Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy

edited by Hannah Slavik
About the cover design

The common languages needed for intercultural communication can be imagined as virtual dialogue zones shaped by the overlapping boundaries of continents and their customs.

*Catalina Ramelli, artist and designer*
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As the world enters the age of the “Information Society,” communication and the exchange of information and knowledge becomes faster and happens independently of both time and space. It seems that people are getting much closer to each other; new means of transportation, the Internet and the telephone system allow communication in and out of the remotest areas. The facilitation of this process also implies that communication between individuals brought up within different cultures is today an everyday routine for an increasing number of people. “Intercultural communication” has become one key factor for success in a vast area of activities.

Diplomats, of course, have a long tradition of intercultural communication skills. Representing one’s country elsewhere and plunging into international relations and politics has a natural intercultural flavour. But what is different today is the higher speed of and access to totally new communication channels that sets into a new light the more traditional discussions around intercultural communication. Communication today goes along with pictures and sounds. The importance and implications of the non-verbal language of pictures also has to be considered in diplomacy.

One may be tempted to think that intercultural communication (being normal and commonplace today) is something not to be thought about any longer. It just happens. E-mails are sent back and forth, allowing a fast and informal exchange. However, the electronic technologies of today are just tools that allow communication to proceed following the same basic rules as ever. The content of the communication and the manner of communicating is perceived within a framework of given values and cultural interpretation modes. The awareness of intercultural differences is, therefore, as important as ever and the basics of intercultural communication theories still remain relevant – with or without new technology!

One needs to look behind the surface of internationally uniform software programs and computer fonts to recognise diversity in composing and receiving messages. Even the phone, video conference installations and e-mail programs cannot guide the “intercultural communicator” in his or her quest for quality in a diplomatic exchange. There is a need for training and reflection to create the necessary awareness that we are communicating in a cul-
But one does not have to look far to sense diversities in culture, communication and values. These differences also exist between organisations, institutions and professional groups. As with other cultural entities, these groups might differ in very visible assets such as the use of language and even clothing; but also in deeper rooted values and modes of thinking. It is important to take into account these differences when striving for development and working in politics today. Multistakeholder initiatives that include governments, civil society, the private sector and research institutions within one common partnership are innovative structures providing platforms for thorough understanding and ensuring ongoing communication for common action.

DiploFoundation began exploring the field of language and diplomacy four years ago, in the year 2000, with a variety of activities. Diplo has since hosted two conferences on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, the second one focussing on organisational and professional cultures and diplomacy. Emphasis was laid on making the events themselves multistakeholder in character, by inviting diplomats and representatives from the business community, non-governmental organisations and academia from 36 different countries. In addition to the conferences, Diplo has made use of electronic communication channels, like an Internet portal and discussion forum, to prolong the dialogue started at these conferences.

Diplo now presents a volume that approaches the topic of intercultural communication and diplomacy from a wide variety of angles. Numerous specialists in intercultural communication theory and practice, diplomats and representatives from international and non-governmental organisations have been invited to contribute to this innovative publication.

First, the reader will go back to the basics of intercultural communication theory before moving to a second topic, intercultural communication in the practice of diplomacy. The next part of the publication will deal with the communication between organisational and professional cultures; Diplo’s primary field of interest for upcoming research. The practice of diplomacy increasingly involves handling not only differences in national cultures, but different organisational and professional cultures at the same time. Diplomats increasingly function in a multilateral environment, interacting with many international organisations, from the UN to specific interest lobby groups. The final topic of the publication is the specific intercultural training for diplomats.
Throughout the publication, readers will be led through case studies illustrating the need for intercultural competence in diplomacy, suggesting the importance for comprehensive training programmes and indications for further study.

I wish you, on your journey through this important range of contributions, illuminating moments of comprehension and awareness, as well as eye and ear openers towards deeper intercultural understanding and communication.

Ambassador Walter Fust
Director General
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
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This publication owes much to the collective efforts of the entire staff of DiploFoundation. First and foremost, the ideas and themes behind the conferences which resulted in these papers originated with Jovan Kurbalija, the director of DiploFoundation. Dejan Konstantinović also deserves special thanks for his assistance in transcribing, editing and coordinating the printing of this book. The successful organisation and running of the conferences would not have been possible without the dedication of Yasmeen Ariff and Sylvana Bugeja. Catalina Ramelli contributed with the design of the book cover.

For assistance with editing, special appreciation goes to Steve Slavik. Sharon Panelo also deserves thanks for volunteer editing. Valeriu Nicolae provided constant support and discussion of ideas throughout the preparations of the publication.

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Thomas Vulpe, Director of the Centre for Intercultural Learning, Canadian Foreign Service Institute, has 14 years’ experience in intercultural performance consulting, including needs analysis, design, delivery, evaluation, management and research. The Centre provides services to more than 3000 individuals each year from the fields of diplomacy, international development, and international business. Vulpe is co-author of A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person. He is currently working closely with Dr Kealey on the refinement of the Intercultural Living and Working Inventory, a personnel assessment/selection tool based on Dr Kealey’s research into the determining fac-
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ment, text and discourse analysis, and Chinese rhetoric and persuasion. She has authored two books on Chinese business communication and cross-cultural business communication and has co-edited special issues for *Asian Pacific Communication*, and *New Zealand Journal of Communication and Cross Cultural Management*. Zhu has published extensively in international journals such as *Journal of Business Communication, Business Communication Quarterly, Document Design, Discourse Studies, Text, Journal of Global Business Language and Asian Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. Zhu received the Unitec Research Excellence Award in 2000 and again in 2002. She has also been involved in cross cultural business consultancy and has taught international communication, negotiation, and English language and culture in China, Australia and New Zealand.
In mid-2002, DiploFoundation began preparations for its first international conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, to be held in February 2003. For the first time, Diplo reached beyond the world of diplomacy, international organisations, and academia, to extend an invitation to the business community, specifically to providers of training and consultancy in intercultural communication. We invited proposals from a number of companies, telling them that we would select those best suited to our needs. We were surprised when, after sending out our polite rejection letters, instead of receiving the usual formal acknowledgement or non-response from diplomats and academics, we received back arguments, attempts at persuasion and, in a few cases, angry or rude responses questioning our judgement! We discovered, quite abruptly, that within this community the practice was to negotiate things that a diplomat would never consider negotiating. Our encounter with a new professional community illustrated well a cultural difference in modes of communication based on professional differences. Today, in almost any career, we encounter differences daily in communication styles based on national, professional and organisational cultures.

Each of us has absorbed or adopted, usually unconsciously, attitudes, values, and beliefs from our social environment. Geert Hofstede describes these patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting as “software of the mind,” using the analogy of computer programming. He defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” Because of these differences, people from one cultural group may have difficulties communicating with people from another. Researchers such as Hall, Hofstede, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars have identified various dimensions of culture, hoping that through understanding these differences, individuals can more easily understand and communicate with each other. Hofstede writes, “although the variety in people’s minds is enormous, there is a structure in this variety which can serve as a basis for mutual understanding.”

Marshall R. Singer applies a perceptual approach to understanding and improving the communication process. Like other researchers, he recognises that every individual is a member of more than one cultural group, ranging
from small (e.g., a family) to large (e.g., a nation). Going a step further, he argues that

because no person is a part of all and only the same groups as anyone else and because each person ranks the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the groups to which he or she belongs differently … each individual must be considered to be culturally unique. … [T]his means that every interpersonal communication must, to some degree, also be an intercultural communication.4

However, in most cases we share at least one, and often many groups with those with whom we interact, leading to at least some commonalities in perception. Singer quotes Harry Hoijer, who writes, “Intercultural communication, however wide the differences between cultures may be, is not impossible. It is simply more or less difficult, depending on the degree of difference between the cultures concerned.”5 Singer suggests that the first step towards improving intercultural communication involves understanding the impact of culture on everything we think and do, and the fact that other people have different cultures, and, therefore, are likely to think and act differently than we do. It is essential to keep an open mind, suspend judgement, and learn as much as possible about the other culture. Finally, an understanding of the communication process itself is important.6

Why is effective communication across cultures important? Throughout history people have been afraid of “the other,” usually avoiding and sometimes even fighting or killing those different from them. In today’s multicultural societies, people with different cultural backgrounds are no longer separated by national borders, but may share the same cities and neighbourhoods, making intercultural conflict often a domestic rather than an international matter. New information and communications technologies make contact between people on different sides of the world a commonplace occurrence. Of course, improved intercultural communication does not guarantee an end to conflict, but, as Singer points out, it can reduce misperception and fear based on misperception, and ensure that when conflict does occur, parties at least have a common understanding of the conflict.7

Diplomats started communicating interculturally long before the development of today’s multicultural societies and workplaces. Many diplomats came to their careers through a natural interest and ability to communicate with members of other national cultures. However, in current international relations, a natural interest is not necessarily enough. First, in terms of national cultural
differences, diplomats posted abroad for short terms need to learn how to communicate within a different culture very quickly while retaining the ability to report effectively within their own culture. Appropriate training and preparation can help diplomats learn to communicate more quickly and effectively in a new culture.

Second, diplomats now communicate with members of a growing number of professional cultures within different national cultures. As well as nation states and international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector are increasingly active on the international scene. An understanding of the different professional and organisational cultures of these international players is essential for a diplomat.

Finally, diplomats increasingly address not only foreign audiences, but foreign and domestic audiences simultaneously. At times, diplomacy must work to convince the domestic audience about foreign policy moves. This domestic communication is increasingly direct: diplomats now communicate on a day-to-day basis with journalists, business people, pressure groups, religious institutions, and local authorities – each group with its own specific professional and organisational characteristics.

The papers presented in this volume not only address the topic of intercultural communication, but they approach it from a wide range of cultural perspectives; the authors hail from 17 different countries and a variety of professional sectors, including foreign services, universities, businesses, and non-governmental organisations. Through these papers, the reader will begin to see that intercultural communication pervades the work of the diplomat. A thorough understanding of the communication process and of the influence of culture on communication is essential. The negotiations and decision-making that define the work of the diplomat affect the lives of people of many nations; ensuring effective communication and that parties emerge with a common understanding is crucial.

The first section of this volume sets the scene, with a number of papers focusing on the theory and basics of intercultural communication. Geert Hofstede, a pioneer of intercultural research, outlines the cultural dimensions he identified through his research with IBM employees, and reflects on the role of diplomats as “cultural bridge builders.” Heather Robinson, an interculturalist, and Lewis R. Macfarlane, a retired diplomat, share a conversation illustrating selected aspects of intercultural communication with anecdotes from diplomatic practice. Their reflections support the idea that “intercultural communication
depends on what we know about ourselves as much as it does on what we know about the other.” *Diana M. Lewis* explores the relationship between language and culture, arguing that cultural competence includes linguistic competence, and that, rather than to language, culture is related to discourse.

This section ends with *Peter Serracino Inglott’s* plea for a multi-dimensional portrayal of the religions of the Mediterranean acceptable to the adherents of all three faiths and reflecting their own self-understanding. Serracino writes that it is important for us “to be concerned about the ways in which we portray each other’s religion.” I would extend this to say that we should also be concerned with the way we portray other cultures; in the words of Amin Maalouf, “it is often the way we look at other people that imprisons them within their own narrowest allegiances. And it is also the way we look at them that may set them free.”

The papers in the second section explore the practice of intercultural communication in diplomacy. *Dietrich Kappeler* looks at the complexity of multilateral diplomatic relations resulting from the variety of cultures involved. Using the example of human rights, Kappeler shows how basic concepts may have vastly different meanings in different cultures and, as a result, international conventions are often accepted and even ratified by countries whose view of the subject matter vastly differs. Kappeler suggests that professional diplomats should take more time to communicate among themselves and with others about these issues, and to explain potential dangers to their own governments and to the public in their own countries and elsewhere.

The next two papers discuss the foreign cultural policy of states as a specific form of intercultural communication. *Heinrich Reimann* outlines the advantages of this kind of interstate communication, pointing out that culture communicates without words. He suggests that relations between countries would benefit if more investment were made in training embassy staff in cultural awareness and capacity. *Valentin Katranzhiev* compares the cultural content on representative ministry of foreign affairs and embassy websites worldwide to determine the usefulness of these sites for cultural and public diplomacy. His study aims to determine the extent to which these websites contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding.

In the final paper in this section, *Sandra Gillespie* offers a case study focusing on the sustained cooperation between China and Africa over the last 50 years, an area relatively neglected by researchers in the West. She writes that “building international diplomacy requires understanding ourselves, others, and how we relate together. It also involves understanding how others relate among themselves.”
The third section of the volume contains two papers on public diplomacy, grouped separately from the other papers on diplomatic practice because of the particular features of intercultural communication aimed at a domestic as well as a foreign audience. R. S. Zaharna looks at post-9/11 American public diplomacy, showing how it reflects a uniquely American cultural style of communication, public relations, and advertising. Although this style of communication resonates positively with the domestic public, it resonates negatively with many foreign publics, resulting in an increasing gap between the two publics. Due to global media and IT, foreign and domestic publics can no longer be separated for public diplomacy purposes.

Biljana Scott considers post-9/11 public diplomacy in the form of social advertising campaigns aimed at building national unity out of cultural diversity. Scott warns that the image of multiculturalism presented in these campaigns discourages much needed dialogue, and she calls for intercultural communication instead. She alerts readers to the “dubious nature of some of the methods of persuasion used in the exercise of public diplomacy.”

Intercultural communication in negotiation and conflict resolution settings is the topic of the fourth section. Nike Carstarphen explains the role of personal story telling in creating shared understanding between conflictual parties. Such stories include “past personal experiences, the meaning and impact of those experiences, why and how participants came to hold their attitudes, beliefs and perspectives, and … meaning-making of the world, especially in relation to the conflict and the other.” Sharing personal stories is one of the most successful methods of “making the ‘other’ human,” as an essential first step in relationship building. In her paper, Marina Tuneva-Jovanovska begins with a personal story illustrating her understanding of the ethnic conflict that has ravaged her country. She focuses on the role of the media in creating and perpetuating ethnic tensions, presenting both pessimistic and optimistic scenarios for the future.

Yunxia Zhu and Sun Zhu analyse communication barriers in unsuccessful negotiations between Chinese and Australian businessmen. Using a number of cultural dimensions, some general and some particular to the Chinese culture, the authors show how lack of knowledge of the culture of negotiation partners can lead to a breakdown in negotiations, in diplomacy as well as business. They point out that it is a “mutual responsibility for both negotiation parties to understand the cultural realities of their negotiation partners. … Intercultural competency is, after all, a two-way learning and communication process.”

The fifth, and longest, section of this volume focuses on communication between organisational and professional cultures, an increasing area of concern
for diplomats and others working in the field of international relations. Mainly through case studies, these papers examine good practice, barriers to communication and the consequences of failed communication between different professional and organisational groups. Stefano Baldi and Eduardo Gelbstein identify “jargon, protocols and uniforms” as the symbols of different organisational and professional cultures, and show how these create barriers to communication. Offering the events of 9/11 as the tragic consequences of communication breakdown, they suggest that “all of us concerned with inter-professional communication, particularly in crisis situations, should never forget the enormous responsibility that we have for the life and security of others.”

Raymond Saner and Lichia Yiu guide diplomats assigned to the UN through various informal arrangements intended to safeguard the interests of member states while allowing for collaboration in areas of interdependent needs such as the environment, peacekeeping, public health and humanitarian assistance. They describe the particular organisational culture of the UN as a result of “porous boundaries.” Also highlighting the importance of understanding organisational cultures, Caroline Linse investigates the challenges faced by women working in overseas diplomatic positions. Her interviewees suggest that knowledge of the working culture of the foreign service and embassy is more important than knowledge of the culture of the host country.

Valeriu Nicolae, though a case study on communication between Roma rights activists and the political elite, examines the organisational culture of the NGO world. Upholding open and effective communication between civil society and the government as essential for the protection of basic rights, Nicolae examines ethnic and professional cultural differences, the culture of racism, and the lack of common ground as barriers to communication. As a result of these barriers, politicians and activists prefer talking among themselves rather than to each other: “Instead of opening the windows of dialogue, most of the people who should be solving problems prefer to surrender themselves to mirrors.” He suggests that diplomats, with their cross-cultural skills, may be ideally placed to help “build bridges between those concerned with human rights and those able to implement policies meant to bring tolerance in a world ravaged by interethnic conflicts.”

Biljana Scott writes that “The distinctive characteristics of professional cultures become most apparent under the following conditions: first, when separate cultures come into contact with each other and attempt to translate across their differences; and second, when the members of one professional culture transgress the rules and mores of their community and are exposed for their mistakes.” Using the Hutton inquiry into the death of Dr David Kelly
as a case study of both situations, she analyses aspects of the professional culture of the journalist, the politician and the scientist, focusing on the language used and the transgressions of all three professional cultures. Eduardo Gelbstein compares and contrasts two other professional cultures: information technologists and their clients, including diplomats, revealing areas of difference that lead to communication failure. He suggests a number of simple, but not necessarily easy, steps to improve communication.

Ending on a positive note, Nadia Boyadjieva and Kostadin Grozev examine the implementation of the Dayton Accords for Bosnia and Herzegovina. They present a case study of this implementation to exemplify the new type of involvement of the international community in crisis management and post-war reconstruction. In a volatile environment, the daily work of implementing these accords shows unprecedented communication and cooperation between NATO and non-NATO states, on the one hand, and between military and civilian institutions on the other.

The authors in the sixth section look specifically at the professional culture of the diplomat. Dietrich Kappeler traces the birth and evolution of diplomatic culture. He finds the roots of some aspects of this culture in the characteristics of the earliest envoys: for example, the use of persuasion rather than force, and familiarity and understanding of the host culture. Kappeler concludes that “whereas diplomatic culture has changed and keeps changing, it is by no means dead, and it should not be allowed to die!” Paul Sharp, likewise, examines the origins and characteristics of an independent diplomatic culture, which he believes “arises out of the experience of conducting relations between peoples who regard themselves as distinctive and separate from one another.” He feels that this culture is worth cultivating through appropriate training and education. This would involve overcoming influences of cultures less consistent with the practice of good diplomacy, and “getting diplomats to think of themselves as members of their respective services less and as members of an international profession more.”

The interaction of the diplomatic culture with the domestic environment is the concern of Kishan Rana’s paper. Rana holds that there is a common diplomatic culture, different from the national or civil service culture of most countries, which leads to challenges in dialogue between foreign ministries and other institutions in the home countries. For example, diplomats are often seen as elites by other institutions, while within diplomatic services the perception is that they are “under siege.” In the final paper in this section, Wynne Russell calls for further research on the concept of “emotion cultures” — cultural rules governing the experience and expression of emotion - and the question of
whether diplomats are socialised into a distinctive and global diplomatic emotion culture.

The papers in the seventh and final section of this volume suggest practical approaches to intercultural communication training for diplomats. Alena Korshuk concludes that although most diplomats communicate sufficiently well across cultures, currently they have too little time for adaptation in the field. As most diplomats already undergo some kind of pre-posting training, in language skills at least, why not offer preparation in cross-cultural communication as well? She proposes an outline for such a preparatory course focusing on both culture-general and culture-specific knowledge. Yunxia Zhu, based on interviews with diplomats in New Zealand, similarly suggests that intercultural training for diplomats can be improved. She proposes a model for high-level competence training, incorporating both etic (culture-general aspects for comparison across cultures) and emic approaches (culture-specific aspects from within a culture), to reduce the possibility of over-generalisation.

The final two papers describe the approaches to intercultural training taken by particular institutions. Daniel J. Kealey, Doug MacDonald and Thomas Vulpe elaborate on the research undertaken by the Centre for Intercultural Learning of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute to learn what it really takes to be interculturally competent and how individuals and organisations can improve their intercultural competence. The result of this research is an instrument designed to establish clear and measurable indicators of intercultural competence for the selection, training, and evaluation of international personnel. Elena A. A. Garcea introduces programmes implemented in Europe to promote intercultural dialogue and to prevent and manage conflicts. As the mobility of professionals, teachers, and students within Europe is increasingly encouraged, cultural diversity within workplaces and educational settings is enhanced. “International professionals, trainers and educators should be prepared and should prepare societies for these new scenarios.”

As a final word on the topic of diplomatic training, DiploFoundation would like to suggest a methodology that has worked well in practice: the multistakeholder approach to diplomatic training. It is clear that increased contact and opportunities for communication help people from different national cultures to understand and often to appreciate each other – this is the basis for the numerous existing exchange and international programmes. The same idea can be applied to different organisational and professional cultures: through studying together – in effect, time spent together on a joint undertaking – individuals from different professional and organisational groups can gain a better understanding of different professional cultures. Over the last few years, Diplo
has promoted the participation of representatives from international organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and media, along with diplomats and other civil servants in courses on diplomacy-related topics. Participants in these courses report positively on the experience and on the results in their professional lives.

Endnotes

1 Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 5; see also the paper by Geert Hofstede in this volume.
3 Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 4.
7 Singer, *Perception and Identity*, xv.
8 The views expressed in the papers presented in this volume represent the views of the authors. They are not necessarily the views of DiploFoundation.
Part I.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THEORY AND BASICS
This cartoon, from the end of the 18th century, suggests that there is room for some bridge-building between cultures. The need for bridge-building between cultures is related to the reality that the world consists of different countries, a fact rooted in history. The people who live in a particular country are supposed to have a common identity, and at least most of the people in a given country do share many elements of this common identity. This identity is something visible to the people themselves and to outsiders and it is rooted in things like a common language or languages or a common religion.

On the other hand, within different countries different institutions exist. Institutions are common to the country; they start from family structure, which differs from one country to another. Other examples include the educational structure (the kind of schools and the entire school system in which they are embedded), the government system, the way the economy is organised, the way social classes are organised, and also the way sports and media are organised. It includes the system of laws: not only the laws themselves, but also the way in which they are applied and maintained. The ways these institutions work are visible, as are elements of national identity, but in between the two there is a block which I call “culture,” as shown in Figure 1.
The word “culture” has several meanings - at least three are given in the dictionary. The basic meaning is that of tilling of the soil and growing something. The word is also used in two metaphoric senses: one is culture in the sense of civilisation. This is the domain of the ministries of culture that work in many countries, and involves activities such as theatre, literature, and sometimes aspects of education. The second metaphorical sense is broader, including all the ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are common to the people of a particular country.

I would like to propose my own definition for culture in the broader sense: culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another. I use the word “programming” as a metaphor, without intending to suggest that the minds of people are programmed like computers. This “programming” has three elements. First, it is collective rather than individual. If we talk about individuals, we have to look at personality. Second, it is programming of the mind, which means that it is somewhere inside us, but you can’t judge from the outside how a person is programmed. You have to see a person acting in order to learn about his or her programming. And, finally, this programming distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

This definition applies not only to the national culture, but also to professional cultures such as that of the diplomat, organisational cultures, cultures of departments within an organisation, and even to the genders and generations: grandparents, parents and children.

The categories shown in Figure 2, known as the “onion,” are used to study or observe culture. Like an onion, culture consists of several layers, and the out-

![Figure 1: Differences between Countries](image)
side layer is called symbols. Symbols are words, gestures, or objects with a meaning that is immediately recognised by people within the culture but not necessarily by others. For example, driving a particular type of car has a particular meaning in a given culture. If you come from the outside, you simply see a vehicle with four wheels which does everything a car should, but you don’t necessarily understand why it may be important to have that particular type of car.

The next layer is “heroes.” Heroes are people about whom articles are written, people who get their pictures in the newspapers or appear on television. Heroes are the people children are told about. Each culture has its own particular heroes who express something very dear to that culture. Even cartoon figures are popular in some countries because they express something which is dear to the heart of that culture.

Rituals, the next layer, are activities we engage in for their own sake, not necessarily for a purpose, but simply because it is socially necessary to engage in them. Many meetings have a ritual rather than a technical necessity. For example, we meet not because we have something to discuss, but because it is Monday.

One example of a ritual we all engage in, perhaps without realising it, is the way we make telephone calls, and particularly the way we answer the telephone. Suppose you call an American. What do you expect to hear when the American picks up the phone? “Hello.” Now you call somebody in Britain, at home, not in the office. What do you expect to hear when you call somebody in Britain? His telephone number. Someone in Britain told me that this
is because the telephone lines are so bad that you always have to verify whether you have the right connection. Of course, this is just a rationalisation, because the practice is a ritual. Now you call somebody in Spain. What do you expect to hear? *Dígame*. Now you call somebody in China or Hong Kong. *Wé. Wé*. The *wé* is interesting because it is not the equivalent of “hello.” The reaction to “hello” is that the speakers immediately start their conversation. With *wé*, the other person reacts by saying *wé* as well. The speakers respond to each other with *wé, wé, wé, wé* a few times. But then at a given moment they start to talk. The speakers are more or less feeling each other out with this *wé*. When you call somebody in Holland they answer the phone with their name. Why do we do that? I don’t know: I was brainwashed as a student. When I didn’t say my name on the phone, the other fellow would say, “Well, you stupid, couldn’t you tell me your name?” So now, that’s what we all do.

These are rituals: we don’t know exactly why we do them, but we do them. Symbols, heroes and rituals together are called practices. Practices are the visible parts of a culture.

Underneath the practices lie values. Values are at the emotional level; they are emotions with a plus and a minus. They relate to the things we consider good or evil, safe or dangerous, clean or dirty, normal or abnormal, or rational or irrational\(^2\), for example.

The important thing about values is that they are often not conscious, because they belong to the first things we have learned. When we are born, we absorb information at a very fast rate. As a doctor explained to me, it’s almost the way we are wired. We have a period of super sensitivity for about ten years when we absorb information, much of it non-codified. This information includes our values. These values are inside of us, and they are not even discussible, because they are not conscious. But these values are in our guts. They are on the emotional level rather than the intellectual level. Therefore, we have the feeling that what we do, of course, is normal, and what others do is abnormal. What we do is good, what others do is evil.\(^3\)

Some famous political statements reflect this, for example, from the nineteenth century, “Perfidious Albion,” referring to Britain. In the twentieth century Ronald Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the “Evil Empire,” meaning of course that while *they* are evil, *we* are good! More recently, we have the “Axis of Evil,” and if there is an Axis of Evil there must also be an Axis of Good.

A final example is the statement “a lack of moral fibre,” said, believe it or not, about Holland. This statement was made by the famous US columnist Walter Laqueur when he wrote about the Dutch, because he thought the
Dutch didn’t want to spend enough money on their defence. So, he decided that the Dutch had a lack of moral fibre.

You can find many such statements in the political field, where the basic law is that we are normal, and others may be evil. A cartoon from Asterix, “Le Domaine des Dieux,” illustrates the point well. The story is about a project developer in Rome who has purchased lots in this French village. When the Roman families come the reaction of the locals is, “I’ve got nothing against foreigners, some of my best friends are foreigners. But these foreigners are not from here!” This is the problem with foreigners: as long as they behave, they’re OK. But as soon as they start behaving like foreigners they’re no longer OK. It’s a gut feeling that comes with values.

The Diplomat’s Profession

Diplomats are people who are on the fringe somewhere, because they are either permanently living in or at least dealing with alien cultures, cultures with different values. The success of a diplomat depends on this brinkmanship because, on the one hand, they must remain credible with their superiors back home and, on the other hand, they must have access to the leaders in the country where they are posted. This is a difficult situation, because if they understand the locals in the place where they are posted too well they may no longer be credible at home.

A short story from my IBM days illustrates a situation similar to that faced by diplomats. One of the top people in IBM in the US was nominated to become the general manager for the Asia-Pacific region and, among other things, to be the boss of the general manager of IBM Japan, which was an entirely Japanese organisation. After some time, the employees in the head office in New York started to complain about the messages sent by this man, as they were quite different from before. The president of IBM, his boss, replied, “Well, this is interesting. You are absolutely right. This man shows remarkably poor judgement. However, my question is how can a man show such good judgement in New York and such poor judgement in Tokyo?” In fact, the president understood that if you are in Tokyo you have to send a different kind of message than that which you would send if you were in New York.

Of course, as a diplomat it is important to have support from people who understand the reality of the profession. Diplomats socialise in their daily lives with a very mixed group of people. This gives them the opportunity to become
bridge-builders and cultural experts, because they have an enormous amount of practical knowledge about other cultures.

Some diplomats have tried to transfer their skills and knowledge into a science, a few actually becoming social scientists later in their careers. For example, Lord Acton was a British diplomat who at the end of the nineteenth century became a Cambridge professor. He is the author of the famous statement: “Power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Another example is a Dutch diplomat named Johann Kauffmann, who was at the same time a diplomat and a scholar. He was the Dutch representative at the United Nations in New York for some time. In 1968 he wrote a book called Conference Diplomacy where he described from a detached point of view how international conferences work and how diplomats can get their points of view heard there.

The last example I would like to mention is Glenn Fisher, an American diplomat who published a book called Mindsets: The Role of Culture and Perception in International Relations, in 1988. The interesting point here is that although he never read my work, he uses the term “mindset,” which is rather close to the term “programming of the mind” which I use. From a practical point of view, his ideas approach those I am describing rather closely.

What exactly is the science of diplomacy? Part of a science of diplomacy is that it provides a particular way to describe the values and the culture of

![Figure 3: Jigsaw Puzzle from 1790](image)
a country without being immediately judgemental. Again, I looked into history, and I found these pieces of a jigsaw puzzle published in 1790 (see Figure 3). It’s an alphabet, but I only found these three pieces. The pieces illustrate and describe different nationalities: the Dutchman, the Englishman and the Frenchman. The Dutchman, that’s me: industrious and hardy, cleanly in their persons, ships and houses. The Englishman is generous and affable, desirous of liberty in the greatest extent. The Frenchman is of a changeable disposition and fond of amusement to excess. This was published in 1790, one year after the French Revolution. There was certainly some excess in the air, whether there was also amusement is a second question. The nationality of the author, William Darton, is quite clearly British!

**Dimensions of Culture**

My own challenge over the past 40 years has been to come up with a kind of classification of nations which is not judgemental; where no one comes out better than the other. I identified first four, and afterwards five, dimensions to describe national cultures. These dimensions are independent of each other.

The first dimension, *power distance*, is about equality within the culture. You can say that all cultures are unequal, but some are more unequal than others, echoing George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. In some cultures the distance between those with power and those without power is larger that in others, and this mindset is not only that of the people at the top, but also of those without power. The basic thing about dictatorships is that you can’t blame them on the dictators; I think would-be dictators are available anywhere. You have to blame them on the people who accept living under a dictatorship. There must be enough people to say aye-aye to the dictator.

The second dimension is about how people live with the unpredictable. Some societies do that rather easily, while others try to fight it. The statement that expresses a strong *uncertainty avoidance* is: “What is different is dangerous.” The opposite is: “What is different is interesting.”

The third dimension is about relationships between people, and these always begin with the relationship between children and their parents and the other people nearby. This later expands into the society. One the one hand, the relationships can reflect *individualism*, which means that children are groomed to be independent. On the other hand, in a *collectivist* society, everybody remains part of a group or a number of groups, in a relationship with loyalty provided in exchange for support.
The fourth dimension examines the social and emotional consequences of having been born a girl or a boy. There is, of course, an absolute difference between men and women; a man cannot have babies. But there are other aspects to the male/female difference: in every society subtle differences exist in the positions taken by men and women in social life and also in emotional relations. Some societies tend to increase these differences, while others minimise them. In a society where the difference is increased, men are supposed to be tough and women are supposed to be tender: this is a masculine culture. In societies which reduce the differences, men are also supposed to be tender: everybody is supposed to be tender and nobody is supposed to be very tough. This is a feminine culture.5

The last dimension, which was added later, is about the gratification of needs: whether you expect immediate payback when you make an effort (or maybe even already yesterday!) or whether you are willing to wait days, weeks, months or even a lifetime. These five independent dimensions are summarised below:6

1. Inequality: more or less?
   Power Distance large vs. small
2. The Unfamiliar: fight or tolerate?
   Uncertainty Avoidance strong vs. weak
3. Relation with in-group: loose or tight?
   Individualism vs. Collectivism
4. Emotional gender roles: different or same?
   Masculinity vs. Femininity
5. Need gratification: later or now?
   Long vs. Short Term orientation

I will describe a few of the implications of these dimensions, but first I would like to explain how I arrived at them. I found the first four dimensions through analysis of material collected in 1970 by the IBM World Trade Corporation, among IBMers in different subsidiaries in 70 countries around the world. When conducting cross-cultural research, it’s very important to compare like with like; in other words, to work with similar sample groups in different countries. This is easily said but not so easily done. This particular material collected by IBM was therefore highly appropriate, as IBM was a very monolithic company. The characteristics of the IBM employees around the world were very similar, except of course for their passports.
In the meantime, researchers have conducted six major replications of the study. One very interesting study was done with national elites through the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, a high-level institution which the elites of many countries used to attend. Another study was done among airline pilots where more than half of all the commercial airline pilots in the world answered questions about their values. More recently, market research agencies are using their networks to get value information about consumers.

The results of these studies are very stable, and converge to the same kind of dimensions. There may be culture shifts within a country, but the comparison between countries does not change. And this is what we measure – the comparison between countries, or how one country looks from the point of view of another. These results can also be validated against other national data, for example, the per capita GNP of a country or prevalent causes of death in a country according to the World Health Organisation. Over 400 significant correlations have been discovered. I will discuss these in further detail later.

First, however, I would like to show you some “maps” of the world according to these dimensions.

Figure 4: Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance

Figure 4 maps power distance and uncertainty avoidance. For example, a country with a small power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance would be relatively equal and relatively tolerant of ambiguity. In this corner we find the Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland), the Anglo countries (Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), the USA and Holland. In the opposite corner, where the power distance is large and uncertainty avoid-
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ance strong, we find countries which are relatively hierarchical and relatively intolerant of ambiguity. Here we find all the Latin countries (this is obviously an inheritance of the Roman Empire along with the Latin languages), Malta, the Muslim countries, Japan, Korea and the Eastern European countries with a few exceptions.

Now if you look at large power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance, you find relatively unequal countries which are relatively tolerant of ambiguity. Here we find two giants: China and India. This is one of the differences between China and Japan. In the opposite corner, relatively equal but intolerant of ambiguity, we find the German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland), Hungary and Israel – which is interesting because Israel was colonised largely by people from German-speaking countries.

The sorting of countries according to individualism and masculinity is completely different, as shown in Figure 5. For example, we now find now that China and Japan are together: both are collectivist and masculine, along with the countries of the Caribbean, Mexico, Venezuela, the Arab world and Greece. In the opposite corner, individualist and feminine, we find the Nordic countries still together (Nordic countries are always together), Holland (which is also a Nordic country in disguise), France and Malta. Malta is closer to the centre but it is still above average in individualism and more feminine than masculine.

The individualist masculine countries are all the Anglo countries and the USA, the German-speaking countries, and the Czech Republic, Hungary,
Poland and Italy. In the opposite corner you find Asian countries like Thailand and Korea, Latin American countries like Costa Rica and Chile, and some Eastern Europe countries, including Russia and Bulgaria, and Portugal and Spain.

Categorisation according to these two dimensions results in a very different mix of countries than categorisation according to power distance and uncertainty avoidance. This explains why countries which are very similar in terms of the first two dimensions may come across to the visitor as being very different. The dimensions of individualism and masculinity are more related to how people function (and as a result, to the countries where you might like to spend your holidays). The power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimension are more related to how organisations function.

The final dimension is long-term vs. short term orientation, shown in Figure 6. The countries which have the longest term orientation tend to be the countries of East Asia: China, Japan, Korea, but interestingly, also Brasil and India. On the short-term side, we find the USA and Britain, who start a war without thinking what will happen the day afterwards. We also find the African countries and the Muslim countries, which tend to be geared towards the past rather than the future. They try to derive from yesterday what they should do tomorrow.

In the middle you find most of the Western countries. Holland comes out relatively long-term among the middle group: in fact, the Dutch have been called the Chinese of Europe. Dutch and Belgians tend to make jokes about each other; one thing that the Belgians say about the Dutch is that they are
stingy. Being stingy is one way of being long-term oriented because you save your money for later.

Earlier in this paper I mentioned that a country’s scores on these dimensions have been found to correlate with other data about a country. One of the correlations is large power distance with perceived corruption. Transparency International, a German institution, publishes data about perceived corruption on the Internet. If power distances are large, fewer checks and balances exist in the society, so the chances that you will have perceived corruption are higher. (This is a demonstration of Lord Acton’s theory that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely!) Such correlations are not laws: some countries, for example, Singapore and Hong Kong, score quite high on power distance but have a low level of perceived corruption.

High uncertainty avoidance correlates with stress on law and order. In general, in politics you will find that parties that stress law and order do very well in countries with high uncertainty avoidance.

Individualist countries score high on human rights. This is interesting because it says something not only about individualist countries, but also about our perception of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written in individualist countries. In fact, all of these correlations can be read in two ways, but we need diplomats to resolve that.

Feminine cultures tend to spend more money on welfare: for their own people, for their old age, and also for aid to other countries. Feminine countries, to the extent that they have money, spend more on development assistance. In fact, there is a difference of about ten to one between the most feminine and the least feminine rich countries in what they spend on development aid.

Long-term orientation is related to savings rates. People in long-term oriented countries tend to save much more, while people in the short-term oriented countries tend to buy on credit.

**National Cultures and Diplomacy**

I would like to start this final section with a number of questions. First, to what extent can research into national cultures help diplomacy, and help you in your work as a diplomat? As a diplomat you have the opportunity to compare different cultures and clearly see the relationships between them. You are also in the position to help your government to understand why certain things are as they are. For example, if you notice that a particular country has a very unfavourable human rights rating, you might try to explain that countries at that level
of poverty and collectivism tend to have poor records of human rights observ-
ances. This approach may lead to more effective methods for improving such
situations.

Another question: What is the relationship between national and pro-
fessional or organisational cultures? National cultures are rooted in values
acquired very early in our lives. Professional and organisational cultures, on the
other hand, are rooted in symbols, heroes and rituals: learned processes. Fortu-
nately, you can learn new practices throughout your life, and this allows people
with different values to collaborate. In international organisations and com-
panies people with different values, but shared practices, can work extremely
productively together. Similarly, a shared professional culture unites diplomats
from very different countries.

I can illustrate this point with an example from my own experience. Many
years ago when I was at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analy-
sis in Luxembourg and Austria we held a seminar with diplomats from various
organisations in Vienna. This was before the turn-around in Eastern Europe,
so we had the Soviet ambassador, the American ambassador and a number of
other ambassadors all participating in a panel. To the observer, they all looked
the same: I really could not tell the difference between the Soviet ambassador
and the American ambassador because they both were highly professional dip-
lomats. Of course, they had quite different points of view, but they had learned
how to present themselves in the same way.

The relationship between diplomats and politicians is interesting as they
have such very different professional cultures. I think the nature of being a dip-
lomat is that you are supposed to see both sides of a problem and to withhold
judgement. Politicians, on the other hand, hold strong opinions: that is the
why they got their jobs.

Even when they talk abroad, they still talk with their own constituency
in mind. However, these two roles are complementary. There is an issue of
authority, as politicians are a notch higher, but basically they are complementa-
ry. The ideal team is a politician and a diplomat who listen to each other.

My final point relates to the price of being a diplomat. I think it’s a very
interesting life, but it can lead to social isolation from your home country and,
especially for the family, a loss of identity. Children brought up in diplo-
matic families may suffer from “Diplomat’s Children Syndrome,” meaning that
after moving from one school to another in different places, they later have dif-
ficulties in attaching themselves anywhere. For these young people, it is very
important to have a base and to develop an identity. I would suggest that for
diplomats and their families, maintaining a home base is essential to emotion-
al health. In most countries, the organisation of the Foreign Service takes this into account, providing opportunities for diplomats to return home to recharge their batteries.

Endnotes

1 This paper is based on the keynote presentation given by Geert Hofstede at the Second International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy: Organisational and Professional Cultures and Diplomacy, Malta, 13 February 2004.

2 When I was teaching at the departments of Economics and Business Administration, some of my colleagues were dealing with rational choice models. With my background, I would ask them, “OK, whose rationality do you apply?” That is not a popular question to ask an economist!

3 Some of the misgivings people have about globalisation are related to values. The rationality of these people is different from that of the international organisations or large companies.


5 If you are in a new place and you want to determine whether it is a feminine or a masculine society, look at how many fathers you see tending small children. If you see fathers dealing with small children in the street, this is a feminine society.


LESSONS FROM TWO FIELDS: A DIPLOMAT AND AN INTERCULTURALIST CONVERSE

Lewis R. Macfarlane and Heather Robinson

LRM: My name is Lew Macfarlane. I’m the diplomatic half - or more accurately, the retired diplomatic half - of our intercultural/diplomatic team. On behalf of my associate, Heather Robinson, and myself, I hope that the “conversation” presented here is just a beginning of an ongoing conversation that will continue in the days to come, and beyond.

HAR: Good afternoon. My name is Heather Robinson. This presentation is directed chiefly at working diplomats, but we hope that those who are theoreticians, academics or interculturalists will also get some value from it. We believe that the juxtaposition of real-life examples from the diplomatic field with intercultural theory may be a useful combination. We also hope that our presentation will spark memories of incidents that have happened to you.

I have my ancestors to thank for being an interculturalist. After four generations of intercultural marriage, I have five strands of different heritage in my veins. In the last generation, my Swiss-born mother married my Canadian-born American father, after meeting in Venezuela. I was born in the US but at the age of seven months moved to India. I subsequently lived in Turkey, Switzerland, Germany and South Africa. Later in my life, I lived in the UK, in Switzerland, in Greece, Israel, and Pakistan. I also have had the privilege, over the last 20 years, of being the senior daughter-in-law in an extended South Asian Muslim family. Educationally, I started with a degree in biology, which led me indirectly into computers and electronics. I spent ten years in high technology. I subsequently received a masters degree in systems theory, which I applied to improving services to immigrants and refugees. Since 1988, I have been training and consulting on working successfully across borders with Global 500 corporations, such as Daimler Chrysler, Thyssen Krupp and EADS, primarily in North America, Western Europe, and South Asia.

LRM: Briefly, I was at the University of Chicago planning a career in the academic world, when the US State Department made me what I thought was a better offer, so I joined the US Foreign Service. By contrast with Heather, I grew up very much a monoculturalist. I had never travelled outside of Canada and Mexico and I spoke no foreign language when I joined the Foreign Service. I was on a rather steep learning curve as far as other cultures were concerned. Although I think a much better job is done today, little emphasis was placed on intercultural training for young diplomats at that time. One exception was
our exposure to Edward Hall’s *The Silent Language*. This book had a big effect on me and I picked up that great line, which I have carried along with me ever since: “We must never assume that we are fully aware of what we communicate to someone else.”

Shortly after language study and basic introductory diplomatic training, I went to the Republic of the Congo as a Vice Consul at a very difficult time in that country’s history. As a learning-on-the-job multiculturalist, I developed a question for myself that I have used all my life: “What’s really going on here?” This proved useful, over and over again, when I suddenly found myself in culturally deep waters, and experienced a sudden flash of awareness that I needed to look past my own cultural assumptions and try to achieve a better understanding of the reality with which I was dealing.

I think the US Foreign Service does a much better job today than it used to do in the intercultural training area. As an example, our Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, recently did three days of cross-cultural training, which involved everybody in the US Embassy and US mission. It is a hopeful sign, I think, of the way in which we’ve become aware of the importance of this kind of training and cultural awareness.

**HAR:** We would like to quote from the British historian, Theodore Zeldin. He defines a conversation as a process “in which one starts with a willingness to emerge a slightly different person. It is always an experiment, whose results are never guaranteed. It involves risk. It’s an adventure in which we agree to cook the world together and make it taste less bitter.” What we are doing here is an experiment, we’re taking a bit of a risk, and we certainly hope that we will make the world less bitter. What we plan to cover is a basic model associated with culture and four selected aspects of intercultural communication: time, power distance, universalism versus particularism, and high and low context cultures.

**LRM:** We’ll change our approach from time to time. Sometimes, I’ll start with an anecdote from my Foreign Service career and then Heather will provide the intellectual framework for a better understanding of what happened. Alternatively, to vary the pattern, Heather may start with some intercultural insights that I will then illustrate with something out of my experience. Sometimes we’ll talk about practical experience first, and sometimes we’ll put the theory first. Intercultural communication depends on what we know about ourselves as much as it does on what we know about the other.

**HAR:** Let’s start with the basics. What do we mean by “culture”? For our purposes, we would like to think of culture as being the attitudes, beliefs, traditions and values shared by members of a social group. These elements are gen-
erally transmitted from one generation to the next (there are some exceptions to this, as those of you who work with street kids well know).

Culture influences perception, cognition and behaviour: how we see things, how we think about them, and how we communicate them. Culture is not the same as instinct. Instinct is inherited, culture is learned. Because culture is learned, it can also be un-learned and re-learned and we see this process happening constantly.

Culture can be thought of as the “default programming” for humans. If no other learning or experience tells you otherwise, your initial cultural programming will dictate how you see things, think about things, and communicate about things. One of my favourite ways of thinking about culture is the way a group of people tacitly agree to solve the problems that we all face as we move through life, from cradle to grave, from birth to death. Culture is what we do in between with all the “stuff” that comes up. Thus, culture affects every aspect of our lives, whether personal, professional or societal.

As Ambassador Reimann mentioned this morning, cultural identity is defined by the boundary or frame we are using at the moment. We can put many frames around whatever cultural group we are talking about at any given time. We all are members of various cultural groups, depending on whether we define ourselves in national, religious, tribal, or linguistic culture terms. For example, I may share my professional culture as an interculturalist with some of you here, but share gender culture as a woman with a larger group. We all belong to a large variety of groups, and thus cultures, and are accustomed to shifting from one to another. In this sense, we are all “multicultural” (see Figure 1).

**LRM:** I think that, as diplomats, former diplomats, or as people involved in this field, much of what we do comes down to interactions between national cultures. For diplomats, this has a double aspect. If we are earning our money, we are effectively conveying the views, concerns and interests of our own government to the host government. Equally importantly, however, if we’re doing our job we are also analysing while we are listening, we are decoding the messages from that culture, that society, that government and we are transmitting the messages back accurately to our own government. Obviously, one requirement is putting both categories of messages in culturally appropriate forms. This can be difficult. As one diplomat put it: “If you are to stand up for your government, you must be able to stand up to your government.” Thus, sometimes in dealing with your own government, you may be the bearer of unpopular or unwelcome news from someone else’s national culture. However, that’s part of the job.
I’m going to tell one story which has made the diplomatic rounds, from my service in Tanzania. I don’t know whether we still do this, but at the end of each UN General Assembly session, the US would analyse each of the governments with which we had relations, summarising how we felt they did - how they had voted - on issues of concern to us. This got be called the UN “Report Card.” We would convey this report to governments in the context of bilateral discussions, which started at the beginning of the UN General Assembly and would go on all year to some degree. I think Washington was surprised when, about 1983, the Tanzanians gave us their Report Card on US voting at the UN, which was duly passed back to Washington. It was an appropriate thing for them to do - we were doing it, why shouldn’t they? - but Washington was somewhat taken aback to have gotten a version of our own reporting format from another government.

HAR: Now that we have a definition, we’d like to give you one simple model of culture, one you may well encounter again. It is a classic model and we think it worth mentioning. Robert Kohls, a lovely gentleman and one of the grandfathers of interculturalism, posits that culture is like an iceberg (see Figure 2).4

The iceberg has three tiers - a top level of surface culture, a level beneath the surface consisting of unspoken cultural rules, and a level at the very bottom consisting of the unconscious cultural rules. The surface level is that part of the iceberg that is up above the water. If we were to look out at the Arctic Ocean on a sunny day, we might see an iceberg. On the portion that daylight reveals, we could see the contours of the iceberg, how large it is, what colour it is and we would have a good sense that we understood what the iceberg was about.
In terms of culture, that surface level represents the aspects of culture that we can take in with our five senses - what we can hear, see, smell, taste and feel. The aspects of culture represented by this surface culture are such things as music, language, food, clothing, crafts and architecture. We can perceive these surface differences without further information: I can hear that someone is speaking a different language. I may not be able to understand what they are saying, but I am aware of a difference. It is also important that, generally, experiencing the surface level of a new culture is not threatening; in fact, it is often pleasurable. Many of us like to hear new music or eat new food. International tourism is built on this fact. People are willing to pay good money to travel to experience the surface aspects of culture they may not have at home. It may be part of why you are interested in an international life. I personally enjoy a broad spectrum of the surface aspects of culture. Thus, surface culture differences can be perceived with the five senses and generally are associated with little negative emotional charge.

Imagine now we were to direct our gaze down into the water and look at the iceberg. Because you are now looking through water, things are a bit fuzzy, distorted. We know there is an iceberg there, but we are no longer exactly sure of its size, contours and colour. In terms of culture, this is the area of unspoken rules. We cannot see rules with the senses. We discover them either when we step over the line and break someone else’s unspoken rules, or someone steps over our line and we say: “What was that?”

![Iceberg Model](image)

Figure 2: Iceberg Model

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Lewis R. Macfarlane and Heather Robinson  A Diplomat and an Interculturalist Converse
LRM: We experience kind of an “uh-oh” effect. When I was at the University of Chicago, I was at a store buying something and right behind me was a Nigerian exchange student whom I had known slightly from before - we had exchanged greetings. He was trying to buy a $10 lamp and he was trying to convince the sales clerk that he should pay $7 for it. I heard this, and I turned around and said: “Hi. I don’t think that’s going to work here.” I was looking at the clerk who had no idea what was going on. The student said “oh,” did a double take, and realised that his behavior was a reflex. It might have worked at home, but it wasn’t going to work in Walgreen’s. He apologised, paid the money, and we went out and had a beer. It’s an example of how you travel with your own rule book and when you’re working with someone else’s, you may forget, suddenly, some of the elements in it.

HAR: This example of unspoken rules shows that, unlike surface differences, differences in unspoken rules can cause a bit of upset. That clerk in Walgreen’s was not very happy with the disruption into which she was being drawn. She didn’t have the context for it. We can see that not only is there usually some upset associated with the breaking of unspoken rules but, because they are unspoken, you may have to go to someone and explain: “This is the situation - this is what happened.” Someone who is familiar with that culture or is from that culture can tell you: “Well, it’s because we don’t bargain for small price tag items in the US.” So it’s very easy for someone familiar with a given culture to explain what an unspoken rule is.

Now we look very deep into the water. The sunlight no longer penetrates. It’s very dark. Not only do we not know how big the iceberg is, what its contours are, or what colour it is, we don’t even know if there’s an iceberg there. We refer to these aspects of culture as the unconscious rules of culture.

It’s precisely the point Dr Araoz made, in saying: When we think we’re working in indisputable rationality is precisely when we get into the problem, because down at that unconscious level we think that what we perceive and respond to is reality. Not only does this deepest level represent the unconscious rules, it also is generally associated with the most upsetting and divisive experience of difference. Thus, this is the area that we’d like to concentrate on for the remainder of our presentation. The four areas of unconscious rules that we’d like to examine have to do with time, power distance, universalism versus particularism, and high and low context.

LRM: I think a difference that’s become important for me is that interculturalists like Heather - and I’m not one of them - are in the business of taking that which is hidden and of making it explicit, of bringing it out. I think diplo-
mats are often doing the opposite. I think we’re trying to keep unspoken those things that everybody knows, or that some people know.

**HAR:** The first area that I’d like to talk about - and this may be because one of my lines of heritage is Swiss - is time. One of the concepts that you are probably familiar with from the works of Edward C. Hall is the notion of monochronic versus polychronic time.¹⁰

A culture that thinks in terms of monochronic time says: Do one thing at a time. The needs of people are less important than the demands of time. Due dates and schedules are sacred. Plans are not easily changed. People may be too busy to see you or talk to you or spend time with you. People generally live by an external clock. The way I think of monochronic time sense is that people believe that keeping the schedule is socially responsible.

There is a continuum from monochronic on one end to polychronic at the other. The polychronic side of the continuum says that it is acceptable to do more than one thing at a time. Time is there to meet the needs of people. Schedules and deadlines are easily changed. Plans are fluid. People always have time to see people. People live by an internal clock. The way I think of a polychronic time sense is: people think that taking the time to attend to human interaction is socially responsible.

**LRM:** An example that we’re all familiar with, if we’ve had any intercultural experience at all, is whether standing in line is a respected social norm or whether it isn’t, whether it’s perfectly acceptable to use your elbows, smile and do whatever you can to get yourself next on someone’s agenda. An example I know involved a very crowded visa section at one of our larger embassies. US visas are very popular and people kept crowding up to the front. When other efforts to maintain order failed, the American official (very much reflecting the American idea of order and monochronicity) tried to implement a “take a number” system. In the United States, when you go in to get your driving license renewed or go to the butcher shop, you’re given a little slip of paper with a number on it. When your number is called, it’s “your turn.” This guy tried to set up the system, and everyone came in, took their number, and then crowded up to the desk just the way they’d been doing before. It didn’t solve the problem as perceived by the Americans, but, on the other hand, the problem, if there was a problem, was that the people in the room didn’t see this as a problem. I don’t know how they solved it, if they did.

**HAR:** I think this is a wonderful example of what happens when we don’t pay attention to the unconscious rules. This is the imposition of the rule book from a different set of unspoken rules. In this case, the “take a number, please” rule (which means “OK, my turn is dictated by this number on the slip of paper and
I wait for the numbers to be called in order and then I get my turn”) is imposed onto a system which says, “I get my turn from elbows, or charm, or personal connection.” We often see the imposition of an unspoken rule from one culture onto the unconscious rules of another. It rarely works, at least not with the intended results.

In addition to the concept of monochronic and polychronic time, we’d like to mention three other aspects of time which might be seen as refinements along the monochronic/polychronic continuum.

One is the concept of linear time. Those who conceive of time as linear see it as a straight line divisible into measurable and predictable segments. This is the domain of schedules, calendars and timetables. Linear time is useful, in fact essential, in industrial contexts, but for much of the world it is perceived as unnatural, if not downright absurd.

Another way of conceiving time is cyclical. Time is thought to consist of cycles that repeat themselves on a daily, monthly, yearly or some other regular basis. Time is not thought of as scarce, but infinite since any point in the cycle will return again. Generally, those who conceive of time as cyclical live in close association with nature and its cycles, possibly in an agricultural context.

LMR: When I got to the Congo and was assigned as Vice Consul to one of our small posts in the eastern part of the country, I became quickly and profoundly aware that I was in a society that ran on very different principles than my own. One feature is a much more flexible approach to time. On one occasion, I invited a Congolese official to my house for lunch at noon on a Tuesday. He accepted with pleasure. I already had learned from experience that time wasn’t handled in quite the same way as at home, but I had to make further adjustments in my assumptions when the official came to lunch at 1) 1:00 instead of noon, 2) on the following day, and 3) accompanied by a colleague. Fortunately, I was home at that time, there was cold beer and food, and it ended up a very pleasant meeting.

HAR: The last way of conceiving of time we are going to mention is event-related. In a world of event-related time, the right time for something to take place is when it happens. Generally, this is associated with certain related conditions being satisfied such as the right people have arrived, the mood is right or the weather favourable.

LMR: In the 1970s, I was US Consul in Zanzibar. I periodically took the early morning East African Airways DC-3 to Dar es Salaam for meetings at the embassy, a trip that took about 20 minutes. As I recall, the standard departure time was 7:30 a.m. One morning, I had checked in and a few minutes after 7:00, the flight was called. We were probably in the air by 7:15. Pretty simple
I guess that for most of us there are features of our own culture that drive us slightly crazy. In my case, I love history and I am constantly dismayed to see how many Americans don’t pay much attention to it. This sometimes has definite practical consequences. At one of my posts, there was a growing problem of narcotics trafficking, and it was agreed that there should be some kind of bilateral effort to deal with it. A detailed plan was developed by a team of embassy officers, working with some host country people, and a lot of work had gone into the project. After the process was pretty well along, one of the local people who worked for the Embassy finally let us know, with some embarrassment (because he was telling us something that we really should have known): “You know, we developed a programme very similar to this eight or nine years ago.” None of the Americans responsible for the programme had known this. We were very focused on what was going to happen next, on future developments, and often did not look back to learn highly relevant lessons even from the very recent past.

This attitude is reflected in other policies as well. The US Foreign Service rotates its officers typically every two or three years. For security and space reasons, we retire almost all of our official files on a two-year cycle. Virtually all classified files and a lot of the rest are then either destroyed or shipped back for storage in Washington. At this point, they are not likely to be referred to again since people at the post don’t know what’s in them and have no idea what to ask for. If you were trying to devise a system intended to minimise institutional memory, you could hardly do better.

**HAR:** This story illustrates how a particular cultural time-orientation influenced the events in this case. By time-orientation we mean how much relative consideration or importance we place on the past, present or future in our minds. A psychologist by the name of Cottle asked people in numerous countries to draw circles that represented the relationship of past, present and future (see Figure 3).14

![Figure 3: Time Orientation – Past, Present and Future](image)
Many variations appeared in the way people from different parts of the world drew these circles: how big they were in relationship to one another, how much they overlapped or if they touched at all. In the example we have shown, one finds a possible explanation for why the US Foreign Service created a policy that calls for the rotation of officers every two or three years and the retirement of official files on a two-year cycle. In the US drawing, “the past” is shown as a comparatively small circle and it overlaps quite a bit into “the present,” almost as if the past were trying not to be too far in the past. Contrast this with the circles drawn by the Indian study participants which characterised past, present and future as equal in size, giving each phase equal value and just touching, but not overlapping, connected but not rushing into one another. Lew’s story of the absence of institutional memory of the plan to address drug trafficking illustrates how something as seemingly abstract as time-orientation can influence something as pragmatic as staff rotation and record keeping.

**LRM:** A second unconscious rule we would like to discuss is power distance. One of the jobs of diplomats is to assist their own country’s companies trying to do business abroad. In Nepal, there was a hot competition for a pre-feasibility contract for a very large hydroelectric project. The US company had a local representative who was an extremely well qualified engineer. This guy, who I’ll call Fred, was doing a great job working with local experts and technicians and laying the groundwork for his company’s bid. I gradually realised, and so did Fred (who was originally from Europe), that he simply did not have the status to deal with the all-important higher-level officials. He and I both agreed that, to stay in the running, his company needed to send out a high-level official to meet with senior government people. We both made this recommendation to the company’s US office. Their reply: “Fred can answer any questions that come up.” They never sent out a senior representative. Other companies from Europe, Japan and Canada did, and the US company did not get the contract.

**HAR:** The concept of power distance is another continuum. In high power distance cultures people accept that inequalities in power and status are natural or existential. Those with power tend to emphasise it, to hold it close and not delegate or share it, and to distinguish themselves as much as possible from those who do not have power. However, they are expected to accept the responsibilities that go with their power, especially when it comes to looking after others.

In low power distance cultures, people see inequalities in power and status as man-made and largely artificial. It is not natural, though it may be convenient, that some people have power over others. Those with power, therefore, tend to de-emphasise it, to minimise the differences between themselves and subordinates and to delegate and share power to the extent possible.
In the story about Fred and the hydroelectric project, the higher power distance local government officials needed to work with someone with status they recognised to feel comfortable doing business. The low power distance US company decision-makers believed Fred, the technical expert, had the necessary knowledge to conduct business, but in a high power distance cultural context it is not what you know, but where you are in the hierarchy that matters.

**LRM:** I think one power distance example where we’ve shown sensitivity to what other cultures expect from us is the choices we’ve made for US Ambassadors to Japan: very senior, well-respected, “elder statesman” types who listen much and say relatively little, but who are perfect vehicles to convey important messages with authority within a very hierarchical, status-conscious society. Examples include former US Senator Mike Mansfield, former Vice President and presidential candidate Walter Mondale and, most recently, former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker.

By contrast, during one of my African posts, we had a working visit from an Assistant Secretary of State, a recent political appointee. This superachiever was the youngest person ever to achieve the rank of Assistant Secretary of State. He was in his thirties, and had the misfortune to look as if he were six or eight years younger. While he had a good grasp of his substantive portfolio and talking points, it was clear in his meetings that the senior officials with whom he worked had real difficulty taking him as seriously as his rank would have warranted. He just wasn’t senior enough.

**HAR:** As we have mentioned, power distance is a continuum, as shown in Figure 4. Some cultures are higher power distance, and some are lower. One of the characteristics associated with high power distance is a steep hierarchy. For instance, military culture almost everywhere is high power distance; a general has a very different degree of power than a foot soldier. In Figure 4, the steeper pyramids represent the end of the continuum associated with higher power distance, and the flatter pyramids the end of the continuum associated with lower power distance.

You may want to debate the exact order on the list shown in Figure 4, but the point we would like to make here is that some cultures place greater value on who you know, and others a greater value on what you know.

**LRM:** When I was assigned to the Bureau of African Affairs in Washington, I worked closely with a number of African embassies. One feature of that job was serving as a cultural and political guide to those countries’ representatives in our national capital. Some middle-level diplomats, and even an ambassador or two, were diffident about making contacts with people they perceived as senior, particularly in Congress. My reading was that staff people and mem-
bers of Congress were very open to these meetings, sometimes asking me why they did not hear more from these embassies. I spent a lot of time encouraging those diplomats to be more aggressive in seeking appointments with the officials whom some of them considered to be “too senior.” In terms of how the Washington, DC subculture worked, there were doors open to them that they perceived as closed.

**HAR**: The third area of unconscious rules is the continuum of universalism/particularism. Universalism contends that there are absolutes that apply across the board, regardless of circumstance or the particular situation. What is right is always right. We should apply the same rules to everyone in like situations. To be fair is to treat everyone alike and not make exceptions for family, friends, or members of your in-group. In-group/out-group distinctions are minimised. Where possible, we should lay our personal feelings aside and look at the situation objectively. While life may not be fair, we can make it more fair by treating eve-

![Figure 4: Power Distance – Selected Counties](Turkey Pakistan Venezuela China Hong Kong Singapore India Austria Ethiopia Malaysia Mexico Brazil Nigeria Spain Bulgaria Belgium Thailand France Greece Argentina Indonesia Philippines Japan Portugal Italy Finland Ireland UK South Korea Germany Switzerland Netherlands Australia Sweden Norway Denmark Canada Canada USA)
ryone the same. Particularism, on the other hand, contends that how we behave in a given situation depends on the circumstances. What is right in one situation, may not be right in another. We treat family, friends and our groups the best we can, and we let the rest of the world take care of itself, with the implicit expectation that everyone else will be taking care of their in-group as well. Our in-groups and out-groups are clearly distinguished. Exceptions will always be made for certain people. To be fair is to treat everyone as unique. No one expects life to be fair. Personal sentiments are important and should be relied upon.

**LRM:** A certain diplomatic situation arises over and over, all over the world. A visa applicant, who later on turns out to be the son, cousin, or niece of a senior official, is denied a visa to go to the US. Some more senior embassy official (the deputy chief of mission, or sometimes the ambassador) then gets a request to meet with the official in question. The meeting takes place, other matters are discussed, and finally, near the end of the meeting, the official relates the story about the denial and asks if anything can be done about it. I became quite familiar with these cases. My standard assumption was that the visa officer had looked at the case on its merits and made a fair decision. The only commitment I would make in such cases was to review how the case was handled.

**HAR:** So the system you were working with was a universalist system: these are the rules and if the decision was made in accordance with the rules, it stands. However, the people who appealed to you came with a particularist orientation: these are the rules, but let me tell you who my in-group is so that you can apply the rules for my particular situation.

**LRM:** Exactly. A further interesting aspect to these visa appeals comes up, as well. Under US law and regulation, no one, not even the ambassador, may legally direct a consular officer to issue a visa or to reverse a previous decision. This is to protect the integrity of the process and to protect the visa officer, who may be at a junior level, from pressures to reverse a sound decision. Officials from more particularist cultures often find this hard to believe.

**HAR:** The answer to the question that follows can show tendencies in a culture towards universalism versus particularism:

You are riding in a car driven by a close friend when he hits a pedestrian. There are no other witnesses and the pedestrian is bruised but not badly hurt. The speed limit in this part of the town is 30 kilometres an hour, but you noticed that your friend was driving 55 kilometres an hour. His lawyer tells you that if you will testify under oath that your friend was driving 30, he will suffer no serious consequences.
To summarise the concept of universalist versus particularist: the universalist says of the particularist, “You can’t trust them, they always help their friends,” while the particularist says of the universalist, “You can’t trust them, they don’t even help their friends.”

The last area of unconscious rules we would like you to consider today is the continuum of high to low context cultures. In many ways the idea of high and low context in cultures integrates the unconscious rules we have spoken of so far, along with others.

In high context cultures, people tend to be collectivistic. In-groups are strong and people spend much time together, thus more shared experiences and common understanding is continuously being fostered. Interactions are interpreted with much attention to detailed contextual cues such as the nature of the relationships and time and place of interaction. Words are not always the primary carriers of meaning. What is not said may be more important than what is said.
In low context cultures, people tend to be individualistic. In-groups are not as well developed as in high-context cultures and people spend less time in them; thus, there are fewer shared experiences and less shared understanding. One has to say things explicitly as words are the primary carriers of meaning. What is said is more important than what is not said.

**LRM:** I’d like to illustrate this principle with what I think is an exceptionally good example. US Ambassador Carl Coon, in addition to all the other skills and talents he brought to the job, illustrated extraordinarily well how good diplomats bring intercultural sensitivity to the position. It is almost certainly not a coincidence that he was the son of a world-class anthropologist. He is remembered as one of the most effective envoys to the country in which he served. I can’t improve on his words, so let me just quote him:

> Before I would get to a new post, I would bone up on the geography, history, social structure, and literature of the targeted area, plus any other background that seemed relevant. Perhaps I’d read a novel or two by a local author. After my arrival I would start what you might call the lab phase. I would seek out and cultivate bicultural individuals sensitive to cross-cultural nuances and willing to explain them to me. I would travel around the area as much as I could. I would observe, collate, and gradually assemble a practical working understanding of the prevalent attitudes, values and concerns, particularly those that differed from my country.

> My primary motive was curiosity, but the result of my efforts paid both immediate and long-term dividends. In the short term I was more effective as a diplomat. If Washington wanted me to make a point, I knew how to make it. When the locals wanted to make a point to my government, I knew how to interpret it.19

![Figure 6: Approach – High and Low Context](image-url)
**HAR:** *Figure 6* shows that in a high context approach to matters - the approach Carl Coon expresses - we start with diffuse attention to the relationships involved. As we gain clarity and understanding in this broad context, we gradually focus on the specific task. Using the low context approach, we start with the identified task and then move out to build relationships where necessary in service of the task. Both approaches recognise the importance of both task and relationship. The task and the relationship are like the two reins used in controlling a horse: you must use both, in balance, to move forward. If you rely on only one, your horse will go around in circles.

![High context diagram](image)

**Figure 7: High and Low Context**

*Figure 7* shows Edward Hall’s placement of a number of countries on the low to high context continuum.

**LRM:** I had the privilege of extensive dealings, in one national capital, with an exceptional diplomat. She had served as the equivalent of Assistant Secretary for the Americas, had spent time in the US and knew our country and culture very well. We worked together closely on issues of importance to both our countries. On one occasion, I had handed over a diplomatic note that I wanted to ensure wasn’t misinterpreted, and offered this guidance: “Please don’t read between the lines … just read the lines.” She and I both laughed - it was one of those acknowledged intercultural moments. I knew her country well enough to know that there would be a search for hidden meanings. She knew ours well enough to advise her governmental colleagues that, if they started to look for hidden meanings, they would miss our message.

**HAR:** In effect you were reminding her that the diplomatic “rule book” is low context.
But diplomats need to be able to operate in and between both and, on many occasions, to implement those low context rules with high context awareness.

We’ll conclude our conversation here, and reaffirm our hope that some of the issues and topics raised will provide the foundation for an ongoing conversation about the relationship between intercultural communication and diplomacy.

**Recommended Reading**


**Endnotes**

3 Presentation given by Heinrich Reimann during the International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, 20 – 23 February, 2003 (http://www.diplomacy.edu/Conferences/IC). See also the paper by Heinrich Reimann in this volume.
5 Adapted from Kohls and Knight.


Ibid., 47.

Ibid., 47.


Adapted from Cottle, 58-71.


Ibid., 35.


Ibid.

Adapted from Hall, *Beyond Culture*, 91.
It is hard to open an English language newspaper nowadays without coming across the words *culture* or *cultural*. In a recent interview with the British newspaper *The Financial Times*, for example, Javier Solana, the European Union’s foreign policy representative, claimed that the United States and Europe are growing further apart due to “a cultural phenomenon.” A religious society, he theorised, perceives evil in terms of moral choice and free will; a secular one seeks the causes of evil in political or psychological terms. Solana added, “the choice of language on the two sides of the Atlantic is revealing.” But how is language related to culture? And what does it mean to attribute distances between the policies of different governments to “a cultural phenomenon”?

Much confusion surrounds this issue. What aspects of language are cultural? How is culture expressed verbally? Does linguistic competence imply cultural competence or *vice versa*? This paper argues that vocabulary use can be cultural, that culture is expressed through discourse community norms, and that cultural competence includes linguistic competence along with other competencies. It stresses that culture must be related not to languages but to discourses. Languages, which are often thought of in terms of standards such as Amharic, Bulgarian, Chinese and so on, are not culture-dependent. Discourses, on the other hand, belong to the groups that produce them. They are conceptual frameworks or schemas built up on the basis of predominantly verbal interaction. Small, clan-based communities, where the kinship group, the social group and the economic group all coincide, provide the conditions for the co-occurrence of language and culture. But in most of the economically-interdependent, literate world, discourses cross-cut languages.

To explore the idea that word use is culture-bound, this paper examines the English words *culture* and *globalisation*, to discover how they are used, and how they have come to have certain meanings or represent certain ideas.
Language and Culture

Linguistic determinism - the idea that the particular language one speaks shapes the way one thinks - is not new. Cultural relativism - the notion that values and even knowledge are not absolutes, but rather have meaning only within the cultural system to which they belong - has emerged more recently. Each of these ideas is controversial. But in some quarters, the two ideas now seem to have converged into a broader schema in which language, culture, ethnicity and identity are assumed to co-occur; and not only to co-occurs, but, at least in the case of language and culture, to necessarily coincide, to be different facets of the same phenomenon.

The sociolinguist Joshua Fishman, advocate of the fostering of America’s “non-English cultures,” declares that “language-minority groups ... want cultural democracy.”3 But why not linguistic democracy? The interculturalist M. Gene Aldridge suggests that “English ... quite readily adapts words from other cultures.”4 Surely it adapts words from other languages? Another interculturalist, T.-S. Lim, makes the astonishing claim that “Arabic cultures, although high-context in communication, tend to be overly expressive. The Arabic language abounds with grammatical features of assertion and exaggeration.”5 These quotations reflect the kind of failure to adequately distinguish between language and culture that can lead to erroneous assumptions and prejudice intercultural communication.

According to one extreme view that has gained ground in some quarters, language is a part of culture. One anthropologist writes, “as part of culture, [language] is essentially invented, artificial, and learned.”6 Yet early twentieth century anthropologists such as Franz Boas and Edward Sapir were able to show, with extensive examples from fieldwork, that language is natural, universal and has very little to do with culture. Boas concluded that “it does not seem likely, therefore, that there is any direct relation between the culture of a tribe and the language they speak.”7 Sapir agreed, writing that “we shall do well to hold the drifts of language and of culture to be non-comparable and unrelated processes.”8 Sapir’s name has long been associated with the linguistic determinism hypothesis, currently enjoying a revival. Yet he would certainly have questioned the kind of link now routinely assumed between language and culture. As well, linguists and psychologists have long rejected any such notion of language as cultural. As Steven Pinker points out, “language is no more a cultural invention than is upright posture.”9 Language change and cultural change have been shown to be uncorrelated. It is not possible to make inferences about culture on the basis of language. What is of interest to those who would under-
stand culture are the differences and similarities in communicative practices among people, regardless of whether these people speak the same or different languages.

A number of universal parameters of discourse can be identified. First, forms of predication, whereby an action, state or quality is attributed to an entity, are extremely similar cross-linguistically. Although communicating information may not be the prime function of language, it is certainly one important function. Second, relations of causation, contrast, exemplification, concession, etc. are universally conveyed, often by juxtaposition, but also by explicit linguistic means, both syntactic (e.g., subordination) and lexical (e.g., discourse connectives). Third, languages have similar means of expressing speaker commitment, degrees of certainty, and of distinguishing experiential from reported knowledge. Moreover, expectation, surprise, and positive and negative affect are universally coded in similar ways. Vowel length, volume, pace and use of marked forms such as diminutives and augmentatives, for example, express heightened affectivity. Fourth, every speaker commands a range of social dialects, or “sociolects.” Differences in rank are dealt with by accommodation, the lower ranking or less powerful accommodating to the higher ranking or more powerful. A universal tendency is for “high” sociolects to involve more indirectness, while directness is associated with impoliteness. A closely related tendency is for relative status to be to iconically reflected in the size of the linguistic expression. Sociolects may be completely different languages or just different styles, sometimes so subtly different that an outsider is hard pressed to distinguish them. Yet their impact can be immense. As noted above, the aspect of language that interacts with culture is vocabulary use. Word meanings are labile, and a particularly slippery and culture-bound word is the word culture itself.

Culture, a Perilous Concept

For the critic Raymond Williams, “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language…it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.”10 Almost thirty years later, anthropologists seem to agree with Williams, judging by the current debate in anthropology between those who wish to retain the word, and those who believe it has become so problematic that it is best abandoned.11
According to one recent definition, culture “encompasses politics, economics, social history, philosophy, science and technology, education, the arts, religion and customs.”\(^1\) What might it mean to characterise one’s own culture by reference to these variables? Is such a broad concept useful? In another definition, “culture is any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organisation, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group.”\(^1\) This definition immediately begs the question of how we identify a people or a group in the first place. Indeed, research into cultural difference is often vitiated by circular argumentation: the claim is that people can be grouped into “cultures” according to their shared cultural characteristics, when in fact the grouping is often done \textit{a priori}, following political, geographical, linguistic, economic or even racial criteria.

This section considers \textit{culture} as an example of how discourse circulates within and among particular discourse communities, and illustrates the apparent paradox that “culture” is itself a culture-bound concept.

\textit{Culture} referred originally to the cultivation of crops or the raising of livestock. The word is used metaphorically in classical Latin (Cicero’s \textit{cultura animi}), but the metaphorical sense seems to have become widespread in modern Europe only in the second half of the eighteenth century, due largely to the Romantic philosophers. \textit{Culture} came to be associated with the authentic, organic and spiritual, as opposed to \textit{civilisation}, which prized reason and which was seen by counter-Enlightenment thinkers as mere artifice or “bloodless intellect”\(^1\) as one writer put it.\(^1\)

In the early part of the twentieth century, a number of European intellectuals, including Franz Boas, emigrated to the United States, taking with them ideas inherited from the Romantic philosophers. Boas founded a new school of thought in anthropology and inspired a generation of scholars. In the early twentieth century, American and European anthropology, including linguistic anthropology, was principally descriptive. There was great interest, for example, in documenting the languages and customs of the small remaining communities of native North Americans. Anthropologists described the language, artefacts, traditions, skills, customs, dress and artistic creations of small, predominantly clan-based societies. However, in the mid twentieth century, they started to shift the locus of their study from behaviour and customs towards beliefs and values, and to view culture as an integrated system rather than a loose array of practices. By making this shift, anthropology was staking out new ground for itself. As anthropologist Roy d’Andrade explains, “if culture is defined as shared behaviour one cannot then use the concept of culture to explain why the Japanese or the Pukapuka do what they do. ... \textit{In the ‘totality of behaviour’ sense, the}
concept of culture has no explanatory value.” Anthropologists started to attribute causal properties to culture, and so changed its meaning.

This development was to have significant implications for our present-day concept of culture. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, culture is increasingly used as an explanation of behaviour, without reference to the material origins of culture. Essentialist views of culture increasingly suggest that culture is a sufficient explanation in itself of a whole range of observed phenomena, including how people use language and even what language they use. This can lead us onto dangerous ground, because while behaviour is observable, beliefs and values are not. In the popular consciousness, views of culture therefore risk losing their grounding in reality and becoming, at best, arbitrary interpretation; at worst, prejudice.

The semantic trajectory of this word represents a typical instance of language change in two respects. First, meaning broadens: it often fans out into closely related sub-senses, each new emergent sub-sense subsuming some of the previous ones. Second, meaning subjectifies: from being something people do, culture comes to refer to the people themselves who do it. In present-day usage of the English word *culture*, five sub-senses are discernible (Table 1).

Table 1: Present-Day Sub-Senses of the Word “Culture”

| (i)   | culture   | behaviour and customs       |
| (ii)  | culture(s) | collection of behaviour/customs; anthropomorphized |
| (iii) | culture(s) | set(s) of traits            |
| (iv)  | culture(s) | group(s) of people          |
| (v)   | culture(s) | fixed, (set of) personal traits |

In sub-sense (ii), *culture* becomes slightly anthropomorphic; for example, cultures are said to “die out.” This tendency is carried further in sub-sense (iii) where traits and even personalities are attributed to cultures. *Culture* then comes metonymically to stand for “a group of people sharing a particular set of behaviours and customs” (sub-sense iv). Finally, we encounter the word being used to refer to a set of personal traits that are by implication immutable, beyond the control of the people to which they are attributed. From here it is easy to see how “culture often comes to serve as a politically correct euphemism for race.” For example, expressions like black culture, commonly found in the British press, may imply that one’s culture should match the colour of one’s skin. So, while anthropologists carefully distinguish race from culture, and view culture as unstable and in constant flux, in popular parlance *culture* has far more essentialist overtones.
The new ways in which culture is being used can be illustrated by the following quotations. In a contribution to the Handbook of Intercultural Communication, Lim states that, “because different cultures have different environments, values, beliefs, and attitudes, their languages tend to be different from each other.”18 If culture is values, beliefs and attitudes, it makes no sense to say that a culture has values, beliefs and attitudes, let alone a language. Only by interpreting culture as a “group of people” can one make some sense of this astounding claim about languages. A second example comes from the American political scientist Samuel Huntington, who has declared that one’s culture is “a given that cannot be changed.”19 Furthermore, once cultures are perceived as discrete entities, it follows that they have boundaries. And these cultural boundaries can then be identified as potential sites of conflict. This line of thinking leads to Huntington’s claim that “in the coming years … the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural,”20 which clearly reflects his essentialist view of culture.

Concerned by the appropriation for political purposes of the word culture, some anthropologists have suggested abandoning the word altogether. Interestingly, some advocate retaining culture and cultural but avoiding the plural word cultures.21 Others recommend total avoidance of the term culture because of the difficulties met when, instead of being seen as something to be described or interpreted, culture “is treated instead as a source of explanation in itself ... Appeals to culture can offer only a partial explanation of why people think and behave as they do, and of what causes them to alter their ways. Political and economic forces, social institutions and biological processes cannot be wished away, or assimilated to systems of knowledge and belief.”22 Yet culture is increasingly made to bear the burden of explanation for all manner of thought and action. In brief, culture has truly become a “perilous idea.”23

From the foregoing discussion three main conclusions can be drawn. First, culture and language are independent: they need not co-occur. Second, either culture is behaviour, or it is an explanation for behaviour; it cannot be both without a radical split in the concept itself. Third, culture can be seen as a case study in language change through the circulation of discourse. It illustrates how shared meanings are sociopolitically defined. Word forms change slowly: the Latin word cultura, used by Cicero two thousand years ago, is almost unchanged in present-day English and Romance languages. Meanings can change extremely fast. The next section takes up this theme of how discourses circulate and looks at some implications of the current globalisation of communication.
The Circulation of Discourse and the Globalisation of Communication

The concept of the circulation of discourse is relatively slow. Pacific Islanders, New Guinea hunter-gatherers and Native Americans were naturally among the first to hear of it, thanks to their contacts with Boasian anthropologists. Eventually, however, the concept became familiar throughout much of the world. The word *globalisation*, by contrast, sped around the world, propelled by a new, technically-sophisticated communications system (*Table 2*). It is likely that most of the world has by now heard of *globalisation*.

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<td>German philosophy &gt; American anthropology &gt; American public domain &gt; global domain &gt; localized</td>
<td>G7 economists &gt; global public domain &gt; localized</td>
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<td>(via journals, books, etc.)</td>
<td>(via mass media, Internet, etc.)</td>
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The trajectories of *culture* and *globalisation* are examples of the circulation of discourse, and not only among English-speaking people. These concepts have rapidly acquired translation equivalents in very many languages. As Tehranian notes, “accelerating processes of world communication have immensely contributed to what might be called an acceleration of history.”

Locally-generated concepts can become global almost instantaneously, then to be re-localized elsewhere in myriad local-level discourse networks. The concept of *globalisation*, like that of *culture*, is elastic. *Globalisation* is sometimes described as a very deliberate *strategy*: *globalisation* is “a specific economic strategy pursued by the countries of the industrialized world and the trans-national corporations whose interests they represent.” By others, it is seen as a *process*: it is “a technologically and ideologically driven process in which geographic distance becomes irrelevant for socio-cultural, political and economic relations.”

On the economics front, it is commonly assumed to refer to a group of interdependent economic tendencies which include greater international capital mobility, changes in international trading practices, development of worldwide production networks, increased labour mobility, and integration of financial markets. From a more social perspective, *globalisation* encompasses the international reach of the mass media, the worldwide distribution of particular consumer goods and cultural products, and the rapid rise of global communication networks such as the Internet, increasing worldwide sociopolitical interdependence.
Most of the economic and social tendencies associated with globalisation pre-date the dissemination of the term itself. Yet once these tendencies have been gathered under the umbrella term, a new concept takes shape. As with culture, the whole comes to seem greater than the sum of the parts, and the new concept starts to acquire an explanatory value. Suddenly, globalisation appears to account for some of the very processes it was supposed to denote. Like culture, globalisation becomes causal, as in this typical example from a business publication: “the tough competition worldwide brought about by globalisation.”

In recent British political discourse, globalisation is overwhelmingly portrayed as an agent: it plays roles, it comes to markets, it makes things harder, and so on. What started out around 1994 as a term for the deregulation of financial markets and the establishment of trade agreements has taken on a life of its own. Of 34 examples of the term found in a sample of British political discourse, 33 represent it as an agent (examples in Table 3).

| Globalisation played a key role in ... |
| Globalisation has given a further impetus to ... |
| Globalisation probably came first to the financial markets |
| Globalisation has made it much harder for ... |
| The forces of globalisation have actually made it harder ... |
| the challenge of globalisation |
| Globalisation is now extending to ... |
| The UK is reacting better to the globalisation of the economy ... |

In other institutions, however, globalisation plays a different role. For instance, one Commonwealth Foundation document makes globalisation not an agent, but an object of management: “in 1997, Commonwealth Heads of Government ... agreed that globalisation must be managed carefully.” One study of how the term globalisation is used by the European Commission shows how the European Commission’s trade directorate presented globalisation as, at least in part, a product of European agency, while the directorate responsible for energy policy viewed globalisation as an agent itself - as a challenge or threat requiring a reaction.

The significance of a word thus depends not on language, but on the discourse community in which it is used. Not only concepts, but discourse norms themselves are circulating ever more widely. Discourse practices that have been developed in one place are exported to others. One example is the spread across languages and continents of western service-encounter discourse, as western companies expand their businesses.
Discourse communities are often envisaged as networks of verbal communication. But communication is often one-way; that is, it follows a broadcast (unilateral, one-to-many) model. Wealthy and/or influential members of discourse communities clearly broadcast more, and become more powerful through their control of certain meanings. The kinds of economic and social changes that globalisation refers to are increasingly “discourse-led,” as certain discourses acquire status.\(^3\) Change is thus brought about most easily by those who can make themselves heard and who can export their discourse to other communities. Yet the most passive members, the overhearers who do not contribute to the discourse, are nonetheless within its orbit. In the complex public arena of the twenty-first century, as more people belong to more and more different discourse communities, overhearers are becoming increasingly important as links between and among communities.

**Conclusion**

This paper has shown how concepts such as culture and globalisation can be created, extended and circulated by influential sub-groups of discourse communities, often for specific political ends. It has stressed the role played in concept formation by those in a position to make their discourse heard, be it at local or global level. New communication technologies and practices have the potential to radically change local-global patterns of communication and the distribution of discourse networks. Discourse now travels further and faster than ever before. Locally generated concepts and communications find their way across the globe, and are interpreted and reinterpreted. As communication networks are increasingly globalised, more people come into contact with more and more discourse communities. Whether this new network model of communication will lead to more or to less pluralism of discourse still remains to be seen.

**Endnotes**

Language, Culture and the Globalisation of Discourse
Diana M. Lewis


8 Sapir, Language, 219.


10 Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, revised ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1976/1983).

11 See, for example, the special issue of Current Anthropology vol. 40 (1999): Culture: A Second Chance?


15 Culture was also associated, of course, with the arts and literature. This “high culture” sense can be considered as distinct, not a sub-sense of the anthropological sense, and is excluded from this discussion.

