

University of Cyprus

From the Selected Works of Costas M. Constantinou

2011

The Transformation of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Costas M. Constantinou, *University of Cyprus*
Gunther Hellmann



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/costas_constantinou/34/

The Transformation of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Costas M. Constantinou and Gunther Hellmann

University of Cyprus and Goethe-University Frankfurt

In the face of a globalized world characterized by practices of de-territorialisation, shifting spaces of political authority, and increasing uncertainty about what is foreign and what is domestic, foreign policy appears to be an anachronistic and almost old-fashioned concept which fails to capture the dynamics of contemporary international relations. A similar problem exists with diplomacy, if viewed exclusively as an interstate or intergovernmental affair, or as only concerned with the “foreign” and not also with the “domestic” as well as with varying degrees of otherness. Used almost interchangeably in some scholarly quarters, the terms *foreign policy* and *diplomacy* are problematized in more critical and sociological approaches, mostly viewed as distinct or co-constitutive, and sometimes even as antithetical concepts. This makes it even more necessary to examine current shifts in the theory and practice of foreign policy and diplomacy *together* rather than separately.

Work done in diplomatic studies in the last couple of decades or so has challenged the idea of diplomacy as the special preserve of the state (e.g. Der Derian 1987, Constantinou 1996, Sharp 1999, Cooper and Hocking 2000, Riordan 2003, Pigman 2011). The so-called English School of International Relations studied diplomacy as a key institution of the “international society” of states (Bull 1977, Watson 1982) but it was not until recently that the practice of diplomacy within the “world society” of groups, movements and individuals was more comprehensively investigated (Neumann 2003, Constantinou 2006, Sharp 2009). Moreover, some scholars viewed diplomacy as quite distinct from foreign policy (e.g. Nicolson 1963; cf. Kissinger 1994) yet the normative and ethical implications of this distinction were not fully explored before the advent of critical diplomatic theory, and its focus on notions of “diplomatic culture” (Wiseman 2005), bureaucratic routine (Neumann 2005), diplomatic flexibility (Copeland, 2009) “diplomatic thinking” (Sharp 2009) and “sustainable diplomacy” (Wellman 2004, Constantinou and Der Derian 2010). Within critical diplomatic studies, interesting works have looked at emerging trends and new practices, such as the political economy (Lee and Hudson, 2004) and anthropological dimensions of diplomacy (Neumann, forthcoming), the privatization of diplomacy (Hocking 2004), sub-state diplomacy (Cornago 2010), the new public diplomacy (Mellisen 2005), the transformation of EU diplomatic practice (Batora 2005), and the impact of NGOs and celebrity diplomacy (Betsill and Corell 2008, Cooper 2007). To that extent, there currently exists a challenge and a need to bring these studies together in order to understand and explain changes in contemporary diplomatic practice.

The analysis of foreign policy – tellingly identified by many “Foreign Policy Analysis” (or: FPA) scholars as a “subfield” of International Relations with a distinct

approach (Hudson 2005) – has struggled to prove its scientific credentials in the mainstream of academic scholarship ever since the behavioural revolution had succeeded in establishing a certain understanding of what “theory” ought to look like (Wæver 2007; Hellmann 2009). As a result the disciplinary study of foreign policy has largely remained fixated on how to manage a multitude of variables for the sake of “building theory” (as defined by positivists). The historicity of foreign policy as a contingent political practice has largely remained outside the scope. Recent attempts at broadening our conceptions of what it may mean to “theorize” foreign policy (Hellmann/Jørgensen, forthcoming) have sketched new paths for linking an appreciation of the historicity and complexity of social action with the needs of theory building.

A similar trend can be observed with regard to the connection between diplomacy and foreign policy. In IR discourse this link has traditionally been conceptualized as a rather simple “objective vs. tool” relationship, in which diplomacy represents merely a “lesser tool of foreign policy” (James 1993), a medium for communicating and negotiating much more fundamental – and usually objective, i.e. given and natural – foreign policy interests. Classical accounts of Foreign Policy usually attribute and restrict this practice to the “main actors” of the system and bearers of sovereignty – nation states – which in this view aim to defend their internal “national” interests vis-à-vis an “external” environment. It therefore should not come as a surprise that foreign policy appeared to be anachronistic in a world of increasingly uncertain distinctions of “home” and “abroad” (Hill 2010) – especially in Europe (White 1999) – and a (correspondently hypothesized) decreasing relevance of the state. Yet this view has been recently challenged by more sociologically and anthropologically inspired/orientated approaches to foreign policy which emphasize its quality as a (socio-)political practice and thereby point to its social function in boundary construction and maintenance (Campbell 1992; Doty 1993; Hill 2003), as well as its relevance under conditions of globalization. Thus, “foreign” policy has not ceased to exist, but – rather to the contrary – has even gained in relevance. Following this reading, (socio-)political practices of border maintenance always entail the production of a specific notion of “foreignness” and “we-ness” which needs to be socially actualized in order to be effectual. For this reason it appears to be a promising undertaking to analyze historical as well as current transformations of foreign policy by examining those agents who are assigned the duty of conducting foreign relations and who routinely enact the notions of “we-ness” and foreignness in their daily business(es) – the diplomats. Bringing together scholars from the fields of foreign policy and diplomatic analysis therefore seems to be a promising way of contributing to the understanding and explanation of changes in contemporary international relations as a whole.

