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THE FUTURE OF NETWORK DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: ON DIPLOMATIC CULTURE AND SMALL STATES

***29** Culture is a “common language, a common pool of memories, and shared way of thinking, reasoning, and communicating...a people’s common stock of ideas and values” (Sharp 2004, 361). Culture may additionally be defined as ‘the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another’ (Hofstede 1980, 25). Thus culture speaks to a particular way of socialization and civilization, determining thought processes, ways of understanding, speaking and ultimately conduct.

Diplomacy has its own embedded culture and civilizing virtues; ‘diplomatic culture places a premium on consulting others, of taking note of others’ concerns, (Sending 2011, 646). It is concerned with rules, protocol and procedure. Linklater explains that communication/dialogue is key to diplomatic culture and its civilizing virtues. The civilizing ***30** process is marked by the equality of speakers’ rights, speaking in so far as one listens and cooperative conversation. It is about persuasion, giving all concerned a voice and recognising others (Linklater 2005). Civilization, according to Sharp is ‘[a] system of relations which exist for the heightening and enrichment of the human personality itself’ (Sharp 2003, 868). So the civilization is the transformation from notions and norms into practice; a behavioural manifestation. Additional traits of the culture involve detachment, self-restraint, distance, objectivity, courtesy, and knowing how to speak without creating undue offense (Sharp 2003).

Diplomatic culture is essentially a behavioural skill set, however, globalization has had a transformative effect on diplomacy; thus on diplomatic culture. All of the values and virtues which make up diplomatic culture were aimed at navigating difference but modern diplomacy calls for a diplomatic culture that is able to coordinate and collaborate on common issues, rather than on mitigating distinction. How diplomacy is practised is evidence of the underlying socialization(culture).

Globalization is changing the way in which the world once existed. Globalization has transformed ways of human interaction, the pace of information flows, and by extension decision making. It has made individuals more cognisant of others existing beyond their own borders and it has obliterated traditional notions of the world comprising of distinct entities and that problems can be somehow contained to a specific territory or region. In short, globalization has made the lives of

every citizen, state, community, corporation, sector, non-state actor more integrated and interconnected than ever before. More importantly and pertinent to this paper is the fact that, globalization has changed the way in which people, diplomats, and actors, think, behave and the roles they play. Castells explains what globalization means as it relates to the present reality:

***31** Overall, the critical issues conditioning everyday life for people and their governments in every country are largely produced and shaped by globally interdependent processes that go beyond the realm of countries as defined by the territories under the sovereignty of a given state. Under such conditions, a number of processes constitute the new landscape of global politics. There is a growing gap between the space where the issues are defined (global) and the space where the issues are managed (the nation-state) (Castells 2005, 10).

Jazbec acknowledges this increasing blur between internal and external distinctions noting that,

Contemporary international phenomena are global phenomena, linking various dimensions – political, military, economic and others – and within them, a very important role is played by the linking and mutual dependence of the internal and the external (Jazbec 2010, 68).

Traditional diplomacy was concerned with state to state relations, an affiliation to a specific territory, the pursuit of power and a Westphalian conception of sovereignty. According to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), diplomacy or diplomatic relations is a process of promoting and developing friendly relations among sovereign states in light of different constitutional and social systems.¹ De Maltgalhaes (1988) holds that diplomacy has long existed, tracing it to ancient civilizations and to biblical periods, and pointing out that there has always been a need to have messengers to maintain ***32** peaceful and friendly relations. For Berridge,

¹ The preamble of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations provides the following: The States Parties to the present Convention, Recalling that peoples of all nations from ancient times have recognized the status of diplomatic agents, Having in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the sovereign equality of States, the maintenance of international peace and security, and the promotion of friendly relations among nations, Believing that an international convention on diplomatic intercourse, privileges and immunities would contribute to the development of friendly relations among nations, irrespective of their differing constitutional and social systems, Realizing that the purpose of such privileges and immunities is not to benefit individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of diplomatic missions as representing States, Affirming that the rules of customary international law should continue to govern questions not expressly regulated by the provisions of the present Convention.

‘diplomacy is an essentially political activity and, well-resourced and skilful, a major ingredient of power. Its chief purpose is to enable states to secure the objectives of their foreign policies without resort to force, propaganda or law’ (Berridge 2010, 1).

From a traditional diplomacy standpoint, its scope was very limited as it was only concerned with pursuing national interests and was state centric in nature; the above definitions are clear evidence of this insularity.