16 Roy d’Andrade, “Comment,” Current Anthropology 40 (1999), S16-S17, S16, original emphasis.


18 Lim, “Language and Verbal Communication,” 76, emphasis added.

19 Samuel Huntington, “The clash of civilizations?” Foreign Affairs 72 (3) (1993), 22-49, 26. For Huntington, a “civilization” is a collection of similar cultures. He writes: “In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was ‘Which side are you on?’ and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is ‘What are you?’ That is a given that cannot be changed.”

20 Ibid., 23.


22 Kuper, Culture, xi.


24 Majid Tehranian, Global Communications and World Politics: Domination, Development and Discourse (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 4.


27 “Garment Exporters Turn to Southeast Asian Mart,” Business World, 10 January 2003, 2, emphasis added.


There is hardly any need to stress that the relations between the adherents of the three great religions of the Mediterranean, as indeed of all other religions, are more affected by the images that each group has of the other than by the precise content of the theological beliefs held by the spiritual leaders of each religious community.

It is, however, worth stressing that it is becoming increasingly impossible in the age of electronic communication for any authority to control the images of any religious group that anyone with the means of diffusing them by means of the airwaves chooses to broadcast.

Given these two conditions it becomes obviously important, for all of us human beings but especially for those of us who are adherents of one or other of the three great Mediterranean religions, to be concerned about the ways in which we portray each other’s religion.

Great interest has been aroused in what has come to be called “the politics of representation” since the publication by Edward Said of a trilogy on the subject: first, Orientalism (1978), which gave a very personally angled appreciation of how the East was reflected in the West, especially in the age of Western Imperialism; second, Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims (1979), which is not only self-explanatory as a title, but also parades a patent value judgment; and third, Covering Islam: How the Media and How the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (1981).

In this paper, however, I will not enter into the many controversies that Said’s work has provoked. I will only try, first, to outline with the utmost brevity the methodology which I have come to the conclusion at my almost venerable age is the best to apply in the field. Second, I will outline, again with the same degree of brevity, the pictures of the Mediterranean religions that emerge from the application of the method.

Styles, Past and Future

I think it is possible to distinguish four main styles in the portrayal of religions - if one wants to parody slightly the historians of art - corresponding perhaps to the four main phases of development of philosophic attitudes. I wish also
to suggest that there is something to learn from all of them for our purpose of hopefully constructing a fifth approach.

**Premodern**

To begin with, before the Cartesian Age, the predominant attitude seems to have been for the adherents of each Mediterranean religion to hold that the truest portrait not only of their own but also of the religions of the others could only be given from the standpoint of their own. Thus in the Middle Ages, Christianity and Islam would appear, in the eyes of a Jew, as misapprehensions of the Torah; Judaism, in the eyes of a Christian, would appear to be an anachronism and Islam a heresy. Both Judaism and Christianity, in the eyes of a Moslem, seemed to be polluted versions of the divine revelation restored to its pristine purity in Islam.

However, reflection on the concept of truth has led later (especially contemporary) philosophers to a surprisingly general agreement that the concept of truth arises only in a dialogic context. Hence, although there may be some point in certain contexts to the mere portrayal of other religions from the point of view of one’s own, it is not an exercise conducive to the dialogue in the context of which truth shines out. That was not, of course, the reason for the change of fashion in the style of portraiture of religions that took place with the waning of the Middle Ages.

**Modern**

The second phase in the history of the portraiture of religions - which I am outlining in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek way - began at least in the West with the Cartesian Age. The attitude then spread that the best account - the most accurate portrait - of a religion would be that given by an adherent of that same religion. This view went swimmingly with the post-Cartesian view prevalent throughout the course of modern philosophy that the only sure starting point of knowledge was self-knowledge.

**Contemporary**

This second view began to lose its popularity with the beginning of the contemporary era. Then “the masters of suspicion” as Paul Ricoeur famously called Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, convinced most of us, in the West at least, that others might be able to understand our deep motivations better than we might. In congruence with this view of the self, many philosophers of religion came to think that truer accounts of religion could be given by non-adherents whose penetrating minds had acquired various new analytic skills, allow-
ing them to pierce beneath the surface consciousness of the mass of religious believers.

I suspect that hardly anyone today subscribes to any of the theories of the “masters of suspicion” *in toto*. On the other hand, it is difficult not to agree that adopting a hint or two from them can improve the quality of our exercise of the craft of the portrayal of religions, as it has improved that of all art criticism when practiced judiciously. If we stuck to just the portraits of a religion given by its own adherents or if we accepted such portraits at face value, the result would be just as vast an impoverishment and distortion of our knowledge as if we allowed only autobiographies to be written and did not countenance any other sort of biographical work.

It is not necessary, for example, to accept any general Marxist theory of historical determinism to recognise that much of the bloodshed attributed to conflicts inspired by religion is, in fact, the expression of reactions to political, economic or cultural conditions. For instance, it is well known that the demographic situation is changing around the Mediterranean basin from a situation when two thirds were Christian and one third Muslim to the reverse situation. At the same time, the GNP per capita is, at the extreme points, forty times higher on the Christian side than on the Muslim. It is clearly easy to believe, especially with knowledge of the relatively high prosperity of the Muslim world before the age of colonialism, that Western - so called “Christian” - culture is responsible for the present tragic disparity.

In the circumstances, it is also easily comprehensible that (as I think it is fair to say has happened) most authoritative Muslims have not accepted engagement in theological dialogue with Christians in abstraction of the actual historical context.

*Postmodern*

I will soon go on to say a little more on the possible role of historical interpretation in the generation of a newer style of portraiture of religion. Before doing that I want to just slip in three (countable) sentences about the fourth style of portraiture, that of nowadays. The predominant belief today seems to have become that the self, at least, as conceived after Descartes does not exist at all. This belief is often taken to be the corollary of totally consistent atheism. However, my terms of reference authorise me to ignore this widespread, contemporary, so-called “post-modernist” point of view.

Since our present concern is with believers, I will say without any further expansion that postmodernism has contributed a great deal to the development of skill in multiperspectival portraiture.
Projected
The only point of these regrettably clumsy and cursory remarks of potted history was to lead up to a serious and sincere plea for a fifth kind of approach to the portrayal of Mediterranean religions. I wish to argue for a method of collaborative construction capable of yielding a multi-dimensional portrait not only acceptable to the adherents of all three religions but reflecting their own self-understanding and the insights possibly of non-adherents as well. Obviously, this is more than just the juxtaposition of three different self-portraits.

I think that two specific conditions make such a portrayal possible, at least in the case of the three Mediterranean religions, even if it might not be possible with all religions. These two conditions are in addition to such facts as that in the present context it is not strictly necessary to pose such primordial questions as “What is a religion?” since it is among us possible to assume some sort of agreed answer to such questions. Nor will I enter into such other questions as the diachronic changes and synchronic diversity found within each of the three religions, because I am placing myself at a level of generality which transcends the relevant differences internal to each religion. The two specific conditions I am referring to are: first, that the three Mediterranean religions relate their identity to a divine revelation that constitutes for all three an anchor of authenticity; and second, this revelation provides a criterion by which the historical behaviour of the adherents of the three religions can be judged.

Unity and Diversity

The first datum constitutes a firm basis on which several of the key features of the tri-partite portrait can be built. In the first place, it allows the setting of the three Mediterranean religions in a global context. Indeed, it provides the ground on which the five great living religions of the world were distinguished into two groups originally, I believe, by Heiler and then most notably by Hans Kung, according to whether they were primarily prophetic or primarily mystical.

From this point of view, the Mediterranean religions hold that God’s main communication with human beings is through language. God has spoken to mankind through his prophets. On the other hand, the two great religions which appeared in India, namely Hinduism and Buddhism, held that God communicates with man primarily in silence; in other words, not so much through linguistic intermediaries as much as through direct communion in the heart.
From this basic difference - the primacy of language or silence, or of prophecy or mysticism - three other major differences emerge. First, God is conceived either as a person or impersonally; second, the human being emerges either as essentially corporal or as essentially spiritual; third, history emerges as either linear or cyclical. It would be clearly out of place for me to elaborate upon these differences here, as one might in a discussion of comparative religion.

For only one reason have I mentioned the vast consequences resulting from the contrasting emphasis on language or on silence as the primary medium of communication between God and man - even though it is not at all a matter of either one approach or the other, but just a matter of emphasis. It is to indicate that the method of portrayal I am advocating enables one very easily to identify the common core of the three great Mediterranean religions. They are not only genetically linked. They also have a deep unity in terms of the understanding of divine-human communication, a unity that marks them off from the great far eastern religions. This way of contrast, however, does not mask the fact that the way of language and the way of silence are not logically exclusive of each other, but may well be complementary. It enables the Mediterranean religions to be placed together on the map of world religion.

Differences

The portraits of the three great prophetic religions can also be undertaken in terms of the differences that emerge when we look at the different ways in which the three religions spell out their common belief that God communicates with man primarily through language. In the first place, it is common ground that the word of God was received by the Jews as a code of law, the Torah. Fidelity to it remains even today basic not only to Jewish, but also to Christian and Muslim belief.

Law

However, differences arose as to how this fidelity was most effectively ensured. A main body of Jews, the Pharisees, sought to achieve it through the elaboration of the code in the form of hundreds of precise prescriptions surrounded, moreover, by pledge of customs. From today’s standpoint, it can be universally recognised that this elaborate codification had an immense value both when it occurred and subsequently, as it enabled the Jewish people to retain their identity throughout the centuries of foreign domination and, indeed, throughout
the Middle Ages, at least in Europe; something which it is not at all implausible to regard in itself as a sign of divine favour.

**Person**

On the other hand, some time later another group of Jews, the Christians, came to believe that the best guide to being faithful to the Torah was provided by the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The first Christian leaders all favoured the continued observation of the codified elaboration of the Torah, but felt it should not be imposed on all the converts from paganism. They had a more effective model for living according to God’s will in the exemplary life of Jesus, the Word made flesh.

**Arabic**

Third, Islam came to believe even more strongly than Jews and Christians that God’s word was inscribed in a text, the Holy Koran. The Muslim stress on the linguistic medium itself is unparalleled in Judaism or Christianity. It has led to Arabic, moulded as it is by the Koran, being the only liturgical language of Islam. Moreover, the kind of literary historical critique applied to the Bible is deemed inappropriate to the Koran.

**Conflicts**

One consequence of such a portrayal of the differences between the Mediterranean religions is that it does not represent any one of them as unreasonable or wicked. On the contrary, the choice of one or other of the three ways of being faithful to God’s revelation emerges clearly to be a function of reasonable discussion and personal decision.

The principal corollary of this consequence is that the hostilities that have undoubtedly characterised the relations between the adherents of the three religions throughout most of their history emerge as historical accidents that were not caused by and are in no way inevitable consequences of the genuine differences in the three ways of conceiving fidelity to God’s word.

The main suggestion of my keynote address is, therefore, that one can find in the primarily linguistic character of God’s mode of communication with mankind a key to the undertaking of a collective, multiperspectival narrative of the historic interrelations between the religions of the Mediterranean. This key provides necessary background to the understanding of the present situation and the undertaking of constructive dialogue.
It would, of course, be appropriate to highlight in this narrative the glorious episodes when creative encounters took place between wise adherents of the three religions, especially because these encounters are much less known than they should be and they provide a kind of model for the future.

Such highlighting should not, however, be allowed to obscure the tragic and counterwitnessing nature of a great deal of the history. Its recounting can be made, in the light of the principles I have very roughly and crudely enunciated, an act of confession and possibly even catharsis. Clearly, I cannot even exemplify here the manner in which such a laborious and penitential exercise could be carried out.

I will only say that scholars have already shown how very accidental were the circumstances which, between the years 62 and 66 of our era, led to the organisational breach between Jews and Christians. (Christians until then had been universally regarded - and regarded themselves - as a variety of Jews.)

Even the bare-boned schema I have outlined of the real roots of the differentiation between Jews and Christians might suffice to show that the whole horrendous history of the persecution, with varying degrees of atrocity, by Christians of Jews, was based from start to finish on the most unchristian of principles: the subordination of religious profession to political interest.

Likewise, I think, that a proper appreciation by Jews and Christians of the unique role attributed to the linguistic medium, specifically, Arabic, of divine communication in the Koran can easily lead to the perception of why it would be correct for Jews and Christians as well as Muslims to regard Mohammed as God’s chosen prophet. The historical context shows that through his agency, the replacement of a highly superstitious and crude polytheism by a simple monotheistic religion, providing solid moral foundations for a trade-based community, at the very least, was brought about.

In this light, such gross features as have greatly contributed to the moulding of the images of Christian and Muslim in each other’s eyes, such as the Crusades on the one hand and the Ottoman penetration into Europe on the other, will appear as the terrible aberrations they spell out into from the indicated standpoint of any Mediterranean religion.

**Non-Belief**

I wish to conclude these far too skimpy remarks on a veritable thorn bush of a topic by very briefly harking back to a qualification which I made in the introduction, and which may have sounded as a mere rhetorical aside, but which I
feel it would be unrealistic not to underline. I said that the fifth approach to the portrayal of religions that I was humbly urging upon you, might *not* be practicable beyond the circuit of the three religions of the Book.

My fears on this score are based on what I regard as the most sinister difference among “the sons of Abraham,” as we have been aptly called, about the nature of faith itself.

Some of us (for instance the Catholic Church, since the thirteenth century) hold that faith is by nature problematic and, hence, non-believers cannot be stigmatised as irrational beings.

This does *not* seem to be the view of all Muslims. It may not be that, for instance, of the authors of the Muslim charter of human rights. Its official English translation contains the statement that “Islam is the natural religion of all mankind.” On the other hand, it has been contended that the word Islam should not have been taken to be the proper name of a particular religion, but a common noun meaning “submission.”

I suspect that it is this difference that gives plausibility, otherwise wholly undeserved, in my opinion, to the notorious Huntington thesis about “the clash of civilizations.”

At any rate, undoubtedly both the Koran and the generality of Muslim practice concede the vital space to Jews and Christians that follows from their shared recognition that God has spoken to mankind and from their common acceptance that his Word - in one of its several forms - is the criterion with which we need to judge our actions. I take that niche to provide sufficient room for the sort of collaborative new style of portrait building I have been putting forward, admittedly in a rather cartoonist manner, in this talk.
Part II.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND THE PRACTICE OF DIPLOMACY
In recent years, considerable attention has been devoted to the impact of cultural diversity in bilateral diplomatic relations. Before being posted in a country with a different culture, diplomats have been encouraged to acquaint themselves with that culture in order to be able to converse and interact with their local counterparts and the population in general in such a manner as not to threaten sensitivities. Depending on the diplomat’s own culture, this has often been difficult.

If we move to the multilateral level, things become far more complicated, as any diplomat who attends meetings of international conferences or deliberative organs of international organisations knows. It is no longer just a matter of not hurting sensitivities. The very meaning of words and especially concepts becomes uncertain because of the multiplicity of cultures involved. This is one reason why international conventions are often accepted and even ratified by countries whose view of the subject matter vastly differs. A good example is human rights. Verbal support is given to the Universal Declaration of 1948 and the two Covenants of 1966 in every part of the world. But when it comes to the interpretation of specific provisions like the one proclaiming equality between men and women, the views of various cultures vastly differ. In fact, the very concept of human rights as rights given to the individual human being in its relations with authorities and other human beings is a relatively late product of Western European cultures. For most of the history of humanity, the individual was seen as part of a group: the family clan, tribe or nation. Such rights as were given to the individual therefore remained subject to the more important interests of the group. This view is still held by the majority of non-Western cultures, as it was by Marxism-Leninism, a product of Western European culture.

Thus, basic concepts mean different things in different cultures. In multilateral relations this means that looking at such a concept is always culturally biased. As a result, an interpretation according to one culture also tends to criticise different interpretations according to other cultures. Whenever countries belonging to one culture have a dominant position in a multilateral forum, they therefore attempt to impose their view on countries belonging to other cultures. The latter will then criticise the views of the dominant culture in fora where they are in the majority.
Historically, international law and international organisations are the creation of countries belonging to the Western European culture and its American offspring. Moreover, many countries that were formerly colonised are strongly influenced by the culture of the colonisers, in particular those colonised by Britain, France and Spain. Otherwise Euro-centric views would no longer be in a position to dominate universal organisations and, in particular, the United Nations. So far, only Islamic countries have consistently upheld their own views on a number of issues. To a lesser extent, divergent views have also been presented within groups of third world countries such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.

However, even within a given culture, strong differences can be found among individuals, groups and countries regarding specific issues - and this geographically as well as in time. To take the latter aspect first, one notes that few European politicians and diplomats appear to realise that the death penalty and corporal punishments, even torture as a means of extracting confessions, were considered perfectly acceptable in Europe and the Americas less than a century ago. With regard to the death penalty, a strong geographic cultural difference remains between Europe and the USA.

It is important that diplomats and politicians pay attention to and accept the fact of cultural diversity. If they do, they will understand the underlying causes of many conflicting attitudes and they may become more inclined to seek compromise and consensual approaches rather than attempt to impose their own culturally biased views.

Currently, the catchword in international relations is globalisation. This is thought to mean that the whole world should become a single unit, in which goods, persons and ideas could circulate unhindered. As the idea of globalisation originates from the USA and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe, the concept is impregnated with cultural values of these regions. Thus, in the field of economic relations, private property and free markets are the core values. In political terms, democracy, transparent governance and the respect of human rights are the key concepts. As regards human values, individualism, freedom of thought and belief and the respect of the integrity of the physical and moral person of the human being are considered to have a global dimension.

Daily evidence shows, however, that such a conception of a global world is far from generally accepted. Indeed, many doubt whether a unification of the globe is at all desirable. Cultural diversity, at least for the time being, appears to mean that a lot of caution is required in defining the meaning and implementation of globalisation.
In recent years, partly as a result of the spread of basic education and the availability of better and faster means of communication, one notes a tendency towards enhancing the specificity of individual cultures. The Indian sub-continent provides a good example. In Pakistan, cultural diversity within Islam itself is threatening the unity of the country with violent communal clashes that, inevitably, also affect relations with non-Muslims. In India, Hinduism, a multi-culture in itself, has spawned a fundamentalist and violent sub-culture that attempts to gain control over the country and, for this purpose, exploits the always-latent tensions between Hindus and Muslims. Here, too, relations with other cultures and religions are affected. Another example is Western Europe, where a nationalistic, somewhat racist and fundamentalist backlash against immigrants from other cultures is gaining ground, with the result that an elder statesman has publicly proclaimed that Turkey, a Muslim country, has no place in the Christian European Union. Finally, at a global level, Islamic fundamentalism and a nearly fundamentalist US world-view are clashing, at the risk of open and even military confrontation.

A greater awareness of the diversity of cultures and of the dangers underlying the recent developments described above ought to lead diplomats and politicians to a serious re-consideration of attitudes and policies in multilateral relations. Otherwise, a considerable risk ensues that a cold-war-like confrontation between not just two but several intransigent cultures and the countries governed by them might develop. This would eventually freeze all efforts towards a true globalisation characterised by a climate of mutual tolerance and a willingness to reach consensual solutions for the urgent problems plaguing our world.

Fortunately, recent developments in multilateral diplomacy and the tools available to it provide means for avoiding a new paralysis of multilateral interaction. Thus more and more multilateral negotiations forgo confrontation in formal meetings in favour of informal interaction in what is officially a suspended formal gathering. Information and communications technologies offer instruments for continuous and discreet interaction before, during and after actual multilateral negotiation. Thus, the number of occasions where cultural posturing is no longer required tends to multiply.

Information and communications technologies also provide instruments for diplomats and politicians, enabling them to better understand the cultural attitudes of their counterparts in general and as regards specific issues about to be discussed in particular. In this regard, DiploFoundation has already done a great deal of groundwork and is embarking on ever wider and deeper-going
programmes aimed at improving multilateral interaction and overcoming obstacles stemming from cultural diversity.

A fundamental problem, however, remains: how can cultural antagonisms be overcome in practice? This problem was partly hidden during nearly a half century as a result of the ideological confrontation known as the Cold War. The two antagonistic camps simply accepted the incompatibility of their respective views and thus tried to extend their influence by recruiting still undecided players to their side. Moreover, they attempted to undermine the loyalty of weaker members of the other side towards a dominant ideology often imposed on them. The result was a number of internal conflicts with more or less open interference by the main ideological powers. The necessity to avoid a global violent conflict imposed a degree of restraint on the latter and thus the world lived in an uneasy truce as far as intercultural relations and conflicts were concerned.

During the last decade, a new situation has prevailed. The disappearance of one of the two ideological contestants has allowed adherents of a variety of cultures to become more vocal. Unfortunately, this has led again to confrontational attitudes favouring extreme and fundamentalist positions within the various cultures. In countries where more than one of these cultures is present, internal confrontations are on the increase. At regional and global levels, denigration of other cultures has become frequent and this has led to extreme forms of “good versus evil” approaches, especially on the religious plane. The numerous countries that do not want, or cannot afford, to be drawn into such antagonistic approaches, and the many diplomats in the countries which follow such approaches who would like to help overcome them, find it ever more difficult to raise the voice of reason, tolerance and humanity. Debates in international fora become poisoned with antagonistic attitudes, and gleeful media are keen to project this to their readers, listeners and viewers.

In such an overheated atmosphere, professional diplomats are best placed to realise the underlying dangers of the current situation and to explain them not only to their governments but also to the public opinion in their countries and elsewhere. They should take more time to communicate among themselves and with others about these issues.
My contribution to this volume on diplomacy and intercultural communication will consist in some reflections on the importance and essence of the foreign cultural policy of states. We frequently hear people talking about the tendency towards globalisation, for instance, in the emergence - or existence already - of the world as a global village. However, the tendency towards nationalism, at its height in the 19th century, has seen its prolongation, at least in the political field, in the 20th century, especially in the second half. During this time quite a number of new or newly independent states emerged, in the first category, for instance, Slovakia, in the second, the Central Asian republics.

The state of cultural relations in the world has been influenced by this double evolution, the more so because cultural factors, as part of identity formation, have been at their origins. This said, we do not see any contradiction between the idea of a globalised world and the idea of a diversity of cultures. We would even deplore any tendency towards a globalisation of cultures - which should be radically opposed, because a variety of cultures enriches not only each of us but also, should it come about, a globalised world.

Culture, in the best case, is what a people, a society, each of us has deep inside us: a positive force or conviction and not an attitude against others. Only because Huntington did not understand this could he write his book on clashes of civilization, which, in fact, he considers a glorification of Western culture, American style, that has to stay victorious in the world. This is neither a fair description nor a fruitful coexistence of the various cultures in the world that enrich our lives. However, such an enrichment is precisely what we strive for.

Another basic issue we should consider before we engage in a discussion on international cultural intercourse is the importance of culture in national life. You may remember the German saying that a prophet is not recognised in his own country. As in every saying, a kernel of truth may be found in it. I would like to give you an example concerning my country. Recently, the internationally known exhibition curator Harald Szeemann wrote: “Switzerland is blessed as a country; it is a land of hoarders whose sense of the past prevents it from looking to the future. But it is also home to many exciting, commit-
ted spirits, creative and resourceful. Regrettably, the body of the people remain little affected by this. Otherwise, I enjoy setting out from here as a mercenary and then coming home to the isolation of Ticino’s valleys to think up new adventures in peace and tranquillity.” At least in old fashioned Western societies, artists have often been, through the centuries, the avant-garde of social life, rarely understood and therefore often underestimated; at best, they have been seen as useful to further, with their art, the prestige of the powerful of their time. Only a few were more lucky and dedicated works to the glory of God, the only one they believed deserved such glory.

I do not want to suggest by this that real art must have a religious basis. I would suggest, rather, that art, if it has a finality, should serve the enrichment and progress of something superior to the political, social or military establishment—meaning today that it should enrich mankind. This is rather abstract, but it is more concrete in its negative meaning: art should not serve a socio-political entity.

Here, I have to make my third introductory remark, namely that I do not find it useful to engage you in a search for identity. Such searches prevent you from concentrating on the essential, namely to be open to the world; to be open to give and to be open to receive. In fact, identity means something distinct from others; it is defined by comparison to the other. Identity is described by indicating its boundaries. The presumption is that what is inside these boundaries is of superior quality to what is outside, as, in the Middle Ages, a city’s preferential legal status was confined to the city walls, or the entity limited (and protected) by the Great Wall of China, by the wall of Alexander the Great, or, in Europe at the time, Hadrian’s Wall. As you remember, the Romans called all people living outside the borders of their Empire “barbarians;” the “Roman” identity therefore meant urban, civilized. It is obvious for us today that such a description not only hinders international communication, but is definitively wrong in substance, because any of the people on our Earth throughout history have, at a given moment, contributed to cultural evolution. It is, above all, a matter of perception. An Iranian can tell you about the formidable cultural achievements of the Mongolians in his country, for example in architecture, whereas Western Europeans would describe Mongolians, or Huns, as they used to call them, as devastating, despite their significant influence on Eastern European music, for example.
This brings me to the question: What, then, are we talking about? International diplomacy should be, in the best case, a form of intercultural communication. As we have seen, many forms of intercultural communication are possible. When we speak about international diplomacy in the form of foreign cultural policy of states, then we deal with a specific form of intercultural communication.

The constituent elements are that

a) it is related to transborder cultural communication;
b) the propagators of this communication are states;
c) the main actors are people who create or perform arts; and
d) the audience of foreign cultural policy of states is only to a small extent governments, and to a much larger extent, the people.

In general terms, one of the traditional difficulties in communication in interstate relations is the language issue. Today, there is no *lingua franca*, as Latin was in Europe hundreds of years ago. On the world level, Spanish might be as important as English, but Arabic, Chinese, French and Russian are equally important languages of the United Nations. Thus, we need to resort to the assistance of interpreters in international conferences, sometimes even in bilateral relations.

Culture, however, communicates easily with other cultures without words. The interpreters who master the language of culture are not language interpreters but creative artists. This is the main reason for the overriding importance of cultural relations, therefore, also cultural communication, over traditional political and economic relations. Political and economic relations have a tendency to vary in their degree of importance and strength, since they depend to a large, almost exclusive extent, on the self-interests of the actors. Whenever their interests match, you speak of close and excellent relations; when they only match in some sectors, you speak about relations that are more difficult.

Of course, cultural relations can also exist to a greater or lesser extent; but even if they exist only to a minor extent, they are conceived and understood as positive and fundamental. By whom? Not only by governments and some important economies, but also by the people. Intercultural communication, including the cultural foreign policy of states, is designed in the first place to connect people, rather than state actors acting on behalf of the people. This is so because of the very nature of the language of culture.
Now, clearly, some individuals, by nature or education, are more receptive than others, but no one is excluded from this communication system. Here, mass media will have to play a role as multiplier, in order to ease access to communications systems and to make them better understood by everybody.

Why then, and this will be the next question, does cultural foreign policy of states not occupy a more prominent place in the field of international relations? Clearly, its impact is not only long lasting but also deep, since it reaches the people themselves quite directly, not only governments and administrations.

The reason is that cultural foreign policy of states not only presupposes inside knowledge of governments and administrations but also a major effort to join forces with artists (in the broad meaning of the word). As long as governments and administrations are of the opinion that art is something nice for the evening, after “serious” work, not much effort will be invested in the promotion of cultural foreign policy.

This is not an issue of quantity but an issue of quality. It is not sufficient to simply increase activities in cultural leisure; one must understand that culture is more than leisure. Culture is, in the true sense of the word, vital. Accordingly, the effort requires a change of mindset that is, in most cases, difficult to achieve.

It is my experience that many civil servants refrain from making initial efforts in cultural communication. They ignore how rewarding participation in cultural communication may be. Sometimes, as well, existing prejudices make relationships between artists and civil servants more difficult. Above all, civil servants in a ministry willing to make the effort do not always connect well with their top structure.

**Improving Intercultural Communication**

Hence, some further investments are needed in order to improve intercultural communication. I think the primary investment has to be made in building the awareness and capacity of the staff of government service branches. This is not an easy process. It will be time-consuming and has to be intensive. Part of it should consist in seeing that good performance in cultural communication is rewarded careerwise. Up to now, in many ministries economic business promotion has been rediscovered and is very much in the forefront; cultural foreign policy in ministries of foreign affairs should have at least equal ranking.
Even more difficult will be to build up, where it does not exist yet, embassy sections to work as solid participants and, in the best case, partners in intercultural communication networking. To achieve this, a minimum of funds must be available at the discretion of these sections.

The results of these changes may be striking: embassies, whose role is mostly misperceived by the civil society of the receiving state, will all of a sudden become partners of civil society, in addition to their traditional role as partners of governments. In its turn, this will facilitate the fulfilment of the more traditional tasks of the embassies with government services.

Having reached a better status, embassies will also discover through their newly acquired networks that their nationals residing as artists in receiving states are, by their activities, already forging very basic ties of understanding between the people of the sending and the people of the receiving states.

At this point, foreign cultural policy will start to show its first results. You will have realised by now that in reality translation of a genuine cultural foreign policy into practice is less a matter of words than of deeds and that for many government services hard work has to be done in order to become a credible player in the so much needed global intercultural communication.

Foreign cultural policy is in itself vital for establishing long lasting and deep relations between countries in international intercourse. But what we should equally bear in mind is what I have said at the outset of this presentation, namely that it is important to preserve the variety and the diversity of cultures in our efforts to bring about global cultural communication. Uniform culture is not culture and cannot be communicated.
CULTURAL CONTENT ON THE WEBSITES OF DIPLOMATIC SYSTEMS
Valentin Katrandzhiev

Cultural prestige has always followed troops and trade as a measure of a nation’s influence.¹

This paper is a comparative examination of the websites of the ministries of foreign affairs of China, India, Germany, France, Chile, Brazil, the US, Canada and several African states and their diplomatic representation abroad. The research is case study oriented. The results are summarised in a comparative assessment table. The objective is to evaluate the websites from the point of view of culture and to analyse their usefulness for the conduct of cultural and public diplomacy. The study also aims to determine the extent to which the official web presence of foreign ministries and their respective missions abroad contributes to intercultural dialogue and understanding. The selection of target countries was not random, but was based on a careful consideration of two factors: geographic representation and choice of countries that traditionally have used culture as a part of their diplomatic strategy.

The Importance of Culture

It has become a cliché to continuously emphasise the impact of culture on the conduct of modern diplomacy. Nonetheless, culture is a source of immense power capable of shaping, changing and influencing diplomatic community perceptions. From a broader perspective, culture may defuse ethnic and religious prejudices, and create a climate of tolerance, respect and understanding among nations and religions around the globe. Therefore, it is an essential medium for peaceful and tolerant interaction. From a narrower point of view, culture is the indispensable bridge that helps diplomats walk into the hearts and minds of their respective audiences. Culture helps diplomacy do its job at various diplomatic receptions. If properly introduced (in the form of appropriate cultural events such as musical and theatrical evenings, art exhibits and film showings), the use of culture dispels the sense of officialdom overshadowing a great number of diplomatic gatherings. Cultural settings become a favourable place for diplomats to exchange precious ideas, to acquire vital information, to pass essential messages and, in general, to provide a channel of unofficial diplomatic nego-
tiation. A growing number of governments acknowledge the influence of culture on the conduct of diplomatic relations and refer to it as a vital venue for the better positioning of their countries in the international arena.

Before discussing case studies, I would like to offer working definitions of two of the terms used in this paper:

**Diplomatic system:** The institutional and organisational framework for execution of a country’s foreign policy. The framework encompasses the ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) and its diplomatic missions abroad.

**Cultural content:** Culturally oriented information embedded in the form of text, hyperlinks, pictures, audio and video within websites of MFAs and their diplomatic representation abroad.

## Case Studies: Latin America

### Brazil

The website of the Brazilian MFA is modest in terms of cultural content. However, a useful definition of Brazilian cultural diplomacy\(^2\) can be found in the “Ministry/Services” folder. This concise one-page report focuses on the organisation of cultural work in the ministry and on areas of responsibility of the cultural department (such as the negotiation and implementation of agreements and cultural programmes, maintenance of contacts with local and foreign partners, and overall managerial and budgetary supervision of cultural events staged under the auspices of Brazil’s embassies abroad). Brazil’s multifaceted relationship with UNESCO is mentioned as well.

The Portuguese language\(^3\) is the common cultural and historical bond uniting Portugal with its former colonies, providing an essential channel of communication. The website offers a short description of the organisational structure, mission, objectives and activities of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). The latter is the analogue of the British Commonwealth and Francophone communities.

Brazilian art\(^4\) is featured on a separate page indirectly linked to the Brazilian MFA site. The well-structured content on this site offers an insightful glance at the multicultural and diverse way of life in Brazil, its traditions and customs, as well as various forms of artistic and cultural expression and accomplishments. A wealth of information with some degree of multimedia application and many hyperlinks facilitates a cultural excursion through the largest Latin American country. Brazil’s multicultural identity results from a lasting ethnic and racial co-existence of different cultural traditions.
The cultural content of the Brazilian Embassy in London\(^5\) is orderly, functionally presented and regularly updated. Culture-related information is well integrated into the context of the entire webpage. It is uncomplicated and easily accessible. Various facets of Brazilian culture such as architecture, cinema, dance, fine arts, fashion, literature, music, photography, theatre, religion and sports appear in a compact informational whole supported by photo images. The site also furnishes interested experts with the text of the cultural convention\(^6\), the legal instrument for Brazilian-British cultural relations. The content is a helpful informational and promotional tool for Brazilian diplomats in the host country.

Chile
The website of the Ministry of Chilean External Relations\(^7\) offers a special section related to cultural issues. The centrally positioned content is easily noticed. It mainly introduces the principal organ of cultural diplomacy - the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) - its place, role, mission and areas of supervisory activities. Being an integral part of the country’s diplomatic machinery, the department is considered and presented as a main tool for designing and implementing Chilean cultural diplomacy. It works in close contact with the country’s cultural institutions and 160 Chilean diplomatic missions abroad. The department acts as a principal negotiator and concluder of cultural conventions with other countries. The content underscores the importance of the DCA within the framework of other foreign and cultural policy instruments. The webpage provides methodical guidelines for holding events (festivals, biennales of arts, exhibitions, fairs), explains cultural project participation, mechanisms of sponsorships and grants offered to Chilean cinematographers, painters, dancers and other artists. However, it is not exclusively the propagation and diffusion of Chilean artistic and cultural pursuits and products that the DCA promotes. Through its net of associations, universities, and private and public foreign agencies, the department jointly manages the coordination of cultural projects of regional scope (Middle East, EU, Asia Pacific). Such initiatives contribute to cross-cultural exchanges and facilitate the networking activities conducted by Chilean diplomatic missions.

Chilean web diplomatic representation abroad: Within a limited number of available webpages, cultural content is traceable in cases where Chilean diplomats pursue traditionally active cultural relations with receiving states. Such is the case with Italy and Australia. The Chilean mission in Rome\(^8\), for example, uses the web actively as a window to project the nation’s identity, to convey the artistic and literary spirit to a highly inquisitive Italian public. On the other
hand, the website of the Chilean embassy in Canberra focuses on cultural events in the most general terms, offering some narrative content and photos. The content is embedded in the mission’s overall activities.

**Case Studies: Europe**

**France**

In Europe, France is among the leading nations to use culture to promote their national interests. Paris succeeded in making French the dominant academic and diplomatic language of 18th and 19th century Europe. The 20th century gave birth to the first French educational institutions abroad, which further projected Paris’s cultural influence. The example was later successfully emulated by Germany, Britain and Italy. As one of the former principal European colonial powers, France has preserved its influence in various corners of Africa, Asia and Latin America by the spread of its language, artistic and architectural achievements and way of life.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France maintains a special cultural section. The cultural content is placed in a separate thematic folder and is rich in substance and form. The content is best approachable via the multilingual page of the FMA website. The page smartly integrates cultural issues into the context of other topics, providing a helpful asset in the conduct of France’s cultural and public diplomacy.

Language: Information is presented mainly in French, targeting the French-speaking community. The extent of the francophone community worldwide is ample testament to the French cultural legacy and its sustained influence.

Organs of cultural diplomacy: The site features valuable information concerning the activities of the General Administration for International Cooperation and Development Department of the MFA, responsible for implementation of the country’s cultural policy and cultural exchange programmes. A definition of France’s international cultural policy is provided as well. Principal bodies responsible for France’s cultural work abroad are introduced in line with their place and rank in the framework of France’s bilateral relations under the “Cultural Action and Cooperation Network.” A searchable database facilitates the discovery of information related to French cultural centres.

Intercultural communication: Bridges of intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation are developed through virtual web demonstrations of (a) French scientific and artistic achievements, aimed at foreign audiences.
and (b) the artistic accomplishments of foreign cultures (e.g., diverse African cultures), aimed at the French public. Multimedia is moderately utilised.

The cultural section on the joint French embassy website for Zambia and Malawi brings French methods of education and culture closer to these African nations. The content is well-delivered, including an outline of cultural and linguistic cooperation and full texts of bilateral agreements. It also presents the opportunities the French cultural centre offers to the local publics. The site reinforces the French cultural presence and is an example of dynamic web cultural diplomacy.

**Germany**

The official webpage of the German MFA offers unproblematic and relatively good visibility of cultural content. Culture-related information appears under the “Foreign Policy” branch, titled, “Cultural Relations and Education Policy.” The content is organised in a one-page overview. The main topics are initially introduced by succinct and informative summaries. A number link below each theme sheds further light on the nature of Berlin’s cultural diplomacy, its types and actors. A full-text PDF format for documents, authentic interviews and speeches reinforces that perception.

Cultural policy framework: The cultural factor has played a lasting role in shaping Berlin’s external relations. Accordingly, the cultural policy which underscores the cultural dimension of those relations is thoroughly explained starting from concept, areas of cooperation, to budget and legal issues.

Culture is frequently perceived as a process of intellectual mastering and accomplishment via research or training. The website pays special attention to exchange programmes in the field of secondary and university education. Here, cultural content is used as enticement for promising foreign students and academics to carry out their specialisation on German soil. However, the content gives very little clue concerning the nature of cooperation programmes with foreign countries except for some valuable information on German-American and Franco-German forms of cooperation initiatives.

Language learning: German language studies abroad are integrated into the Foreign Office’s cultural agenda. Study of the German language is encouraged in regions where Berlin maintains a traditional cultural presence (The Commonwealth of Independent States, Eastern and Central Europe). The content related to German language studies offers practical information to potential students and introduces the Goethe Institute, an organ of cultural diplomacy, and other agencies that oversee the education process. A full address list of German cultural societies serves as a helpful guide. The organisation and
functioning of official and private organisations involved in the formulation and execution of German cultural diplomacy are reviewed briefly.

Diplomatic efforts to reclaim Germany’s works of art are also reflected on the website. Here, the content alerts the international community of an unresolved problem relating to the repatriation of German cultural heritage and property.

At the core of European affairs, Berlin actively uses its MFA website to publicise major Euro-based cultural events. One example is the Cultural Capital programme, which offers the opportunity for a number of European cities (including 10 German cities) to apply to become one of two Europe Cultural Capitals for 2010. Cultural cooperation remains an essential tool of the European integration process.

German Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria: This website illustrates the extent to which the content is empowered to help the conduct of German cultural diplomacy in missions abroad. The functional layout is practically identical with that of the MFA webpage. A separate section, not yet fully operational, is dedicated to cultural issues. A substantial drawback is that information is still offered in English and German only and not in Bulgarian. The content explains exclusively German cultural objectives. In comparison, the web presence of the Dutch embassy in Sofia seeks a more effective balance between promotion of Holland’s cultural accomplishments and offering visible web space for the recognition of the culture of the host country. A German citizen who wants to pay a visit to a foreign country may be interested in the way of life, social rules and customs of the people with whom he or she is about to get acquainted. The website of the German embassy, therefore, should perform this function. Websites are expected to encourage intercultural understanding and dialogue through appreciation and balanced presentation of different cultural patterns.

Case Studies: Asia

China

On the official MFA website of China, cultural content is hidden within the context of many other topics. Relevant information can nonetheless be found.

China’s bilateral relations: Cultural relations are perceived as an integral part of overall bilateral relations. The “Countries and Regions” section features information about China’s relations with other countries. It also provides valuable insight on cultural and educational exchange programmes and coop-
eration agreements. An example is the illustration of Sino-Indian\textsuperscript{19} and Sino-Iranian\textsuperscript{20} relations.

The cultural content addresses the sensitive issues of Taiwan and Tibet. The international community occasionally casts a critical eye on China’s human rights policy in its autonomous region. In response, Beijing’s diplomatic strategy is to treat Tibetan Buddhism, the mysticism of Tibetan folklore and Tibetan artistic achievements in the context of Chinese historical heritage (see: Tibetan Art Exhibition in Estonia\textsuperscript{21} and About China/Tibet\textsuperscript{22}). The website reflects the official Chinese position of respect for the unique Tibetan cultural tradition, creating the impression of openness towards Tibet. Regarding Taiwan, the MFA uses the website as a tool of cultural diplomacy to publicise China’s position. In addition, information about Taiwan presented on the website is used as a channel for public diplomacy to convey important foreign policy messages to the outside world.\textsuperscript{23}

China’s partnership with specialised UN organs is highlighted as well. Particular importance is attached to relations between China and UNESCO.\textsuperscript{24}

China has not yet developed an extensive web presence for its diplomatic missions abroad. An examination the websites of the Chinese diplomatic missions in Russia\textsuperscript{25}, South Africa\textsuperscript{26} and Beijing’s UN mission in Geneva\textsuperscript{27} shows a certain amount of cultural information, mainly consisting of announcements of various cultural events and exchanges. China’s mission in Jakarta, Indonesia\textsuperscript{28} is an exception. This site is one of the best and exhaustive attempts to utilise cultural content for the realisation of China’s foreign policy objectives. It provides a natural bridge between a sizable Chinese population living in Indonesia and the Chinese motherland. The special section, “Culture and Education,” is particularly intended to serve that purpose but is still under construction.

\textbf{India}

General introduction to Indian culture: The Indian Ministry of External Affairs\textsuperscript{29} website guides the reader into a special cultural portal with an appealing title, “Discover India.”\textsuperscript{30} This portal offers a concise but highly informative guide to Indian arts, clothing, cuisine, dance, literature, education, festivals, films, history, languages, monuments, music, religion, theatre and galleries. The site is easy to navigate, with hyperlinks to supplementary sites containing a wealth of culturally and educationally-oriented information. (This cultural portal was operational until 2002. The updated version of the Indian MFA website\textsuperscript{31} does not refer to this page and cultural content is harder to locate.)

Legal framework for India’s cultural cooperation with other countries: Full-text bilateral cultural agreements are available on the MFA website, pro-
viding guidelines for cultural cooperation and very useful reference materials for practicing diplomats, cultural and arts workers and researchers. However, finding needed information can be difficult because full-text treaties are not accessed in alphabetical country-by-country indexed order, but in a periodical and chronological way and are listed in volumes.

Information about bilateral cultural ties can be accessed via both the foreign policy/foreign relations section and the bilateral treaties and agreements section. For example, the Republic of Korea and India’s cultural exchanges are examined succinctly in the bilateral relations review, where the 1972 cultural agreement is mentioned. The full text of the same bilateral agreement is reachable in the treaties section. Likewise, a short review of Indian-Syrian cultural relations is available in the bilateral relations section where there is also mention of the bilateral cultural agreement. The full text of the same agreement can be read in the treaties section.

The bilateral treaties section provides access to a number of other full-text cultural conventions which India has signed with, for example, Yemen, Senegal, Mexico, Argentina, and Zambia. Unfortunately, these texts are not linked directly to the sections where Delhi’s bilateral relations with those states are reviewed.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is a vital instrument of Indian cultural diplomacy at home and abroad. The ICCR website is directly linked to the Ministry of External Affairs homepage and offers the reader a concise profile of the ICCR, including cultural policies, goals and mission. The information is presented in a simple narrative format with numerous hyperlinks to services offered by the Council as well as information about various branches of the organisation. A sample of cultural content produced on the basis of a random search includes: CICA Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations.

The Indian MFA web cultural content is a useful promotional tool for intercultural understanding and dialogue. First, it reaches the hearts and minds of foreign audiences by conveying the richness of Indian cultural diversity. This is an important feature of the country’s national identity. The content illustrates the importance of culture in the implementation of Indian foreign policy objectives. A good combination of photos and descriptions enhances the meaning of historic, linguistic and artistic images that India wishes to project onto the international scene. Second, the content stimulates cultural curiosity regarding why and in what ways nations differ culturally, and demonstrates respect for cultural otherness. Third, the content emphasises cultural commonalities as an example of the unity of modern civilisation.
Indian Diplomatic Mission in Cairo. Indian cultural insight is offered to the Egyptian public through easy access to an “Indian Culture” section. The cultural accomplishments, customs and traditions are introduced in storyline format with information on crafts, paintings, arts, cuisine and costumes. The content is spread throughout various parts of the page. The “India-Egypt Bilateral Relations” section gives a chronological account of the cultural aspects of bilateral cooperation. The impact of the Islamic heritage on the formation of Indian national character is skilfully presented in a separate section with a number of informative articles. The content is available both in Arabic and English. The differences and the commonalities between the cradles of two unique and ancient civilisations are underscored. The page sets a good example of how to employ cultural web content to foster relations with a key Arab and Muslim country.

Case Studies: North America

Canada
The official website of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade contains a special section entitled “Culture, Education and Youth.” For the sake of clarity, cultural and educational programmes are presented separately. The website makes a good introduction to cultural programmes and project funding mechanisms. The MFA, in particular its various divisions and bureaus, is the coordination centre that ensures support for unceasing cultural expression in the field of arts, literature, music and theatre. For example, it offers financial and organisational backing to artists and cultural performers through grants and business development programmes. The MFA identifies cultural and educational priorities and its success in promotion of culture depends immensely on the coordination of a wide network of cultural communities. Canadian cultural communities are the Canadian organs of cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is performed by a successful mixture of public and business sponsored initiatives.

The content is also aimed at facilitating the efforts of Canada’s educational institutions to invite foreign students to study in Canada. Educational exchanges are an important way of fostering understanding and appreciation of the Canadian way of life and creating future ambassadors of Canadian culture.

The Canada-Mexico Creative Artists Programme is a good example of a bilateral exchange in the sphere of contemporary art, which fosters mutual appreciation in a cross-cultural environment.
Canadian cultural diplomacy is conducted in a completely transparent environment. The site provides an exhaustive list of the country’s cultural representatives accompanied by full contact details. Canadian diplomatic staff abroad (commissioners and cultural attaches) constitute the nuts and bolts of the Canadian image making and culture projection machinery.

A quick scan of Canada’s relations with the outside world reveals additional cultural content. Well-presented graphically, the content, among many other things, focuses on cultural exchanges between Canada and the South Pacific region. Cultural activities fall under the realm of public diplomacy.

Canadian diplomatic missions abroad: Cultural content is visibly, coherently and graphically well delivered. In that respect, the official Canadian diplomatic overseas web presence is one of the best examples among the examined countries. For instance, the websites for Canadian embassies in Berlin, Athens, Ankara, London and Kiev all maintain special sections dedicated to cultural affairs with finely chosen information located in dynamic settings. This cultural content is surely a very useful promotional tool in the hands of Canadian diplomats involved in outreach activities in the respective host countries.

United States
The US Department of State administers a solid cultural and public diplomacy web-presence. The bulk of the content is located in the easily accessible “Press and Public Affairs” and “History, Education and Culture” sections. Both the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (BECA) and the Bureau of Public Affairs (BPA) stand at the heart of Departmental efforts to cultivate mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue with the outside world. The observed content illustrates the willingness of America to rely on its “soft” power, not to coerce, but to attract foreign nations. The content has been conveniently and succinctly highlighted in a one-page summary. The web is used as a suitable platform for publicising a considerable number of important scholastic, training and cultural programmes run by the BECA. Thus, the content is instructive and promotional in character. The information is comprehensively presented and offers regular updates in highlighted boxes. Each programme is reviewed in detail, from various angles. Of particular note are “Art in the Embassies,” which has been in operation since 1964 and the “Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation.” The first handles the decoration of representational rooms of American ambassadors with masterpieces of American painters. It therefore puts art at the centre of US diplomacy. The second reiterates America’s respect for the cultural heritage of developing countries through
granting funds for cultural preservation. The principal objectives of US cultural diplomacy can be read in BECA’s profile: “… promoting personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad, as well as by presenting U.S. history, society, art and culture in all of its diversity to overseas audiences.”

The webpages of the US diplomatic missions in Denmark, the Netherlands, Japan, and Malaysia illustrate good organisation of cultural content. The functionality of cultural content varies from country to country. Most of the sites provide different online resources promoting multiple aspects of American culture, science and education abroad, offer useful links, ambassadorial speeches at cultural symposiums, profiles of public affairs offices and practical examples of State Department programme implementation. The content highlights various aspects of American values, ways of life and traditions. Academic and training exchange programmes are covered as well. The US embassies endeavour to create a perception of a hospitable and welcoming America. The information sections underline various aspects of contemporary American culture and art. The US embassy website in The Hague, for instance, offers highly relevant information about the role of education in a cross-cultural context to prevent wars. In her year 2000 address to the “Educating in Paradise” Symposium in Florence, US Ambassador Cynthia Schneider emphasised that “education across national borders is not with the expectation that knowledge would make us love each other but foster the emergence of leaders whose sense of other nations and cultures would enable them to share specific policies based on tolerance and rational restraint…. [T]he dangers of wars are significantly reduced by producing generations of leaders who have acquired some feeling of understanding for other people’s cultures.”

Case Studies: Africa

Nigeria, Lesotho, Egypt, South Africa

Apart from sketchy and very general insights into this nation’s cultural features and tourist information, the Nigerian MFA website makes no serious attempt to present the most populous and culturally diverse African state in the manner it deserves. The governmental portal of the tiny kingdom of Lesotho includes an MFA section. Its still relatively limited cultural content tells us about the impact of theatrical performances and art festivals in fostering the spirit of neighbourly relations in the South African region.
The Egyptian MFA\textsuperscript{67} has no flag of “culture” on the first page of its website. However, a search for “culture” produces some valuable information: the country’s top ranking official speeches and statements used as public diplomacy channels to advocate the official Egyptian position on inter-civilisational and inter-religious dialogue. An address by H. E. Amre Moussa, at the time the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, at the Center for Muslim Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington DC, June 29, 1999, is one such example.

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs\textsuperscript{68} website furnishes the interested reader with a considerable amount of diligently archived documents (e.g., the Cultural Charter of Africa\textsuperscript{69}, media reports on significant cultural events, and bilateral agreements with reference to cultural arrangements).

South African embassy web presence: While cultural content is practically absent on the website of the diplomatic mission in Switzerland\textsuperscript{70}, the South African embassy in Greece website\textsuperscript{71} provides a good introduction to the work of the South African Information Centre. In this particular case, the web content is used assertively as an instrument of cultural and public diplomacy outreach.

Although the analysed web content represents just a small fraction of the culture-related information found on the websites of diplomatic systems, it is sufficient to summarise the empirical results in a comparative assessment table. This table is based on information found on the MFA websites during or before August 2004.
## Comparative Assessment of Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Content Description</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Instructive but not very promotional. Content is delivered in a narrative format accompanied by maps and photos.</td>
<td>Content of MFA website is not sufficient to serve as a convincing tool for Brazilian public and cultural outreach abroad. However, the supplementary cultural page as well as the example from the content review of Brazilian diplomatic missions abroad demonstrates better results.</td>
<td>Some segments may be helpful promotional material for Brazilian diplomats to plan public and cultural activities in the missions overseas. This is particularly important in countries where Brazilian diplomacy wishes to extend its influence through means of its language, culture and art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Informative, but not very promotional. Content is purpose-oriented.</td>
<td>Ministerial website focuses on the role of the cultural department and provides guidelines for organising culture-focused activities.</td>
<td>The website needs to offer some examples to foreign audiences of the country’s cultural heritage and achievements. These assets should be better utilised in the official website. Mission websites do provide examples, but need to be culturally enriched to facilitate cultural outreach. Content should be provided in languages other than Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>The information is presented in a transparent and easily accessible way. Content is conveniently split into subtopics (cinema, science, books, music, art policy). Subtopics are not reviewed in isolation but in the context of the country’s cultural diplomacy. The information is delivered through a good mix of narration, video clips and photos.</td>
<td>On one hand, topics handled on the site are meant to produce a positive perception of a friendly and culturally rich French nation and, on the other hand, the site materials facilitate meaningful cultural cooperation with other countries through recognition and respect for cultural diversity.</td>
<td>The web platform should be used consistently as France’s cultural image-maker. More materials should be made available in languages other than French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The information is thematically structured and purpose-oriented. Narration is the main form of content delivery.</td>
<td>The website provides helpful information for German diplomats and cultural workers responsible for the projection of German culture abroad.</td>
<td>More emphasis might be laid on what foreign cultures could offer to an art-loving German public. That means offering content which sets the parameters for intercultural exchange, not focusing exclusively on one’s own cultural objectives: cultural diplomacy is a two-way street.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Cultural information is given in a narrative format and is succinctly and dryly presented, but is not very interactive.</td>
<td>Content is tackled in a limited way and with brief summaries. There is no link dedicated to a cultural department within the MFA, the principal organ of cultural diplomacy. The same could be said about the embassy web pages. Visitors find mainly brief summaries and listings of forthcoming cultural events.</td>
<td>Greater use of text, as well as video and audio effects to make foreign audiences aware of China’s unique civilizational and cultural heritage is needed. The web platform needs to be better utilised as an instrument of cultural outreach in missions abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>The cultural dimension is richly presented. The best way to approach the cultural information is via the site-map and through the search facility. The content is delivered in a non-intrusive and intelligent manner.</td>
<td>The content conveys the richness and vibrancy of Indian culture to foreign audiences. Indian diplomacy seeks to project the country’s power through means of the country’s cultural heritage and achievements. Content builds up an important perception: an image of a hospitable and friendly nation open to intercultural dialogue and understanding.</td>
<td>Direct accessibility to cultural information should be provided because content cannot be spotted at first glance. Much substantive material is available, yet not presented in a visible and easily traceable manner. The site has the undiscovered potential to assist Indian diplomats in promoting the country’s cultural image abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>The content makes good reading since it has been neatly organised. The narration follows smoothly through conveniently placed hyperlinks and purpose-oriented summaries. Content is abundant, supported with multi-faceted sources of information, photos, and additional net resources.</td>
<td>A user-friendly website where cultural content is meaningfully and exhaustively presented. The website ushers the reader into the operational mechanisms of the country’s cultural and public diplomacy activities.</td>
<td>The content could also incorporate documentation on MFA-sponsored conferences and workshops on culture-related affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>The cultural content is easily identifiable. It is thematically well structured, very informative and purpose driven. Browsing is assisted by consistently arranged links.</td>
<td>The website provides an extensive overview of the US cultural and training programmes, with a wealth of additional information as to how they function. The content would be useful to US Department efforts to project America’s influence abroad and create lasting bridges for intercultural communication.</td>
<td>Searchable content available in the archive site could be improved. Information on past major events in the field of culture sponsored by the US State Department such as “Conference on Culture and Diplomacy” 2001, could be highlighted in the current site as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria, Lesotho, Egypt, South Africa</td>
<td>Informational, at times promotional, occasionally purpose-oriented. Information seems to be insufficient and dispersed, with some exceptions.</td>
<td>Cultural content is, at best, humbly touched upon in the observed websites. Culture-related web information tools still await employment by the African diplomacy and policy-making community as a whole and by respective countries in particular. Websites provide no clue as to how cultural policy is shaped and executed.</td>
<td>Culture-related information needs to be more consistently and systematically presented on the official MFA and embassy webpages so it can assist African diplomats to convey the magnetism of the continent’s diverse and wealthy cultures and serve as a venue for intercultural dialogue. The web content should offer greater coverage of culture-related issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Cultural Content Bibliography

The study of cultural content on MFA websites illustrates the general trend for the national diplomatic systems to utilise the web:

- for presentation of the structure and organisation of the main organs of cultural diplomacy;
- for familiarisation with the countries’ international cultural agendas.

**Austrian MFA**

The site promotes a distinguished Alpine nation, whose cultural achievements, especially in the field of classical music and visual arts, have helped its influence worldwide. The website emphasises the organisation and work of Austrian cultural centres abroad. Web links to those forums are provided as well. The Austrian international cultural policy is introduced at length.

**Croatian MFA**

The site provides a good selection of materials related to the country’s cultural heritage. It could be a useful promotional tool for Zagreb’s conduct of cultural diplomacy. The organisational structure of the MFA features the Division for International Cultural Cooperation within the cabinet of the State Secretary for Political Affairs.

**Danish MFA**

The Danish Secretariat for International Cultural Affairs (DSICA) is a good example of an organ of cultural diplomacy placed outside the MFA structure. The department, which falls under the administrative umbrella of the Ministry of Culture, is a coordination centre for exchange programmes. The site makes the reader familiar with the functions and priorities of the DSICA.

**Greek MFA**

A one page concise summary makes a good introduction of the responsibilities and priorities of the country’s principal organ of cultural diplomacy, the Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The place and role of Greek cultural centres is briefly illuminated as well.
Hungarian MFA
The archived section of the website furnishes information both about Hungarian cultural institutes abroad and foreign cultural institutes operating in Hungary. An article features Hungarian cultural achievement in the context of world cultural developments.

Irish MFA
The website presents a one-page review of the role of the Cultural Division in pursuit of cultural foreign policy objectives in tandem with other national institutions.

Israeli MFA
The site offers a detailed review of the structure and activities of the ministry’s “Division for Scientific and Cultural Affairs” and its respective subdivisions. The objectives of Israeli cultural, academic and scientific activities are listed as well.

Italian MFA
The cultural content is summarised in one page of well selected hyperlinks that lead to comprehensive information on Italian language studies, Italian institutes, relevant documents, cultural activities and archaeological missions. The organisational structure and functions of the Directorate General for Cultural Promotion and Cooperation are thoroughly examined.

Japanese MFA
The comprehensive content promotes Japanese language learning, cultural, scientific and sports programmes. A succinct articulation of MFA priorities in the field of cultural diplomacy can be read in the PDF report “International Exchange and Public Relations Activities” in the Diplomatic Bluebook 2003. The report focuses on international exchanges, cooperation with UNESCO, youth exchange and education and Tokyo’s support for culture-building efforts in developing countries.

Peruvian MFA
The Cultural Affairs section presents Peruvian arts and cultural activities carried out with the help of the Cultural Promotion Office and Peruvian diplomatic missions abroad. The site offers a well-organised database with the full text of bilateral and multilateral cultural conventions. The content is available in Spanish only.
**Romanian MFA** 82

A special section presents a summary on how Romania’s cultural diplomacy is conducted, and explains the levels of subordination and coordination among various institutional structures involved in endorsing Romanian language and culture abroad.

**Slovak MFA** 83

The website offers short summaries of bilateral agreements in the field of cultural, educational, scientific, healthcare and sporting activities. The competencies of Slovak cultural institutes are highlighted concisely.

**Slovenian MFA** 84

Functions of the Department for International Cultural Relations are briefly described.

**Turkish MFA** 85

The cultural section of the website presents various aspects of Turkish culture, arts and national character in a storyline format accompanied by photo images. It is aimed at showing the richness of the Turkish cultural heritage to foreign audiences. A link to the Ministry of Culture is provided.

**MFA of Serbia and Montenegro** 86

The website provides information with some details about bilateral agreements signed by the MFA with foreign counterparts in the sphere of culture and education. Current news and events in the field are covered briefly as well.

**Endnotes**

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57 Ibid., http://exchanges.state.gov/culprop/afcp.
74 Danish Secretariat for International Cultural Affairs: http://www.kum.dk/sw3113.asp.
77 Irish MFA website: http://www.irlgov.ie/iveagh/information/culture/default.asp.
79 Italian MFA website: http://www.esteri.it/eng/2_10_126.asp.

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Researchers in the West, preoccupied by the complexities of their own relations with Asia and Africa, have taken comparatively little time to examine how the peoples of those regions have related among themselves. Indeed, the action and reaction of Western and non-Western values is a major theme of the modern world. Since Vasco da Gama arrived in the Indian Ocean at the end of the 15th century, the story of humankind has been largely an account of the response of Asia, Africa, and South America to the alien culture of the West. However, long before the West rose into prominence, contacts between other cultures flourished.

Building international diplomacy requires understanding ourselves, others, and how we relate together. It also involves understanding how others relate among themselves. In efforts to internationalise and build a truly global future, the consideration of contacts among all parts of the world becomes critical. The sustained diplomatic cooperation that has taken place in the last fifty years between China and African nations may be an instructive example. This major phenomenon, which deserves more attention than it has received, is the focus of this paper.

Introduction

Since its establishment in 1949, the People’s Republic of China has made a concentrated effort to forge close ties with African nations. Sino-African relations have thus largely resulted from the diplomatic initiatives of the People’s Republic of China rather than those of African nations. This immediately gives rise to a number of questions. Why is China interested in Africa? How does Africa fit into China’s image of the world?

Samuel Kim proposes that China’s image of world order is a corollary of its image of internal order and thus a projection of self-image. China’s behaviour in the international community can therefore be viewed as a reflection of its world image and self-image. In this light, Kim advances the notion that these images integrate both normative and epistemological principles. On the one hand, these images embody dominant social norms and values. As such,
they serve as philosophical assumptions about the international order. On the other hand, these images provide an epistemological paradigm. This paradigm performs cognitive, evaluative and prescriptive functions; it leads policy makers to define the state of the world, to evaluate the meaning of the world and to prescribe the correct behaviour to heed.

The theme that correct behaviour is a manifestation of correct thought permeates all important theoretical writings in the People's Republic of China. Such a notion is referred to as the Chinese “world outlook.” Since 1949, China's world outlook has been largely shaped by Mao Zedong's thought. Therefore, China's definition of its place in the world during the Maoist reign serves as a useful context in which to explore China's global policies. Moreover, the Maoist image of world order provides an indispensable frame of reference for assessing any change or continuity in the post-Mao global policy.

**Purpose and Focus**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the historical context of Sino-African diplomacy. To do this, I trace the evolution of China's definition of its place in the world as reflected by the evolution of China's three main foreign policy strategies: the “Peaceful Coexistence” strategy of the 1950s, the “Revolution” approach of the 1960s, and the “Grand Alliance” tactics of the 1970s. Within this purview, I examine components of the Maoist world vision and highlight China's policy towards the Third World. Finally, I point out that while all three strategies failed to survive in totality, each, in part, continues to influence current policies as China continues to define itself and its place in the world.

**Phase One: The Peaceful Coexistence Approach**

The Peaceful Coexistence approach of the early 1950s had its intellectual roots in the 1940s. During World War II, Nationalist and Communist Chinese leaders, engaged in civil war, sought support from the emerging superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively. When the Communists won victory in October 1949, they strengthened their alliance with the Soviet Union, the “motherland of socialism,” and began to share the Soviet view of the United States as the major imperialist adversary.
Two-World Theory
Just months before the official establishment of the People’s Republic of China, Mao declared this alliance:

Internationally we belong to the anti-imperialist front, headed by the Soviet Union…. The Chinese people must either incline towards the side of imperialism or that of socialism. There can be no exception to the rule. It is impossible to sit on the fence. There is no third road.8

Articulating the principal contradiction of the post-war international system,9 Mao thus obliged all Chinese to lean in the direction of a socialist alliance with the Soviet Union.10 Mao looked to the Soviet Union as a model to emulate and claimed, “The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is our best teacher and we must learn from it.”11

However, Chinese and Soviet expectations of each other within this teacher/pupil alliance soon proved to be unrealistic. As the alliance began to falter, Mao continued the call to learn from the Soviet Union but began to stress the necessity for China to acquire an independent outlook: We must not eat pre-cooked food. If we do we shall be defeated. We must clarify this point with our Soviet comrades. We have learned from the Soviet Union in the past, we are still learning today, and we shall still learn in the future. Nevertheless our study must be combined with our own concrete conditions. We must say to them: We learn from you, from whom did you learn? Why cannot we create something of our own?12

Intermediate Zones
Indeed, Mao did create something unique. In the process of establishing independence from the Soviet Union, Mao modified the prescribed Two-World Theory and raised the notion of “an intermediate zone.” Instead of predicting an impending confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, as many had when the Cold War began, Mao declared the international situation to be “extremely favourable.”13 In his paper tiger thesis,14 Mao minimised the strength of the US and the dangers of a Soviet-US war. Mao proclaimed that the true battlefield now lay, not between the two worlds, but rather in the vast zone that separated the two rivals: a zone that included many capitalist, colonial, and semi-colonial countries across Europe, Asia, and Africa. This intermediate zone became the new ally for the socialist camp because
it served as a protective buffer, constituting, in Mao’s own words, “the rear areas of imperialism.” Thus, the theory of the intermediate zone, comprising what later came to be known as the Second and Third Worlds, reflected Mao’s changing perceptions of the international environment.

Henceforth, Chinese leaders were nurtured with a tripartite perspective of international relations. According to Lin, Mao’s emphasis on the existence and importance of a third force enabled China to develop its own identity and expand its own influence in international relations. China could now maintain its ideological commitment to the Soviet Union and at the same time seek relations with other nations with whom it shared a more common historical experience and international stature. Theoretically, China had defined an area that belonged neither to the Soviet Union nor to the United States. This middle ground not only served China’s own interests but the larger interests of the socialist world as well. Mao’s assertion of a changing world order and China’s place within it later crystallised into his Three-Worlds Theory. This notion of three worlds, though not yet fully developed, began to influence China’s conception of the world in general and the Third World in particular. In fact, China’s first articulated Third World policy of Peaceful Coexistence was based upon this tripartite perception.

**Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence**
The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were first introduced by Zhou Enlai to an Indian delegate in 1953 and subsequently appeared in the Sino-Indian agreements on Tibet, signed in Peking on April 29, 1954. These agreements gave rise to the following five principles:

- Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- Mutual non-aggression;
- Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs;
- Equality and mutual benefit;
- Peaceful coexistence.

In essence, four of the five principles decreed a hands-off policy towards other sovereign states. The remaining stipulation, to seek equality and mutual benefit, was both a political and economic guideline. Thus, the five principles could be reduced to two: justice and non-interference. Though criticised as vague and platitudinous by some, as a doctrine these principles constituted a set of rules to govern international behaviour. As a strategy, these principles revealed China’s desire to create a united, self-conscious, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperial-
ist coalition among newly independent countries. Such a broad coalition was to manoeuvre China out of isolation and secure its rightful position in the world. To this end, China tempered ideological differences and extended reconciliatory policy initiatives as a means of approaching many Third World countries.\(^{20}\)

As early as August 11, 1954, the relevance of these principles extended beyond Asia, as Zhou Enlai declared them the basis for “relations between China and the various nations of Asia and the world.”\(^{21}\) The following year, Zhou firmly established these principles as China’s official state policy towards other Third World countries at the Bandung Conference.

**Bandung Conference**
The Bandung Conference, held in Indonesia, April 18-27, 1955, was conceived by the Colombo Powers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia and consisted of twenty-nine Afro-Asian states. The conference was not initiated by China, nor did China take a part in its planning. In fact, China was not even envisaged as a participant in the original proposal.\(^{22}\) However, contrary to expectations, China was not in the periphery at Bandung; rather, for the first time in modern history, China played an active role as an acknowledged, independent power, shaping the pattern of world order.

Bandung signified China’s modern debut onto the world stage, and this debut marked a watershed in Chinese diplomacy.\(^{23}\) Zhou Enlai, representing the Communist delegations, strove to resolve outstanding differences and establish a reputation for reasonableness. He avoided conflict, sought reconciliation, and steadfastly identified China with the common cause.\(^{24}\) He even managed to introduce two additional principles to the original five:

> Respect for the freedom to choose a political and economic system;
> Mutually beneficial relations between nations.\(^{25}\)

However, Zhou’s “master card” was his offer to negotiate with the United States, China’s main rival, on the Taiwan issue. He made this proposal at precisely the right moment to achieve the desired effect,\(^{26}\) gaining prestige at the conference with a triumph of personal diplomacy while China gained a reputation for being accommodating and ready to resolve differences through negotiation.\(^{27}\) In the wake of Bandung, moderation and neutralism emerged as positive forces in Chinese foreign policy.\(^{28}\)

In addition to marking China’s diplomatic debut and new current of moderation, Bandung also marked the beginning of China’s Third World dimension of foreign policy.\(^{29}\) Zhou utilised the setting as a platform to establish China’s
Third World credentials, stressing two points that China shared in common with all the other countries: a history of colonial dominance and a need for further independence based on economic reconstruction. Significantly, neither of these points applied to the Soviet Union. From this time on, China’s foreign policy drew away from Soviet clutches and drew towards embracing a common identity with former colonial countries. Henceforth, the Chinese leadership attached increasing significance to Afro-Asia as the primary centre of the anti-imperialist struggle, and Afro-Asian solidarity, as embodied by the “spirit of Bandung,” became a prominent theme in Chinese pronouncements.30

The proposed image of Afro-Asia, that Asians and Africans share a common political and social task, provided powerful rhetoric. Bandung initiated the articulation of a Third World voice that was to be heard in the global arena thereafter. In this way, Bandung was of great and lasting symbolic significance. Beyond symbolism, however, the spirit of Bandung soon diminished.

Strategy Downfall
The spirit of Bandung never materialised into broadly effective institutions, nor did it create any substantial mechanisms for ongoing relations. China was unable to harness the momentum gathered at Bandung and unable to establish any type of extensive relations with the Third World. Ultimately, the strategy failed to create a viable foreign policy framework. Lin31 explains that both domestic and international factors contributed to this failure.

Domestically, the increasing radicalisation within China, as evidenced by movements such as the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957) and the Great Leap Forward (1958-60), made a moderate foreign policy line politically unappealing. Internationally, the second Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958 and the subsequent efforts of the United States to contain China diminished hopes of maintaining a stable environment. China’s calls for the unity of the Third World were further muted by the looming Sino-Soviet split, as China now found it increasingly necessary to distinguish pro-Soviet from pro-Chinese countries. Moreover, China’s relations with neighbouring nations became increasingly strained as outstanding boundary and territorial problems emerged. According to Yahuda32, China’s neighbours feared that a newly reunified China would be influenced by the legacy of its imperial past that wielded a superior lordship over the other Asian rulers. In addition, Beijing’s commitment to communism deepened their distrust. Beijing was perceived as a supporter of local communist parties dedicated to the overthrow of the newly established and fragile regimes. These neighbours feared that China would exploit domestic weaknesses as well as inter-regional disputes. In 1958, when Chinese foreign policy
shifted away from the moderation of Bandung towards a more militant revolutionary line, these misgivings about China intensified.\textsuperscript{33}

**Phase Two: The Dominance of Revolution**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, both domestic and international conditions created an atmosphere in China in which the low-key, conciliatory approach of Peaceful Coexistence was replaced by a revolutionary-based strategy towards the Third World. Two developments especially contributed to this revolutionary spirit in China: the escalating tensions between China and the Soviet Union and the growing independence movements in Africa.\textsuperscript{34}

**The Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance**

Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the Soviet factor had been at the centre of Chinese politics. China’s ideology, economy, national security and foreign policy were all based on the “leaning to the side of” the Soviet Union in a bipolar world. The rupture with the Soviet Union fundamentally altered this paradigm. This rupture did not emerge suddenly but, rather, unfolded in the process of the deteriorating Sino-Soviet alliance. The alliance, seemingly cemented by the Korean War, began to unravel as historical, cultural and socio-economic differences surfaced and proved to be irreconcilable. Eventually, differences over international politics and strategy drove the ultimate wedge between China and the Soviet Union.

Yahuda\textsuperscript{35} explains that the Soviet Union, as the senior partner, could not permit China to jeopardise Soviet global interests. Concurrently, an independent China could not permit itself to be made subordinate to the Soviet Union. These tensions affected the very nature of the entire international communist movement. Moreover, because ideology was at the core of the legitimacy of the movement, these differences were expressed in ideological terms. Therefore, the legitimacy of each regime was challenged by these rising disputes. Ultimately for Marxist-Leninists theorists, only one correct view could exist and no true comrade would persist in publicly putting forward a contrary perspective. By the early 1960s, both sets of leaders accused the other of betraying the communist cause and their own people.\textsuperscript{36}

One root of this complex problem stemmed from their respective relationships with the United States. After Stalin, Khrushchev sought to ease tensions with the USA, in part to carry out reforms at home but also to reduce the costs and risks of maintaining nuclear weapons. At the same time, the Chinese lead-
ers also sought to diffuse tensions with America, in order to focus on domestic economic development. Unlike their Soviet colleagues, however, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai found the Eisenhower administration unresponsive. American policy held that the way to divide the two communist giants was to keep up the pressure on China; thus, they denied to China the diplomatic overtures extended to the Soviets. As a result, China found no reason to believe Khrushchev’s claims that the United States had moderated its tactics.

These differences quickly escalated into issues of national and international security. In 1959, when the Soviet Union and the United States joined forces to restrain China from developing nuclear arms, it was a point of no return. In the following year, the Soviets dealt the Chinese leaders a huge blow by withdrawing all economic aid and technical expertise. In 1962, China, still reeling from this withdrawal and from the failure of the Great Leap Forward, faced three major crises at its borders. In Xinjiang, tens of thousands of Kazakhs crossed into the Soviet Union; in the southeast, Taiwan posed the threat of an invasion; and in the southwest, a border war erupted with India. In this war, the Soviet Union sided with Britain and the United States in support of India and thus confirmed China’s worst fear: an unholy triple alliance between the reactionaries (India’s ruling class), the revisionists (the Soviet Union) and the imperialists (the United States). From this point forward, Chinese and Soviet leaders took opposite positions on all key international issues.

**Impact of the Collapse**

The impact of the Sino-Soviet collapse on international politics in the Asia-Pacific region was not immediately obvious. By contrast, the impact on the Third World was keenly and immediately felt. After the split, both the Soviet Union and China increased their efforts to enlarge their own geographical stake on the international scene. From the early 1960s, the two nations competed for the allegiance of the various liberation movements and newly independent countries in the Third World.

Chinese leaders felt that their Third World policy had to be more militant in support of their strong criticism of the Soviet’s alleged “sell out” by the “revisionist” Khrushchev. Thus, partly to respond to the split and partly to challenge Soviet dominance, China adopted a distinctively radical, revolutionary-based Third World policy throughout the rest of the sixties.

**Independence Movements in Africa**

Given their historical, demographic, and geographical ties, South East Asia was a primary concern for China’s Third World policy. In many of these Asian
countries, independence was accompanied by well-developed social and economic infrastructures. By contrast, many newly independent African states were open to new social and economic models. Thus, African decolonisation contributed to China’s revolutionary zeal in that it provided a rare opportunity for China to put its new revolutionary-based policy into practice.

Chinese leaders felt that the modern Chinese revolutionary experience provided them with the insight to understand and deal with the problems of the African continent. Moreover, they felt that knowledge of this Chinese revolution could help Africans deal with African problems. At one point, Chinese leaders actually proposed to teach Africans Chinese history so that the Africans might better understand African conditions:

Africa itself looks like the seven powers of [China’s] Warring States [403 BC to 221 BC] with its Nasser, Nkrumah, Hussein [sic], Sekou Touré, Bourguiba and Abbas [sic], each with his own way of leading others. In general everyone is trying to sell his own goods. Africa is now like a huge political exhibition, where a hundred flowers are truly blooming, waiting there for anybody to pick. But everything must go through the experience of facts. History and realistic life can help the Africans to take the road of healthy development. We must tell them the Chinese revolutionary experience in order to reveal the true nature of both new and old colonialism. In Africa we do no harm to anyone, we introduce no illusions, for all we say is true.41

Thus, the Chinese historical experience was advanced as a useful framework within which African conditions could best be understood.42 China’s attempt to apply and universalise its experience to Africa was further revealed by Foreign Ministers Chen Yi’s remark, “our yesterday is their today and our today is their tomorrow.”43 Thus, attracted by both a perceived common past and ripe revolutionary opportunities, China attempted to implement its new Third World policy in Africa.

Two Components of the Revolution Approach
Unlike the Peaceful Coexistence approach, which was vague and fragmented, the Revolution approach was comparatively concrete and systematic. The strategy had two major components: first, China supported countries fighting for independence or struggling against reactionary regimes and, second, China advocated self-reliance.44
Component One: Symbolic and Substantive Support

China increased both symbolic and substantive support for African countries undertaking various forms of struggle. In particular, Chairman Mao Zedong, on behalf of 650 million Chinese people, declared “full sympathy and support for the heroic struggle of the African people against imperialism and colonialism, … [and expressed] firm confidence that ultimate victory would certainly be won.”

To promote the common struggle, the Chinese Communist Party reached out not only to national leaders but also to ordinary citizens. As early as 1949, China began offering Africans opportunities for higher education. Bringing with them an image of an altruistic Communist government, young African scholars thus arrived in Beijing.

Upon arrival, these African students were welcomed with extraordinary fanfare: They were carried shoulder-high, showered with flowers and confetti and bombarded with the din of traditional rejoicing, gongs and cymbals and fire-crackers. They were led before microphones to voice their demands for freedom to applauding crowds half a million strong. They were borne round in limousines like ministers and seated beside the Chinese leaders at rallies and parades. … Very humble Africans, unknown young men and women, were received with honour by the greatest personalities of the land. … [Many] … found themselves closeted, almost as a matter of course, with Mao, his Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, his Foreign Minister Chen Yi; or all of them.

Beyond the symbolic fanfare, however, China delivered substantial support for revolutionary activities. In a systematic study of China’s support for wars of national liberation in 1965 (the peak year of the Revolution strategy), Peter Van Ness examined three questions critical to China’s state policy: (1) Did the relevant state have diplomatic relations with Peking? (2) Did they vote in favour of admitting Peking to the UN in 1965? (3) Did their trade relations with Peking exceed $75 million in 1964 and 1965? Van Ness tested whether the nature of state-to-state relations correlated better than officially articulated revolutionary theory. He concluded: “Whether a foreign non-Communist country was seen to be ‘peace-loving’ or ruled by ‘reactionaries,’ or whether a Communist Party state was viewed in Peking as ‘socialist’ or denounced as ‘revisionist’ largely depended on the extent to which that country’s foreign policy coincided with China’s own.” In fact, during this period, China
endorsed revolutionary armed struggle “in only 23 of a possible total of some 120 developing countries.” Lin, however, firmly asserts that China would have supported more countries if it had been able.

Snow concurs that China offered what economic assistance it could. In the following two decades, Africa became the object of a philanthropic crusade. The Chinese government spent approximately US$2 billion in loans, food, and aid projects. Regardless of China’s own domestic problems, assistance to Africa was to be a heroic endeavour: the poor helping the poor.

Component Two: Advocacy of Self-Reliance
China’s willingness to provide economic aid to other Third World countries, even though it was far from rich in resources itself, supported the prevailing view that the struggle for political independence would be incomplete unless followed by a nationalised, self-sufficient economy. To that end, China urged newly independent states to develop strategies distinct from those of the Western imperialists or Soviet revisionists. Thus, in addition to lending symbolic and substantial support, the second component of the Revolution strategy involved advocating self-reliance. Shih explains:

One of China’s missions in the Third World is to help these nations achieve self-reliance in order to sever links with imperialism and facilitate its eventual collapse. Although China does not have the resources of a superpower, China can demonstrate its sincere support in every possible fashion and without political strings. In an anticolonial struggle, China will sometimes back all the factions involved. Third World nations are expected to appreciate truly friendly support and gradually phase out the politically motivated assistance given by other powers. This is probably why the Chinese deem South-South cooperation critical to overall development of the Third World. The notion of South-South cooperation extends the scope of self-reliance to include the Third World as a whole. Receiving aid from China is thus more desirable than receiving it from a non-Third World nation. The stress on self-reliance portrays China as a model and the Chinese presence as being morally appealing.

This message of self-reliance and self-sufficiency was brought directly to the African continent by Foreign Policy Minister Zhou Enlai during his 1963-1964 tour. The dominant theme of Zhou’s visit, the call for a new, independent, and prosperous Africa, was warmly welcomed. Six more African countries estab-
lished diplomatic relations with China in that year alone. Zhou’s tour represented a breakthrough; never before had China been so positively received.

Closer to home, however, China’s revolutionary initiatives were less favourably greeted. The major diplomatic victories that China did realise, such as the signing of border treaties with neighbouring states including Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia, were overshadowed by failures. China’s increasingly militant stance, particularly the encouragement of domestic revolutions, fuelled existing suspicions among its neighbours. Except for a few countries such as Indonesia and North Vietnam, most Asian nations responded to these hard-line policies with caution. Lin Piao’s famous 1965 article on the universal application of “People’s War” confirmed these misgivings.

**Failure of the Revolution Strategy**

By the mid 1960s, the Revolution strategy had begun to unravel. In Southeast Asia, China lost one of its last remaining allies when diplomatic ties with Indonesia were severed in response to the bloody coup of 1965. Even in Africa, initial enthusiasm for the revolutionary spirit had been replaced by a more sober appreciation of its limits. China’s hopes of revitalising the spirit at a second Asian-African conference were quashed when the conference was cancelled because of a coup in Algeria, the host country. In addition, a series of subsequent coups drove out many African leaders with close ties to China. This led to the expulsion of many Chinese diplomats and contributed to growing suspicions about China’s presence on the continent. In the end, not a single government or movement significantly expanded their power because of China’s revolutionary tactics.

According to Lin, the Revolution strategy failed for two main reasons: overreaching and miscalculation. First, by committing to a broadly defined goal of revolution, China overextended itself into too many regions. The intense ideological component of the revolutionary strategy inhibited China from establishing priorities and developing effective means to implement them. Second, by relying on an ideologically based strategy, China seriously miscalculated the complexity and diversity of the Third World. China alienated itself from many countries by insisting on a united Third World struggle against both revisionism and imperialism. China failed to consider that each country had its own conception of national interest and wanted to define its own relationship with the superpowers. Moreover, China misinterpreted international trends and its own ability to influence world events. Chinese leaders believed that the Revolution approach, like the Peaceful Coexistence approach, would encourage a movement that would inevitably lead to vast changes benefiting all...
Third World nations. When this did not happen, Chinese leaders were forced to re-evaluate and reorient their foreign policy strategy.\textsuperscript{56}

**Phase Three: The Grand Alliance**

The transition from revolutionary chaos to pragmatic reconstruction began in late 1968 and culminated in April 1969 at the First Plenum of the Ninth Chinese Communist Party Congress. The new strategy, based on the concept of a united front of China, the US and sympathetic Third World countries against the Soviet Union, ushered in a new era of Chinese foreign policy. Once again, domestic and international pressures combined to prompt the changes. Domestically, the disruptive effects of the Cultural Revolution, which had put Chinese foreign policy in limbo between 1966 and 1968, were subsiding. As the frenzy waned, Mao and other top leaders shifted their focus to more threatening developments, especially the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Soviet border clash with China in 1969. The risk of Soviet military intervention against China, rendered plausible by the upheaval from the Cultural Revolution, pushed Beijing to reassess its foreign policies.\textsuperscript{57} The reassessment followed a new analysis that identified four contradictions in the world, instead of the idealised one contradiction.\textsuperscript{58} Kim\textsuperscript{59} explains that Mao’s difficulty in identifying the single principal contradiction revealed his “agonising reappraisal” of the international system. Kim adds that the structural shift from bipolarity to multipolarity, coupled with the Sino-Soviet split, prompted Mao to examine different variations on the theme of multiple zones.\textsuperscript{60}

Ultimately, because of the superpowers’ hegemonic “contention and collusion” in both intermediate zones, Mao proclaimed it desirable to combine the two zones in order to create the broadest united front.\textsuperscript{61} The *People’s Daily* newspaper was used to reinforce this united front stand and to argue that the immense changes of the late 1960s had led to this new historical situation: for a time US imperialism remained the archenemy of the people of the world. However, many countries in its camp were no longer taking their cue from it and most countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America won independence. Meanwhile, the Soviet leadership betrayed socialism, restored capitalism at home and the Soviet Union degenerated into a social imperialist country. Then, after a succession of grave events, the Soviet Union not only turned into an imperialist superpower that threatened the world as the United States did, but also became the most dangerous source of another world war.
Thus, the United States was portrayed as on the defensive and in decline (largely as a result of the protracted Vietnam War) while the Soviet Union, as a younger imperialist power, was depicted as on the offensive and on a ruthless and insatiable incline. Henceforth, Soviet social-imperialism, rendered “more crazy, adventurist, and deceptive” than US imperialism, became China’s number one enemy.62

**Alignment with the United States**

The Soviet threat to Chinese security provided a rationale for establishing a temporary strategic alignment with the United States: the imperialist superpower that, though weakened, remained the sole power able to counter this danger.63 China’s perceptions of the Soviet Union began to coincide with the United States’ own anxiety over unprecedented Soviet expansion. Subsequent Nixon-Kissinger advances enabled China to shift its international strategy of opposing both superpowers to opposing only the Soviet Union. China then could embrace the United States as an implicit ally. Levine64 concludes that for both parties, a classical balance-of-power politics prevailed over ideology. The Sino-American rapprochement of the 1970s, culminating in the normalisation of formal diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979, was rooted in a shared strategic assessment representing the union of two parallel obsessions: America’s Cold War obsession with the Soviet Union and Maoist China’s latter-day obsession with Soviet social-imperialism.65

The Sino-American rapprochement, the new Grand Alliance, held tremendous practical implications for China.66 First, it enabled Beijing to establish new contacts with other industrialised nations. During the final years of Mao’s rule, political and economic relations flourished with the West. In 1973, for example, China purchased US$4.3 billion worth of industrial equipment from the West, the largest such move made since China accepted Soviet aid to construct its industrial base in the 1950s. Second, due to improved relations, Beijing was able to forge new contacts with pro-US developing countries. Between 1971 and 1972, twenty-four Third World countries opened or resumed diplomatic relations with China. In short, the reorientation of China’s foreign policy in the early 1970s put China in a far better position to implement its Third World policy.67 After the initial focus on the Sino-US rapprochement, Mao turned his attention to a more systematic and theoretical basis for this new arrangement.68
Three-Worlds Theory
Mao’s image of China and of the new world order finally crystallised in his Three-Worlds Theory.\(^{69}\) The Three-Worlds Theory began to develop as a response to the increasingly untenable “lean-to-one-side” policy that Mao himself had earlier pronounced. As discussed, Mao premised that policy on a Two-World Theory that he later modified by the notion of intermediate zones, comprising what he later termed the Second and Third Worlds. According to Kim, Mao’s repeated attempts in the 1960s to define the theory of intermediate zones in the face of a rapidly changing world revealed an acute crisis of Chinese identity. By the early 1970s, however, Mao finally resolved the crisis by positioning China with the Third World. Thus, within the final refinement of the theory of the intermediate zone emerged a model of the Three-Worlds.