This proposed workshop seeks to link the study and practice of foreign policy and diplomacy with changes and transformations taking place in global politics. To do so, **firstly**, the diachronic or conceptual history dimension needs to be addressed, specifically by examining a set of issues relating to the evolution of “foreign policy” and “diplomacy” as distinct and historically contingent practices that had to respond

to and were shaped by major political transformations. **Secondly**, going beyond a systemic understanding of foreign policy and a merely interpersonal understanding of diplomacy, we want to emphasize a broader conceptualization of practices in the way they can affect the constitution and transformation of notions of political subjectivity, sovereignty, national identity, mediation and international order. **Thirdly**, we want to examine the extent to which the combination of new technologies, actors and networks impacts on both the objectives, methods and practices of foreign policy and diplomacy, and indeed how new forms of interrelatedness and interconnection reconfigure regional and global power relationships.

In order to open up and systemize this broad field of study our interest is theoretical as well as empirical. Among others, relevant questions to be addressed in this context might include: What are the potential benefits and costs of focusing on foreign policy and diplomacy as historically contingent practices (rather than as ahistoric practices which merely need to be approached analytically)? What does it mean to conceive both foreign policy and diplomacy as political practices transcending what is usually (if misleadingly) called the “Westphalian” state system? What follows from that for foreign policy and diplomatic analyses? Through which engagements and discursive practices are foreign policy and diplomatic actors constituted in relation to particular socio-political environments? How does foreign policy/diplomatic culture evolve and change? To what extent can the practices of foreign policy and diplomacy themselves be considered as dynamic factors in the constitution and transformation of international relations and notions of international order? If we allow for such effects, how might we gauge the transformative causal powers of foreign policy and diplomacy- and where would we look in actually trying to locate them? Does “paradiplomacy” offer opportunities for the transformation of diplomatic relations or is it merely a subcontracting and normalization of state practice? Might this practice be an example of how foreign policy actors constitute themselves, that is, how they come to be acceptable “players” in the first place? How are we to understand new developments, like the European Neighborhood Policy, European External Action Service, “transformational diplomacy” or “smart power”? Do these developments represent genuinely new forms of conducting foreign relations? If so, how far do claims to foreign policy and diplomatic transformation hide new ideological biases and new forms of power and hegemony? How can we account for the relationship between globalization and the (continued or even heightened) relevance of practices of foreign policy and diplomacy? To what extent and how does globalization constitute a challenge to (prevailing routine) practices of foreign policy and diplomacy and what would be particularly telling events in this respect?

These questions are merely suggestive for the papers and contributions invited for the proposed workshop. However, they underline that the workshop is supposed to take a fresh look at where we stand (and where we might head) in IR in the fields of diplomacy and foreign policy analysis. In short, we want to try to combine historical depth with current innovations in practice as well as issues of topical significance, but also to examine what relevant insights different theoretical approaches can bring

to the study of the current transformation of foreign policy and diplomacy.

References:

- Batora, J. (2005) "Does the European Union Transform the Institution of Diplomacy?", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12: 1, pp. 44-66.
- Betsill, M. and Corell, E., eds (2008) *NGO Diplomacy*, Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Bull, H. (1977) *The Anarchical Society*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Campbell, D. (1992) *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Constantinou, C.M. (1996) *On the Way to Diplomacy*, Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press.
- Constantinou, C.M. (2006) "On Homo-diplomacy", *Space and Culture*, 19:4, pp. 351-364.
- Constantinou, C.M. and Der Derian, J., eds. (2010) *Sustainable Diplomacies*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cooper, A.F. (2007) *Celebrity Diplomacy*, Paradigm Publishers.
- Cooper, A.F and Hocking, B. (2000) "Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and the Re-Calibration of Diplomacy", *Global Society*, 14:3, pp. 361-376.
- Copeland, D. (2009) *Guerilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner.
- Cornago, N. (2010) "On the Normalization of Sub-State Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 5:1, pp. 11-36.
- Der Derian, J (1987) *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Doty, R. (1993) "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counter-Insurgency in the Philippines", *International Studies Quarterly*, 37: 3, 297-320.
- Hellmann, G. (2009) "Introduction: IR/Foreign Policy Theory and German Foreign Policy", *Journal of International Relations and Development* 12:1, pp. 251-54.
- Hellmann, G. and Jørgensen, K.E., eds. (forthcoming) *Theorizing Foreign Policy in a Globalizing World* (manuscript).
- Hill, C. (2003) *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hill, C. (2010) "The Future of Foreign Policy Analysis", *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, Denmark, R.A. Blackwell Publishing. Blackwell Reference Online. 14 September 2010.
- Hocking, B. (2004) "Privatizing Diplomacy?", *International Studies Perspectives*, 5, pp.