Diplomacy has evolved over the years especially as a result of globalization, as aforementioned, and as a result of the Cold war and the information, communication and technologies revolution. Diplomacy and international relations as a whole has moved from a state centric model to a model of a multiplicity of actors. Evidence of the evolution of diplomacy may even be seen in Barston’s conceptualization of diplomacy as ‘the management of relations between states and between states and other actors’ (Barston 2006, 1). With globalization, the number of issues has increased as well as the stakeholders. Barston thus contends that ‘diplomacy is undertaken by a wide range of actors...’ (Barston 2006, 1). Globalization has had a commonizing effect on life, relations and problems. That is to say, it has brought similarities and shared anxieties to the fore and has made the preoccupation with difference and distinction redundant. Globalization has posed challenges to governance and simultaneously created needs for managing this new reality where there is ‘the evermore complex ways in which different issues are linked’ (Hurrell 2010, 292). So now more than ever, diplomacy is about finding ways to reconcile common problems.

According to Jazbec; *33

The contemporary international community is, “for the first time in the history of international relations and the human race generally, faced with the question of survival...distinct warnings of the growing importance of the structural interdependence of the contemporary world” (Jazbec 2010, 68).

The author states that globalization has brought new actors and new issues onto the agenda and that interdependence is necessary to deal with issues of survival.

As it relates to small states, it can be argued that their diplomatic culture has always been characterized by an identity of survival seeking and/or problem solving. That is to say, it goes beyond the bilateral pursuit of national interests. However, just as traditional diplomacy has changed, changes too have occurred in small state diplomacy’s perceptions and its reality. Traditionally, small state diplomacy was seen in terms of bandwagoning; this is a passive view of

small state diplomacy. Small states were also more influential geopolitically but this has waned in the post- Cold war world.

Small states may be defined as ‘states with limited resources and, therefore, with a limited reach of diplomatic efforts’ (Iaydjiev 2011, 46). Smallness is not only about size of territory or population but it is also about capacity. Many small states became sovereign states during the Cold War, joined the international system and conformed to the international system. This implies limited influence or impact on diplomacy and its culture.

In international relations, the power of a state is often attributed to quantitative criteria, such as population and territorial size, gross domestic product (GDP) and military capacity. In these terms small states are held to be politically, economically and strategically vulnerable and, as such, incapable of exerting any real influence in world affairs (Thorhallsson 2012, 135-136). *34

However, small states have generally been less concerned with power and more about survival and solving problems which threatened their existence. Henrikson contends that,

By definition, as well as usually in reality, a small country is one that cannot protect itself by its own efforts. Small countries require allies - or to be allies... (Henrikson n.d.).

What is perhaps intriguing about the above statement is that this is no longer an exclusive reality of small states.

Small states have tended to focus on coalition building with others as a means of pursuing their national interests. They have long understood the essence of interdependence due to the inherent challenges that come with their smallness. Certainly some difficulties exist in terms of small states’ ability to influence international organizations, big countries and diplomacy and its culture, however, small states have tended to focus on influencing through persuasion rather than coercion, as the latter was never a part of their cultural identity either in theory or in reality.

For Caribbean small states, usually among the weakest states in the international system, diplomacy plays a central role in their international relations. These states usually have little recourse to great military or economic power and as such, diplomacy remains the only effective means by which such states can attempt to impact and interact in the international system for their benefit (Cross-Mike 2007).

Thorhallsson (2012) posits that the influence of small states, especially in international organizations, using the UNSC² as a case study, rests in some key factors viz:

the administrative competences of small states based on quality not quantity, diplomatic skills, knowledge and initiatives... states' image and their reputation as norm entrepreneurs and their perceived neutrality... [d]emonstration *35 of strong leadership, excellent coalition-building skills and an ability to prioritize heavy workload (Thorhallsson 2012. 140).

The above actors make small state diplomacy quite reminiscent of the diplomacy which NGOs employ. Sending (2011) notes that NGOs are concerned with norms, coalition building, mobilization and advocacy and that they are apolitical in nature. The small state narrative tends to be that of survival, it basically assumes the nature of a cause for which advocacy and lobbying is employed.