The Three-Worlds Theory was officially pronounced by Deng Xiaoping at the Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly on April 10, 1974. Three months earlier, however, Mao first discussed this theory in an interview with Zambian President Dr K. D. Kaunda. At this meeting, Mao stated:

In my view, the United States and the Soviet Union form the first world. Japan, Europe and Canada, the middle section, belong to the second world. We are the third world. . . . The third world has a huge population. With the exception of Japan, Asia belongs to the third world. The whole of Africa belongs to the third world, and Latin America too. (Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily), “Chairman Mao’s Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds Is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism.”\(^{70}\)

Kim\(^{71}\) explains that the Three-Worlds Theory is a simplified model to define and assess the main contradictions in the international order. The theory operates as a geopolitical compass for China to establish its rightful place in the world. Like the Wallerstein world-system model, which divides the global political economy into core, semiperiphery, and periphery, the Three-Worlds Theory also makes a tripartite division of the globe: the First World of two superpowers in predatory competition or collusion; the Third World of developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America; the Second World of Northern developed countries in between. Kim\(^{72}\) captures the essence of the theory in the following synopsis:

Stripped to its core, Mao’s Three-Worlds Theory is a theory of anti-hegemonism designed to strengthen the weak and the poor (includ-
ing China) to overcome the strong and the rich. It envisions a united front strategy, derived from China’s own revolutionary experience, that has been extrapolated to the global setting to pit the nations of the Third World against those of the First in an unfolding struggle to transform the postwar international system. Although the theory calls for a dual-adversary approach directed against both superpowers, in practice the Soviet Union has often been singled out as the greater threat to world peace.\footnote{73}

The Three-Worlds Theory served different purposes at different times.\footnote{74} While Kim interrogates Mao’s use of Third Worldism, he also cautions against its quick dismissal. Kim\footnote{75} warns that

deconstructing the symbolism of the Third World as an independent force in world politics, if carried too far, can be just as misleading as the earlier claims on behalf of its negotiating solidarity. A more valid critique is normative and conceptual. The term ‘Third World’ is increasingly challenged by those claiming to represent that world, who prefer such terms as ‘nonaligned’ and ‘South’ to a designation they see as unwittingly legitimating a hierarchy in the global political system. Without completely rejecting this critique … the label ‘Third World’ [endures] partly because it persists in Chinese policy pronouncements and partly because it is emblematic of the common identity and shared aspiration that still link the countries and peoples of the poor South in an essential but elusive struggle to escape from poverty and underdevelopment.

It initially served as a theoretical underpinning for the drastic shift in China’s foreign policy. It also negated any misgivings some Third World nations felt about the rapprochement and the subsequent close relations between China and the United States. Soon, however, the theory became a convenient tool to justify China’s focus on the Soviet Union. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Three-Worlds Theory supported the Grand Alliance strategy with the United States, which strongly influenced the development of China’s Third World policy.\footnote{76}

The Grand Alliance strategy affected China’s Third World policy in two main ways. First, the strategy tied China’s Third World policy closer to its concerns regarding the two superpowers. As China’s relations with the two superpowers changed, so did its Third World policy. As a result, China’s Third
World policy became less coherent. Second, under the Grand Alliance strategy, China tended to judge other Third World nations according to their degree of “Soviet connections.”77 Supporters of the Soviet Union were enemies and those who were not were allies.78

**Demise of the Grand Alliance**

Within a few years, three fundamental limitations of the Grand Alliance strategy began to surface. First, the strategy proved to be too simplistic. By insisting on the anti-Soviet criterion, many Third World states were alienated. By focusing largely on the single anti-Soviet factor, this strategy, like the Revolution approach, underestimated many developing nations’ will to determine the nature of their own foreign relations. Second, the increasing parallels between Chinese and American policy on many Third World issues, especially those involving regional disputes, incited suspicions and resentment from many who viewed these parallels as evidence of China’s increasing deviation from its proclaimed Third World position.79 However, as the strategy distanced China from many potential Third World allies, it further attached China to the United States. Thus, the third and perhaps the most serious flaw of the plan was the over-reliance on compatible and sustainable relations with the US that, in the end, left China somewhat isolated. In the early days of the Reagan administration, any illusions of a Sino-American partnership were quickly exposed as the new American government took an increasingly pro-Taiwanese stance, accompanied by a revived US-Soviet rapprochement. While this new US stance did not escalate into a major confrontation, it did signify the beginning of China’s disenchantment with the Grand Alliance Approach.

**Dropping the Grand Alliance**

Above all else, the most important motive for dropping the Grand Alliance stemmed from China’s increasing concentration on domestic reform and modernisation.80 With the main benefit of the strategy, the normalisation of diplomatic relations with the US, now exhausted, the continuation of the policy would only increase costs with no return. Moreover, to invest huge resources in direct conflict with the Soviet Union became counterproductive. To continue to distinguish between pro and anti-Soviet states only limited China’s expanding relations. Moreover, harsh anti-Soviet propaganda now seemed outdated as the domestic scene de-radicalised. Indeed, internal affairs took precedence, particularly in the two years immediately following the deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in 1976. In fact, due to the serious domestic situation in the immediate post-Mao period, Beijing was in no position, militarily or other-
wise, to employ provocative tactics. Thus, for a while China assumed a relative-
ly passive position in which it remained before taking its first step in the post-
Mao years of foreign policy.  

Conclusions

During the Maoist reign, China’s definition of its place in the world under-
went a protracted struggle. The 1950s witnessed a dialogue between the two-
camp theory and the theory of the intermediate zone, as China made its dip-
lomatic debut with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence at the Bandung
conference. The spirit of Bandung, however, was short-lived. As China con-
tinued to search for a place in the rapidly evolving international system, revo-
lutionary tactics seemed more promising. The identity crisis of the 1960s, evi-
dent in China’s repeated efforts to define the theory of the intermediate zone,
was manifested in the break with the Soviet Union, in the conflicts with neigh-
bouring nations, and in the loss of credibility on the African continent. Finally,
however, China made peace with itself as a member of the Third World. Chi-
na’s foreign policy may thus be seen as an adjustment of diplomatic struggles
- of conflict, competition, coexistence, and cooperation - whose focus shifts
from time to time, place to place, and actor to actor.  

Endnotes

1  P. Snow, The Star Raft: China’s Encounter with Africa (London: The Bath Press,
1988), xiii.
2  In fact, seventy-five years before Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape of Good
Hope to establish a Portuguese empire, the court of the Ming dynasty had repeat-
edly sent expeditions across the Indian Ocean to the ports of the East African
coast. For a closer look at the nature and depth of these historical linkages, see J.
J. L. Duyvendak, China’s Discovery of Africa: Lectures Given at the University of
London on January 22 and 23, 1947 (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1949); T. Filesi,
China and Africa in the Middle Ages (London: Frank Cass, 1972); A. Hutchison,
China’s African Revolution (London: Hutchinson, 1975); J. D. Fage, A History of
Africa (London: Hutchinson, 1978); R. Portères and J. Barrau, “Origins, Develop-
ment and Expansion of Agricultural Techniques,” in General History of Africa I:
Methodology and African Prehistory, ed. J. Ki-Zerbo (Paris: United Nations Edu-
cational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1981), 687-705; N. M. Sheriff,
“Nubia before Napata (-3100 to -750),” in General History of Africa II: Ancient Civ-

3 P. Snow, Star Raft, xiii.


8 A. Ogunsanwo, China’s Policy in Africa, 3.

9 Kim (“Mao Zedong and China’s Changing World View,” 20-21) explains that the Law of Contradictions is a central idea in Mao’s world view. Mao’s philosophy of life revolved around the belief that contradiction is inherent in the social process itself and without it no social progress will occur. Every contradiction represents an objective reality. To resolve contradiction is to engage in a protracted struggle because, as the moving force in nature, contradictions rise, resolve, and rise again. In the relationship between various contradictions, one and only one is the principal contradiction that necessarily determines the development of the others. In every given situation, the crucial task of leadership is first to identify and then to resolve the principal contradiction. The remaining problems (the secondary contradictions) can easily be solved once subordinated to the resolution of the principal contradiction.


11 Yahuda, China’s Role in World Affairs, 46.

12 Ibid., 106.


14 Mao launched his concept of imperialism as a “paper tiger” in an interview with Anna Louise Strong. Mao stated, “The atom bomb is a paper tiger used by the U.S. reactionaries to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact isn’t…. All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long range point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful…. U.S. reactionaries, like all reactionaries in history, do not have much strength…. Although the Chinese people still face many difficulties and will long suffer hardships from the joint attacks of U.S. imperialism and the Chinese reactionaries, the day will come when these reactionaries are defeated and we are victorious. The reason is simply this: The reactionaries represent reaction, we represent progress” (Extracts from Mao’s Interview with Anna Louise Strong, August 1946, as cited by Hsuan Chi, IV: 1192-93 as cited by S. R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung (New York: Praeger, 1963), 279-80).

Diplomacy on a South-South Dimension

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17 Ibid., 229.
19 Ogunsanwo, China’s Policy in Africa, 3.
22 Ibid., 66.
24 Ogunsanwo, China’s Policy in Africa, 3.
25 Cooley, East Wind over Africa, 11.
26 Ibid., 3.
27 Yahuda, China’s Role in World Affairs, 46.
29 The Bandung conference marked the first opportunity for leaders of the six participating African states, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (later Ghana), Liberia, Libya and Sudan to meet the rulers of Communist China (Ogunsanwo, China’s Policy in Africa, 8). These meetings were followed by Chinese efforts to renew diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts that had begun over 500 years ago. As Ogunsanwo points out, in 1956, one year after the conference, Chinese cultural missions visited Egypt, the Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia and Ethiopia. China also made commercial inroads into Africa with large cotton purchases from Egypt, followed by its first commercial contracts with other African countries, beginning with the Sudan and Morocco. On the diplomatic front, China succeeded in obtaining recognition from Egypt in May 1956 and the first Chinese embassy in Africa was established in Cairo. Ambassador Ch’en Chia-k’ang was sent to Cairo, where he remained until December 1965. From Cairo, China’s diplomats began to follow the situation on the continent.
30 Yahuda, China’s Role in World Affairs, 46.
31 Lin, “China’s Third World Policy,” 231.
33 Ibid., 55.
34 Lin, “China’s Third World Policy,” 231.
36 Ibid., 57-58.
37 In 1959, the Soviet Union refused to supply China with a sample atomic bomb. A Test Ban treaty was signed in 1963. Undaunted, in 1964 China tested its first device.
38 Ibid., 59.
39 Yahuda, Towards the End of Isolationism, 125.
40 Lin, “China’s Third World Policy,” 231.
41 Yahuda, Towards the End of Isolationism, 125.
42 According to Yahuda (China’s Role in World Affairs, 126), “it is critically important to note that China’s didactic intentions did not call upon the Chinese to direct and instruct the Africans. Even though Peking was perceived as the true source of Marxism-Leninism and as the centre of principled opposition to imperialism, there was no sign that China’s leaders sought to … direct its member constituents.
… The Chinese position was still country-centred. … Mao had never practised the export of revolution.”

43 Yahuda, *Towards the End of Isolationism*, 125.
47 Snow, *Star Raft*, 73.
49 Ibid., 159.
50 Yahuda cautions that perhaps Van Ness went too far in this conclusion. He believes that China’s foreign policy concerns went beyond those of narrow state interest.
52 Snow, *Star Raft*, 144-185.
53 The Tanzanian-Zambian Railway, initiated in 1965 and completed in 1975 (two years ahead of schedule), stands as China’s most significant accomplishment on the continent. The “Tan-Zam” remains not only the longest railway in Africa (1,860 kilometres), but also the longest railway completed anywhere in the world since the end of the Second World War.
54 Ibid., 145.
56 Lin, “China’s Third World Policy,” 234-235.
58 According to Mao, the four major contradictions in the world now were: (1) oppressed nations vs. imperialism and social-imperialism; (2) the proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie in the capitalist and revisionist countries; (3) imperialist vs. social-imperialist countries; and (4) socialist countries vs. imperialism and social-imperialism (Kim, “Mao Zedong and China’s Changing World View,” 32).
59 Ibid., 32-33.
60 Mao’s different variations on the theme of multiple zones included: (1) the superpower zone, comprised of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism; (2) the socialist zone, made up of all Socialist countries; (3) the first intermediate zone, including Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and (4) the second intermediate zone, representing the major capitalist countries in the East and the West, except the two super powers (Kim, “Mao Zedong and China’s Changing World View,” 33).
61 Ibid., 32-33.
62 Ibid., 33.
63 Levine, “Chinese Foreign Policy,” 63-86.
64 Ibid., 63-86.
65 Ibid., 167-168.
67 Ibid., 234-235.
69 Ibid., 183-184.
While acknowledging the variety of purposes the Three-Worlds Theory served, Kim critiques Mao’s construction of Third Worldism and concludes it “was more symbolic than substantive.” He states, “The cleavages in the South between fast-growing and stagnant, small and large, coastal and landlocked, left and right, and democratic and authoritarian made any claim of a unified Third World movement seem a curious mixture of rhetoric and wishful thinking…. The uneven and differentiated performance in economic growth and social equity has introduced a measure of distortion to the holistic image of the Third World.” S. Kim, “China and the Third World in the Changing World Order,” in *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. S. S. Kim (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 129.

Ibid., 129.


Ibid., 234-235.

Ibid., 234-235.

Ibid., 234-235.


Kim, “Mao Zedong and China’s Changing World View,” 21, 34.
Part III.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY
In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in America on 9/11, Americans asked themselves, “Why do they hate us?” The attacks underscored the importance of public diplomacy. As American Congressman Henry Hyde noted during one of the congressional hearings, “the perceptions of foreign publics have domestic consequences.” American President George Bush echoed the sense of urgency when he said: “We have to do a better job of telling our story.”

In short order, a flurry of activity started with the aim of getting America’s message out to the world. The US State Department put a veteran advertising executive in charge of America’s public diplomacy initiative. Both the Senate and House held hearings, passing the new “Freedom Promotion Act of 2002,” which injected $497 million annually into the budget of public diplomacy. First the Pentagon, then the White House, established special offices to help with America’s public diplomacy initiative.

With such a concerted effort at the highest levels of the American government to win the hearts and minds of foreign publics, officials expected increased international understanding and support. Instead, the opposite happened. America’s intensified public diplomacy initiative resulted in decreased support for American policies.¹ Much has been made of the rift between the US and its major European allies, yet American support declined in Asian, African and Latin American countries as well. In the Arab world, where the US conducted the most intensive public diplomacy, anti-American sentiment grew rapidly.

The immediate explanation for declining support was the Bush administration’s war on terrorism and the American-led war in Iraq. However, the primary purpose of public diplomacy is to garner support from foreign publics for political policies. To be effective, public diplomacy must work not only in times of peace, but also in times of conflict. In fact, during times of conflict, garnering foreign support is even more imperative.

The critical question is: How did America’s efforts to intensify its public diplomacy result in a decrease of foreign public support for America?

Answering this question is particularly relevant to diplomacy and intercultural communication. Public diplomacy appears to entail more than translating official messages and giving them the widest possible dissemination to a foreign audience. While translation may overcome the language barrier, it may
not overcome the cultural barrier. Just as culture shapes the communication of a people, it appears that culture shapes the public diplomacy of a nation.

Many of the American public diplomacy initiatives reflect a uniquely American cultural style of communication, public relations and advertising. Although the American style resonated positively with the American public, it resonated negatively with foreign publics. This difference in perception would not be a problem if it were possible to segment audiences. However, today’s global media and technology have made public diplomacy an open communication forum; one can no longer segment the domestic public from foreign publics.

Thus, in addition to crossing the language hurdle, it appears equally critical that effective public diplomacy bridge different cultural styles so that a nation’s public diplomacy positively resonates with foreign publics as well as with one’s domestic public. If a nation does not address the asymmetry of cultural styles, its public diplomacy efforts may inadvertently magnify differences between the domestic and foreign publics and amplify international tensions.

This appears to be what happened with recent American public diplomacy. The more America intensified its efforts – relying exclusively on American-style public diplomacy – the wider the gap became between the domestic and foreign publics. Instead of increased understanding and support, there was increased misunderstanding and tension. Instead of achieving greater international unity, divisions grew and America became increasingly isolated within the international community. None of this was intended. This opposite result, based on asymmetry of cultural styles of public diplomacy, is the unintended consequence of crisis public diplomacy.

The purpose of this paper is to explore this issue. The first section contrasts the American cultural communication style with other styles. The second section identifies the cultural features of an American style of public diplomacy that resonate positively with the American public, yet negatively with foreign publics. The concluding section explores how an asymmetry of cultural styles can produce the unintended consequences of crisis public diplomacy.

The American Style of Communication

Scholars have distinguished cultures in several ways. This section briefly highlights some of the salient features of the American cultural style of communication. Although America is rapidly becoming a more multicultural society, the cultural features mentioned here characterise communication patterns still prominent in the American media and society.
Low-Context and High-Context Cultures

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, sometimes referred to as the “father of intercultural communication,” characterised American culture as “low-context.” He distinguished low and high context cultures by the amount of meaning imbedded in the code versus the context. Low-context cultures tend to place more meaning in the language use or message itself and very little meaning in the context. For this reason, communication tends to be specific, explicit, and analytical. Chen and Starosta pointed out that low-context cultures tend to use a direct verbal-expression style; people tend to directly express their opinions and intend to persuade others to accept their viewpoints. In analysing messages, low-context cultures tend to focus on what was said in the words and phrasing.

In contrast, cultures found throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Arab world have a more high-context communication style. In speaking of high-context cultures, Hall states, “most of the information is either in the physical context or internalised in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.” For high-context cultures, what was said cannot be understood by the words alone; one has to look at who said it, when they said it, where they said it, how they said it, the circumstances in which they said it, and to whom they said it. Each variable helps define the overall meaning of the communication event. Thus, in high-context exchanges, much of the “burden of meaning” appears to fall on the listener. In low-context cultures, the burden of meaning falls on the speaker to convey accurately and thoroughly through the message.

Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

Hall also spoke of the American culture as monochronic in terms of its view and use of the concept of time. As the term suggests, monochronic cultures focus on one thing at a time. In this regard, Americans tend to view time as linear (“spread out across time,” “the time line” or “time frame”). Being punctual, scheduling and planning tasks to match time frames are valued behaviours. Americans view time as a commodity (“time is money”) that can be bought (“buying time”), spent (“spending time”) or wasted (“wasting time”). Although time is technically an abstract phenomenon, in the monochronic view it becomes a concrete reality. One of the most outstanding features of a monochronic culture is that because time is so concrete and segmented, people prefer to do “one thing at a time.” Monochronic cultures view trying to do too many things at one time as chaotic.
Polychronic cultures have a non-linear view of time as circular or cyclical in nature (“what goes around, comes around,” “life is a circle”). Thus, what passes can reoccur later. Punctuality and scheduling occur, but rarely with the ardent fervour found in monochronic cultures. Schedules are not “etched in stone” but, rather, are loose as a matter of cultural habit instead of personal habit. People from polychronic cultures, as the prefix “poly-” suggests, find little difficulty doing many things at one time and often will meet with several different people - each with different agendas - at the same time. Because time is not linear or segmented, matching specific activities with specific time frames is not necessary. Times and activities are fluid.

Direct and Indirect Communication
David Levine spoke of the American cultural preference for direct communication. Direct communication works to strip language of its expressive overtones and suggestive allusions,” Levine said. “It aims for the precise representation of fact, technique, or expectation.” The direct style of Americans is evident in many common expressions such as “Say what you mean,” “Don’t beat around the bush,” and “Get to the point.” The direct verbal communication style strives for emotional neutrality or objectivity. Openness and clarity are valued.

The indirect style of other cultures deliberately uses affect and ambiguity to create subtle nuances among messages and meaning. As Levine noted, indirect communication “can provide a superb means for conveying affect. By alluding to shared experiences and sentiments, verbal associations can express and evoke a wealth of affective responses.” In cultures where “saving face” is important, one’s skill is not in how directly one can state criticism, but rather in how cleverly one can disguise it.

Linear and Non-linear Thought Patterns
Anthropologist Dorothy Lee spoke of how different cultures support different thought patterns: linear and non-linear. Carley Dodd characterised American culture as having a linear thought pattern. As members of a linear culture, Americans tend to stress beginnings and ends of events, to prefer unitary themes, and to rely heavily on empirical evidence. They tend to present points sequentially and to follow an underlying organisational structure. For example, this article, with its introduction, body and conclusion, is very much in keeping with the linear progression of ideas. The use of subheadings further illustrates the practice of segmenting the whole into parts and then reconnecting them sequentially, following what is culturally defined as a “logical order.”
Non-linear cultures, says Dodd, are characterised by the “simultaneous bombardment and processing of a variety of stimuli so that people think in images, not just words.” The non-linear thought framework typically has multiple themes, is expressed in oral terms and heightened by nonverbal communication. The visual/aural medium of television, with its simultaneous bombardment of the viewer with multiple messages, is analogous to communication in non-linear cultures, whereas the linear pattern of written texts is more representative of linear cultures. People comfortable with the non-linear style move easily between ambiguity and fluid metaphors to create meaningful associations. For them, to separate the parts from the whole is to lose the meaning and emotional resonance of the communication experience. From the linear perspective, the idea of multiple themes without an ordered pattern or underlying structure is perceived as illogical or disorganised.

Literate and Oral/Aural Cultures
The American culture also reflects many features common to print or literate cultures as opposed to oral/aural cultures. Literate dominant cultures tend to place a higher premium on accuracy and precision in a message than on symbolism and emotional resonance. The focus on accuracy may relate to the historical purpose of the written word - to record, preserve, and transmit information over time and space. Literate societies also favour evidence, reasoning and analysis over what their members view as a less rational, more intuitive approach. This contrasts with the logic of oral cultures, where a single anecdote can constitute adequate evidence for a conclusion and a specific person or act can embody the beliefs and ideals of the entire community.

In oral cultures, a greater interplay occurs between the audience, speaker and message. In the tradition of Cicero, the speech should be “agreeable to the ear.” Aural ornaments such as formulas, humour, exaggeration, parallelism, phonological elaboration, special vocabulary, puns, metaphor and hedges are critical. Style overrides substance; an oral message may be valued more for its affective power to link an audience than for its cognitive merits. Such lapse in substance, however, is rarely a problem because the audience actively participates with the speaker to construct the meaning. Speakers strive for an emotional and participatory response from their audience. The audience, in turn, helps fill in the meaning. As Henle noted, auditors will “go to considerable lengths to make sense of an oral message.” Similarly, Gold states, “the audience cooperates with the speaker by trying to understand the meaning or ‘gist’ rather than the actual content.” Thus, the audience, not just the speaker, works to create the meaning of the message.
Individualist and Collectivist Cultures

Triandis, Brislin and Hui discussed the differences between collectivist and individualist cultures, characterising the American culture as individualist. Individualist cultures value the goals of the individual over group or collective goals. In individualist cultures, a person tends to look primarily after his own interests or that of his immediate nuclear family. Personal accomplishments are important and individuals will take advantage of opportunities for advancement even if it means sacrificing personal relations. Group cohesion, without expressed consent, is often negatively interpreted as group pressure that impinges on the individual freedom. As Triandis et al. noted, individualist cultures tend to prefer horizontal (peer) relationships to vertical (superior-subordinate) relationships. Also, relationships tend to be utilitarian-based; individuals must perceive some benefit to “joining” or gaining “membership” to a group. Because such utilitarian relationships tend to be short-term or transitory, they are often explicitly defined via public statements or written contracts.

Collectivist cultures tend to value goals of the collective over goals of the individual. Triandis et al. observed that people from collectivist cultures “pay primary attention to the needs of their group and will sacrifice opportunities for personal gain.” Distinctions between “in-groups” and “out-groups” are clearly defined and play a dominant role. Because the in-group protects the individual, the in-group receives the individual’s loyalty while out-groups tend to be regarded with suspicion. Relationships tend to be long-term, based on trust or historical context, and often implicitly acknowledged by both parties. While collectivists strongly encourage cooperation within the in-group, they tend to be “poor joiners” of new groups. Similarly, people from collectivist cultures tend to be more comfortable with power differences and vertical relationships.

Doing versus Being Cultures

Anthropologist Florence Kluckhohn described another dominant cultural divide with her distinction between activity-orientated and being-oriented cultures. An activity orientation places a premium on “measurable accomplishments through action.” Edward Stewart refers to the activity orientation as “doing” and categorises the American culture as a doing culture, with its emphasis on the importance of achievement, visible accomplishments and measurements of achievement. Such common American expressions as “How are you doing?” or “What’s happening?” express the American proclivity towards “doing.”

In contrast to “doing” cultures are the “being” cultures. Okabe observed that the American emphasis on achievement and development are not as important in a traditional vertical society (a “being” culture) where an individ-
ual’s birth, family background, age and rank are much more important. As he stated, for an individual of the “being” culture, “what he is” carries greater significance than “what he does.”

**Future-Oriented versus Past-Oriented Cultures**

Kluckhohn also distinguished between future-oriented and past-oriented cultures as a value orientation related to time. Future-oriented cultures, such as the American culture, tend to place a premium on change and innovation. New is good, and the promise of the future is better and brighter. One looks “ahead.” Looking “backward” carries a negative connotation similar to “being stuck in the past.” History serves as a “reference point” of departure for those moving forward. Often future-oriented Americans tend to become frustrated with historical detail, impatiently dismissing it as “irrelevant” or time-consuming. They tend to engage more easily in such future-oriented activities as forecasting, scheduling, planning and strategising. The future tense of the verb “will” is used generously, if not forcefully, in American communication: “I will ...” is often a signal of defiant personal resolve to overcome the past and meet future challenges.

In contrast, past-orientated cultures view with reverence the historical continuity of human existence. The past informs the present to such a degree that it is difficult to understand the present apart from the past. The historical context of any action is critical and thus discussion tends to draw on the past for meaning. Any comprehensive, “meaningful” understanding of a situation demands that it be viewed across the entirety of its existence. The future can also carry religious significance that bars its liberal use. For many Muslims, knowledge of future events is not the prerogative of mankind, but of God. Thus, whereas the future-oriented American speaker may use “I will” to stress personal resolve, the Muslim audience may view it as arrogant if not naive.

In summary, the American culture has numerous features and characteristics that dramatically contrast with those of other cultures. Many of the contrasting cultural perspectives presented here are typical of cultures throughout Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Arab world. *Table 1, Contrasting Cultural Patterns of Communication*, summarises these differences.
The American Style of Public Diplomacy

The American style of public diplomacy reflects the dominant American cultural style of communication. This is hardly surprising, given that communication is a pivotal feature inherent in public diplomacy activities. If one looks at American definitions of public diplomacy, communication is central.

According to the US State Department, “Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences.” American Ambassador Pamela Smith’s characterisation of public diplomacy reflects the earlier US Information Service definition of public diplomacy, namely, “to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts abroad.” Again, “dialogue” implies communication. Hans Tuch defined public diplomacy as “Official government efforts to shape the communications environment overseas in which American foreign policy is played out.”

Ambassador Smith listed the primary activities of public diplomacy: “to explain and advocate U.S. policies in terms that are credible and meaningful in foreign cultures; provide information about the U.S., its people, values, and institutions; build lasting relationships and mutual understanding through the exchange of people and ideas; and advise U.S. decision-makers on foreign attitudes and their implications for U.S. policies.” In the State Department’s Dictionary of International Relations Terms, public diplomacy’s “chief instruments are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, radio and television” - all are communication channels or media. Professor Glen Fisher, writing in 1979, was perhaps the most succinct in stating the link: “public diplomacy, which is, of course, a communications process.”

Given this link between communication and public diplomacy, it is not surprising that when the crisis of September 11th hit America, the State Department appointed a communication professional, Charlotte Beers, to head America’s public diplomacy efforts. Beers, a veteran advertising executive with more than forty years of experience, employed many of the communication tools of the trade. This included American style marketing, advertising, focus group research and even attempts at branding America’s image.

Putting a communication professional in charge of American public diplomacy was the first step in what appears to be the development of a uniquely American style of public diplomacy. Features of this American style are reflected in the goals, strategic approach and message appeals of American public diplomacy.
First, the goal of American public diplomacy focused on disseminating America’s message. If one looks at the broad strategic goals stated by Beers, all focus on information transfer:

- The first is to inform our many publics of the content of U.S. policy — accurately, clearly and swiftly;
- Next, re-present the values and beliefs of the people of America, which inform our policies and practices;
- Third, define and provide dimension to the role that democracy plays in engendering prosperity, stability, and opportunity; and
- Fourth, communicate our concern for and support of education for the younger generations.

This information-centred goal is characteristic of the “transmission view” of communication as a linear mechanistic model that focuses on the sending, giving or imparting of information. While this model reflects many of the cultural features outlined in the American cultural profile presented in the previous section, this perspective is not shared by other cultures. James Carey contrasted the “transmission” with the “ritual” view of communication. The ritual view of communication is more relationship-centred. Rather than focusing on a one-way transmission of information, cultures that use a ritual style of communication focus on two-way relationship-building strategies to create links between people. The difference is critical. Whereas the American style of information transfer resonated positively with the American public and was effective in rallying support from the American public, with other publics the transfer of impersonal information fell flat, or failed to resonate. For these cultures, without a relational base for interpreting the information, the information is meaningless.

Second, the strategy of American public diplomacy in communicating America’s message internationally with foreign publics reflected the same approach Americans use domestically with the American public. With the primary goal of information transfer, American communication campaigns tend to rely on mass media channels and advanced technology to reach the most people in the least amount of time. Noteworthy, in Beer’s statement, is the stress on conveying the information “accurately, clearly and swiftly.” This American emphasis on communication efficiency is reflected in the American use of mass media channels versus interpersonal channels of communication. For example, the telephone is faster than meeting face-to-face, thus it is used frequently. Much was made of President Bush’s “telephone diplomacy” in trying
to rally foreign support for the UN resolutions. Similarly, Americans use intensive media blitzes - in which many officials say the same thing through numerous media outlets - to reinforce their message. The Sunday morning news interviews with high-ranking administration officials echoed America’s message domestically and stimulated American domestic support; however, it is unclear whether these interviews resonated with foreign publics.

In other cultures, interpersonal communication is a more effective means for reaching people. The “personal touch” is more important than speed. Additionally, not all audiences share the American public’s familiarity and trust of the mass media in disseminating messages. If one looks at the history of American public relations and marketing, America’s growth as a nation parallels advancements in the mass media and media strategies. For example, mass-marketing techniques arose during the American industrial revolution to create a mass consumer base for the sudden increase in product supply. Not all countries use the mass media to link and create their nation as America does. Similarly, not all nations are as trusting of or dependent on the mass media as Americans for obtaining credible information. Whereas relying on the mass media is an efficient and effective medium for communicating with the American public, it may be less so for foreign publics. In fact, in cultures where interpersonal channels are preferred or where the mass media is not credible, the American public diplomacy strategy may have been ineffective, if not counterproductive, in communicating with foreign publics.

Third, the content and style of American public diplomacy messages also reflected the American cultural pattern. The American focus on message is characteristic of low-context cultures; it is the message itself that contains the meaning, not the context or audience. American officials focused on sending their message, as Undersecretary Beers stated, “accurately, clearly.” However, by not accounting for context, American officials were not able to control how foreign publics interpreted the message. For example, American officials were perplexed and alarmed by how rumours and misperceptions about American policy aims were constantly spreading despite intensive dissemination of information. Rumours speak to the power of interpersonal communication over mass media channels, while the misperceptions speak to the power of the group context to interpret or give meaning to a communication event.

“Directness” was another prominent feature of American messages. “Let me be perfectly clear,” as President Bush said in his warning to Iraq. The US wanted to force a vote on the second UN resolution, Bush explained, “so that we know where people stand. People have to show their cards.” Such an open confrontation or violation of “public face” resonates negatively with cultures.
that value indirect styles. Such directness was the basis for depictions of America as “aggressive” and a “bully.” Many foreign commentators negatively associated Bush’s directness with the “American cowboy” image and derided America’s aggressive stance. Not surprisingly, many Americans were proud of that “American cowboy” image. American Vice President Dick Cheney was not alone when he described Bush’s cowboy behaviour as “refreshing.”

Similarly characteristic of the American cultural style is a focus on “facts” and “evidence” as primary ingredients of persuasive messages. Hence, Americans tend to gather as many facts as possible and carefully construct an argument. American Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared at the UN numerous times to present the American case. Each time, he forcefully outlined in detail the specific facts in an effort to make a stronger, more compelling argument. The administration felt confident that with new and stronger facts - more evidence - it could rally foreign support. However, in other cultures, metaphors and analogies that suggest important relationships are much more persuasive than impersonal “facts.” Thus, while the facts positively resonated with the American public and reinforced domestic public support, the facts alone failed to resonate with foreign audiences. The “facts” did not persuade these audiences.

Time-focused messages are also in keeping with the American cultural profile. As members of a monochromic and linear culture, Americans tend to adhere to schedules, deadlines, time lines and other forms of time commitments. Time is an important commodity in American culture and keeping one’s time commitment is often seen as an indication of one’s character. Hence, Americans saw Iraq’s failure to meet deadlines as particularly grievous. In contrast, polychronic and non-linear cultures have a more fluid concept of time. Thus, while America tried to focus international attention on the time element as symptomatic of Iraq’s ill intentions, foreign audiences were understandably chagrined by the American rigidity and myopic focus.

The American perspective of “time” was also evident in the future-oriented messages that pervaded American public diplomacy. Americans repeatedly chastised Iraq for “stalling” and “delaying,” anathema to a culture concerned with moving forward. At times, America’s focus on “moving forward” visibly strained relations. American officials said America would “go ahead” with or without the UN or the international community. Many other past- and present-oriented cultures perceived such behaviour as “impatient” or “aggressive.” They urged America to “take the historical perspective” into account and they questioned America’s “rush” to war. Whereas the future-oriented perspective positively resonated with the American public, other publics were not swayed by America’s sense of urgency. The most prominent example of the ten-
sions caused by the differing time orientations was in the American Defence Secretary’s characterisation of “new Europe and old Europe.” Both literally and figuratively, Americans expressed their praise of the “new” and their disdain for the “old.” Ironically, however, while the American public lauded the “new” as a precursor of the future, other nations esteemed the “old” as proof of history and tradition.

These differences of goals, approach and message appeals together reflect and reinforce what appears to be an American style of public diplomacy. The features of this American style closely parallel features of an American cultural profile. However, while the American style positively resonated with the American public, it negatively resonated or failed to resonate with foreign publics that have a different cultural profile. Table 2 illustrates how foreign publics with contrasting cultures may negatively perceive the American style. Table 3 illustrates how Americans may negatively perceive the cultural style of others.

**The Unintended Consequences of Crisis Public Diplomacy**

Public diplomacy appears to entail more than simply translating official messages and giving them the widest dissemination possible to a foreign audience. While translation may overcome the language barrier, it may not overcome the cultural barrier. Just as culture shapes the communication of a people, it follows that because communication is at the core of public diplomacy, culture also shapes the public diplomacy of a nation. American public diplomacy initiatives reflect a uniquely American cultural style of communication, public relations and advertising.

Unfortunately, although the American style resonated positively with the American public, it resonated negatively with publics in other cultures. In fact, a communication style that resonates positively within one’s own culture seldom resonates well in another. According to intercultural communication theory, ethnocentric tendencies tend to reinforce the view that one’s own cultural style is not only the right way, but also the only way. Cultural differences are rarely seen as “different,” but more often as “right” and “wrong.” Consequently, while the public diplomacy style of a country may resonate positively with its own domestic public, if it is different from the style of a foreign public, it is likely either not to resonate at all (i.e., be ineffective) or to resonate negatively (be counterproductive) with foreign publics.

A nation cannot communicate with foreign publics in the same way that it communicates with its domestic public and achieve the same response. How-
ever, because of the open nature of public diplomacy, a nation cannot segment the domestic from foreign publics so that both receive different communications. What the domestic public hears, the foreign publics hear. Yet, because of an asymmetry of cultural styles, each public interprets the message differently.

The challenge of public diplomacy during crisis and conflict situations becomes the challenge of communicating effectively with culturally different publics simultaneously. Effective public diplomacy must cross the cultural hurdle so that a nation’s public diplomacy positively resonates with one’s domestic and foreign publics.

In the American example, American officials apparently saw “the problem” as a “lack of information.” Thus, they focused on supplying information - making the information available in the native language and disseminating it widely. However, by focusing on language and technical hurdles, without accounting for the cultural differences, Americans may have magnified the problem. They insured that their message reached foreign publics, but they had no control over how the foreign publics interpreted that message.

The problem may have been made worse in that America was facing a crisis or conflict situation. Traditional public diplomacy tends to focus on long-term education, culture and information programmes aimed at favourable or neutral publics. Crisis public diplomacy is distinct from traditional public diplomacy in that it often entails communicating simultaneously with multiple audiences, including hostile publics, in a rapidly changing, highly visible and competitive communication environment. Additionally, during times of conflict, rallying domestic support often means identifying a foreign enemy. If the foreign public identifies with the “foreign enemy,” efforts to demonise the enemy will only further alienate the foreign public. See Table 4 for an illustration of the continuum from traditional diplomacy to crisis public diplomacy.

The most important factor in crisis public diplomacy, however, is the asymmetry of cultural styles among publics. If there is an asymmetry of cultural styles, a nation’s efforts to intensify its public diplomacy may inadvertently magnify cultural differences between the domestic and foreign publics and amplify international misunderstandings.

For Americans, the war on terrorism and Iraq was part of the American solution to address that crisis. In response to this crisis, America intensified its public diplomacy. It tried to amplify its message through stronger language and vigorous dissemination. Because of the positive resonance, American domestic support grew. However, because of negative resonance, foreign support weakened and anti-American sentiment grew. While American officials were able to control their message domestically and achieve the public
response they wanted, it appears they lost control of their message internationally. Rather than achieving positive results, American public diplomacy efforts yielded negative results.

The more America intensified its efforts, relying exclusively on American style public diplomacy, the wider became the gap between the domestic and foreign publics. Instead of increased understanding and support, the result was increased misunderstanding and tension. Instead of achieving greater international unity, divisions became more pronounced and America became increasingly isolated within the international community. None of this was intended. This result, based on asymmetry of cultural styles of public diplomacy, is what I call the unintended consequences of crisis public diplomacy. Table 5 illustrates the process which led to increased division between domestic and foreign publics, increased tensions and misunderstandings.

### Summary and Conclusion

This essay examines how intercultural communication differences among nations can inadvertently magnify tensions during a crisis when nations rely on their own cultural style of public diplomacy to communicate with foreign publics. Beginning with posing the question of how American efforts to intensify its public diplomacy efforts resulted in declining support, public diplomacy was examined as a communication phenomenon, as opposed to a purely political phenomenon. From there, a review of cultural differences in communication styles illustrated America’s cultural style of communication. American cultural communication patterns are incorporated within the American style of public diplomacy. While this American style of public diplomacy resonated positively with the American domestic public, it resonated negatively or failed to resonate with foreign publics. This asymmetry of cultural styles produced different perceptions and responses to American public diplomacy. The more America intensified its public diplomacy efforts, the greater the gap became between America’s domestic and foreign publics. This widening gap between the domestic and foreign publics is the unintended consequence of crisis public diplomacy.
Table 1: Contrasting Cultural Patterns of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall (1976)</th>
<th>Low-Context Communication</th>
<th>High-Context Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- meaning in message</td>
<td>- meaning in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- explicit messages</td>
<td>- implicit messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- include details in message</td>
<td>- details in context, not message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- speaker responsible for message clarity</td>
<td>- listener responsible for understanding message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall (1976)</td>
<td>Monochronic Communication</td>
<td>Polychronic Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- view time as linear</td>
<td>- view time as nonlinear, can be seen as circular or cyclical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- time can be segmented (divided into measurable quantities)</td>
<td>- time not segmented, more fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- value punctuality, scheduling and planning</td>
<td>- loose adherence to scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levine (1985)</td>
<td>Direct Communication</td>
<td>Indirect Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- direct, to the point</td>
<td>- indirect, circular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- clear</td>
<td>- ambiguous, vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- objective (remain emotionally neutral)</td>
<td>- subjective (deliberately use emotion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee (1950)</td>
<td>Linear Style</td>
<td>Circular Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodd (1982)</td>
<td>- one theme</td>
<td>- may have multiple themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- clear structural organisation with beginning and end</td>
<td>- organisational structure fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- time segmented</td>
<td>- time fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triandis &amp;</td>
<td>Individualist Style</td>
<td>Collectivist Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui (1988)</td>
<td>- individual's goals valued</td>
<td>- group's goals valued over individual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- personal accomplishments valued</td>
<td>- group solidarity valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- networking among groups</td>
<td>- in-group loyalty valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- functional, utilitarian relationships maintained for one's</td>
<td>- relationships long-term, trust important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>own benefit</td>
<td>- relationship-building of paramount importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- easy to begin functional relations, easy to sever non-</td>
<td>- strong allegiance or loyalty to members of in-group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>functional relations</td>
<td>- distrustful of members of out-groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- relationships can be short-term</td>
<td>- important to preserve &quot;public face&quot; of group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- fluid boundaries between in- and out-group members</td>
<td>- dislike public confrontation, prefer private mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- value individual freedom and choice</td>
<td>- value well-defined social structure, clear roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- value equality in social relationships</td>
<td>- value hierarchical structure of superior and subordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- value horizontal communication among equals</td>
<td>roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- comfortable with vertical communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literate Style</th>
<th>Oral/Aural Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- printed, written word valued</td>
<td>- oral/aural experience valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- singular experience</td>
<td>- group experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- factual accuracy stressed</td>
<td>- imagery and sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- logic and coherence</td>
<td>- metaphors, similes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- speaker may be detached from audience</td>
<td>- emotional resonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- analytical reasoning</td>
<td>- intuitive insights, word plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- speaker and audience create the experience together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 2: How Other Cultures May View the American Communication Style Negatively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Context Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Low-Context Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- meaning in context</td>
<td>- meaning in message</td>
<td>- too direct, not subtle or diplomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- implicit messages</td>
<td>- explicit messages</td>
<td>- aggressive or condescending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- details in context, not message</td>
<td>- include details in message</td>
<td>- arrogant, insulting or naive, as they state the obvious so publicly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- listener responsible for understanding message</td>
<td>- speaker responsible for message clarity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polychronic Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Monochronic Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- view time as nonlinear, can be seen as circular or cyclical</td>
<td>- view time as linear</td>
<td>- rigid in forcing time schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- time not segmented, more fluid</td>
<td>- time can be segmented (divided into measurable quantities)</td>
<td>- not understanding the importance of human activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- loose adherence to scheduling</td>
<td>- value punctuality, scheduling and planning</td>
<td>- obsessed about time – making deadlines, sticking to deadlines and schedules, agendas, plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Direct Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- indirect, circular</td>
<td>- direct, to the point</td>
<td>- confrontational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ambiguous, vague</td>
<td>- clear</td>
<td>- no regard for “public face” – insulting, name calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- subjective (deliberately use emotion)</td>
<td>- objective (remain emotionally neutral)</td>
<td>- careless in handling relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- insensitive to others’ concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular Communication (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Linear Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- may have multiple themes</td>
<td>- one theme</td>
<td>- obsessed with only one issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- organisational structure fluid</td>
<td>- clear structural organisation</td>
<td>- unable to connect issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- time fluid</td>
<td>- with beginning and end</td>
<td>- too narrow, single-minded focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- time segmented</td>
<td>- rigid, inflexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Individualistic Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- group's goals valued over individual goals</td>
<td>- individual's goals valued over group goals</td>
<td>- narcissistic, selfish, childish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in-group loyalty valued</td>
<td>- personal accomplishments valued</td>
<td>- regarding only self and not others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- relationships long-term, trust important</td>
<td>- networking among groups</td>
<td>- insensitive to others' needs, concerns, interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- relationship-building of paramount importance</td>
<td>- functional, utilitarian relationships maintained for one's own benefit</td>
<td>- unable to work well in groups, too controlling or demanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- strong allegiance or loyalty to members of in-group</td>
<td>- easy to begin functional relations, easy to sever non-functional relations that offer no benefits</td>
<td>- untrustworthy, does not honour group loyalties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- distrustful of members of out-groups</td>
<td>- relationships can be short-term</td>
<td>- unpredictable, follows own choices instead of established group norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- important to preserve &quot;public face&quot; of group</td>
<td>- tend to trust strangers</td>
<td>- disruptive, has little regard for allegiances and group norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dislike public confrontation, prefer private mediation</td>
<td>- value individual freedom and choice</td>
<td>- manipulative, tries to use relationships for own benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value well-defined social structure, clear roles</td>
<td>- value equality in social relationships</td>
<td>- disrespectful of established social positions or status (tries to treat everyone the same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value hierarchal structure of superior and subordinate roles</td>
<td>- value horizontal communication among equals</td>
<td>- dangerous, behaviour not regulated by group controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- comfortable with vertical communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>- disloyal, does not honour commitments if they violate self-interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral/Aural Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Literate Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral/aural experienced valued</td>
<td>- printed, written word valued</td>
<td>- untrustworthy, does not keep his word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- group experience</td>
<td>- singular experience</td>
<td>- insensitive, disregards human aspect of situation or issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- imagery and sounds</td>
<td>- factual accuracy stressed</td>
<td>- obsessed with facts and statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- metaphors, similes</td>
<td>- logic and coherence</td>
<td>- unable to &quot;relate&quot; or connect with audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emotional resonance</td>
<td>- speaker may be detached from audience</td>
<td>- insulting, repeats same statements, arguments, statistics over and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- intuitive insights, word plays</td>
<td>- analytical reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- speaker and audience create the experience together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Oriented (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Doing Oriented (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis on social position</td>
<td>- emphasis on doing, action, acting, achievement</td>
<td>- aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- self defined by who one is in relation to others</td>
<td>- emphasis on measurable action and products of action</td>
<td>- busy, preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- high regard or respect for social standing, regardless of achievements</td>
<td>- reward and recognition for doing and achievements</td>
<td>- disrespectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- strong tie between word and deed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Past Oriented (what is viewed positively)
- value on past (history, ancestors, culture, tradition)
- ease in seeing connection between past and current situation
- uncomfortable working with unknown or knowable future events
- difficulty conceptualising activities in future, such as planning or strategising

### Future Oriented (what is viewed positively)
- value on future (new, improved, future potential, innovation, progress, development)
- advanced (technology/research as tools)
- ease in visualising future activities or circumstances
- forward looking, advancing, progressing, changing are all positive
- courageous, willing to take risks even with unknown consequences

### Other cultures may perceive American communication negatively as….
- impatient, too much in a rush or hurry
- aggressive, pushy, arrogant
- disrespectful, unappreciative of historical context
- naive, ignorant, unwilling to learn lessons of past

### Table 3: How Americans May View Other Communication Styles Negatively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Context Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>High-Context Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- meaning in message</td>
<td>- meaning in context</td>
<td>- obtuse, confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- explicit messages</td>
<td>- implicit messages</td>
<td>- buries message in riddles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- include details in message</td>
<td>- details in context, not message</td>
<td>- implies messages with unclear conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- speaker responsible for message clarity</td>
<td>- listener responsible for understanding message</td>
<td>- perhaps uses manipulation or deceit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- doesn’t stick to the facts of the case but goes off on tangents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- not clear, articulate, or persuasive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monochronic Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Polychronic Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- view time as linear</td>
<td>- view time as nonlinear, can be seen as circular or cyclical</td>
<td>- disorganised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- time can be segmented with measurable quantities</td>
<td>- time not segmented, more fluid</td>
<td>- doesn’t understand the importance of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value punctuality, scheduling and planning</td>
<td>- loose adherence to scheduling</td>
<td>- unable to plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- unable to follow set schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Indirect Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- direct, to the point</td>
<td>- indirect, circular</td>
<td>- unclear, coded messages, difficult to understand the other’s meaning or intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- clear</td>
<td>- ambiguous, vague</td>
<td>- overly emotional, unprofessional display of emotions inappropriate or exaggerated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- objective (remain emotionally neutral)</td>
<td>- subjective (deliberately use emotion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Style (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>Circular Communication (what is viewed positively)</td>
<td>How Americans may view Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- one theme</td>
<td>- may have multiple themes</td>
<td>- chaotic, haphazard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- clear structural organisation with beginning and end</td>
<td>- organisational structure fluid</td>
<td>- priorities unclear, if any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- time segmented</td>
<td>- time fluid</td>
<td>- ineffective or inefficient by trying to do too much at one time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circular Style (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Linear Communication (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- chaotic, haphazard</td>
<td>- clear structural organisation with beginning and end</td>
<td>- priorities unclear, if any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- priorities unclear, if any</td>
<td>- time segmented</td>
<td>- ineffective or inefficient by trying to do too much at one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ineffective or inefficient by trying to do too much at one time</td>
<td>- multiple themes</td>
<td>- unable to stick to established time schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualistic Style (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Collectivist Style (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- individual’s goals valued over group goals</td>
<td>- group’s goals valued over individual goals</td>
<td>- too dependent on others for making decisions or taking action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- personal accomplishments valued</td>
<td>- group solidarity valued</td>
<td>- relationships that are illogical, unproductive, or detrimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- networking among groups</td>
<td>- in-group loyalty valued</td>
<td>- unable to severe relations even if they obviously offer no benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- functional, utilitarian relationships maintained for one’s own benefit</td>
<td>- relationships long-term, trust important</td>
<td>- subservient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- easy to begin functional relations, easy to sever non-functional relations that offer no benefits</td>
<td>- relationship building paramount importance</td>
<td>- loyal without reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- relationships can be short-term</td>
<td>- strong allegiance or loyalty to members of in-group</td>
<td>- tolerates inappropriate or illicit behaviours, especially from leaders (ie, corruption, bribery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tend to trust strangers</td>
<td>- distrustful of members of out-groups</td>
<td>- inefficient decision making in groups (consensus building time consuming, easier to use take vote and majority rule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value individual freedom and choice</td>
<td>- important to preserve “public face” of group</td>
<td>- undemocratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value equality in social relationships</td>
<td>- dislike public confrontation, prefer private mediation</td>
<td>- solicitous with superiors, insensitive with subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value horizontal communication among equals</td>
<td>- value well-defined social structure, clear roles</td>
<td>- too dependent on others for making decisions or taking action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- status conscious</td>
<td>- value hierarchal structure of superior and subordinate roles</td>
<td>- relationships that are illogical, unproductive, or detrimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lazy, unwilling to pitch in and do his share</td>
<td>- comfortable with vertical communication</td>
<td>- unable to severe relations even if they obviously offer no benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- uncooperative</td>
<td></td>
<td>- subservient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing Oriented (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Being Oriented (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis on doing, action, acting, achievement</td>
<td>- emphasis on social position</td>
<td>- status conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis on measurable action and products of action</td>
<td>- self defined by who one is in relation to others</td>
<td>- lazy, unwilling to pitch in and do his share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- reward and recognition for doing and achievements</td>
<td>- high regard or respect for social standing, regardless of achievements</td>
<td>- uncooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- strong tie between word and deed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Oriented (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>Past Oriented (what is viewed positively)</th>
<th>How Americans may view Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- value on future</td>
<td>- value on past (history, ancestors, roots, culture, tradition)</td>
<td>- backward, stuck, delaying, stalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- new, improved, future potential, innovation, progress, development</td>
<td>- ease in seeing connection between past and current situation</td>
<td>- unable to accept change or adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- advanced (technology and research as tools)</td>
<td>- uncomfortable working with unknown or knowable future events</td>
<td>- unable to plan effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ease in visualizing future activities or circumstances</td>
<td>- difficulty conceptualising activities in future, such as planning or strategising</td>
<td>- cowardly, unable to venture into the unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- courageous, willing to take risks even with unknown consequences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R.S. Zaharna Asymmetry of Cultural Styles
### Literate Style (what is viewed positively)
- printed, written word valued
- singular experience
- factual accuracy stressed
- logic and coherence
- speaker may be detached from audience
- analytical reasoning

### Oral/Aural Style (what is viewed positively)
- oral/aural experienced valued
- group experience
- imagery and sounds
- metaphors, similes
- emotional resonance
- intuitive insights, word plays
- speaker and audience create the experience together

### How Americans may view Other
- doesn’t respect written documents, even if official or legal
- uses illogical or irrational arguments
- Demagogue, verbose
- plays loose with the facts
- given to overstatements or exaggerations
- uses faulty reasoning
- dense, frustration because “they” just don’t get it or understand the obvious

### Table 4: From Traditional Diplomacy to Crisis Public Diplomacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Diplomacy</th>
<th>Public Diplomacy</th>
<th>Traditional Public Diplomacy</th>
<th>Crisis Public Diplomacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>source</strong> - government</td>
<td><strong>source</strong> - government</td>
<td><strong>timeframe</strong> - long term</td>
<td><strong>timeframe</strong> - immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>audience</strong> – foreign governments</td>
<td><strong>audience</strong> – foreign governments and public</td>
<td><strong>focus</strong> – information, culture, education</td>
<td><strong>focus</strong> – political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>message</strong> – political, economic, military national interests</td>
<td><strong>message</strong> - public interests</td>
<td><strong>public</strong> – favourable</td>
<td><strong>public</strong> – hostile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>channel</strong> – controlled, contained, secret, private (diplomatic channels)</td>
<td><strong>channel</strong> – uncontrolled, open, public (mass media and public forums)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Crisis Public Diplomacy: How Intensifying Public Diplomacy Initiatives Creates Division between Domestic and Foreign Publics

- America 9/11 – links crisis to public diplomacy; perceptions of foreign publics have domestic consequences
- Asymmetry of cultural styles – creates difference perceptions and response to public diplomacy initiative
- Unintended consequence of crisis public diplomacy - greater division between domestic and foreign public, increased tensions and misunderstandings.

America initiates intensive crisis public diplomacy effort – uses American cultural style in open communication environment

America style public diplomacy positively resonates with domestic public – domestic support increases

America style public diplomacy negatively resonates with foreign public – international support decreases
Endnotes

1 Several studies, including those conducted by the Pew Research Centre, the German Marshall Fund, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the University of Michigan, cite a precipitous drop in favorable support for the United States around the globe, among traditional American allies as well as new adversaries. *The Economist* (2 January 2003) has written of similar findings in a report “Dealing with a Superpower,” as has the Council on Foreign Relations, *Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform* (2 August 2002), available online (http://www.cfr.org/pubs/Task-force_final2-19.pdf).


8 Ibid., 32.

9 Ibid., 29.

10 Ibid., 32.


12 Carley Dodd, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, 1982).

13 Ibid., 162.


16 Cicero cited in ibid, 160.


Ibid., 273.


Planning Group for Integration of USIA into the Department of State, June 20, 1997.


The terrorist attacks of 9/11 have brought an old problem into new focus: how to unite a population potentially divided along racial, ethnic and denominational fault lines. In the light of unprovoked and indiscriminate racist attacks on Muslim-looking minorities, multi-media advertising campaigns were mounted in several countries in order to quell racism and sell multiculturalism. This paper examines the use of advertising campaigns as a medium for public diplomacy, and focuses on the promotion of national unity out of cultural diversity.

Three recent ad campaigns are selected as case studies: the US Ad Council’s “I am an American,” the UK Commission for Racial Equality’s “The Unique Faces of Britain,” and the equivalent Scottish campaign “One Scotland. Many Cultures.” These campaigns are compared to “The Family of Man” exhibition of 1955, and to the groundbreaking “United Colors of Benetton” campaign of the last two decades.

Some revealing similarities between social and commercial advertising are discussed, concerning issues such as branding, a-historicism and false advertising. The paper concludes with a call to promote intercultural communication, as opposed to multiculturalism, on the grounds that the former invites much needed debate whereas the latter, as currently advertised, discourages it.

Multiculturalism and Social Ads

Multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism, refers both to a state of affairs and to a goal: the former meaning recognises the co-existence of many cultures within a region or nation; the latter identifies the aim of multiculturalism to promote the equality of different cultures, both in the eyes of the law and in the life of society. Multiculturalism therefore promotes cross-cultural understanding and encourages the active participation of cultural representatives in social, economic and political affairs. It discourages discrimination, isolation, disempowerment, hatred and violence.

There is always a potential for conflict between plurality and cohesion and, in particular, between multiculturalism and national unity. In human affairs, diversity all too often degrades into division, and division into discrim-
ination. Why this should be calls for analyses based on sociology and psychology, but by way of a quick answer, we may draw on a distinction made in sociolinguistics concerning standard language. A standard language serves as a norm against which dialectal variants can be measured. Since these variants are established on empirical grounds including phonological, syntactic and lexical criteria, dialects are therefore non-standard by definition. However, what is non-standard on empirical grounds to the linguist very readily becomes sub-standard to the speakers of a language, thus acquiring an ideological dimension. In so far as we are all guilty of confusing non-standard with sub-standard (and how many of us can honestly say that we haven’t experienced a twinge of prejudice at the sound of certain accents?), we have an insight into why diversity might result in discrimination.

How can one counteract this tendency? An obvious answer is to subsume diverse subcategories within a unified supercategory. Depending on the balance between persuasion and force, one can either respect diversity while emphasising unity, as is suggested by President Clinton’s maxim “diversity is our strength,” or one can suppress diversity in order to create or consolidate a superordinate unity, as did President Tito in former Yugoslavia. Advertising is the obvious medium for governments that opt for persuasion.

Social advertising, known as Public Service Advertising (PSA) in America, aims to sell concepts rather than commodities and addresses issues in the public interest, such as health, safety and racial equality. The American Ad Council, which is responsible for PSA, states its aims as follows:

Our mission is to identify a select number of significant public issues and stimulate action on those issues through communications programs that make a measurable difference in our society.²

The “significant public issue” addressed by the three advertising campaigns discussed below is the promotion of a multicultural national identity.

*I am an American*³
This television ad shows individuals of different ages, races, religions and occupations looking at the camera and saying, each in their own distinct accent and intonation, the single sentence: “I am an American.” The text at the end spells out the national creed: *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one). According to the ad’s creators, “the advertising communicates the idea that our differences equal the very foundation and spirit of this nation.”⁴
“I am an American” was conceived in the hours following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington by a group of advertising executives determined to respond constructively to the calamity. They decided to create a Public Service Ad that provides a visual rendering of the racial and cultural diversity that characterises America. They explain their aim as follows:

From the nation’s original creed rises a message that has never been more appropriate than now. GSD&M Advertising and the Ad Council have partnered to let the world know that diversity unites America, and that in the wake of this national tragedy, now is the time to embrace and celebrate that diversity instead of letting it divide us.5

“I am an American” proved to be hugely popular, as witnessed by the many laudatory responses sent to the Ad Council’s “What People are saying” web page.6 The fact that the ad emphasises being an American, rather than a “hyphenated” American (Hispanic-American, Irish-American etc), was singled out by some as a positive step towards a new, integrated America in which cultural differences are relegated to the nation’s history. To others, the range of skin tones and accents spoke more eloquently of cultural diversity than words might have done. Either way, the ad’s simplicity was the essence of its strength: a direct appeal for unity in the face of adversity, aimed at a population otherwise divided in a multitude of ways. The appeal, moreover, was based on the nation’s founding creed, thus giving the call for unity a historical authorisation and patriotic component. America was built by immigrants and continues to see itself as a nation of immigrants. “I am an American” therefore promoted a national identity based on an emotive vision of multiculturalism as something always destined to be, something already largely achieved, and something to be strongly defended if America is to survive as a nation post-9/11.

The Unique Faces of Britain7
This campaign, produced by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), consists of a poster featuring numerous head and shoulder shots of ordinary people on the street. As with the “I am an American” campaign, the individual pictures represent different ages, ethnic groups and in this case, towns of origin. The heading reads: “Britain. We all make it unique.” The message adds: “56 million people, over 300 languages and at least 14 faiths make us what we are today.” The CRE explains the campaign in the following words:
The unique faces of Britain poster campaign celebrates and encourages recognition of ethnic diversity in this country. It acknowledges modern Britain for what it is — a fascinating multicultural, multiracial, multi-faith nation.8

Regional variants of this poster were produced in some cities. The Unique Faces of London poster, for instance, produced in conjunction with the Greater London Authority, “features photographs of men, women and children of different ethnic backgrounds, creating a snap-shot of the many faces of London in 2001.” It was produced, says the CRE “in response to fears of a racist backlash against London’s Asian communities due to the current international situation,” and the message on the poster reads:

Terror respects no one — let’s not forget, more than 600 Muslims were killed on September 11th. And Islamophobia and racist attacks create exactly the same climate of fear terrorists want to spread. Let’s show that they have no place in London.9

Southampton City Council also produced its own equivalent ad. The message, based on a statement made by council leaders of all political groups immediately after the tragic events of 11 September 2001, reads:

Southampton has always been a multi-cultural city and we value the diversity of our local communities. These communities and the individuals within them have always shown understanding for one another. This is one of our city’s greatest strengths. By working together we will ensure that the co-operation which exists between all communities in our city is sustained.10

Although the impact of the message might seem to be in inverse proportion to its wordiness, the reaction to this campaign was nevertheless very positive: “The response has been great. We’ve had calls from local people saying it’s really made them feel at one with their neighbours — and interestingly those calls haven’t just been from minority groups.”11

One Scotland. Many Cultures12
The Scottish anti-racist campaign, which was not conceived solely as a reaction to the racist fallout of the 9/11 attacks, is a more sustained multi-media venture than its English or American equivalents. It consists of an extensive
website which provides information on diverse topics related to the integration of ethnic minorities in Scotland. These include a history of migration, comprehensive statistics on demographic trends, as well as notification of nationwide activities and events related to the campaign, chatlines, teaching resources, useful links and much more besides. The aim of the “One Scotland. Many Cultures” campaign is explained on its website as follows:

This website is part of a campaign organised by the Scottish Executive to tackle and eliminate racism in our country. We believe that a just society is one free from prejudice and discrimination. Our anti-racism campaign is based on that belief.

Campaign material includes several TV and radio ads. None of these adopt the direct “face-to-camera” approach of the other two campaigns discussed above. The TV ad that might best compare with the Ad Council and CRE equivalents is “Tug of War,” in which images of different coloured hands and faces are spliced in quick succession, the hands all pulling a rope. Because of the alternating angles of view, most people on first seeing the ad imagine that two teams are playing a game of tug of war, one coloured, the other white. However, the last shot zooms out to show a single mixed race team pulling together under a huge flag of St Andrews. The opposing team is off-screen, and the campaign motto, “One Scotland. Many Cultures,” reinforces the message of unity and strength through diversity.

The significant difference between the Scottish ad and those from the US and UK is that “Tug of War” invites a double-take by setting up an expectation (of two opposing teams of different colours) only to reverse it. In so far as surprise creates awareness, this ad achieves a heightened awareness of the possibility that prejudice may lurk in the shadows of our own psyche. This approach contrasts with the other two ads under discussion, which present multiculturalism as a given. In these cases, the invitation to viewers is not to question their own prejudices, or to enter into discussion or even to find out more about the issues involved, but to join the gallery of multicultural, multiracial and multi-faith citizens already on display.

This is not to say that thought provoking anti-racist ads have not been produced in response to 9/11. “We all came over in different ships, but we’re in the same boat now” has all the wit and density of meaning as an aphorism. The same can be said of the single line of text printed on the American flag: “Racism can hide in the strangest places. Like behind patriotism.” This was an arresting message at a time when the flag was seen as the symbol of patri-
otism and all things good about America (Wal-Mart sold 88,000 American flags on September 11, 2001 compared to 6,400 that same day the previous year). In another powerful ad, “Americans stand united,” the twin towers of the World Trade Center are replaced with two columns of text which counsel against hatred and revenge. Examples of thought provoking pre-9/11 anti-racist ads can be found in Social Work: Saatchi and Saatchi’s Cause-Related Ideas. Despite ample evidence of clever advertising, the fact remains that the most popular and influential 9/11 social ads were not those that queried the causes of terrorism, but those that emphatically asserted the power of multiculturalism. Since my aim is to evaluate how governments use persuasion in order to promote multiculturalism, these are the ads I shall focus on.

In concluding this part of the discussion, it is worth highlighting the similarities between these three campaigns. All three were developed following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, two in direct response to them, and all three appeal to a sense of unity which encompasses diversity. They claim that national strength and unity are to be achieved not despite, but because of and by means of ethnic diversity. Finally, all three campaigns proved to be genuinely moving and persuasive, affirming a sense of identity and of belonging which the majority of people, judging from their feedback, were grateful to be reminded of and proud to be a part of. While it is admittedly difficult to measure the influence of such advertising, these three campaigns nevertheless epitomise the attempt to create “communication programs which make a measurable difference in society.”

Precedents

One might be justified in asking why, if these campaigns to promote multiculturalism are proving so successful in stimulating patriotism and creating a new sense of belonging, a similar appeal had not been made before? Is a photo campaign all it takes to dispel racial problems once and for all and to replace divisiveness in the world with one big happy family?

“The Family of Man” exhibition of 1955, curated by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was conceived in precisely such a spirit of universal brotherhood. In the words of its curator:

The Family of Man has been created in a passionate spirit of devoted love and faith in man… It was conceived as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world.15
The exhibition, which subsequently toured the world to great acclaim, consisted of 503 photographs from 68 countries, selected from over 2 million submissions, showing men, women and children engaged in the daily activities of sleeping, eating, playing, working, crying, washing, ageing, dieing and more besides. As with the three social ads discussed in the previous section, this exhibition carried emotive appeal for many viewers who were inspired by its assertion of unity across boundaries. As we shall see, however, it also came under attack for abstracting human experience from the historical context of time, place and socio-economic circumstances.

More impactful still than “The Family of Man,” have been the United Colors of Benetton ads, mounted by the Benetton Group since 1985. Benetton is an Italian clothing corporation run by the Toscani family, now with over 5,500 shops across 120 countries. Although its primary product is brightly coloured clothes, it has become indelibly associated with images of ethnic diversity and racial harmony as a result of a long-running, groundbreaking and often controversial advertising campaign.

In line with its brand name, United Colors of Benetton ads typically depict different coloured models, male and female, children and adults, working, playing or just posing together. In some ads, cultural icons such as flags and national costumes provide an overt reference to the identity of the individuals depicted. These are often traditional rivals (American and Russian, Israeli and Palestinian) juxtaposed and seemingly reconciled under the Benetton logo. In other cases, the marriage of opposites is communicated through skin colour alone, as in the case of a black woman nursing a white infant (an ad which proved controversial enough to be withdrawn in America because of its allusions to slave wet nurses), or a black wrist handcuffed to a white one. An albino African and a black face sporting one green eye and one brown take the theme of united colours one conceptual step further as they break down not just cultural but biological norms. The final step is achieved in what proved to be one of the most memorable images of the campaign. It shows three human hearts in a row, raw, shiny and massively enlarged, with one of the words “white,” “black,” and “yellow” printed on top of each. The message is that under the superficial differences of culture and of skin colour, we all have a common human heart. This particular image provides as graphic a statement of universal humanism as one can find: scratch under the surface and we are all alike.

The effect of such images is twofold. First, high street viewers across the world are invited to see not just racial diversity but more importantly, racial harmony, as something trendy and progressive - as a sign of today’s street culture and evidence of Benetton’s street savvy. Second, Benetton shows itself to
be concerned with the social issues of the day. It does not simply sell clothes; it
displays an awareness of and sensitivity to - maybe even a solution to - issues of
race relations (and, in its other campaigns, of terrorism, war, AIDS, etc.). Buy
Benetton, and you buy into multiculturalism, the campaign suggests.

The Benetton ads most similar to the social ads under discussion in this
paper are part of its 1997 campaign. In these posters, head and shoulder shots
of ethnically diverse children and youth surround selected articles from the
Declaration of Human Rights and from the Commission for the Red Cross. The
posters in this campaign all sport the logo of the Fiftieth Anniversary
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If the ideology promoted by
the Benetton campaigns up until then was open to the charge of being self-
proclaimed, this campaign confers on Benetton the blessing of internation-
al organisations. Benetton was now officially to be seen as a serious contribu-
tor to making the world a better place. This claim to status is reinforced with
the current (2003) campaign entitled “Hunger,” which carries the logo of the
World Food Programme and shows head and shoulder shots of children from
Afghanistan.

Why might a clothing company become the champion of racial harmony,
human rights, hunger relief and many other urgent concerns of our times? The
answer is simple: branding, as discussed next.

**Branding Multiculturalism**

A number of evident similarities between social and commercial advertising
have been touched upon above and merit closer attention here. The salient
common denominator involves branding, the conventional meaning of which
is to mark something with a recognisable label, as one might mark a cow by
burning a number on its flank. Today, branding refers to the defining features
of a corporation, and includes its logo, look and message. These constitute a
brand identity which, when consistently applied across all outlets, ensures a
familiarity and reliability known as “brand promise.”

In commercial advertising, branding has come to signal the shift from
selling products to selling concepts, values, lifestyles and even ideologies. In
the world of commercial advertising, to show a product, as Luciano Benetton
himself says, is *banal*. By contrast, to associate a product with a concept and
picture that connect, is clever marketing. By repeatedly showing photographs
of beautiful multi-ethnic models posing harmoniously together, Benetton
transfers upon its brand name, and by extension upon all Benetton products,
a sense of happy universal brotherhood and sisterhood. Furthermore, by placing its own logo next to that of international organisations such as the United Nations, the Red Cross and the World Food Programme, Benetton comes to be associated in people’s minds with these official players for good in the world. The often-sensational nature of the Benetton ads, by arresting attention and triggering emotions, further ensures that the company’s logo is remembered and recognised world wide since Benetton has a global market.

The branding of social issues such as multiculturalism and human rights by a commercial company is not unique to Benetton. Many companies are content just to display multi-ethnic models, whereas others integrate anti-racist text into their ads. Yet others set themselves up as the champion of a cause, such as empowering women, as in the case of Nike, or promoting human rights, as in the case of Reebok. Whereas advertising promotes products, branding promotes the systems of belief and values which define a corporate culture. Brand identity is therefore determined as much, or possibly more, by message as by product: “Standing up for human rights is a Reebok hallmark - as much a part of our corporate culture and identity as our products.”

The following questions arise: what is the relationship between ideology and commerce? What force does a political statement have when it is an integral part of an ad selling a product? To what extent, for instance, is Benetton guilty of cynically exploiting the popular appeal of multiculturalism for the sake of financial gain? On the one hand, some believe that multiculturalism is cheapened by being commodified. On the other hand, others feel that Benetton’s campaigns have heightened people’s awareness of important social issues, and that heightened sales and heightened awareness, far from being in conflict, represent a double benefit. Yet a third approach (and one which must either be admired for its irony, or read with a generous helping of it), is to be found in the recent book *The Benetton Campaigns*. Here Lorella Salvemini claims that Benetton’s photographer, Oliviero Toscani, “denounced the traditional strategy of advertising and replaced its hollow promise of success and happiness with an unflinching treatment of difficult subjects such as sex, death and racism.”

The implication is that whereas traditional advertising is full of empty promises, Benetton’s advertising is not. Before evaluating the nature of Benetton’s promises, however, we should first consider the presence of branding in social advertising.

Is branding at all relevant to social advertising, the aim of which from the outset is to sell concepts rather than commodities? Evidence suggests that branding in social advertising is achieved by associating the concept with a product, thus providing a mirror image of branding in commercial advertising.
Colin Powell, for instance, on appointing the top brand manager Charlotte Beers to the role of Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, explained his choice by claiming that:

There is nothing wrong with getting somebody who knows how to sell something. We are selling a product. We need someone who can rebrand foreign policy, rebrand diplomacy.21

What exactly is the product being sold here? Not America itself, but, according to Beers’ brief, the defining attributes of the American way of life, namely liberty, democracy and diversity. Since these are not products so much as values, it becomes apparent that Powell was speaking metaphorically. Yet it is a rhetorical turn with two serious implications. The first has to do with marketability, the second with brandability.

A product is a physical entity which serves a particular function, whereas values, which are more abstract and complex than products, cannot be so readily “grasped.” Since the essential purpose of metaphors is to help us understand abstract concepts by relating them to more familiar, concrete ones, Powell’s claim that selling American values is equivalent to selling products helps us to understand what Beers’ job is about: the promotion of American goods, in both the concrete and abstract senses of the term. The danger of this kind of equation, however, rests in the oversimplification involved. Democracy, for instance, is not a marketable good. You may be able to promote its benefits by example, but you cannot force people to buy it. Aggressive salesmanship policies that coerce other countries to adopt democracy undermine and negate democracy. The danger of equating democracy with goods, therefore, resides in encouraging people at home to believe that the hard sell of democracy is both good for America and for its “clients.”

Secondly, the inherent nature of democracy and diversity are inimical to branding. As noted, the hallmark of branding is the promotion of uniformity; yet imposing homogeneity on democracy and diversity once again involves a contradiction in terms. Naomi Klein makes this point forcefully in her article appropriately entitled “America is not a hamburger.” America’s attempt to brand its own form of democracy has already met with dissent around the world, not least from countries relegated to the status of “rogue nations” for not conforming to the US template. With regard to diversity, Klein points out that:

Beers may have convinced Colin Powell to buy Uncle Ben’s, but the US is not made up of identical grains of rice or hamburgers or Gap
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khakis. Its strongest “brand attribute” is its embrace of diversity, a value Ms Beers is now, ironically, attempting to stamp with cookie-cutter uniformity around the world. The task is not only futile but dangerous.²²

The reason why branding is dangerous is that it does not invite debate or allow dissent, even though “diversity and debate are the lifeblood of liberty:”

At its core, branding is about rigorously controlled one-way messages, sent out in their glossiest form, then sealed off from those who would turn corporate monologue into social dialogue.²³

Powell’s metaphorical mapping between American values and commercial products invites people to overlook the inherently discursive nature of values such as democracy and diversity, and encourages them to see them in terms of uniformly packaged goods which deliver to the brand promise.

This criticism levied against the branding of America applies equally to the branding of multiculturalism. Cultural and racial issues are far from being resolved, contrary to the image projected by the campaigns under discussion. In both the US and the UK, ethnic minorities are more likely to be stopped and searched, more likely to be prosecuted and to be given longer jail sentences for equivalent crimes, more likely to be executed (in the US), and more likely to hit a glass ceiling than their white counterparts. Such disconcerting evidence of institutional racism is an issue which needs to be urgently and thoroughly addressed, yet the branding of multiculturalism eschews controversial legislative, policy and social issues.

**Oversimplifications**

Branding also dangerously oversimplifies complex issues. An example is the equivalence made between skin colour and racial-cum-cultural identity. All the campaign ads discussed above are guilty of reducing the notion of cultural identity to simply one of skin colour and costume. Benetton takes this reductive process one step further by suggesting that skin colour is something fashionable, something that, like clothing, can be put on or taken off. Yet cultural identity involves many more complex issues than colour and costume, not least of which are history, traditions, religion, values, language, opportunities
and expectations. Moreover, race and culture do not necessarily coincide and should not be confused.

Another instance of oversimplification is found in the implicit message that people pictured together are indeed united together in some essential and intentional way. Yet it is perfectly possible that some of the Americans filmed asserting their national identity, or some of the British whose mug shots appear on the same poster, are in real life strongly prejudiced against each other. Photographs decontextualise their subjects, and are subject to editorial recontextualisation: “All photographs are ambiguous. All photographs have been taken out of continuity. … Discontinuity always produces ambiguity.”24 The danger is that because we tend to believe in photographic evidence, we come to believe the inferences we ourselves have made about the relationship between the individuals represented.

A related issue concerns the dangers of a-historicism and static humanism. “The Family of Man” exhibition was strongly criticised by the French philosopher Roland Barthes precisely on account of its humanist perspective: “Any classic humanism postulates that in scratching the history of men a little... one very quickly reaches the solid rock of a universal human nature.”25 Barthes claimed the exhibition “aims to suppress the determining weight of History,” and yet human responsibility resides precisely in those differences which have been obscured: although we are all born, we have more or less control over our destinies; though we all die, some have no choice but to die in infancy from poverty and medical neglect while others die in old age having enjoyed the best medicine man has to offer; though everyone works, the nature, necessity and rewards of work are not individually determined but are subject to all sorts of socio-historical variables.

Since these differences are man-made, to subsume them under the glossy cover of humanism is irresponsible because it elides discussion of - and the possibility of change to - these social determinants: “The final justification of all this Adamism is to give to the immobility of the world the alibi of a ‘wisdom’ and a ‘lyricism,’” says Barthes, “which only make the gestures of man look eternal the better to defuse them.” By presenting multiculturalism as an eternal good, these ads deflect attention from the evils suffered at the hands of man, thus “defusing” them of culpability. Ultimately, myth does not so much deny things, as “give them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact.”26 Should anybody feel dissatisfied with his lot on racial or cultural grounds, and should they agitate for change, these ads confront them with the illusion of multiculturalism as already achieved.
A final instance of the expedient and dangerous oversimplification of complex issues to be found in the social ads under discussion (though as we shall see, not commercial ads), involves the concept of nationalism. A number of components combine to make up nationalism: political, cultural, affective and psychological (as expressed in identity politics). Nationalism thus promotes the nation as the central principle of political organisation; it allows cultural diversity to co-exist with national pride; it encourages love of one’s country and it endows citizens with a sense of belonging and of collective destiny. To reduce nationalism to patriotism, as has been done in the social ads, is to demote the political and doctrinal in favour of the emotive. Where nationalism is equated with patriotism, to question the policies of the nation is to be unpatriotic. Once again, debate and the potential for constructive change are bypassed, to be replaced in this case with an appeal to an unconsidered and strongly emotive tribal allegiance.

Given this equation between nationalism and patriotism, it is not surprising to find that the national flag figures prominently in social ads that address racial diversity. The massive flag of St Andrew’s which flies above the Scottish team is a hyperbolic expression of the nation. In many of the ads released along with “I am an American,” as in “Main Street, USA” which was part of the American campaign for freedom, the Stars and Stripes act as the symbol of the nation and the focus of patriotism. Although one exceptional ad (“Racism can hide behind the strangest places; like behind patriotism”) goes against the trend, there is no denying that flag waving has always proven more appealing to jingoists than to analysts.

Although this discussion of nationalism comes under the heading of oversimplifications, it does not belong under the larger remit of similarities between social and commercial advertising, since nationalism does not apply to Benetton’s campaign, or that of any other global corporation. This essential difference is discussed below.

**Differences**

This paper started out by distinguishing between social and commercial ads based on what was being sold: concepts or products. As noted, however, this initial distinction has become largely blurred under the influence of branding. One might nevertheless argue that even though the goods being promoted by both types of advertising are now the same, namely brand image, the gain is different in each case: ideological for one and commercial for the other. Yet this
difference too has been invalidated. On the one hand, evidence of the commercialisation of ideology comes, for instance, from the explicit equation between patriotism and consumerism promoted by the government of America post-9/11 (the more you buy, the more patriotic you are). Similarly, all three governments under discussion have made explicit statements on the need to protect and promote the important economic contribution made by immigrants, revealing a close link between the promotion of multiculturalism and a concern for the national economy.

On the other hand, commercial companies have come to acquire considerable ideological capital through promoting good causes and, although such championship may appear purely commercially driven, ideological pronouncements come at a price, namely the potential loss of customers should the brand prove insincere in its commitment to its cause. This was the experience of Nike, which while championing the empowerment of women through their brand image, was revealed to be grossly exploiting female workforces in third world sweatshops. The politicisation of consumers, largely as a result of branding, is ironically backfiring on those corporations who do not live up to their professed principles, thus forcing what might have started out as cynical commercialism to turn into genuine ideological commitment.

In the light of this diminished distinction between social and commercial ads with regard to both goods and gains, can we at least identify a difference in the sales pitch or in the public’s reaction to the message of multiculturalism, depending on the source of the ad? Here, too, differences have been eroded. The sales pitch of social ads tended to adopt a “straight sell” with a strong pedagogical - sometimes thought of as “nannying” - component, whereas commercial ads (especially the more sophisticated and increasingly popular “anti-ads”) typically rely on surprise, ambiguity and double-takes. Valuable lessons in stopping page traffic are increasingly jumping the divide from the commercial to the social ad, however, not least because famous advertising agencies are extending their client portfolios to include governments and charities. A quick glance through Saatchi and Saatchi’s *Social Work* reveals just how cleverly verbal and visual ambiguity are used in order to win attention and provoke reflection.

The face-to-camera US and UK social ads nevertheless epitomise the traditional straight sell approach in which you hold up a product and praise its merits. Conversely, the Benetton ads that involve head and shoulder shots achieve a different effect. The very fact that it is the brand message and not the product which is being promoted triggers reflection on what the connection might be, and maybe even on its pertinence. The controversy surrounding so many of Benetton’s more sensational ads has provided some of the best publicity for the
brand. With regard to sales pitch, therefore, there has been a notable loss of distinction between social and commercial ads. This is symptomatic of a postmodernist age in which the boundaries between commerce, art, news and advertising are much more fluid than was previously the case (or believed to be the case).

What of public reaction? Do people respond differently to an ad promoting multiculturalism depending on its source? Enthusiasm and cynicism are to be found in people’s reactions to both types of ads. I have already mentioned the strongly enthusiastic responses to the humanist message of multiculturalism in the social ads discussed, and evidence suggests that Benetton’s ads have met with a similarly positive response. On the other hand, a palpable cynicism abounds among the population at large about the commercialisation of all facets of life, including ideology. Naomi Klein’s best selling No Logo both gave voice to that reaction and encouraged further cynicism towards commercial brands. As her attack on the branding of America suggests, her argument extends beyond commercial corporations. Although any individual’s position on the enthusiasm to cynicism spectrum is a matter of individual temperament, it would seem that once again a similarity rather than a difference has gained the upper hand. The general public is much more insistent on integrity and accountability in advertising, and much more strongly critical of false advertising than it ever was before, as evident in the growth of consumer watchdogs and of public complaints.

It is, in fact, with regard to the false advertising of multiculturalism that a genuine difference finally emerges between social and commercial advertising, one which involves the target audience. Whereas Benetton’s audience is global, the other three ads address a national audience. The concept of a nation presupposes the existence of other nations and the presence of defining differences between them, which include geographical, political, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other criteria. The bottom line is that an “us versus them” dimension is inherent in the definition of any given nation. The question then arises, where does the “us” stop with regard to multiculturalism? If it is at geographical boundaries, as in the case of national borders, then the nation is no longer being defined culturally or ideologically, and multiculturalism is therefore not central to its identity. This may well be the way in which America is heading, but it is still counter-intuitive to say that the founding creed of America, with its emphasis on cultural diversity, is not important to the definition of America as a nation today. A geographical definition of nation would also imply that there is no population growth through immigration, which we know not to be the case in either the UK or the US. This option is therefore implausible for now.
If, on the other hand, the scope of “us” excludes individuals who are already present within national borders, then “multiculturalism” is a misnomer in all those cases where such exclusion is based on cultural or racial grounds. This is because the definition of multiculturalism requires the equality of all citizens in the face of the law. Yet in so far as some citizens are discriminated against, or would-be citizens are denied full citizenship on the grounds of their country and culture of origin, equality has not been achieved, and government promotion of multiculturalism is guilty of false advertising. Institutional racism, discriminatory immigration practices, the deferment of full citizenship and the singling out of particular cultures for differential treatment are all evidence of a discrepancy between the professed policies of governments who promote multiculturalism and their actual practices.