147-152.

- Hudson, V. (2005) "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1:1, 1-30.
- James, A. (1993) "Diplomacy and Foreign Policy", *Review of International Studies*, 19: 9, pp. 1-100.
- Kissinger, H. (1994) *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon and Schuster.
- Lee, D. and Hudson, D. (2004) "The Old and New Significance of Political Economy in Diplomacy", *Review of International Studies*, 30, pp. 343-360.
- Melissen, J., ed., (2005) *The New Public Diplomacy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Neumann, I.B. (2003) "The English School on Diplomacy: Scholarly Promise Unfulfilled", *International Relations*, 17:3, pp. 341-369.
- Neumann, I.B. (2005) "To Be a Diplomat", *International Studies Perspectives*, 6, pp. 72-93.
- Neumann, I.B. (forthcoming, 2011) *An Ethnography of Diplomacy*, Cornell University Press.
- Nicolson, H. (1963) *Diplomacy*, London, Oxford University Press.
- Pigman, G.A. (2010) *Contemporary Diplomacy*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Riordan, S. (2003) *The New Diplomacy*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Sharp, P. (1999) "For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations" *International Studies Review*, 1:1, pp. 33-57.
- Sharp, P. (2009) *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Wæver, O. (2007) "Still a Discipline After All These Debates?", in: Dunne T. and Kurki M. and Smith S., eds., *International Relations Theories. Discipline and Diversity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 288-308.
- Watson, A. (1982) *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States*, London, Methuen.
- Wellman, D. (2004) *Sustainable Diplomacy: Ecology, Religion and Ethics in Muslim-Christian Relations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- White, B. (1999) "The European Challenge to Foreign Policy Analysis", *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:1, pp. 37-66.
- Wiseman G. (2005) "Pax Americana: Bumping into Diplomatic Culture", *International Studies Perspectives*, 6:4, pp. 409-30.

Potential Contributors:

- Kuniko Ashizawa, Oxford Brooks University (Senior Lecturer in International Relations) – identity and foreign policy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Costas M. Constantinou, University of Cyprus (Professor) – history of diplomatic

- thought (Workshop Director)
- Noe Cornago, University of the Basque Country (Associate Professor) -
paradiplomacy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Gunther Hellmann, Goethe University, Frankfurt (Professor of Political Science) -
foreign policy and systemic transformations (Workshop Director)
- Brian Hocking, Loughborough University (Professor of International Relations) -
privatization of diplomacy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Friederike Kuntz, Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte Frankfurt
and Bielefeld University (PhD Candidate) - social knowledge and diplomacy,
conferences and systemic transformations (interest in participation confirmed)
- Halvard Leira, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), PhD Candidate -
history of foreign policy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Jan Melissen, Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations
(Professor) - public diplomacy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Sam Opondo, University of Hawaii (PhD Candidate) - Postcolonial approaches to
diplomacy (interest in participation confirmed)
- Christian Reus-Smit, European University Institute, Florence (Professor) - ethics of
diplomacy (invited/to be confirmed)
- Iver Neumann, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) - diplomatic
culture (interest in participation confirmed)
- Paul Sharp, University of Minnesota (Professor) - diplomatic theory (interest in
participation confirmed)
- Ursula Stark Urrestarazu, Goethe University Frankfurt (PhD Candidate) - identity
and foreign policy, history of foreign policy and international relations (interest
in participation confirmed)
- Johannes P. Weber, Goethe University Frankfurt (PhD Candidate) - History of
international relations (interest in participation confirmed)

Workshop Directors:

Costas M. Constantinou
Professor of Political Science,
Department of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Cyprus
Email: constantinou.m.costas@ucy.ac.cy

Prof. Dr. Gunther Hellmann
Professor of Political Science,
Institute of Political Science
Goethe-University Frankfurt
Email: g.hellmann@soz.uni-frankfurt.de