In essence, the more competence small states have in diplomatic skills and the more they can demonstrate that smallness does not impinge on their ability to function, the more influence small states possess. Others' (states or actors) perceptions are also important in determining the influence which can be wielded. Strong leadership too is key, according to Thorhallsson above. The author looks at various presidencies including that of Kofi Anan (former UN Secretary General) to show that strong leadership provides the best opportunity for influencing. Presidencies in international/intergovernmental organizations, namely the UN provide avenues for setting the agenda, this is critical to how small states boost their impact (Thorhallsson 2012).

In 2009, the Secretary General of CARICOM, His Excellency Edwin Carrington noted that Caribbean diplomacy has been:

...integrally involved in the fight to get the international community to recognize the special circumstances of small vulnerable economies and to accept that small states should not be marginalized in today's rapidly evolving socio-economic and geo-political landscape (Carrington 2009).

While the above appears to be a cry for influence and agenda setting capability, the issues which have long plagued small states are now the issues which are core to global governance. These are issues such as: *36 poverty, economic and food security, climate change, in short the Millennium

² United Nations Security Council

Development Goals. The priority now given to these issues can precisely be attributed to the factors which Thorhallsson outlined especially the coalition building factor.

His Excellency Jim Mclay noted at the Forum of Small States (FOSS) in March 2013 that,

despite our size, we know that small states can, and do make a difference... being small can have its advantages. Time and again, small states have demonstrated greater agility than many larger countries. They are less weighed-down by the baggage of complex relationships and obligations, or by the historical legacies that often burden great powers. They are less constrained by domestic and global interests and by large, often rigid and siloed bureaucracies. So, they can often respond more quickly, creatively and decisively to emerging challenges and opportunities (Mclay 2013).

The Ambassador noted that small states have had to learn how to address their interests by relying on persuasion, negotiation; key elements of diplomatic culture, and partnership. He states that the power of small states reside in the power of their numbers, partnerships, and good ideas.

...[I]t is through partnerships, more than anything else, that small states survive and thrive at the UN. Participation in groups such as the G77, G7+, the EU, the FOSS, the 3G, and a multitude of regional and sub-regional arrangements, enables small states exponentially to expand their coverage of the UN agenda. And those small states who have employed variable geometry –working through multiple groupings, and approaching issues in partnership with allies have been particularly successful (Mclay 2013).

Small states have had two major successes in terms of setting the climate change agenda and the calling for the establishment of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (Briguglio 2007). Finding solutions to climate change and the numerous claims and disagreements as it related to the ocean were in the interests of small states but also had *37 consequences and an impact at the international level, and small states played a major role in persuading and promoting for solutions in these areas. The AOSIS³ group- a partnership among small states, allowed these states to have a louder voice at the global level, carving out a space for climate change on the global agenda⁴. Small states also partner with NGOs and epistemic communities/organizations to find solutions to common issues. Thus, what is revealed is that, small states are less concerned about mitigating distinctions and instead their diplomatic culture is based on finding commonalities to work as

³ Association of Small Island States

⁴ This grouping sought to highlight a very clearly defined problem - the impact of climate change on the economic development, even the survival, of very small states (Camilleri 2007).

partners with others (cooperation), to pursue common goals, while engaging in persuasion for some goals to be part of the global agenda by establishing common interest. In addition, they rely on classic diplomatic culture and values of communicating and deliberating. This is the crux of future network diplomacy.

Networks are the way forward as it relates to global governance. Networks are 'complex structures of communication constructed around a set of goals that simultaneously ensure unity of purpose and flexibility of execution by their adaptability to the operating environment' (Castells 2005). Traditional issues of territorial affiliation and outdated concepts of sovereignty are passé. Šumberová points out that diplomatic culture is about finding 'ways to live with differences unresolved' (Šumberová 2007, 8). However, interdependence is the way forward and structures stressing problem solving through interdependence will be the most effective means of global governance and will be the shift required in diplomatic culture. It appears that small state diplomacy can give an idea as to how network diplomacy ought to function. Though small states have been centred on national interests, there have been the elements of solidarity and *38 partnership which are needed to facilitate the move towards problem solving of common issues. For pursuing similar national interests and issues of mutual concern are very different matters.

While globalization has created more challenges or heightened the issues facing small states, it has at the same time provided them with the tools needed to mitigate these challenges through reinforcing the need for interdependence and the evolution to network diplomacy. Considering that coalition building and mutual problem solving have characterized small state diplomacy, the future of network diplomacy based on: creating shared value, solidarity, employing diplomatic practices of courtesy, dismantling of hierarchy and an issue centric model should be a simple transition for small states.

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