This potential for conflict between the exclusivity of nationhood and the inclusivity of multiculturalism does not affect the commercial advertising of global corporations. Thus, Benetton’s promotion of multiculturalism is a universally inclusive venture. Even those who cannot afford to purchase Benetton products can nonetheless buy into its message of universal humanism. Evidence of false advertising would be of a different order in the case of Benetton and would have to do with conditions of employment or maybe even with the false promise of a racial and cultural harmony which clearly has not yet been achieved. However, it is not Benetton’s responsibility to achieve this idealised image, whereas it is the responsibility of governments who promote such an ideal to ensure that their policies and statements are consistent with their advertising.

Conclusion

Although the argument of this article has been largely critical of the promotion of multiculturalism as conducted by Benetton and by the US, UK and Scottish governments, its objections are not directed at multiculturalism itself, which is certainly a desirable objective, but rather at the way in which multiculturalism has been sold to the masses. The problem resides in the effects of branding, and more particularly, in the suppression of dialogue which is the hallmark of branding. Multiculturalism should never be the last word on matters of race, culture and identity. This is because there is no definitive solution to the problem of discrimination; the best that can be hoped for is a dynamic equilibrium driven by enhanced intercultural communication and understanding.

To sell multiculturalism as an irrefutable given, by appealing to patriotic sentiment, rather than as an ideal to be sought through heightened critical
awareness, is to indulge in false advertising verging on propaganda. The foregoing discussion will have served its purpose if it has alerted the reader to the dubious nature of some of the methods of persuasion used in the exercise of public diplomacy.

Endnotes

1 Although the term “public diplomacy” primarily refers to the means by which a state attempts to influence public opinion abroad, it is increasingly being used to encompass domestic public opinion. This paper adopts the broad definition.

http://www.adcouncil.org/about/.

2 http://www.adcouncil.org/campaigns/I_am_an_American/.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.


8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.


13 Reproductions can be found in Silberstein, 2002.


20 Salvemini, United Colors, inside cover.


22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


Part IV.

NEGO TIA TION,
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
MAKING THE “OTHER” HUMAN: THE ROLE OF PERSONAL STORIES TO BRIDGE DEEP DIFFERENCES

Nike Carstarphen

An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.
Mrs. Gene Knudsen-Hoffman

The conference announcement for the International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy 2003 quoted Raymond Cohen as saying: “By definition, negotiation is an exercise in language and communication, an attempt to create shared understanding where previously there have been contested understandings. When negotiation takes place across languages and cultures the scope for misunderstanding increases.” Taking that as our starting point, I would add that conflict resolution (my locus of practice) is essentially the art and science of relationship building and agreement building. This is true whether one focuses on individuals, groups, or nations striving for peace. Both relationship building and agreement building require, in Cohen’s words, an attempt to create shared understanding. Similarly, others have talked of the need for conflict parties to develop “co-created narratives” or a “third culture.”

When conflicts are between parties from different cultures, the process of developing shared understandings is especially difficult. Even more difficult to resolve are protracted, deep-rooted conflicts characterised by fractured, hostile and oftentimes violent relationships. How do negotiators and other conflict resolution practitioners from different cultures create shared understanding under these conditions? For that matter, is shared understanding enough to bridge deep differences? This paper suggests that developing shared understanding is part of the larger need for building relationships between conflict parties, especially when the conflict parties have a history of animosity. My particular interest and focus is on inter-group conflict resolution between groups at the community and national levels. What follows is a tripartite model of conflict and conflict resolution, the role of personal stories for bridging deep differences and building relationships, and their implications for diplomacy.

Tripartite Model of Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Conflict may be conceptualised as including three components: (1) the substantive issues (perceived goal incompatibility, interests, issues), (2) conflict
behaviours and processes employed for resolving the conflict (e.g., violence, litigation, negotiation, mediation), and (3) conflict relationships (psychological factors, attitudes, perceptions, etc.) between conflict parties. Although these components are interrelated, one may be the primary source of the conflict. Over time, another component may become the primary reason the conflict escalates and continues. For example, a conflict may initially begin as a dispute over water resources. If not resolved, the conflict parties may resort to increasingly hostile behaviours, which then drives the conflict. Ongoing hostile behaviour, especially if it escalates into violence, changes the basic relationship between the parties to one characterised by extreme polarisation, demonisation, and dehumanisation. The psychological and relationship changes then become the drivers of the conflict as the parties begin to fight not only to achieve their interests, but also to punish the other.

Despite the tripartite model in much of the conflict analysis literature, the primary focus in conflict resolution literature has been on resolving specific substantive issues (e.g., disputes over resources, territory, arms), changing behaviours (e.g., moving from violence to negotiating), and improving resolution processes (e.g., negotiation, mediation, joint problem-solving). There has been less focus on improving conflict attitudes, perceptions, and relationships. The attitudes, perceptions and relationship issues are often treated as by-products of conflict escalation and resolution and are assumed to be largely resolved through the settlement of substantive issues using appropriate resolution processes. From this point of view, relationship building is reduced to developing a “working trust” sufficient to reach agreement. However, as agreements fall apart and acrimony continues, the easy assumption is that the “other” wasn’t really interested in peace. The problem might actually be the lack of real relationship building that addresses the underlying psychological and human needs and hurts of the conflict parties that fuel the conflict. I suggest that many conflicts go unresolved because of the lack of sufficient focus on improving the relationship between the conflict parties.

Relationship building is not only a worthy end in itself, but may also be the key towards conflict de-escalation, resolution and transformation, especially in protracted, deep-rooted conflicts between different identity and cultural groups. W. W. Wilmot and J. L. Hocker argue that identity and relational issues are the “drivers” of disputes and they underlie content and process issues; they write, “Because we are human beings, our inherent subjectivity drives dispute... the more severe and strained the conflict, the less satisfying the content approaches will be.” John Paul Lederach suggests the key towards building peace in contemporary conflicts is restructuring the relationship of conflict parties:
To be at all germane and salient in contemporary conflict, peace building must root and direct itself to the realities facing the experiential and subjective facets of peoples’ needs. However, it is at this very point that the conceptual paradigm and praxis of conflict resolution must shift significantly away from the traditional framework and activities that make up statist diplomacy.

I believe this paradigmatic shift is articulated in the movement from a frame of reference concerned primarily for the resolution of issues and toward one that envisions the reconciliation of relationships. This calls for a conceptual framework that goes beyond a mechanical structural, or issue focused approach.9

The best approach to resolving a conflict in the long run is to match the strategy used to resolving it with the type of conflict one is seeking to resolve. Conflict analysis should precede efforts at conflict resolution. While this is stating the obvious, too often parties (and third party interveners) rush to trying to resolve the conflict before they understand the nature of the conflict; these parties suffer from the “hurry up, let’s fix it” syndrome. But, as one of my professors insisted, “Sometimes you have to go slow, to go fast.”10 One simple “typing” of conflicts is Jay Rothman’s distinction between interest-based conflicts and identity-based conflicts.11 Interest-based conflicts are usually concrete, clearly defined, and each side seeks outcomes that are bounded by the resources at stake (e.g., land, money, military and economic power). Identity-based conflicts are relatively intangible and deeply rooted in complex and multidimensional psychological, historical, and cultural factors. Identity conflicts typically emerge from frustrated and unmet needs and values and centre on such identity needs as dignity, safety and control. Rothman argues that all identity conflicts contain interest conflicts. However, not all interest conflicts contain identity conflicts, although many do, particularly the longer the conflict goes on and the more it escalates.

Rothman suggests that interest conflicts are suitable for resolution via mediation, negotiation and problem solving, while identity conflicts are best approached via a dialogue and reconciliation process about needs and values promoting “voice,” mutual recognition and the discovery of common ground. Simply put, you can negotiate over interests, but you cannot negotiate over identity. It is generally only when the underlying sources of insecurity in identity conflicts are surfaced and needs are addressed, that the interest-based aspects of these conflicts may become amenable to negotiation. Thus, in identity driven conflicts, the conflict resolution process should begin with focusing
A simple illustration from my work with teenage gangs in Washington, DC shows the distinction between interest-based and identity-based conflicts. I became involved in an intervention between two teenage gangs from adjoining neighbourhoods in a predominantly Latino immigrant community. The gang members were all male immigrants to the area. The two gangs were constantly fighting each other over what seemed to be a territorial issue — an interest-based conflict. Whenever members of one gang entered the “territory” of the other gang, they were subject to being attacked. Each gang had clearly staked out their territory and “trespassers beware.” The two gangs fought frequently and had been fighting for many years in a seemingly endless cycle of attack and counter-attack.

I was asked to co-facilitate a weekend dialogue retreat between the leadership of the two gangs. Four members of each gang participated. We used a dialogue model to facilitate the discussion and relied heavily on the use of personal stories. It took only a few hours to discover three key elements of the conflict that laid the foundation for resolution.

First, none of the gang members really remembered what had started their conflict. The feud between the two gangs had preceded their membership. They were merely carrying on a tradition against the “evil other.” Upon realising that no one could remember what started the conflict in the first place, they laughed a bit and realised it was pointless to point the finger of blame at each other. The tension began to ease a little.

Second, the gang members’ “territory” was the neighbourhood in which they lived, went to school and worked. It was their home. They felt a personal connection to their neighbourhood. It was part of their identity, which went beyond territorial interests. When members of the other gang came into their territory, it was as if the other had invaded their home uninvited. In addition, when the gangs “invaded” each other’s homes, each gang also perceived the other gang as “acting like they owned the place.” That added insult to injury. After discussing the “issue” of territory and how the other’s behaviour impacted them, they discovered that teenage girls in their neighbourhoods would often invite gang members from the other neighbourhood to their parties. Therefore, “the others” were often invited guests, not trespassers. They realised the real problem between the two groups was about respect — respect for their home and respect for the gang members individually and collectively. They discovered that each gang had the same perception of the other gang — the “mirror image” effect that Ralph White found in his research on US-USSR relations.
Both groups saw the other as disrespectful for behaviour they never questioned in themselves. Upon these discoveries, the participants realised that as long as each group showed respect to the other, they had no real “beef” (as they called it); they had no conflict.

Third, the gang members found common ground in the form of common values and hopes for the future. We asked them to talk about the impact of violence in their personal lives. One of the older gang members told a particularly emotional story in a very solemn voice about his life and his mother. He talked about how surprised he was to still be alive (at age 19) given all that he had been involved in. He said he wanted to quit fighting and “do the right thing” because he didn’t want his mother to cry over him anymore, especially since she was working so hard to give him a better life in a new country. He wanted his mother to be proud of him, not to be mourning his death. The room was absolutely silent as the older participant told his story. The normally fidgety young men sat completely still. You could hear a pin drop in the silence that followed as everyone reflected on the story and its resonance with their own lives. They realised they all wanted their mothers to be happy and proud of them, which meant they had to change their lives and stop the violence in their community. At that point they made a commitment to make peace.

The two gangs developed a new relationship built on mutual understanding and respect and their shared love for their mothers and desire to end the violence in their community. To celebrate their new relationship, they agreed to jointly design and paint a wall mural in their community as a symbol of their peace agreement and smoked a “peace pipe” to celebrate their new relationship. To the best of my knowledge, the two gangs have not fought each other since that weekend retreat four years ago.

I tell this story for two reasons. One, I want to illustrate that while all conflicts may include tangible, substantive issues, many conflicts are essentially about intangible, subjective relationship issues. Substantive issues are amenable to negotiation. However, relational issues, such as those over identity and respect require a different approach to resolve. Second, I tell this story to begin the discussion of how personal stories are a powerful tool for developing shared understanding and new relationships.

What follows are the results of two recent studies on what leads to positive changes in attitudes and relationships between individuals and groups in inter-group conflicts.
Study 1: How Do We Make “The Other” Human?

An often noted observation is that cultural differences between identity groups (or any individuals and groups) do not generally cause conflicts, but may exacerbate them and make them harder to resolve. One way that cultural differences exacerbate conflicts is by making the “other” seem so different from “us.” In extremely polarised conflicts, the other is also seen as less human than “us.” It is easier to dehumanise people and groups who seem so different from us. Once the other is dehumanised, it becomes much easier to aggress against them, thereby escalating and perpetuating the conflict.\textsuperscript{14} A challenge, then, for conflict resolution practitioners is how to make the other human again. What factors and processes lead to attitude change and improved relationships?

Research Methods
To explore inter-group relationship building, I interviewed diplomats, academics and practitioners of different types of conflict resolution efforts around the globe (N=19). I also interviewed participants of several dialogue groups (N=31) in the United States, including those from Jewish-Palestinian dialogues, race/ethnic dialogues, and pro-life/pro-choice dialogues around the abortion issue. The interview questions focused on what factors facilitated positive changes in interpersonal and inter-group attitudes and reconciled relationships in the context of small-group third party intervention efforts.

Research Results: The Power of Personal Stories
The interviews showed that the first step in relationship building is to “make the ‘other’ human” and that sharing personal stories – in the spirit of genuine dialogue – was the most successful starting point in this process. Personal stories included stories of past personal experiences, the meaning and impact of those experiences, why and how participants came to hold their attitudes, beliefs and perspectives, and basically any discussion that focused on participants’ personal experiences and meaning-making of the world, especially in relation to the conflict and the other. These could include discussions of substantive issues, but the focus was on the meaning and impact of these issues on the participants. Personal stories included the participant’s direct experiences and the experiences of others close to the participants (e.g., family, friends). Participants also connected these personal stories to their group or collective experience.

Listening to the other’s personal stories facilitated attitude change and reconciliation in three ways. First, stories helped adversaries break through their
stereotypes, fears and animosities toward the other side by helping them begin to understand and recognise the other’s perspectives, needs, values and core concerns. Second, stories helped adversaries develop empathy with the other and helped them feel bonded and connected to the other at an emotional level. Third, stories helped adversaries discover common ground, shared experiences, needs, values, core concerns and hopes for the future. Listening to each other’s stories helped create bridges across deep differences and lay the foundation for reconciliation and conflict resolution.

Why are Personal Stories Powerful?

Storytelling is a process that empowers participants by giving voice to their experiences and core concerns. Storytelling is a window into underlying meaning systems, values and needs, and a process through which empathy, healing, trust, understanding and relationships can be nurtured.15 Tamra Pearson suggests that “using personal experience when discussing issues in dialogue can convey a personal involvement with the topic, can indicate its centrality to the speaker, and can indicate a sufficient trust in either the other party or at least in the setting to allow one to express personal reflections.”16

The interviews suggest that stories were impactful because they were vivid, emotional, concrete and sincerely told personal experiences that touched and opened the hearts and minds of the listeners. For stories that were of painful experiences (physical and/or psychological), the impact on the listener was often surprise and shock at hearing these stories, and pain and empathy with the speaker and the other group. These personal stories also helped reveal the other’s humanity – “they have pains, sorrows, fears, feelings, thoughts, and experiences just like me.” Listening to the other’s stories and feeling the other’s pain and humanity helped the listener to begin to feel a personal connection and bonding with the other and helped to build a feeling of trust that the other wasn’t out to hurt them. Stories also increased the listeners’ understanding of the other by helping them be more willing and able to listen, reflect and think about the other’s experiences, perspectives and feelings with an open mind.

The power of personal stories may be related to people’s tendencies to match other people’s emotions. Hatfield, Caioppo and Rapson refer to this tendency as emotional contagion and as something that develops in early childhood.17 When others are sad, we become sad. When others are happy, we become happy. When others are angry we become angry, and so on. The same dynamic may be operating when we listen to other’s personal stories. We naturally connect with the emotions they are expressing, be it fear, pain or happiness. Through this process, we begin to empathise with the other.
Personal stories may be particularly effective because they provide clear information about the experiences, concerns, needs, motivations and intentions of the storyteller. Research on emotions in childhood development indicates that when children were given better information about the internal states of others through language (e.g., why one is angry), which was delivered at intense emotional levels, they were better able to respond with understanding and concern. Other research suggests that stories are effective because they are easy to follow, engaging and more likely to be remembered than other forms of communication.

Personal stories touched people because they expressed real and personal experiences, feelings and meanings. Personal stories were windows through which to see and feel the other and their life experiences. They brought out the humanity in the other in a way that was often irresistible; the other was naturally drawn closer to the storyteller. Listening to the other’s stories penetrated people’s habituated system of denial, denigration and distance from the other. The individual stories create the opportunity to develop a shared story that is a more whole, inclusive and complex picture of the conflict that recognises everyone’s fears and pains of the past as well as their hopes and dreams for the future.

When people are engaged in conflict, especially protracted or violent conflict, or conflicts that attack one’s identity, people have intense emotions that often fuel the perpetuation of conflict. However, this research suggests that feeling, revealing and dealing with emotions, one’s own and others’ – whether pain, grief, anger and fear, or joy, love and hope – can also be a source of personal connection, trust-building, empathy, understanding and common ground, and is key to changing attitudes and relationships.

Listening to each other’s personal stories often led the individuals and groups to express acknowledgement of the other side. Acknowledgement was another key factor that facilitated shift. The role of acknowledgement has received more attention in the conflict resolution literature than personal stories. Pearson found that the most significant statements in problem-solving workshops that seemed to shift the climate, relationships and negotiations were those that included some form of acknowledgement. Pearson suggests the power of acknowledgement can be explained by Tajfel and Turner’s social identity theory. This theory posits that until different groups acknowledge each other’s identity and experiences, they are often locked into a social comparison process that results in the need to assert one’s own group’s superiority over the other group. Pearson asserts that acknowledgment validates the other’s group worth and therefore diffuses the necessity for social comparison at the identity level. This suggests that underlying social identity theory and the social com-
parison process are deep insecurities. Once the different groups acknowledge each other, this boosts their collective sense of self-esteem and identity reducing the need to deny and denigrate the other.

Sharing personal stories and expressing acknowledgement were impactful because they touched the participants emotionally or met their psychological and identity needs in some way. Many scholars and practitioners have discussed the need for acknowledgement between identity groups to achieve reconciliation and conflict resolution. What has been less clear in the literature and research has been what leads people and groups to acknowledge others in the first place. This research sheds some light on that and suggests that sharing personal stories may be a key process that encourages acknowledgement.

The powerful role of personal stories in facilitating shift was clear from the interviews. What was less clear was the role of facts, information and general explanations that didn’t include a personal element. Less than half of the people interviewed reported this type of communication as facilitating attitude change and reconciliation. In many cases, facts, information and explanations were seen as something to be argued with and reasoned against just as conflict parties’ positions can be debated and negated. But participants couldn’t argue with other’s stories. They might discuss the interpretation of events in those stories, but they couldn’t deny that they happened.

While personal stories also include facts, information and explanations, or are used to illustrate facts, information and explanations, they impact the listener in a different way. The difference seems to come from people’s ability to feel empathy, see the other’s humanity, and feel a personal connection and bonding to other people’s stories much more easily than to other people’s facts, information and explanations. So, while the famous movie line, “Give me the facts ma’am, and nothing but the facts,” may work well in a courtroom, such “cold, hard facts” are insufficient to facilitate attitude change and build relationships. What seems key in personal stories is their ability to connect with the listener at an emotional level.

Study 2: Experimental Design: Personal Stories versus Rational Explanations

The purpose of the second study was to further explore the differential effects of personal stories versus rational explanations for inducing positive attitude change toward the other conflict party in a protracted and violent inter-group conflict. In addition, given that dialogues or discussions between conflict par-
ties would likely include both types of communication, this study tested the assumption that both approaches would be better than only one approach and whether there was an optimal sequence to these approaches for inducing positive attitudes. The study examined three primary hypotheses:

**H1:** Personal stories are more likely to induce positive attitudes than rational explanations.

**H2:** A combination of personal stories and rational explanations is more likely to induce positive attitudes than either approach alone.

**H3:** The combined approach of personal stories before rational explanations (story-first approach) is more likely to induce positive attitudes than the combined approach of rational explanations before personal stories (explanation-first approach).

### Methods

A pretest-posttest experimental design examined shift (attitude change) using a simulated prenegotiation dialogue in which participants (n=81; undergraduate students) assumed the role of a negotiator in an interethnic conflict. However, no actual dialogue or negotiation took place. The experiment tested the impact of two types of written communication by an opposing negotiator on subjects’ attitudes and perceptions of the “other” side, the conflict situation, and their expectations about the presumed upcoming negotiations. Specifically, the experiment tested the impact of affective approaches (reading the opponent’s personal story of tragedy suffered in the conflict) versus cognitive approaches (reading the opponent’s rational explanations of his/her side’s perspectives and actions in the conflict) on attitude change in the reader.

The personal story and rational explanation were adapted from real-world experiences and explanations of conflict parties in interethnic conflicts. Six coders read the materials to be used for the cognitive and affective experimental conditions (the “statements” made by the opponent) and rated each of the materials on their communication style and content using dichotomous statements on a 7-point scale. The items representing each of the conditions was as follows:

- **Personal story:** assessed by the 8 items: feeling-oriented, emotional, expressive, subjective, concrete, specific, personal, passionate
- **Rational explanation:** assessed by the 8 items: facts-oriented, rational, calm, objective, abstract, general, impersonal, dispassionate

*Table 1* summarises the simulated pretest/posttest design.
Table 1: Simulated Pretest/Posttest Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Stage 1 Attitude Induction</th>
<th>Stage 2 Attitude Change</th>
<th>Stage 3 Prenegotiation Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostile Pretest</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story-Only</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X – Personal Story</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation-Only</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X – Explanation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story-First</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X – Personal Story, Explanation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation-First</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X – Explanation, Personal Story</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The procedures were divided into three stages: (1) attitude induction of negative attitudes toward the other side; (2) attitude change via a personal story, and/or a rational explanation; and (3) a prenegotiation questionnaire, which measured the participants’ attitudes toward the other, the conflict situation, and expectations about the presumed negotiations. The design included one pretest (control) condition and four experimental conditions. The “hostile” condition served as the pretest condition and reflected “no approach.” The four experimental conditions included the following: “story-only;” “explanation-only;” “story-first” approach (story then explanation); and “explanation-first” approach (explanation then story). Attitude change (as measured by a number of factors described below) was the dependent variable and the experimental conditions were the independent variables. The conditions were embedded in the written materials received by subjects.

Although the procedures do not follow the traditional pretest/posttest method whereby participants complete both a pretest and posttest measure (e.g., between Stage 1 and 2), this simulated pretest/posttest method has been used in other experiments to avoid encountering repeated measure artifacts such as pretest sensitivity. This was of particular concern in the present research given the short time delay (about 10 minutes) between the pretest and posttest measures.

The Conflict Scenario

The conflict scenario is an adaptation of a simulation, the “Cygnus Conflict,” used by Druckman et al. The present study included two simulated ethnic groups, Ruritans and Graustarks, who are in conflict within the nation of Cygnus. Participants were asked to take the role of a negotiator from the Graustark side of the conflict (the participants did not realise that they all had the same role). The conflict setting and issues were described in a 9-page document that included an overview of the exercise, background information about Cygnus, a historical chronology of the conflict, information about the negotiator’s family.
history and role as a negotiator, and the issues on the table for negotiation. After reading the background information, the subjects were then instructed to imagine that today (the day of the simulation) was the day of their prenegotiation, informal dialogue with the other side’s negotiators. Participants in all conditions then read a statement supposedly made by their opponent that was hostile and accusatory. The participants in the pretest condition then completed the prenegotiation questionnaire while the participants in the experimental conditions read additional statements made by their opponents appropriate to their experimental condition. Following their reading of the additional statement(s), these participants then completed the prenegotiation questionnaire.

**Dependent Variables**
The effects of the conditions were assessed using 49 questions on 7-point rating scales to assess a variety of attitudes about the opponent, the negotiator’s group, and expectations about the upcoming negotiations. The 49 questions represented eight dimensions or composite variables as follows:

- **General Attitudes About the Opponent’s Personality/Behaviour:** assessed by 13 items: fair, trusting, trustworthy, compromising, peaceful, friendly, sincere, logical, practical, predictable, effective, intelligent, similar to us
- **Feelings Toward the Opponent:** assessed by 8 items: care about, feel compassion toward, respect, forgive, like, positive feelings toward, can get along with, willing to invite to my home
- **Understanding/Empathising with Opponent:** assessed by 5 items: easy to understand, understand perspectives, understand actions, has legitimate concerns, empathise with
- **Assumptions About the Opponents’ View of Us:** assessed by 5 items: trusting of us, cares about us, likes us, understand us, sees our legitimate concerns
- **Attitudes About the Opponents’ Role in the Conflict:** assessed by 4 items: not responsible for the conflict, used defensive military actions, justified actions, are victims
- **Attitudes About Our Role in the Conflict:** assessed by 4 items: not responsible for the conflict, used defensive military actions, justified actions, are victims
- **Expected Negotiation Climate:** assessed by 4 items: open climate, cooperative climate, productive climate, friendly climate
- **Expected Negotiation Outcomes:** assessed by 6 items: opponent wants fair agreement, expect satisfactory resolution, we have compatible solutions,
A total attitude score was calculated by summing the scores for the eight dimensions and dividing by eight to determine one mean score.

**Results**

Table 2 presents the results. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure differences in means among the hostile pretest condition and four experimental conditions. The Newman-Keuls multiple range tests was conducted to identify which specific changes from the pretest (hostile condition) to the posttest (experimental conditions) were significant. The ANOVA analysis and multiple range tests were also used to compare means between the post-test conditions. A higher score indicates more positive attitudes – more friendly, cooperative, and so on.

**Table 2: Mean Scores for All Conditions on Eight Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Hostile_pretest</th>
<th>Story-Only</th>
<th>Explanation-Only</th>
<th>Story-First</th>
<th>Explanation-First</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opponent in General</td>
<td>33.07</td>
<td>48.50*1, 2</td>
<td>41.00*1</td>
<td>52.13*1, 2</td>
<td>50.13*1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings Toward Opponent</td>
<td>27.07</td>
<td>35.13*1</td>
<td>28.67</td>
<td>32.88</td>
<td>33.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the Opponent</td>
<td>24.27</td>
<td>28.67</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>26.33*2</td>
<td>26.47*2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent’s View of Us</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>13.40*1</td>
<td>11.94*1</td>
<td>12.75*1</td>
<td>13.33*1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent’s Role in Conflict</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td>17.63*1</td>
<td>15.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Role in Conflict</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>18.63*1</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Negotiation Climate</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>15.88*1</td>
<td>13.72</td>
<td>16.00*1</td>
<td>15.13*1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Negotiation Outcomes</td>
<td>19.93</td>
<td>25.94*1</td>
<td>22.94</td>
<td>24.88*1</td>
<td>24.53*1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ATTITUDE SCORE</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.58*1, 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.54*1</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.98*1, 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>24.43*1, 2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 — indicates the mean score is significantly different at p<0.05 in the experimental condition versus the hostile pretest condition (Newman-Keuls multiple range tests)

*2 — indicates the mean score is significantly different in the story-only, story-first or explanation-first condition versus the explanation-only condition at p<0.05 (Newman-Keuls multiple range tests)

The hypotheses were tested from two perspectives. First, the posttest was compared to the pretest. Second, the posttest scores were compared to each other.

Comparison of the mean scores of the experimental posttest conditions to the pretest condition on the 8 dimensions had the following results:
• **Story:** showed significant changes from the pretest on five of the eight dimensions (63%): attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001$), feelings toward the opponent ($F[4,75]=3.14, p<0.02$), assumptions about the opponent’s view of us ($F[4,74]=3.21, p<0.02$), our expectations about the negotiation climate ($F[4,75]=4.43, p<0.003$), and negotiation outcomes ($F[4,75]=4.03, p<0.006$); and the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)

• **Explanation:** showed significant changes on two of the eight dimensions (25%): attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001$) and opponent’s view of us ($F[4,74]=3.21, p<0.02$); and the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)

• **Story-first:** showed significant changes on six of the eight dimensions (75%): attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001$), assumptions about the opponent’s view of us ($F[4,74]=3.21, p<0.02$), opponent’s role in the conflict ($F[4,75]=2.53, p<0.05$), our role in the conflict ($F[4,75]=2.40, p<0.06$), our expectations about the negotiation climate ($F[4,75]=4.43, p<0.003$), and negotiation outcomes ($F[4,75]=4.03, p<0.006$); and the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)

• **Explanation-first:** showed significant changes on four dimensions (50%): attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001$), assumptions about the opponent’s view of us ($F[4,74]=3.21, p<0.02$), our expectations about the negotiation climate ($F[4,75]=4.43, p<0.003$) and negotiation outcomes ($F[4,75]=4.03, p<0.006$); and the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)

Comparing the mean scores of the experimental posttest conditions to each other on the 8 dimensions and total score had the following results:

• **Story:** showed a significantly more positive attitude than the explanation condition on one dimension: attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<.0001$); and the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)

• **Story-First, Explanation-First:** showed a significantly more positive attitude than the explanation condition on two dimensions: attitudes about the opponent in general ($F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001$); understanding the opponent ($F[4,74]=3.02, p<0.03$); and on the total attitude score ($F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001$)
Hypothesis 1. This hypothesis posited that the story-only approach is more effective than the explanation-only approach for inducing positive attitudes. The story-only condition had a higher percentage (63%) of significant changes from the pretest to posttest on the eight dimensions than the explanation-only condition (25%).

When comparing the posttest means between the story and explanation, the story showed significantly more positive attitudes than the explanation on one dimension (13%): the opponent in general (F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001). The story also showed significantly more positive attitudes than the explanation on the total attitude score (F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001). These results support Hypothesis 1 that personal stories are more likely to induce positive attitudes than rational explanations.

Hypothesis 2. This hypothesis suggested the combined approaches are more effective than either approach alone. Comparing the posttest scores to the hostile pretest, the story-first condition (6 significant changes, 75%) and explanation-first condition (4 significant changes, 50%) were much more effective than the explanation-only condition (2 significant changes, 25%) for inducing shift from the pretest hostile condition. Both combined conditions were also significantly more positive than the hostile pretest on the total attitude score. The story-first condition was slightly more effective than the story-only condition (5 significant changes, 63%). However, the explanation-first condition was slightly less effective than the story-only condition.

Comparing the posttest means between the experimental conditions showed the story-first and explanation-first conditions had significantly more positive attitudes than the explanation-only condition on two dimensions (25%): opponent in general (F[4,75]=15.06, p<0.0001) and understanding the opponent (F[4,74]=3.02, p<0.03). They were also more effective than the explanation-only condition on the total attitude score (F[4,73]=10.09, p<0.0001). There were no significant differences between the combined approaches and the story-only approach. These results suggest the combined approaches are more effective than the explanation-only approach. The story-first approach produced slightly more positive changes and the explanation-first approach was equally as effective as the story-only approach. The results show modest support for Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3. This hypothesis compared the efficacy of the story-first and explanation-first conditions. The story-first condition had significantly more positive attitudes than the hostile pretest condition on 6 dimensions (75%). The explanation-first condition had significantly more positive attitudes than the hostile pretest condition on 4 dimensions (50%). Although the story-first con-
dition had generally higher mean scores than the explanation-first condition, there were no significant differences in scores between the two conditions.

When comparing the pretest to the posttest results, the story-first condition is more effective for inducing positive shift than the explanation-first condition, suggesting support for Hypothesis 3. However, the lack of significant differences between the affective-first and cognitive-first conditions qualifies this conclusion. Overall, the results indicate weak support for the hypothesis that the story-first condition is more effective than the explanation-first condition for inducing positive shift in attitudes.

The lack of stronger results than predicted by the interviews in the previous study may be explained by the difference between a “real life” dialogue and the experimental setting used for this research. In a “real life” dialogue, what happens-in-the-moment is likely to be much more impactful on people’s reactions and what comes next than when participants are told what to do (e.g., read all the materials) in an experimental setting. In a real dialogue, people may get stuck in discussions of the substantive issues and never discuss the relationship issues. They may attempt to engage in rational discussion and problem-solving without ever focusing on attitudes and underlying meanings and personal experiences. In the real world, this might not lead to shift unless or until they focus on the issues from their personal experiences and/or underlying meanings. If the latter occurs, this may then help them re-evaluate information and discussions they may have dismissed or argued against earlier and help them get to a problem-solving state of mind. In the experimental setting, participants were told to read all the materials. They read both the personal story and the explanation before being asked to respond on the questionnaire. They did not have the same opportunity for “dialogue or problem-solving to breakdown” and were able to react to the materials as a whole, after reading them all, rather than incrementally and in-the-moment as would occur in a real dialogue. Therefore, in contrast to the “real world,” the ordering of the materials may have been less effective in the experiment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research revealed the transformative power of sharing personal stories for changing conflict parties’ hearts and minds toward the other conflict party, thereby paving the way for building peaceful relationships. In addition, combining personal stories with more rational discussion and explanations is more effective than either approach alone; especially more effective
than hearing (reading) only rational explanations. The results suggest that inter-group interventions should include time for participants to share personal stories and meanings as well as engage in more rational discussion and explanations of each side’s perspectives. What is less clear from the data is whether there is a best time for this storytelling to take place. The interviews in Study 1 suggested that storytelling precede more “rational” discussion of the facts because the stories helped the listeners open their minds to hearing and discussing each other’s facts and perspectives. However, Study 2 showed only marginally better outcomes when the storytelling came before the rational explanations than vice versa. Given that most interventions likely include a mix of these approaches, further research is warranted to explore whether there is an optimal ordering of these two approaches. In fact, further research is warranted to validate the findings of this study given these hypotheses have not been tested elsewhere.

**Implications for Diplomacy**

The research presented in this paper was not conducted with diplomacy in mind. The research was focussed on helping conflict resolution third-party practitioners better understand what factors lead to improved attitudes and relationship building in the context of small-group interventions, in the hopes that this knowledge would help them design more effective intervention processes. Nevertheless, what are the implications of the research findings for diplomacy? I will suggest four possibilities:

*Storytelling as Part of Prenegotiation Dialogues and Negotiations.* The idea of having prenegotiation dialogues to improve relationships between negotiators is not new. However, this research suggests that part of the prenegotiation dialogue should include time for negotiators to share personal stories, whether they are of personal experiences or the impact and meaning of the conflict in their lives. This sharing should also include their personal visions and hopes for the future. An honest sharing of the past and hopes for the future will likely increase positive attitudes toward the other, including trust, which is crucial for genuine negotiation in good faith. Personalising the discussion may also be effective during negotiations. A simple illustration of this dynamic is found in the historic Camp David meetings with Presidents Carter, Begin and Sadat. During a conference, I heard President Carter tell this beautiful story (paraphrased here) about the turning point in the negotiations.24
After several days of unsuccessful negotiations, the Camp David meetings were at a standstill and Begin and Sadat were at an impasse. Fortuitously, at the start of the negotiations, Begin had asked Carter for an autographed picture to give to one of his grandchildren. Carter, while trying to figure out how to salvage the negotiations, had an assistant identify the names of all of Begin’s eight or so grandchildren, and then made personalised and signed photographs for each one. During the height of the impasse, Carter gave the photographs to Begin and said to Begin something like, “The negotiations are for them,” while pointing to the names of the grandchildren. Begin was so surprised and touched by Carter’s gesture, and the implications of the negotiations for his family and future generations, that this simple gesture was the turning point in the negotiations.

Track 1 and Track 2 Diplomacy. The majority of conflict intervention efforts that have focused on improving relationships have been in the realm of Track 2 diplomacy. The significant role of citizen diplomacy towards peace-making is increasingly recognised by citizens and diplomats alike. Harold Saunders, former US diplomat and negotiator of the Camp David Accords wrote in his 1999 book, “Only governments can write peace treaties, but only human beings – citizens outside government – can transform conflictual relationships between people into peaceful relationships.” For lasting peace, both are required. For diplomats to negotiate successful agreements, they may need to adopt the lessons learned by citizen diplomats, including the positive role of personal stories for changing and building relationship. If these are key to relationship building among citizens, it makes sense to assume the same is true for diplomats. An additional challenge is for citizens and diplomats to coordinate their efforts in order to maximise peacebuilding at all levels.

Spreading New Stories to the Masses. The value of small group dialogues and personal stories is clear. However, not everyone has the opportunity to participate in these processes directly. A challenge for citizen and government diplomats is how to spread what they learned through storytelling and dialogue to their constituents and people in general. One approach may be for political and civic leaders to share their new stories with others through the media and other communication channels. Leaders have long used stories to inflame anger and dehumanise the other. Therefore, leaders can use the same technology and techniques to spread new stories. The challenge will be to make these new stories as “sensational” and “exciting” as the past harmful stories so they
capture the attention, imagination, hearts and minds of the listeners, and motivate them to new kinds of behaviours.

**Facilitated Diplomacy.** The intervention processes studies in my research were generally facilitated by a third party who was considered instrumental in designing and facilitating the dialogue process. Third party facilitators are useful in most conflict intervention settings, but may be crucial in conflicts characterised by great hostility and fractured relationships. Under these conditions, a facilitator may be needed to help the conflict parties communicate effectively and to encourage and help them use personal experiences to share underlying needs, values, meanings, and core concerns towards developing shared understanding and improved relationships.

These implications require further thought and elaboration.

**Endnotes**


10. Mr. Frank Blechman, former faculty member at the Institute for Conflict Analysis & Resolution, George Mason University.
The Role of Personal Stories to Bridge Deep Differences


My co-facilitators were affiliated with the Institute for Conflict Analysis & Resolution, including Frank Blechman, Giselle Huamani Ober, and Ngozi Robinson, and Barron Bingen of Barrios Unidos (a gang intervention organisation).


Daniel Druckman, Benjamin Broome and Susan H. Korper, “Value Differences and Conflict Resolution: Facilitation or Delinking?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32 (September 1988), 489-510.


When, three years ago, a friend of mine from abroad paid me a visit after a long absence, in typical euphoria we talked about our joint memories and time we had spent together in the past. However, a moment that occurred during the meeting made me feel unusual, almost uncomfortable.

Walking around in places new for my friend, we paid a visit to a village in the west of the country, a typical idyllic place, full of peacefulness. In front of a shop, two men were sitting playing cards. After a while, one of them stood up and greeted several guests who were entering the nearby restaurant where he was probably working. The other man greeted us and asked us if we needed something from his store. My guest noticed that they were speaking different languages. One of them was Macedonian and the other, Albanian. Probably that is where he got the inspiration to ask me later how the Macedonians and the Albanians live in Macedonia. How do they communicate? Is there friendship everywhere as in that village? I remember that it took me a few seconds to respond concerning what I thought or what different concerned parties thought.

At that moment, I felt as if I were standing in front of a treasure chest in the middle of a street, not knowing what was inside it: I am tempted to open it. Perhaps it contains something valuable and I should give it back to the one who lost it, but for a moment I think that something unknown is inside, something dangerous. The dilemma is that what lies inside may be either pleasant or bad.

I was faced with the same image when I answered the question how do we, the two nations, live together, how do we communicate. The answer to this question coming from two different people may reveal two opposite viewpoints, the optimistic and the pessimistic.

By the way, I would like to mention that here I will focus on communication between the Macedonians and the Albanians, considering that these are the two largest ethnic groups in the country and even more, that these two groups were involved in the military conflict in 2001. Just as a clarification, according to the census carried out in 1994 the population of the Republic of Macedonia is composed of 66.6% Macedonians, 22.7% Albanians, 4% Turks, 2.2% Roma, 2.1% Serbs, 0.8% Macedonian-Muslims, 0.4% Vlachs and 1.2% other nationalities. According to the preliminary results from the census car-
ried out in 2002, the total population in Macedonia is 2.043 million; however, the 2002 data for the national composition were not available at the time this paper was written.

**Seen Through the Pessimistic Prism**

The pessimistic viewpoint leads us to think that the two largest communities in Macedonia (the Macedonian and the Albanian) remain stubbornly locked in two parallel universes. Inter-ethnic relations are often placed in a framework of ancient hatred of unlimited duration. Simply said, both communities act as if the other one does not exist. The pessimistic considerations continue: members of the different ethnic communities do not want to listen to the fears, desires and opinions of “the others.” Everyone remains closed inside his community, which is also closed. In literature, poetry and music, one cannot find art made by members of the other community. The cultures are different and there are no attempts to open any channel of communication.

At the academic level, the situation has been summarised as follows: “Partially due to the political appetite of the Albanian leaders and in combination with the reluctance of the Macedonian authorities to review the Albanian issue, the Albanian community in Macedonia was excluded from the decision-making on some of the most important issues that concern the Macedonian statehood.”2 Just to remind the reader, the Albanians boycotted the referendum for independence of the country in 1991, the adoption of the Constitution, and the census in 1994. All of this, followed by the unfortunate events in Gostivar and Bit Pazar in 1996, when the inter-ethnic tensions in Macedonia produced the first civilian victims, provided fertile ground on which the antagonism between the two ethnic communities could grow.

In the following years, the gap between the Macedonians and the Albanians continued to grow. The Macedonians said that they did not want to have anything to do with the Albanians, and the Albanians responded in the same fashion. For example, most of the Albanians were displeased about the formulation of the preamble of the Constitution (which has now been altered), disagreeing with the statement that “Macedonia is a state of the Macedonian people, as well as of the members of the other ethnic groups who live on its territory.” Instead, they demanded that the preamble say that Macedonia is a state of “all citizens,” so that the name of their ethnic group would be highlighted. With the recent change in the text of the preamble, Macedonia became a joint...
state of “the Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma, Serb, Vlach people, as well as of all other ethnic groups who live on its territory.”

Dissatisfaction was also manifested concerning the alleged unequal participation of the minorities in state institutions. Participation is now regulated through the decentralisation of the central government, an obligation that comes directly from the Framework Agreement, which I will focus on later in this paper.

**Divided Media and Different Reality**

The participation of the media and its role in creating and perpetuating ethnic tension is undeniable. “The media were either becoming prisoners of their ethnic prejudice, or they were choosing to support certain political interests,” the Macedonian Helsinki Committee comments in its 2001 report. Some of the Macedonian language newspapers reported that the isolation of the ethnic Albanians was becoming increasingly strong. “Soon we will see new Albanian associations of mechanics, woodworkers etc.,” the local Macedonian language daily *Dnevnik* reported ironically. The Albanian language media replied with the statement that “ever since Macedonia separated from the former Yugoslavia, the Albanians have been treated as second-rank citizens.”

Even more ironical in this situation is that the Macedonian and the Albanian language media were addressing different publics, meaning that they did not have one joint public. Usually, the members of the non-Macedonian communities in Macedonia understand the Macedonian language; however, they trust only “their” media. The Macedonians, on the other hand, are never familiar with the reporting of the Albanian, Turkish, Vlach or Serbian language media, and, likewise, trust only their own media.

In a situation where everyone listens to his media only, the viewers, listeners and readers believe that the picture they get is the same for all. One does not need great wisdom to understand that the reality is different for other language publics. All it takes is curiosity to learn that the reality is different.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that some experts disagree that the media were reporting only for their own communities. “Of course, they reported more for their own, than for the other ethnic group – but not only for their own. Finally, the journalist’s curiosity (which is crucial for this profession) and the sensationalism are so strong, that when it comes to daily events they would not allow the opportunity to inform the public to be missed, regardless
of which ethnic group is concerned,” claims Vesna Sopar, media expert from the Institute for Political and Sociological Research from Skopje.  

Everything would have ended with this exchange of verbal arrows if pessimism had not become the dominant orientation. This orientation was widely supported by the media, mainly from two directions: the domestic media, and the foreign media present in the country, or at least trying to enter the country.

**Reality in the Military Conflict and the Divided Media**

The dominance of pessimism became obvious during the military conflict in the spring of 2001. The last year of conflict caught everyone in Macedonia off-guard, because, according to statements not only from the local, but also from the international officials in the country, we were doing so well.

Probably the first casualty of the clashes between the Macedonian security forces and the Albanian militants was inter-ethnic relations. A common characteristic both of the Macedonian and the foreign media was the preparatory role they played even before the outbreak of the conflict. At the point when conflict broke out, they assumed (deliberately or not) a different role – the role of a third side in the conflict. The government often reacted in regard to so-called “undesirable reporting.” The Southeast Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) from Vienna registered 41 violations of the freedom of the press in Macedonia in 2002.

However, the media played a further role: they did not make clear the difference between peace and war journalism. The media did not understand that peace journalism intentionally adopts an agenda for peace, believing that it is the only possible alternative, as opposed to war journalism, which promotes an agenda for war. These two approaches go hand in hand with the division of pessimistic and optimistic scenarios that I described earlier. More specifically, peace journalism opens the gates to optimism, and war journalism shuts them. War journalism does not allow us to remind ourselves that the beauty of different cultures lies in the fact that they are a reason for making us closer to one another. Unfortunately, with the type of journalism which dominated Macedonia during the conflict, this type of logic is distant and hard to reach. In the following, coming from an article written on May 5, 2000, by a foreign correspondent of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, this tendency is clear:

In Skopje, the people are on the move. The river Vardar divides the town, with Macedonians on the one side and Albanians on the other.
Those on the “wrong side” are busy arranging apartment exchanges. … Nowadays, it is rare to find Macedonians and Albanians living next door to another. The two communities keep to themselves. They have their own hairdressers, dentists, bars and discos. Children attend separate schools. In a recent poll, not one respondent said they would consider marriage to a member of the other community or to allow their children to do so.⁸

The military clash in the country started in March of 2001. It may sound absurd, but the war was “discovered” by the media. “An unidentified group that spoke Albanian” held a TV crew hostage for several hours in the village of Tanusevcı at the border with Kosovo. At that moment, the media began competing to see who would publish more exclusive information, who would say something new and unknown, even if that information was only an assumption. For example, the Macedonian language daily Dnevnik and Sitel TV, also in the Macedonian language, publicised the possibilities for the breakout of a “spring offensive” (as they called it) after the end of the six-month long conflict between the national security forces and the armed Albanian guerrillas, who called themselves NLA members. However, these forecasts did not come true. All they did was to enhance the inter-ethnic hatred and to spread fear. This was the outcome, at least according to several surveys carried out on co-living in the country.

Speaking about the interest of the foreign media in covering the military conflict in Macedonia, the best indicator is the report from the Agency of Information which says that right after the Tanusevci events approximately 1,000 journalists, photo reporters and cameramen were accredited to report from Macedonia.

Quite often the foreign media illustrated the conflict in Macedonia as a clash between Albanians and Slavs and not between Albanians and Macedonians. Some Western media used the same terminology during the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia. In this regard, the comments were in the following spirit: “This terminology leads to a conclusion that the Slavs are at war with the Albanians all over the Balkans.”⁹

For example, an article issued several times demonstrates the analysis of the foreign media coverage of Macedonia. This article, originally released by BBC, said: “Macedonia is a country with two nations which barely speak to each other. This is like a marriage from hell. The Macedonians are orthodox Slavs, friends and relatives of the Serbs, militant, cruel, some might say without sense of humor. The Albanians are mainly Muslims, smart, amusing, some might say wise.”¹⁰
By the way, it may be worthwhile mentioning the results of a survey carried out just before the military conflict in the country. According to these results, the citizens in the last few years mostly feared corruption, unemployment, crime and poverty, far more than the interethnic hatred. However, the list of “main fears” altered after the war. A survey recently carried out in Macedonia by the US State Department based on a sample of 1,500 over the age of 15 showed that fear of ethnic hatred had become dominant.

Returning to the role of the local media, I would like to mention another example of reporting, this time concerning the village of Semsevo in the northwest of the country, populated by both Albanians and Macedonians. A problem occurred after the Albanian population insisted that the village school be named after an Albanian writer, Jumni Jonuzi, while the Macedonians insisted on the name of Dame Gruev, a famous Macedonian revolutionary. The dispute seemed endless and the conflict resulted in a boycott of the school by both the Macedonian and the Albanian students. The media continuously reported on this dispute, but failed to tackle one very important moment, the moment when compromise was reached and the school was given the name of the village. The media failed to seize the moment and, instead, continued to publish headlines like “Nothing new in Semsevo: School to be named after the village.” This is yet another example of avoidance of peace reporting. Even at the present day, reporting on Semsevo proceeds in the same manner: no progress on the horizon.

I mentioned earlier that one needs to be curious enough to see how the media that operate in different languages present different images in a country. My curiosity made me feel very upset at one moment. A book published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting describes the attack carried out by the Macedonian security forces in the village of Ljuboten on August 2001. In the shelling, six-year Erhan Aliu, an ethnic Albanian, was killed while playing on the street. He died in the arms of his uncle within an hour. If I had not read this book, I would have never learnt about this from the Macedonian language media. Likewise, the Albanian language media never reported on the brutal torture, sexual abuse and humiliation of five Macedonian construction workers kidnapped by uniformed NLA members on 7 August, 2001, while they were working on the Skopje-Tetovo highway.

**Quest for the Truth and the Meaning of Co-Living**

Without getting into a deeper analysis of the events in the media field, a positive result was the revelation of a truth that was very important, yet hardly
noticed. I am speaking about the fact that ordinary people started to open their eyes. It did not take long for both sides involved in the conflict to learn their lessons. At first, the military conflict was approached with great confusion, as when a man suddenly faces something quite unexpected. The propaganda which I described earlier went unnoticed. The voice against the media distortion of reality, or against the division that it caused, did not break out to the surface. On the contrary, everyone believed the details reported by distorted media practices. Nevertheless, initiatives coming from several international organisations helped change these practices. For example, the NGO “Search for Common Ground” produced a TV program with 16 episodes, entitled “Our Neighbourhood.” The main characters in this show were children faced with different problems due to their ethnic origins, age or gender. As the director of “Search for Common Ground,” Ibrahim Mehmeti, said, this program identified ways in which these problems can be resolved. Another NGO, the Nansen Dialogue Center, in its media component produced programs that aimed to enhance inter-ethnic communication through the media. This helped improve cooperation amongst journalists who worked in media with different languages; they completed joint programs and some media for the first time used a language different from the one that they usually used. For one year, “Life” radio has operated in Skopje, broadcasting programs both in the Macedonian and the Albanian languages. The Institute for Sustainable Communities continued to give support to large number of NGOs and civic associations, which among their other activities stimulated inter-ethnic cooperation and current and future conflict resolution.

Optimism on the Horizon

Gradually, attention becomes focused in another direction, and now new perspectives are urged by those who always stood for an optimistic scenario. Becoming aware that differences are bringing the two nations closer to each other, the people started to reject conclusions that offered no positive solutions. The factors that constantly promoted the dark scenario started to retreat and to open space for the ideas, feelings and desires of the ordinary people. These feelings, ideas and desires clearly indicated that reconciliation and forgiveness are crucial for renewal and normalisation after violence and war. In moments of such consideration or, better said, exhaustion of all possible and applied scenarios, what became central between the sides involved in the conflict, as well as among the media and the international players, was an accord titled “Frame-
work Agreement,” the main precondition for exiting the crisis. The Framework Agreement was signed on 13 August 2001 under international supervision by the two sides involved in the conflict, and officially marked the end of the military clash of the Republic of Macedonia.

All sides accepted the Accord as something that will restore hope, instead of trying to attribute this benefit to themselves. I am not saying that there were no such attempts; I am not even saying that such attempts are not present nowadays. It would be useless to believe in such an idyllic situation, which would mean unconditional, uncompromising nodding to everyone from each side. The document I mentioned, the Framework Agreement, faced different reactions. For some it has been a forced solution, for others a withdrawal, and for yet others, not enough met requests. Sometimes the document is a top story, sometimes it is forgotten, in order to open it up again and to think about it.

However, the words of one man whom I met accidentally while standing in line in a store could capture the mood that existed: “Peace is what we all want. Mine and my neighbour’s day, no matter whether we belong to different nationalities, does not begin if we are not together.” Ratko Gligorovski from the village of Zelino, near Tetovo, in October 2001 also pointed out that there is something more important than searching for a person to be blamed and spreading hatred: “Not all Albanians belong to the NLA. Even when it was most difficult and when we were cut off, my friend Avdija from Zeline visited me. He is an Albanian. He gave me a sack of bread and told me to share it with the others.”

The moments when we think that we are unique and that nothing makes us different one from another are unforgettable. One of those moments, of which I am particularly proud, is when on October 17, 2002 everyone went out onto the streets of Skopje cheering the name of Artim Shakiri, a football player in the Macedonian national team. In the qualifications for the World championship 2004, he scored a goal straight from the corner against England. With this goal, he contributed to the achievement of one of the greatest successes of the Macedonian national team: 2:2 against England. What happened at that moment to pessimistic considerations? What happened to the remarks that something is unusual in the joint celebration by the Macedonians and the Albanians of the success brought by our citizen, by the way, an ethnic Albanian?

Moments like this one make us believe that in order for a good inter-ethnic climate to be created, it takes more than formal documents and accords. On the contrary, the voices of the ordinary people should be heard: the people should be allowed to work together, to listen to each other, to read the words
of the other in order to understand their culture. The sense of understanding is something that we need to revive, and in order to do that we must be open to that feeling.

In this context, I do not want to focus on the document as a revolutionary discovery that will leave deep traces in history regarding the time that brought and resolved the conflict. I prefer to see it as a moment that made us all think, perhaps with some mystic power, and reminded us that we all participate in the creation of one reality which we will bear within us; we will build it and adjust it. It reminded us that reconciliation between ourselves, as well as reconciliation with the truth and reality, comes from those who are mostly concerned about how it looks, which does not mean forgetting, but, on the contrary, remembering the past in order to have a better and more integrated future. We forgive because we cannot forget the past. Many of the people in Macedonia live with the past, they feel harmed, they mourn somebody, and they do not want to see what happened occur again. Still, an untold promise hangs in the air, that we will leave to the past that gap that made the different cultures run away one from the other, that made the bullies in one area embrace the challenges to distort reality to their own benefit; we will leave the sense of differences to the past. I believe that the greatest deeds will start with minor steps, but in the right direction. True commitment exists because it was inspired in the time of all these temptations, when the number of alternatives was reduced to a minimum. However, the spirit is here and the spirit does not allow us to hesitate about the path that we will choose. When we once take that path, a new turmoil will be created: a turmoil of peace, welfare and seizing the moment. In this regard, I am an optimist!

Endnotes

4 Macedonian language daily Dnevnik, 11 July 2002.
5 Albanian language daily Fakti, 13 July 2002.
9 Ljube Profiloski, “*Media War against Macedonia*” (BIGOSS - Skopje 2002).
10 Macedonian Institute for Media, Media and the Conflict in Macedonia, November 2001.
Business negotiation is a lengthy, difficult process in itself, and becomes extremely intricate when cultural aspects are involved. However, cross-cultural business negotiation is an unavoidable part of international business today, so learning more about the process is an important undertaking. When two negotiating parties from different cultural backgrounds attempt to communicate, the potential for disagreement and misunderstanding is great.

The Chinese are generally recognised to have a tough negotiating style. People from other cultural backgrounds, especially from the West, often find the behaviour of Chinese negotiators strange and unintelligible. This is why much attention has been given to studying the Chinese negotiation style. So far, most research on the topic has focused on successful negotiations and very little has been done to examine the barriers to negotiation. This paper aims to address this need by examining communication barriers between Chinese, Australian and American negotiators. The cases analysed in this paper are derived from a series of business meetings that took place in Australia and China between 1999 and 2002.

The following research questions are proposed:

- What are the barriers to successful negotiation with Chinese business people?
- What is the appropriate approach to overcome these communication barriers and to achieve a win-win outcome?
- What are the implications of studying these communication barriers for international business as well as for diplomats?

In order to answer these questions, this paper will first develop a theoretical framework followed by a discussion of the research method. The theoretical framework will focus on universal or Western cultural dimensions as well as Chinese-specific dimensions. The paper will then proceed to describe and analyse the negotiation cases in light of the proposed theoretical framework. Finally, the authors provide recommendations for Chinese, Australian and American negotiators and highlight significant implications for the study of diplomacy.
Literature Review

This literature review seeks to highlight specific Chinese cultural traits that characterise Chinese negotiation behaviour and to identify possible barriers to negotiating with the Chinese. It begins with a brief outline of negotiation and negotiation theories followed by an examination of cross-cultural dimensions. Three important Chinese cultural traits - Confucianism, face and guanxi - are then discussed in detail to complement the universal dimensions.

Negotiation and the Negotiation Process

Negotiation has been a topic of research for several decades and, as a result, many definitions are available. Zartman understands negotiation as a process of two or more parties combining their conflicting points of view into a single decision of mutual interest.\(^1\) Ferraro defines negotiation as “a process between people who share some common interests, people who stand to benefit from bringing the process to a successful conclusion.”\(^2\) The difference between these two definitions exemplifies the development of negotiation studies: Zartman emphasises that negotiation is mainly used to resolve conflicts, while Ferraro believes negotiation is an approach to better cooperation. At the present, although no definition of negotiation is universal, most authors hold the view that any negotiation involves two or more parties who have both common and conflicting interests, and who interact with one another for the purpose of reaching a mutually beneficial agreement.\(^3\)

The negotiation process is also divided differently by individual theorists. McCall and Warrington use a three-stage model which involves pre-negotiation, face-to-face interaction and post-negotiation.\(^4\) Graham and Sano develop a four-step negotiation process:

- Non-task sounding: negotiating parties get to know each other.
- Task-related exchange of information: parties’ subjective needs and preferences open to discussion.
- Persuasion: parties attempt to influence the other side’s needs and preferences by using various persuasive tactics.
- Concessions and agreement: parties accomplish an agreement which often is the summation of a series of concessions.\(^5\)

The above process is referred to in the following discussion, as it is a synthesised process useful for examining cross-cultural negotiations.
Behaviour Theory. Behaviour theory focuses on human behaviours during negotiation. Ren, Anumba and Ugwu note that “behaviour theory attempts to analyse the negotiation processes in which negotiators influence each other’s expectations, perceptions, assessments, and decisions during the search for an outcome, thereby affecting the outcome.” They also note three approaches to the study of behaviour. The psychological approach focuses on analysing negotiators’ personalities, perceptions, expectations and their persuasive techniques. The learning approach views negotiation as a learning process in which each party is largely dependent on its experience of the results of past actions by the two parties. Last, but not least, the dual responsiveness model shows that a negotiator’s response is a function of his own previous pattern of making concessions as well as the opponent’s concession rate. The psychological approach can be relevant to our analysis since we focus on examining behaviours of people from different cultures.

Cross-Cultural Negotiation. Chaney and Martin define cross-cultural negotiation as “discussions of common and conflicting interests between persons of different cultural backgrounds who work to reach an agreement of mutual benefit.” Cross-cultural negotiation is more challenging than mono-cultural negotiation. In a cross-cultural environment, the negotiation process increases in complexity with the need to consider the factors of different languages and cultures, which are not relevant in a mono-cultural environment. Ferraro states that:

When negotiating within our own culture, it is possible to operate effectively at the intuitive or unconscious level. However, when we leave our familiar cultural context and enter into international negotiations, the scene changes dramatically. There are no longer shared values, interests, goals, ethical principles, or cultural assumptions between the negotiating parties.

Different values, attitudes, interests, behaviours, and languages may produce different negotiation styles, which, if not managed well, can lead to misunderstanding and disagreement and can even break up business relationships. Gulbro and Herbig believe that the negotiation style used effectively in one culture can be ineffective and inappropriate when dealing with people from another cultural background and actually may result in more harm than gain. For instance, being frank and direct may be welcome in some cultures and may help reach a quick agreement, but may not be acceptable in other cul-

Yunxia Zhu and Sun Zhu Communication Barriers to Negotiation
tures. In addition, members of different cultures may focus on different aspects of an agreement. In some cultures the attention of negotiators may be directed more towards the specific details of the agreement, while other cultures may focus on how promises can be kept.12

Because of such cultural differences, negotiating with Chinese individuals can be a very challenging task. Buttery and Leung consider China to be one of the most challenging countries in which to conduct negotiations.13 Ghauri and Fang note that negotiating with Chinese counterparts is quite complex and time consuming.14 Woo finds that “western business people entering a negotiation in China are often confronted with fierce adversarial bargaining that appears to lack politeness and consideration and find that the Chinese negotiators are tough, shrewd and tenacious.”15 Searching for reasons why negotiating with the Chinese carries difficulties for Western business people, without exception these authors emphasise the great influence of Chinese culture on negotiation style. They have investigated aspects such as Confucianism, Taoism, collectivism, face, patience, guanxi, and social status. Among these aspects, Confucianism, face and guanxi are studied most frequently and are believed to be the key factors governing the behaviour of Chinese negotiators. They are also used to indicate a Chinese perspective since we are dealing with negotiation across cultures. This dual perspective is essential for intercultural encounters.16

In an attempt to bridge the gap between negotiation styles, negotiating parties in cross-cultural negotiations need to have a deep understanding of the cultural realities of their negotiation partners. As Woo and Prud’homme appropriately point out, “in a cross-cultural negotiation, in addition to the basic negotiation skills, it is important to understand the cultural differences, and to modify the negotiation style accordingly.”17

**Intercultural Dimensions**

*Hall’s High- and Low-Context Cultures.* According to Hall, high-context communication emphasises “the physical context or internalized in the person” rather than the “coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.”18 A low-context communication, on the contrary, stresses the importance of information vested in the explicit code.19 Gudykunst and Kim echo Hall’s view, confirming the above description of high- and low-context cultures.20

Referring to the difference between Chinese and American cultures, Lin and Miller state, “members of high-context cultures (e.g., Chinese) are not likely to express their opinion openly and explicitly, whereas members of low-context cultures (e.g., American) appreciate openness and directness with little attention to hidden contexts.”21 Unawareness of this kind of difference in
negotiation style can be a barrier to successful communication in cross-cultural negotiations.

*Power Distance.* Hofstede’s power distance can be another factor affecting cross-cultural negotiations. Power distance is “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally.” Gudykunst and Kim distinguish high power distance from low power distance as follows:

Individuals from high power distance cultures accept power as part of society. As a result, superiors consider their subordinates to be different from themselves and vice versa, while members from lower power distance cultures believe power should be used only when it is legitimate and prefer expert or legitimate power.

According to Hofstede’s Power Distance Index, different cultures have different attitudes to hierarchy and the distribution of power. For example, “the Chinese have a strict hierarchical system and place emphasis on rank,” while Australians and Americans tend to pay less attention to social ranking.

*Collectivism and Individualism.* Hofstede also classifies cultures based on the dimension of individualism and collectivism. Leung further explicates collectivism as “the tendency to be more concerned about the consequences of one’s behaviour for in-group members and to be more willing to sacrifice personal interests for the attainment of collective interests,” whereas individualism refers to “the tendency to be more concerned about the consequences of one’s behaviour for one’s own needs, interests, and goals.”

According to Hsu, as members of a collective culture, Chinese people emphasise group goals and needs, and strive to maintain relational harmony. In contrast, members of an individualistic culture, such as Australians, value individual autonomy and interests, and encourage competition.

*Confucianism.* Confucianism emphasises the responsibilities of individuals toward one another within five important human relationships: those between ruler and subject, husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother, and friend and friend. Confucianism also advocates a social order that values duty, loyalty, honour, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity. As Woo points out, Confucianism concerns “obedience to, and respect for, superiors and parent, duty to the family, loyalty to friends, and the hierarchy at work.”
Confucianism has implications for negotiating with the Chinese. According to Fang, Confucianism is more concerned with righteousness and humanity than profit. This explains why Chinese negotiators do not rush into formal contract discussions, but take considerable time to build up trust with their negotiation partners. From the perspective of Western business people, an initial meeting with Chinese individuals is seldom a “successful” one, as the Chinese tend to use this meeting simply to collect more information to assess the trustworthiness of their partners. In addition, because Confucianism holds that business is governed by a moralistic notion of sincerity and trust more than by a legalistic concept of contract, Chinese business is largely built on trust rather than law. Chinese negotiate deals with their partners most effectively when sufficient trust has been established between the parties. A verbal agreement with Chinese business people is as effective as a written contract. Finally, Confucianism advocates the relative importance of knowing others and the relative unimportance of being known. This is the reason why Chinese negotiators are so attentive to discern the interests and personalities of their negotiation partners and defensive about freely disseminating information about themselves.

**Face.** Face is described as “a projected social image in a diverse range of communicative situations.” More specifically, face “implies status and prestige and is a mark of personal dignity.” This is linked to Confucianism and power dimension in Chinese society. Woo and Prud’homme describe the significant role of “face” in Chinese society:

The Chinese are preoccupied with the concept of face and are very sensitive to having and maintaining face in all aspects of social and business life. Having face means having high status and prestige in the eyes of one’s peers. To the Chinese, face can be compared with a prized commodity, something that can be given, earned, taken away, or lost.

The Chinese are invariably characterised by Western business people as being tough negotiators. The factor of face can be an important reason for this tendency. Here, two Chinese face-related terms can be crucial for understanding Chinese negotiation: giving face and losing face. Giving face during negotiations can be understood as showing respect to negotiators on the other side of the table and recognising the status and moral reputation of the negotiators in society. It is important for Western business people to protect their Chinese
counterparts’ face, but it is perhaps even more important to give face to them.\textsuperscript{38} Losing face takes place when one negotiator denounces the status and reputation of another. In negotiations, a Chinese negotiator will lose face if someone is critical of him in front of others. Treating Chinese negotiators as junior in rank when their official status in an organisation is higher can also cause them to lose face.\textsuperscript{39} Therefore, Brahm believes that it is important to “to give your Chinese counterpart ‘face’ at the negotiation table without losing it yourself.”\textsuperscript{40}

Oetzel and Ting-Toomey point out that face negotiation theory provides an organising and explanatory framework for conflict behaviours in negotiation; in particular, they point out that cultural backgrounds directly affect negotiators’ attitudes toward face. Therefore, it can have an impact on their selection of negotiation strategies.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{Guanxi}. \textit{Guanxi}, the Chinese term for relationship, is one of the most important Chinese cultural traits. It is also translated as “personal contacts” or “personal connections.” The concept of \textit{guanxi} is not unique to China, but it is closely related to the five relations of Confucianism as part of the socio-cultural tradition in China. The Chinese give considerable effort to developing \textit{guanxi}, which is usually established among people who share a commonality of certain identities, for example, schoolmates, fellow villagers or old friends.\textsuperscript{42}

The importance of developing \textit{guanxi} for foreign business people has been emphasised by many researchers. For example, Hu believes that doing business in China is not just a matter of price and product.\textsuperscript{43} To achieve success, Western business people must rely on good personal relationships. Woo and Prud’homme state that in business negotiations the side that can assemble a stronger \textit{guanxi} network will be more formidable.\textsuperscript{44} Schnepp, von Glinow and Bhambrì hold that a fine \textit{guanxi} with high-level officials in Chinese bureaucracy can smooth negotiation and generate good business.\textsuperscript{45} However, \textit{guanxi} is not about immediately returning one favour with another. It may involve constant giving without obtaining a favour in return or \textit{vice versa} for an extended period.\textsuperscript{46}

These intercultural dimensions can be used to interpret cultural differences in negotiation. Failure to understand them may lead to barriers to any of the processes in negotiation.

\textbf{Research Method and Data}

The research method is based on case studies. Altogether, we collected the details of ten negotiations between 1999 and 2002. None of the negotiations
were successful. More background information will be given in the next section. One particular case is analysed as an illustration, chosen because it contained features common to each of the negotiations. Two kinds of analytical tools were applied: first, the parameters identified in our theoretical framework were used to analyse the specific encounter. In particular, the negotiation processes discussed earlier are applied. Second, discourse and genre analysis were used to examine the negotiation discourse of each party involved in the cases. Swales examines genre in terms of communicative purposes and strategies, both of which are relevant to this analysis.47

Background Information about the Negotiation Cases

From 1999 to 2002, one of the authors of this paper worked at the Investment Promotion Service Centre in Beijing, China, a not-for-profit organisation directly affiliated with and entirely funded by a district government. The mission of the Centre is to act as a liaison for investors in Beijing, and thus it attracted much foreign attention.

In her three years’ experience working in this centre, the author participated in no less than ten initial face-to-face meetings between Chinese and Western business people, the latter mainly from Australia and America. For the purpose of facilitating further cooperation between the parties, the meetings took various forms including seminars, negotiations, forums and informal discussions. However, the results of each of these meetings were the same: no business cooperation between the parties occurred. One specific case has been selected for discussion as it clearly represents the different stages of negotiation.

The Case

At the end of 1999, the “F” District Council of Beijing sent a delegation to visit their sister town of “S” in Australia. F and S had already established a sound relationship. The delegation, headed by the deputy governor, consisted of eight people, including four government officials and three businessmen. Following is a description of the meeting, broken down into processes according to the method used by Graham and Sano.48

Process 1. When the Chinese delegation arrived at the seminar, more than fifteen business people from S were waiting for them. John, head of the Australian delegation, and Mr Wang, head of the Chinese delegation, greeted each other:

John: “How do you do?”
Mr Wang: “How do you do?”
John: “Welcome to S.”
Mr Wang: “We are so glad to meet so many business people from S at this meeting, thank you for your hospitality.”

Process 2. Business began soon after they greeted each other. At the meeting, five Australians from different business areas introduced their products and services to the Chinese in detail. For example, Tom, a double-rider bicycle producer, brought a sample to the seminar and explained the functions of his product in detail for the Chinese delegation.

Process 3. Tom said to the Chinese delegation: “I know China has long been called the ‘bicycle kingdom,’ so I am sure most Chinese people, especially young people, will like this double-rider bicycle, because it looks smart and is of very high quality. If you introduce it to the Chinese market, it must be very popular.”

A clear pause occurred after Tom’s presentation. Tom seemed to be waiting for responses and questions from the Chinese; the Chinese group, however, responded by nodding and smiling.

Interlude Now it was the turn of the Chinese delegation. The following was the conversation among the three Chinese businessmen when they felt pressed to make a speech:

Mr Lin: “I don’t know what to say. You two can represent me.”
Mr Ma: “I prefer to be the audience too. You two just feel free to talk.”
Mr Liu: “I am not good at talking at all, you two are much better than me, why do both of you ask me to talk?”

Process 2. Since the three didn’t reach an agreement, Mr Wang, head of the delegation, announced: “I order Xiao Lin and Xiao Ma to make a speech immediately, and not to hesitate any more.” Obeying this order, Mr Lin and Mr Ma talked respectively without any sign of reluctance. They said they were very grateful to the F District Council because the government had offered them long-term support, and they could not succeed in their business without this sup-
Concerning their own businesses, they provided the audience with very brief introductions.

The seminar then ended abruptly without any agreements or even cooperative initiative mentioned. Worse, no further contact ensued between the F and S groups after the F delegation returned to China.

**Analysis of the Case**

The two parties clearly came to the meeting with a common communicative purpose: to develop business collaboration between the two countries. However, the Chinese delegation seemed to have an additional purpose, to establish further trust or relationship before signing any business deals. This difference in communicative purposes led to further clashes in each of the negotiation processes. The processes are discussed in relation to the intercultural dimensions as shown in *Table 1*.

**Table 1: A Breakdown of Barriers to Negotiation in the Case**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>H/L</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>I/C</th>
<th>Confucianism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Short/long introduction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Group/individual</td>
<td>Guanxi and trust building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude (Chinese)</td>
<td>Indirect style</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Inner/outer group identity</td>
<td>Confucianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detailed/brief introduction</td>
<td>High/low</td>
<td>Group/individual</td>
<td>Confucianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Open forum/ non-response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Inner/outer group identity</td>
<td>Face value and guanxi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: H/L stands for high- and low-context dimensions, PD stands for power distance, and I/C for individualism and collectivism.

*Table 1* details the significant cultural differences that came into play between the Chinese and Australians throughout the negotiation process. Communication barriers related to the differences between Chinese and Australian cultures in terms of the high/low-context dimension and the individualism/collectivism dimension were apparent in all three processes and the interlude. In comparison, the conflict between high and low power distance is less obvious and is seen only in Process 2. Confucianism, which is related to all three of the aforementioned Chinese cultural traits, is another major factor
causing the barriers in this Chinese-Australian business negotiation. As shown in Table 1, only three of the four negotiation processes take place in the case, and the third process seems to involve only one-way communication. This may be part of the reason that the negotiation did not succeed. Further barriers in each process are discussed below.

The first process is the non-task sounding process in which both parties begin to introduce themselves to each other. Both parties seemed to have started well, using appropriate terms to greet each other. However, the process did not progress. For the Australians, it ends after brief introductions. For the Chinese, it should involve more than simple greetings. The cultural dimensions listed in Table 1 show specifically what the barriers are.

The conflict in this process is invisible. The Australian group may have thought that they had finished the first process of getting to know each other. However, the Chinese likely needed more information about their Australian counterparts than provided in the greetings. What the Chinese expected from this process was not information about the Australians’ current businesses, but more personal information such as their past work experience and from where they originally came. Such information would help the Chinese group establish guanxi with their counterparts. In addition, the conflict can be explained in relation to high- and low-context parameters of their cultures. As members of a high context culture, the Chinese expected more information, but they would by no means directly ask for the information from Australians.

Unlike the first process, the second process did not have a smooth start. As noted earlier, real communication did not take place as the Chinese delegation needed more time to get to know the Australian representatives. As a result, a further mismatch occurred. The conflict between low-context and high-context cultures becomes even more evident in this process. Since the Chinese felt that they had not yet established mutual trust and guanxi with the Australians, they were reluctant to speak in front of people they considered strangers. Also, as noted earlier, Confucianism advocates that knowing others is more important than being known.

The Australians, after their extensive introductions to their products and services, must have found it difficult to follow the Chinese speeches, which included extensive acknowledgement of the F District Council but very little information about the Chinese businesses. This kind of acknowledgement reflects the collectivistic nature of the Chinese culture. To Chinese people, any success is the result of group endeavour; individuals are not expected to display their own achievements in public, instead they emphasise the help and support that they have obtained from others. As a result, acknowledgement is an
indispensable part of Chinese speeches, and both Chinese businessmen spent considerable time expressing their appreciation of F District Council, which Mr Wang, head of the delegation, represented. The dimension of high power distance also applies to this process. Mr Lin and Mr Ma followed Mr Wang’s order to speak up at the meeting immediately, although they had just shown clear signs of unwillingness.

The barriers increased tremendously in the third process. Tom triggered the beginning of the third process by highlighting the importance of bicycles for China. He attempted to persuade the Chinese group by bringing up two attractive factors of the product: smart design and good quality. However, his invitation to the Chinese group to speak failed to elicit any effective response: the Chinese delegates simply nodded and smiled, a non-verbal symbol of the Chinese high-context culture. Chinese people tend not to use a direct “no” when refusing as they consider it as an impolite expression, especially during the first meeting with strangers. Instead, they use non-verbal expressions or phrases such as “it is inconvenient,” “I am not sure” or “maybe.” The Chinese delegate may have though that refusing Tom’s offer directly, in front of other people, would embarrass him.

The events of the interlude are also related to the high-context cultural dimension. The reluctance of the Chinese businessmen to give speeches must have made the Australian business people feel impatient. It was impossible for the Australians to understand that the three Chinese businessmen were not actually unwilling to speak at the seminar; instead, they were using a Chinese way to show their modesty, a Confucian virtue.

**Recommendations for Successful Negotiation with Chinese**

A number of barriers in this business meeting led to a failure in collaboration. Identifying these communication barriers can also be relevant to diplomacy since meetings and negotiations are essential for international relations. We therefore make the following recommendations for both business and diplomacy in order to help overcome these barriers.

1. Make an effort to learn Chinese culture and customs. This will help in understanding and categorising Chinese negotiation behaviour.
2. Be patient during the non-task sounding process. Chinese usually need time to build trust and create *guanxi* with their counterparts before deciding to move ahead with a negotiation.
3. Make sure that trust has been successfully built into the task-related exchange of information process, because Chinese individuals will provide adequate and useful information only to people they trust. This will eventually make the persuasion process easier.

4. Remember that entry to the concessions and agreement process is not the sign of a successful negotiation. Developing good *guanxi* with Chinese negotiators and respecting Chinese cultural traits is the basis for moving forward in this process.

**Conclusion**

This paper explored barriers in negotiating with Chinese business representatives and analysed authentic business meetings across cultures using a theoretical framework based on negotiation behaviour, discourse analysis and intercultural dimensions. Confucianism, face and *guanxi* were also incorporated in the framework. Specific barriers relating to different cultural values were identified in each of the processes of negotiation. The analysis showed that the major barrier was related to the first process of non-task sounding, and a series of recommendations were made based on this finding.

In general, this approach is useful for identifying communication barriers and for better understanding Chinese negotiation style. These findings offer relevant implications for negotiation in diplomacy. The purpose of any negotiation, business or diplomacy, is to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Minimising communication barriers can be a big challenge. In particular, in a cross-cultural context, negotiation becomes much more complex and difficult. The difficulty involves dealing with the different sets of values, attitudes, behaviours, and communication styles of the other party. As one way of overcoming the barriers, it is essential for diplomats to apply intercultural dimensions and culture-specific dimensions such as Confucianism to the specific negotiation processes.

Finally, since it is a mutual responsibility for both negotiation parties to understand the cultural realities of their negotiation partners, it is worthwhile for Western diplomats and business people to disseminate their cultural values to their Chinese counterparts as well. Intercultural competency is, after all, a two-way learning and communication process. Further research is needed to explore ways of overcoming communication barriers in cross-cultural negotiation involving a dual cultural perspective.
Endnotes

7. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 70.
23. Gudykunst and Kim, Communicating with Strangers, 72.
Yunxia Zhu and Sun Zhu  Communication Barriers to Negotiation

26 Hofstede, *Cultures and Organisations*.
30 Woo, “Negotiating in China,” 117.
33 Buttery and Leung, “The Difference.”
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39 Woo and Prud’homme, “Cultural Characteristics.”
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46 Buttery and Leung, “The Difference.”
48 Graham and Sano, *Smart Bargaining*.
Part V.

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES
Clearly, the world has become “smaller” due to the use of information and communications technologies. In December 2003, during the World Summit on the Information Society, it was reported that over 750 million people used e-mail on a regular basis. As a consequence, the processes of international relations now involve many parties along with diplomats: regional and international organisations, multinational businesses, stock markets, non-governmental organisations, politicians, the press and other media, other civil society players as well as “uncivil society” in various forms.

Difficulties in communication increase with increased contact between people from different countries and different fields of work. We have accepted a few languages as lingua franca of our times, and we rely on translators and interpreters, but even so, effective communication remains a challenge. This challenge was recognised long ago. For example, the Book of Genesis, in the Bible, tells the story of the construction of the Tower of Babel:

If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.

Study of human history confirms that this “confusion of our language” in the pre-history of humankind was totally successful; so much so, that communications difficulties occur even in societies sharing a mother tongue.

This paper presents a number of case studies illustrating the role of jargon, protocols and uniforms in creating communication problems. The authors will also provide some pointers for improving communication. The authors are conscious of the fact that in the five thousand years of recorded history, extensive research in philosophy, biology, sociology, psychology and other disciplines has offered few answers to the problems of effective communication across cultures and professions. However, some measures do work, when there is a will from all parties for them to work.
Case Study 1: Responding to International Crisis Situations

While international crisis situations have always existed, the availability of “real time news” through e-mail, fax machines, satellite television, websites and other mechanisms means that a much larger percentage of the world population is now aware of these crises and can follow their development as they unfold. In recent years, the international community has also become better at responding in an increasingly coordinated manner.

International crises exist in two substantially different forms:

- those arising from natural disasters (earthquakes, flooding) or man-made disasters (forest fires, industrial accidents) which create the need for urgent humanitarian assistance;
- those arising from political, religious or economic conflicts and the use of force within a particular state or across borders.

This case study is based on a composite of recent events falling into the second category and involving several stages of intervention, some of which occur concurrently, each with its own communication challenges:

1. Peacekeeping: intervention by military forces from one or more countries often under the coordination of an international organisation;
2. Humanitarian assistance: provided by international organisations, non-governmental organisations and volunteers;
3. Interim government and governance;

We do not intend to discuss the political and diplomatic aspects of the background against which military and humanitarian aid are deployed, but instead will focus on the problems that arise in these situations involving information, communication and coordination.

Information

During crisis situations information is a scarce resource. The information available may be of doubtful quality because it may stem from unreliable or unverifiable sources. Parties with malicious intent may even feed false information into the process simply to cause confusion and undermine the credibility of the parties responding to an emergency.
The collection of information from multiple sources, some of them unverifiable, almost always leads to inconsistencies in information and to potential confusion. Using this information to support meaningful decisions and action is a major challenge. Working against tight and unpredictable timetables aggravates the problem. Unfortunately, the need to take action on the basis of such information is often unavoidable. The risk associated with this is a potential loss of credibility.

**Communication**

Effective communication requires the parties involved to share a clear understanding of the various definitions and parameters about which information (and data) are being exchanged - in other words, are we talking about the same thing?

Here, language and, in particular, jargon, plays a key role. Even assuming that all parties have a reasonable command of a common language – for example, International English¹ – the same words may have significantly different meanings to people from different parts of the world. For this reason, “command and control,” “coordination,” “security” and “integration” are always problematic.

**Coordination**

Assuming that information is available to the various parties involved and that communication has been established, we come into the world of protocols and uniforms, best described by the answers to three simple questions:

1. Who is in command?
2. Are you entitled?
3. Are we compatible?

The first question addresses the issue of authority: who has the right to release information. In crisis situations, most of the information in question is privileged (i.e., not in the public domain), involving details of military activities and locations, logistics of transport and deliveries, field and other intelligence. Some of this information is held by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or other institutions active in the field. One specific example is the Catholic Church in Africa.

Most crisis situations involve a large number of civilians: victims of a disaster, displaced people and refugees. The issue of human rights and refugee protection becomes particularly complex when the military is required
to search among them for known activists, suspects or other individuals, as the majority of the displaced do not normally have documentation and they require secure shelter.

The second question concerns the relationship between the parties that need to work together. The person authorising the release of information must decide if the party requesting the information is actually entitled to receive this information under the “need to know” protocol. Military operators, as well as police and other emergency service personnel, have a strong culture of confidentiality and a substantial part of the information they deal with is described as “classified.” It can, therefore, be shared only under very specific circumstances and with the proper authority to do so. The nature and objectives of NGOs, on the other hand, lead them to share whatever information they have.²

The last question is the only one with a technical component - that of compatibility of data formats and technologies. If the map references used by the information source are different from those used by the recipient, this incompatibility will render the exchange of information largely useless, if not impossible. The same is true when different actors use incompatible radio communications equipment, operating in different frequency bands or using different encoding mechanisms. In these cases, communication between the parties will not be technically possible.

In a world where these situations arise with unfortunate regularity and involve the simultaneous participation of UN peace-keeping forces, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and many other bodies, the problems of interoperability and information interchange have become major issues. In order to counter these problems, the former President of Finland launched the international initiative for Information Technology and Crisis Management (ITCM).³

Case Study 2: Diplomacy and the Media

Traditional diplomacy was conducted by career civil servants. While civil servants continue to work in the field of diplomacy, today many other players are also present in this field. Diplomacy is a discipline characterised by discretion and careful consideration in the use of language, including many formal protocols concerning what is disclosed, when and how.
Diplomacy has, at its heart, the national interest of the parties involved and its success is determined by the long-term credibility and accuracy of its outcome. The documents produced by diplomats are primarily intended for their national ministries of foreign affairs and are seldom intended for mass readership. Press releases are issued to allow the media to report on the progress and outcome of diplomatic negotiations.

The worlds of diplomacy and the media are fundamentally different and their objectives may not always be compatible. The media is primarily interested in breaking news; ideally, each news agency or correspondent would like to have an “exclusive” before anyone else. Depending on national legislation concerning defamation, libel and other responsibilities, the media is primarily concerned with gaining mass circulation with time-critical information and shaping public opinion. In order to do this, the media may simplify or even oversimplify issues and resort to the use of slogans and soundbites for maximum effect.

For example, in 1989, the European Union planned to introduce a European Currency Unit (the ECU) that would gradually displace national currencies (as was done later with the introduction of the Euro). The position papers and press releases from Brussels at the time were written in the careful language of politicians and administrators, and targeted civil servants in the countries involved who had equivalent backgrounds and functions and who were familiar with the issues. Reporting on this matter, the UK’s Sun newspaper used a more colloquial approach, including a picture of what is possibly the rudest gesture in the UK on its front cover. The Sun was obviously targeting readers with different backgrounds, cultures, educational levels and knowledge of the subject matter than the politicians and administrators who drafted the press releases. This front page achieved such notoriety that to this day it remains quoted on various websites.

The information flowing between diplomatic sources and the media is fairly complex, as shown in Figure 1 below. In reality, it is even more complex than the illustration shows because a third player is involved: the politician. This discussion deliberately excludes the role of politicians as the authors wish to focus on the roles of jargon, protocols and uniforms in effective communication.
Figure 1 shows the relative amount of information that diplomacy and the press produce and how this is influenced by the targeted final recipients of this information. In diplomacy most of the information exchanged and produced is intended for internal use and only a small amount is intended for external recipients. Typically, information intended for external use includes press releases, official statements and off-the-record briefings. For the press the situation is virtually the opposite: most of the information is destined for the (external) public and only a very small amount is kept for internal purposes.

Of course, diplomacy invariably will be found among the external users of the information produced by the press and this creates a kind of circular information flow. The information flow between diplomacy and the press and other media is asymmetric: the amount of information provided by the press (news agencies, newspapers and magazines) and used as a source by diplomats is considerably greater than the amount of public information produced by diplomats intended for use as a source by the press.

