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Flexible Diplomacy: Scholars as Key Players in Track II Diplomacy[1]

Diplomacia flexible: los académicos como jugadores clave en la Diplomacia de la pista II

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ABSTRACT

Introduction The field of traditional diplomacy has changed very little since the Congress of Vienna in the 19th century. Globalization, non-traditional security threats, and a changing global landscape require a more flexible diplomacy that includes a wider range of stakeholders such as NGOs, community leaders, and most importantly scholars/academics. **Objective** The academic freedom enjoyed by scholars allows them to explore policy questions from a scientific perspective **Materials and methods** the present study follows the grounded theory approach to model development while adopting a largely constructivist paradigm in terms of the nature of diplomacy **Result** the academic freedom enjoyed by scholars allows them to explore policy questions from a scientific perspective. Thus, scholars have the freedom to explore controversial topics in an environment of respect and professionalism. **Discussion** Scholars have historically served as the conscience of their generation and also as the keepers and creators of civilization and therefore it is only natural for them to play important roles in public policy **Conclusions** The integration of the scholarly community into the diplomatic corps of developing countries can reduce the intrinsic asymmetry between the expertise and skills of the ministries of foreign

Key words: professionalism, grounded theory, roles

RESUMEN

I**ntroducción** El campo de la diplomacia tradicional ha cambiado muy poco desde el Congreso de Viena en el siglo XIX. La globalización, las amenazas a la seguridad no tradicionales y un panorama global cambiante requieren una diplomacia más flexible que incluya una gama más amplia de partes interesadas, como ONG, líderes comunitarios y, lo más importante, académicos. **Objetivo** La libertad académica que disfrutan los académicos les permite explorar cuestiones de política desde una perspectiva científica. **Materiales y métodos** El presente estudio sigue el enfoque de la teoría fundamentada para el desarrollo de modelos al tiempo que adopta un paradigma en gran parte constructivista en términos de la naturaleza de la diplomacia. **Resultados** los académicos les permiten explorar cuestiones de política desde una perspectiva científica. Por lo tanto, los

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académicos tienen la libertad de explorar temas controvertidos en un ambiente de respeto y profesionalismo. **Discusión** Los académicos han servido históricamente como la conciencia de su generación y también como guardianes y creadores de la civilización y, por lo tanto, es natural que desempeñen un papel importante en la política pública. **Conclusiones** La integración de la comunidad académica en el cuerpo diplomático de los países en desarrollo puede reducir la asimetría intrínseca entre la experiencia y las habilidades de los ministerios de relaciones exteriores

Palabras clave: Esencialismo, teoría fundamentada, roles.

1. Introducción

Diplomacy is a field that is shrouded in mystery for those not directly involved in the discipline. By many, it is considered to be an "old boys" club reserved for retired politicians and wealthy donors. Another very common depiction of diplomacy is as a network of professional bureaucrats with very little interest or concerns about the problems faced by the common people. Nevertheless, diplomacy continues to be one of the most important and influential fields in the social sciences (Kissinger, 1994; Miller, 2009; Mulgan, 2008; Nair, 2008; Peneau, 2013; Rodham-Clinton, 2010; Simon, 2008; Sponsel, 1994; Tow, Thakur, & Hyun, 2000). Part of the reason for the pivotal role played by diplomacy is the primacy that nation-states have played in international relations since the Congress of Vienna (Chandler, 2009; Chizuko, 2010; Dore, 1997; HSIN-HUANG, HSIAO, & WAN, 2007; Ishii, 1994; MacFarlane & Khong, 2006; McCargo, 2008; Sponsel, 1994). The nation-state as the highest representative of the "nation" has overshadowed other actors as the essential spokesperson in the international arena. Nevertheless, diplomacy pre-dates the rise of the nation-state and has historically involved a wide range of actors beyond the usual formal official envoys (Lal, 2004; Lockard, 2009; Ongsakun, Millar, Barron, & Tanratanakul, 2006; Roberts, 1997; Syukri, 1985).

There are many examples of envoys exercising diplomatic functions in ancient civilizations such as in ancient China, Mesopotamia, Greece, and others (Malik, 2013; Notar, 2008). Communication is at the core of diplomacy and the distinction between diplomat and messenger is not very clear in early accounts of the discipline. Gradually, etiquette developed for diplomats which required higher ranking "messengers" to deliver certain messages and to conduct negotiations with other groups or nations. Important characteristics of the ideal envoy included great communication

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skills, wisdom, and the ability to negotiate under pressure. The formalization of the figure of the diplomat is strongly correlated to the strengthening of the concept of sovereignty (Kissinger, 1994; Kriesberg, 1997). Early diplomats were simply the envoys of sovereigns. This is reflected in etiquette by the later 19th century practice to reserve the rank of ambassador for representatives of sovereigns while using the title of "legate" for representatives of republics. Eventually ranks were standardized to reserve ambassadorial rank to representatives of heads of state regardless of the form of government (Roberts, 1997). Nevertheless, the reification of diplomacy as the relationship between sovereign nation-states reached its zenith during the mid 20th century (Kissinger, 1994).