It is important to note that today, the press and other media are major players in the world of diplomacy, much of which takes place in the court of public opinion. Politicians are even more sensitive and exposed to public opinion than diplomats and civil servants.
Types of Relationships

Before exploring the factors that make the difference between effective and ineffective communication, it will be useful to examine some aspects of human nature: the human species is a social one, with the unique traits of sophisticated language capabilities and an ability and willingness to trade.

Looking back into our history, and at the work of philosophers and psychologists over the years, it is clear that our relationships are strongly influenced by the closeness that we are able to develop with others. The pyramid in Figure 2 illustrates a set of levels of personal relationships, from distant to intimate. The top four levels involve our family, friends and colleagues. “Professional fellows” describes people with whom we share a certain level of education, comparable activities, and other characteristics, and with whom, as a result, we can associate without difficulty. For example, diplomats posted in a particular country would consider the diplomats from other countries in the same location as “professional fellows.” The category of “Socio-cultural affinities” moves outside our professional work to describe people with whom we share interests or hobbies, such as liking opera or supporting a particular football club. The pyramid continues to expand, including at each level a larger number of people with whom we have less and less in common beyond our humanity.

Effective communication can be difficult at all levels. Family conflict is all too common, and statistics show that in most murder cases the victim and the murderer know each other.

Figure 2: Human Relationships
We now have the means to communicate directly with a substantial part of the world population (in late 2003, 750 million people used e-mail regularly, while over 1700 million telephone lines exist in the world, according to ITU data).\textsuperscript{4} The widely-accepted view that only six degrees of separation exist between any two individuals in the world may be true.

Although totally different in their nature, both case studies described above illustrate relationship scenarios which can take one of five different forms depending on the players, circumstances and the degree of trust that exists among the parties: collaborative, negotiative, competitive, conflictual and non-recognition. Figure 3 illustrates how these scenarios are linked to each other and how potentially unstable they are. A relationship can quickly develop from one type to another, resulting either in improved effectiveness of communication (the positive development path) or sliding into a complete breakdown of communication (the negative development path). Regrettably, the negative development path occurs frequently in international relations.

Two of these relationships present a fundamental obstacle to effective communication. Non-recognition, which can be as brazen and aggressive as Slobodan Milosevic’s response to the International Criminal Court, blocks any meaningful exchange. It involves a refusal to acknowledge that one or more of the players in the desired exchange has any rights whatsoever. In a conflictual situation, parties recognise each other but are unable to work together towards a win-win result and resort instead to verbal abuse and physical violence.

![Figure 3: Relationship Scenarios](image-url)
The other three relationships are often of an unstable nature in the sense that a change in the relationship can be triggered by a relatively minor event - even just one inappropriate word - very quickly.

In the collaborative relationship the needs and positions of all the parties are clearly defined and understood and everyone involved shares the will to succeed, as well as information, equipment, accommodation and logistic arrangements.

The negotiative relationship has much in common with the collaborative scenario except that some needs and positions may not have been defined clearly enough and require discussion and trading to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.

Collaborative and negotiative relationships can quickly become competitive when one of the players needs to (or decides to) play a role different from that which was originally agreed upon. This new role might result in some form of overlap with the responsibilities of others. Another kind of competitive relationship occurs when a “new player” joins an established effort and expects to obtain rights, privileges and concessions from other players. Competitive relationships can quickly deteriorate into non-recognition, conflict and exclusion, if not properly managed.

To make effective communication possible, the concepts of credibility and trust are important. Neither credibility nor trust are automatically and instantaneously given; they need to be earned. This is why communication with family and friends is much easier than with a stranger. Figure 4 illustrates how credibility and trust develop over time. At the early stages of a relationship, personal charac-

![Figure 4: Developing Credibility and Trust](image-url)
ter largely determines whether we assign the person we are dealing an optimistic profile of credibility and trustworthiness (as we would normally do with a medical doctor) or a cautious profile (as we would do with a door-to-door salesman).

As a relationship develops it can follow many different paths. Figure 4 depicts a happy situation where credibility and trustworthiness actually increase during the early stages of the relationship (verification and affirmation) until they reach a high level denoting a mature and stable relationship. Alternately, the mature relationship can involve a catastrophic loss of credibility or trust, which is almost always irretrievable, and implies the end of any meaningful and effective communication.

Nature and Nurture

Nature and nurture play a major role in the way we associate and communicate. Analysis of our DNA reveals that nearly 99% of our DNA is shared with the bonobo (miniature chimpanzee). This 1% difference gives us complex spoken language, a larger cerebral cortex, and the ability to codify and record our knowledge (although the invention of writing occurred only 5,000 years ago).

The remaining 99% represents a major legacy from nature and it has a great impact on the electrochemical activity in our brain. Current scientific understanding of the human brain reveals three major components:

- the **reptile** brain, which drives survival, territory (or dominance) and reproduction;
- the **limbic** brain, which drives association, bonding and the raising of the young; and
- the **cortex**, divided into two halves (left and right) where language, thinking, logic, creativity and all other conscious activities take place.

The reptile and limbic brains are thought to be autonomous and capable of taking over rational thought if they sense that any of the activities they drive need to be invoked. Scientists believe that these characteristics are independent of culture.
The characteristics that are defined by the culture and environment in which we live are described as “nurture.” The elements most often associated with nurture include language, values and traditions, body language and other non-verbal cues. Anyone exposed to intercultural exchanges realises how important the aspects of nurture are and how lack of awareness of each other’s beliefs and values can lead to diplomatic blunders or worse. Violations of another person’s cultural norms can result in the loss of credibility and trustworthiness, as described above.6

**Jargon, Protocols and Uniforms**

Jargon is an abbreviated form of language that encapsulates tacit knowledge. It is very useful in a community sharing a common interest as it removes much information redundancy. At the same time, it represents a barrier to those unfamiliar with it and makes it possible to quickly identify the “outsiders.” Outsiders will feel excluded until they learn how to effectively use the jargon of the group concerned.

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**BTW PLZ 4GV ME 4 BEING A PITA IYKWIM. CUL8.**
A typical Short Message Service (SMS) text, used in mobile phones. A close translation is: By the way, please forgive me for being a pain in the ***, if you know what I mean. See you later.

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**Patient complains of pruritus in LLL.**
Note made by a doctor about a patient with an itchy leg.

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**Doubleclick the icon on the system tray and change the defaults.**
Instructions from a Help screen in the Windows operating system.

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**The perp’s MO has been noted by the SOCO.**
UK police jargon. Translated, it says that the suspected criminal’s modus operandi is familiar to the Scene of Crime Officer.

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**17 diplomats from country XYZ, having engaged in activities incompatible with their status, have been asked to leave the country within 48 hours.**
A report in diplomatic-speak, which a newspaper would publish as “17 XYZ Spies Expelled.”

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**Friendly Fire.**
Military-speak to describe a situation where military personnel were attacked by their own colleagues or allies.
Following are a few examples of jargon, some familiar and some likely to be totally unfamiliar.

Jargon goes beyond styles of writing to encompass different pronunciations of the same word. For example, in referring to the standard language for making queries on a database - Structured Query Language or SQL - non-programmers are most likely to say *Ess Kyu Ell*, whereas database professionals refer to it as *Sequel*.

After a time, jargon that has proven useful may become incorporated into mainstream language. For example, *Internet* and *e-mail* both originated as jargon. In other cases, jargon which originated with one group of people has become part of the common language of inter-professional communication. In the case of the relationship between diplomacy and the press, several terms and acronyms which are not yet found in the dictionary are now extensively used by both parties with the same meaning, although sometimes in a different context: *G8, G77, equitable geographical distribution, Intifada, golpe, embargo* and others. Interestingly, in many instances it is not possible to ascertain whether the expression or acronym originated from diplomatic or editorial usage.

A *protocol* is a code prescribing the correct etiquette and precedence in specific circumstances. Protocols are well established in diplomacy, the military, social life, formal meetings and many other situations. As with jargon, lack of awareness can lead to, at the very least, embarrassment.

Protocols usually consist of a simple set of rules. Protocols also exist in nature: in the animal world, for example, protocols are referred to as “instincts.” A school of fish or a flock of birds flying in large numbers in astonishing formations use the very simple protocol “stay close to one like you but don’t touch him.”

Following are some examples of protocols more closely related to the subject of this paper.

*Do not interrupt:* a protocol usually observed in conferences and presentations, where the audience will wait until the question and answer session to interact with the speaker.

*The chain of command:* key protocol of the military and law enforcement – orders given by a higher ranking officer must be complied with. Negotiation or argument is not permitted.

*The press conference:* an important protocol for politicians and diplomats dealing with the press and the media. This is a formal event where a prepared text will be delivered, question and answer sessions will be managed and all the statements will have a clear attribution.
The consequences of ignoring a protocol can be significant. Ignoring the chain of command can result in a dishonourable discharge or even a court martial. Non-compliance with the Geneva Convention is considered a major breach of human rights and of grave concern to the international community. Similarly, a journalist who chooses not to respect the off-the-record nature of a statement and reveals its origin is highly likely to be excluded and ignored by the source he has disclosed.

*Uniforms* consist of a form of dress of a distinctive design worn by members of a particular group as a means of identification. This identification can serve two purposes: an indication of profession (judge, nurse, garage mechanic) and/or an indication of status (priest, bishop, soldier, brigadier-general).

A uniform confers authority on the person wearing it in the environment in which he or she operates. Some uniforms exist where the concepts of “uniform” and “authority” are not the usual ones: the four members of a string quartet wear formal evening dress; tuxedos for the men, a little black number for the woman. As virtually all concert performances in classical music require this kind of clothing, it may be regarded as a uniform. When, prior to the beginning of the concert, one of the musicians addresses the audience to request that all cellphones be switched off, this is in fact an order given in the most polite terms using the authority implicit in the “uniform.”

Even a person wearing the same type of clothes as everyone around him may be in fact wearing a uniform. If you see a couple of people approaching you with a microphone and a TV camera, these accessories perform the role of identifying them as reporters, and therefore constitute a “uniform.”
The indication of status implicit in a uniform may require a measure of insider knowledge to decode. For example, the United States of America Armed Forces have 43 different insignia to denote rank (11 each for the Navy, Army and Air Force and 10 for the Marines). Similar complexities exist in other armed forces, police forces, churches of various denominations and elsewhere.

**Effective Communication in the Real World**

Figure 5 summarises the points made in this paper: effective communication is no more and no less than a complex balancing act, regrettably, with no safety net.

In 1580, Michel de Montaigne accurately stated that “the most universal quality is diversity.” Many factors combine to make effective communication in an international and intercultural environment a major challenge. One such factor is **cognitive styles** (how individuals organise and process information). Cognitive styles are strongly influenced by cultural orientation and, in general, it can be said that people are either **open-minded** or **closed-minded**. Open-minded people see issues in relation to their context and admit that they do not know (or that there may not be) answers to the many questions that arise and need to be explored before coming to a conclusion. Closed-minded people operate on the basis of dogmatic answers to issues, which are rigid and non-negotiable. It is interesting to note that most closed-minded people would describe themselves as being open-minded.
Another factor is *value system*. Definitions of what is “right” and what is “wrong,” what is the “truth” and what is accepted as evidence, differ around the world. Lack of awareness of these differences will invariably make communication among different groups difficult, if not impossible.

Without an appropriate level of *trustworthiness and credibility*, communication will be severely limited. While credibility may be established by a person’s track record and reputation, trustworthiness needs to be earned by actions and subsequently maintained.

Our inheritance from *nature and nurture, jargon, protocols and uniforms* are all factors that raise the level at which we perform this balancing act, and it is only through our own understanding of what we know and don’t know, and the willingness to learn, that we can hope to succeed.

Leaders have the responsibility of facilitating the removal of barriers to enhance the effectiveness of communication, information sharing and coordination of activities. The concept of the Chain of Command, which is not exclusive to armed forces and law enforcement, implies that only the leadership can initiate such a top-down process.

Finally, in situations where it is necessary to choose between inconsistent or incompatible solutions, implementers must be willing to abandon the “Mindless Pursuit of Perfection” syndrome that wastes so much time and energy for, often, little return. The concept of “Good Enough” has much to commend it and yet is frequently ignored in the search of something better.

### The Importance of Improving Inter-Professional Communication

Effective communication is doomed if the parties involved have no will to achieve it. In our complex, networked and interactive world, the consequences of failed communication can be disastrous in times of crisis. In many crisis situations, communication has been ineffective for reasons that could be attributed to jargon, protocols and uniforms.

A very serious example took place in New York, on September 11, 2001. A New York Police Department helicopter flying over the twin towers determined that their collapse was imminent. The radio message from the helicopter to evacuate the building was received by police officers, who start-
ed to carry out the evacuation. However, the officers of the New York Fire Department relied on a different radio system, incompatible with that of the police, and failed to receive the message. During these critical minutes, police officers tried to evacuate the building while fire fighters were trying to work their way in. Because of their different uniforms and different chains of command, fire fighters could not and would not accept instructions from police officers.

We all know the tragic consequences of this inability to communicate and all of us concerned with inter-professional communication, particularly in crisis situations, should never forget the enormous responsibility that we have for the life and security of others.

Endnotes

1  *International English* differs significantly from the English spoken in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and other Anglophone countries: it has few grammar and syntax rules and any mistakes in either are ignored by all parties during exchanges. The vocabulary often includes many non-dictionary words made up to meet specific circumstances.

2 For a real example of how information sharing is conducted, see the website of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at http://www.reliefweb.int. Some of the information on crisis areas in this website is provided by NGOs active in the field.

3 For more information on this initiative please see the website at http://www.ahtisaari.fi.


5 An alternative expression for “verification and affirmation” popular in some circles is “walk the talk.”

6 The good news is that a vast and very helpful range of material is available on this subject, ranging from the humorous and accurate booklets in the series *The Xenophobe’s Guide to …(nationality)*, the book *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands*, and many more on, for example, body language and gestures, such as *Supplemento al Dizionario Italiano*.
Diplomats assigned to UN agencies face challenges specific to the UN system. Acting as stakeholders of the UN system and, at the same time representing member states, these diplomats need to learn how to navigate through the complicated UN systems and their various informal arrangements in order to safeguard the interests of individual member states. At the same time, they need to allow for collaboration in order to deal with interdependent needs, such as preventive diplomacy, trade, public health, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, environment and development cooperation. Besides having to face intercultural complexity in their exchanges with UN staff coming from almost all possible cultural backgrounds, diplomats also need to understand the different organisational cultures of UN agencies which are distinct and not comparable with those of any other private or public sector organisations.

The goal of this article is to introduce readers to the complexity of the organisational culture of UN agencies in order to limit possible misunderstandings about the functioning of the UN and its agencies and in order to make diplomatic interactions with UN agencies as efficient and as effective as possible. Indirectly, it is hoped that this article may also contribute, however slightly, to the successful functioning of the UN community and offer support for the mutually beneficial collaboration of nations and the identification of successful solutions to meet shared global concerns.

United Nations: The Context

In September 2002, the UN system consisted of 191 member states. It includes six core bodies: the General Assembly, the UN Secretariat, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice. In addition, the UN system has 14 specialised agencies and 12 funds and programmes. Collectively, of about 56,000 staff members, some 22,000 occupy professional positions in the UN workforce.2

The 15 UN organisations apply a common system of salaries and pensions (excluding the WB, IDA, IFC and IMF) and employ people assigned to over
170 countries, working at some 600 different places throughout the world and using six major official languages. Some 52% of UN staff work for the UN Secretariat and its programmes. The remaining 48% are employed by the 14 specialised or related agencies, including the ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO, World Bank, IDA, IFC, IMF, ICAO, UPU, ITU, WMO, IMCO, WIPO and IFAD. These agencies report annually to the Economic and Social Council in New York.

These intergovernmental agencies are separate, autonomous organisations related to the UN by special agreements. They collaborate with the UN and with each other through the coordinating machinery of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Their secretariats, composed of international staff representing over 170 different nationalities, work under the direction of the executive head of the respective agencies. They provide either a forum for negotiations and decisions (e.g., international conventions regarding trade, labour and human rights) or specific services (e.g., health, institution building and agricultural development).

The Charter describes the Secretary General as “Chief Administrative Officer” of the Organisation, who shall act in that capacity and perform “such other functions as are entrusted” to him/her by the Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC and other UN organs. The UN Charter also empowers the Secretary General to “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matters which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.” These guidelines both define the power of the Secretary General’s office and its scope of action.

However, the interpretation of the role of the Secretary General is very much dependent on the incumbent of the office. It ranges from administration to a more dynamic and innovative role. The current Secretary General, for example, sees himself assuming a combined role with equal parts assigned to being a diplomat and an advocate, a civil servant and a CEO, and being a symbol of United Nations ideals and a spokesman for the interest of the world’s peoples, in particular the poor and the vulnerable among them.4 In the different perceptions of the role and responsibility of the Secretary General lays another source of potential tension between the Organisation, the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Criticism and On-Going Reform
In this world of renewed and growing conflicts, some countries express misgivings about the role of the UN and, in particular, of its Security Council. Disagreements heightened between key countries before the invasion of Iraq by the
USA and its allies. In particular, the functioning of the security council was severely criticised and the future of the UN was put into question by some leading officials of the US government who expressed unhappiness about the multilateral decision-making process in general and the accompanying rules and conventions in particular.

Leaving the Iraq war and the related conflict between key counties aside, few would want to abolish the very existence of the UN system with all its many specialised agencies and accompanying multilateral treaties. Most countries prefer the multilateral UN system with all its imperfections to a situation based on unilateral dominance or bilateral confrontations. It is up to the member countries that exercise oversight and governance over the UN system to make it work to the benefit of the total membership.

While the large majority of the current UN membership prefers continuity of multilateralism, many countries nevertheless have expressed their wish to see efficiency and effectiveness improved within the UN system. Criticism and concerns have been raised regarding various perceived shortcomings of the UN system and its ineffective performance, especially when dealing with humanitarian crises and inter-racial/communal armed conflicts. Criticism of some agencies has been raised in regard to lack of reform of swollen bureaucracies, to tardiness in responding to the needs in the field, and to the even more grave accusation of fraud and abuse within some specialised agencies.

Reform of the UN system has been an ongoing process since the 1980s, focusing on budgetary, management, or structural issues. The US in particular, and other Western industrialised countries have pushed for budgetary and management reforms with visible success while the more complicated institutional changes remain limited and harder to accomplish.

Faced with the uncertainty induced by the attacks on the World Trade Towers (9/11/2001), the Iraq War and the twin processes of global integration and local fragmentation, the UN role of offering global governance structures and facilitating social and economic development around the world has become more important than ever before. Yet, without a mandate to regulate world affairs and with no control of independent resources, the UN’s capacity to intervene, especially during times of crisis, remains rather limited.

In the words of the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, “if the UN is to effectively realize its global mission of furthering peace, development and human rights, it must manage its human resources better.” He further stated, “We are too complicated and too slow. We are over-administered and have too many rules and too many regulations.” Calling for more investment in staff, simpler procedures and more authority for managers, the Secretary General said that
the reforms he proposed were designed to ensure that the UN could have “the right people with the right skills in the right job at the right time.”

What was omitted is that the complex operational environment of the UN system is embedded in a situation of divergent interests, power blocks, complicated interaction patterns and contrasting worldviews. The UN is not only a system of service providers but, at times, is called upon to be an arbitrator between competing factions without vested power to do so. Diplomats representing member countries have an important role to play to support the Secretary General in achieving the challenging goals of strengthening the capacity to perform and, in addition, in co-creating an enabling environment for the UN to carry out its duties.

The Organisational Culture of the UN

Multilayers of Political Influence
Public management and public organisations are characterised by features distinct from those of private sector companies. Rainey summaries the commonly known aspects, namely: reliance on governmental appropriations for financial resources, presence of intensive, formal legal constraints, presence of intensive external political influences and greater goal ambiguity, multiplicity and conflict.

The UN system functions with similar characteristics. Each specialised UN agency has its own decision-making body involving a multitude of government and related constituencies; together they approve annual budgets and influence the major directions of the agencies’ programmes and activities. Hence, the decision-making process can be very complex and presents in itself major obstacles regarding clarity of purpose, effectiveness and efficiency of management and unity of staff. These constraints are even more pronounced within the workings of the UN Secretariat which negotiates and deals with international “political” dossiers.

The budgetary process determines the resource allocation to different programmes; hence, member states have keen interest in influencing the outcome through different forms of manoeuvring. Alliance-building within the diplomatic communities and within the UN secretariat and agencies becomes critical, especially for the small nations that rely on UN appropriation for their national development.

At the personnel level, UN staff members, bound by the UN rule of neutrality, are supposed to stay above the political manoeuvring. However,
this has not always been the case. Mixed loyalties toward the UN system and one’s own home country are almost inevitable since many member countries influence their own nationals’ posting within the UN system and promote their career paths. However, personal and national interests alone cannot fully explain why the UN is a complex system with sub-optimal performance. Additional understanding is needed in order to find ways to strengthen this important institution.

At the organisational level, the UN system is constantly under pressure to fulfil the wishes of its paymasters and constituencies. Sandwiched between the Security Council (akin to a cabinet of nations led by the five permanent members) and the member states (shareholders), the Secretariat and the UN system are evaluated based on both the political criteria and actual performance in discharging its responsibilities. International politics are played out in the UN arena. As a result, mirroring its membership, at times of crisis the UN is locked up by policy paralysis and power struggle. Diplomats inadvertently become part of the problem when executing the national will at the expense of collaboration for common good.

At the grassroots level, non-state actors have been allowed, albeit gingerly, into the international policy arena of the UN. Increasingly vocal and self-assured, trans-national NGOs and other self-styled militant groups have yielded considerable influence on international policy, at times even greater than some of the member states. They promote their agendas through active participation in the UN system and by providing service delivery for development and/or humanitarian purposes. This third sector, representing trans-border and communal/grassroots interests, has enlivened international policy debates, but also added to the already complex process of the multilateral decision-making process. Diplomats, as well as UN officials, are pushed to recognise the legitimacy of non-state actors in their so-to-speak “home turf” and to learn how to live with such post-modern reality.

**Internal Fragmentation and Coordination Barriers**

Internally, for decades the UN system has had coordination difficulties. For instance, UN agencies may compete with each other to be given specific mandates or they have overlapping mandates and opt not to cooperate as they should. Overlapping and competing programmes among different agencies remains a reality despite best efforts to eliminate such wastefulness over the last twenty years. However, this sub-optimal performance of the UN should be attributed not only to structural origins, but should also be understood from an organisational behaviour perspective.
Inter-agency coordination has been difficult because of low system cohesion within the UN family, resulting in mini-kingdoms and/or serfdoms. Layers of “class or prestige”\textsuperscript{16} create gaps between various levels of management. In addition, functional gaps sometimes exist between working units of UN agencies. If horizontally layered management gaps are superimposed on vertical functional gaps, so called “operational islands” (as shown in Figure 1) can emerge which refuse to communicate with one another for fear that giving up information may strengthen their “opponents” and reduce their own power base. Duplication of functions and programmes is but one manifestation of this internal fragmentation.

![Figure 1: Fragmentation and Organisational Islands\textsuperscript{17}]

Similar rifts may exist at the intra-organisational level. Management control is insufficient to harness a more cohesive culture and operations. Many UN agencies have neither a functioning performance appraisal system nor career plans or merit system. Depending on power shifts, managers are reassigned to posts without necessarily possessing the required professional expertise. On the other hand, UN agencies cannot easily dismiss their staff. Hence, a strong conflict exists between relative job security and a sense of insecurity based on persistent uncertainty regarding job posting and career prospects. Both factors combined encourage patronage, which, in turn, reinforces the multicultural divisions within the staff of UN agencies, which, in turn, reinforces “patronage-tribalism” and exacerbates the problem of coordination further.

Individual “fiefdoms” have also been prone to curry favour with specific constituencies. Such alliance-building, on the one hand, consolidates one’s hold on power; on the other, it further erodes the already permeable boundary of the UN system.

\textit{Weak and Porous Organisational Boundaries}

Continuous external pressures on financial and political decisions in conjunction with complex decision-making processes and entrance of non-convention-
actors weaken organisational boundaries and open UN agencies to the power plays of multiple external and internal constituencies. To understand this phenomenon, Henry Mintzberg developed a typology of configurations of organisational power. He proposed one possible relationship between external and internal coalitions that, the authors believe, fits the context of the UN system well. He very concisely stated: “A divided external coalition encourages the rise of politicised internal coalitions, and vice versa.”

The board members of UN agencies, namely the various member governments, have been and continue to be divided over general as well as particular issues. The most apparent divisions occurred during the cold war period. The current divisions centre on the North-South divide, trade block conflicts, and on particular issue-by-issue conflicts, whatever is at stake at the particular moment for the governments concerned.

Member governments exert pressures on the leading heads of UN agencies and vice versa. The respective director generals use their political weapons to counterattack real or perceived threats to their power and re-election. De Cooker, who cites various secondary sources, gives an example of such manoeuvres:

Mr. Saoma, the head of FAO is accused of having politicized and mismanaged his organisation, of practising coercive and terrorist tactics and to run a reign of terror in the secretariat … In addition to the US, the UK, Australia and Canada have suspended further payments to the organisation pending budget reforms. These countries are applying financial blackmail to the organisation, in order to obtain the right to approve or veto its budget level.

A continuous building and shifting of coalitions weakens the decision-making process of UN agencies and causes negative consequences in regard to staff cohesion and internal functioning. UN agencies’ external boundaries remain weak, porous and continuously open to manipulations by multiple interest groups and stakeholders, while internally, boundaries may be rigid, making it difficult to engage in constructive teamwork and inter-departmental collaboration.

The tendency towards external and internal coalition building is further heightened by the multi-national and multi-cultural composition of the UN staff, which presents a rich linguistic, national, religious and cultural mixture. This built-in diversity and the resulting psychological and cultural differences can create ambiguities in staff loyalty and identification, which, in turn, fur-
ther increase the likelihood of conflict and coalition building. Under ideal circumstances, those working for the bureaucracy should be politically neutral, recruited based on merit, and subject to “uniform standards regarding conditions of employment …, but in reality the international civil servants are subject, like their national counterparts, to the political conditions of their environment.”

Yet, the conflict regarding loyalty is built into the system though two articles of the UN Charter, which unintentionally have led to tension and conflict. Article 100 reminds international servants neither to seek nor to receive instructions from any government or other authorities external to the UN organisation. It also reminds member states not to influence the staff and to respect the international character of their work and responsibility. Article 101 on the other hand, while not putting into question Article 100, asks for due geographical distribution of the UN staff. Both articles have been actively resisted at times by main member states for different reasons.

**Leadership Challenge and Accountability**

Continuous changes in its external environment combined with possible reactive or even proactive shiftiness of its internal environment have made UN agencies an especially difficult if not challenging place for leadership and management control. *Figure 2* depicts a situation built on the previous “operational islands” concept but showing also the multitudes of influencing vectors reaching into a typical UN agency from outside at practically all levels of the hierarchy; at the same time vectors are emanating from within the UN agency aiming at influencing stakeholders outside of the organisation.

![Figure 2: Fragmentation and Porousness: Influencing Vectors Passing through Porous Boundaries](image-url)
Any attempt to reform current organisational practice in such a volatile environment has to face many forms of open and subtle resistance. Laurence Geri has reported successful organisational change at the World Health Organisation (WHO) but, overall, failure is common. Small successes give rise to a consultant’s celebration but the task of reform in UN agencies often appears to be of a Sisyphean nature.23

What are “Porous Boundary” Phenomena?

When interacting with UN agencies, a foreign diplomat might feel confused about the seemingly fuzzy reality of organisational life in most of them. In contrast to the clear lines of command and clear boundaries concerning roles and responsibilities common in most private sector enterprises and public administrations, the organisational culture of UN agencies might best be described as resulting from “porous boundaries.”

Porous boundaries affect different aspects of organisational life. The concept helps to explain some of the performance issues confronting the UN system, although different agencies suffer from this phenomenon to varying degrees. Table 1 provides an overview of an organisational profile with porous boundaries.24

Table 1: Definition of “Porous Boundaries”

| Stakeholders: | A multitude of actors, e.g., governments, NGOs, inter-governmental institutions, who compete for use of the financial and human resources of the organisation. |
| Leadership: | Elected or reinstated by members of the governing body through a process of bargaining and coalition building. Elected leadership enjoys relative autonomy during times of power parity in between budget cycles. |
| Goals: | Negotiated compromises often remaining ambiguous in order to satisfy the needs and objectives of the stakeholders. |
| Financial Resources: | Result of a bargaining process, often approved, rejected, altered or amended on a yearly basis. |
| Human Resources: | Recruitment based on official or unofficial quota system. Standards adjusted to accommodate divergent competence levels of international staff. |
| Organisation: | Hierarchical, dominance of legal and bureaucratic measures as a defence against shifting alliances and external pressures. |
| Culture: | Traditional, non-innovative, defensive, security-minded, clanism combined with idealism resulting in frequent power struggles. |

Confronted with these specific characteristics, it is surprising that UN organisations have managed to deliver some outstanding achievements. For
instance, the eradication of smallpox occurred through a successful global immunisation programme organised by the joint efforts of UNICEF\textsuperscript{25} and the WHO. The protection and restoration of heritage sites around the world has been carried out by UNESCO. The on-going efforts of various UN agencies have helped raise awareness of the situation of children and woman in war-torn cities and other under-developed regions of the world. Through the continuous effort and championship of the UN, the plights of vulnerable groups around the world have been brought to the consciousness of a public that enjoys much higher standards of living. Concerted effort, under the umbrella of the UNDP, has brought infrastructure development in terms of water, transportation, health, education, and employment to different parts of the world, even if at times very slowly. Without a global infrastructure and the oversight of an international administration, these feats would not be easily accomplishable.

Conclusions

UN agencies are needed and so is the UN system. While this is obvious to most people, fewer people agree on what these agencies should do and how they should be organised and managed. The need for their continued efficient and effective existence is not in doubt, but, as Geri states: “International Organisations and their public stakeholders must protect their capacity to provide critical collective goods or their value to global society will be seriously compromised.”\textsuperscript{26}

This point is amply demonstrated with the current SARS crisis around the world. Without WHO’s Global Response and Alert Network, it would be difficult to imagine that a coordinated effort connecting different parts of the world could be mobilised to contain the further spread of the SARS virus. To entrust this task, for instance, to one national health centre such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, USA, would not be feasible politically or effective from an operational perspective.

While very important - if not irreplaceable - for the international community, UN organisations also have to adapt and adjust to new environments and engage their member countries in constructive and efficient interactions. However, due to the multiple stakeholders involved, the organisational environment of UN agencies is and will be politicised for the foreseeable future. Hence, the porous boundary phenomena described above will continue for a long time.

As the mandates and tasks of the UN system increase almost day by day, the need for efficient management and an effective organisation is of para-
mount importance to all parties involved. Ways to improve existing and future UN agencies’ performance will be needed on a consistent and continuous basis. At the same time, foreign diplomats assigned to cover a UN agency should be mindful that undue external influence and political pressures may further aggravate the porous boundary phenomenon, endangering the long-term survival of the UN system. What is needed is a reduction of porous boundaries and a strengthening of the UN systems’ organisational structure and processes through more collaborative arrangements between member states and through the good offices of the diplomats who facilitate the dialogue between their capitals and the UN system.

Endnotes

1 This concept was first put forward by Butros Butros-Ghali in his Agenda for Peace to the Security Council in 1992 as a more effective approach for the UN to mediate humanitarian crises.
5 Secretary General Kofi Annan would be the first to acknowledge that the UN failed to respond effectively to some of the recent atrocities in places such as Rwanda (1994) or Bosnia (1995). He published two tough reports on the Srebrenica and Rwanda massacres with forthright frankness. Besides acknowledging the responsibility of the UN Peacekeeping Department, these reports also implicated the Security Council in its woeful lack of quick and active responses to clear signs that horrendous catastrophes were in the making.

12 As international civil servants, staff members and the Secretary General answer to the UN alone for their activities and take an oath not to seek or receive instructions from any government or outside authority. In addition, under the Charter each member state undertakes to refrain from seeking to influence the staff and the Secretary General improperly in the discharge of their duties.


14 A case in point here was the fight between the ILO and UNICEF regarding child labour.

15 The current Doha Round of the WTO requires capacity-building for least developed countries. Despite ample attempts to coordinate programmes, the World Bank, UNDP and UNCTAD remain insufficiently coordinated, to the detriment of the LDCs.


17 Adapted from Kerzner, *Project Management*, 20.


21 For instance, based on President Truman’s Executive Order 10,422 of 1952, US citizens used to be required to undergo full field security investigations before being “cleared” for work in UN organisations. This political control has since been abolished.


24 A description of porous boundaries first appeared in the work of Rainey, Sochor and Mintzberg. More recently, the authors of this paper expanded this concept to describe the unique organisational culture of the UN. For a more detailed overview of porous boundaries, see Saner and Yiu; “Porous Boundaries and Power Politics.”


Numerous careers have traditionally been reserved for men. For example, the first women doctors in the US began graduating from medical schools only in the late nineteenth century. It has not always been easy for women to enter different professional realms. The infamous glass ceiling phenomenon has curtailed women with regard to their hiring, promotion and retention. The glass ceiling has impacted the hiring and promotion of women in many different professions including those in the public sector and those serving diplomatic missions.

American women did not enter the diplomatic arena and join the ranks of ambassadors until 1934 when Ruth Bryan Owen was posted to Denmark. Gibson reviews two arguments posited against having women serve as career diplomats. The first was that women could not serve in places considered unsafe and that men would end up with too many hardship assignments. The second argument was that most male diplomats came with a female spouse and the woman provided US government representation services without charge and without receiving a salary. In other words, the US government had the services of two individuals and had to pay for only one. UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld also expressed arguments against women’s serving in diplomatic positions, stating that issues more important than gender needed to be taken into account when personnel decisions were made. After the 1959 Cultural Revolution in Cuba, a perfect opportunity arose to assign women to the Cuban diplomatic corps; however, those in decision-making roles placed men in these positions.

When looking at the glass ceiling phenomenon in diplomacy, women have also had difficulty being promoted beyond the junior and mid levels. As a result, in 1976 Alison Palmer, a mid-level career officer, sued the US Department of State. The Department was not expedient in resolving the matter and did not settle the case until 1990. In Palmer versus Baker, the plaintiffs claimed widespread discrimination against women. Not only was it argued that women were under-represented in general, a hiring problem, it was also asserted that women were clustered at the junior and mid-levels. The court ruled that part of the violation of discrimination laws was the fact that women were not given the opportunities or experiences necessary in order to be promoted.
Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to identify challenges that women face when working overseas in diplomatic positions, a professional environment that historically has been male dominated and that can be characterised in some ways as an “old boy’s” network. The paper intends to identify some of the significant issues from the perspective of women who are serving or have served their countries’ foreign missions. As this is a new area of research, the author chose to use qualitative methods, which are suitable when research generates theory rather than verifies it. These methods are appropriate when the researcher does not have a clear-cut hypothesis regarding the research question or questions.

Sample

In qualitative research the sample size is often much smaller than when quantitative methods are utilised. In this study, the sample consisted of eleven women, ten of whom were serving in overseas missions for their governments. One of the eleven worked for a number of years before opting to stay home and take care of her children. Ten of the eleven women who participated in this study were living and/or serving in Minsk, Belarus, the residence of the author at the time of the study. The remaining participant in the study was serving in Mexico City. An attempt was made to obtain a representative sample in terms of age, marital status, position and length of time working overseas, although a very limited number of women work in diplomatic missions in Minsk. The participants ranged in age from 24 to 60 and came from Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, South Africa and the United States. Seven of the eleven women were serving or had served in US missions abroad. Although Potter points out the need for a representative sample, in this case compelling reasons demanded the inclusion of more individuals from the US in the sample. First, as a result of the Palmer vs. Baker decision focus has been placed on the needs of US women diplomats. Secondly, at the time of this study, more English-speaking diplomats from the US resided in Minsk than from any other country.

The women interviewed had served from one and a half years to over thirty years and had worked all over the world from Africa to Russia and from Laos to Canada. Six of the women were raising or had raised children. Two of the women worked for their governments’ diplomatic corps while raising children on their own as single parents. The remaining five were single without children. The women held or had held a variety of positions ranging from clerical secretary all the way up to counsel general or deputy chief of mission.
While clerical secretaries or administrative assistants are not foreign service officers, they were included in this study because they serve their countries by working in diplomatic missions abroad. Administrative assistants face many of the same challenges as other women serving abroad and historically were the first women posted abroad to work in diplomatic missions. Although the title “secretary” in some countries has changed to something more politically correct, the women interviewed for this study labelled themselves as secretaries.

**Methodology**

The author conducted semi-structured interviews with all of the participants. (See the interview guide in Appendix 1.) Participants were asked to comment on why they chose to work for their governments in a foreign service capacity as well as on what challenges they faced. Participants were also asked if they would advise a young person, particularly a young woman, to join the foreign service or the ministry of foreign affairs.

Interviews with each participant took place in a location of the interviewee’s choosing and lasted between thirty minutes and several hours. One interview took place in the embassy cafeteria, one in the interviewee’s home and the rest in the interviewees’ offices. All of the interviews, with one exception, were conducted face to face; the one exception took place by telephone. Notes were taken during the interviews. The interviews were not tape-recorded due to security regulations at US embassies. All of the notes were analysed to determine major categories and themes related to the topic. Since this was a qualitative study looking at challenges that women face, the range of responses were included in the final paper.

**Findings**

Two main categories of challenge emerged from the data: (1) the actual work that the foreign service/ministry of foreign affairs employee performs; and (2) the family life of the interviewee. With respect to work and the job, many aspects arose, some of which depended upon the woman’s job functions as well as upon personal experience. With respect to family, the interviewees addressed many facets. Some women gave opinions regarding situations that were not their personal experiences; for instance, several single women commented on the benefits given to working mothers.

Since the women in the study represent vastly different backgrounds and experiences, not all of the issues mentioned affected every woman interviewed.
The findings reported are the most significant from the standpoint of work and family. Because the sample size was small, all issues that appeared to have relevance to other women in similar situations are reported.

**Work**

Most of the women interviewed went into detail about their specific place or role within the overall structure of their ministry of foreign affairs or the Department of State. It was evident they had a very good understanding of their work culture and their place in the hierarchy of their ministry of foreign affairs or the Department of State. They were very patient with me while they explained the “work culture” of their government agencies. One woman put it very succinctly: “You need to know the work.” She was referring to both the job expectations carefully set up and dictated by her government and the culture of the workplace. She went on to say that the work was the same worldwide because her focus was within the embassy. Three women who gave extensive details regarding their “systems” or “work culture” had joined their diplomatic corps through different, non-traditional channels. They were able to utilise both *emic* (insider) and *etic* (outsider) perspectives, an approach considered by many to be more sophisticated than just one or the other.

Two participants in the study did not elaborate regarding the organisational structure of their ministries of foreign affairs. This could be because their ministries have only been in existence for the past dozen years since their countries have re-established independence. It could also have been the case because their countries as well as their missions abroad are much smaller than those of other participants in this study.

Within the context of learning the culture of the US Department of State, many cited the mentor programme as a vehicle that helped some participants learn both cultural assumptions and expectations. The mentor programme, a direct result of the Palmer case, is a formalised system of helping junior staff and officers learn the culture of the organisation. Noon points out that women, especially in male dominated professions, do not have the same routes for learning how to do a specific job. The mentor programme was set up as an avenue for staff and officers to learn about the culture of the US Department of State as well as about the expectations required for advancement. It is a simple but effective way of helping new employees. Interviewees cautioned, however, that the mentor programme is only as good as those who are selected to serve as mentors.

It should also be noted that the “work culture” for a couple of the women interviewed had changed since they joined their respective governments’ diplo-
matic corps. Two of the administrative secretaries interviewed commented that the role of secretary is not necessarily the best position for someone entering a ministry of foreign affairs or the foreign service. They pointed out that the career is changing in large part because of technological advances. No longer is the secretary responsible for taking dictation and typing original documents. In ever increasing numbers, drafting officers have their own computers and produce their own finished reports.

Many of the interviewees mentioned chauvinistic men in the workplace. Chauvinistic treatment from men was considered par for the course and it was not confined only to the diplomatic community but, rather, was part of life in general. Several mentioned that they had received similar treatment from men in other work situations. They considered this male behaviour a nuisance but not an insurmountable problem. It should be pointed out, however, that three women said that bad male bosses were not nearly as difficult to work for as bad female bosses. The women in this study had the maturity to realise that one can receive unprofessional treatment from individuals in all walks of life.

Although interviewees were generally aware that bothersome or irritating behaviour could come from anyone, they also commented that expectations were higher for women than for men. Within the context of the work environment, eight of the eleven women commented that they were required to work much harder than the men around them and that was true regardless of their position, be it senior level or secretarial. Only two women expressed serious concerns that they did not get as far ahead, or as quickly, in their careers as they would have if they had not been female. Just as regarding the unprofessional behaviour mentioned above, women spoke of this phenomenon as a very straightforward fact that was not considered unusual. This finding is consistent with reports from women serving as ambassadors in Washington DC. Women envoys representing their countries in Washington noted the need to work twice as hard as their male counterparts.12

When asked about the challenges that they faced in their jobs, for the most part interviewees did not address issues related to the host culture where they were serving. Women interviewed had served virtually all over the world, including Middle Eastern countries, which, according to many conventions of political correctness, are considered male dominated societies. Women interviewed did not generally see the attitudes of host country men to be problematic. As one woman put it, “Even when I was in a Middle Eastern country they saw me as representing the US first and the fact that I was a woman second.”

Several women commented that men in host countries where they were serving did not know what the rules of politeness were when the foreign rep-
resentative was a woman. The rules of etiquette have not kept up with types of roles women are beginning to fill. Two women described such situations as “amusing,” and two others called them “annoying.” One woman had even developed strategies to help avoid potentially awkward situations. For example, she would introduce herself by name and title even though this was contrary to her shy personality style. She felt that it helped everyone from unintentionally ending up in a potentially embarrassing situation.

**Family**

The issue of family and career was a central theme for the majority of women interviewed. They expressed a wide range of opinions relating to this issue. One single woman put it starkly: “If I were to give advice to a young woman thinking of becoming a diplomat, I would say that you need to choose between family and career.”

The sentiment expressed in this woman’s comment reflects the statistics provided by the US Department of State for this study. Thirty-five percent of foreign service employees serving overseas are women. Forty percent of all foreign service employees are single, but that figure increases to a whopping 57 percent for female foreign service employees. Naumann\(^\text{13}\) points out that families and dependents are an important issue that needs consideration when looking at expatriates working abroad.

Several of the mothers interviewed commented that it was much easier to combine a career working overseas for their government with family concerns than in similar situations in one’s own country. For example, the cost of a nanny and other household staff members in many developing countries is a fraction of what it would be in the United States or in many European countries. One woman said that she and her husband liked being overseas in part because her country’s government paid for their children to attend very fine private schools.

Fogarty and Raporport\(^\text{14}\) remind us that as women become more active in the workplace, it is extremely challenging for them to balance career and family. However, some who work for a US embassy believe that in response to the Palmer case the US Foreign Service went too far in helping employees balance career and family. Two individuals shared with me the post-Palmer decision nickname for the US Foreign Service: the US Family Service. This derogatory nickname implies that the Foreign Service may be putting too much emphasis on the family. According to these women, it is not that families are unimportant; it is just that families and the needs of families may have become too predominant in the workplace. One participant felt that it was absurd for
embassies to bend over backwards to try to create positions for family members so that the spouse can have employment, even if it is a low level clerical position.

Regardless of the banter among ministry of foreign affairs and US Department of State employees, a real tension can exist between one’s career and one’s family. The last US Ambassador to Pakistan exemplifies a woman diplomat torn between job and family responsibilities; she quit her post to be with her children (who were being evacuated). Women in this study described conflicts between work and family that were less dramatic, but nevertheless real.

In many families, the wife chooses to work and to balance a job with family. Quite often, both the wife and husband wish to work in professional capacities and they are referred to as a dual career couple. As was pointed out during the interviews, this is not nearly as simple as it appears on the surface for couples embarking on diplomatic careers. Dual career couples residing in their home countries have opportunities to work for different employers. This is not the case with dual career couples who reside abroad. The spouse cannot merely go out and get a job, since in many countries regulations prohibit work by non-citizens. At times, exceptions can be made, for example with waivers often given to school teachers married to diplomats who wish to work in the host country. In some countries, bilateral agreements permit diplomatic spouses to work in the local economy. (Employment of diplomatic spouses in the private sector is complicated by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities.)

According to a representative of the US Department of State, approximately ten percent of foreign service staff are married to other foreign service staff members. The term “tandem couple” is used to designate a couple where both the husband and wife work for the foreign service on a career basis. Other governments use similar schemes, including the inherent problems associated with both members of a couple working for a ministry of foreign affairs or the foreign service.

Although on the surface it may seem like the perfect solution for situations where both members of a couple wish to have an active and vibrant life in the field of diplomacy, a number of women interviewed for this study had serious concerns regarding this basic practice. These concerns ranged from supervision to time off. Many governments have either written or unwritten rules that an individual may not supervise his or her spouse. One participant described a situation that could arise where a woman was the ambassador and the spouse was working in the motor pool. No one can guarantee that the ambassador would not get detailed reports on a daily basis as to what was transpiring in the
motor pool. However, for junior level staff at a large embassy, one would not expect much of a problem with one spouse potentially supervising the other. The problem, as it was pointed out, is when you have mid-career to high-level staff who supervise others in small embassies.

I was also told about some governments which try to post husband and wife couples in neighbouring countries. While not considered an ideal situation, it is a way of keeping both members of the couple working in their chosen careers at the same time. It was also explained that, at times, at a post where positions are not available for both husband and wife, someone has no option but to stay home.

Another participant described a different situation, one in which the tandem couple’s needs negatively impact other members of the embassy staff. A tandem couple usually prefers to take vacations together at the same time. If the embassy has only four staff members, this means that half of the embassy is on vacation and the other two staff members are responsible for a disproportionate amount of work. Another problem occurs when a tandem couple’s children are evacuated. The question is who leaves his or her duties to escort the children out of the country.

The issue of dependents – non-working wives or husbands – was also addressed by all of the women who had or had had dependents while abroad. Three women mentioned the problem of dependent husbands. Blackwelder points out how difficult it can be for a man to suddenly find himself in the role of dependent and not in the role of provider; this was the experience of several women who participated in this study.

Men traditionally have been the breadwinners and women traditionally identified as the dependents. One woman discussed what it was like for her husband to be labelled the “dependent” on his diplomatic ID card. She pointed out that he tried to be a very good sport about it even though it was awkward. Participants also mentioned how difficult it can be for the dependent spouse to try to find a professional career when he is not in the foreign service or ministry of foreign affairs. One woman told tales of her husband commuting across many time zones back and forth to his family from their home country where he was trying to start and run a business. Another woman mentioned a very creative solution to this problem: the husband served as a priest for the local expatriate community where his wife was the ambassador. In this way their work was complementary and not conflicting. This same woman wished to see more solutions such as the one described.

Mothers who participated in this study brought up the issue of schooling for children. Two women pointed out that their children received very
good educations because they were abroad. However, one woman cited a serious problem for families whose native language is not spoken or studied in the country of posting. Her concern was with regard to her daughter who wished to attend university in their native country; the daughter had no options in the host country to acquire the necessary first language skills that would gain her admission to a university in her home country. The daughter needed to remain in her country, unfortunately away from her mother, if she wished to gain the first language skills necessary to succeed in her home country. Smith\textsuperscript{16} points out many issues for children, known as Third Culture Kids, who are raised abroad because of their parent(s). The issue of schooling was the only issue related to Third Culture Kids that arose in this study.

Discussion

Several findings from this study are worth noting with regard to other research conducted in similar fields. The need to know the work culture was identified as a prominent theme in this study and this finding is consistent with other research regarding corporations as well as women. Sacks\textsuperscript{17} points out that learning the corporate or work culture is so important that some companies even offer courses in it. Renshaw\textsuperscript{18} explains that it is essential for the few women managers who exist in Japan to know the corporate culture.

Although the issue of the work culture was very strong, this was in sharp contrast to issues related to the cultures of the host countries. None of the interviewees expressed concern over this issue. This is interesting, since Kohls\textsuperscript{19} advises individuals moving abroad to live and work to know the host culture but fails to mention the need to know the culture of one’s own organisation.

The family issues discussed by women in this study are similar to those found in the literature. Séphocle\textsuperscript{20} underscores the tension between having a family and having a career. Austin\textsuperscript{21} points out that corporate culture does not always accommodate the needs of the family. It appears that members of the diplomatic corps from some countries receive better consideration for family needs than those at similar professional levels in their home countries.

Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

Some of the challenges facing women working abroad for diplomatic missions are similar to those facing other women who have broken through the glass
ceiling and entered careers traditionally held by men. Women need to know the culture of their work environment. Unfortunately, as reported in this study, women still need to work harder than their male counterparts and they may still have trouble advancing as quickly as men. Research needs to be undertaken which investigates the most efficient avenues for women to learn the culture of their government’s diplomatic corps. In addition, researchers should explore whether women working for diplomatic missions are indeed working twice as hard and whether they are advancing as quickly as their male counterparts. It is also important to help women in diplomatic positions access existing resources, such as the Women Ambassador project.

Many issues related to family emerged in this study. Men serving abroad are more likely to have families than their female counterparts. In order to gain a more accurate picture of women in diplomatic positions, it is necessary to examine the reasons that women are more likely to be single. For example, the problem could be that women are working so hard that they do not have time for a social life.

Special considerations apply when both husband and wife are working as part of a dual career family. The concept of dual career family is not immediately transferable from one’s home country to the overseas environment. Research needs to be undertaken to determine the best models for dual career couples working and living abroad.

Finally, numerous issues relate to women who have husbands and children as dependents. For example, special family issues arise when the woman has a career outside the home and the husband does not. In addition, preparing children to return for education in their home countries can be an important issue. Investigators need to determine how women have successfully coped with the special needs of husbands and children as dependents.

Appendix 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Semi-Structured Interview Guide</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. How did you decide to work for the foreign service or ministry of foreign affairs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What have been the biggest challenges that you have faced in your career? Were there any special challenges because you are a woman?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What advice would you give someone considering working for your ministry of foreign affairs or foreign service?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author wishes to thank all of the women who participated in this study.
Endnotes

20. Séphocle, *Then They Were Twelve*.
Open communication and interaction between political elites and civic society is considered one of the fundamental conditions of a representative, working democracy. Theoretically, this communication ensures that individuals are treated equally, regardless of their race, creed, gender or ethnic origins.

This paper examines the existing situation and some of the problems of communication between professional diplomats or politicians on the one side and Roma rights activists on the other. I believe that many of the difficulties encountered in communication between diplomats and politicians and Roma rights activists apply equally to communication with other human rights activists and civil society groups advocating other causes such as the environment or gender issues.

Several aspects of this process deserve a close look: ethnic cultural differences, professional cultural differences including educational and language barriers, the culture of racism, and finally, the lack of interaction and of a common ground all affect the process of communication. I will start by providing some historical background on the situation of the Roma in Europe.

The Roma in Europe

Seven to nine million Roma live in Europe. Romani people are those who speak the Romani language or who are descended from populations which spoke Romani at some time in the past. The much better known term Gypsy (and its equivalents in the many European languages) is also used to refer to many groups who do not meet this criterion. The word Gypsy and its equivalents in other European languages have strong connotations relating to crime and antisocial behaviour. The Encarta World English Dictionary 2003 defines Gypsy as “an offensive term for a member of the Romani people.”

The Roma are the European minority facing the strongest discrimination in Europe and, according to a World Bank study\(^1\), with a living standard in many places close to the poorest countries in Africa. Historically, the Roma have been rejected by society and regarded as unwanted aliens. Despite
the fact that few Roma are unable to speak the language of the countries where they live, communication and interaction between Roma communities and the majority ethic communities, including the local administration and local civil society groups, is severely limited.

Exclusion, mistreatment and racist behaviour against Roma has a long historical precedent. In Romania, for example, Roma were enslaved until 1856. Mihail Kogalniceanu, a Romanian politician, described the Roma of Romania in the middle of the 19th century as:

human beings wearing chains on their arms and legs, others with iron clamps around their foreheads, and still others with metal collars about their necks. Cruel floggings and other punishments, such as starvation, being hung over smoking fires, solitary confinement, and being thrown naked into the snow of a frozen river, such was the treatment meted out to the wretched Gypsy…. [C]hildren [were] torn from the breasts of those who brought them into the world, and sold … to different buyers from the four corners of Romania, like cattle.2

In 1939, Johannes Behrendt of the Office of Racial Hygiene of Germany issued a brief stating that “all Gypsies should be treated as hereditarily sick; the only solution is elimination. The aim should therefore be the elimination without hesitation of this defective element in the population.”

About 500 000 Roma are believed to have been murdered in Nazi camps (official records indicate around half of this number). In Romania, under Prime Minister Ion Antonescu, authorities deported as many as 90 000 (the official estimate is around 40 000) Roma to the concentration camp of Bug, in the province of Transnistria, a dumping ground for Romania’s undesirables during the racist projects of World War II. More than one third of the Roma sent there perished from exposure, malnutrition and disease (the official number is 19 000).3 Antonescu considered Gypsies to be “pests” with the same value as mice, rats and crows.

I am writing about this subject for a publication on intercultural communication and diplomacy for several reasons. First, my professional training is in diplomacy, and my daily work involves interaction or, more specifically, lobbying, with European politicians. Second, I am deeply concerned with human rights in general and, because I am Roma, with Roma rights in particular. I believe that the process of integration of Roma within Europe could benefit dramatically if the dialogue between politicians and Roma rights activists became optimal. Most of the examples I give here are based on my own experi-
ence as a Roma rights activist in Eastern Europe, and lobbying with European politicians in Brussels.

Lack of Communication

I would like to start with an example of how little communication actually takes place between Roma and human rights activists and the political elite. I decided to focus on the speech given by American President George Bush on November 23, 2002, on the occasion of Romania’s acceptance into NATO.4 Mr Bush was the first American President to visit Romania since well before the end of communist times.

Mr Bush’s prepared speeches are well known for their quality and the strong signals sent. A very large and well-paid team of diplomats and political analysts prepares his speeches. The fact that his speech showed no sensitivity or even awareness of the history and the situation of Romania’s minorities, in particular that of the Roma, is a clear signal that communication between the Roma rights movement and the political elites is not taking place.

During his speech in Bucharest, Mr Bush said:

Close by is a church, three centuries old, a symbol of the faith that overcomes all oppression.

In fact, the Romanian Orthodox Church has supported the persecution of Romania’s minorities, in particular, the Jews and the Roma, historically and until very recently. The Romanian Orthodox Church proclaimed the spiritual leader of the fascist Iron Guard Corneliu Zelea Codreanu a “national saint.” The Iron Guard is held responsible for one of the most brutal pogroms in history, during which 200 men, women and children were driven through all the automated stages of animal slaughter on a conveyor belt. Then the corpses were stamped “fit for human consumption.”5 The same Church is responsible for the longest and most brutal enslavement in Europe of the Roma minority. The Orthodox Church was also a strong supporter of Marshall Antonescu, who was responsible for the death of tens of thousands of Roma during the Second World War. He thought that Gypsies were pests and as worthless as rats. In June 2001, in the interior courtyard of the same church mentioned by Mr Bush, a bust of Antonescu was unveiled.

President Bush continued:
Since those days of liberation, Romania has made an historic journey. Instead of hatred, you have chosen tolerance.

Romanian society, although not alone in this regard in Eastern Europe, can hardly be described as tolerant. Romania harbours one of the worst cases of social stigma in Europe. The direct result is that important public personalities of Roma origin (government members, writers, professors, doctors, sports celebrities and singers) feel reluctance and in most cases refuse to declare their membership or links to Romania’s Roma minority. They fear possible exclusion from social life, scapegoating, or the decline or end of their careers. Even the few Roma politicians elected to represent Roma communities often criticise or insult those communities, in an effort to distance themselves from ordinary Roma and to show the majority that they belong to “high society.”

In the latest presidential elections in Romania, second place went to the extreme right wing politician Corneliu Vadim Tudor; his party holds the most places in the Romanian parliament after the ruling party. Tudor has said:

Gypsies and Jews … stand out amongst the other ethnic groups that populate our country and that have become integrated alongside Romanians in the Romanian society. [It seems] they have schemed to subdue the Romanians by making use of various plans and means; but with the same goal: to enslave Romanians economically speaking, to annihilate their freedom in their own country.⁶

President Bush added:

Instead of destructive rivalry with your neighbors, you have chosen reconciliation.

A poll conducted by the Romanian agency Metro Media just one year before Mr Bush came to Romania showed that 93% of Romanians do not trust Roma. A staggering 99% said that they believed Roma do not deserve any respect.⁷ In the weeks before his speech, numerous racist articles in the Romanian press targeted Roma, Jews and Hungarians.

Let me remind you that President Bush’s speech was prepared by an exceptionally well educated team of diplomats and political analysts representing the strongest political power in the world. How can we explain the obvious misrepresentations in this speech? This speech indeed sent strong signals both to the ethnic Romanians and Romania’s minorities. The signals suggest that
the minorities, in particular the Roma, are unimportant and, in fact, invisible. Communication is clearly not taking place between those representing the minorities and the political elite.

**Political Class versus Roma Rights Activists**

Communication between the political elites and Roma Rights activists break down in a number of areas. This section will describe some of these, with attention to communication failures on both sides.

*Ethnic Cultural Differences*

To start with, there are some cultural differences based on ethnic background between Roma and the majority populations in the countries where they reside. These differences or, more specifically, ignorance on both sides about the extent and nature of these differences, affect the effectiveness and, in many cases, the existence of any communication between members of the two groups, including activists and members of the government.

Until recently, little was known about Roma traditions and customs as Roma were isolated and avoided communicating with majority populations up to the early 1990s. Since then, hundreds of articles on Roma culture have been published, but still both the majority populations and the political elites have little knowledge of the Roma. As political policies regarding Roma have tended to focus on assimilation rather than integration within their societies, policy makers see little need to learn more. The phrase “if they want to live in our country they should learn to be like us” is often heard at both the political level and among the general population.

Both the Roma and the majority populations have strong cultural beliefs that teach them not to trust the other. The Roma are suspicious and afraid of being corrupted by *gajikane* (non-Roma) influences. They fear that contact with non-Roma will lead to the disintegration of traditionally strong family and community ties, and result in juvenile delinquency. Many Roma also fear that public admission of being Roma in *gajikane* society will single them out for discrimination and persecution.

The majority population, on their side, are strongly influenced by prevailing negative stereotypes of Roma, which teach them that Roma steal, Roma are dirty, Roma are dangerous and cannot be trusted. Even well educated members of the political elite may be completely ignorant or misinformed about the reality of the situation of the Roma. Many of the commonly held stereotypes
are not necessarily negative, but are simply false. For example, many politicians hold the view that Roma cannot integrate because of their nomadic lifestyle, while in fact very few Roma still maintain or even wish to maintain a nomadic lifestyle.

Only in the later part of this century have Roma children been given access to education. Until very recently, most Roma regarded, with good reason, the educational systems of their countries as a means of forcing assimilation. As a result, few Roma went through the educational system and illiteracy was highly accepted by Roma themselves and seen as a way to preserve their identity. Very respected traditional leaders of Roma communities are often unable to speak or write the majority language well, making them an easy target of ridicule. In addition, their use of titles such as “king” or “emperor,” meant simply to emphasise their social status within their community, are regarded as ridiculous by the majority population.

Due to my personal experience, and despite the fact that for years I have lived and worked with non-Roma, I can well understand the inclination of traditional Roma leaders to advocate limited or no contact with the non-Roma. Half of my family on my mothers’ side perished during deportation in the 1940s. I went through the educational system during communist times and experienced first hand the pressure to assimilate: for about four years in high school I told my classmates and teachers that I was Greek.

Lack of awareness or understanding of such ethnically based cultural differences leads to misunderstanding, at the best, and outright refusal to engage in attempts to communicate, at the worst.

**Professional Cultural Differences**

Alongside ethnically based cultural differences that exist in all sectors of the two populations, huge differences can be found between the “professional culture” of the political elite in Eastern Europe and that of Roma rights activists. Many of the same differences also exist between the professional culture of western European politicians and Roma rights activists.

As the majority of Roma (around 90%) live in the ex-communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe, it is most relevant to describe the professional cultural of Eastern European politicians. I will begin by describing the political scene inherited by the current politicians of Eastern European countries.

John Locke saw government as the trustee of civil society. This ideal is clearly not applied in the countries coming from the ex-Soviet sphere of influence. Over 40 years of communism destroyed civil society in most of these countries. The state had complete responsibility for looking after the inter-
ests of the people; any civil initiative, whether religious, economic or cultural, was regarded as subversive and was very quickly subdued. Most of the people in power in Eastern European countries today were part of the communist political class or, at the least, were educated during that time. Consequently, although they may be under increasing pressure to respond to civil society, they remain reluctant.

All across Europe, ultra nationalist political movements have gained popularity; in Eastern Europe, in order to retain votes even moderate politicians are adopting some of their characteristics. A cult of personality and very centralised and hierarchical decision making is characteristic of the new political class in Eastern and Central Europe. A “strong hand” capable of controlling the “destiny of the nation” is considered a necessary quality. Rigidity, formality and strong opposition to change can be seen not only as characteristics of the political class but also of their discourse. Patriotism is fundamental for the selection of political representatives and probably the most important quality asked by the electorate from them.

In absolute opposition, Roma rights activists tend to be young people, often with university degrees from western Europe or North America. Through exposure to two very different educational systems, one focusing on assimilation and often openly teaching racist attitudes, and the other advocating tolerance and the importance of multiculturalism, they have a sharp awareness of the problems in their home countries.

In contrast to the nationalistic ideas of most politicians, Roma activism is a very internationalised movement with strong connections to international human rights movements. Roma rights activists are quickly developing strong international networks and a very efficient exchange of ideas and information. As is typical of many civil society initiatives, actions are initiated at the grass roots level and support is gathered and focused as a situation develops. In order to function efficiently, Roma rights organisations must be transparent. They depend on the active participation of all of their members.

Roma rights activists not only strongly believe in the active role of civil society, but often strongly and publicly criticise and accuse the political elites of their countries for the rampant racism and intolerance within the societies they lead. Many of the views held by activists are radical, and politicians and the mass media have responded by denying them access to the political and public scene.
Job Descriptions
Not only are significant differences visible between the professional culture of politicians and that of activists, but the very essence of what they are asked to do in their work is not at all complementary.

Politicians represent the majority. As the president of Malta said yesterday, diplomats need to represent their governments and the governments represent the will of the people. This sounds fine in theory, but let’s have a look at the will of the people as expressed in a Gallup poll from September 2003 in Romania (Romania has the largest Roma population in Europe).

Some 82% of Romanians think that Roma are criminals and two thirds are in favour of refusing Roma the right to travel outside Romania. Almost half of Romanians agree that a demographic policy aimed at hindering the growth of the Roma population in Romania is necessary. A full 36% of Romanians believe Roma should live separately and 31% think forbidding Roma access to public places (restaurants, clubs and bars) should be legal. Over 75% of Romanians do not know or believe that the Romanian state was involved in the extermination of Roma and Jews during WWII. The majority of Romanians also think that the public interest should prevail over individual rights and a strong and radical leader is needed.

In most states with Roma population, the Roma have historically been perceived as “the other.” In a disastrous economical situation, politicians in Eastern and Central European governments need a way to relieve social tensions and the easiest and almost “traditional” way of doing so is to find a scapegoat and to claim they are protecting the majority from their imagined enemies. I have often heard Romanian politicians saying the most outrageous things meant to distract the attention of the public from some corruption scandal in the political sphere. These distractions are taken up by the media and repeated until they seem to become the truth.

A good example comes from late 1994 when Romanian intellectuals and members of the business community were looking for a way to disassociate Roma from Romanians in the European mentality; the Roma were accused of destroying the chances of Romania to become part of the EU. An obscure and extremist nationalist Romanian professor came up with the idea that the word “Roma” is a recent invention and had supposedly been used by criminal factions trying to destabilise Romania by persuading western Europeans that Romania is the country of the Roma (Gypsies). This “discovery” was widely reported in the Romanian mass media. The word “Roma” actually means “human being,” and it is much older than the names of any of the modern European states.
As a result, in January 1995 Romania’s Foreign Ministry attempted to dissociate Romania and the Romanian people from Roma. The Ministry decreed that the Romanian Roma should be called “ţigani” rather than “Roma” as the latter name “was likely to be confused with the Romanians.” Imagine the reaction of Michael Jordan, Colin Powell, Bill Cosby, Alice Walker and other Afro-Americans if President Bush decreed that Afro-Americans should be called “niggers” in order that they not be confused with Americans!

The violent reaction of activists abrogated the decree, but, at the same time, shut down any dialogue between the Prime Minister and civil society, as the best thing said about him during the protests was “drunk moron.” This is a good example of the approach that activists feel they must take. They feel forced into corners where they must fight their way out, and they consider politicians to be the main enemies. Attacking and exposing politicians is what justifies their job in the eyes of the donors and those whose rights they defend.

Because of these differences in job requirements and expectations, a huge gap exists between these groups when they try initiating dialogue.

**Language**

During the early days of the Roma movement a serious gap existed between the language of the political elite and the language of the often self-educated, inexperienced traditional Roma leaders. The basic and often unprepared speeches of the traditional Roma alienated them not only from the majorities in general but even from civil society groups generally sympathetic to the situation of Roma. These speeches focused on accusing the ex-communist governments of confiscating their gold and on ways to get it back.

As nationalist movements in Eastern and Central Europe emerged, the political class found nationalistic discourse to be a required tool in their striving for power. The discourse of the traditional Roma leaders provided an easy target for the extreme nationalists who accused Roma in general of not caring about the difficult economic situation of their nations and of trying to use the new democracy to become rich at the expense of the majority ethnic group.

Despite the presence of more and more well educated Roma activists, communication has not improved due to the often radical and non-negotiable approach of the activists. However, the new class of well educated Roma is far more skilful at attacking and dismantling the nationalistic slurs coming from the elites.
Culture of Racism
The politicians in power, particularly in Eastern Europe, tend to hold the same stereotypes regarding Roma as the rest of the population and, in many cases, their stereotypes are stronger and more sophisticated. These politicians represent states created primarily on a basis of ethnic nationalism, and a historically despised minority is often regarded as a danger. Disrespect, arrogance, blatant ignorance coming from lack of interest, and often-racist speech based on stereotype is the result. It is clearly difficult for communication to take place between two groups with mutual dislike, hate, or fear. Communication does not start with insults.

For example, in 1999 I attended a reception given by the Romanian consulate in Strasbourg. The reception was organised for the European interns within the Council of Europe and the European Court of Justice. At the reception, one young diplomat made a joke: “What are 32 Gypsies good for? You can make 8×4 soap from them.” (8×4 was a well-known German brand of soap.) Incredibly, most of the people present laughed. That diplomat was not kicked out of the Foreign Service. In fact, a few months later he was made one of the cabinet directors within his national government.

“You know the problem with you Gypsies? You make far too many children,” I was told during an official dinner by someone holding a PhD and working in the diplomatic field. This was the first thing he said to me immediately after I told him that I was a Roma.

At the end of September 2003, I attended a meeting with a German MEP – a Christian Democrat at the European Parliament in Brussels. The director of Human Rights of one of the European Commissioners had arranged our meeting and I was trying to pursue and schedule a hearing on Roma matters with different players in the EU institutions. To my utter stupefaction, she started our meeting by saying that there are “many problems with you Gypsies and most of them are because of your vagrant way of living.” Too many children, disrespect for Western culture and begging were the next problems she pointed out before I managed to say anything more than my name.

When I first started my job with the European Roma Information Office in Brussels, I contacted a French MEP asking him to meet with me in order to talk about the Romanian Roma (he was also part of the delegation supervising Romania’s improvements for EU accession). He replied that he would meet with me only if the language used would be French. Two months later I received a call asking me to come and help brief the same MEP about the situation of Roma, as he had to attend a round table about it. Obviously, this time...
no one expected me to be fluent in French, nor did I request that the meeting be held in Romanian or Romani.

In these situations, it was hard for me to ignore the antagonism and to try to communicate my ideas and do my job. However, I persisted in my effort to communicate and, despite the injury to my ego, every single one of these people eventually helped me to advance very important initiatives on improving the Roma rights situation at the EU parliament level. Unfortunately, very few Roma are willing or able to communicate with politicians displaying arrogance, ignorance or very limited and biased knowledge of the subject, open racist speech, or stereotypes.

Lack of Interaction and Common Ground

No doubt exists in my mind that in order to make communication possible, Roma and human rights activists need to overcome stereotypes and not be afraid of making mistakes even if that will require adapting to a type of speech we might hate.

Rules of communication need to be known or learned in order to make communication work. An example from my first year living in Chicago may illustrate this. I was working in a very white American professional IT environment. Despite the obvious lack of African-American people in the company, I never thought of the people working there as racist. I learned most of my colloquial English in this environment. After four months in this environment I went for the first time to play basketball in my neighbourhood with a large number of African-Americans. After 20 minutes a new player came in and greeted everybody, using the word “nigger” with his friends. Trying to be “cool” and friendly, I replied: “What’s up, nigger?”

Not knowing the rules of basic communication could have been a disaster, but the fact that both of us were trying to help our team win allowed us to overcome what could have been interpreted as racist slur. This incident, which started very badly, proved to be one of the best learning experiences of my life.

Roma and political elites have very little common ground to meet and team up, and little apparent interest in creating this common ground. European institutions in Brussels allegedly representing Europeans in general do not have any Roma working for them. I am talking here of over 20 000 people. The OSCE appointed one Roma to work for them in 1999. Another Roma joined in 2003. This is 2 out of over 30 000 people. The diplomatic missions of the European countries in Brussels follow the same trend and have not a single
diplomat of Roma origin. No Eastern or Central European president or prime minister has visited a Roma settlement despite the fact that in some countries the Roma population is around 10% of the total.

Conclusion

Because of all of these barriers to communication, both politicians and activists feel frustrated and prefer talking among themselves rather than to each other. This only amplifies the problems and the stereotypes. Instead of opening the windows of dialogue, most of the people who should be solving problems prefer to surrender themselves to mirrors.

Professor Geert Hofstede said yesterday in his excellent speech that diplomats risk losing their identity. I would be very happy to see as many diplomats as possible lose their ethnically based nationalistic identities, if these could be replaced with broader identities based on our common human identity. I believe that due to their experience with crossing cultures, diplomats are in the position to advise and even correct the sometimes disastrous policies of their own governments. President de Marco said yesterday that diplomats have to serve their governments and respect the politicians, but I think perhaps it is more important for politicians to respect diplomats. I see a need for stronger involvement of experienced diplomats in designing not only foreign, but domestic policies of their governments. We should give these bridge builders the chance to do their jobs both abroad and at home, and to help improve the communication between the majority and minorities.

In the last two centuries, diplomacy focused on power relations between countries in order to counterbalance the explosion of radical nationalism that fascinated the elites. Diplomacy could and should be the way to build bridges between those concerned with human rights and those able to implement policies meant to bring tolerance in a world ravaged by interethnic conflicts.

Endnotes

2 Mihail Kogalniceanu, Schita Asupra Istoriei, Obiceiurilor si Limbii Tiganilor (1837).
4 The full speech is available online at http://www.roembus.org/english/journal/bush/speech_Bucharest.htm.
6 Published in *Romania Mare* (“Greater Romania,” right wing newspaper owned by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, http://www.romare.ro).
8 Opening Address by H.E. Professor Guido de Marco, President of Malta, for the Second International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, 13 - 15 February, 2003 (http://www.diplomacy.edu/Conferences/IC2).
11 Keynote Address by Professor Geert Hofstede at the Second International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, 13 - 15 February, 2003 (http://www.diplomacy.edu/Conferences/IC2); see also Hofstede’s paper in this publication.
12 Opening Address, Second International Conference on Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy.
The distinctive characteristics of professional cultures become most apparent under the following conditions: first, when separate cultures come into contact with each other and attempt to translate across their differences; and second, when the members of one professional culture transgress the rules and mores of their community and are exposed for their mistakes.¹

The Hutton inquiry into the death of Dr David Kelly, the senior British arms inspector in the UN inspection mission to Iraq who was found dead in an English wood in July 2003, offers revealing insights into the contrasting professional cultures of journalists, politicians and scientists. Not only does the Hutton inquiry reveal essential differences in the styles of discourse of these three cultures, it also reveals the errors of judgement on the part of the key players within each professional culture, namely the journalist, Andrew Gilligan, the political spin doctor, Alastair Campbell and the scientist, David Kelly. The Hutton inquiry therefore provides a uniquely well-documented and contemporary case study of both conditions mentioned above.

This paper focuses both on the language and on the transgressions associated with each of the three professional cultures under investigation. Included within the linguistic analysis are the terms “sexing up” and “weapons of mass destruction,” the inferences and implications made by Gilligan, and the various devices from modals to presupposition used to “strengthen the language” of the September 2002 dossier.² The discussion of transgressions focuses on the issue of truth, lies and good faith, not only as “basic cultural values” which guide personal and professional conduct, but also as emotive terms which, as will be shown, have the reprehensible effect of foreclosing debate.

Relevance to Diplomacy

The relevance of this paper to the practice of diplomacy is three-fold. First, diplomacy provides the backdrop against which the Kelly affair unfolded. It was in an act of public diplomacy aimed at winning both national and international support for increasing the pressure on Iraq that the British government exaggerated the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction in its September
dossier through what came to be known as the “forty-five minute claim.” It is because of his misgivings about the misrepresentation of scientific evidence for the benefit of government policy that Dr David Kelly first approached BBC journalists.

Second, all three protagonists may be deemed, in retrospect, to have in varying degrees perpetrated the same fault, that of “careless talk,” reminiscent of WW2 British propaganda that cautioned, “Careless talk can cost lives,” known in the US as: “Loose lips sink ships.” In the case of the Kelly affair, it was loose language that resulted in the perceived attack on the integrity of the British Government and the national crisis that followed. The power of language to sway public opinion, and to make or break not only individuals but also governments, is clearly central to the concerns of diplomacy.

Finally, the various inquiries which followed from the Kelly affair raised the curtain on the workings of the BBC, the government and the intelligence services, creating the kind of clarity and accountability which enhance public confidence. Yet against these advantages, the ultimate deflection of the debate on the validity of the government’s claims about - and attack on - Iraq, into an assertion of good faith, diverted attention onto the strength of the government’s beliefs rather than the pertinence of its policies. The hard sell of basic values witnessed here is, I believe, characteristic of public diplomacy as it is emerging post 9/11.

**Language**

Differences in discourse styles are popularly thought to offer an accessible indicator of distinctions between professional cultures. Thus, for instance, it has been claimed that journalistic language may be careless and sensational; political language manipulative and spin-laden; scientific language cautious and empirically driven. Reductive though such generalisations might be, they provide a frame of reference from which to start. The next few sections, therefore, look at evidence from the Kelly affair for such assertions. Because meaning is always context dependent, each section is followed by an explanation of the context in which the discourse elements under analysis appeared. The decision to look at the evidence through the lens of language will, it is hoped, provide a novel insight into a topic that has already received saturation coverage both through official inquiries and in the British press.
The Language of Journalists

A meeting took place between Dr David Kelly, the UK’s top scientific advisor on weapons of mass destruction, and Andrew Gilligan, the defence correspondent of the BBC’s Radio 4 Today programme, on May 22, 2003. There is no accurate transcript of the exchange, due to Gilligan’s failure to tape-record the interview and to his subsequent loss of the notes he took of it, a transgression of professional practice for which he was severely criticised by Lord Hutton and which contributed to his dismissal from the BBC. However, a reconstruction of the conversation can be found in Gilligan’s Mail on Sunday article published three days after the Today programme was broadcast. A similar reconstruction was also featured on the BBC’s Panorama programme entitled “A Fight to the Death,” and reads as follows:

GILLIGAN: So, back to the dossier. What happened to it? When we last met, you were saying it wasn’t very exciting.
KELLY: Yes, that’s right. Until the last week, it was just as I told you. It was transformed in the week before publication.
GILLIGAN: To make it sexier?
KELLY: Yes. To make it sexier.
GILLIGAN: What do you mean? Can you give me some examples?
KELLY: The classic was the 45 minutes. The statement that WMD could be ready in 45 minutes was single source and most things in the dossier were double source.
GILLIGAN: How did this transformation happen?
KELLY: Campbell.
GILLIGAN: What, you know that Campbell made it up? They made it up?
KELLY: No, it was real information but it was unreliable and it was in the dossier against our wishes.

Gilligan broadcast the following news item on the Today programme, BBC Radio 4, on May 29, 2003, at 06.07 am:

What we’ve been told by one of the senior officials in charge of drawing up that dossier was that actually the government probably knew that the forty-five minute figure was wrong even before it decided to put it in. … Downing Street, our source says, ordered a week before publication, ordered it to be sexed up, to be made more exciting and ordered more facts to be, to be discovered.
Since this short and seemingly innocuous broadcast acted as the trigger for the momentous debacle that followed, it is worth looking at the wording closely. We find that Gilligan makes a number of false attributions and inferences.

First, Dr David Kelly was not a senior official in charge of drawing up the Iraq dossier but an arms inspector attached as an official to the Ministry of Defence. Gilligan, in his own defence, claims to have offered Kelly two options on how he would like to be described: “One of the senior officials involved in drawing up the dossier” or “the senior official in charge of drawing up the dossier,” both of which Kelly is supposed to have approved. Admittedly, our knowledge of Kelly’s actual words is uncertain and this underlying uncertainty underlies all of Gilligan’s pronouncements about the interview.

Second, Kelly does not suggest that the government “probably knew that the forty-five minute figure was wrong,” he merely claims that the intelligence source was uncorroborated. If the British government had indeed known the forty-five minute claim to be wrong and had inserted it into the dossier regardless, having made it up in order to achieve the desired public reaction, then the government would have been guilty of deceit. Since, as will be discussed below, truthfulness is a basic value which, when breached, provokes strong condemnation, Gilligan’s charge is a very serious one indeed.

Third, Kelly does not say that it was Downing Street that had “ordered it to be sexed up.” At most, if we can rely on the reconstruction, Kelly refers to an individual - Alastair Campbell - who was the director of communication and strategy at the time. However, it emerged in the Hutton inquiry that Kelly did not volunteer the name and only acceded when Gilligan suggested Campbell as one of the perpetrators of the “sexing up” exercise. In his evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Kelly denies having mentioned Campbell. In a subsequent conversation with Susan Watts the day after Gilligan’s broadcast, Kelly also backs off from accusing Campbell. It does, however, appear that he had pointed the finger at Campbell in an earlier conversation with Watts:

WATTS: [on the 45-minute claim] So would it be accurate then, as you did in that earlier conversation, to say that it was Alastair Campbell himself who …?
KELLY: No I can’t. All I can say is the No. 10 press office. I’ve never met Alastair Campbell so I can’t. But … I think Alastair Campbell is synonymous with the press office because he’s responsible for it.

It is worth noting here that Kelly equates Campbell with the Press Office rather than with the Blair government, which is what Gilligan’s use of the
metonym “Downing Street” would typically denote. However, Gilligan is not far off the mark in his claim of Downing Street involvement. As was revealed during the Hutton inquiry, an unnamed government official (a member of Whitehall’s Joint Intelligence Committee) sent an email to the secret services saying Downing Street wanted the dossier “to be as strong as possible within the bounds of available intelligence…. This is therefore a last! Call for any items of intelligence that agencies think can and should be included.”

The fourth dubious attribution Gilligan makes concerns the term “sexed up,” which he later admitted was not used by Kelly. At best, Kelly repeated Gilligan’s suggestion that information was added to the dossier in order to “make it sexier.” Kelly dismissed Gilligan’s version of their conversation out of hand when he said to Nick Rufford, a journalist friend who had come to warn him that his name was out in the public domain, “I talked to him about factual stuff. The rest is bullshit.” Many people feel that the term “sexed up” is indeed more congruent with a journalist’s than a scientist’s register and it is possible, therefore, that Gilligan was putting words into Kelly’s mouth.

Finally, Gilligan is guilty of making a false inference concerning why the 45-minute claim did not appear in earlier drafts of the Iraq dossier. According to Gilligan, “the reason it hadn’t been in the original draft … was that it only came from one source.” Gilligan based his inference on the following words, which he attributes to Kelly: “It was included in the dossier against our wishes, because it wasn’t reliable. Most things in the dossier were double source, but that was single source, and we believed that the source was wrong.”

The single source is the reason Kelly was unhappy about the claim, especially as that source was unreliable, but it was not the reason for its omission from earlier drafts of the dossier. According to evidence that would later be given to the Foreign Affairs Committee, the 45-minute claim was not included because it was fresh intelligence. Gilligan’s mistaken inference, however, adds fuel to the sensational suggestions made in his broadcast, subsequently spread by Chinese whispers, that the government had knowingly planted wrong information in the dossier shortly before its publication in order to exaggerate the danger presented by Iraq and thereby to promote its own advocacy of war against Iraq. “In this respect a claim with quite serious implications appears to rest on no authority at all other than a speculative and incorrect deduction made by the journalist.”

The immediate context of Gilligan’s broadcast sheds some light on the tone he adopted for it. It took place in the context of a “two-way” interview, in which a reporter is interviewed by a news presenter and answers a number of questions on his or her story. This format has several distinctive attributes.
and consequences. One is that the news thus delivered is unscripted and may, therefore, lack rigor. Another is that it offers journalists an invitation to make the news, not to report it. This is particularly relevant in the context of so-called “frenzy journalism” in which, ever since the Watergate scoop, journalists see themselves as capable of bringing down a president or prime minister through investigative reporting. A third characteristic of the two-way is that it runs the risk of “collusive auction,” where unreliable claims outbid each other. This is illustrated in the introduction the anchor newsman John Humphrys gave Gilligan on the *Today* programme:

> Now our defence correspondent Andrew Gilligan has found evidence that the government’s dossier on Iraq that was produced last September was cobbled together at the last minute with some unconfirmed material that had not been approved by the security services.

Humphrys is here guilty of sensationalising the facts: although the “last minute” refers to the last week before the dossier’s publication and the “unconfirmed material” refers to the single source, there is, nevertheless, no justification for Humphrys’ claim that the material “had not been approved by the security services.” Kelly may have objected to it while speaking to Gilligan, but this is a far cry from the claim that it was not approved of by the security services, which Kelly anyway did not represent.

Humphrys’ claim that the dossier was “cobbled together” is not random, however, and alludes to the notorious “dodgy dossier,” a government dossier on Iraq published in February 2003, later revealed to have passed off plagiarised material from an outdated doctoral thesis as recent intelligence. It was also notorious for obvious instances of spin. An example involves the rewording of phrases such as: Iraqi intelligence was “aiding opposition groups in hostile regimes” to Iraqi intelligence was “supporting terrorist groups in hostile regimes.” The *Today* programme broadcast, therefore, has to be understood in the context of the dodgy dossier that epitomises a previous government exercise in using a supposedly factual document for the purpose of hack-handed advocacy.

Furthermore, Gilligan’s initial *Today* programme broadcast is best understood in the context of other statements he made on the same subject at the time. He made a total of nineteen radio broadcasts on May 29, mostly more subdued in tone. For instance in his 07:32 Radio 4 news broadcast he modulates his original charge that Downing Street had “ordered” the dossier to be sexed up into “[my source] told me the dossier was transformed at the behest of Downing Street.” Similarly, he qualifies his suggestion of deception by
allowing for the possibility of an error made in good faith, and refers to the 45-minute claim as “questionable” rather than “wrong:

It could have been an honest mistake, but what I have been told is that the government knew that the claim was questionable, even before the war, even before they wrote it in their dossier.

In his *Mail on Sunday* article published on June 1, Gilligan not only has more space to elaborate on his story, but he also has the chance to respond to the impact of his initial broadcast. Thus, we find him setting the record straight when he says:

The Prime Minister and his staff have spent the past few days denying claims that no one has ever actually made – that material in the dossier was invented; that it came from nonintelligence sources, and so on.

In the next breath, however, he stokes the fire by suggesting that in failing to deny other accusations, such as the last minute rewriting of the dossier, the late insertion of the 45-minute claim, and a meeting between Jack Straw and Colin Powell concerning the fragility of intelligence, the government is indeed guilty of something. Implied throughout the article, but never overtly stated, is the charge that the government is guilty, if not of overt falsehood, then of spin so distorting as to be akin to deception.

Gilligan makes the implication of falsehood by means of the following devices: first by framing the context of the September dossier and previous government publications in such a way as to foreground the disaffection of the intelligence services with the government’s spin-driven approach. Illustrative quotes include: “We take pride in our independence … and we are unhappy to see our work being quoted in public” (cited as a quote from an official of the Joint Intelligence Committee); “The final version [of the January dossier] was not shown to the Joint Intelligence Committee. They were furious about that too,” and “The spooks may have been too ready to give way to the spinners.”

Second, Gilligan uses simile and analogy with America in order to condemn Britain. This is illustrated by his use of the following quote from retired American spies condemning government spin in the Bush administration: “There is one unpardonable sin: Cooking intelligence to the recipe of high policy. There is ample evidence that this has been done in Iraq.” In the same vein, Gilligan quotes a member of the Pentagon’s Defence Intelligence Agency
as saying: “The Americans were manipulated.” Readers of the *Mail on Sunday* are invited to infer that the British public has likewise been manipulated.

Third, Gilligan accuses the British government not only of over-ruling intelligence but also of condescending to the British public, thus making an emotional appeal to the reader’s sense of self-respect:

The language of intelligence is inconclusive. The language of spin admits much less doubt. The Government thinks we need an easy headline – Saddam’s nuclear bomb, Saddam’s 45-minute warning. I’m not sure we’re that stupid.\(^{24}\)

As it turns out, this sentence proved to be very prescient. Amendments to the dossier requested by Campbell and his colleagues did indeed call for a strengthening of the language in order to eliminate uncertainty, and the 45-minute claim, as it emerged during the Hutton inquiry, was indeed aimed at securing sensationalist and alarmist headlines.

Finally, one of Gilligan’s most forceful implications of deceit comes in the rhetorical flourish with which he concludes his article:

Some say none of this is important. All that matters is that a tyrant was toppled…. However, the dossier saga touches on an even more important goal than the freeing of oppressed foreign peoples. That is, that your words should be credible, and your own people should be told the truth.\(^ {25}\)

Emotive though this appeal to truth is, and incendiary though Gilligan’s article and broadcasts were in their implied accusations, it is difficult to find a case here for Campbell’s subsequent accusation that Gilligan’s BBC story “is a lie, it was a lie, it is a lie that is continually repeated and until we get an apology for it I will keep making sure that parliament, people like yourselves and the public know that it was a lie.”\(^ {26}\)

Perhaps the final piece of context that needs to be mentioned in order to make sense of the passion of Campbell’s accusations is the *Mail on Sunday*’s editorial input into Gilligan’s story. The photograph showed an unflattering image of Campbell and the headline, supposedly a quote from Gilligan, reads sensationaly: “I asked my intelligence source why Blair misled us all over Saddam’s weapons. His reply? One word … CAMPBELL.” As Matt Wells explains, “That one headline, more than anything else, set the course for the firestorm that followed.”\(^ {27}\)
Can we claim based on Gilligan’s initial broadcast that his language was sensationalist? It is significant that although Gilligan states the fragility of available evidence, he only implies the presence of deceit. Even in his initial and most forcefully stated broadcast, he hedges his accusation with the qualifying adverb “probably” when he claims the government probably knew the 45-minute claim to be wrong. The headline to his article was indeed sensationalist, but this was not of Gilligan’s or the BBC’s doing.

On the other hand, Gilligan certainly is guilty of not having kept an accurate record of his interview with Kelly and of having made some false attributions and mistaken inferences. Lord Hutton’s criticism of “loose language” is, therefore, justified, as is his editor’s criticism that “he painted in primary colours.” But Campbell’s sustained haranguing of the BBC in order to secure an apology, his public appearances – including a dramatic unscheduled appearance on the BBC’s Channel 4 evening news – in which he accuses Gilligan of lying and demands a retraction from him, not to mention his own very primary colour private expressions of retaliation, hardly seem warranted by the Today programme broadcast. This is all the more so given that Gilligan’s interpretation of Kelly’s words has largely been borne out – his inferences were, it turns out, sound. As Jeremy Dear, the General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists argued, the “essential truth” of Gilligan’s report could and should be defended. There must be something more, therefore, to Campbell’s rage than the words “the government probably knew that the forty-five minutes claim was wrong” or that “Downing Street … ordered it to be sexed up.” What this might be is discussed below.

The Language of Politicians
One of the most interesting dimensions of the Hutton inquiry was the wealth of normally confidential material which Lord Hutton ordered to be made public, from official minutes to informal office emails and private diary entries. Thanks to this, we have an exceptionally comprehensive coverage of available written material. It is in the language of the Iraq dossier that we find some of the strongest evidence of political spin. As emerged during the Hutton inquiry, Campbell had drawn up a sixteen-point memo of recommendations for “strengthening” the language of the dossier. The resulting changes to the dossier illustrate both sins of commission and of omission.

Foremost among the sins of commission is the 45-minute claim, made four times in the dossier. The version in the preface, written by Tony Blair, reads: Saddam “has existing and active military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, which could be activated within 45 minutes.” Of
note here is the certainty with which the claim is made, despite the background uncertainty concerning the reliability of the source and its compatibility with existing intelligence material. Also of note is the ambiguity contained in the 45-minute claim. As the witness, Mr A, testified:

All those of us without access to that intelligence immediately asked the question: well, what does the 45 minutes refer to? Are you referring to a technical process? Are you referring to a commander control process? Moreover, if your assessment causes you immediately to ask questions, then we felt that it was not perhaps a statement that ought to be included.32

John Scarlett (Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee) told the inquiry that the 45-minute claim was meant to refer only to short-range battlefield weapons such as mortars, and not to long-range missiles able to strike at British bases in Cyprus, as the dossier implied.33 When Geoff Hoon, the Defence Secretary, was asked why he had not put the record straight following sensationalist headlines on the imminence of attacks against Britain and British bases, he disingenuously replied that he found the task of trying to correct what appeared in the media time-consuming and frustrating.34 However, as Richard Norton-Taylor suggests in his introduction to *The Hutton Inquiry and its Impact*, the insertion of the claim as well as its inherent ambiguity amount to an exercise in spin: “the evidence is that Downing Street was only too delighted at headlines in the press at the time warning of a 45-minute threat to Britain, not British troops invading Iraq.”35

A further sin of commission involves the use of modal auxiliaries. Modality is a cover term for a range of linguistic devices ranging from auxiliaries to adverbs that allow speakers to express varying degrees of commitment to, or belief in, a proposition. Thus the question of whether Iraq *can, could, might* or *would* deploy nuclear weapons, depends on the degree of certainty of the speaker and to his/her commitment to the factuality of the statement. In the words of one linguist, modality refers to “the area of meaning that lies between yes and no.”36 The study of modality falls under the heading of *realis* and *irrealis* in linguistics, or “possible world semantics,”37 and it is precisely this link with hypothetical worlds which makes modality so central to political rhetoric.

Campbell reveals himself to have a keen awareness of the shadowland “between yes and no.” In his sixteen-point memo on strengthening the language of the dossier, no less than four recommendations concern modal auxiliaries, and each berates the fact that those used “are weak” or “read very weakly.”38 By
way of illustration, recommendation 10 reads: “On page 17 … ‘may’ is weaker than in the summary” (this refers to the draft sentence, “The Iraqi military may be able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within forty five minutes of an order to do so.”). Similarly, recommendation 11 reads: “On page 19, top line, again ‘could’ is weak ‘capable of being used’ is better” (referring to: “Other dual-use facilities, which could be used to support the production of chemical agent … have been rebuilt….”). Other changes involving modals include the alteration of “Iraq could deploy” or “could be ready” (about the deployment of WMDs in 45 minutes) to read that these “are deployable.” In each of these cases, Campbell increases the commitment to the factuality of the claims being made in the dossier. The world he depicts is more than merely possible – it becomes actual every time he replaces a modal such as “may” or “could” with a present passive such as “are deployable” or “are capable of being used.”

Although Campbell maintained that rather than changing the substance of the dossier, he merely made some presentational recommendations, as any linguist can testify, style and content are not independent of each other and a change in modal is not merely a presentational concern, but a semantic one. This was also the conclusion of Brian Jones (a civil servant working in counter-proliferation and defence intelligence) when he “made the crucial point that when it comes to intelligence assessments, wording is substance” (italics mine).

Further revisions towards greater certainty were introduced by Campbell and his team, such as the change from “intelligence indicates” to “intelligence shows;” the inclusion of expressions such as “intelligence has established beyond doubt” and of presuppositions such as “We must ensure that he does not get to use the weapons he has” (italics mine). Given the uncertainty of intelligence findings at the time, and the failure to discover any weapons of mass destruction since then, there was no justification for such confidence and this choice of language must be attributed to the rhetoric of persuasion.

Another instance of spin is to be found in the following changes in wording. The earlier draft, which was entitled “Iraq’s Programme for Weapons of Mass Destruction,” contained the entry “Saddam is prepared to use chemical and biological weapons if he believes his regime is under threat.” In the final draft, the title changed to “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction,” a phrase which, unlike the first, presupposes the existence of WMDs, and the equivalent entry reads: “Saddam is willing to use chemical and biological weapons, including against his own Shia population.” The conspicuous shift brought about by this rewording from a defensive to an offensive stance on the part of Saddam makes a direct appeal to our fear of an unprovoked attack. The reference to Halabja, an incident which took place some twenty years ago, further
reinforces this fear, since it shows Saddam not only capable and willing to use such weapons, but also guilty of having already done so.

Just as the final draft of the dossier included unwarranted expressions of certainty, it also excluded earlier qualifications and uncertainties to achieve the same end. One of the most conspicuous of these sins of omission is the deletion of the following line from Blair’s preface: “The case I make is not that Saddam could launch a nuclear attack on London or another part of the UK (he could not).” Further evidence emerged during the inquiry when this evidently unheeded email from Jonathan Powell, No. 10 Chief of Staff, dated September 17, 2002 was made public: “you need to make it clear Saddam could not attack us at the moment. The thesis is he would be a threat to the UK in the future if we do not check him.”

Perhaps even a more glaring sin of omission was the failure in the dossier, and in subsequent parliamentary debates, to articulate the range of weapons to which the 45-minute claim actually referred: short range battlefield weapons or long range ballistic missiles. Claims by the Prime Minister and by the Secretary for Defence, Geoff Hoon, that they had not thought to elucidate these facts appear as irresponsible as they are incredible. They were greeted by calls from the opposition for their resignation for “failing to ask basic questions” before going to war. It is noteworthy that Blair’s and Hoon’s supposed ignorance concerning the weapons to which the 45-minute claim referred stand in stark contrast to the appraisal of Iraq’s WMD given by Robin Cook, former leader of the House of Commons, in an article on why he felt compelled to resign on the eve of going to war:

Iraq probably has no weapons of mass destruction in the commonly understood sense of that term - namely, a credible device capable of being delivered against strategic city targets. It probably does still have biological toxins and battlefield chemical munitions. But it has had them since the 1980s when the US sold Saddam the anthrax agents and the then British government built his chemical and munitions factories.

Lord Butler criticised the confusion arising from the dossier’s use of the term “Weapons of Mass Destruction” and criticised the form in which the 45-minute claim appears in the dossier. He also considered it a “serious weakness that the JIC’s warnings on the limitations of the intelligence were not made sufficiently clear in the Dossier.” His criticisms notwithstanding, it is interesting to note the linguistic subterfuge which Lord Butler himself practices in order not
to assign blame with regard to why the “language in the dossier as used by the Prime Minister, may have left readers with the impression that there was fuller and firmer intelligence than was the case.”

He refers to a process of translation (as opposed to, for instance, “alteration” or “inclusion”) and uses the impersonal passive of the verb “to lose,” which connotes an unfortunate but unintentional incident rather than an agentive act, when he says: “In translating material to the dossier, warnings in the JIC assessment were lost” (italics mine).

These examples of politically driven changes to the language of the dossier are best understood in the context of the Blair administration’s evident desire to go to war against Iraq. This objective helps to explain the exceptional circumstances in which the Iraq dossier was written, with the Prime Minister’s Director of Communications and Strategy and some of his team of press officers making recommendations on “presentational” matters while intelligence officers discussed and wrote drafts of a dossier “owned” by the Joint Intelligence Committee. Such a set up can only be explained as a means of inserting spin under the cover of intelligence – advocacy in the guise of a factual report – and has been condemned in the Butler report.

The same determination to go to war explains the need for spin in the first place. Because it would have been unpoltic to admit to wanting war without first finding a legal pretext for it, such as Iraqi non-compliance to United Nations Security Council resolutions, yet because there was no ready consensus within the UN over non-compliance and the need for war, it was important to Blair’s purpose that public and parliamentary opinion, which was largely anti-war, be swung round. A clear and current threat from Saddam was the catalyst chosen to bring this change about. Revealingly, Blair’s Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell e-mailed Alastair Campbell asking, “Alastair: What will be the headline in the Evening Standard on the day of publication. What do we want it to be?” True to expectation – and it would seem design – the tabloid press reaction to the Iraq dossier was indeed sensationalist, and included the following headlines: “45 Minutes From Attack” (Evening Standard); “45 Minutes From a Chemical War” (The Star); “Saddam Can Strike in 45 Minutes” (Express); “HE’S GOT ’EM … LETS GET HIM” (The SUN); “Brits 45 Minutes From Doom … British servicemen and tourists in Cyprus could be annihilated by germ warfare missiles launched by Iraq, it was revealed yesterday” (The SUN). As noted, the government made no attempt to correct the misapprehensions behind these headlines.

Finally, the following two quotes provide further background context in support of the policy-promoting rather than intelligence-sharing aims of the dossier. The first comes from an email from Danny Pruce (a Foreign Office
diplomat seconded to Downing Street Press Department) to a Foreign Office colleague: “much of the evidence is circumstantial so we need to convince our readers that the cumulation of these facts demonstrates an intent on Saddam’s part.”52 Revealingly, the email carries on to read, “the more they can be led to this conclusion themselves rather than have to accept judgements from us, the better,” an injunction which justifies the close attention paid to modals and the possible worlds they create. The second quote comes from Campbell’s personal diary, read as evidence to Lord Hutton: “The dossier had to be ‘revelatory,’ we needed to show that it was new and informative, and part of a bigger case.”53 In other words, since the old story about Saddam was not good enough to serve the Government’s purpose, a new, more eye-catching, more convincing case had to be made.

Can we claim because of the evidence surveyed here that Campbell’s input into the dossier was spin-laden? Was Gilligan right in accusing him of having sexed it up? What does the term to “sex up” actually mean? Lord Hutton described it as “a slang word the meaning of which lacks clarity” because of an inherent ambiguity:

It could mean that the dossier was embellished with items of intelligence known or believed to be false. Or, it could mean that while intelligence contained in the dossier was believed to be true and reliable - it was drafted in such a way as to make the case against Saddam Hussein as strong as possible.54

He went on to add, “If the term is used in the latter sense … it could be said the government ‘sexed up’ the dossier … but this was not the meaning of Mr Gilligan’s broadcast,” he concluded.55 Opinions differ concerning this judgement.56

It is indeed unfortunate that the central accusation against the British government should have been expressed by means of a new coinage that had not yet acquired a consensual definition. Yet, it is precisely because “sexing up” was still open to interpretation that it proved so provocative. Although Lord Hutton determined that the term is ambiguous, my own assessment is that “to sex up,” in its basic sense, means to embellish and render more eye-catching, glamorous and appealing - more “sexy” in short. Although the phrasal verb “to sex up” is indeed new,57 it is not difficult to understand by analogy with equivalent phrasal verb constructions: to “beef up” means to make more beefy; to “dress up” means to make more dressy; therefore to “sex up” means to make more sexy. In the context of sexing up one’s looks, we would readily envisage scope for art, subterfuge, and even deceit – these would not be mutually exclu-
sive meanings, but are integral to the definition of the term. However, the term as used by Gilligan was applied metaphorically in the context of a government dossier. In this context, the defining elements of art, subterfuge and deceit are retained and applied not to a human body but to a body of information. Again, the term is not ambiguous in the sense of having two mutually exclusive meanings – if anything, it is polysemous in that it includes all these meanings.

The problem arises, I believe, not at a linguistic but at a socio-cultural level, where a categorical distinction is made between embellishment, spin, language-strengthening and other kindred activities, all of which are considered par for the course, and – in the other corner – deceit, which is considered an unpardonable crime. Therefore, although one may quibble with the term “to sex up” and may even accuse Gilligan as John Williams, the Foreign Office Press Secretary did, of having done “great violence to the English language,”58 such terminological disputes distract from the issue at hand, which is to evaluate the evidence concerning the presence of either deceit and/or spin in the language of the September dossier. Such an exercise leads us to another, much more intractable semantic problem: whether it is possible to draw a clear line between spin and deceit.

The Language of Scientists
The publicly broadcast images of David Kelly being interrogated by the Foreign Affairs Committee just a few days before he committed suicide epitomise the clash of professional cultures and discourse styles represented by an aggressive and point-scoring politician, on the one hand, and a mild mannered weapons expert inclined to hedge all his answers, on the other. The acute discomfort Kelly was clearly suffering on that occasion suggests that his language did not so much reflect the language of a scientist as it betrayed the stress of a man being “put through the wringer” as he himself described the experience.59 Although I do not use it as the basis for my linguistic analysis, the discourse features discussed below are amply evident in the transcript of Kelly’s responses to the FAC.60

Accordingly, I draw my evidence of Kelly’s discourse style from Kelly’s tape-recorded telephone interview the day after Gilligan’s story broke with Susan Watts, the BBC Newsnight science editor.61 Two attributes emerge: his tendency to qualify the degree of certainty associated with any claim to knowledge, whether his or others’; and his recognition of the existence of differing points of view and the impact that differences in perspective might have on the meaning or significance of a proposition. Both of these attributes might be considered typical of scientific caution.
An example of a qualification concerning other people’s beliefs is: “I mean they wouldn’t think it was me, I don’t think. Maybe they would, maybe they wouldn’t, I don’t know.” An example of a qualification concerning his own professional status and access to information is: “You have to remember I’m not part of the intelligence community – I’m a user of intelligence…. So some of it I really can’t comment because I don’t know whether it’s single source or not.” And an example of a qualification with regard to his influence, in response to the question, “but it was against your advice that they should publish it?” is: “I wouldn’t go so strongly as to say that particular bit … no I can’t say it was against MY advice. I was uneasy with it.” Further examples abound in which Kelly either declines to comment for lack of sufficient information, or declines to confirm suggestions as anything more than “a possibility.”

Examples of Kelly’s respect for differences in perspective include, in response to Watt’s mentioning No 10’s furious denials that it had inserted the 45-minute claim: “well, I think it’s a matter of perception isn’t it. I think people will perceive things and they’ll be, how shall I put it, they’ll see from their own standpoint and they may not even appreciate quite what they were doing.” Similarly, towards the end of the interview when Watts suggests she’ll ring him again if there proves to be “a surprise” in the forthcoming Blix document, “but you’re not expecting that, are you?” Kelly answers “I’m not, but you think differently to me so you might find there’s a surprise there, I don’t know.”

Despite these expressions of caution, Kelly’s undoing came when he lied to Parliament. Asked by the MP Ottaway to respond to what proved to be a transcript of his conversation with Watts, Kelly answered: “I find it very difficult. It does not sound like my expression of words. It does not sound like a quote from me.” Ottoway then asked: “You deny that those are your words?” To which Kelly uttered the one damning word: “Yes.”

It is no doubt significant in relation to this discussion of different professional cultures, that of all the people in this affair revealed to have dabbled in untruths, whether we call their activities lies or not, Kelly is the only one who had any remorse about it. So much so that it must have contributed to his decision to commit suicide.

The immediate context in which Kelly lied was one of extreme duress, not only because of the public humiliation he was subjected to, but also because of the tightrope act he had been asked to perform, in which he was to falsify the BBC’s reporting in order that Gilligan might be discredited, but not to undermine the Iraq dossier, the integrity of which the government was anxious to preserve. The FAC had accordingly been instructed not to draw him out on his views regarding the intelligence contained in the dossier. Would Kelly
have willingly embarrassed the government? The following words from Kelly to Watts reflect the fair mindedness and integrity of a professional who, like his colleagues Hans Blix, David Kay and Brian Jones, remained unconvinced by political interpretations of empirical evidence concerning WMDs:

We’re not sure about that [the 45-minute claim], or in fact they [intelligence] were happy with it being in but not expressed the way it was, because, you know, the word-smithing is actually quite important, and the intelligence community are a pretty cautious lot on the whole but once you get people putting it/presenting it for public consumption then of course they use different words. I don’t think they’re wilfully dishonest. I think they just think that that’s the way the public will appreciate it best.66

In concluding this analysis of discourse styles, the empirical evidence would seem to support the claim that journalistic language may on occasion be sensationalist, that political language tends to be spin-laden and scientific language factual. However, one would be justified in asking what the value of such generalisation might be. Language is not synonymous with culture, nor is it even a reliable indicator of cultural differences since, as we know, the same language can be spoken by different cultures, different languages can be spoken by similar cultures, and a given population sharing a common culture may well be multilingual. The same holds true for the relationship between individuals and discourse styles, as we can all, for instance, choose from a variety of registers according to context. How do the discourse styles of the three professional cultures under discussion here help us to understand the Kelly affair?

The answer, I think, lies in the observation that the Kelly affair came to a head not because of a failure of translation or of comprehension across different cultures, but rather because of a failure to anticipate the repercussions which would arise when the acceptable bounds of professional conduct were transgressed. Some of these transgressions involved language, as when Gilligan broadcast too loose and sensational an interpretation of the information he had been given by Kelly, or when Campbell had the wording of the dossier changed in order to exaggerate the threat posed by Saddam, or, finally, when Kelly, finding himself publicly humiliated in a televised interrogation by the FAC, lied in an attempt to save face. In each of these cases, however, it is the inappropriate use of a particular form of discourse which caused conflict: journalistic language cannot afford to be loose and sensational when serious charges concerning the integrity of the government are in question; neither can politi-
cal spin be inserted into a factual and objective Intelligence report; nor, finally, can an individual – whether a scientist or not – be caught lying to Parliament. The prototypical discourse features discussed above are, therefore, more revealing in the breach than in the application.

Transgressions

Transgressions in the appropriate use of language are only part of a larger issue that must also be addressed if the clash of professional cultures witnessed in the Kelly affair is to be understood. It is perhaps a truism that all professions have to navigate between constraining values that are often distinctive to that particular professional culture. Thus, the BBC, in the case of investigative journalism, must steer a course between the Scylla and Charibdis of breaking news and maintaining the standard of accuracy on which it stakes its reputation. Similarly, the British government, with regard to the Iraq dossier, needed to steer a course between advocacy and factuality, whereas David Kelly had to find a middle way between the official secrets act which bound him to silence and his own sense of professional and personal integrity, which compelled him to denounce the government for misrepresenting intelligence. The intelligence services themselves face the daunting challenge since 9/11 of securing reliable sources on the one hand while ascertaining the security of the country against imminent but - by their terrorist nature - unconfirmed attacks on the other.

One of the most interesting consequences of the David Kelly affair is the discrepancy between codes of professional conduct and modes of professional practice that have emerged within each culture. The Hutton inquiry placed a wealth of evidence into the public domain on how the government and the BBC operate, providing the general public with an unprecedented insight into where and how their modi operandi fall short of best practices. Lord Hutton’s judgement on the nature and degree of such shortfalls and transgressions provoked the heated debate which ensued precisely because the public was in a position to have its own informed opinions. His judgement, which largely absolved the Campbell and the Blair administration and placed the blame for the Kelly affair with Gilligan and more broadly with the BBC, clearly did not coincide with those of the general public and was seen as a whitewash.67 Lord Butler’s subsequent inquiry, although more critical of Blair’s administration and modus operandi, was also judged by many to be an exercise in diplomatic appeasement.68
Given the plethora of opinions with regard to who transgressed where, when, and how, this section can only summarise some of the more consensual judgements on professional misconduct. Thus, Andrew Gilligan is generally seen as guilty of bad record keeping, loose language, overstated if not actually false accusation against the government, and failure to protect his source. The BBC itself was found guilty of a score of other shortcomings, including slack editing and the over-protection of its staff.

Alastair Campbell, although he was officially exonerated, was perceived by many to have trespassed on intelligence in his contributions to the dossier. Campbell is also widely perceived as having waged a personal war on the BBC and of having conducted a vendetta against Gilligan, pushing his requests for an apology far beyond the measured exchange professional conduct would condone. One of the most serious transgressions of a spin-doctor is to become the story itself. The question arises as to whether Campbell genuinely had difficulty in managing his anger, or whether he was using his anger intentionally as a decoy from the question of the legality of the war, to one of truth, a value so fundamental in Western society that it, perhaps more than any other value, provokes strong and often unconsidered reactions of allegiance and condemnation.

Finally, David Kelly broke the terms of his contract and the Official Secrets Act in conducting unauthorised conversations with the press. Hoon considered this a serious disciplinary matter, and Richard Hatfield, the Ministry of Defence personnel chief wrote to Kelly condemning these “serious breaches of departmental procedure.” However, Kelly, most damningly of all, lied to Parliament, thereby not only committing perjury, but also breaking his own moral code of conduct and trustworthiness.

Truth and Good Faith
Whereas the preceding discussion of professional conduct falls under the heading of what the culturalist Geert Hofstede calls “organisational cultures,” the notion of truth reaches into the heart of national culture and belongs to those basic values which situate culture “in our guts, not in our minds.” According to Hofstede, basic values such as truth and lies or good and evil are strong emotions with a minus and a plus pole and are generally - and often unconsciously - learned before the age of ten. Whereas national cultures are rooted in these basic values, professional cultures are rooted in practices, which can be learned at any age.

Of course, on occasion national and professional cultures coincide. In the Kelly affair, the basic value of truth and falsehood came to dominate the discussion of professional misconduct, ultimately monopolising so much atten-
tion that comparatively little discussion ensued regarding the most serious of all charges of professional misconduct – whether the war on Iraq was legal, and whether the Blair administration misused its mandate and misled parliament and the people into waging it.

The status of truth and falsehood as a basic value in our society accounts for the passionate nature of the accusations and denials of falsehood uttered across the political and media spectrum. The following is only a small sample: “The allegation that I lied is itself the real lie. . . . had the allegation [of dishonesty] been true, it would have merited my resignation” (Tony Blair); “The PM told the truth, the Government told the truth, I told the truth. The BBC . . . did not” (Alastair Campbell); “Hutton is the truth” (senior official); “An even more important issue . . . is that your own people should be told the truth” (Andrew Gilligan); “The most important thing, undoubtedly, is to tell the truth to the public” (Gavin Davies, BBC); “We are resolute that the BBC should not step back from its determination to search for the truth” (BBC staff in a collective advert published in response to Lord Hutton’s judgement); “At stake is whether both the government and the BBC can be trusted to tell the truth” (BBC Panorama programme).

In contrast to the seemingly non-negotiable nature of basic values such as truth for those whose culture is defined by them, the following reaction from Salam Pax, the Baghdad Blogger, reflects the amused incomprehension of those with a more cynical perspective on truth, especially as uttered by politicians:

So your government’s marketing campaign turned out to be a fraud: I would have thought the “west” would be very sceptical of marketing campaigns in general, and government-funded ones especially, but that doesn’t seem to be the case.\textsuperscript{70}

Truth, it is believed by many, is a social construct.\textsuperscript{71} The definition of a word, any word, is itself also a social construct. This is because meaning is consensual – the result of an agreement within a speech community over the semantic remit of a word. Thus, English speakers (and within that superset, the speakers of various regional, social and professional dialects), come to a working agreement over what constitutes “truth” as opposed to “falsity,” “fudge,” “spin,” “underspecification,” “embellishment” and other sibling terms in the same semantic field. Nevertheless, it is precisely because the meanings of words are consensual that they are also negotiable: an individual’s idiolectal, or a given community’s dialectal, usage is subject to wholesale adoption, adaptation,
or rejection by other speakers. It is this property of language that leaves meaning open to debate and subject to change.

In the Hutton and Butler reports, the definition of truth was assumed, never discussed. In determining that the “strengthening of language” in the September dossier did not amount to a lie or to wilful deception and that it was done in good faith, the category membership of “truth” was determined from above by dictat. Dissent with these judgements is still possible, of course, but only in a social rather than a legal context. The slipperiness of what counts as true or false in the eyes of the law is well illustrated by the following legal brief: “Many categories of response which are misleading, evasive, nonresponsive or frustrating are nevertheless not legally ‘false’ [including] literally truthful answers that imply facts that are not true.”

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that falsehood comes in many guises, and the most salient of these are illustrated here with reference to the Kelly affair. David Kelly, Andrew Gilligan and Geoffrey Hoon are all guilty of outright lies: Kelly in his denial that his words as recorded by Susan Watts were his own; Gilligan in his claim that his reporting was accurate and in his promise to protect his source (he revealed Kelly’s name to the MPs Sambrook and Chidgey, both on the FAC); and Hoon in his assertion that “I certainly think that every reasonable step was taken to ensure that Dr Kelly was properly supported, yes” which, in the light of the Ministry of Defence’s “naming strategy,” and in the lack of any follow up care or support for Kelly once he was fed to the dogs, is a far cry from ensuring protection and is, therefore, undeniably untrue.

The “naming” or “outing” strategy itself, whereby journalists were invited to guess the name of the weapons inspector Gilligan had spoken to and would have their correct guess confirmed, provides an example of duplicity, another form of falsehood. Praeteritio, the rhetorical device whereby one makes mention of a subject by denying that one will talk about it (as in “far be it for me to tell you that the password is ‘xyz’”), has, since the Greeks, been used as a duplicitious way of mentioning something while seemingly not saying it. The Ministry of Defence adapted praeteritio when it denied naming Kelly because its spokesmen had not actually uttered the word “Kelly.” And subsequent claims by No. 10 that “the government has ‘absolutely and categorically’ denied the intention was to provide clues to help journalists uncover his name” simply defy belief.

The main unresolved charge of falsehood remains whether No. 10 was guilty of taking Britain to war by deception. As we have seen, Lord Hutton exonerated Tony Blair and his administration of knowingly misleading parliament and the people. Yet in the judgement of many critics, the omission and backgrounding of the reservations of experts on the actual threat posed by
Saddam, and the promotion of remote possibilities as “real and current” threats amount to deception if not to bare-faced lying.

Similarly, the government’s underspecification of the nature and capability of the WMDs referred to in the 45-minutes claim can also be classified as a form of deception. Intelligence Security Committee chairwoman, Ann Taylor, judged that “The omission of the context and the assessment allowed speculation as to its exact meaning. This was unhelpful to an understanding of the issue,” but concluded that Defence Secretary Hoon, although “potentially misleading” in his evidence in July, had not actually lied to the committee.

The question then arises, what is the difference between lies and deception? According to Hutton and Taylor, it would seem that the omission of relevant information, the spin-laden strengthening of language and the non-prototypical usage of commonplace terms may be considered as misleading but do not qualify as lies. Yet the use of misleading language is undeniably a form of deception, and deception is a close cousin to lying and falsehoods. How significant are these shades of meaning? Are we not splitting hairs in a semantic field in which it is compromising to be caught no matter which corner of it one occupies?

The answer to this, I believe, is both yes and no. Yes, mud sticks, but, more significantly, perhaps, no, a lie is a basic value and judged as utterly wrong. A fudge or a wriggle or an omission or underspecification or an embellishment or even a deception, when committed in “good faith,” are much milder variants on a theme associated with what we still judge to be acceptable human frailty.

What then is the relationship between truth and good faith? Since the commonly accepted definition of “to lie” involves wilful deception, in denying that an act constitutes a lie, one can focus on either the semantic component of wilfulness or that of deception. Since the definition of deception was never adequately elucidated, the question of intention – of whether the act, deception or not, was done in good or bad faith – became the determining issue. Good faith, however, is less vulnerable to empirical evidence than is deception, since the measure of good faith is assertion not fact, just as the measure of conviction of politics, of which Blair is such a committed advocate, is the strength of beliefs rather than the pertinence of policies. It follows, therefore, that whereas disagreement is likely to arise over what actions add up to deception, the presence or absence of good faith cannot so readily be debated and is more prone to be taken on trust. Thus, despite Tony Blair’s lip service to the value of debate (see the Big Conversation in Autumn 2003 and his recognition, post Butler, that debate concerning the September dossier was likely to continue), his emphasis on good faith, a term which he repeats as many as seven times in his parliamen-
tary response to the Butler Report, reveals that where debate on what constitutes deception is concerned, he has secured the last word.75

Conclusion

This paper started out by investigating the part language played in the clash of professional cultures that occurred in the Kelly affair. It determined that although the discourse styles of the journalistic, political and scientific cultures under analysis could indeed be seen to conform with their respective stereotypes, the conflict lay not in the prototypical use of professional language but in its inappropriate use: Gilligan was imprecise; Campbell exaggerated; and Kelly lied. The discussion of language was, therefore, complemented by an overview of transgressions with a view to understanding how breaches in the professional codes of conduct that characterise each of the cultures under investigation led to the ensuing debacle. The focus on transgressions inevitably led to the subject of deception, since truth and lies represent a basic value in Western culture and deception is perceived as the most unpardonable transgression. The discussion of deception, in turn, brought us back to the question of language and the problem of definition: in particular, of what constitutes a lie. It also raised the thorny issue of good faith and of having to “take somebody’s word for it.”

I would like to conclude with the following observation: despite the heavy price incurred by the Kelly affair, which included loss of life, loss of jobs, and loss of trust, the outcome of this clash of professional cultures was beneficial in many ways. The Kelly affair revealed weaknesses in the BBC that led to the implementation of stricter codes of practice. It opened the curtain on the workings of the British government that led to recommendations for changes which have been acknowledged and will (Blair assures us) be adopted. It also alerted the public to the use and abuse of spin, which has led Blair to announce an end to spin and which, more realistically, will defuse the effect of subsequent uses of spin. However, one area which has not yet been satisfactorily addressed by the various inquiries which have followed in the aftermath of the Kelly affair is that of decoy and deflection. It would seem that the Blair administration has masterfully deflected attention away from those issues on which public attention needs to focus, such as the appropriate use of intelligence, the proper conduct of government and the legality of the war. Both with regard to the storm about truth, and more recently with regard to the presence of good faith, basic values have been used as decoys to focus passions and distract analysis.
The use of basic values as decoys has already been witnessed with regard to fear of terrorist attacks and the erosion of personal liberty and may well become a feature of this new age of public diplomacy, since the most efficient way to counter dissent from an increasingly well-informed populace is to cut through intellectual argument and empirical evidence by appealing not to the mind, but to the gut. This is the subject of another paper. I would like to end with the words of Henry Porter in The Observer: “The issue is not whether Campbell lied; it is whether he and Blair got it wrong and skewed the process of government to forge the dossier that took us to war.” Can we know which sense of the word “forge” he had in mind - the act of “creating” or that of “counterfeiting”? Beware the consequences of a false inference!

Endnotes

1 I follow Geert Hofstede’s definition of culture as the “collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another,” where “group/category” can be a nation, region, profession, organisation, department, gender or generation. For further information see Geert Hofstede’s homepage at http://spitswww.uvt.nl/web/iric/hofstede/page4.htm.


3 Andrew Gilligan, article published in Mail on Sunday; available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/bbc/bbc_1_0027to0028.pdf.

4 “A Fight to the Death” was broadcast on British television on January 21, 2004, a week before the publication of Lord Hutton’s findings on January 28, 2004; transcripts available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/programmes/panorama/transcripts/afighttothedeath.txt.

5 For a full transcript, see http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/bbc/bbc_1_0004to0017.pdf.


7 Transcript of oral evidence given before the Foreign Affairs Committee by Dr David Kelly, available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/fac/fac_1_0060to0096.pdf, 13-14.

8 For a full transcript, see http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/sjw/sjw_1_0037to0043.pdf, 4.

9 The use of “Downing Street” to denote different referents is not elaborated in this paper, but is an interesting linguistic phenomenon that would merit further examination elsewhere.


Ibid.

See “Lines to Take” on 45-minutes memo: http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/cab/cab_4_0014.pdf.


Ibid.

Radio 4 Today Programme, 29 May 2003, transcript available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/bbc/bbc_1_0004to0017.pdf.

Ibid., 3.

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Ibid., 2.

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Diary of Alastair Campbell, 4 July 2003, available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/cab/cab_39_0001to0002.pdf.


For the memo in full, see http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/cab/cab_11_0066to0068.pdf.

http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page271.asp.


The Hutton Inquiry, Hearing Transcripts, available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/transcripts/hearing-trans42.htm, 139.

Ibid., 81-82.


See the works of David Lewis.

Campbell’s drafting points, available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/cab/cab_11_0066to0068.pdf, points 2, 9, 10, 11.

The draft Campbell refers to can be found at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/dos/dos_2_0058to0106.pdf.


E-mail from Jonathan Powell, 17 September 2002, available online at http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/cab/cab_11_0053.pdf.


Ibid.

For a satirical review of Lord Butler’s use of language, see Matthew Norman “Like Jeeves, this Butler’s First Language is Euphemism,” The Guardian, 17 July 2004, available online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/butler/story/0,14750,1263454,00.html.


Campbell’s diary entry, 5 September 2002.


Ibid.


For a definition and origin, see http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Sexed_up.


Transcript of oral evidence given before the Foreign Affairs Committee by Dr David Kelly, http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/fac/fac_1_0060to0096.pdf.

Susan Watts and Kelly telephone transcript, http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/sjw/sjw_1_0037to0043.pdf.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Transcript of oral evidence given before the Foreign Affairs Committee by Dr David Kelly, http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/fac/fac_1_0060to0096.pdf, 27.

Questioning at the Hutton inquiry about this alleged plea-bargain can be found on: http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/transcripts/hearing-trans39.htm, 45-51.

Susan Watts and Kelly telephone transcript, http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/sjw/sjw_1_0037to0043.pdf.


Legal brief filed by President Clinton’s lawyers to a committee of the Arkansas Supreme Court which recommended that he be disbarred for “serious misconduct,” cited in Campbell, *The Liar’s Tale*, 11.


Blair’s response to the Butler Report, available online at http://www.number-10.gov.uk/print/page6109.asp.

Henry Porter, “Are We All Mad, or Is It Hutton?,” The Observer, 1 February 2004, http://observer.guardian.co.uk/focus/story/0,6903,1136400,00.html.
**The Symptoms**

Why discuss the profession of information technology at a conference focused on the diplomatic community? There is a very good reason: communication between information technologists and their clients— including diplomats — does not work as well as it should.

We know that information technology has become ubiquitous. We also know that diplomats rely extensively on web services, electronic mail and documents in electronic form. Yet when communication does not work well, technologists poorly understand the needs of the diplomatic community. As a result, technical solutions may not address the real needs of end-users. When this happens, there is a backlash: diplomats accredited to international organisations and members of their governing bodies have control over these organisations’ budgets, including those for information technology. Proof of the results of unmet expectations (due to poor communication) is easily found:

**Example 1** - The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) passed annual resolutions from 1992 to 1998 asking for simple, easy and unrestricted access to information from international organisations. The fact that such resolutions had to be passed each year indicates that the organisations’ responses were not considered adequate.

**Example 2** - The Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems (ACCIS), an inter-agency body established in 1988, was abolished in 1993 for not having met the expectations of the Member States. It was replaced in 1994 by a new body, the Information Systems Coordinating Committee (ISCC) which, in turn, had a substantial part of its budget frozen by the UN General Assembly in 1999 and was subsequently abolished in 2001.

**Example 3** - The finance committee (5th Committee) of the United Nations General Assembly reduced the proposed budget for the biennium 2002-2003 of the Information Technology Services Division in New York by twenty percent (yes, 20%).
Example 4 - In virtually all the international organisations of the UN system, the highest-ranking official dealing with information technology has a boss who has a boss who has a boss. In other words, the role is considered merely as a utility comparable to the cafeteria or building maintenance.

Many more examples of this kind could be produced. Relations between diplomats and information technologists are polite but there is no real dialog.

Diagnosis: a case of serious misunderstanding between professions. An evaluation of the situation over many years, considering a large population of technologists and end-users, indicates that miscommunication is a prime cause of the problem.

The Paradox

The willingness of electrical and electronic engineers, researchers, computer scientists and many other players to take risks, to be creative and enthusiastic has changed our world. They are taking us in the direction of an information society and the consequential digital divide.

Until 1844, information travelled only as fast as the fastest means of physical transport: the Pony Express by land, steamships across the ocean. Then came the electric telegraph, aptly described as the *Victorian Internet* by Tom Standage.¹

Machines that could be described as “computers” have been around in many forms since the end of the 19th century, and truly programmable computers as we know them today became commercially available in the late 1940s. (At that time, Thomas Watson, the chief executive of International Business Machines [IBM] thought that five such computers would be enough to meet the computing needs of the world.)

Since the invention of the transistor in 1947, innovation in the field of analogue and digital electronics has steadily gathered speed. Devices based on these technologies have become ubiquitous, starting with the television set and photocopiers and offering us today a wide range of sophisticated appliances that include video-recorders, personal computers, cellular telephones, global satellite positioning, personal digital assistants, digital photographic cameras, digitised music, compact disks and so much more.

Electronic mail, the World Wide Web and related technologies such as browsers, search engines, and computer-assisted translation have, since 1990, given a growing number of people access to vast amounts of data and infor-
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mation without having to physically visit the places where this information is
kept.

As we enter the age of the Knowledge Worker, how do we view the people
who have made this possible? Surprisingly, not as heroes or valuable members
of society. This creates a paradox: who are the people most admired (almost to
the point of adulation), most highly paid and in whom a large percentage of the
population is greatly interested? Athletes and artists, such as the most success-
ful movie stars and pop music performers.

Who are the people most trusted, liked and respected in our societies?
Nurses, fire fighters and others who help us in times of trouble.

Who are the people most distrusted? Used car salesmen, lawyers and pol-
icians.

And the most feared? Members of organised crime and dentists.

Where do electronic engineers and computer sci-
entists come into the picture? As figures of fun, little
respected, sometimes resented or criticised. They tend
to be identified with a popular cartoon character, Dil-
bert. He is an individual who likes technology for its
provides a ferocious description of how people working
in technology see their managers (and *vice versa*).2

How did this situation come about, and what impact does it have on effec-
tive communication among professions?

Anyone who has attempted to program a video-recorder, to use the
500 functions available in a minute cell phone or digital camera, or who has
acquired some new software, will know that the vendors and developers have
not told us the whole truth. The promises that vendors have failed to keep are
many: at the level of the technologies themselves, we have all heard about “user-
friendly,” “plug and play,” “fit and forget,” “best in class,” “first class support”
and many other such statements that are no more than marketing hype.

At the level of delivery of value, particularly to senior management, the
unkept promises include “artificial intelligence,” “Decision Support Systems,”
“Executive Information Systems,” “Computer Translations,” “seamless integra-
tion of heterogeneous databases” and many more similar statements, many of
them incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

Another reason for dissatisfaction, if not distrust, is the lack of perma-
nence of information technologies – it used to be said that “if it works, it’s
obsolete” and this is becoming increasingly apparent in the speed with which
we are expected by vendors to replace or upgrade our systems and software. Of
course, each new piece of equipment and software brings its own new problems, bugs and challenges.

Developers, who are wildly optimistic people, have given us buggy software, runaway projects, incomprehensible documentation and a feeling that their ability to estimate the duration and cost of IT projects is not very good.

If such unkept promises were the outcome of deliberate actions, courts would be very busy dealing with these problems. In reality, the true culprit is miscommunication.

**Historical Reminder**

The history of humanity is relatively short. It is generally accepted that Cro-Magnon, as anthropologists call our species, appeared some 40,000 years ago.

Writing was invented 5,000 years ago or so and, by then, oral tradition in Mesopotamia had transmitted an explanation for the origin of diverse languages: the story of the Tower of Babel. In the *Bible*’s book of Genesis, the narration states that “the whole world spoke the same language, using the same words” and that to prevent humankind from reaching the heavens it was decided to “confuse their language so that one does not understand what another says.”

Three points should be noted: the first is that the issue of miscommunication has a long history. The first human settlements are thought to have started 11,000 years ago, and the oldest known version of the Book of Genesis is 3,000 years old. Miscommunication is an old problem to which humanity has not yet found a solution.

The second is that the proposed universal language (Esperanto) nearly succeeded in becoming the working language of the League of Nations. Near success is, however, failure. A number of languages have been used as a *lingua franca* (including Latin, French and English); they have helped to facilitate communication between groups with different mother tongues, but only to a degree.

The third point is that miscommunication also occurs among people with the same mother tongue. Inter-professional communication is a case in point.
People are not Simple

Current research indicates that humans and pigmy chimpanzees (bonobos) have 98.5% of their DNA structure in common. The 1.5% difference has had a tremendous impact, as it gave us not only a larger brain but also the ability to deal with abstract concepts, complex language, writing, music, tool making (but also weapon making) and a complex personality.

The factors that define an individual human being are many and research in this field makes it clear that the study is far from complete and that understanding needs to be developed much further.

Figure 1 – Factors Influencing Communication Skills

The major factors that influence our communication skills are summarised in Figure 1. Below follow thumbnail descriptions of these factors and the impact they have on the way we communicate.

Main Culture
Culture defines the environment in which we are nurtured; it includes multiple factors such as internal and external forces, climate and location on the globe, and population density. However, the factors that have the greatest influence in the topic under discussion are a culture’s definitions of Right and Wrong, what constitutes socially acceptable emotional behaviour, the perception of time and what is respected within a culture.
Examples: Punctuality is a very flexible concept. Turning up “on time” in certain cultures may mean finding the host quite unready. Some cultures have a great respect for age, others for consensus and conformity. In some cultures, public expressions of emotion (anger, joy, grief) are the norm, while in others these are discouraged (stiff upper lip).

Subcultures
We are all members of several subcultures, often without being conscious of it. These subcultures define our social circles and, with their own patterns and rituals, they are of a tribal nature. When these subcultures develop a vision of themselves as an elite with special values, this becomes a very strong barrier to effective communication.

Examples: Information technologists often exhibit an elitist behaviour because the industry attracts people who are creative and very intelligent. This encourages them to think of themselves as “special.” In the 1950s, anyone able to do anything at all with a computer was referred to as a mathematical genius, and this belief persists today, particularly among the technologists themselves.

Other examples of sub-cultures include social and sports clubs, networks in the workplace, church, professional associations, the Freemasons, etc.

Both main and sub-cultures represent a minefield for the unaware. As global networks and computing reduce the importance of distance and time, society needs to give more attention to cultural and social issues than it has done hitherto.

Personal Values
Cultures and subcultures are the background against which we acquire our individual personal values, such as work ethics, what motivates us, how we feel about truthfulness, and our sense of aesthetics.

Examples: In certain societies it is admissible to tell a lie if this allows the speaker to avoid open disagreement with somebody or saying NO, both of which are socially unacceptable. In other societies, work is regarded as a necessary evil (the text of a song says that “only fools and horses work for their living”), while in others truthfulness and excellence in work are held as honourable targets.

Education
Formal education and subsequent investment of personal time in the search for new knowledge and experience are part of who we are, what we can achieve and
also an important part of how we perceive the world and communicate. Education gives us a wider vocabulary, languages other than our mother tongue (at various levels of proficiency) and an awareness of the world around us. These are major contributory factors to our ability not only to communicate but also to connect with others.

**Discussion:** Much education provided in the 20th century was based on the model developed during the late 19th century to meet the needs of the industrial revolution—based on reading, writing, and arithmetic. Two features of this model are inappropriate to the world in which we live today. One is the concept that for every problem there is a correct answer, often only one (that expected by the teacher). We know by now that complex problems are never solved, only transformed, and that many of the problems with which we deal have no single answer. In fact, there are multiple choices, none of which is perfect and, as a result, the education system should be giving us tools to assess information, make choices and understand their consequences.

The second inappropriate feature of this educational model is that exchanging information during a school or university examination is called “cheating.” In today’s education, emphasis remains on individual work and on competition to get the highest possible marks as these tend to provide access to better career opportunities or to more exclusive and highly regarded institutes of higher education. It is clear that the information society will rely on information sharing and collaboration; the current educational model imposes one more barrier to overcome in achieving this ideal.

**Thinking Skills**
Thinking is a learnable process that supports our conscious actions, in particular communication in its many forms: negotiation, creativity and problem solving. Edward de Bono, in the introductory note to his *Thinking Course* book, writes:

Thinking is the ultimate human resource. The quality of our future will depend entirely on the quality of our thinking. This applies on a personal level, a community level and on the world level.

On the whole our thinking is rather poor, short-sighted and egocentric. We have come to believe that judgement and argument are sufficient. In a rapidly changing world we are finding that our thinking is inadequate to meet the demands put upon it.
Intelligence

Mental skills are far more varied in scope and nature than the now somewhat discredited IQ tests indicate, based as they are on verbal and numerical skills. Research conducted over the last 20 years on the nature of intelligence and genius has revealed that there are several kinds of intelligence.

Most of the types of intelligence shown in Figure 2 are self-evident, and only those having direct impact on communication will be described here. For more detailed descriptions and a deeper discussion of this topic, Buzan’s Book of Genius is recommended reading.6

Emotional intelligence6 refers to the understanding of others and our individual ability to understand and manage our emotions. Spiritual intelligence was described by A.A. Maslow as the ultimate human goal in the hierarchy of needs and relates to one’s feeling of sense of purpose and to having a profound understanding of oneself. We should not forget that an individual’s position on Maslow’s pyramid of needs is also a determining factor in communication.

Figure 2 illustrates how these forms of intelligence can be mapped (the inner concentric circles representing low scores, the outer one defining the highest achievable level). Joining the dots for each intelligence gives an individual’s profile. The profile shown is not atypical of a computer programmer.

Many individuals such as computer programmers, who have exceptional skills in mathematics and in the logical manipulation of abstract concepts, and often also very good creative ability, may regard themselves, or more commonly, be regarded by their peers as “geniuses” and, regrettably, start behaving...
as if they were. However, the use of a chart such as the one in Figure 2 reveals a different picture by highlighting many gaps. If the other intelligences are not developed to a high level, these people are specialists in their field and potential misfits in life.

Figure 3 – Maslow’s Pyramid of Human Needs

For completeness, Maslow’s pyramid of human needs (see Figure 3) is divided into two groups, the lower of which, below the line, he called “deficiency needs” — these must be met to allow an individual to move to the next higher level. At the Esteem level, an individual achieves, is competent and gains approval and recognition. At the Cognitive level, an individual knows, understands and explores. At the Aesthetic level, an individual understands and appreciates symmetry, order and beauty. At the Self-Actualisation level, an individual finds self-fulfilment and achieves her/his potential.

Maslow later added an additional state, Transcendence, that represents an individual’s ability to enable others to find self-fulfilment and realise their potential. People who have reached the higher levels of Maslow’s pyramid are more likely to be good communicators than those who have not.

**Personality**

Just as each of us has a unique fingerprint, we also have unique mixes of personality traits. Psychologists and psychiatrists have provided classification schemes to group the main personality traits into families applicable to a large population.
One of the best-known classifications is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)\(^7\) often used for career counselling and for assessing employee suitability for career moves. Used by non-experts, these classifications are potentially harmful to individuals who may be sidelined into areas of work where they rapidly become misfits. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator classifies individuals through analysing responses to multiple questions in a group of four parameters, each of which can take two extreme values:

- Introverted (I) or Extroverted (E)
- Intuitive (N) or Sensing (S)
- Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
- Judgement (J) or Perception (P)

Extensive analysis of the classifications of people who perform well in their professions shows that the profile for a substantial population of information technologists is INTJ or INTS. In real life, most people fall somewhere in between the extreme values for the four above scales. It would, however, be worthwhile to identify if people working in the field of diplomacy are also of a predominant Myers-Briggs profile.

Discussion: The nature of miscommunication between professions starts to become apparent in the following example: a woman in her mid-forties is a highly successful and creative fashion designer. She is also left-handed (with a strong ESFP profile). Having decided to move into computer-aided design, she employs a computer programmer, a male in his late twenties, highly logical and technically knowledgeable. He is right-handed.

How well do you think the solution he will develop will meet the needs of the fashion designer? The right answer is NOT AT ALL. There are hundreds of computing disasters to confirm that this is exactly what happens. At the same time, he will no doubt say, “I gave you what you asked for.”

Temperament\(^8\)

Further research on personality types, particularly by Kiersey,\(^9\) led to the more detailed definition of the sixteen combinations of Myers-Briggs types. This research defines four main groups of temperament:

- Artisans
- Idealists
- Rationals
- Guardians
Each has specific strengths and suitability to well-defined types of activities. In summary, these are:

**Artisans:** defined as the ultimate utilitarians; the four temperaments associated with artisans are:

- Entertainers – Composers: ISFP
- Entertainers – Performers: ESFP
- Operators – Crafters: ISTP
- Operators – Promoters: ESTP

**Idealists:** defined as having the ability to deal with the abstract and strong at cooperation:

- Mentors – Counsellors: INFJ
- Mentors – Teachers: ENFJ
- Advocates – Healers: INFP
- Advocates – Champions: ENFP

**Rationals:** defined as having strong strategic analysis and organisational skills:

- Engineers – Architects: INTP
- Engineers – Inventors: ENTP
- Coordinators – Mastermind: INTJ
- Coordinators – Field Marshall: ENTJ

**Guardians:** defined as being very good at logistics, dealing with specifics and cooperation:

- Administrators – Inspectors: ISTJ
- Administrators – Supervisor: ESTJ
- Conservators – Protectors: ISFJ
- Conservators – Providers: ESFJ

The fact that professions will attract people with similar temperaments enables the tendency of professions to see themselves as privileged groups, and encourages their concept of “one of us” to the detriment of communication with people outside the profession. The Myers-Briggs Indicator is a develop-
ment of an older and well-established technique for defining personality and temperament, the Enneagram.¹⁰

Curiosity
One of the major forces in the chemical cocktail and electric storm environment of the human brain is curiosity: the drive to question many things and thus investigate new subjects or seek different ways of doing things. A good quotation on curiosity comes from Charles Handy in his book *The Age of Unreason*: “Necessity may be the mother of invention but curiosity is the mother of discovery.”¹¹

Children are always curious and they use the word “why” all the time. Regrettably, the education system and our increasingly hectic lifestyle, driven by cell phones, being permanently online, and a strong sense of (artificial?) urgency, gradually build limits to our curiosity and to our inclination to explore our constantly changing world. The worst side effect of a lack of curiosity is the misguided belief that we actually know everything.

Openness
Best defined as our ability to recognise and accept the new, openness is an essential component of communication. Given that every individual is unique, it follows that what is right for one person may not be so for another. Similarly, some things will be important to one person and completely irrelevant to another.

Openness is a hard attribute to acquire and develop, as we find it easy to become prisoners of the familiar. Vanessa Mae, a young violinist who plays an unconventional repertoire, said, “people who say I know what I like, actually mean I like what I know.” A low degree of openness drives the mental filters that make us poor listeners and thus prevents us from understanding the messages being conveyed to us.

Stress
Before discussing stress and its effect on communication, we need to consider some features of our brain. Our DNA, built over a period of several hundred million years, has given us a complex brain considered to consist of three layers: a reptile brain, a limbic brain and the cortex and neo-cortex.

The reptile brain, also known as the r-complex, is responsible for the basic functions of life, such as breathing, and drives the basic urges of survival: fight or flight, reproduction, and acquisition of territory (yes, it includes office space and car parking). It also drives our basic emotions.
responsible for transforming information into memories and in driving bonding needs including those emotions involved in forming attachments. The neo-cortex accounts for 80% of our brain and is the centre that controls such processes as language, logic and the integration of sensory information. The neo-cortex is divided into two parts, the left brain and the right brain, each with their dedicated functions.

What does the structure of the brain have to do with our communication skills? Whenever we experience a threat or a thrill, such as a roller coaster, the reptile brain causes the generation of adrenaline, neo-epinephrine, corticotrophin and other chemicals. Their effect is to override the neo-cortex to give us more strength and speed, and to prepare our body to deal with the situation.

Aha! When we are stressed by a situation, our thinking brain gets switched off. No wonder we often regret what we say in the heat of the moment. For many people, negotiations on serious matters, public speaking, or disagreeing with a colleague, boss or another professional, are all highly stressful situations.

**Gender**

This factor will not be discussed in this paper other than to acknowledge that hormones such as testosterone (male) and oxytocin (female) have a powerful impact on interpersonal relations and communication.

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**Warning**

Additional factors have an impact on the ability to communicate, such as an individual’s energy and attitude towards risk taking. The problem is complex enough as is and these will not be considered in this paper.

However, we should not forget that all of the above is based on research that involves large populations and that the outcome represents what statisticians describe as a “normal” distribution, meaning that a high percentage, usually 67%, of the population examined falls within a range of values or behaviours.

Those who fall outside this “normal” range on the high or the low end present additional challenges, as they can range from the depressive to the manic and from the uncouth to the sociopath and the power-hungry. Every situation is unique and all these means to evaluate the problem of miscommunication should be seen as basic guidelines.
Barriers to Inter-Professional Communication

The previous sections of this paper paint a picture of multiple interacting factors that play a role in the way we communicate. When we communicate, we also need to overcome many self-created barriers, most of which are in our subconscious brain. We know from our own experience that it is easier to communicate with people with whom we have some affinity or bonding - for example, people with similar Myers-Briggs types or members of specific subcultures - than it is with people with whom we have less, let alone little, in common.

What makes communication easier with these people is the implicit trust that exists among members of a community and the shared verbal aspects of communication, such as jargon, as well as non-verbal cues such as the wearing of identical football club scarves. As we communicate with members of other subcultures or professions, two major barriers appear: perception and listening skills.

Perceptions and Prejudices

Whether we like it or not, or want it or not, perceptions and prejudices conspire to create a trust barrier between people with clear differences such as nationality, profession, level of education, and even source of education. For an in-depth discussion of egocentrism, ethnocentrism and other factors creating bias in our perceptions and prejudices, *A Brief History of Everything* by the philosopher Ken Wilber is highly recommended.12
Information technologists and their bosses, clients or other professionals typically regard each other as shown in Figure 4. These prejudices come from comments made by other people, cartoons such as Dilbert that ridicule technical people, personal experience and usually, crude generalisations.

We often lack the tools and skills to recognise the nature of these barriers to trust, and more particularly of the different thinking and communication styles of professions and individuals. As a result, prejudices are reinforced instead of overcome.

Poor Listening Skills
Although nature has given us two ears and one mouth, for many people the concept of “communication” is oriented towards output, not input. However, the most common cause of miscommunication is ineffective listening. Listening is quite different from hearing.

We may happily believe that we are good listeners. Studies and statistics do not support this view and show that the average person is likely to understand and retain only about 50% of a conversation, and this surprisingly low percentage drops to an unimpressive 25% retention rate forty-eight hours later. Should it be a surprise that people so often disagree about what was discussed? One component of the problem stems from how our brain operates: in order to avoid sensory overload the brain blocks out inputs. Advertisers who bombard us with messages on TV and radio no doubt wish it were otherwise. However, the brain is so used to blocking inputs that it often screens out things that are important to us.

Another component is found in the filters built by our cultural, subcultural and other factors defining us as individuals. Whenever somebody says something that does not fit with our perception of the world, the filters come into operation, limiting our ability to understand what is being said and, instead, triggering a thinking process that will drive us to interrupt, think about how to counter-argue and do anything else but listen effectively.

Many of us fall into the trap of multi-tasking (the brain has enormous spare capacity) given the fairly low transfer rate of speech. Daydreaming, doodling on a piece of paper and looking at other people in the room are all clear signs of multi-tasking which, again, limits our listening ability. Worst of all is the effect of our emotions when listening: if the message is boring, too long, or too well known, or if we take a dislike to the speaker’s appearance or accent (dare I include race, gender or educational level?), these block listening even further, and miscommunication is the only result that can be expected.
Not Understanding the Listener’s Position

Given our different temperaments, backgrounds, and all the other factors discussed earlier, we all have our individual “Logical Bubble,” a space which defines our perception of right and wrong, good and bad, priorities and overall perspective on all matters. When these logical bubbles do not have an extensive overlap, miscommunication is guaranteed. Returning to the dialog between an information technologist and another professional, for example a business manager, it is not unusual for these two parties to have different questions at the top of their minds.

The information technologist’s view of the world is illustrated in Figure 5. Said in an unkind way, the typical technologist is more interested in the toy-shop aspect of the work than in what value will be delivered to the employer organisation. “Will this work?” is fun, a learning opportunity and a great chance to apply the IT craft and impress one’s IT peers.

![Figure 5 - The Information Technologist’s View of the World](image)

However, the business manager has a different approach, as shown in Figure 6. Communication will be successful only if the subjective, “gut-feel” issues are addressed first, and often access to the manager will be influenced by the degree of trust that exists in the relationship with the information technol-
ogist. A poor track record of delivery and perpetual optimism that all problems can be fixed quickly do not help build such trust.

The story about communication most often told in IT conferences is about meeting the business manager in the lift and spending the journey to the top floor in total silence. Members of the audience understand that this is a missed opportunity and, at the same time, feel unable to do anything about it, reinforcing their image as poor communicators.

**Poor Communication Skills**

Although society aims at 100% literacy and we all know how to talk, our formal education rarely includes the learning of communications skills, written, verbal and presentational. In most cases, we pay dearly for this absence in our professional and personal lives.

Common offences against communications include: not making the purpose of the communication clear from the outset, using too many and/or inappropriate words, taking too much time and using irritators, particularly in verbal exchanges. Typical irritators are “if,” “but,” “in a sense,” and “on the other hand.” A few pointers to improve communication skills are given below.

![Figure 6 – The Business Manager’s Approach](image)
From Professional Misfit to Effective Communicator

This short paper is not intended to be a textbook. The brief sections that follow provide pointers for further exploration, study and practice. While everything mentioned in this section is simple and possible, making improvements is not easy. It requires us to change patterns of behaviour established since childhood.

True Knowledge of Self
According to the ancient historian Plutarch, “Know Thyself” (Gnothi se auton) was the admonition inscribed at the temple dedicated to Apollo in Delphi. Yet it seems that humankind is not very good at learning from history. The expression, “Why do you see the straw in your brother’s eye, but fail to see the beam that is in yours,” appears in two of the Gospels of the New Testament (Matthew and Luke). For as long as you can see the “imperfections” of others and not recognise your own, your ability to communicate with others will be impaired outside a circle of like-minded individuals, which could be your professional environment or another tribal culture.

The fact that little has changed is confirmed by reading the poem, “To a Louse,” written by the Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1786, in which the final stanza reads “O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us! It wad frae monie a blunder free us.”

Readers interested in additional material on this topic should look up information on Johari’s window, which discusses four categories:

- The OPEN window: that which is known to oneself and to others.
- The BLIND SPOT: that which is not known to oneself and is known to others.
- The HIDDEN window: that which is known to oneself and not to others.
- The UNKNOWN window: that which is not known either to oneself or to others.

The Professional Misfit
It is easy to describe a misfit in engineering terms: a square peg in a round hole. In professional terms, a misfit is a person active in an environment where there is a mismatch between the values and expectations of the individual and those of the circles in which the activity takes place – for example a place of employment.
Figure 7 illustrates some of the parameters that cause individuals to become misfits. For example, an ambitious, results oriented person working in an organisation that does not reward such efforts, but has instead a politicised reward system will become a misfit.

Misfits who cannot leave the environment in which they are active (which can happen because of many reasons: age, family ties, health, insufficient qualifications) have limited choices: they may be able to adapt to the environment by adjusting their values or they will lose their motivation and enthusiasm. What is left for them is to survive until retirement or until something else comes along.

Can you expect unmotivated people working in an environment incompatible with their values to be superior communicators?

Effective Communication: Active Listening

The issue of poor listening skills was discussed earlier. Improving listening skills requires a conscious and determined effort to do a number of things throughout the listening process:

- Avoid multi-tasking and distractions. Concentrate on the speaker and only on the speaker. Whenever possible, seek a calm, distraction-free environment, turn off your cell phone and beeper and, particularly, be conscious of your own mind wandering and daydreaming.
• Confirm to the speaker that you are interested and attentive by acknowledging your active participation through verbal (“I see”) and non-verbal signals (nodding). Acknowledging does not mean giving in to the temptation to interrupt the speaker.

• Interact with the speaker by eliciting focused information. The communication should be a dialog through questions that increase your understanding and encourage the speaker to share information with you, using such questions also to expand the discussion and clarify points about which you may not be certain.

• Self-control requires you, the listener, to respond to controversial and sensitive subjects in a way that allows you to remain focussed on the speaker’s points and messages. This requires that you should know thyself and that your emotional intelligence should be developed sufficiently to avoid strong disagreement, or worse still, a fight, thus preventing further communication.

• Develop awareness of the speaker, in particular the speaker’s emotional state, through learning how to read tone, level of voice and non-verbal cues (body language) since without this there is a risk that the content of the communication may be submerged and thus lost.

• Understanding the content’s structure. Is the speaker conveying information in an orderly manner or raising points that may not fit logically together? Is the speaker offering fact, assumption or theory? The effective listener must learn to keep track of the speaker’s message.

Effective Communication: From I to You
The two most commonly used words in the English language are “I” and “NO.” Communication centred on the writer or speaker, characterised by the constant use of “I,” fails to focus on the interest and needs of the recipient. Effective communication requires that the other party should receive relevant and appropriate information, advice and support. Therefore, effective communication requires the speaker or writer to:

• understand fully the purpose of the communication (why am I writing or speaking, what messages do I wish to convey to the recipient or audience);

• use the appropriate medium and language to convey the information. This must match the expectations, culture and profile of the recipient or audience;

• ensure conciseness and clarity.
When you hear somebody say, “I told you a million times…” to another person, who do you think has failed to communicate?

**Effective Communication: Managing Stress and Distractions**

Certain types of stress activate the reptile brain and bypass the cerebral cortex so that instinct takes over rational thinking. Stress, however, can be managed to some degree and what is truly important is to acquire the ability to recognise when stress affects our behaviour and to learn techniques that help manage stress. There are many such techniques and every individual needs to find those effective for them personally.

Managing distractions, which involve using the brain’s spare processing capacity to purposes other than active listening, rational thinking focusing on the topic under discussion and directing our intelligence, knowledge, memory and all other factors discussed in this paper, is hard to achieve as it requires a strong mental discipline to maintain focus and concentration. Without it however, our ability to communicate effectively will be seriously handicapped.

**Tools and Techniques to Reduce Miscommunication**

Out of the large catalogue of tools and techniques that can be used to reduce the chance of miscommunication, two are worth describing here. Mind-mapping is a technique developed by Tony Buzan to create a graphic-rich summary of concepts and how they are related. Mind-mapping creates structures that facilitate exchanges of information. Given the focus on concepts and relations, instead of extensive use of text, it permits discussions to focus on areas of agreement instead of disagreement.

Online and e-mail discussions are favoured by information technologists as an extension of the tools they use for their day-to-day work. However, these techniques often have undesirable side-effects:

- Many people regard these tools as highly informal and do not exercise the same care in choosing their words and formulating their thoughts as they would in a face-to-face exchange or in preparing a report or formal letter.
- The absence of an overall context for the communication means that there are few indications of the emotional state of the writer.
- There is a risk that a private discussion may become public by the indiscriminate dissemination of copies of the exchanges to a larger, relevant or not, population.
At the same time, the positive aspects of online and e-mail communications should not be forgotten:

- Exchanges are asynchronous, which allows their use regardless of distance and time zone.
- This asynchronous exchange also gives “time to think,” something we are at risk of losing as technology makes it easier to be online all the time, everywhere. Communication deprived of time to think risks becoming miscommunication.
- Dominant individuals, whose voice and body language may inhibit others from participating in discussions and sharing their valuable input, are subdued.

Conclusions

In which nothing is concluded (to quote Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas*).

- Miscommunication is a major cause of most of humankind’s problems.
- Humankind has been aware of miscommunication for many thousands of years and has not been able to find a solution.
- Miscommunication is not limited to exchanges between people who have different languages. It also exists among people who have the same mother tongue.
- Humans are complex and their communication is influenced by culture, subculture, education, intelligence, personality and temperament and many other factors. It is reasonable to assume that all human beings are just as different as their fingerprints.
- Humans are not taught how to communicate, on the assumption that this comes naturally. This assumption is of doubtful validity, as communication is a learnable skill.
- We have two ears and one mouth. We should believe that, in order to avoid miscommunication, it is more important to listen than to talk.
- Communication is most effective when the focus is on YOU, the recipient, and not on I, the originator.
- Learning how to improve our communication skills involves several simple tasks. However, simple does not mean easy: these tasks require important changes in behaviour patterns acquired since birth.
Endnotes

3. For more information on the work of Edward de Bono, see his official website at [http://www.edwdebono.com](http://www.edwdebono.com), with links to courses, books and other material on thinking and learning.
7. For more information see [http://www.personalitypage.com](http://www.personalitypage.com), a website about psychological type, based primarily upon the works of Carl G. Jung and Isabel Briggs Myers (includes the Myers-Briggs assessment questionnaire).
8. For more information on temperament, see the website of the Temperament Research Institute at [http://www.tri-network.com](http://www.tri-network.com).
10. See the website of the Enneagram Institute, at [http://www.enneagraminstitute.com](http://www.enneagraminstitute.com).
The end of the Second World War in 1945 produced a new geopolitical status quo and a corresponding new international order. The miseries and sufferings of millions of people during two world wars (in less than a quarter of a century) imposed a great challenge on the victorious allies - how to establish a long-enduring mechanism to guarantee international security and peace. The United Nations Organisation, created in 1945 as an instrument to safeguard international security and peace, has not proved fully capable of fulfilling the main goals and objectives embodied in its charter. Its successes are evident in the fact that the Cold War faded away without leading to a Third World War. Its main failures derive from the historical trend that transformed the Second World War allies and victors into Cold War rivals soon after 1945. In this international environment, the permanent members of the Security Council were not capable of using the UN Charter and its tools for active conflict prevention and crisis management.

In the 1990s, with the end of the bi-polar world and the consequent rapid expansion in the number, scope and mandate of international conflicts, international intervention faced new problems. Ongoing problems include: the UN as an international organisation is often asked to address too many crises; member states are frequently reluctant to provide financial, material and human resources for the operations; inherent limitations exist within the complex multinational system of decision making and operational command; and difficulties arise while engaging in enforcement at a time when troops are widely dispersed in peace-keeping or humanitarian assistance roles around the world.

The evolving concept of international intervention (especially in the form of peace-keeping operations) underwent a significant transformation in the post-Cold War era. This transformation was a direct product of the changing international security environment and thus presented a serious challenge to the UN, to NATO and to all international organisations and structures involved in the preservation of world peace. In the last decade, the international community has explored different approaches to intervention, making it an important element in the functioning of the overall international system.
Multi-Track Diplomacy and the Challenges of International Intervention in the Post-Cold War World Order - The Search for Peace in War-Torn Former Yugoslavia (up to the Dayton Accords of 1995)

It’s going well by definition. That is, we’ve succeeded in separating the three groups in their defined areas. That’s the most important thing, because if they don’t talk to each other, they don’t argue and insult each other. If they don’t do that, they don’t fight. If they don’t fight, there won’t be any bullets flying. So the peace is safe as long as we keep them in their own places, apart from one another.

From an interview with a UN/NATO officer (early 1996)

Multi-track diplomacy is an important theoretical issue within the realm of diplomatic techniques. The academic debate over its vast potential received a new impetus in the concrete and pragmatic framework of the deep changes underway in Eastern Europe in the post-Cold War era. Searching for new national security guarantees in the 1990s, the countries of the former Soviet bloc followed separate, but quite similar paths in their goals to become integrated into NATO and the EU. Thus, they came to appreciate the newly acquired freedom in pursuing their national interests through different channels – including informal diplomacy. This trend coincided with the rising interests of non-Eastern European states to follow a similar line of inter-state communication that made possible the deployment of such diplomatic techniques.

Multi-track diplomacy aims to incorporate all levels of diplomacy in building a real and sustainable peace. For the authors of this paper, the peace-making process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an appropriate case-study because at all levels the process referred both to government-negotiated settlements (as was the case with the Dayton Accords) and to unofficial steps taken by the conflicting parties (by academics or intermediaries working towards conflict resolution). It also referred to efforts undertaken by community groups or NGOs.

Using the approach of conflict resolution theory we will apply the multi-track diplomacy model to Bosnia. We will examine to what extent Track I diplomacy (Dayton Peace Accords) had an impact and how important the other levels of diplomacy (Track II and III) were in creating a “real and sustainable peace” in Bosnia. Another important element of our case study is the use of the tools of the conflict transformation approach as the most applicable theory in this area. Conflict transformation, in the current academic debate, involves not only a political settlement leading to conflict resolution but also
a complete restructuring of the system which allowed the conflict to flourish. This is particularly necessary in cases of deep-rooted social conflicts like those between the Israelis and the Palestinians or in Bosnia.

The term “Track II diplomacy” was first used by Joseph Montville in 1990. It was then a serious endeavour and an academic departure because it sought to analyse the unofficial actions external to the government targeted at achieving peace. Traditionally, analysis focussed on the official framework, that is, on government-led negotiations leading to a settlement, henceforth known as Track I diplomacy. Montville, however, was struck by the human needs aspect of conflict and sought to understand the “psychological tasks necessary in successful peacemaking strategies.” He defined Track II diplomacy as the “unofficial, non-structured interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations that is directed toward conflict resolution by addressing psychological factors.”

Developing the idea of multi-track diplomacy, John McDonald elaborated Track II diplomacy as a “non-governmental, informal and unofficial form of conflict resolution between citizen groups which is aimed at de-escalating conflict by reducing anger, fear and tension and by improving communication and mutual understanding.” Michael Bavly, in his paper on Second-Track Diplomacy, followed similar lines. However, he acknowledged all tracks as being “responsible for the creation of peace and the setting in motion of the other tracks.”

For us, it is crucial to discover whether in Bosnia and Herzegovina some initial popular support existed for the Dayton Accords. The Dayton Accords were a settlement negotiated by the prime instigators of the conflict, often referred to as a “negative” peace settlement, an end to the war certainly but not necessarily a guarantee of the peace. Through the institutions of Dayton (five-sixths of the documentation concerned civilian aspects of the settlement), a peace was imposed “from above,” mainly by external actors. Thus, we must consider seriously whether any change in the mindset of the communities occurred; whether the communities held any real desire for an integrated, transformed society.

The potential for peace along these lines must not be underestimated: initiatives sponsored from the bottom-up, at grass-roots level with the participation of a wide variety of groups, not just peace activists, have a real chance of fostering an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation and the building of a sustainable peace. This optimistic outlook obviously takes into account how difficult it can be to nurture peace at this level, as can be seen in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
However, by necessity, the full potential of international intervention aimed at achieving peace can be realised only when all three tracks are implemented simultaneously. This is the essence of multi-track diplomacy, namely, a real and lasting peace will be achieved only when there is a genuine desire for peace among the government, civic and private sectors. A mutual dependency between all three tracks, an “inter-relatedness,” interlinks them, even if unofficially. For example, it is clear that a secure environment will encourage business, trade and economic cooperation. Concurrently, the improvement in the economic ties between the conflicting communities will bring about the desire for peace among the population and the private sector.

Having presented briefly the theoretical debate on multi-track diplomacy, we will now try to apply this analysis to the Dayton Peace Accords. Our aim will be to analyse the implementation of the Accords and the nature of the peace process as carried out through these channels in order to define the scope and potential for international intervention in the peculiar environment and geopolitics of the post-Cold War period.

One of the major challenges to the international community and its capacity for such intervention came with the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The ethnic tensions, the resurgence of old rivalries and the outbreak of violence at the time of democratisation in Eastern Europe was a severe test to the adaptability of international diplomacy to the new geopolitics of the period. In due course, many international institutions and structures had to dive into uncharted waters and to follow a course aimed at producing peace. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at least, a peace settlement was achieved at the end of 1995. However, it came at a very high price: after serious diplomatic and military setbacks and much bloodshed. The lessons for the international community regarding the potential for conflict resolution and the limitations to its intervention in an escalating crisis were harsh and not at all optimistic.

All international actors had their own successes and failures in that direction: the UN, the European Community, the OSCE and NATO.9 Tracing, for example, very briefly NATO’s involvement in former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina (up to the end of 1995), we should acknowledge that it was just one distinctive layer in a very complex and multi-layered, web-like involvement on the part of the international community. We can evaluate NATO’s engagement during those years mainly as supportive, complementing the peacekeeping efforts of the UN and the OSCE, and thus it was restricted mainly to providing military support and other related services. That role is analysed in detail by Steven Burg10, Jane Boulden11, and Dick Leurdijk12, as
well by prominent personalities actively involved in the field such as Michael Rose\textsuperscript{13}, Carl Bildt\textsuperscript{14}, and David Owen\textsuperscript{15}.

The multiple efforts by the international community to end the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina during 1994-1995 gave rise to the expanded use of several diplomatic tools that were either innovative or seldom used in normal circumstances. The Contact Group was the most prominent tool. It was designed to solve an old problem: how to separate the principal players and engage them in reaching an agreement before getting the rest of the participants to join in the solution. The creation of the Contact Group evolved from a series of ill-fated attempts by the international community to produce a peace plan acceptable to all warring parties as well as to all parties responsible for implementing the plan. First was the Vance-Owen proposal stemming from the September 1992 International Conference on Yugoslavia (ICFY). That plan gave way to the Owen-Stoltenberg (or Invincible) package in 1993, which had no more success.

Another tool, the special envoy for Bosnia, was an exceptional diplomatic technique used by the US in 1994. The envoy worked hard to achieve a Bosnia-Croat federation. At the same time, as proposed by the ICFY co-chairmen, the principal powers reached a comprehensive accord among themselves and then undertook to sell it to the warring factions. Out of the efforts of the envoy and the contact group came the “51\% - 49\% Map” to divide Bosnia’s territory between the Federation and the Bosnian Serbs, as well as a further series of well-publicised principles to end the war.

Still another approach was the appointment in March 1994 of the special military advisor to the US Secretary of State, as part of the new US approach to bring together the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims. The advisor was given the mandate to achieve a better working relationship between the military commands of Bosnian Croats and Muslims, which only weeks earlier had been killing each other.

Then came the “shuttle diplomacy,” another time-tested but infrequently employed diplomatic technique. It was brought forward, again by the US, with the renewal and intensification of fighting in the spring and summer of 1995. After a series of exploratory meetings in Europe, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke began an exhausting schedule of meetings with the principal players and protagonists. He succeeded in isolating the most radical warring factions and brought to the negotiating table the most appropriate representatives. It was these representatives that first reached an accord for a ceasefire and then signed the peace agreement. From a military point of view, the results were fostered partially by battlefield victories by the Croat and Muslim side, along with battlefield fatigue. However, Holbrooke’s success was also due
to skilful diplomacy, backed up with some classic diplomatic persuaders: lifting trade sanctions, providing economic aid, denying diplomatic recognition, and enforcing an arms embargo.

The **talks held in Dayton, Ohio**, in November 1995 were the key to achieving a peace settlement. Unlike similar mediated efforts (i.e., the Camp David negotiations), these talks included many parties (e.g., representatives of the Contact Group countries) brought together under the chairmanship of Holbrooke and the chief European negotiator, Carl Bildt.

In retrospect, it was obvious that gradually (over the summer of 1995) the international community accepted the idea of using greater force in Bosnia. That trend coincided with the change of attitudes in both Washington and Brussels. President Clinton appointed Holbrooke as the chief US negotiator, while in NATO headquarters emergency operational plans were prepared for stronger action. The mortar attack on Sarajevo on August 28, 1995, set the military machine in action. On August 30, 1995, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force. During that operation, NATO controlled the military aspects of the peace process while Holbrooke used the military arguments on the negotiation table. There were halts in the bombings to facilitate the dialogue and a renewal of the bombing campaign. Unlike in previous situations, the UN played a supportive role at that time, while NATO and the US dictated the pace of the campaign in view of the successes and failures on the diplomatic front.

Analysis of NATO’s escalating involvement in the international intervention in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) suggests that this intervention had significant implications for the evolving nature of the concept of peacekeeping within the framework of NATO. We should acknowledge the gradual, but logical and meaningful evolution in NATO’s peacekeeping engagements. Seeking to redefine itself in the post-Cold War period, NATO as a regional security organisation worked together with the UN at a time when the UN was overly optimistic about its ability to prevent conflicts and guarantee peace and international stability in greater cooperation with regional organisations.

Having no adequate military means for enforcing the mandate of its missions in former Yugoslavia, the UN had to rely on the military support of NATO, a fact most evident through the experience of UNPROFOR. Each of the significant stages in that process showed the potential for greater involvement and associated risks: the enforcement of the UN embargo, the military flights ban, the establishment of the safe-areas, the exclusion zone, the ultimatums and the hostage crises. During each stage, NATO’s position evolved according to the military situation on the ground, the outcome of the diplomatic initiatives and the overall interests of its member states. But the trend was obviously directed...
at an outcome requiring greater involvement and new approaches towards the peace-enforcement actions of the peace-keeping troops.

Many lessons were learned in due time; the least part of them derived from successes in the field. At the end of 1995 it became obvious that NATO, alongside the UN, the EU, the OSCE and all those involved had a lot to learn from the diplomatic and military setbacks of trying to intervene in a complex ethnic, religious and political conflict. As Jane Boulden convincingly argued, “by the time the parties to the Bosnian conflict signed a peace agreement in Dayton, NATO’s involvement with the UN had gone from virtually non-existent to having been the source of NATO’s first military action since its creation.”

**Implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace:**
**Communication and Interaction between Actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996-2003)**

The Dayton Peace Accords of November 1995 made the deployment of UN peacekeepers with the support of NATO a crucial element in the restoration of peace in the area. The General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) was signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, after it had been negotiated in Dayton, Ohio. It represented a significant step towards peace in the region by achieving the primary goal of the international community: stopping the war which had already caused enormous human and material losses, displaced and left homeless nearly half of the population of the area and thus left huge scars in the flesh of a multiethnic, multi-confessional and multicultural society. The signatories (the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) had a clear idea about the difficult and obviously long period ahead, during which the reconstruction of the country should lead to the establishment of the structures of a completely new kind of statehood in the region.

These complex tasks inevitably required effort, financial resources and the involvement of the world community. The implementation of the Accords brought about the creation of new and so-far untested institutions and tools with specific forms, means and methods of action. In the following months and years, the international actors in the field took the responsibility of restoring the peace and establishing a new social order in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Acting through a complex web of interlinked institutions, the representatives of the international community used the whole spectrum of their previous mandates, combining them with newly acquired functions to enforce order in
When it was considered necessary, they even took over powers and prerogatives from local authorities in order to make the country a unified multiethnic and democratic actor in international relations (sometimes referred to as “one state, two entities and three state-formative peoples”). The efforts of the various institutions and representatives of the international community were poorly coordinated in the beginning. In due course, however, the results became more encouraging with the unfolding of their activities in the field and the accomplishment of the first concrete tasks in restoring the peace.

Two of the most important aspects of the Accords were the extension of recognition by each signatory to all the other parties and the pledge to settle all disputes peacefully. The Dayton agreement extended the cease-fire in Bosnia indefinitely and established a zone of separation, which divided Bosnia between the Serbian Republika Srpska, on one side, and a Bosniak-Croat Federation on the other. The agreement established an inter-entity boundary line with 51% of the territory going to the Bosniak-Croat Federation and the other 49% going to the Bosnian Serb Republic (Annex 2). Despite this division, Bosnia was still to be considered one country, with collective executive authority.

The agreements also contained provisions for the entry into Bosnia of an international Implementation Force (IFOR) of peacekeepers under NATO command with a grant of authority from the UN (Art.VI). Their primary mission included monitoring compliance of the agreement on military matters such as disarmament and withdrawal of forces. IFOR was granted the right to use force as necessary and freedom of movement. Consequently, the GFAP acknowledged “that the conditions for the withdrawal of UNPROFOR ... had been met,” except for those parts incorporated into IFOR (Art.VII). The agreement also mandated internationally-supervised free and fair elections (Annex 3) and the right of refugees either to return home or to be compensated justly for property they could not regain. The agreement made provisions for the new constitution, the structure of the new government, and the structure of the central bank and the monetary system (Annex 4). The agreement further established a High Representative of the UN to coordinate and facilitate the civilian aspect of the agreement, including humanitarian aid, economic reconstruction, protection of human rights and the holding of free elections (Annex 10).

Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1031, NATO was given the mandate to implement the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. Thus, on December 16, NATO’s North Atlantic Council (NAC) launched the largest military operation ever undertaken by the Alliance: Operation Joint Endeavour. It was a NATO-led operation under the political direction and control of the NAC. The NATO-led multinational force (IFOR) started its mission...
on December 20, 1995. IFOR had a unified command structure with overall military authority in the hands of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. In November 1996 IFOR Headquarters were transferred from Allied Forces Southern Europe to Allied Land Forces Central Europe. Several countries contributed troops and resources to the operation.

From a theoretical viewpoint, all these developments constitute a crucial new element. They demonstrate the potential for communication and cooperation between both NATO and non-NATO states in a peace-enforcement operation; as well, between military and civilian institutions in an environment that was apt to produce outbreaks of violence at any moment. Thus IFOR became much more than a NATO operation, developing into a peace operation of the “willing” states interested in the stabilisation of the region and the democratisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Alongside NATO countries (Iceland contributed only medical personnel), troops for IFOR were contributed by Partners for Peace countries, including Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine as well as by other countries (Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, and Morocco).