The important role of messenger between groups, factions, nations, or guilds has always required a very broad set of skills (K. J. Arnold, 2005; Baker, 2005; Bell & Nurre, 2005; Bens, 2005; Bergdall, 2005; Bracken, 2005; Bradley & Beyerlein, 2005; J. Chilberg, 2005; J. C. Chilberg, 1989, 1995; Epps, 2005; Kriesberg, 1997). A good diplomat needs to be generalist and at the same time a specialist. Flexibility and commitment are both required in complex negotiations and therefore diplomacy is both an art and a science (Kissinger, 1994). The role of the diplomat increased in prestige over the centuries until it reached its highest point in the 19th century. Originally reserved mostly for the aristocracy, diplomacy internalized and institutionalized many of the norms and mores of this important social class and owes much of its sophistication and elegance to this formative period (Kissinger, 1994). The nepotism that characterized the early beginnings of this discipline was slowly replaced by a meritocracy with a favoritism for the children of the aristocracy yet permeated by a strong sense of duty and commitment to the service of the nation and the state.

The proliferation of newly independent nation states in the early 20th century and in particular after World War II resulted in an exponential expansion of diplomats (Weitz, 2011; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). Newly established governments inspired by the ideology of national liberation raced to appoint supporters to diplomatic posts with little regarding to previous training or education. This was sharp return to nepotism but with the disadvantage of a tendency of this new post-revolutionary political class for kleptocracy (Johnson, 1995). The sharp downturn in the quality of credentials of diplomats was partly due to the ideological trends of the times in the newly established nation-states but also partly due to a shortage of qualified professionals (Feigenblatt,

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2008). This drop in quality was acutely felt and resulted in the establishment of schools for diplomats in many countries. Political considerations continued to be important in emerging democracies and therefore in many cases loyalty became the most important criteria for the selection of diplomats.

Nevertheless, a concurrent trend was the rise of academics as informal and in many cases semi-official diplomats (Heller, 2005; Kriesberg, 1997; Tow et al., 2000). The years after independence gave rise to a small yet influential class of foreign trained intellectuals with the skills, access to international networks, and credentials to effectively promote the interests of their countries. This parallel cadre of diplomats is sometimes called track-two diplomacy which includes former government officials and academics. The present study focuses on the consequences and opportunities of the proliferation of this trend and also discusses the intersection between track one and track two diplomacy.

One of the greatest challenges faced by developing countries is to interact with the more experienced and in many cases better funded diplomats of the developed countries (D. Arnold, 2006). This leads to a very unequal playing field that is further exacerbated by the nepotism prevalent in developing countries. One of the obvious solutions is to create a professional diplomatic corps with a national school of diplomacy. This was attempted by many countries with the obvious problem of a lack of resources (Kissinger, 1994). Another challenge is the issue of salaries for the diplomatic corps. In many cases qualified professionals in developing countries can receive better salaries in the private sector than in the public sector (Johnson, 1995; Than & Thein, 2007). Therefore, the problem tackled by the present study is how can academics be integrated into the diplomatic efforts of a developing countries in order to ameliorate the asymmetry in terms of skill, experience, and resources between the diplomatic corps of developed and developing countries.

2. Materiales y métodos

The present study follows the grounded theory approach to model development while adopting a largely constructivist paradigm in terms of the nature of diplomacy (Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Willis, 2007). Data was collected over a period of three years from a vast array of sources (Alldred & Gillies,

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2008). Participant observation in diplomatic events, conversations with current and former government officials, participation in academic events dealing with governance, governmental reports, and more than one hundred secondary sources written by scholars and policymakers on the subject of flexible diplomacy were coded and interpreted through the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). The resulting tentative model was then tested and adjusted to reflect a further set of texts which were coded in order to develop a mid-level theory of academic involvement in track 2 diplomacy.

3. Resultados

Scholars are guided by the ancient principle of "academic freedom" (University, 2014; Villarreal, 2014). The freedom of movement to discuss controversial ideas and to test hypotheses in an environment of respect is one of the key characteristics of academia. Based on the ancient Greek idea of dialogue, the Socratic Method is best known example of academic freedom in action. Operating in an environment of academic freedom serves many purposes but probably the greatest advantage is that it fosters creativity and the defense of a range of ideas (Rogers, 1996). Academic dialogue focuses on the merits of each argument as evaluated through accepted methods and theories. Knowledge is created through this exploration of ideas by experts and students in an environment of respect and freedom (Creswell, 2007, 2012). Thus, scholars are both shaped and shape their academic environment (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; T. J. Ellis & Levy, 2008; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2007).