IFOR was given a one-year mandate. Its primary mission was to implement Annex 1A (Military Aspects) of the Peace Agreement. It accomplished its principal military tasks by bringing about and maintaining the cessation of hostilities; by separating the armed forces of the Bosniac-Croat entity (the Federation) and the Bosnian-Serb entity (the Republika Srpska) by mid-January 1996; by transferring areas between the two entities by mid-March; and, finally, by moving the parties’ forces and heavy weapons into approved sites, which was realised by the end of June. For the remainder of 1996 IFOR continued to patrol the 1400 km de-militarised Inter-Entity Boundary Line and regularly inspected over 800 sites containing heavy weapons and other equipment. In carrying out these tasks it opened 2500 km of roads (about 50% of the roads in the country), repaired or replaced over 60 bridges, and freed up Sarajevo airport and key railway lines. It also participated in de-mining activities and in the restoration of gas, electricity and water supplies.

Thanks to IFOR’s early success, a secure environment was established. Its very existence enabled the High Representative (nominated at the London Peace Implementation Conference of December 8-9, 1995) and other organisations to start implementing the civilian aspects of the peace agreement, and to create conditions in which the return to normal life could begin in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Annex 1A, Article VI:3 of the GFAP provided IFOR with the right “to help create secure conditions for the conduct by others of other tasks associated with the peace settlement … to assist UNHCR and other international organizations in their humanitarian missions … to observe and prevent interference with the movement of civilian populations, refugees, and displaced persons, and to respond appropriately to deliberate violence to life and person.” It should be pointed out that this right was not an obligatory one and thus the civilian implementation was from the beginning hampered by IFOR’s relative reluctance to use this power. The lack of political will in the major world capitals due to fears of casualties among IFOR troops left the High Representative without tools and mechanisms for enforcing the peace.

Within the limits of its mandate and available resources, IFOR provided substantial support to the High Representative and other organisations. One important element was the priority support given to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in preparing and conducting the September 1996 elections. After the peaceful conduct of these elections, IFOR successfully completed its mission of implementing the military annexes of the GFAP. However, it was clear that much remained to be accomplished on the civilian side and that the political environment would continue to be potentially unstable and insecure.

IFOR’s actions in 1996 showed both the potential for peace-enforcement in the post-Dayton Bosnian environment and the restrictions due to certain flaws in the mechanism of the early implementation of the agreements. Because of domestic political considerations linked with the upcoming November 1996 presidential elections in the US, President Clinton committed his country’s troops to IFOR for a one-year term only. As the US was the leader of IFOR, its clear-cut military mission was restricted to a much shorter time-period. A two or three year period would have been more likely to convince the former warring factions to seek a political solution on the road to civilian implementation of the Accords. In that short period IFOR had to be deployed, to separate the warring factions, to hold free elections, to establish the democratic mechanisms in society and, eventually, to withdraw. This put a strain on the key areas of civilian implementation, that is, on the transfer of authority in the Sarajevo area and on the first free elections. The different parties on the ground were in the position to simply retreat and wait until IFOR withdrew, and then to resume fighting, while the new international civilian bodies operating under miserable conditions were unable to establish themselves in such a short time. NATO’s commanders on the ground soon acknowledged that the civilian agencies were not capable of carrying out the complex logistical opera-
tions of holding the elections without energetic support from IFOR, which was provided on time and in the fashion required.

The deployment of US and other NATO forces into Bosnia and Herzegovina (first as IFOR and then as SFOR) had a large impact upon and changed in a substantial fashion the very concept of international intervention, especially regarding the new post-Cold War environment. The urgency of the operation and the expected withdrawal after one year made a strong civilian mandate a prerequisite to the success of the mission. However, the implementation in reality was obviously different. The High Representative (Carl Bildt) was entrusted with the overall civilian implementation (except for the first elections which were entrusted to the OSCE) but he was given few formal powers. While IFOR had 60,000 troops, the High Representative had to build from nothing an organisation capable of running the institutions of the civilian implementation. The successful and peaceful conduct of the September 1996 elections was considered by NATO’s political and military leaders as the completion of IFOR’s mandate. However, much remained to be done in terms of establishing stability and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which required further peace-enforcement and eventually transition to peace-building functions.

The authors’ analysis of the role of IFOR in 1996 gives ample grounds to conclude that its primary task (to enforce the peace militarily) ended successfully. But the biggest problem confronting the international community was how long-standing that peace would be. Logically, that led to the decision by the international community (NATO included) to establish a more functional mechanism for strengthening the results achieved, in the form of a new military presence: the NATO-led UN forces that eventually took over the difficult transition from peace-keeping and peace-enforcement to peace-building.

Here we can distinguish and analyse the similarities and differences between the role, functions and results of the IFOR and SFOR missions. The role of IFOR (Operation Joint Endeavor) was to implement the peace. The role of SFOR (Operation Joint Guardian/Operation Joint Forge) was to stabilise the peace. The difference between the tasks of IFOR and SFOR is reflected in their names. Under UN Security Council Resolution 1088 of December 12, 1996, SFOR was authorised to implement the military aspects of the Peace Agreement as the legal successor to IFOR. Like IFOR, SFOR operated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement). SFOR had the same rules of engagement for the use of force, should it be necessary to accomplish its mission and to protect itself.

The transition from peace-keeping to peace-enforcement and later to peace-building is quite obvious in the activities and accomplishments of SFOR.
Unlike IFOR, which had peace-enforcement tasks in the implementation of the military aspects of the GFAP, the primary mission of SFOR was to contribute to the safe and secure environment necessary for the consolidation of peace. Its tasks were to deter or prevent a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace, to promote a climate in which the peace process could continue to move forward and to provide selective support to civilian organisations within its capabilities. Therefore, the main objective of SFOR consisted of practical work on difficult issues such as devising a new defence policy for Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishing, training and finding financial provisions for the new, unified army of the country. The difficulties derived from the fact that SFOR had to overcome the resistance of the two entities, each of which was trying hard to preserve its own armed units, at a time when Bosnia and Herzegovina had no unified army and no Ministry of Defence (while the armed units of each entity were under the control of each entity’s defence agency).

Initially, SFOR consisted of around 32 000 troops - about half the size of IFOR. Thereafter, significant force reductions were made and from 1997/1998 both the US and other NATO and non-NATO troop contributors accepted the responsibility of an open-ended military commitment in Bosnia and Herzegovina by talking not of “end-date” but instead of “end-state.” Subsequent talks by SFOR commanders with the High Representative to set out target time-lines for the events leading to an “end-state” were inconclusive. Following several restructurings, SFOR was reduced to the level of about 12 000 troops in early 2003.

Building on general compliance with the terms of the GFAP, the smaller SFOR was able to concentrate on the implementation of all the provisions of Annex 1A. SFOR had a unified command and was NATO-led under the political direction and control of the Alliance’s NAC, as outlined in Annex 1A of the Peace Agreement. Overall military authority was put in the hands of NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe. From February 19, 2001 onwards Allied Forces Southern Europe became Joint Force Commander for SFOR.

SFOR was a multi-national peace operation, including the participation of troops from non-NATO members. As with IFOR, non-NATO forces were incorporated into the SFOR operations on the same basis as NATO forces, taking orders from the SFOR Commander via their respective multinational Brigade Headquarters. As a result, all the participating forces from Partnership for Peace countries gained practical experience of operating with NATO forces. It became obvious that NATO and non-NATO countries could work closely together in NATO-led peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations, thus contributing to the enhancement of international security.
In implementing this approach NATO closely monitored the results of SFOR actions in the field. Every six months the NAC reviewed SFOR force levels and tasks in close consultation with non-NATO contributing countries, SFOR and SHAPE. Based on those reviews, NATO took decisions on the future force requirements and on the mission accomplishment. Thus, on October 25, 1999, the NAC decided, having taken into account the improved security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to revise the structure of SFOR between November 1999 and April 2000. This restructuring led to a troop level of about 12,000 at the very beginning of 2003.

An important element of the IFOR/SFOR experience was the participation of Russia in both cases. The presence of Russian troops showed in a convincing fashion that NATO and Russia could work together successfully in the field of peacekeeping. After the initial skirmishes during the Bosnian conflict (1992-1995), the implementation of the Dayton Accords was a major step in the evolving NATO-Russia cooperative relationship. Russian forces were deployed within IFOR in January 1996 through a special arrangement between NATO and Russia. In the zone of operations, the Russian Separate Airborne Brigade (RSAB) came under the tactical control of the US-led Multinational Division (North). The Russian contingent was directly subordinate to Colonel General Leontii Shevtsov, as General Joulwan’s Russian deputy. Later Russian forces became part of SFOR as well.

Thus IFOR and SFOR became instrumental in promoting something quite unique in international peacekeeping: the deep, daily cooperation between security institutions. Unlike previous operations, for example the Persian Gulf War, military and civilian roles and responsibilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were clearly intermingled. It was no longer possible for the military to win the battle and leave the civilians afterwards to deal with the results and to secure the peace. The final success of the operation was to be judged by the state of the economy of the host country, by the stability of its political system and the self-sustainability of the emerging civil society.

Thus came new levels of cooperation between civilian agencies and the military. Moving towards effective peace-building, NATO, through SFOR, underlined the importance of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement. With fewer forces at its disposal, SFOR prioritised its efforts and carefully selected where they would be applied. The effectiveness of the operations depended on how well SFOR and the other organisations involved continued to plan together and identify objectives to ensure that SFOR support was applied where and when it was most needed and effective.
In Bosnia and Herzegovina after 1995, a variety of inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies were working closely with the NATO-led forces at all levels, on a daily basis, to achieve the common goals. NATO provided the secure environment the organisations needed to do their work. The UN provided legitimacy to the oversight and overall coordination of the High Representative. The OSCE helped to train police officers and to run elections. The EU provided financial and technical assistance.

Among the institutions and organisations implementing the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement were the Office of the High Representative (OHR) which was an overall coordinator of those efforts, the now-disbanded UN International Police Task Force (UNIPTF), the European Union Police Mission (EUPM), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Many other inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations also played important roles.

Summarising the concrete work carried out by SFOR in implementing the civilian aspects of the GFAP, we should mention several positive outcomes. Under the direction of the NAC, SFOR was instrumental in providing a secure environment for the national elections in October 1998, the municipal elections in 1997 and April 2000, the special elections in Republika Srpska in 1997 and the general elections in November 2000. The prime responsibility for those elections rested with the OSCE, but SFOR provided support to the OSCE in their preparation and conduct. SFOR helped the OSCE in its role of assisting the Parties in the implementation of the Confidence-and-Security-Building Agreement and the Sub-Regional Arms Control Agreement – mainly working for the overall reduction of heavy weaponry in the area. SFOR also supported the UNHCR in supervising the return of refugees and displaced persons. SFOR facilitated the establishment of procedures for securing these returns, for example, ensuring that no weapons other than those of SFOR itself were brought back into the zone of separation. SFOR aimed at preventing any conflict with regard to the return of refugees and displaced persons. SFOR worked closely with the UNIPT in promoting local law and order as a prerequisite to lasting peace.

Another important moment in SFOR activities was the implementation of the Brcko Arbitration Agreement of March 5, 1999. SFOR provided a secure environment in the Brcko area and helped the Brcko Supervisor, the UNIPTF, UNHCR and other involved agencies in the implementation of their missions. SFOR oversaw the complete de-militarisation of the Brcko District. Its success
in establishing a secure environment was manifested in the official launching of the Brcko District on March 8, 2000.

Conclusions

The Bosnian experience has fundamentally transformed modern peacekeeping. It has broken down cultural barriers between military and civilians. It has fostered new training and education programs that bring together all parties involved in rebuilding a failed state. It has been a model for an entirely new peacekeeping partnership where it matters: on the ground.

*NATO Handbook (2001)*

The end of the Cold War posed a great challenge to the international community in terms of crisis management: how to cope with a new environment where conflicts no longer took place only between states, but more often within states, among local war-minded factions and groups. During the previous decades, the support of superpowers had acted as a restraint at the local, regional level. In the 1990s however, a vacuum of authority was created that was soon filled by local war leaders. The outbreak of numerous intra-state conflicts called for international intervention. In such a security environment, it was necessary to strengthen the capacities and options for peace support operations because military force alone could not accomplish the job of prevention and conflict resolution.

Thus during the 1990s regional security organisations demonstrated increasing interest in international intervention in crisis management through their participation in peacekeeping operations. Previously, such operations were regarded exclusively as the domain of the UN, but the post-Cold War security environment demanded more vivid and effective mechanisms of conflict resolution and conflict prevention than the traditional ones. That presumption applied to the UN, the EU, NATO and other regional and collective security structures and agencies.

The Yugoslav crisis of the 1990s provided a demonstration of the emerging new doctrine of international intervention. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (later in Kosovo as well) the UN lost credibility and, because the threats to civilians as targets of warring factions increased, NATO and its member-states decided to intervene on behalf of the international community in order to halt repressions. NATO’s motivation for playing the role of a peacemaker and eventually of a
policeman derived from its institutional interest in displaying itself as the principal guardian of European stability, security and regional peace. Those principles were explicitly verbalised in the New Strategic Concept of NATO.

Certain doctrinal differences between the UN and NATO concerning the conduct of international intervention derived from doctrinal polarisation and from the lack of an effective means of communication between the international actors. The main role of the UN in the early 1990s was the traditional approach that included maintaining neutrality and using force only in self-defence. Occasionally it was not capable of containing the conflicting parties which violated UN Security Council resolutions. At the same time, the UN embarked on the road of redefining the nature of peace-keeping operations and elaborated their new place in the international security system. In this respect, NATO’s approach was more flexible and proactive in regard to using force for both deterrence and coercion as an element of a successful intervention strategy. Thus, it emphasised the use of force in cases that would undermine the viability of intervention in operations that endangered its personnel, halted atrocities and limited pending disasters.

The analysis of the peace operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina presented in this paper shows that the new international security environment with its transnational threats required international cooperation, role-sharing and operational cohabitation. It also shows the potential for communication between the different actors in the field. The missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (as well as those in Kosovo after 1999) were the largest international operations in the history of the UN and, at the same time, the first full-scale operations in NATO’s history. Their significance originated from the fact that they fostered changes in the traditional concept of international intervention in Europe as well as impacting specific elements and wording of the UN and NATO doctrines. Responding to the Yugoslav conflict, the peace operations in both countries became a part of the international involvement in the area. Thus the world observed the first interaction between NATO and the UN. As a first experiment in institutional cooperation, those efforts had successes, setbacks and difficulties.

More than eight years after the signing of the Dayton Accords we can state as a general conclusion that diplomatic means of communication prevailed over military pressure, thus demonstrating the adequateness of the peace implementation mechanisms embodied in the agreements. In the second half of the 1990s, grounds were established for the post-war reconstruction of the political and social order in the conflict-torn country. The results accomplished to date are not yet satisfactory compared to the high expectations and interna-
tional standards. Several obstacles remain to complete and peaceful reconstruction, due to the legacy of ethnic, political and social confrontation between the different ethnic communities and the ruined notion of statehood with its basic state institutions. Thus, a major and self-evident conclusion is the fact that in the near and foreseeable future the process of democratisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will depend on the strong and pragmatic presence of the international community, including, at times, the use of open pressure.

It is important to reassess the very mechanism of functioning of the international community and its efforts for post-war reconstruction. More concretely, that includes the issues of mutual cooperation, elaboration of existing structures and vision and perspective for the future. The lack of unified institutional leadership and coordination is widely acknowledged, especially in view of the duplication of activities and overlapping of responsibilities. The only positive example in this respect were the activities of the Return and Reconstruction Task Force which has been singled out as providing an example of good coordination and unified command authority.

One possible means for improving the work on the ground and for achieving better coordination is a restructuring of the efforts of the international community by merging the offices of the various international institutions in Bosnia. One idea is the appointment of a future High Representative of the United Nations who will be responsible for overall peace-implementation. Hesitation to restructure the international community efforts stems mainly from the fear that such a process will result in institutions which are more bureaucratic and less flexible than they are currently.

Endnotes

1 This article was written in collaboration between two Bulgarian researchers, Dr Kostadin Grozev and Dr Nadia Boyadjieva. Dr Grozev provided the background information on theoretical aspects of multi-track diplomacy and also general editing of the paper. Dr Boyadjieva wrote the main body of the text based on several research projects on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The paper draws heavily upon original research, made possible through a NATO/EAPC Fellowship (2001-2003) grant. Dr Boyadjieva expresses her gratitude to the Academic Affairs Unit of NATO for the grant. The complete version of the research project can be found at Nadia Boyadjieva, NATO on the Balkans: Patterns of Peace-Keeping in the Post-Cold War Era (The Cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), NATO/EAPC Research Fellowship 2001-2003, Final Report [website]; available at http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/01-03/boyadjieva.pdf.


Given the broadness of what he saw as Track II efforts, he categorised them into four separate sub-groups, giving rise to five tracks of Diplomacy and the term “Multi-track Diplomacy;” *Track One:* Official government-to-government diplomatic interaction; *Track Two:* Unofficial, non-governmental, analytical, policy-orientated, problem-solving efforts by skilled, educated, experienced, and informed private citizens interacting with other private citizens; *Track Three:* Businessman-to-businessman, private sector, free-enterprise, multinational and corporation interactions; *Track Four:* Citizen-to-citizen exchange programmes of all kinds, such as scientific, cultural, academic, educational, student, film, music, art, sports and youth exchanges; *Track Five:* Media-to-media based efforts designed to expose and educate large segments of the population in conflict to the philosophy, ideas, culture, and needs of the other national, social, or ethnic group with whom they are in conflict. See John W. McDonald, “Further Exploitation of Track Two Diplomacy in Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts,” in *Syracuse Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution,* ed. Louis Kriegsberg and Stuart Thornson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press: 1991), 201-220.


23 General Framework Agreement, 21-22.
24 Ibid., 7-8.
29 General Framework Agreement, 7.
37 Among SFOR’s troops were units from Albania, Austria, Argentina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. By special arrangement with the United Kingdom, SFOR also included troops from Australia and New Zealand.
38 Wentz, *Lessons from Bosnia*. 

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**Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy**

Nadia Boyadjieva and Kostadin Grozév

Diplomacy, International Intervention and Post-War Reconstruction
40 Wentz, *Lessons from Bosnia*.
41 See the main documents and activities in that field on the OSCE website: *Confidence and Security Building Measures*; available at http://www.oscebih.org.
Part VI.

THE DIPLOMATIC PROFESSIONAL CULTURE
THE BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF A DIPLOMATIC CULTURE

Dietrich Kappeler

The terms “diplomat” and “diplomatic” are used in this essay in a traditional sense, meaning agents acting on behalf of recognised international actors for the conduct of mutual relations of a non-violent character.

The Beginnings

In early history, human groups living in the same region tended to come into contact in their quest for food. Such contacts were mostly of a hostile nature and resulted in one group’s moving farther away. As humans became more and more numerous, their fight for territory became fiercer and more frequent. It would appear that the first “diplomatic” contacts among hostile groups aimed at agreeing on a truce and possibly the recuperation of dead warriors. These first “diplomats” already had certain characteristics that can be found in later diplomatic cultures: they came without weapons and tried to use persuasion to obtain their goals. They were also considered inviolable by the opposite side, at least in principle.

When some human groups settled they started to interact both with other nearby settled groups and others that still led a nomadic existence. These contacts, when they were not violent, led to exchanges of goods, animals and even prisoners from previous clashes. To make this possible, peace agreements had to be concluded. Emissaries active in this context needed to be of a certain social standing and to possess the requisite knowledge of the issues in question. Sometimes they were required to stay as hostages to guarantee the implementation of agreements. Often they were individuals related to the ruler of their community. As hostages, they became familiar with the culture of their keepers. One can assume that even after having been released, they were likely to play an important role in relations between their community and the one in which they had been held.

Ancient empires and their surrounding communities tended to have rather frequent diplomatic exchanges. Depending on the size of the outside community, such exchanges took place on a level of more or less equality. The Amarna tablets found in Egypt provide an insight into the manner in which that country conducted its relations with neighbours and more distant entities of the Near East in the second millennium BC. We have records of the manner in
which diplomatic relations were conducted within and by ancient Greece and of similar relations in the Hellenic world in the last centuries BC. During the same period, Kautilya, an Indian author, wrote *Arthashastra*, a compendium of statecraft during the Maurya dynasty, which also illustrates the manner in which diplomatic relations were conducted at the time. Records exist from the same period documenting diplomatic relations among the “Warring Empires” of China. These sources show how the necessities inherent in the conduct of diplomacy tended to lead to patterns of behaviour and thinking that can be said to form the essence of a diplomatic culture.

The Roman empire had relations both with its neighbours and more remote entities. The latter contacts were occasional and mostly related to trade. The former were governed by the Roman *ius gentium*, a kind of unilaterally edicted international law. When the Roman empire broke up, somewhat chaotic situations prevailed for several centuries in Western Europe, but the main actors continued to have peaceful relations between violent confrontations. The Byzantine empire gradually set up the first diplomatic service of a modern kind, followed by the Republic of Venice and the Holy See. In the world of Islam, the caliphate gradually broke up and the resulting entities engaged in active diplomacy among themselves as well as with the Byzantine empire and other Christian rulers.

From the information available, one can deduce that a common diplomatic culture was already in the making. The diplomats had to defend the interests of their ruler while cultivating amicable relations with the ruler and the elite of their country of accreditation. Like today, these objectives tended to clash, especially as defence of interests could be very active resulting in espionage and interference in local politics, sometimes cumulating with the fomenting of revolts and assassinations. On the other hand, too friendly relations with the receiving prince and elite could be seen as treason by the sending prince and his entourage. To navigate successfully in such troubled waters required a considerable amount of intelligence, flair, tact and a personality of a self-effacing but nevertheless unshakable kind. Diplomats were not yet professionals but often tended to have a career of sorts.

**Classical Diplomatic Culture**

Classical diplomatic culture was, to a considerable degree, the result of the emergence of permanent diplomatic missions in Europe during the Renaissance. The presence of several such missions in the same place required the
observance of some basic rules of protocol. Diplomats, moreover, were not only engaged in contacts with the receiving entity. Relations between various missions followed similar patterns as relations between their respective sending entities, and early versions of diplomatic corps emerged. The characteristics of classical diplomacy prevailed for several centuries without undergoing major change. From personal appointees of the ruler or his chief administrator of external policies, diplomats eventually evolved into public officials and their profession tended to become a career. But their personal and social background and the qualities required of them remained basically the same up to the early twentieth century.

A diplomat was supposed to come from a superior social background. He had to have an excellent education in the fields of arts and history, possibly also law. He had to possess an engaging personality and excellent manners, speak, if possible, two or more “civilised” languages, of which first Latin and later French was compulsory, have considerable financial means of his own, as for a long time he not only received no salary but had to finance personally his premises and staff, and preferably be married to a lady of similar qualifications, capable of being an excellent hostess. It is not surprising, therefore, that outstanding personalities like Metternich or Bismarck spent time as diplomats or that thinkers and inventors like Benjamin Franklin would not refuse a diplomatic appointment.

As a result, diplomats fit easily into the ruling circles of the receiving country, in which quite often they spent a considerable number of years. Thus, they became experts in analysing local events and policies and were able to provide valuable insights to their home country. On the other hand, their personal background and their long absence from home made them rather ignorant of the realities of their own country. This was a handicap when they had to negotiate on the latter’s behalf. They had to rely on precise instructions and, in their absence, would be hesitant to undertake any major engagements or offer concessions. This may have prompted the tendency to use *ad hoc* diplomatic teams for important or complex negotiations rather than the resident missions.

Some diplomatic negotiations, especially those aimed at ending conflicts involving a number of countries, were lengthy. A good example is the series of negotiations which led to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This helped in strengthening the diplomatic culture, as the same diplomats would meet again, in varying contexts and circumstances, over a number of years. The Congress of Vienna in 1814/5 inaugurated a multilateral approach to the major problems of Europe and the world and further reinforced the feeling among diplomats of belonging to the same profession and culture. As a result, when countries with
different cultures, like the Ottoman empire, Japan and China, were admitted to international diplomatic interaction, they did not try to impose their own cultural approaches but were willing or forced to adjust to Western diplomatic culture.

Diplomats have often been blamed for failing to prevent the outbreak of the First World War. This failure was, however, the result of their culture and of the expectations placed on them by their governments, which were mostly restricted to the conduct of ordinary and peaceful bilateral relations. They were not prepared for, nor instructed, to intervene actively in conflict prevention.

The First “Cultural Revolution”

The 1919 peace agreements were not the work of diplomats; those diplomats present had to stay on the sidelines while the politicians decided among themselves the fate of Europe and much of the world. Diplomats had a certain role in the implementation of the peace treaties, as evidenced by the more or less permanent Conference of Ambassadors. However, a considerable number of diplomats now had to cope with the new environment of multilateral diplomacy. In addition, they soon had to deal with diplomats of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, many of whom were party faithfuls with no international experience and little respect for diplomatic niceties. The world economic crisis of the 1930s, moreover, gave rise to a new kind of economic diplomacy that could not be entrusted to traditional diplomats but had to be handled by officials of directly concerned ministries. Finally, the culture of traditional diplomats did not help them to cope with the brutality of Hitler’s representatives.

During the Second World War and its aftermath, traditional diplomats were still active and played a considerable role in the preparations for the new world of multilateral organisations. However, they had to rely increasingly on experts from other ministries to advise them, and the latter were quickly tempted to take over the conduct of negotiations themselves.

A new development was the need felt in many countries to give diplomats better training for their job. So, to a degree, diplomatic culture was both safeguarded and adapted to the new situation. Unfortunately, this training effort was not extended to officers outside the foreign ministry who were increasingly involved in diplomatic activities. As for international civil servants with whom diplomats had to deal more and more, they received no diplomatic training at all. Only the presence among them of a considerable number of diplomats
made available by member countries brought a degree of diplomatic culture into those circles.

**The Proliferation of International Actors and their Representatives**

Since 1960, the number of sovereign states has grown from some 60 to over 200. Most of these new states are former colonial territories. Their original cultures are diverse, but all have been subjected to efforts by the colonisers to adopt at least a certain amount of their culture. This was particularly noticeable in the field of diplomacy, where the first batches of diplomats of newly independent countries were trained in the coloniser’s foreign service. The diplomatic culture instilled into them was largely of the traditional sort and frequently not adjusted to new international realities. The result was often that such new diplomats either felt ill at ease and tried to copy an alien approach or, on the contrary, revolted against traditional diplomatic attitudes and attempted to follow “authentic” values.

International organisations also became ever more numerous and, in many instances, specialised. Their officers were experts and mostly devoid of diplomatic experience. With regard to new states, many of which are small or poor, or both, such organisations, especially the IMF and the World Bank, but also the European Union, could adopt a powerful and even overbearing position, so that the conduct of their representatives was hardly affected by traditional diplomatic culture. The same can be said of representatives of superpowers during the cold war, who used every means at their disposal to keep third world countries on their side. During the first years of independence, many former colonies had to cope with considerable very un-diplomatic interference from the representatives of their former colonial power.

In recent years, non-governmental organisations, lobbies, pressure groups and transnational enterprises have become active and sometimes powerful international actors. They were kept outside the fora of diplomatic interaction for a long time, and thus many of them have hardly been motivated to absorb a diplomatic culture. However, representatives of such entities have long been active in confidential encounters with diplomats, sometimes with notable success. Whether this will help the spreading of diplomatic approaches in places where they are still shunned remains to be seen.
Diplomatic Culture and Institutional Cultures

Diplomatic culture is the product of interaction between representatives of states and international institutions of various kinds. Yet, these representatives are themselves embedded in the culture of the institution that employs them. This culture may put constraints and restrictions on their freedom of action and also promote attitudes that are not entirely compatible with an overall diplomatic culture. The behaviour of diplomats of the two superpowers during the cold war was greatly marked by this type of internal cultural influence. However, even comparing the institutional cultures of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the French Quai d’Orsay shows considerable differences. This is important as these two countries were the masters of huge colonial empires and bequeathed their culture on the new states emerging from decoloniisation, including in the field of diplomacy.

At the level of international governmental and non-governmental organisations, the impact of the institutional culture on their representatives is even greater as the latter often have no real diplomatic background. Moreover, such representatives are only concerned with issues related to the area of competence of their institution; they often lack an overall view as regards the situation of a state to which they are sent as representatives. This is enhanced by the fact that they will normally deal only with the administrations in charge of the issues for which their sending institution is competent.

Is There Still a Diplomatic Culture?

Under the guise of public diplomacy, it is now fashionable to address directly and openly the people and their leadership as well as the media in the country where a diplomat is posted. This is done by politicians and other public figures from the sending country and also expected from professional diplomats. They are supposed to be visible, give media interviews, attend all sorts of public events, especially those organised by the media, and shed the “outdated image” of the diplomat. Dress regulations are abolished or disregarded, overly good manners are suspect, and the use of blunt ordinary language is often encouraged. Another aspect of public diplomacy is the open interference of diplomats in national affairs and politics of receiving countries, not just by making representations to governments and their ministries, but by publishing articles in the press and speaking to the audio-visual media. This began in Africa but has now spread worldwide. Sometimes pushy attitudes are also used by the dip-
diplomat to become popular in his own country, possibly with a view to further political activities.

Alongside such developments and occasional excesses, however, a great amount of diplomatic activities still follow the approaches of an enlightened diplomatic culture, which has managed to retain the best of traditional values while shedding ballast and adjusting to new developments. This culture still stresses restraint, politeness, tolerance, patience, empathy and mutual confidence, all qualities which cannot shine in the glare of public diplomacy as practiced today. As in the past, many achievements obtained by practicing this kind of diplomacy must remain unknown to the public. Nonetheless, occasionally certain results become publicly acknowledged, for example, the role played by Norwegian diplomacy with regard to conflicts in Palestine and Sri Lanka.

At the multilateral level, diplomats used to be vocal representatives of the two sides in the cold war as well as of the non-aligned movement. Much time was wasted in acrimonious exchanges; often diplomats of one side were encouraged to shun contacts with their colleagues from the other. Since the end of the east-west confrontation a climate more akin to the values of traditional diplomacy has evolved in multilateral gatherings. Informal and confidential contacts often replace the confrontational statements in public debates, thus contributing to the reaching of more balanced outcomes. The greater involvement of international secretariats in the preparation and management of multilateral negotiations has also led to more intensive interaction with diplomats of the countries concerned. This has promoted a greater awareness of the advantages of diplomatic culture in those circles.

It would thus appear that whereas diplomatic culture has changed and keeps changing, it is by no means dead, and it should not be allowed to die!
THE IDEA OF DIPLOMATIC CULTURE AND ITS SOURCES

Paul Sharp

To what extent does an independent diplomatic culture exist which permits diplomats to exert their own influence on the conduct of international relations? Insofar as such a culture exists, what does it look like, is it a good thing and, if it is, how is it to be sustained? To answer these questions, I will begin by exploring what we generally mean when we talk about culture and how we see culture operating in contemporary international relations. I will then sketch out the basic elements of a diplomatic culture and discuss different accounts of its origins. The main argument of this paper is that something we may call a diplomatic culture arises out of the experience of conducting relations between peoples who regard themselves as distinctive and separate from one another. The production of this culture by experience, however, can benefit from the right sort of diplomatic education and training. This help is greatly needed because diplomats are also shaped by other cultures whose preoccupations are rarely consistent with the requirements of good diplomacy.

The Idea of Culture

Bozeman refers to culture as a “common language, a common pool of memories, and shared way of thinking, reasoning, and communicating,” while Der Derian suggests that it is conventionally seen as a people’s “common stock of ideas and values.”1 Thus, we see the term used to refer to a set of attributes, each of which may or may not have causal or explanatory power, and to suggest a force in its own right. In both senses, culture is seen as important in international relations, but this is a relatively recent development. Formerly, culture was either ignored or treated as an accent which might modify expected behaviour and surprise policy-makers if they had not made allowances for it. The rigidities of Soviet bargaining techniques or the pretensions of French grand strategy, for example, would lose their wrong-headed character once one put on one’s culturally sensitive spectacles. The basic rationality common to us, it was maintained, would then re-appear.

How are we to account for culture’s neglect and subsequent elevation? Three lines of explanation for its neglect suggest themselves: those which distinguish between relations inside polities and outside them; those which are sceptical of the idea of culture itself; and those which assume that beliefs are
easily subjected to the tests of reason and evidence. “Inside/Outside” arguments assert that most political, social and cultural life is lived inside polities, between which only simple relations are conducted in a thin or absent cultural context. Indeed, this thinness or emptiness, it was argued, gave international relations their distinctive quality. Realists saw the international arena as a social vacuum filled only by hot air or fragile utopian projects that always succumbed to considerations of power and national interest. Liberals asserted that power and interests could generate some international rules and a sense of obligation to them, but that both remained circumscribed and prudential in character. Anything stronger depended on the moral afterglow of a previously existing community, Christendom in the case of western Europe, for example. Radicals acknowledged various conceptions of a cosmopolitan world culture, but this existed only immanently or in principle, and certainly not yet. Even for them, culture remained primarily an “inside” phenomenon until the advent of some kind of revolutionary transformation.

Scepticism about the idea of culture itself may be expressed in analytical or political terms. It may be objected that according to typical definitions like the ones above, everything is culture. This may be true, but it is not very useful for explaining things, and it seems to ignore the fact that individual human beings may have uneven and limited liability commitments to the cultures of the societies in which they live. It may be that by calling sets of ideas, values and associated behaviours a culture, we assign existence and explanatory power to something which, properly speaking, does not exist and, in so doing, obscure the real explanations for why a set of people seem to think, believe, and act in a certain way. Belief in cultures may have real consequences for people for what they do, in much the same way as children’s beliefs in Father Christmas, but Father Christmas does not exist, and no one should argue in any way which suggests otherwise. They do, however, and this provides the ground for political scepticism about the idea of culture. In this view, culture claims may be no more than political moves by the relatively weak. The strong do not justify what they want or resist the demands of others on cultural grounds. They employ reason, righteousness, interest and, when all else fails, necessity and power. It is the weaker party that argues that they do what they do because they are who they are, and claim that cultural arguments are trumps, because they have nothing else, not power, reason nor, perhaps, even justice on their side.

Finally, the concession that the elements of culture and the idea of culture operating as a whole may both have material consequences has usually been accompanied by an implied corollary. Beliefs which cannot be rationally sustained in the face of the available evidence will lose their force among reasona-
ble people. To this might be added the belief that the world in which we all live is providing ever more vigorous tests of unsustainable beliefs and other incentives for not adhering to them. The long-established view, therefore, was that we should expect particular cultures to fail under the pressures of modernisation and the idea of culture itself to fade into no more than a signal of secondary accents on an increasingly common form of life.

The Revival of Culture in Contemporary International Relations

None of this seems to have come to pass. Instead, culture appears to be at the centre of contemporary discussions of international relations. There are great debates about whether civilisations - transnational cultural communities of understanding about the world and how people ought to live in it - are more important actors than states in world affairs. Concerns are expressed about the possibility for real understanding between peoples trapped in their respective culture worlds. And, overshadowing all, is the sense that some single, global culture may be in the process of transforming everything. In all these debates, culturalists currently hold the initiative. Sceptical policy-makers and scholars alike who maintain that the commonalities of human experience outweigh the differences are told that this claim is itself culture-bound, as is the idea of globalisation which they thought was eroding those differences which exist.²

How is all this to be explained? One conclusion that most of us are tempted to entertain is that people in general are more stupid than we thought and less brave than we hoped. Under pressure, they cling to old beliefs even when these are proven wrong and counterproductive. Ruling such people, elites which can only justify themselves in cultural (i.e., unreasonable and irrational) terms turned out to be stronger than previously assumed and have not had to rely on raw power. In this view, then, there has been no rise of culture, even if people talk about it more, because the idea is necessarily epiphenomenal in relation to more important things. Even in rationalist terms, this is probably a poor explanation based on a misreading of the incentives under which people operate and judgements about what ought to be important to them. A better one suggests the possibility that the march of reason and modernity in the world is itself a primary catalyst of culturally-based reactions. This march presses people to define who they are and make explicit what was previously implicit in their ways of life in response to it. If this is so, then it suggests problems with the idea of human beings as rational cores with cultural accents. Either assigning reason to the core and culture to the periphery of individu-
als and societies, or the weights assigned to the rational core and the cultural periphery may be mistaken.

Irrationalists favour the former, assigning a capacity for some sort of calculation to the edges of beings driven by more primary impulses and commitments. Culturalists tend to the second formulation, seeing our reasoning capacity taking place within cultural perimeters which settle many of the big questions for us *a priori*, and of which we are barely aware until they are challenged.

**“Big” Cultures**

Mistakenly or not, however, the idea of culture has taken hold in international relations, in terms of what will be referred to here as “big” cultures or civilisational projects embodying claims about what the world is like and how people ought to live in it. At the highest generality, people speak of a global or world culture. They have always done so in the sense of an underlying, cosmopolitan set of values which human beings have been claimed to share whether or not they are aware of the existence of each other. In addition, a surface or even superficial global culture is said to be coming into existence for a variety of reasons. These range from the need to address economic and environmental problems which may be solved only by the efforts of all, to the emergence of worldwide patterns of consumption and their associated fashions. In this view, the common skills, appetites, loyalties and disciplines required by industrial modernisation which, Gellner once maintained, were provided by the creation of national populations within territorial states, now have to be created at the global level to satisfy the new scale of economic operations. This new culture helps establish and maintain the conditions under which a global division of labour operates and the moral and legal terms under which people participate in it. International relations, in short, are becoming more like what we understand as domestic political relations.

At least they would be if not for the fact that this burgeoning common stock of ideas and values is said to be producing antitheses in the form of counter-cultures or cultures of resistance. Old forms of class consciousness, new social forces based on identities or issues, and all sorts of revived ethnic, national and religious localisms may be understood in these terms. The attempt to do so, however, uncovers two problems. First, some elements of a burgeoning cosmopolitan world culture, those associated with the idea of an emerging global civil society, for example, like the idea of universal human rights, the need for codes of conduct for big corporations, or for restrictions on nuclear prolifera-
tion, may be also understood in terms of strategies of resistance to hegemonic projects. Secondly, while cultural responses to cosmopolitan or hegemonic conceptions of globalisation may be themselves understood as global phenomena, very often this is not how their participants understand themselves. They accept neither the global characterisation of what they are up against nor, indeed, the characterisation of themselves in essentially reactive terms. Globalisms, in either their cosmopolitan or hegemonic forms, are seen as the projects of a particular culture from a particular part of the world, and that culture, in its turn, is seen as belonging to an outside contender or rival for primarily regional power and influence.

Instead of one “big” culture, cosmopolitan or hegemonic, provoking a series of cultural responses, therefore, we are presented with a world in which a number of “big” cultures are in contention with one another. These culture worlds are in contention not merely because they have different ideas regarding how their people should live, but because they incorporate views on how all people should live. Some of them, at least, have universal aspirations and this entails that none of them can leave each other alone. The most obvious protagonists in this regard are the market democracies of the “West” on the one hand, and the “world of Islam” stretching from Morocco on the Atlantic Ocean to Indonesia and the Philippines on the South China Sea on the other. The modernising project of the former is presented as clashing with the efforts of the community of the faithful to rediscover or revive its own transnational religious and political way, if not forward exactly, then towards God and away from the material corruption of this world.

This view of clashing civilisations is problematic, not to say controversial. It may be objected that it does violence to the facts. In no simple sense does a “world of Islam” actually exist. The faith is divided into at least two confessions. The expression of both is underlain by strong local cultural differences and overlain by different degrees of accommodation with modernity. Similarly, the West is divided, and some would say increasingly so, between US and European models reflecting their respective cultural priorities. Identity problems such as these underlie the difficulty of seeing civilisations as actors in any meaningful sense. The West, for example, does not act. Other kinds of actors which may share aspects of its culture claim to act in its name. To objections based on appeals to the evidence may be added those which rest on moral or prudential grounds. We should not speak in terms of clashing civilisations, it is sometimes argued, because of the self-fulfilling potentials of such talk. It may exacerbate existing differences and create new ones where there were none before. This is not really an objection to the claim that the world can be divid-
ed along civilisational lines. Indeed, it may confirm the extent to which it can, for the stories we tell must have some correspondence with reality or resonance with the way in which others apprehend that reality if they are to secure an audience. “Big” culture stories clearly seem to resonate more than in the past, and the moral questions they pose do not revolve around whether or not they should be told, but how and with what ends in view.

There are, nevertheless, real difficulties with referring to, for example, African, Hindu or Confucian civilisations as actors or forces in the world, especially when, as in the case of the latter two, culture has an alternative and more obvious referent. It is India and China which act in the world as collective actors, not the civilisations of which they happen to be the principal bearers and vehicles. The fact that this is so reminds us that most people still regard states as the most important actors in international relations and, thus, the society of those states and its associated culture as the primary international culture. From this perspective, cosmopolitan claims on behalf of humanity as a whole, various hegemonic visions of how we all really want to live, other faith-based claims about how God wants us to live, and interest-based claims about what particular groups of people need if they are to fulfil their potential (or merely survive), are all mediated to a great extent by the voices of territorial, sovereign states in their relations with one another.

Few doubt that the state system remains the most important formal organising principle of the international system, and most people believe that this formal organising principle best captures how the world actually lives, if not must live or ought to live. They argue much more about the practical application of the states system, especially over who gets their own state and who does not, than they argue about whether or not the world should be carved up into states. The culture of the states system or society has its own distinctive priorities. States ought to co-operate with each other to secure wider and agreed-upon goods, but where this is not possible, their primary responsibility is to themselves and the people who inhabit them, and it is right that this is so. If this account of the formal organisation of international relations is broadly accepted, however, the extent to which it is actually true and should be regarded as right are increasingly challenged by scholars, citizens and even governments alike.

We live, then, in an international world of at least three cultural levels: global/hegemonic; civilisational/regional and state/national, with many other transnational identities cutting across these levels. Several of these cultures purport to capture what life in general is and ought to be about. They do so in ways which theoretically call into question and practically undermine each
other’s premises. How, one wonders, is it possible to conduct diplomacy, effectively representing these identities and their interests to one another, in such a world, and what sort of culture does diplomacy itself need if its practitioners are to be effective?

“Small” Cultures

This is a difficult question to answer. The difficulties may be illustrated by shifting our attention from the rise of “big” culture in international relations to what I call the “small” culture of the organisations in which we work. The rise of “big” culture has been mirrored by an increased interest in “small” culture which is, at first glance, paradoxical. It is so because the focus is upon organisations viewed in primarily instrumental terms and how to maximise their efficiency in these terms, what we might regard as post-cultural or even anti-cultural themes. Implicit in any social organisation is the idea of how people might be best organised to achieve a wide range of goals. Even in a community of people who are not conscious of themselves in these terms - regarding themselves, for example, as simply existing as part of some sort of natural order - some thought must be given to how certain collective purposes, or individual purposes requiring collective effort, might be more easily achieved. From such reflections we may trace the eventual emergence of both a science of society which sees the latter in primarily functional and instrumental terms and an applied science which focuses on how societies might be best organised to perform functions and achieve purposes. This applied science has adopted the idea of culture and adapted it to help solve its own problems by asking, and posing answers to, the question, “what sort of general beliefs, values and senses of identity on the part of the members of an organisation or society will best promote both desired goals and the social arrangements designed to secure them?”

Attempts to instrumentalise the idea of culture in this way pose two questions familiar to anyone who has participated in such exercises. Do they work and for whom? A common response to the first question is that they are a waste of time. In this view, they bear testimony only to the wealth and gullibility of organisations which commit time and money to the elevation of useful insights about self-awareness into rigid and time-consuming operational principles which hinder more than they help. A common response to the second is that the construction of such cultures is an exercise in soft power on behalf of particular agendas not necessarily consistent with the aims of an organis-
tion, its members or those on behalf of whom they work. Not only that, it may be regarded as a particularly intrusive exercise of soft power, a bid for the soul, perhaps, rather than for merely external compliance. Both answers contain elements of truth, although, insofar as all attempts to get people to do things must result in a number of failures and all attempts to get people to do what they otherwise would not have done must result in a number of complaints, these truths must be kept in perspective.

Behind such concerns, however, lie two more analytical questions. First, does the attempt to create, build or foster a small culture within an organisation fundamentally misunderstand how cultures, or ideas of cultures, form and how they operate? Big cultures appear to have formed through processes more akin to sedimentation and evolution than construction and revolution. They look natural rather than synthesised. Thus, there looks to be something fundamentally different between the way “the world of Islam” has emerged and the way in which, for example, a government seeks to create a new culture in the staffs of its foreign service or universities, by which they are encouraged to think of themselves as value-adding, service providers with clients. This is not the case. It is hard to imagine even the most natural-looking of cultures developing without some element of conscious construction, and we can see conscious elements in the production and reproduction of real cultures today. Naturalisation is probably more a consequence of the passage of time than culturalists would like to think. This should not prevent the generation of interesting hypotheses about, for example, the relationship between a culture’s ability to appear natural and its effectiveness at providing a frame and reference for how people think of themselves and what they do.

Insofar as all cultures involve synthetic elements, however, this leads to the second question. What are sources of these elements? I say sources, for it would seem unlikely that a culture has a single set of sources for its conscious and synthetic element. Indeed, in a world where the idea of “big” and contesting cultures is in ascendancy, it might be expected that a “small” culture like that of diplomacy would provide one of the terrains for those contests. Thus, while we may wish to know what kind of diplomatic culture would best facilitate the representation of big cultures and their agents to one another, we must acknowledge that actual diplomacy reflects the priorities of those agents and its culture bears the marks of theirs. The question is, “to what extent?” which is really a polite way of asking the questions which were posed at the beginning of the paper. Does an independent diplomatic culture in the sense of a common set of experiences, pool of memories, way of thinking, reasoning and communicating exist? If it does exist, does it matter?
Diplomatic Culture and its Sources

The elements of such a culture are easily identified by considering how the members of a diplomatic corps or the diplomatic community at an international organisation regard one another as “dear colleagues.” First, they will be aware of each other as servants of the national interest of their respective states as this is interpreted by their respective political leaders. Second, they will be aware of each other as members of complex organisations with their own sets of organisational and bureaucratic interests. Both are elements of what might be termed a culture of sympathy. Footballers and soldiers, for example, might share these sorts of elements of an outlook on life with people in other teams or armies and still primarily be opponents or enemies. The components of a diplomatic culture go beyond a sense of sympathy with colleagues who, nevertheless, remain on the other side of the boundary, to a sense of being involved with them on common projects or possibly a common grand project.

Thus, the third element is that of maintaining the conditions which make diplomatic work possible. An obvious example of this would be their commitment to the idea of diplomatic immunity and the sense that diplomats as a body are, for certain purposes, separate from the rest of humanity. A fourth element reflects the concern that the process of communication does not itself become a source of unwanted tension and conflict in a relationship. Hence arises the profession’s emphasis on both precision and courtesy in communication and on keeping the personal relations of diplomats and the political relations of those whom they represent separate. Fifth, we may identify a value placed on understanding not only what is happening on the other side of the hill, but also on why, in terms of the people who live there. And finally, a diplomatic culture would seem to incorporate a preference for the peaceful resolution of disputes. In short, when compared to the rest of us, diplomats are, indeed, the successors to the angels that their forebears claimed them to be.4

At least, they would be if they were able and willing to live up to the high standards embodied in the culture of their profession. The possibility exists that these elements of a diplomatic culture are no more than pieties that we all express on occasions without deep practical commitment. Indeed, arguments suggest not only that diplomats cannot live up to the high standards implied by the culture which presents them as heroic go-betweens, but also that this is itself one of the great obstacles to better international relations. Diplomats, it may be argued, cannot live up to the standards of their own culture because, in practice, they are far more formed by the culture of the domestic worlds in which they are rooted. Navari, for example, identifies a range of diplomatic
cultures consistent with the requirements of dynastic, absolutist, republican and liberal democratic states respectively. Each comes with its own distinctive conceptions of who or what is to be represented, what constitutes an interest, and what are appropriate means for securing such interests.

Arguably, we are witnessing a similar sort of shift today with the rise of trading states and virtual states. Their diplomats are told that they must acquire new management and entrepreneurial skills which will enable them to bring people and resources together for a variety of purposes in an environment where information is increasingly available to more people who will attempt to act on their own account. In short, diplomatic training is becoming more like the training that anyone else who works in big organisations - private companies, government ministries, colleges and hospitals, for example - undergoes as they are asked to think of themselves as providers of a service to a range of clients. Nothing is intrinsically wrong with this, and some aspects of it may be quite useful. The important question to ask, however, is whether these changes are of a magnitude which would make the activity of diplomacy in 16th century Europe, for example, unintelligible to a present-day ambassador or render an Athenian proxenoi incapable of understanding what is going on today. I suspect not, because there is a core to our respective professions and businesses that this sort of training and acculturation does not touch or, at worst, merely impedes.

It may be argued, however, that even this core, the idea of an independently existing diplomatic culture with its own sense of the world, is an emanation of something else. Diplomacy is conventionally presented as a response to a condition of human relations that exist separately from it. People live in separate political units and because these units have relations with one another, the need for diplomacy arises. Der Derian takes issue with this conventional understanding because, in his view, it obscures diplomacy’s role in reproducing and maintaining what he calls conditions of estrangement in human relations. Every time diplomats attempt to reconcile national positions, whether it be on the future of a piece of territory, the size of fishing quotas, or limits on the production of carbon dioxide, the premise on which they operate helps to reproduce a world in which positions on such issues are both multiple and national. Diplomacy, in this view, not only manages the consequences of separateness, but, in so doing, it reproduces the conditions out of which those consequences arise. Presenting itself as an independent response to natural and permanent conditions, therefore, is simply diplomacy’s part of the process by which human beings are maintained in conditions of estrangement from one another.

Problems with this argument are associated with the concepts of estrangement and alienation which it uses. The argument assumes that neither estrange-
ment nor alienation is the default setting for human beings in their relations with one another. Indeed, conditions of estrangement and a sense of alienation require a great deal of work to maintain. However, the ideas of estrangement and alienation also imply their corollaries, a process of making familiar, which is quite intelligible, and a true or natural condition from which a condition of alienation can exist which is far more problematic. We may imagine diplomats involved in making the strange seem more familiar by cultivating good relations, or even making the familiar seem more strange by creating the conditions for a war. It is less easy to imagine them involved in maintaining or constituting conditions of alienation, for that raises the question “alienation from what?” Unless some essentialist sense of natural or good human beings living in natural or right relations with one another is implied, it is hard to think what this might be. History provides us with powerful motives for wishing that such human beings were more than a theoretical possibility, but few reasons for thinking that they actually might be and some grounds for worrying about the practical consequences of thinking otherwise.

The Autonomous Component in Diplomatic Culture

If we can separate the notion of estrangement from that of alienation, however, we have the element of diplomatic culture that we might regard as autonomous and belonging to diplomats and the activity of diplomacy. This component may be regarded as an encounter culture, and its workings are best illustrated initially by employing the device often used by writers on diplomacy, namely, that of postulating its origins and early development. We imagine the prototypical heralds and messengers, products of their respective societies as they undoubtedly were, once they walked out of their home settlement or found their donkey in the trade caravan. They move on to the new terrain of someone else’s system of rules, conventions, power and authority, or the space between such systems. How should they talk to strangers and how should they talk to those employed by strangers in the same capacity as themselves? Can they borrow from the herders who inhabit border zones but for whom the borders have no significance? Can they borrow from the traders who have preceded them but for whom the questions with which they have now to deal did not arise? How do those who claim to be supreme gods or the descendants of such talk to one another?

In the case of the Amarna system we have a record, admittedly sparse, of diplomatic activity with which to supplement our efforts to imagine what diplo-
macy was like between the early empires. In one account of a dynastic marriage between Mittani and Egypt, for example, we see their respective ambassadors, Keliya and Mane, jointly reporting on the acceptability of the bride, the bride price and related gifts; travelling together; and being detained together when a hitch arises in the negotiations. We see each of them working to re-assure both sovereigns at difficult moments, and it seems reasonable to infer that they collaborated in this effort. Doubtless the ambassadors’ personal prestige became linked to the success of the relationship, but this diminishes neither the distinctiveness of their shared position between two worlds nor their preoccupation with making relations between those two worlds work.

We have a far richer sense of similar sorts of encounters between strangers from the records of European expansion into the rest of the world. On multiple occasions it is possible to see the terms being worked out through which relations can be conducted with others, even when basic questions of whether they are human, like us, and, thus, possibly, equal to us, have not been worked out. The Iroquois, for example, found it difficult to establish the full relations of forest diplomacy with someone whom they could not regard as kin. Once they had decided they wanted relations with someone, therefore, the first task was to give them a name by which they might be adopted into their clan system. The Europeans, in contrast, assumed that diplomacy took place between those who regarded themselves as different from, but equal to, one another. The point is not that these sorts of first principle differences had to be settled before relations could be conducted (often, they were never settled), but that relations had to be conducted by someone nevertheless, and in the midst of such differences.

Sometimes, these differences had fortunate synergies. In the Amarna system it was customary to marry out one’s princesses to lesser courts as demonstrations of standing, a practice which resulted in many arguments about the relative standings of the great kings. Egypt, in contrast, received princesses from courts it regarded as lesser as a mark of its superior standing. As a consequence, dynastic marriages with Egyptian princesses might be arranged without either party having to regard itself as subordinate. One imagines diplomats leading those who argued that this fundamental difference in dynastic marriage practices and understandings did not have to be resolved.

More often, however, a way of living with differences unresolved had to be found, typically by recognising what was important to the other side without understanding why. In the forest diplomacy of the Iroquois, for example, diplomatic démarches and treaties were made by “reading” them into wampum strings and belts with great ceremony and were received and maintained by having the strings and belts “speak” through a mediator. Great importance
was attached to the renewal of agreements by frequent face-to-face exchanges of principals and/or their representatives who would, in the metaphors of forest diplomacy, “re-polish” the covenant chains which bound their peoples. The agreement was said to have no life without such a process of renewal. The Europeans, in contrast, committed their agreements to paper and, in so doing, expected them to remain in force until other agreements, similarly committed, superceded them. Europeans were perplexed by requests for meetings to renew agreements to which they already considered themselves bound by their signatures, while the Iroquois were surprised when the Europeans attempted to hold them to agreements which had not been renewed at regular intervals. These differences were never fully resolved, but what the diplomats of both sides quickly learned was to insist upon their counterparts’ observing the forms which they did not understand but knew to be important. If a negotiated agreement was to be regarded as serious, then the Iroquois insisted that the Europeans sign bits of paper to which they affixed their own signs, while the Europeans insisted on being presented with wampum.

What we see then are men and women in the middle seeking not to reconcile differences between those they represented nor even to establish a common basis of understanding between them, but a way of conducting relations between peoples who maintain their own understandings intact. In this space between cultures, therefore, we see diplomats, bearers of their respective home cultures, developing their own culture with its own preoccupation. How do we find a way to talk to each other, possibly, but not necessarily, in such a way as to render our respective peoples less strange to one another? It may be objected, however, that this autonomous element of diplomatic culture, if it indeed exists, pertains only to the first contacts and early encounters of peoples who previously had nothing to do with one another. As the space between fills with various interactions creating their own communities of understanding, then surely both the distinctiveness of the diplomatic culture and the need for it would lessen. Indeed, it is frequently argued that diplomacy and its attendant culture are being left behind as levels of transnational interaction in other sectors rise and develop their own cultures. Diplomacy, it is said, serves only its original master, the state, in a world of many new international actors. Not only that, because of its culture’s outdated conception of the state, it serves it poorly. Worse, insofar as it works at all, it does so to keep people apart in spite of their similarities, rather than bringing them together despite their differences. Who needs diplomats, indeed?
Seeing diplomacy as based on a vestigial and minimalist encounter culture from earlier times is, however, is mistaken. For one thing, it is based on a misreading of the history of diplomacy.

The latter, in fact, provides corroborating evidence for Buzan’s and Little’s claim that political-military systems of relations have typically followed the development of economic, social and religious relations between peoples. The ambassadors of Amarna travelled along trade caravan routes which were already established, as did the representatives of European powers who made contact with the Iroquois confederacy and the tribes beyond. The European legations to the Sublime Porte emerged from trading companies that were already in situ, and the system of resident embassies first emerged precisely because of the density and continuous character of relations between the states of northern Italy. In short, wherever diplomacy appears, encounters have already taken place and established patterns of relations. In what sense, therefore, can diplomacy be regarded as resting on an encounter culture?

One possibility would be to push its origins further back to when traders, worshipers, explorers and wanderers with a sense of themselves and others first encounter one another. In this view, the diplomats of the ancient empires, the classical city states and European imperial powers merely adapted and formalised an encounter culture which had been developed in its essentials by those who had gone before them. This is possible, but it still does not explain why a culture based on problems associated with seminal encounters persists once relations are established and in the teeth of developments which one might expect to quickly supercede it. An alternative and better approach is to cease seeing encounters in primarily historic terms, that is, as defining moments which occurred at various points in the past between people who then, if they are allowed, proceed to become increasingly familiar with, and less strange to, one another.

Instead, we may think of encounters occurring and re-occurring between peoples who may know aspects of each other quite well and may have done so for a long time. They re-occur because of the kind of relationship which exists between these peoples, a relationship in which, for some reason, a sense of difference and separateness from one another is emphasised. Contact and continuous relations do not bring them closer together, at least not willingly. This sense of difference and separateness is not absolute, but a matter of degree. It is not, for example, entirely absent from the relationship between lovers nor does it completely dominate the relations of groups in an ethnic conflict. However, insofar as a sense of difference and separateness exists between peoples who conduct relations with one another, those relations will have a diplomatic char-
acter, and those responsible for conducting them will experience the predicaments and imperatives which have given rise to a diplomatic culture.

If this is the case, then the autonomous element of diplomatic culture neither estranges nor makes familiar necessarily. Neither the “confidence curve” nor diplomats’ commitment to it are unidirectional.13 Countries and peoples may be brought closer together or pushed further apart by the exercise of diplomacy. It reflects policy which, in turn, reflects broader economic, technological and, indeed, cultural trends, although these do not push in any single direction. Thus, it is perfectly possible for individual diplomats, from a European Union (EU) member state for example, to be engaged in activity which simultaneously renders the EU more familiar to the people of their member state while estranging the Union to outsiders. The specific separate aggregates and groupings in which people live may shift over time, as may the conditions which favour or hinder the ability of specific groups or types of groups to live separately and feel distinct. As the emergence of the international relations of “big” culture would seem to suggest, however, the separation principle remains a constant. When people feel or define themselves as such in their relations with one another, those responsible for conducting their relations will find themselves in the thin atmosphere of the encounter with little more than the autonomous element of diplomatic culture to help them.

Conclusions: Strengthening the Autonomous Component of Diplomatic Culture

Whether an autonomous component of diplomatic culture will come to the aid of diplomats, however, is another matter. The autonomous component of diplomatic culture operates as a weak force when compared to the far stronger national and statist component in which individual diplomats grow and mature, the priorities of which they are committed to serve. Its sources are fewer and more diffuse. We may suppose that some people are attracted to the profession by reasons that go beyond simply entering into the service of their country in a career which remains associated with personal status and prestige. Individuals of a more romantic cast may have made themselves familiar with the idea of diplomacy as a potentially heroic or tragic drama played out on the highest stage in human affairs. One suspects not many, however. Acculturation of this sort is more likely to come with experience or it will, at least, if there is time for reflection. Experience may wear down the hopes and aspirations with which people enter the profession. However, it will also enforce the
sense that they, along with their colleagues in other services, constitute a community with a common set of predicaments and priorities, which, to a greater extent than is the case with other professions, are bound up with the international world they represent and help to keep running. Lawyers, professors and footballers may also acquire this sense of common professional identity and interests, but the worlds in which they operate are sustained by many other things. Not so the world of diplomacy; for diplomats, to an extent greater than lawyers, professors and footballers, not only serve their professional universe, they constitute it.

Can diplomats be acculturated to this sense of themselves only by experience? The latter may, indeed, be the best teacher, but diplomatic educators have a great stake in believing that experience is not only an inefficient and uneven teacher, but also that is can be helped. People can be prepared at the onset of their careers to absorb and make the most of the lessons of their experiences to come. The implications of my argument that an autonomous component of diplomatic culture exists are, therefore, considerable for how we ought to undertake diplomatic training and education. The focus of the latter in recent years has been on two priorities. The first has been technical skills, drafting communications and agreements, for example, and doing so in an era when information technologies are constantly being transformed with uncertain consequences for the way in which diplomacy is conducted. The second focus has been on imparting insights from intellectual disciplines like economics, psychology, and the management sciences. New subjects, for example, environmental sciences, have been tacked on to the curriculum when the need for them has become apparent. Diplomacy, *per se*, has been relegated, sometimes by default and sometimes by intention, to the preambles and afterwords of programmes designed thus.

What is needed is for diplomacy, the science and arts of managing relations between those who regard themselves as separate and different, to be placed back at the centre of such programmes. In theory, this would involve treating what I have identified as the autonomous component of diplomatic culture as diplomacy’s own culture. In practice, it would involve getting diplomats to think of themselves as members of their respective services less and as members of an international profession more. In this regard, the diplomatic corps is an institution to which both academic and professional attention may be long overdue.

Putting diplomacy back at the heart of diplomatic education and training will be difficult for two reasons. First, developments in diplomatic education and training in recent years reflect both the priorities of those who gen-
erally pay the educators and the more widespread sense that diplomacy of the sort I am talking about is primarily a historical phenomenon which yields a few insights and many more banana skins. Teaching diplomacy, therefore, would have to take on something of the character of a subversive activity. Indeed, it would be doubly subversive. It would depart from what those who control the purse strings want taught, and it would contribute to making their respective visions of the world in which we will all be happy harder to achieve (which is no more than saying that, as always, diplomacy has a role to play in saving governments and others from their own worst selves).

To be subversive in both ways will require the application of considerable intelligence and tact, not to mention ketman, on the part of the diplomatic educators. I have no doubt that they are up to it and, indeed, that a measure of this sort of thing is going on already. However, teaching diplomacy as a subversive activity is inhibited by the second difficulty, namely that serving diplomats who have the experience have not been the best communicators of what their experience holds and has to teach. Historically, diplomacy has been an elite business with a sense of recruiting the best, those capable of grasping the essentials without being told or, at least, learning them quickly from a few hints, nods and winks. Anyone who needed more did not belong, and experienced diplomats have long been unable or unwilling to spell out the elements of their craft to those who cannot grasp them for themselves. We all now know a great deal more about what is and, more often, what is not going on in nuanced communication societies. The deep understanding which appears to hold them together may be no more than a mixture of bluff, mystery and misunderstanding bound by pressures for social conformity. Even so, such a system served when foreign services could rely on recruiting the brightest, the best, and the most conforming to a gentlemen’s game for which the players were unambiguous and the rules relatively simple. It has not served so well when the fundamental assumptions around which the diplomatic culture has been organised can be, and have been, challenged at all levels of societies.

Under such conditions, experienced diplomats have been ineffective at reflecting on what they do in ways which satisfy anyone other than their own constituency of enthusiasts or those who want to hear vignettes of working with the great and good. Habits of discretion and humility, sheer busyness and, perhaps, a sense that no one is interested have inhibited the reflections of diplomats on their own craft from being more than implied or notes in the margins. The result is, however, that diplomats often appear puzzled by what professors, politicians and other voices of the chattering classes (including, sometimes, their own political masters) are saying is happening to international relations.
They have been particularly ineffective, for example, in addressing the debates about who is now entitled to and who now needs representation.

Consider the response of embassies to arguments about the rise of public diplomacy. They may ignore them, which, to judge by the failure of most embassies to engage in public diplomacy of any sort, most of them do. They may address the arguments in such a way as to suggest that “they just don’t get it.” Public diplomacy, for example, is simply seen as providing a series of new conduits in the receiving state along which the embassy must get out “our line.” Or they may flirt with coalition-building and issue-promoting activities which undermine the established rationales for resident embassies and restrictions upon them without realising that this is what they are doing. One gets very little sense of an engagement from a diplomatic perspective with the arguments and assumptions which fuel the trends towards more public diplomacy or more outsourcing of diplomatic activities, or more involvement by private citizens talking directly to one another. Therefore, the first step in bringing diplomatic culture back into the heart of training and educating in diplomacy may involve bringing senior and experienced diplomats back to school. In the first instance, however, they will be asked not to impart, but reflect on the assumptions of their own culture and how to make these assumptions more explicit and intelligible to others. Only then, perhaps, can the potentially subversive activity of teaching diplomacy, as opposed to teaching other things to diplomats, proceed apace.

Endnotes


4 G. R. Berridge, Diplomacy: Theory and Practice (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). G. R. Berridge and Alan James, authors of A Dictionary of Diplomacy (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), provide contrasting views on whether diplomacy must be characterised by peaceful ends and peaceful processes.

DIPLOMATIC CULTURE AND ITS DOMESTIC CONTEXT

Kishan S. Rana

Is there a specific, distinctive diplomatic culture? Given the fact that the conduct of diplomacy is regulated by international law and by custom, and since the structures through which states conduct their external relations, both bilateral and multilateral, are standardised, it is fair to say that both the institutions and the process form a pattern of their own, unique to this profession. The professional diplomatist actors on the international stage, and their institutions, display certain shared characteristics. Empirical evidence shows that at different times in history, diplomatic culture has varied, adapting itself to circumstance and needs. We are concerned here with the current scene, not the history or the evolution of this professional culture.

Characteristics

What are the current circumstances that shape this culture? The following elements are relevant.

A. The number of sovereign state actors on the international stage has grown dramatically. Member-states of the UN number 192, in contrast to the 50 founder-states that signed the San Francisco Treaty of 1945. At that time, national individuality was even suppressed by non-Western diplomats. Today we celebrate diversity, in diplomatic attire, working languages, and styles of conduct, in contrast to the recent past. The working diplomats one encounters, in bilateral, regional and global settings are much more uninhibited and prone to express their individuality. One incidental effect is that cross-culture studies for diplomats are more important than in the past.

B. At the same time, shared values lie beneath the surface. Professional and personal integrity and an ability to win trust from interlocutors are foremost, regardless of a diplomat’s country of origin. Surface diversity and a measure of underlying homogeneity is one way of describing the situation. If we are candid, we might acknowledge that some countries of the global South have tended to be less serious or professionally committed to their work, especially in bilateral diplomacy, in places of medium or relatively
low interest to the home country. Some observers might assert that such situations are under evolution and one should not generalise excessively.

C. The entry of multiple players in international affairs has led to a culture that perforce has to be more open and accessible than before. The activities and relatively autonomous stature of these state and “private” or civil society stakeholders in the diplomatic process has forced relearning of skills for the professional diplomats. In order to distinguish the latter from the “para-diplomats,” one is tempted to go back to the old term “diplomatist” to describe the full-time professionals; we should also acknowledge that we have in view mainly the professional “diplomatists.”

D. Regional diplomacy, be it in the shape of the unification process of the European Union or the intensifying dialogue within the Organization of American States or the Association of South East Asian Countries, is producing multiple encounters among diplomats of different regions, as well as, perhaps, some degree of mutual emulation and a kind of “regional” diplomatic style, or at the very least, cross-influences.

E. In describing diplomatic culture, we need to be aware of a normative element in our narration. We tend to describe an ideal that may exist but imperfectly, in the world of practicing diplomats.

What are the contours of a shared, generalised diplomatic culture? We may broadly distinguish between the culture of individuals and institutional culture. Both are shaped by national characteristics, but beyond their distinctiveness are some common elements typical of both the people and the structures of foreign ministries and their diplomatic services. This paper focuses on the commonalities, while noting also the national context that must be taken into account when we look at particular countries.

1. It is a culture that flows from its function, namely, managing external relations in a foreign environment that ranges from the bilateral to regional and global. Ability to handle the cross-cultural interface is central to the professional tasks, as is language and area expertise, besides other functional skills.

2. It is a culture of outreach, advocacy, communication and negotiation. These are among the core professional skills. By its very nature, diplomacy
is pragmatic, working for the possible, even while ideals and principles may provide a frame of reference. Its focus is on the possible, generally within a spirit of mutual accommodation with foreign partners. This means a focus on compromise, and on pragmatic solutions that bridge differences.

3. Our interdependent world is dominated by globalisation, subject complexity (and technicality), plus multi-level dialogue among states, with varied actors, state and private. A central task of diplomacy is to find synthesis and cross-connections between issues, to produce linkage and leverage. This changes the work description of the professional from that of the generalist of the past, to the “generalist-specialist,” or someone akin to a systems engineer, who is not the master of each element of the international dialogue, but can find the interconnections between disparate subjects, in pursuit of national interest.

4. It is a culture of gradualism, of working slowly towards objectives, mainly focused on incremental results. Each individual participant in the diplomatic process is a cog in a continuum, indebted to predecessors and aware that others will carry forward the dossiers on which he or she has worked.

5. Public service reform is widespread, even a national priority in many states. A culture of accountability and user-friendliness is beginning to emerge, though this is a new notion in diplomacy. Foreign ministries in countries as far apart as France, Thailand and the UK are today guided by public management concepts such as good governance, delivery of value and customer satisfaction. Corporate culture norms like ISO 9000 certification are creeping into diplomacy networks. Other countries implement similar approaches through citizen charters.

6. Concepts of domestic public diplomacy or public communication are also reshaping this diplomatic culture. This entails two-way dialogue with the publics, and institutionalised dialogue with civil society, based on accepting them as legitimate stakeholders in foreign policy and the diplomatic process. China offers an interesting example of recent conversion to public diplomacy.

7. The diplomatic corps has always acted as a unifying influence on professional diplomats posted abroad, reflecting shared values. A new trend is a heavy focus on bilateral interactions between countries that keep embassy
personnel pre-occupied; accordingly, social interaction among diplomats is reduced and, when it takes place, all too often it is in a regional framework, in terms of clusters of African, Arab or EU envoys. In the capitals that are home to a large diplomatic community, much of the socialisation takes place in the regional frame. This strengthens the regional values and styles and slightly reduces the cross-connection within the diplomatic corps as an entity.

The above list is illustrative, not exhaustive. Other elements that are distinctive to individual countries should be added to the list as we consider particular states and regions.

**Domestic Interactions**

Let us consider the way this professional culture interacts with the domestic environment. The first issue this raises is the manner in which diplomats and the foreign ministry apparatus are perceived at home.

In many countries, foreign ministries currently face criticism, even a sizable image deficit. An Asian foreign ministry official that attended a conference held at Wilton Park, UK in January 2003 on the theme “Diplomacy Today” remarked: “Everywhere, diplomatic services feel themselves to be under siege.”³ In countries such as Japan and Thailand, where the foreign ministry and its embassies enjoyed a high reputation until the recent past, financial scandal and other lapses uncovered in their domestic media in the last two years have led to a loss of public trust. In Denmark, a TV documentary series titled “Our Expensive Diplomacy” found popular reception in 2002. In India, where the print media has seldom viewed its diplomats with favour, a leading daily carried an editorial page critique titled “The Indian Fossil Service”⁴ and some months later the leading economic daily carried a lead editorial blaming foreign ministry officials for the country’s low brand equity abroad.⁵ An Internet-based poll in July 2004, during the kidnapping of three Indians working in Iraq (at a time when many foreigners had been kidnapped and even killed) showed that 74% of Indians felt that the Indian government had not done enough to ensure release of the hostages.⁶ One may identify several reasons for such public disenchantment.

First, domestic publics that have progressively become interested in foreign affairs have often found the foreign ministry establishment not responding fast enough to this new development. A quick survey today in different
capitals would show countries in early stages of implementing their domestic outreach strategies. Inflated expectations may also be behind this loud media criticism of diplomatic services. Second, in some countries the foreign ministry was earlier perceived as exempt from corruption and other wrongdoing, perhaps because it was insulated from extensive public contact. The breaking of the sharp division between domestic and external work has placed the foreign ministry closer into the home context. Expansion in economic diplomacy has also exposed working diplomats to new temptations. Third, standards of public accountability and good governance have risen for all agencies of the government, and the foreign ministry is not insulated from this trend. At the same time, public expectations have also risen, led by changes in the manner in which all government ministries are expected to be accountable. Witness, for instance, the new notions of performance targets and “outcomes,” pioneered in UK in the late 1980s under the inspiration of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, that apply in Australia, France, and New Zealand, among others. Fourth, in many countries diplomatic services have often been seen as elites that are too insulated from domestic circumstances. This produces envy among the other branches of public services, and the situation is compounded when the foreign ministry appears to function in isolation, or practices poor coordination with the functional ministries. South Asia has witnessed this over the years, especially India.

The situation described above does not, of course, obtain everywhere. But the loss of insulation from domestic publics or, to put it more positively, the necessity for the foreign ministry to integrate and work more closely with state and non-state actors at home, is part of the wider dimension of the diplomat–home interaction. For instance, Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade regards the building of better understanding of the country’s foreign policy and support for its diplomatic service as a legitimate goal of its internal public diplomacy. Other countries may not say this openly but are motivated by the same calculation. Let us consider this further.

1. The foreign ministry has evolved from its earlier role as the exclusive channel - that is, the “gatekeeper” - to external contacts by other branches of government to the role of coordinator. But unlike the earlier situation of external contact monopolisation, the foreign ministry has to earn the confidence and the cooperation of these agencies, and that in turn hinges on the extent to which it is perceived by these partners as adding value to their work. This applies with special force to the foreign ministry’s dealings with civil society and the full panoply of non-state partners who have
to be persuaded to work with the MFA. Success hinges on the foreign ministry’s openness and transparency.

The track record of different foreign ministries in implementing openness and gaining domestic trust is uneven. It is interesting that the transition states of East and Central Europe and Central Asia have shown greater flexibility and willingness to communicate with internal stakeholders than a number of the older developing countries of Africa and Asia. This may well be since the post-communist regimes have a more urgent necessity for change, and a keener urge to sweep away the cobwebs of the past. For instance, many of them have sections within the MFA charged with dialogue with domestic and international NGOs and civil society, while in many developing countries this is yet to happen, in part because of reserve in accepting them as partners.

2. A more advanced model of internal communication occurs where the MFA has moved from coordination to “networking,” as a proactive from of multilevel dialogue with the entire foreign affairs community within the country. On the face of it, communication should come easily to diplomats, since this is one of the core skills of the profession. In the UK, the networking model works well with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), not only in dealings with different home partners, but even in the shape of economic diplomacy structures – “Export Britain” and “Invest Britain” that are located in the FCO and jointly managed with another ministerial department, the Board of Trade. Contrast this with the situation of unending turf battle characteristic of the management of economic diplomacy in countries such as India and Thailand. Within the EU we witness more advanced forms of cooperation, mandated by the unification process and the fact that EU affairs are no longer “external,” but a kind of hybrid “domestic-external” zone in which all branches of government have equal competence. While the response of each EU MFA is far from uniform, new models of indispensable networking have developed. More study is needed to examine if some of these concepts and methods can be emulated elsewhere.

3. The foreign ministry is one agency that has no sectoral agenda of its own, but is a harmoniser of varied, sometimes clashing, functional interests of all the other agencies as they relate to external affairs. The only permanent interest of the MFA is in the advancement of national interests abroad, in their totality. This should give it a “natural” centrality and an honest broker status, in cases of differences between different agencies on
the policy or tactics on some foreign issue. For instance, to counter the threat from terrorism, an internal affairs ministry may demand strong visa controls on the entry of foreigners; a tourism ministry concerned with stepping up the inflow of foreign tourists may prefer a more liberal regime. The civil aviation ministry may be more concerned with the profitability of national airlines than an open-skies policy that gives more flights that bring in business visitors and tourists. Ideally, the MFA should be able to adjudicate or help harmonise differences. But sometimes the MFA is perceived as excessively interested in good external relations for their own sake, or “soft.” During the Falkland War a former British Foreign Secretary accused the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of having forgotten the distinction between diplomacy and foreign policy, and having concentrated too much on the former!

4. MFAs are traditionally attuned to secrecy and “managing” information. The new dictum of openness sits heavily with them, especially those that have a strong history and self-image. While it is customary today to have a unit at the foreign ministry to handle interface with civil society and NGOs, not just in Western ministries but also in the transition states - the latter having shown themselves to be fast learners of the structures and jargon of contemporary diplomacy - that is not the case with many developing countries. India, for instance, does not have a unit to handle civil society dialogue; nor a designated agency for public diplomacy, which is still handled in compartmental fashion by at least three different agencies, with no coordination between them. One consequence is that dialogue with academia, business associations and thinktanks has an *ad hoc* and episodic character, dependent on the individual official who is in authority, lacking permanence or institutional force. In some other developing countries, such as the ASEAN member-states, the development of multiform regional cooperation is opening up the work culture of the foreign ministries, and we see the same phenomenon beginning a change process in South Asia.

**The Change Process**

Opinions may diverge on whether a distinctive diplomatic culture is a good thing, as seen from the home perspective. The position one takes on this perhaps depends on whether we see the principal attributes of diplomatic culture in positive or negative light. Supporters of diplomatic culture may affirm that it
is always good to have an agency of government that understands and is responsive to the external environment and, in effect, acts as a translator or intermediary between the home and abroad. Critics of diplomatic culture see the foreign ministry establishment too remote from the real situation within the country, and failing to deliver value for its rather high cost. Further, they may want the foreign ministry establishment to be less concerned with good relations abroad for their own sake, and also not to act as a disseminator of other people’s values.\(^{14}\) Whatever the truth of the matter, clearly diplomatic culture cannot afford to be out of rapport with the domestic context, nor be perceived as providing too much of its “leadership” to unreceptive home agencies.

Underscoring the above is the notion that the MFA is much more equal to the home agencies on foreign affairs than before, and needs to earn their respect, rather than demand it as a matter of right. This involves adaptation of the institutional culture of the diplomatic establishment, especially in the tradition-bound agencies.

One revealing indicator of the way the establishment deals with the publics is the degree of openness that is practiced in relation to the official archives. Democracies recognise the right to information enjoyed by their citizens and usually open up even the most confidential of documentation after about 30 years, when the balance is deemed to tilt from secrecy of inter-government exchanges to historical accountability to the publics. However, many democracies do not practice this, on the false premise that state secrets must be guarded over a much longer term. Such attitudes fly in the face of accountability.\(^{15}\)

Training is a key element in helping foreign ministry personnel to relate better to the domestic players. Mid-career training is especially useful, ideally where MFA officials are blended with those in the home establishments, including the armed forces, to stretch and balance the perspectives of all the participants and to learn to integrate foreign and domestic affairs. No less vital is training for ambassadors and senior officials, something that is addressed by just a few countries as yet. These exceptions are Canada, with an obligatory two-week programme that all ambassadors are required to attend before proceeding abroad, regardless of seniority, and China, with a two-month programme that seems in part attuned to language training. India sends two officials each year to the National Defense College for its one-year course for higher leadership, and a similar practice is followed in a fair number of other countries. But this does not substitute for in-house training for senior officials, where new diplomacy techniques, corporate management techniques, and public diplomacy outreach are among the issues addressed, to a blend of MFA and home administration personnel.
The other device is annual or periodic meetings of envoys, ideally held in the home capital. An increasing number of countries are adopting this practice, expensive as it is, as an essential way of integrating the diplomatic process more closely with the home country objectives and hierarchy systems. Within the past decade, China and Germany are two instances of states that hold annual conferences of all their ambassadors. (The other alternative, regional gatherings of envoys held in a foreign capital, usually coinciding with a foreign tour by the president or foreign minister, are a very poor cousin, missing the home establishment dimension.) Smaller countries, such as Namibia, hold ad hoc gatherings, again aimed at improved integration of the external and the home public service process.

A more sustained way of integration is an exchange of personnel between home and diplomatic services. In Western countries this is standard practice. In developing and transition states, the application is limited, often inhibited by the “trade union instincts” of the diplomatic service. One can point to a number of MFAs in these states where officials of other home services are not accepted as yet, or where some small openings have been made, but considerable resistance remains. It is forgotten that a “closed-shop” foreign ministry conveys images of aloofness and elitism that it can ill-afford.

Diplomatic culture remains a distinctive entity, in comparison with the national or civil service culture of most countries. Commonalities among all diplomatic establishments persist, but are less of a unifying force than before. The subject deserves closer empirical study, looking to different regions and continents.

Endnotes

1 France has obtained ISO 9000 certification for its economic services, and Thailand for its consular services. Other countries have likely already done the same or are considering this.
2 In March 2004, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that it was setting up a new division for public diplomacy, mainly for communication with home publics. Its website draws a large volume of comment from citizens, and this website operates several discussion fora for members of the public to voice their opinion on foreign policy issues.
3 Informal conversation with the author, November 2003.
5 The Economic Times, November 2003.
This transparency is exemplified in the biennial document of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office under the banal title, “FCO Expenditure Plans.” Similar material on the US State Department’s narration of performance target fulfillment, available in its annual report “Fiscal Year Performance and Accountability Report,” is thorough and exceptionally lucid. These documents are available on the websites of the two institutions.


Both these are real life instances of long-running differences between the Indian ministries handling home affairs, civil aviation and tourism.

In the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, publicity related work, including limited domestic public relations, is handled by a large XP Division (whose head doubles as the official spokesman of the government on foreign affairs). A semi-autonomous Indian Council for Cultural Relations handles most aspects of cultural diplomacy and maintains a dozen cultural centers abroad (though a separate ministry department of culture exists). The Policy Planning Division handles the interface with academia, including partially funding some specific studies and projects.

In March 1982, during a British parliamentary debate on the Falklands War, former Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington charged the Foreign Office with having forgotten the distinction between diplomacy and foreign policy, because in working to safeguard relations with Argentina it had distanced itself from the advocacy of real British interests.

This is true of a large number of developing countries that are practicing democracies, including India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
This brief essay - a call for further research rather than a summary of existing findings - speculates on the existence of an area of potential misunderstanding, yet also of potential solidarity, among diplomats: that of emotion culture. All diplomats know that different cultures have different triggers for emotion (e.g., what would be taken as a joke in one culture is heard as an insult in another), as well as different rules governing the expression of emotion (one has but to compare the scene at funerals around the globe). Sensitivity to these cultural differences is indeed a key attribute of a good diplomat, whose job so often involves maintaining a cordial atmosphere or defusing an already tense situation. However, here it is argued that diplomats may, in fact, face a further challenge - that of deciphering the emotion culture of the international practice of diplomacy itself.

This essay first examines and seeks to explode the notion that diplomats are, or should be, immune to emotion in the conduct of their duties. Second, it discusses the concept of emotion cultures - cultural rules governing the experience and expression of emotion. Third, it suggests the possibility that modern diplomacy, perhaps a distinctive culture in itself, encourages the socialisation of diplomats into a distinctive, ostensibly global diplomatic emotion culture. Last, it suggests a number of research questions.

The Ambassadorial Ideal and the Eviction of Emotion

Few would question the idea that international politics is a realm of emotion. Classical historians and philosophers of international relations, from Thucydides to Hobbes and Grotius, assumed that the “passions” had an important role to play in international conflict, explaining the causes of war in terms of human emotions such as greed and pride. Even liberal thinkers such as Locke, Bentham and Kant, who looked forward to a reason-based transnational consensus of interest, started from the premise that the passions would need to be tamed first, while their conservative as well as radical critics (Burke on the one hand, Marx and Engels on the other) concluded that the passionate nature of
humankind would never be eradicated. Within the classical realist tradition of the twentieth century, the passions reassert themselves; the writings of Hans Morgenthau, for example, are sprinkled with references to trust and love, exaltation and pride, and frustration, insecurity and fear.

Nevertheless, the specialist literature, as well as the public imagination, conventionally depicts diplomacy - the institution by which much of this passionate world of international politics is negotiated - as a realm in which emotion should play no part. Indeed, the ideal of the dispassionate diplomat has been perpetuated by generations of post-Renaissance European diplomatic handbooks. Medieval writers, for the most part, focused on ambassadors as “servants of god,” and therefore on their moral qualities. But a rash of treatises on diplomacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began to focus on how “civilized behaviour was to be propagated among ‘ideal ambassadors’ … [as well as] reproduced in the fledgling institutions of a states-system.”

The model of the perfect ambassador presented in these works shifted over the years from the ideal humanist scholar described by writers such as Frederici de Marselaer (Legatus, Libri Duo, 1618) to the “well-bred gentleman” portrayed in Juan de Vera’s El Embajador (1620), from which text comes the term “the perfect ambassador.” The “qualities of mind and feeling” that such an ambassador should cultivate most assiduously, according to the accomplished diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort (L’ambassadeur et ses fonctions, 1679), were prudence and modération, the latter meaning the ability to curb one’s temper and to remain cool in moments of tension. “Those spirits,” de Wicquefort warned, “who are compounded of sulfur and saltpeter, whom the slightest spark can set alight, are easily capable of compromising affairs by their excitability.” Forty years later, in his influential De la manière de négocier avec les Souverains (1716), François de Callières repeated many of de Wicquefort’s injunctions, dedicating nearly half a chapter to the need for a minister to possess the quality of emotional control. “A man of an odd, uneven temper, who is not master of his humours and passions, ought not to engage himself in the business of negotiations,” de Callières warned, preferring “a man who has the command of himself, and is always in a cool sedate temper.”

Over two hundred years and dozens of major treatises later, one of the “essential” qualities of a diplomat listed by Sir Harold Nicolson in his classic treatise on diplomacy remained “the quality of calm.” In fact, for some writers, what diplomats should be had become what they were: “what really distinguishes the diplomat from the common herd,” experienced diplomat Jules Cambon opined in 1931, “is his indifference to its emotions.”
The disdain for emotion expressed in these works mirrors shifts between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries both in theories of the conduct of international relations and in the notion of reason itself. As Hedley Bull put it, the emergence of the “notion of the ‘ideal ambassador’ as a person governed by his reason rather than his passions, and seeking to subordinate the latter to the former … is bound up with the emergence of rationalism in the seventeenth century, and especially with the notion that the proper objective of states was the pursuit of their [‘true’ or objective] interests rather than of their honour or their faith.”  

This shift, as Bull suggests, in turn reflected the consolidation of an underlying “myth of rationality” that deemed emotion and reason to be not only separate, but inimical. Under the influence of this conception of rationality, emotional responses came to be seen as “disruptive,” “illogical,” “biased” or “weak,” and emotion “a deviation from what is sensible or intelligent” – a prejudice that lingers to this day.

The perceived need for professional representatives to control their own emotions seemingly has been made all the more urgent by what diplomats themselves have frequently bewailed as the inability of political leaders to control theirs. As de Calliéres complained, “the passions of princes … often overrule their interests.” The role of the diplomat thus was and is still seen to be one of “helping to ensure that the interests of rulers triumph over their passions, and not their passions over their interests.” The “rulers” in question were initially monarchs. “Sovereigns,” warned de Wicquefort, “cannot meet without the risk of prejudice to themselves or to their affairs.” But democratically elected rulers have shown themselves no more trustworthy in this regard: of the many dangers of diplomacy by conference, Nicolson recounts, one of the greatest is that leaders “would return from the interview, but with sentiments of lasting personal dislike,” a situation that could lead to disastrous consequences.

Yet would it be correct to say that the classic diplomatic manuals of Europe expect diplomacy to ignore the existence of emotion altogether? Certainly, the diplomats of the classical literature are expected to have a keen appreciation of the feelings of others. A successful negotiator, de Wiquefort observed, must be able to play on the emotions of others: “Ministers are but men and as such have their weaknesses, that is to say, their passions and their interests, which the Ambassador ought to know if he wished to do honor to himself and his Master.” Three hundred years later, former British Ambassador Peter Marshall concurred: “Diplomacy must rank as one of the higher forms of persuasion. People may be persuaded by reason or by feeling, or in all probability by a combination of both.” Even more importantly, diplomats are expected to be
considerate of others’ feelings; hence the popular use of the term “diplomatic” to mean “tactful” or “sensitive.” Sir Ernest Satow’s famous definition of diplomacy as “the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states” sums up the emphasis that classical diplomatic theorists placed on letting sleeping emotions lie.23

Implicit in these concerns, of course, is the assumption that the feelings of other state representatives are subject to be riled. Nor should this be surprising: diplomats, by virtue of their ability to speak in the name of states, serve as embodiments of some of the most highly emotionally charged political entities in the modern world.24 Many recognise the emotional position of an “empowered negotiator of a country” as sharply different from that of negotiators for most firms, with the political dimension of diplomatic representation imposing additional emotional burdens.25 In particular, the kinds of relations of power and status that diplomats, in the name of and as an extension of the state, are required to navigate and negotiate are precisely those from which many of the social emotions - pride, humiliation - arise.26 Hence, Charles de Martens, in his famous Guide Diplomatique (1832), can say: “The least of inconsidered words can wound a whole nation.”27 And, hence, arises the difficulty of stepping back from a national position; as Cambon himself noted: “[t]his is by no means an easy matter sometimes, when one’s sympathies are involved.”28

Indeed, what classical theorists of diplomacy were advocating was the ability, not to completely deny the existence of emotion, but to repress its expression, particularly in the case of the negative emotions. Nicolson, surveying fifteen and sixteenth century diplomatic manuals, noted their insistence that an ambassador must be “imperturbable, able to receive bad news without manifesting displeasure, or to hear himself maligned and misquoted without the slightest twinge of irritation.”29 Nicolson added, regarding the ideal diplomat: “In the first place, he should be good-tempered, or at least he should be able to keep his ill-temper under perfect control.”30

One device that classical European diplomacy evolved to help diplomats keep their “ill-temper under perfect control” was an elaborate language for conveying displeasure without either overtly evincing emotion or causing offence. “Diplomatic” language, as Nicolson observed, means not only “those technical phrases which, in the course of centuries, have become part of the ordinary diplomatic vocabulary,” but also “that guarded understatement which enables diplomatists and ministers to say sharp things to each other without becoming provocative or impolite.”31 Through the elaborate conventions of language of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, and even in today’s guarded phrases such as “frank exchange of views,” the “ideal diplomatist” works
to minimise friction in relations between nations. Indeed, diplomats have recorded the toll of working in environments where these conventions have been discarded; for example, then-US Ambassador to Moscow George Kennan recorded in his diary in mid-1963 the strain of living through an unusually vitriolic anti-US Soviet propaganda campaign, which he found “foul, malicious and insulting.”

Principles and codes governing and facilitating the expression of emotion in diplomatic exchanges have, of course, been noted by many. What has not been so broadly discussed is the possibility that these principles and codes serve as proof of the existence of a distinctive diplomatic “emotion culture.”

Emotion and Emotion Cultures

The idea of “emotion cultures” has received its most extensive discussion in the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology. It emerges from thinking of emotions as social, rather than entirely personal, experiences. In this view, the focus of psychoanalytic and social psychological theories of emotion on the individualised, internally generated quality of emotion is at best excessive and at worst misplaced. Far from being solitary events, many emotions result primarily or frequently from real, imagined or anticipated social interactions. “An emotion,” Robert Solomon writes, “is intrinsically tied up with our social existence and our relations with others…. [The problem] is to retain the personal and experiential (‘phenomenological’) grasp of emotions but place emotions in a larger social context, treating them not only as the result of but as constituted in relations with other people.”

Scholars interested in emotion cultures thus have tried to understand the application to emotion of sociological concepts such as norms of behaviour. Most diplomats as a matter of course encounter different cultural norms governing the display of emotion; funeral rites are an obvious example. Furthermore, underlying these display norms are also cultural norms influencing the way in which individuals experience emotion: norms governing the “type of emotion, the extent of emotion, and the duration of feeling that are appropriate in a situation.” Children are socialised into these emotion cultures at very early ages—as early as two, according to some researchers. An individual’s ability to master and adhere to these cultural rules often affects others’ perceptions of her or his social efficacy, maturity and mental health. Underlying these norms are different cultural conceptions of the nature of emotion, as well as of the relationship of emotion to human health.
Scholars have discussed the contextual or situational norms governing the display and experience of emotion, with different implications for the examination of emotion cultures in diplomacy. While some scholars have focused on the national and ethnic cultural level, others have focused on the level of organisations or firms.\textsuperscript{43} Taken together, the observations and conclusions of these works suggest that individual foreign ministries might possess sharply different emotion cultures, products of both national/ethnic and organisational cultures. Sensitivity to the differences between these cultures is largely taken for granted in diplomats.

At the same time, other scholars have focused on emotion norms operating at the level of occupations or professions. Some scholars have described the pressures placed on employees to conform to expectations of emotional display, for instance in the service industries.\textsuperscript{44} Others have described the ways in which workers in particular professions - for example, in the highly dangerous profession of iron working - develop group standards of emotional display governing, for instance, the expression of fear.\textsuperscript{45} Many of these studies would have benefited from taking into account the national or ethnic emotion culture and gendered emotion culture in which the occupational emotion culture is situated.\textsuperscript{46} Nonetheless, their conclusions raise the intriguing notion that diplomacy as an international occupation may have an emotion culture, or emotion cultures, of its own.

To what extent is such a proposition plausible? The answer to this question depends to a large degree on whether or not diplomacy can be said to have a culture of its own.

**Diplomatic Culture**

The idea of a “diplomatic culture” that sets diplomats apart from other citizens is not novel. Diplomats and humorists alike have reflected on the esprit de corps of the diplomatic corpus, a sense of professional solidarity that transcends national boundaries.\textsuperscript{47} The distinctive customs and manners of diplomacy, such as the concern with protocol and precedence and the evolution of a specialised language, can at one level be seen as typical of the norms of behaviour that emerge in many occupations. Indeed, diplomats, whose work by definition involves operating across national boundaries, have even greater need than many professionals for an occupational culture that can help smooth over national cultural differences. As John Mayall has observed, diplomatic society and culture to some extent protect diplomats “from the pressures and mutual incomprehension which might otherwise arise from cultural diversity. … The
common conventions of this profession in part serve the function which lan-
guage serves in national cultures: they act as vehicles for communication, hold
and transmit the values of the profession, and prove an effective barrier between
those within the charmed circle and the uninitiated outside.48

However, it is also possible to discern a deeper purpose behind diplomatic
socialisation than simply that of professional efficiency. As James Der Derian
has observed, diplomatic theorists from de Vera on have both described and
advocated the development of diplomacy as a society, a body of socialised, “civ-
ilized” individuals, with its own body of thought on how “civilized” behaviour
is to be propagated not only among “ideal ambassadors,” but, by extension,
among the society of states.49 Diplomatic society thus is to be both a subset and
an ideal microcosm of the interstate society whose affairs it helps to order.

As Der Derian’s formulation suggests, the cultural norms of diplomacy
in this conception stretch well beyond the fine points of protocol that help to
order diplomatic and interstate society.50 Hedley Bull posited that diplo-
ic culture, which he conceived of as “the common stock of ideas and values
possessed by the official representatives of states,” consists of “the common
intellectual culture of modernity: some common languages, principally Eng-
lish, a common scientific understanding of the world, certain common notions
and techniques that derive from the universal espousal by governments in the
modern world of economic development and their universal involvement in
modern technology.”51

Many would argue, however, that this diplomatic culture has not evolved
sui generis within the confines of an egalitarian international society.52 Rather,
they would suggest, it is a culture “derived from the aristocratic cosmopoli-
tanism of dynastic Europe.”53 In this view, diplomacy’s customs, manners and
underlying norms, although certainly not static, reflect those of the Europe-
an diplomatic society into which non-European states have been voluntarily or
forcibly incorporated over the last four centuries. These scholars would argue
that the cultural norms of other diplomatic systems, in many cases as fully
evolved as those of European diplomacy, have for the most part been left by the
wayside in the process.54

Research Questions

This essay has argued that diplomacy, as a social practice with distinctive cul-
tural qualities, possesses the potential for a common “emotion culture” that
would set out standards for the appropriate experience and expression of emo-
tion by its participants. It has indicated how European theorists of diplomacy would prefer this culture to appear - emphasising emotional control, particularly of negative emotion - and has attempted to suggest why these European conceptions might have come to dominate modern diplomatic practice. To date, however, these issues remain at the level of conjecture. For the study of emotion cultures within diplomacy to proceed, it will be necessary for scholars and diplomats alike to consider at least the following questions.

- To what extent do diplomats globally share an emotion culture? To what extent do diplomats from various cultural backgrounds face pressure to conform to an international professional standard of emotional behaviour? Whence do these pressures emanate? Who informs diplomats of “the rules?”
- To what extent do sub-groups within global diplomacy possess distinctive emotion cultures? Do individual foreign ministries possess distinctive emotion cultures? What of the diplomats of regional groupings?
- To what extent does an “emotion culture” of European/Western diplomacy dominate notions of what a global diplomatic emotion culture should look like? Or to what degree do many of the prime dictates of European/Western diplomatic emotion culture, such as control of negative emotion, mirror precepts from diplomatic manuals from other diplomatic cultures (the Chinese or Ottoman diplomatic cultures, for instance)?
- To what extent does the effectiveness of diplomats depend on their socialisation into dominant emotion cultures? To what degree does this depend on whether they are operating in bilateral or multilateral environments?
- And, finally, with inclusion of so many non-diplomats in international negotiating processes, does the existence of a diplomatic emotion culture mean anything any more?

Endnotes


2 The scholarly literature on emotion often uses “emotion,” “feeling,” or “affect” interchangeably, a tendency that more rigorous theoreticians have deplored (see, for instance, Lynn Smith-Lovin, “The Sociology of Affect and Emotion,” in Karen Cook *et al.*, eds., *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), for a discussion of the distinctions between emotion, sentiment, affect and mood). This essay, proceeding from a conception of emotions as “inner states with external manifestations,” uses “emotion” throughout. Interestingly, in
an approach that sits nicely with the emphasis here, some writers present “feelings” as essentially private sensations which become “emotions” when enacted in social situations according to cultural rules of definition and display (see Stephen Fineman, Emotion in Organizations (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 31).

3 For an excellent overview of European and American writing on the subject of emotion in politics, see Philippe Braud, L’émotion en politique (Paris: Press de Sciences Po, 1996).

4 For example, Thucydides, detailing the progress of the Corcyran civil war, saw revenge as more important than self-preservation; and his Athenians, explaining their expansionist ambitions to the Spartans, describe their primary motivation as fear of Persia. Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War (London: Penguin, 1972), 243, 80.


9 Cited in Jones, Splendid Encounters, 52.


12 Sir Harold Nicolson, Diplomacy, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford, 1969), 62. As Nicolson recounted in appal: “The occasions on which diplomats have lost their tempers are remembered with horror by generations of their successors. Napoleon lost his temper with Metternich in the Marcolini Palace at Dresden on June 26, 1813, and flung his hat upon the carpet, with the most unfortunate results. Sir Charles Euan Smith lost his temper with the Sultan of Morocco and tore up a treaty in the imperial presence. Count Tattenbach lost his temper at the Algeciras Conference and exposed his country to a grave diplomatic humiliation. Herr Stinnes lost his temper at Spa” (62).


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and refutation of the reason/emotion dichotomy, see Barbalet, Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure, 29-61.

18 Ibid., 169.
19 Cited in Jones, Splendid Encounters, 19.
28 Cambon, Diplomatist, 22. In fact, a degree of emotional identification with the nation may be a necessary part of effective representation. First, representatives who are emotionally unengaged with the entity they represent will be less concerned with its fortunes and may be less vigorous in pursuing its interests. Second, for a representative of an entity, particularly one as potentially highly emotionally charged as a nation/state, not to be emotionally engaged with its fortunes might call into question in the eyes of others that entity’s ability to inspire loyalty. Consequently, a genuinely emotionally detached diplomat may be more of a liability, both in practical and in public relations terms, than an asset.
29 Nicolson, Evolution, 36.
30 Nicolson, Diplomacy, 62.
31 Ibid., 122.
33 George Kennan, Memoirs, 1950-1963 (London: Hutchinson, 1972), 162. Kennan found himself declared persona non grata by the Soviet government in September 1963 for having irritably compared the complete social isolation to which diplomats were subjected in Moscow to the conditions of the internment he had experienced in Germany in 1941-1942. The Soviet government considered his comment a “slanderous attack hostile to the Soviet Union in a rude violation of generally recognised norms of international law.”
36 Theodore Kemper, “Modernisation, Barbarism, and the Ethos of Modernity: The Interplay of Structure, Culture, and Emotions,” paper presented to the confer-


39 Ibid., 125. Some have argued that members of different cultures can experience culturally distinctive, mutually unintelligible emotions. See Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).


42 For instance, the Western notion that emotion is internally generated and privately experienced has led to a ‘container’ metaphor that compares strong feeling with steam building up in a closed vessel (Smith-Lovin, ibid., 127).


46 For example, one otherwise subtle and perceptive examination of emotion management among academics would have benefited from the insertion of the word “Danish” before the word “academia” throughout, as very different rules apply in, for instance, the American context. See Charlotte Bloch, “Managing the Emotion of Competition and Recognition in Academia,” in Jack Barbalet, ed., *Emotions and Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing/The Sociological Review, 2002).

47 The diplomat and the humorist have often been one and the same person; see, for instance, Lawrence Durrell, *É spirit de Corps: Sketches from the Diplomatic Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966).


49 Der Derian, “Diplomacy,” 244.


52 See, for example, Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1982).

54 See discussion of the Ottoman and Chinese diplomatic systems in Adam Watson and Hedley Bull, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982). Some, however, might argue that these local norms reassert themselves in regional diplomatic concepts - see, for example, the much-discussed “ASEAN way.”
Part VII.

TRAINING DIPLOMATS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
For most rank-and-file dwellers in any country, diplomacy is virtually an unreachable dream world where half-gods live and act. The dream world has its own laws, strict and clear-cut rules with which all the half-gods are at ease, no matter from which part of that world they come. No misunderstandings are possible as a special protocol rule prescribes every step they take. They even look similar when you see them on TV.

In real life, however, the situation in the twentieth century is not quite as crystal-clear and serene as it may seem. It may have been close to the truth, however, somewhere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The reasons for that were manifold. First of all, there were few actor-states on the diplomatic map. Second, they were more or less homogeneous as far as political and economic systems were concerned. Third, the people who were involved in the area were, indeed, similar to each other. Their social (family) background was similar, if not identical, similar tutors educated them at home and they went to similar, prestigious private schools and to the same universities, of which not so many were around. They socialised in similar ways with similar types of people. They usually had similar life experience, expectations and aspirations.

However, even in the seventeenth century cross-cultural diplomatic misunderstandings occurred. As Anne and Serge Golon write in their historical novel, *Angelique and the King*, the Persian ambassador to the court of Louis XIV would not agree to go to Versailles “as a prisoner in a closed carriage, surrounded by armed warriors.” He also found it hard to come to grips with the idea that the beautiful woman who introduced herself to him (Angelique) was not a present the king had sent him as a sign of good will.¹

People who knew the values, rules and norms of behaviour in the respective cultures helped to solve this type of cross-cultural misunderstanding. For example, a letter had to be written to the Persian ambassador explaining that the woman in question was the *bashı-hanum*, that is, the oldest and indispensable wife of the French king and that other women would be sent as a present instead of her. As well, for the visit of the ambassador to Versailles the floors were covered with fresh flower petals and he was allowed to arrive on horseback together with his people, instead of in a closed carriage. On the other hand, a compromise was reached to accommodate the French rules as well, as the Persians did not wear their turbans in the presence of the king.
Modern Diplomacy

The collapse of the empires and, more significantly, the appearance of the new socialist states caused changes in the diplomatic world. A new type of political values, a new set of behaviours and, first and foremost, a completely new type of diplomat appeared in the arena. These new diplomats came from a more ordinary social background, without years of private school education and upper-class gatherings. Without any doubt, most of them were outstanding people who managed to function quite successfully in the diplomatic world.

The situation became even more complicated when international communication turned into intercultural communication in the last decade of the twentieth century with dramatic changes in the political map of the world.

On the one hand, one may think it most unlikely that any misunderstandings may take place when diplomats communicate since the strict rules of behaviour and the Almighty Protocol are still in place. On the other hand, as Alexander Burda, a famous Russian intellectual, said, “There can only be two viewpoints - mine and the wrong one.” No matter how educated, experienced, or tolerant a person is, deep at the bottom of our hearts we all share this conviction concerning norms and rules of behaviour. We all share the temptation to think and feel that other worlds are abnormal and that the only world that is normal is the one in which we live. This is where ethnocentrism, xenophobia and racism start. The reasons lie in the fact that culture is in many cases subconscious. If a small white dog bites you when you are four years old, you are unlikely to buy yourself a Bichon Frise when you grow up. What is more important, you never question yourself why you do not do it. In the diplomatic service, these attitudes can affect not just people but entire nations.²

For example, undoubtedly diplomats from Moslem countries are perfectly well acquainted with the protocol, nevertheless they instinctively (i.e., culturally) avoid shaking hands with female diplomats at all costs.

These feelings do not necessarily manifest themselves in the form of a red-neck racism. At times, what on the surface appears to be respect for a host culture is in fact perceived as a demonstration of superiority. For example, at a lunch-time, middle of the week United States Information Service (USIS) event in a European post-Soviet country huge amounts of alcohol were served (contrary to the current trends in the US business lunch culture). This was perceived as an insult by the local participants who took it as a hint at the widely-spread drinking problem in that part of the world.

In another country, a Western European female diplomat praised the good work of her local female staff at a conference, saying that the young...
women took her as a progressive Western example of what democracy means for women, that is, the prospect of becoming an ambassador. The problem was that the country where the speech was delivered had its first female ambassador several decades before universal suffrage was introduced in the speaker’s country, and much earlier than the first woman was sent to a diplomatic mission.

Differences in Communication Styles

Differences in cultures manifest themselves in different styles of structuring discourse. The protocol-determined way in which diplomatic papers are written makes it easier for the parties involved to create shared meanings, the utmost objective of communication. However, pitfalls still occur, often related to the fact that in the modern world entire diplomatic missions may be changed or created virtually overnight. In some cases, staff new to the field have no time to study the rules and, hence, they make mistakes. Besides, as has already been said, culture is not always conscious, and feelings are more difficult to control than outward behaviour.

In meetings and negotiations, differences in the use of both verbal and non-verbal codes of communication become obvious. The lexical-semantic fields involved in diplomatic communication are more or less limited and are not expected to create problems. Nevertheless, even the use of the same language does not eliminate chances of incomplete or wrong interpretation. For example, an Austrian of Russian descent talking to an Austrian from Salzburg used the idiom “It is in his blood” referring to the behaviour of an aristocrat, to suggest that his behaviour was predetermined by his upbringing. The idiom was taken literally by the Salzburgian who pointed out that the blood of aristocrats and the blood of common people are just the same. Slavic and Germanic cultures have different approaches to the human body and base idioms on different lines.

As in any other sphere of life, a diplomat will naturally tend to follow the communication style of his/her culture. The following table, Communication Styles, summarises two distinct communication styles associated with different cultures. The so-called high-context cultures like China, Russia and France, are usually characterised by a non-direct, relational way of communication, where much depends on how well the communicants can read between the lines. Low-context cultures like the USA, Australia, and Germany mostly use straightforward, task-oriented styles and prefer to spell out every detail.
Communication Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINEAR</th>
<th>CIRCULAR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication is conducted in a straight line, moving in a linear way toward the main point. “Getting to the point” is very important and the point is stated explicitly. Not getting to the point quickly is seen as a time waster.</td>
<td>Communication is conducted in a circular manner around the main point. The point may be left unstated because the verbal and nonverbal information provided is sufficient for understanding. Stating the point explicitly is seen as insulting to the other person.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT</th>
<th>INDIRECT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What one means is stated in a very straightforward and direct manner. There is no “beating around the bush.” Directness is equated with honesty and respect for the other person.</td>
<td>Meaning is conveyed by subtle means such as nonverbal behaviour, parables and stories, suggestions and implication. Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for the other person.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW CONTEXT</th>
<th>HIGH CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The context of the communication is not assumed to be known. Things must be explained clearly and unambiguously. Meaning must be expressed precisely. Communication is carried out in a calm and impersonal manner. This is equated with objectivity, which is valued. Highly expressive, emotional and engaged communication is inappropriate and seen as personalizing the issues and as biased.</td>
<td>The context for communication is assumed to be known. Hence it is unnecessary, even insulting, to explain things and state meaning precisely. Meaning is taken from context. Communication is carried out with feeling and emotion. Issues are discussed with passion and commitment. Communication is very expressive. Sharing one’s values and feelings about the issues is highly valued.</td>
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<tr>
<th>FUNCTIONAL</th>
<th>RELATIONAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The emphasis is on ideas seen as separate from the person. Thus, disagreement with another person’s ideas is acceptable and even valued. It is not seen as a personal attack.</td>
<td>The emphasis is on the relationship; hence, great importance is attached to the feelings of the other person. Issues and ideas are not separated from the person. Thus, disagreement with someone’s ideas must be handled carefully to maintain the relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<th>TASK-CENTERED</th>
<th>PERSON-CENTERED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication focuses on the task-at-hand and getting it done. The other person’s feelings are secondary. Group harmony is secondary to task completion.</td>
<td>Communication is focused on relationships. Maintaining group harmony is central. The task is secondary. Task completion must not come at the expense of the group or person.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURAL</th>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The emphasis is on policies, rules and procedures. Fairness is ensured by treating people similarly. Communication, particularly workplace communication, reflects this emphasis.</td>
<td>The emphasis is on the person and the circumstances of the person’s situation. Fairness is ensured by treating people uniquely. Strict adherence to rules prevents empathy. Communication reflects this emphasis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of negotiations is largely determined by protocol. What protocol has no power to regulate are such things as differences in the talk-silence ratio, attention and respect manifestation rules, pauses, the meaning and use of interruption and the length of each element of the conversation with which each of the communicants are comfortable.

Argumentation and persuasion styles also vary from culture to culture. Obviously, to persuade your counterpart to accept your position it is much
more productive to use warrants and arguments that appeal to the addressee
and, certainly, to avoid issues that could bring discontent and be counterpro-
ductive. To do so, future diplomats have to learn the basics of different styles of
persuasion: quasi-logical, emotional or analogical. What use is it to provide all
kinds of material evidence to a Chinese individual when the Chinese culture
holds no connection between objects and the actions of people? Or to appeal to
witnesses talking to representatives of an African country who think that if a
witness speaks up s/he has a hidden reason to do so?

For example, an IKEA representative was sent to an East European coun-
try to see what kind of business-links could be established, including when and
where IKEA shops could be opened. It took IKEA over a year of futile attempts
of directly approaching various factories and businesses to give up and say that
the first IKEA store might appear in that country in about 50 years. If the rep-
resentative had taken a basic course in cross-cultural communication, he would
have known that the best way to do business in that high-context, collectivistic
country is through friends and connections. However, even between high-con-
text cultures, negotiations at times fail to bring the expected results. As Kishan
Rana has reminded us, at times when India was lobbying a question at the
UNO, and had been promised support by a number of countries of the same
region, when it came to voting the support was not given.5

In all of these issues, and in many others, experience, linguistic sensitiv-
ity and talent can, to some extent, help a diplomat learn how to talk to dif-
ferent people. Undoubtedly, as well, special training in discourse types would
be helpful to all foreign office employees. Even taking into consideration that
learning a culture is a life-long process and that no “rules” or “norms” can ever
apply to all representatives of a given culture, the more we know about the pos-
sible bumps, the faster we adapt to a new situation.

Training in Intercultural Communication

Undoubtedly, when a diplomat receives an assignment to a mission and arrives
at the destination, s/he is exposed to a new world full of new “colours.” S/he
has no option except to learn as soon as possible how to deal with all those new
colours, or ways of behaving. So far, most diplomats have survived and done
quite well. Then, one may ask, why study the theory of intercultural commu-
nication?

The answer is very plain and simple: times change and diplomats have
little if any time for adaptation in the field. As well, since universities already
are in the business of training diplomats, why not offer them a preparation in what they are supposed to be part of: cross-cultural communication? Why not provide diplomats in advance with as much culture-general and culture-specific knowledge as possible?

Verbal codes of communication can be taught first at a culture-general level and later, before going to a certain country, on a culture-specific level. While the non-verbal codes of communication that provide over half of the information we get are even more difficult to learn or teach, and while the best way to learn them is to be within a culture, nonetheless, the theory of non-verbal codes of communication is an integral part of a course in intercultural communication. The case when Lady D. almost created a breach in Arab-UK communication having involuntarily half-shown an Arab prince the sole of her shoe is well-known. In the Arab world showing the sole of your shoe to the interlocutor is considered to be a gross offence.

Unfortunately, we cannot yet point to data on the impact of intercultural training on the performance of diplomats. However, experience in teaching “Theory and Practice of Intercultural Communication” at the Lublin University International Relations Department, in Poland, has resulted in great enthusiasm on the part of the students and it seems likely to have a positive impact on the quality of training.

The contents of a course on intercultural communication should, above all, include training in cultural awareness. Three components are vital:

1. a theoretical component: presentation of the reasons that cultures are different, and of salient features forming cultural patterns (as suggested by F. Kluckhohn and G. Stroedbeck);
2. a practical component: exposure to and analysis of differences/similarities of beliefs, values and norms functioning in various cultures; and
3. a personal component: a look at the native culture of the students, building an awareness of its features and of its place within the system of other cultures.

It can hardly be expected that a relatively short course is capable of radically changing the deep-rooted feelings of the participants; as a matter of fact, theoretical courses and training sessions in intercultural education mainly serve the task of an eye-opener, preparing the participants to work in a cross-cultural setting. However, even drawing attention to the psychological basics of ethnocentrism could be a good impetus for the formation of empathy, tolerance, acceptance, respect and cultural enrichment.
The next issue that arises is the structure of the course and the appropriate time for courses in intercultural communication to be taught. The earlier in their studying careers that students take the course, the better. For example, in those universities that provide additional language training for future diplomats, some elements of cross-cultural training can be included in the respective language courses.

It appears that at least two possible steps must be included in the intercultural training of diplomats. First, an introductory course in theory of intercultural communication should be presented. Depending on the time available, this may be either an intensive two to three week course (see the outline of a sample course below) or, better, a semester long one of at least 40 hours, where a large number of examples can be presented and analysed, and where reports, written works and projects can be presented. In case students specialise in a certain region of the world, another course can be added, concentrating on the features common for the area.

After such initial training, in an ideal world, upon the receipt of each assignment a diplomat should:

1. receive a cross-cultural information pack and training;
2. receive on-site help from someone who is more familiar with the local cultural bumps and opportunities; and
3. have the option to appeal for assistance from intercultural specialists at the Foreign Office.

As well, an intercultural specialist should be available in the analytical departments of Foreign Offices.

In the long run, interculturalists and diplomats have a common objective, to provide for peace and understanding in the world, and this objective can be achieved only through their joint efforts.
Today the world is becoming smaller and smaller - distances shrink and become irrelevant, information flows are immense and very fast. People tend to speak foreign languages and, to their surprise, find out that this is not enough. There is more to it, and it is culture.

It is of paramount importance to educate a generation of people capable of communicating effectively and working together with representatives of other cultures. This course is designed to further this aim. The objective of the course is to help students realise the salient features of their own culture, to compare it with other cultures and to learn to communicate with people respecting the differences and making the best possible use of them.

The course aims at providing:

1. culture-general and culture-specific knowledge;
2. the groundwork for the formation of necessary intercultural communication skills;
3. the capability to analyse a person’s system of values and to adapt it to new situations.

The contents of the course cover the following areas:

1. Introduction of basic terms (culture, communication, intercultural communication, nation, inter-, cross-, and intra-cultural communication, intercultural communication competence)
2. Factors that make cultures different
3. Universal and specific features of cultures
4. Some taxonomies of cultures
5. Verbal and non-verbal codes of intercultural communication, their interrelations and interdependence
6. Culture-specific discourse structure (texts, persuasion, conflicts)
7. Interpersonal communication across cultures
8. Media and intercultural communication
9. Intercultural business communication
10. Acculturation models, problems, culture shock

The issues to be discussed include, but are not limited to the following:

**Topic 1: Introduction and Main Terms**
1. Culture and its features
2. Nation, Race, Subculture
3. Communication, its features and types
4. Intercultural communication, connected terms
5. Intercultural competence

**Topic 2: Why Do Cultures Differ?**
1. “Ecology” of culture
2. “Biology” of culture
3. History
4. Technology
5. Institutions
6. Models of interpersonal communication

**Topic 3: Cultural Models**
1. Definition
2. Grounds for model formation (Kluckhohn)
3. Components of models: beliefs, values, norms

**Topic 4: Taxonomies of Cultures**
1. High- and low-context cultures (Hall)
2. Hofstede’s taxonomy
3. Other taxonomies

**Topic 5: Verbal Codes of Communication**
1. Language and communication
2. Definition and levels of verbal codes
3. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
4. Language and self-identification

**Topic 6: Non-Verbal Codes of Communication**
1. Definition, characteristics
2. Interrelation of verbal and non-verbal codes
3. Universal and culture-specific codes
4. Kinesics
5. Space
6. Touch
7. Time
8. Vocal codes, silence
9. Other non-verbal codes

**Topic 7: Culture-Specific Discourse Structure**
1. Translation
2. Text structure
3. Argumentation process, components, styles
4. Dialogue structure, value of silence
5. Conflict and conflict resolution styles

**Topic 8: Interpersonal Communication**
1. Types of interpersonal relations
2. Communication situations
3. Uncertainty reduction
4. Self-disclosure

**Topic 9: Acculturation Processes and Problems**
1. Types of acculturation
2. Cultural shock
3. Ethnocentrism
4. Stereotypes
5. Prejudices
6. Racism

**Topic 10: Professional Application of Intercultural Communication Basics**
1. Business communication
2. International communication

**Endnotes**

2. See, for example, Kishan S. Rana, *Bilateral Diplomacy* (Geneva and Malta: Diplo-Projects, 2002), 201-212.
3 Adapted by R. Michael Paige, 1996, from J. Bennett, 1993.
4 From a private conversation carried out by the author.
This study was initiated by my telephone communication with New Zealand diplomats. Intercultural training has been a long-standing interest of mine, and recent contact with diplomats literally highlighted the issues that directed me to a novel but exciting area of study. Here are some of the questions I asked one diplomat during a telephone interview:

Me: Do you run intercultural training programmes such as using intercultural patterns?
Diplomat: Sometimes, in particular, with Maori culture.
Me: What other trainings do you have?
Diplomat: Language training, of course.

Of course, it is important to have language skills to make life easier. However, language training does not necessarily include any emphasis on intercultural training. This conversation reflects how little attention diplomats pay to intercultural training. Even when intercultural training is used, the focus is placed on using cultural patterns and categories. Generally speaking, little literature can be found on intercultural training within diplomatic training. The only related literature is in the teaching of intercultural communication, which focuses strongly on using cultural patterns. This is a Western approach and no local theories or insiders’ perspectives have been stressed. It is therefore imperative to develop an appropriate approach for the training of diplomats. These research questions are posed for the exploration of the approach:

- Which programmes are employed for diplomacy and intercultural training?
- Are these training programmes feasible?
- Is it possible to develop an effective approach to intercultural training for diplomats?

This paper aims to explore issues in relation to these questions. Specifically, first, it will provide some background information about diplomacy training in New Zealand. Second, it will discuss advantages and disadvantages of using cultural patterns, as training programmes frequently involve the use of cultural patterns. Third, it will review literature in relevant areas such as inter-
cultural communication, language pragmatics and classical rhetoric. Fourth, it will propose the need for incorporating a local or culture-specific perspective within diplomacy training. Finally, the paper will develop a model of diplomacy training based on intercultural competence and situated learning and apply the model to intercultural encounters. The research is based on a literature search and a critique of the use of cultural patterns. In addition, I conducted six interviews with New Zealand diplomats in Wellington. For the sake of confidentiality, their names and positions will remain anonymous and their views or comments will be incorporated where relevant, particularly in the area of background information for New Zealand diplomacy training.

Some Background Information about Diplomacy Training in New Zealand

As briefly mentioned, New Zealand does not utilise many programmes in diplomacy training. However, according to my interviews with diplomats, some programmes exist as part of current diplomacy training. These are in the areas of:

- language training;
- task- and policy-focussed training;
- using intercultural patterns.

Diplomats are required to undertake one year of language training before being posted overseas. The second and most common type of training is task-specific. As New Zealand is a result-oriented culture, task-oriented training in education or development issues has become a major part of diplomacy training. The study of cultural patterns is used only in limited areas with a clear cultural issue. For example, New Zealand is a bicultural country composed of Maoris and European New Zealanders. The understanding of Maori cultures has been stressed in training and the study of cultural patterns is used to a certain extent in this particular area. In general, trainers tend to rely on the use of various models for diplomacy training such as cultural patterns.

Introducing Cultural Patterns

Frequently used cultural taxonomies include Hall’s categories of high- and low-context cultures and Hofstede’s categories of individualism vs. collectiv-
ism, power distance, masculinity and femininity, and uncertainty avoidance.\textsuperscript{4} Both researchers classify cultures according to their position along a continuum of certain dimensions such as high- and low-context, and individualism vs. collectivism. These dimensions describe universal features of cultures. For example, the concepts of high- and low-context can be used to explain all cultures, based on direct and indirect communication styles. Many Asian cultures are high-context, while the United States, Australia and New Zealand are low-context. In a similar way, Hofstede divides cultures into individualistic and collectivistic based on the concept of self or how self is related to various groups in society. Many of the high-context cultures also exhibit characteristics of collectivism and low-context cultures share similarities with individualism.

Related to generalisation is the cross-cultural approach that tends to provide trainees with specific skills, yet based on cultural patterns. For example, McCaffery proposes a how-to-learn orientation.\textsuperscript{5} He criticises pattern-focused training, which, he claims, relies on learning pieces of information about a particular culture. McCaffery stresses the importance of individual experience when learning about a different culture. Accordingly, he proposes skills based on everyday life experience including observation, self-reflection, transactions, saying no, and responding to ambiguity. With these ideas, McCaffery indicates that one has to observe intercultural encounters carefully, reflect on the encounters, adapt one’s behaviour around daily transactions, learn how to say no or how to avoid saying no and work out strategies of responding to ambiguous situations in a new culture.

This kind of skill-focused training programme is very popular because of its easy application and task focus.\textsuperscript{6} For example, the programme can be easily assessed by looking at how many skills have been taught to trainees. However, McCaffery falls into another kind of generalisation in applying these skills based on predominant cultural patterns with little culture-specific consideration.

A combination of both categories and skills can also be employed. For example, Harris and Moran\textsuperscript{7} include both in their training programmes for managers conducting business with other cultures. They name these two approaches “research” and “action learning” respectively. Similar skills have been stressed and utilised in other training programmes designed by Chaney and Martin\textsuperscript{8}, Lustig and Koester\textsuperscript{9} as well as Simons and associates.\textsuperscript{10}
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Cultural Patterns

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using cultural patterns. A discussion of them can highlight the necessity for developing a more holistic approach in diplomacy training. Advantages are discussed first.

The first advantage is the fact that dimensions or categories can help us understand cultures, and sometimes multiple dimensions can be applied to one particular case. Second, these categories can be used as references for identifying differences. As Tayeb points out, intercultural patterns provide an analytical tool for comparisons across cultures. Third, the study of cultural patterns also clarifies our thinking. As part of our thinking process we need to put things into categories in order to simplify and systematise the information we receive. Otherwise, we would be overwhelmed by hundreds of thousands of stimuli everyday. The use of cultural patterns helps us to sort our information and make sense of the events around us. In particular, the categories are useful for understanding new cultures.

However, using cultural patterns also carries disadvantages. The first disadvantage is related to simplification and generalisation of information.

This kind of generalisation can also be related to the cognitive constraints deriving from certain cultures. Cognitive constraints are often discussed in relation to social and cultural conditions. For example, Ting-Toomey describes the cognitive constraints in which culture interferes with effective intercultural understanding. According to her, the frames of reference within one particular culture provide a backdrop to which all new information is compared. Ting-Toomey’s idea of cognitive constraints can also apply in explaining the approaches used for intercultural training. For example, both cultural patterns and cultural skills used in intercultural training are predominantly a Western approach and, therefore, tend to indicate certain sets of cognitive constraints in understanding other cultures. This phenomenon also poses a challenge for intercultural training in incorporating an insider’s perspective.

The second disadvantage is that the use of cultural patterns focuses on obtaining results rather than on processes. For example, training programmes can be assessed based on the number of cultural patterns and skills learned or required of the trainees.

The third disadvantage is that the use of cultural patterns is based on an *etic* or culture-general rather than on an *emic* or culture-specific perspective. The terms *etic* and *emic* are used in social science as standard vocabulary although originally they derived from anthropological linguistics. The term *etic* is taken from phonetics and *emic* from phonemics. According to Pike,
phonetics refers to a universal system describing the sounds of various languages while phonemics refers to the study of the sound system of a particular language. Pike also extends this distinction to non-linguistic cultural phenomena. In contemporary research, *etic* study involves using cultural-general constructs for comparison across cultures while *emic* focuses on cultural-specific aspects from within a culture. There is a genuine lack of the *emic* perspective in cultural pattern-based training since these patterns are known to be universally applicable. We need to incorporate an *emic* perspective as well in order to ensure that all cultures’ voices are heard in intercultural training and research. Therefore, both dimensions are seen as essential for this study. With both of these dimensions, we will be able to overcome any cognitive constraints deriving from generalisations based on just one particular perspective such as the *etic*.

**High-Level Intercultural Competence**

If current intercultural training approaches are revisited in the light of intercultural competence theories, one can see that cultural-pattern based training may fail to target high-level competence. Collier and Thomas have contributed a four-stage developmental model regarding intercultural competence:

- unconscious incompetence
- conscious incompetence
- conscious competence
- unconscious competence

These four stages clearly intend to point to levels of competence where the most advanced level is unconscious competence; they can, as well, be useful in discussing the types of competence in communication. However, Collier and Thomas give no further illustration as to how to achieve the highest level of competence. In spite of that, “conscious competence” and “unconscious competence” are relevant here as they represent high levels of competence.

Kim asserts that communication competence is composed of cognitive, affective and operational levels. At the cognitive level, the individual needs to have competence in language and knowledge of the host culture. At the affective level, competence consists of the emotional capacity to deal with the challenges of a host culture and to understand the hosts’ emotions and aesthetic values. Operational competence involves behavioural competence in which
an individual is able to select appropriate communication strategies to interact with the host country successfully. From this we can see that high-level competence involves an all-round knowledge that apparently goes beyond general cultural patterns and skills. In other words, cultural generalisations alone will be far from sufficient to offer us adequate skills for intercultural encounters.

A further reference can be made to Kim, who asserts that communication competence occurs in a relationship between an individual and a specific task. This also specifies the way in which high-level competence can be achieved. An individual may have the ability to communicate across cultures but only particular communication relationships will be competent. Kim’s research found that situational factors were more important than an individual’s disposition and competent communication will not occur unless there is a positive relationship.

Kim gives no specific details as to how to develop from one level of competence to another. However, one point may contribute to high-level competence: it is essential to develop a positive relationship through completing specific tasks in a given context. Here, Kim talks about higher levels of intercultural competence as he examines problem-solving in real-life situations. Kim’s view echoes cognitive learning theory and learning in situated contexts. For example, Vygotski views situated contexts as essential to knowledge acquisition.

From this, we can see that situated learning or learning in specific contexts can help trainees achieve a high level of competence, and in particular an unconscious competence. However, current training programmes based on the study of cultural patterns are mainly based on an etic approach, either providing generalisations about cultures or giving recipe-like skills. They may help achieve a certain level of competence such as conscious competence, but they fail to target high-level competence. The major reason for this is that no clear stress has been placed on culture-specific and situated contexts. In order to provide an all-round view of the cultures for the trainees, it is important to incorporate the emic perspective. Specifically, the ethnography of communication is reviewed below.

The Ethnographical Dimension

The ethnography of communication provides an approach to studying culture from the “inside.” It is also known as the interpretive approach, which gained prominence in the late 1980s among communication scholars. Researchers in
this area believe that humans construct reality and that an external view alone is not sufficient for understanding human behaviour. They also believe that human experience, including communication, is subjective. In order to reduce the subjectivity caused by one’s perceptual biases, interpretive researchers propose a descriptive approach. Their major objective is to describe culture and observe how culture is created and maintained through communication. In this way, they can provide an insider’s perspective or understanding of a cultural practice from within the culture itself. This perspective can help overcome the cognitive constraints identified earlier in this paper.

Ethnographers use methods derived from anthropology and linguistics and, in particular, from Dell Hymes’ ethnography of communication. Frequently used methods include field studies, observations and participant observations. Hymes particularly advocates the importance of participant observations in understanding the different components of speaking. An example of the ethnography of communication tradition can be found in Jarvis. Jarvis and his research team observed the Euro Disney culture, primarily using interviews and participant observations. They discovered, for example, that management and workers operated with conflicting values, which was the key for further problem-solving within the organisation.

In this way, the interpretive approach provides an insider’s perspective; it also provides the researcher with a possible tool for comparing any external views. In other words, both the insider’s and outsider’s views can be incorporated into the research. In order to achieve this dual perspective, the author proposes that the following areas can contribute to the emic approach: using local theories of target cultures, interviewing native speakers to verify research findings and participant observation. This paper will focus on the first two items in their relevance for diplomacy training.

**Result-Oriented Learning vs. Process-Oriented Learning**

Diplomacy training is characterised by its result orientation, one of the disadvantages discussed earlier. Various studies on process-oriented vs. result-oriented teaching in the teaching of ESL have been carried out and their findings can be applied here. For example, Leki explains that with a result-oriented approach, it is assumed that schemata can be taught directly. Within a process-oriented approach, however, schemata are induced indirectly and gradually. A typical example of the result-oriented approach is often found in a classroom setting when readings are presented as models for successful com-
munication. With the process-oriented approach, readings taken from the target language are used to generate ideas. Students are often encouraged to reflect on the readings and report their impressions about the readings. The result-oriented classroom resembles the recipe approach in that both tend to focus on the prescribed rules of the sample texts. The process-oriented classroom, on the other hand, can be compared to a template metaphor since students are asked to learn guidelines and to reflect upon the sociocultural conventions underlying the structure of the text. These rules can also be applied to diplomacy training. It is imperative to promote process-oriented diplomacy training, utilising the template approach. In this way, trainees, instead of focusing on various patterns only, can learn more flexibly some guidelines for intercultural competence.

Process-oriented training is also related to the ethnographic approach. For example, trainees can be encouraged to participate in and observe a culture from the insider’s perspective. They can thus enhance their competence through active participation in various activities relating to the knowledge of a specific context within a particular culture. In a similar thrust, Zhu\textsuperscript{23} and Zhu and Rolland\textsuperscript{24} found that business students could enhance their learning by merging themselves into a specific organisational context. The remainder of this paper will focus on developing a model that suggests ways to incorporate the process-oriented as well as the \textit{emic} perspectives.

Developing a Triple-Level Training Model

Based on the theoretical dimensions discussed above, a training model aimed at both \textit{etic} and \textit{emic} perspectives is proposed here. This model targets high-level competence, taking into consideration all the theoretical perspectives discussed above. Specifically, this model involves three levels: the macro level, the meso level and the micro level, all of which are detailed below.

\textit{The Macro Level/Etic Perspective}

Cultural patterns can be used as starting points for identifying cultural differences. Categories and generalisations can be made at this level based on the general preferences of national cultures. For example, high- and low-context cultures are useful and effective terms for identifying differences in the beginning. Trainees can also refer to their own experiences of communicating with individuals from both high- and low-context cultures.
Meso Level/Emic Perspective
The meso level refers to examining cultural differences from the perspective of the target culture, and thus it is also the emic perspective. This level is also related to a process-orientation as it involves various processes of exploration and research. Specifically, it involves the processes of studying sociocultural contexts, examining linguistic skills and cultural language and exploring pragmatics and persuasion. All these areas have a close link with high-level intercultural competence.

First, learning sociocultural contexts will provide situatedness and contextualised factors for learning cultural differences. In this way, learning these contexts will help trainees to aim at high-level competence.

Second, trainees should learn linguistic skills, pragmatics and cultural language. Learning language skills is important; however, learning these skills alone is not sufficient. Trainees should be exposed to learning cultural language as well. By cultural language, I mean the specific cultural conventions and practices underlying linguistics skills.

Finally, rhetoric and persuasion refer to the use of language in relation to effective communication. Different cultures may have different preferences for persuading people. For example, according to Aristotle, logos or the logical approach is seen as the essential element of persuasion in the west. However, both logos and pathos or the emotional approach are important persuasive orientations in many Asian cultures. Zhu and Hildebrandt point out that persuasive orientations are the root of cultural differences. Understanding the differences will help us to enhance trainees’ intercultural competence. It is therefore necessary for trainees to have access to some of the local theories of persuasion.

Micro/Etic and Emic Perspectives
The micro level involves both the etic and emic perspectives:

- Interpersonal relations;
- Specific strategies;
- Individual sociopsychological profiles, personal traits and preferred communication styles.

Both cultural patterns and culture-specific elements can be used for exploration at this level. For example, interpersonal relations can give some clues to the perceptual context involving both parties, specific task information provides background knowledge about certain forms of communication involved.
such as verbal and non-verbal, and individual profiles offer indications of individual preferences.

Illustrating the Model with an Authentic Case

Using dialogues is a prevalent method in intercultural training. Dialogues also reflect our rhetorical thinking and the way in which we organise information. The dialogue presented here illustrates a communication breakdown. The proposed model is used to analyse the intercultural encounter. This dialogue takes place between a European New Zealander and a Chinese girl from Hong Kong:

Anna: Anna speaking.
Miss Ng: Hi Anna! Why didn’t you ring me in the past few days?
Anna: Is that all you wanted to tell me?
Miss Ng: Yeah…?
Anna: Bye then.
Miss Ng: Bye, Anna, but…

This conversation can be analysed with the three-level model. At the macro level, Anna is from New Zealand, a low-context culture, and Miss Ng is from Hong Kong, a high-context culture. The dialogue clearly shows some differences in how to begin a telephone conversation: the two participants couldn’t decode each other’s messages and their conversation thus ended before they could reach any substantial point.

The meso level offers further explanation about what lead to the communication breakdown. In Hong Kong, “Why didn’t you ring me in the past few days?” can be easily interpreted as a greeting to indicate that the addressee misses the addressee. In the New Zealand context, however, this sentence can be easily misinterpreted as a criticism blaming the addressee for being lazy. In addition, an emic explanation helps the analysis. For example, Chinese persuasion has a focus on emotions or the pathos and thus there is a need for Miss Ng to indicate her feelings in this context.

The micro level details the interpersonal relationship. The two girls of different cultures are good friends at high school and they ring each other very often. In Hong Kong this relationship would allow the use of “Why didn’t you ring me?” as a greeting. Miss Ng thus prefers a direct communication style. Anna, however, found it hard to interpret this as a greeting in this encoun-
In summary, all these levels of analysis provide a sound interpretation for this intercultural encounter. The explanations offer more dimensions than an analysis of the cultural patterns alone. For example, this encounter does not really fit into established patterns as the person from the high-context culture appears to be very direct and begins the conversation with a “criticism.”

Conclusion

This paper has evaluated diplomacy training programmes in New Zealand and developed a model involving a series of processes of learning. The model mainly focuses on the learning processes of macro, meso and micro levels as well as the etic and emic approaches. It has been found that successful training lies in incorporating both the etic and emic perspectives in diplomacy training. The etic perspective enables trainees to have a systematic understanding of cultural differences, while the emic perspective can help trainees reduce possible over-generalisation. In this way, this model goes beyond identifying cultural differences and targets enhancing high-level competence as the ultimate goal for diplomacy training. Further research, however, needs to be carried out to explore new paradigms for high-level competence training. Further study also needs to be conducted on how to incorporate authentic cases diplomats collect overseas into training programmes, as their first-hand experiences can play a convincing and significant part in successful diplomacy training.

Endnotes

1 I had six telephone interviews with New Zealand diplomats in Wellington regarding intercultural training as detailed below.
An Intercultural Model for Diplomacy Training in New Zealand

Yunxia Zhu

27 This is an authentic telephone conversation collected by the author.
An ever increasing consensus suggests that the field of international diplomacy is becoming more complicated due to many factors, including the pressures of globalisation, the threat of terrorism, and the technological revolution. That international diplomats and others managing and working on international projects need to become more knowledgeable and skilled in the art of working across cultures is a given. We believe that Jonas Stier echoes the conviction and wish of the world community when he writes that “It seems inevitable that future generations, in order to function in a global world, will see the value of intercultural competencies and be more prone to seek knowledge and experiences outside their home country.”

However, two key questions remain to be answered. First, what do we know about what it takes to be interculturally competent? And second, what can we do to better enable individuals and organisations to become interculturally competent? This paper, organised into three sections, will attempt to answer these two questions. The first part will present some of the key research findings on expatriate intercultural competence, derived primarily from the extensive study of professionals working in international development, business, and peacekeeping. In the second part, we will discuss the relevance of these research findings for those working in the field of international diplomacy. Finally, the third part will describe a major project undertaken by the Centre for Intercultural Learning (CIL) aimed at establishing clear and measurable indicators of intercultural competence, the results of which were to become the foundation for a new approach for the selection, training, and evaluation of international personnel.

Research on Expatriate Intercultural Competence: Key Findings

Much research on intercultural competence derives from the study of sojourners, people who go to live and work in another culture on a temporary basis but often for an extended period of time. Sojourner groups include business personnel, military personnel, foreign students, international development advisors, diplomats, emergency relief workers and international peacekeepers. Professionally, the authors have had extensive experience studying the experience of sojourners and developing standards for the selection, training, and evalu-
ation of international personnel. What follows is a review of some of the key research findings on intercultural competence derived primarily from over two decades of work by Kealey and colleagues. It should be noted, however, that many of the findings reported have indeed been replicated in research undertaken by others in the same period.

**A Definition of Expatriate Intercultural Competence**

Two major challenges confront all people making an international transition. The first challenge has to do with the person’s capacity to become well-adjusted and personally satisfied in the new culture. The second challenge has to do with the person’s potential to function and work effectively in the new environment. Accordingly, by our definition, an interculturally competent person is someone who is able to live contentedly and work successfully in another culture. Further, our research has found that what predicts the ability to live contentedly in a new culture often differs from what is needed to achieve professional success. For example, we have often found in our work assessing candidates for international assignments that an individual or couple might possess the emotional readiness and personal skills needed to adapt to the new environment, yet lack other skills (such as relationship building, social and cultural insight) needed to work effectively in the new culture. The reverse also occurs commonly.

**Effectiveness versus Satisfaction**

In a study of Canadian development advisors it was determined that only 20% of advisors were rated by colleagues and supervisors as highly effective at their jobs whereas over 75% reported a high level of personal satisfaction on their foreign assignment. These findings are in keeping with the results of other research on international business personnel. One explanation for this finding is that expatriates derive their satisfaction from “living the foreign lifestyle” (enjoying frequent socialising with other expatriates, having servants, etc.) rather than from meeting professional challenges. In a recent study of Canadian peacekeepers it was reported that 92% of Canadian civilian peacekeepers in Kosovo would readily undertake a second peacekeeping mission but less than a third were rated as highly effective interculturally. Interviews identified the excitement and adventure of the assignment as being particularly motivating and satisfying.
The Role of Previous Overseas Experience

Kealey\(^6\) also found that Canadians with previous overseas experience generally adjusted to life in a new country more quickly and easily than those on their first overseas assignment. They reported lower levels of stress than those without overseas experience, and higher levels of satisfaction.

The study found, however, that ease of adjustment is not predictive of effectiveness in transferring skills and knowledge, despite the fact that advisors with prior experience express confident expectations prior to departure and rate themselves as being highly effective once they are working overseas. When rated by their peers, counterparts, and researchers, these advisors did not rate as more effective than those without overseas experience. In fact, too much previous experience may lead to complacency, forming a barrier to establishing effective relationships with nationals.

This finding is important for its implications in the selection of candidates for overseas assignments. To date, previous experience has been an important factor in selecting people for overseas assignment. Too often, otherwise qualified people are eliminated from the selection process because they lack international experience, a fact clearly demonstrated in this study where only 35% of the sample were on their first overseas assignment. While previous experience does have some merits, its importance as a selection criterion should be tempered. Such an action would have the added benefit of enlarging the pool of talent from which to select overseas advisors.

Culture Shock and Effectiveness

Many researchers\(^7\) have identified a number of interpersonal skills associated with overseas effectiveness. However, Kealey\(^8\) found that the presence of those skills - flexibility, respect, attentiveness, cooperation, control, and sensitivity - is also associated with greater difficulty in adjusting to a foreign culture. People who were judged by their peers to be most effective overseas were also likely to experience the greatest degree of culture shock during the transition period.

Although these findings seem counterintuitive, they are perhaps not surprising. People with well-developed interpersonal skills place a high value on the people in their lives. In moving to a foreign culture, they are cut off from their friends and family in Canada and are unknown in their new environment. They experience acculturative stress from both a sense of loss of the old and familiar and a confrontation with the new and unfamiliar. That initial sense of loss is diminished as they become settled in the new environment and establish new relationships.
These findings have important implications for the selection of overseas personnel. To date, many recruiters have stressed adaptability as a primary consideration for selection and look for an individual who will experience the least acculturative stress, that is, someone who can move to a foreign country and begin functioning immediately. Results of this study recommend against this practice as at least some of the individuals who ultimately will be most successful will also undergo severe acculturative stress. By selecting only those individuals judged as highly adaptable, recruiters of international personnel may be screening out some of the best candidates.

The Reality of Culture Shock and the Stages of Adaptation
Although people may be unaware of experiencing culture shock on an international assignment, almost all sojourners experience some degree of culture shock or culture fatigue during their stay in a new culture. Research has also identified three distinct phases in the process of adaptation. An initial stage of elation is followed by a period of depression which usually gives way to renewed feelings of satisfaction. This was identified as the “U” curve theory of cross-cultural adaptation and it still remains valid for sojourners today although the timing and severity of the down phase (the “culture shock” or “culture fatigue” stage) varies greatly depending on prior experience and pre-departure knowledge and expectations. That the experience of fatigue and stress on encountering a new culture can seriously affect performance is clear and for this reason pre-departure training sessions usually include training on how to recognise and cope with this experience.

The Reality of the Expatriate Ghetto
Research on sojourners reveals the tendency of expatriates to socialise among themselves, that is, to live in an expatriate ghetto. Although this has the advantage of providing a support structure for those expatriates, it also serves as a barrier to becoming interculturally effective. The study of Canadian development advisors determined that the 20% of advisors who were rated highly effective at their jobs tended to be more involved with the local people and the host culture and had made an effort to learn and use the local language. Interestingly, these advisors paid a price, for they tended also to be rejected by their fellow countrymen who likely were threatened by such behaviour. Torbiorn reports a similar finding in his research on Swedish business personnel working in other cultures.
Hardship and Satisfaction
Canadians posted to countries with severe living and working conditions tend to report higher levels of satisfaction than those assigned to countries of lesser hardship. Faced with a difficult situation, people tend to bond together for mutual support. This serves to increase the morale and effectiveness of the team. It is this experience of camaraderie which returning soldiers from World War II and other military expeditions described as so personally enriching and so powerful in its effects.

Headquarters versus Field
One of the recurring findings in the studies of sojourner groups is the difficulty of communication between personnel working in the field and headquarters managers. Overall, field personnel report that they do not feel understood, supported, or trusted by headquarters’ managers. They feel that managers at headquarters are out of touch with the reality of the field, make decisions and give directions that inhibit rather than enhance their effectiveness.

Profile of Skills for Intercultural Effectiveness
Over the past 50 years, extensive empirical research has attempted to identify the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to live and work in another culture. Recent research continues to replicate previous findings and thus serves to confirm the validity of a set of general traits and skills needed to be successful in another culture. Traits such as relationship building, respect, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, realistic expectations, initiative, and self-confidence, among others, are consistently identified by researchers as part of the skills profile needed for success in another culture. Building on this research, the recent work of Vulpe and colleagues has succeeded in establishing a very detailed description of the actual behaviour of interculturally effective people. The profile of skills and knowledge identifies nine major competency areas for a person to be acknowledged as being interculturally competent. The nine competency areas are:

- adaptation skills;
- an attitude of modesty and respect;
- an understanding of the concept of culture;
- knowledge of the host country and culture;
- relationship-building;
- self-knowledge;
- intercultural communication;
• organisational skills;
• personal and professional commitment.

For each competency area, a detailed description of behavioural indicators is provided. These are the observable, concrete actions displayed by interculturally competent individuals. Accordingly, we do know a great deal about what it takes to be effective in another culture, at least in terms of the personal skills and traits associated with intercultural success.

The Role and Impact of Intercultural Training

Although studies attempting to evaluate the impact of intercultural training remain inadequate for “proving” its effectiveness in equipping people with intercultural skills, the need to prepare and assist people in being able to live and work effectively in another culture is clear. Evidence abounds with respect to the multiplicity and variety of problems which people encounter on entering a new culture. Many types of intercultural training, from the very didactic to the very experiential, have been tried over the years. The recent emphasis in cross-cultural training, and in the field of training more generally, has been to identify the behavioural competencies needed for success and to then design training programmes aimed at acquiring these skills. This new behaviour-based approach to intercultural training provides trainees with the opportunity to learn about and actually practice interacting with people from different cultures. One of the benefits of this approach is that it makes easier to measure skills acquisition and thus may permit a more scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of intercultural training programmes.

Monitoring and Support

Anyone who has had responsibility for recruiting and managing expatriate personnel will readily speak to the importance of monitoring performance and providing support to employees and staff posted abroad. Too often people are sent into other cultures and left to fend for themselves. Failure rates measured by early return are estimated from 15% to 40% for American business personnel; of those who stay, less than 50% perform adequately. Often the reason for early return has to do with family adjustment problems. In a study of Canadian technical advisors posted to Egypt, over 90%, including spouses, identified the need for in-country support services (such as on-arrival orientation, seminars and counselling) to help them adapt and be effective while living and working in Egypt.
Debriefing and Re-Entry
Although research on expatriates has found that re-entry culture shock is often more severe than the culture shock experienced in adapting to the foreign culture, few international agencies or companies offer their employees any systematic debriefing/re-entry programme on return. The opportunity to learn from the employee’s intercultural experience is lost and the need to assist employees and families to re-adapt to the home culture is ignored. Returning personnel often express frustration because they feel their international experience is not exploited by their employer and the difficulty of their re-entry on themselves and their families is unacknowledged. This is often cited as one of the reasons why many returning expatriates actually resign from the companies which sent them to work internationally.

The Role of Motivation, Attitudes and Expectations
Most researchers would agree with the view that one’s motivation, attitudes, and expectations are critical determinants of whether or not a person will adapt and perform effectively in a new culture. A strong professional commitment and a desire and energy to contribute to improving conditions in the host country has repeatedly been found to be associated with success in another culture. Additionally, having positive attitudes and a spirit of adventure are also predictive of personal contentment and professional success in a new culture. Ambivalence about whether or not to undertake the foreign posting or excessive fear or concern about the future are negative indicators with respect to overseas adaptation. And, finally, possessing a set of realistic expectations prior to departure has often been found to be associated with international success as it guards against becoming disappointed or even disillusioned with the process of adapting to a new culture. On this latter point, however, it is interesting to note that Kealey’s research adds an important addendum to these general findings. For example, he found an order or priority with respect to positive attitudes and realistic expectations. Although he confirmed the importance of both, positive attitudes were found to be more important than realistic expectations in predicting success in another culture. It seemed that those possessing very positive attitudes prior to departure were simply confident and determined to make the posting work. Once in the new culture, even if they were disappointed or disillusioned due to not being adequately realistic about the conditions that awaited them in the new country, they did not let their disappointment or surprise prevent them from becoming content and effective in the new culture.
The Experience of Spouses

Most of the research on spouses involves the study of women who accompany their husbands and children on the overseas assignment. Although it is becoming more common to find men who are the accompanying spouse, very little research has been conducted on their experiences. Kealey’s data on spouses identifies three key problems which confront spouses. First, in comparison with their husbands, they undergo a greater degree of stress and difficulty in adjusting to the new culture. It is their responsibility to get the house in order as their husbands go off to the office. The tasks of settling in (e.g., housing, unpacking, shopping), dealing with children’s adaptation problems, establishing relationships with domestic staff, loss of privacy, and adjusting to the expatriate community are often simply overwhelming. Second, spouses report feeling isolated and dependent. They miss their family and friends back home and often come to resent their financial and emotional dependence on their husbands as they try to establish a life for themselves in the new environment. Third, many spouses report difficulty and even anger at having had to put their own career on hold in order to support the career of their husband.

The research of Kealey and others serves to illustrate the critical importance of the situation of the spouse overseas. Put simply, the capacity of the accompanying spouse to adjust to the foreign environment is at least equally important, if not more important, as the capacity for adjustment of the working spouse. With respect to the characteristics of successful spouses, Kealey identifies three key factors: initiative, an interest in culture, and a willingness to put their own career on hold. The spouses who cope best in a new culture see the posting as an opportunity to explore, learn, and develop themselves. They have come to terms with interrupting their own career and see the posting as an adventure and a break from their own job responsibilities. For spouses who do not cope well, it is most often the case that they fundamentally did not want to go overseas but felt they had no choice but to support the career opportunity of their partner.

Relevance of Research Findings for International Diplomats

Although the foregoing discussion of research findings on expatriate intercultural competence derives primarily from the study of international development workers, foreign students, and international business people, many of the findings also likely hold true for foreign service personnel. Unfortunately, very little research has focused on the personal adjustment and professional effec-
tiveness of individuals and families in the diplomatic service. It may be that the traditional role of the diplomat as representing the interests of his/her own country has justified a certain distance from local culture and, therefore, less need to be interculturally competent.

However, increasing evidence shows that the role of the diplomat is changing. Joseph Nye and others argue that traditional self-interested diplomacy is being replaced by a diplomacy of mutuality of interests. Nye points out that the end of the cold war, economic globalisation, and the technological revolution have changed diplomacy fundamentally. Accordingly, the “hard power” of military force should give way to “soft power,” such as “the capacity for effective communication and for developing and using multilateral institutions.” Although some will argue with this position, especially given current world events, it seems that the role of the diplomat is indeed changing and becoming more demanding in terms of the personal qualities and skills needed for success. For example, an American observer has suggested that the role of his country’s diplomats will evolve toward being “networkers,” who link up home and host country businesses, NGOs, and other organisations for mutual advantage.

More recently, Glen Fisher, after spending more than 20 years in the foreign service, concluded that his profession ignored and continues to remain ignorant of what he terms the “psychocultural dimension of international affairs.” He argues that diplomats and others involved in international projects need new skills to be effective in their jobs. Just learning facts and the language of another culture is insufficient for effective cross-cultural collaboration. International personnel need to be interculturally competent, able to communicate, empathise with, and understand the “mindsets” of local colleagues. It is his opinion that international operations have indeed developed a greater technical “know-how” and efficiency, but continue to ignore the need to train their people in understanding and managing the psychocultural dimensions of their business.

Without focusing on the issue of intercultural competence per se, other writers and researchers in the field of international affairs plead for a new direction. Helena Finn argues that more than military force is needed to fight foreign extremism. She makes the point “that dialogue is essential to winning the hearts and minds of moderate elements in societies vulnerable to radicalism.” Interestingly, Robert McNamara had already alerted the international community to this point in his retrospective on Vietnam. But McNamara went further, to deplore his nation’s continued ignorance of other cultures: “Our judgments of friend and foe alike reflected our profound ignorance of the history,
culture, and politics of the people in the area, and the personalities and habits of their leaders.” Finally, in an interesting article, Samuel Huntington issues a wake-up call for the West as he feels many are mistakenly convinced that modernisation equals Westernisation equals an eventual single, global culture. He argues very convincingly that the widespread acceptance of American food, music, and consumer goods does not at all mean that other nations are forsaking their own ways: “Drinking Coca-Cola does not make Russians think like Americans any more than eating sushi makes Americans think like Japanese.”

Clearly, the DiploFoundation has increasingly acknowledged the changing nature of international diplomacy and is working to bring new knowledge and awareness of intercultural and other skills needed to perform effectively in the role of diplomat. It is hoped that the foregoing presentation of research findings can serve to inform current and future planning for the selection, training, and evaluation of international diplomats.

This research has enabled us to better understand the personal and professional challenges in working across cultures, identified the interpersonal and intercultural knowledge and skills needed to be successful, and enabled a number of international organisations to improve their management of international operations. More specifically, the research findings led the Centre for Intercultural Learning of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute to conduct further research related to intercultural competence with a view to redesigning its programmes in support of international selection, training and performance evaluation.

We now turn to a discussion of A Profile of an Interculturally Effective Person, a project which enabled the Centre to redesign its intercultural programmes and services. The paper will conclude with a description of the new programmes and services being developed to address the need for foreign service personnel to become more interculturally competent.

Profile of an Interculturally Effective Person

Prior to undertaking the exercise described here, the Centre for Intercultural Training had considered a plan to evaluate the impact of pre-departure intercultural effectiveness training on expatriate performance in the field. This study was put off, because it was felt that a clear and measurable statement of the performance expected of an interculturally effective person did not yet exist. What is it that a person does or does not do, says or does not say, that
would indicate to an observer that he or she is, in fact, interculturally effective. In other words, a proper evaluation required an elucidation of the behavioural indicators of intercultural effectiveness.

This thinking, and a review of other sources such as Kirkpatrick and Mager, led us to the development of a framework for selection and training design and evaluation, which we called a profile of the interculturally effective person.

This new profile presents an integrated hierarchy of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes expected of an interculturally effective person working in a foreign culture. It covers three levels of skills and knowledge, which we called major competency areas, core competencies, and behavioural indicators.

At the most general level are nine major competency areas, or the most essential qualities required of an interculturally effective person. Although a knowledge of these nine major areas is useful to organise a multitude of competencies and behavioural indicators, and to quickly assess areas of priority attention when selecting individuals for overseas assignment or for designing training programmes, their use for evaluation purposes is minimal.

The second level gets more specific and measurable. Some 30 core competencies flesh out and begin to defuzzify the aforementioned major competency areas. These core competencies serve as precise learning objectives in the design of training programmes and are used as such by trainers. But they are still not precise and observable enough for evaluation purposes.

Therefore, our ultimate level of specificity lies at the third level, that of behavioural indicators. These indicators are conceived as behaviourally defined and observable, and hence provide evaluable statements of what an interculturally effective person would actually do and say in real life.

Table 1 provides a visual presentation of a part of the intercultural effectiveness profile. Due to space constraints, the complete sequence is given for only one of the major competency areas and its related core competencies and behavioural indicators.
### Table 1: An Example of CIL’s Profile of an Interculturally Effective Person (IEP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Competency Area</th>
<th>Core Competencies</th>
<th>Behavioural Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. IEPs are effective intercultural communicators.</td>
<td>7.1. IEPs are able to convey their thoughts, opinions, and expectations in a way that is understandable yet interculturally sensitive.</td>
<td>See Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe &amp; MacDonald (2001) for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2. IEPs are not afraid to participate in the local culture and language.</td>
<td>7.2.1: IEPs are not afraid to participate in the local culture and language.</td>
<td>See Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe &amp; MacDonald (2001) for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3: IEPs are able to establish shared meanings with local people so that foreigners and local people understand what is said in the same way.</td>
<td>7.3.1: IEPs attempt to enhance communication by avoiding any stereotypical presumptions about how local people would understand what is being said.</td>
<td>7.3.2: IEPs can identify both the values the foreign workers and local colleagues share and those they do not share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3.3: IEPs have effective listening skills as evidenced by, for example, being able to restate what others have said both individually or in a meeting.</td>
<td>7.3.4: IEPs possess strategies for resolving an intercultural miscommunication, for example, by checking whether local colleagues have understood a point; checking that they have understood the points made by locals; or reformulating points to enhance clarity of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4: IEPs possess sufficient local language capacity to show that they are interested in the people with whom they work and interact.</td>
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<td>See Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe &amp; MacDonald (2001) for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5: IEPs have an ability to empathise with, not just understand intellectually, how the locals see the world.</td>
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<td>See Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe &amp; MacDonald (2001) for details.</td>
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**The IEP Profile in Use**

The development of the competencies and indicators in our profile of an interculturally effective person has provided a common language and set of reference points or benchmarks for consistent use throughout our selection, training design, and evaluation processes. We have now developed a series of tools and procedures for the screening and selection of international personnel. This system, called the *International Personnel Assessment (IPA) Program* assesses an
individual’s overall readiness and capacity to perform effectively in another
culture. These instruments are designed to assist organisations in identifying
the best candidates to undertake an overseas assignment. Results of the IPA
programme are also useful for identifying the knowledge and skills that need
to be upgraded in order to perform effectively on an international assignment.

With regard to training design, our flagship intercultural course, a three-
day pre-departure course designed for professionals and their spouses undertak- ing an international assignment, has been revamped by using the competen-
tcies and indicators in the profile as baseline measures and constructs for con- ducting assessments of learning needs and articulating the baseline learn-
ing objectives. In other words, the profile provides the performance standards
against which an individual trainee’s current level of intercultural skills can be
assessed prior to training. Identifying the gap between actual and needed skills
permits a large degree of customisation. We also give a copy of the profile to
all course participants as a reference for helping them to align their behaviours
with the learning objectives.

The Centre has also taken the comprehensiveness, precision and behav-
ioral observability of the competencies and indicators to construct and imple-
ment evaluation frameworks with which one can assess not only the learning
that takes place in our courses, but also the extent to which this learning trans-
fers to effective intercultural performance in an overseas assignment. Finally,
the profile has proven a valuable marketing and client relations tool, permitting
our potential and new clients to grasp more clearly the tangible benefits that
they can expect from our intercultural learning products and services.

Endnotes

1 Jonas Stier, “Internationalisation, Ethnic Diversity, and the Acquisition of Inter-
2 T. Vulpe, D. J. Kealey, D. Protheroe and D. MacDonald, A Profile of the Intercul-
turally Effective Person (Hull, Quebec: Centre for Intercultural Learning, 2001), 5.
3 D. J. Kealey, “A Study of Cross-Cultural Effectiveness: Theoretical Issues, Practi-
4 D. J. Kealey, Cross-Cultural Effectiveness (Hull, Quebec: Canadian International
5 R. Weekes, D. J. Kealey, J. Mantha, D. MacDonald and E. Verreault, “The Per-
sonal and Professional Challenge of Peacekeeping,” paper presented to Special
Committee of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Ottawa, Canada: 2001).
6 Kealey, Cross-Cultural Effectiveness, 34.
7 N. Dinges and K. Baldwin, “Intercultural Competence: A Research Perspective,”
in Handbook of Intercultural Training, ed. D. Landis and R. Bhagat (Thousand...
Intercultural Competence and Its Relevance

Daniel J. Kealey, Doug MacDonald and Thomas Vulpe


8 Kealey, Cross-Cultural Effectiveness, 38.


10 Kealey, Cross-Cultural Effectiveness, 35.

11 I. Torbhorn, Living Abroad: Personal Adjustment and Personnel Policy in the Overseas Setting (Chichester: Wiley, 1982).

12 Kealey, Cross-Cultural Effectiveness, 40.


15 Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe, and MacDonald, A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person.


18 Kealey, Interpersonal and Cultural Dimensions, 74.


22 Joseph Nye, “Soft Power,” Foreign Policy (Fall, 1990), 153.

23 Ibid., 164.


28 Ibid.


30 Ibid.

31 Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe, and MacDonald, A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person.


Someone has said that international relations are men’s business and intercultural relations are women’s affairs. International relations deal with politics, economics, important issues - things that men are usually familiar with; intercultural relations deal with exchanges, visits, gentle issues - things that better apply to women! International relations deal with war and conflict; intercultural relations deal with peace and harmony. International relations imply urgent matters, sometimes even emergencies; intercultural relations are nice, but not essential and can be postponed. A war must be settled, before peace can be established.

The person who made these remarks, Ewald Brass, did not personally believe they were true, but wanted to make a provocative statement concerning the fact that international and intercultural relations are too often separated, as if it were not possible to deal with both at the same time. Brass is former director of the Franco-German Office for Youth (OFAJ-Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse/DFJW-Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk), a very good example of an organisation that uses intercultural activities in the field of international affairs.

On January 22, 1963, General de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer signed the Franco-German Treaty for Cooperation between France and Germany. Less than six months later, on July 5, 1963, the ministers of foreign affairs, Maurice Couve de Murville and Gerhard Schröder, signed the agreement on the foundation of the Franco-German Office for Youth. The aim of the Office for Youth has been to provide training and learning opportunities for young citizens in order to facilitate cooperation between the two countries.

Brass’s considerations draw attention to the fact that political, diplomatic, social, cultural and conceptual reasons make international affairs dependent on intercultural relations. International relations establish borders between countries and the conditions to cross them, yet intercultural relations regulate not only the conditions to cross, but, as well, the conditions to enter into another culture.

We need to understand the relationship between international and intercultural relations. The two are inseparable as no communication occurs if we do not translate and interpret behaviours in the same way we do when we speak a foreign language. The experience of both interculturalists and diplomats provides many examples of this. We need to translate ourselves and to interpret
others. We need to make ourselves understandable, and to do this, we need to accept that much information and many nuances will be lost. For example, I use English as a foreign language to make people understand me, but I know that my knowledge of English limits the expression of my thought. Nevertheless, I have to cross this barrier in order to communicate with foreigners. At the same time, those who have English as their mother tongue have to make the effort to understand my foreign accent when I speak, and my foreign style and logic, when I write. Those who do not have English as their mother tongue have to make the double effort to understand my accent and my style in a language that is not ours. Therefore, we are making a compromise. We want to communicate and we do it at the price of losing and missing bits and pieces of information. Nonetheless, we want to do it because we want to go beyond our cultural, national, linguistic and cognitive limits. I think in one language, translate it into another and people interpret my words so that they make sense in their frame of mind.

**European Commission**

In addition to the OFAJ/DFJW, one can find many other political, governmental examples of initiatives in favour of international/intercultural relations, a major one coming from the European Union.\(^4\)

The European Commission acknowledged that intercultural dialogue plays an enormous role in the understanding and prevention of violence and terrorism. They created the *Jean Monet Project for Intercultural Dialogue*, on the premises that “the events of September 11 have underlined the necessity, recognised by the Heads of State and Government, to reinforce intercultural dialogue.”\(^5\)

The project promoted a symposium “to provoke a relevant analysis of the numerous aspects of intercultural relations as well as conclusions and recommendations of a political nature.” The conclusions were conveyed to Mr Prodi and to Mrs Reding (Directorate General for Education and Culture) and to the political decision-makers, institutions and ministers. As a follow-up to this event, the Commission held a conference on “Peace, security and stability: international dialogue and the role of the European Union,” in December of 2002. The final declaration of the Jean Monet Project stated, “A policy of intercultural dialogue, next to traditional economic and diplomatic relations, plays a vital role in the governance of the shared responsibility. In this perspective, intercultural dialogue is an efficient instrument to prevent and manage
conflicts at all policy levels. … The policy of an international dialogue by the European Union should focus on youth, education and communication.6

**Centre for International Mobility**

Another governmental initiative comes from the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), in Helsinki, Finland. This is a service organisation under the Finnish ministry of education and acts as the national agency for the European Union education, training and youth programmes. CIMO belongs to the youth information network Eurodesk and to the Euroguidance network, including 65 organisations in 31 European countries, which provide information on international mobility, best practices, education and training systems.

The most recent policy papers on immigration include the Treaty of Amsterdam, which has the objective that immigration and asylum are a Community responsibility7, and the Tampere European Council, which was part of the 1999 Finnish Presidency conclusions and had the objective of creating an EU area of freedom, security and justice.8

The policy papers on guidance, counselling and information include the Memorandum on Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality9 and the High Level Task Force on Skills and Mobility.10

From 1999 to 2001, CIMO coordinated an international project entitled *Towards a European RAINBOW - Increasing Intercultural Awareness among Guidance Counsellors*. The project took into consideration the European policy papers on immigration and on guidance, counselling and information.11

The main aim of the Rainbow project was to design and implement a European training module on multicultural counselling and intercultural communication for guidance counsellors working with immigrants and ethnic groups in the education and employment sectors in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece and Italy. All partner organisations operated in the field of educational and vocational guidance and counselling. Half of the partners were members of the transnational Euroguidance network that covers 31 European countries and supports the European guidance community in mobility-related issues, such as providing guidance practitioners with information on studying and training opportunities abroad.12 The Rainbow project also created a www-service13, a database about multicultural counselling that includes an in-service training course, a thematic link collection and a virtual learning space.
My experience as trainer in the Rainbow project showed how intercultural awareness could be an effective tool for guidance counsellors. Together we understood that guidance counsellors often use intercultural communication with their clients unconsciously, without mastering intercultural skills and, therefore, running the risk of being unsuccessful.

**European Federation for Intercultural Learning**

I shall now present two other case studies of non-governmental organisations working in the field of intercultural communication.

The European Federation for Intercultural Learning, EFIL (Brussels, Belgium), is the umbrella organisation of the AFS associations in Europe. AFS Intercultural Programmes, Inc. formed in 1947 to facilitate student and teacher exchanges, after the activities of its predecessor, the American Field Service ambulance corps. The origins of American Field Service (AFS) began shortly after the outbreak of World War I. A group of 15 Americans living in Paris volunteered to drive ambulances for the American Hospital there. This group, eventually known as the American Field Service, undertook to transport wounded French soldiers from the front lines to mobile medical units. By the end of the war, their number had grown to 2,500 volunteer ambulance drivers. During World War II, the American Field Service’s all-civilian volunteer force was stationed in Europe, Syria, North Africa, India and Burma. When the war ended in 1945, AFS volunteers pledged not to abandon their tradition of international service. They began their exchange programme in 1947, bringing 52 high school students from 10 countries, including “enemy” nations such as Japan and Germany, to the United States for a yearlong exchange experience. Today, AFS has offices in 52 countries and more than 290,000 participants have taken part in international cultural exchanges.14

EFIL comprises 22 AFS European organisations and Tunisia, as an associate member.15 Its main activities are international exchanges for young people, development of educational methods and materials on intercultural communication, and intercultural training for teachers, students and volunteers. The current EFIL projects include:

- Co-ordination of intra-European trimester exchanges: On behalf of the Council of Europe, EFIL co-ordinates pupil exchanges between western and eastern European countries. Thirty countries are involved in this exchange.

- Research on the mobility of secondary school students: Thanks to the support of the EU Commission (Socrates Action 6.2), EFIL has undertaken a two-year
research programme focusing on the mobility of secondary school pupils. The research seeks to identify the existing regulatory environment, especially with regard to validation and recognition of curricula, and to identify best practices.

Creating a special visa status for participants in international mobility schemes: The creation of common European borders calls for harmonised immigration and residence rules for the Union’s members. EFIL is lobbying for a special European visa status for exchange programme participants in order to facilitate the international mobility of secondary school pupils in Europe.

A new generation of educational and mobility programmes: EFIL is lobbying the European Commission on the next generation of EU programmes in order to set aside more funding for mobility and intercultural learning, the validation and certification of skills acquired through participation in mobility projects and increased support to schools wishing to foster intercultural learning in the classroom.

A European network for transnational studies: EFIL collaborates in a higher education project with Bocconi University (Italy) to create a network of formal and non-formal educational institutions and to develop a protocol of specific competencies and a set of didactic tools and guidelines for secondary schools.

Validating the intercultural results of stays abroad: AFS, with the support of EFIL at the European level and in collaboration with Mitchell R. Hammer, has launched into a three-year study involving 1400 pupils aimed at evaluating and measuring the educational value of intercultural learning and competence.

Discussion

Europe is the continent with the largest quantity of borders. Its small countries with millenary histories and diversities offer a variety of intercultural challenges. The borders among European countries, when they still exist, are no longer the frontiers of the past. Mobility of professionals, teachers and students has substantially increased and has been encouraged at local, national and international levels. This affects workplaces as well as educational settings by enhancing cultural diversity. International professionals, trainers and educators should be prepared and should prepare societies for these new scenarios.

Culture plays an essential role in both promoting and hindering change and in affecting Europeans’ view of their present and future attitudes toward cooperation and integration. The EU originated in the effort to create and share a common market economy. In the 1990s, the communal principle was extended to political, legal, financial and social issues. However, policies and
laws remain quite different in the various EU countries due to cultural differences. Uniform and coordinated policies can take place only with intercultural awareness and cultural adjustments.

The EU has constitutional arrangements and a series of treaties, but a European constitution does not exist yet. Various organisations have provided fora for discussions and proposals, including formal institutions as well as private organisations. Among the former, the European University Institute in Florence drafted a “Basic Treaty” for the Union at the request of the European Commission. Among the latter, The Economist suggested a review of the Basic Treaty combined with the previous EU treaties. These discussions rise from the need to harmonise European diversities. Cultural diversity is an important resource. The initiatives of formal institutions and private organisations finally and systematically corroborate the individual pioneers who started supporting intercultural communication in much earlier times. Among them, the Franco-German Office for Youth has succeeded in promoting intercultural activities to fulfil international affairs since the 1960s. More recently, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) has coordinated an international project to increase intercultural awareness based on the European policy papers on immigration, guidance, counselling and information.

Initiatives of non-governmental organisations are even more numerous than those of governmental agencies. The earliest one is probably AFS Intercultural Programmes, Inc., which was created in Europe in 1947 to facilitate student and teacher exchanges among the different countries that fought against each other in WWII. AFS later gave birth to a European-based organisation, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), which promotes the development of educational methods and materials on intercultural communication and intercultural training for teachers, students and volunteers.

The success of all these programmes confirms that the diversity of European cultures is a positive challenge as it brings richness and added value to its citizens. It provides them with the opportunities and skills to manage intercultural communication, cooperation, and synergy and to handle the competitive advantage to manage diversity. The European Commission, together with the heads of state and government, acknowledged the social, diplomatic, and security roles of intercultural dialogue, by creating the Jean Monet Project for Intercultural Dialogue.
Endnotes


6. Ibid.