The academic freedom enjoyed by scholars allows them to explore policy questions from a scientific perspective. Thus, scholars have the freedom to explore controversial topics in an environment of respect and professionalism. This is a great asset that they can bring to the field of diplomacy in order to discuss difficult topics which may be politically sensitive but may have clear scientific solutions (Anderson, 2006). In other words, scholars can serve as the conscience of diplomacy and influence the process and content of international negotiations. Therefore the

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culture of academic freedom can permeate the stultified and highly ritualized culture of diplomacy and foster frank discussions about difficult topics.

In addition to academic freedom, scholars are subject area experts (Eckl, 2008; D. C. Ellis, 2009). This is the most important advantage of scholars in terms of their contribution to diplomacy. There is a content aspect to all negotiations and in many cases career diplomats tend to be generalists with little content knowledge about certain fields (Dore, 1997; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). On the other hand scholars tend to have advanced degrees in their fields and many years of research experience. Thus, content area expertise can strengthen the bargaining power of a country in a particular negotiation (Broome, 1997; *Negotiation: Your Mentor and Guide to Doing Business Effectively*, 2003). There is usually a very sharp asymmetry in terms of expertise between the delegations of advanced industrialized countries and those of developing countries (Brunnee & Toope, 2006). One of the challenges is dealing with the lack of expertise on certain topics. One way to ameliorate this challenge is to harness the power of academia for the service of diplomacy.

Professors are great communications by the very nature of their work (Davis, 2009; hallinger & Lu, 2013). Teaching is about the art of communication and years of experience lecturing and leading seminars helps scholars fine tune their skills. Therefore those skills gained in the classroom and beyond can serve scholars very well if they venture into the field of diplomacy. Diplomacy is about communication and negotiation and therefore hiring professionals from a field that requires great communication skills will greatly facilitate the process. Moreover, academic conferences provide great training for future participation in international forums. Academics are well trained in the Socratic Method which favors dialogue for the joint construction of knowledge. Many academics are also well versed in other methods such as the Delphi method and have experience serving as facilitators in a wide range of situations (Rogers, 1996).

Access to epistemic communities is another important strength of scholars. Policymaking requires access to information and to knowledge communities. Scholars tend to be involved in the development of their disciplines and are active in the construction of knowledge. Each discipline has very clearly defined power centers and specific schools of thought (Lueddeke, 2008). Some disciplinary associations are international, others are regional, and many are national. Academics

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have access to those associations and in many cases contribute to the development of their disciplines through participation in academic conferences and other activities. Participation in discipline related academic activities allows scholars to expand their network of contacts with other people actively involved in their fields. Direct contacts with researchers in a particular discipline has many advantages because it allows scholars to have access to new developments which in many cases are still in the process of development. Therefore, access to working papers which are yet to be published is a great advantage over other professionals who have to wait for new theories, best practices, and studies to be published which can take a long time.

4. Discusión

Scholars have historically served as the conscience of their generation and also as the keepers and creators of civilization and therefore it is only natural for them to play important roles in public policy (Foster, 2013; Wellin & Fine, 2007). Nevertheless scholars have in many cases actively avoided involvement with the general public in favor of remaining in their ivory towers (Ish-Shalom, 2008). This avoidance of public debate is not necessarily out of fear but in many cases out of an absolute deference to the purity of their disciplines. In other words, many scholars believe that the pressures of practice can distort the strict pursuit of knowledge (Ackerly & True, 2008; T. J. Ellis & Levy, 2008). Examples from many developing countries in which there is a strong overlap between the government and academia support these fears but there are steps that can be taken to avoid these pitfalls (Lynch, 2008).

A clear distinction between activities performed by a scholar as an academic from those performed as a practitioner can be a simple yet powerful solution to the challenges posed in the previous paragraph. A similar requirement is currently imposed on holders of public office in relation to activities in the private sector (Hamlin, 2009; Johnson, 1995). Regarding the danger of scholars abusing their academic authority to promote their political views, the antidote would require a strong ethical and professional code rather than external enforcement (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Murphy & Dingwall, 2007).

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5. Conclusiones

The integration of the scholarly community into the diplomatic corps of developing countries can reduce the intrinsic asymmetry between the expertise and skills of the ministries of foreign affairs' of developed countries and those of newly industrializing and developing countries. The integration of scholars for first and second track diplomacy would allow developing countries to practice a more flexible type of diplomacy in an age of change and uncertainty.

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