**DIPLOMACY HAS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED SINCE THE START OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

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# Introduction

For a deeper comprehension of the transnational relationships between a wide variety of stakeholders and to give meaning of the international order, the research of diplomatic engagement, a constant and crucial aspect of foreign politics, is a vital instrument. Furthermore, diplomacy becomes more crucial in this age of globalization where there is a greater interconnectedness between countries and where local and global matters are intertwined, making modern international politics everyone's concern (Colley, 2021, p. 45). Notwithstanding this, since the 1990s, several scholars and professionals have questioned whether diplomacy is still relevant today. There have been claims made that diplomats are now antiquated relics of a bygone world relations, and that a wide range of non-diplomatic players have taken up their previous roles (Handelman, 2012, p. 162). This essay will seek to address the question ‘How diplomacy has fundamentally changed since the start of the 21st Century’.

# 2.0 The changing of nature of diplomacy

## 2.1 Political and social changes

Two social and political changes—the emergence of novel domestic stakeholders in international relations and the growing sway of non-state actors—are particularly pertinent for modern diplomacy. The capacity to implement international policy and, consequently, diplomacy is shifting as a result of these developments, which are discussed in this paper, both laterally to emerging state actors outside of the foreign department and its diplomatic office and externally to private companies (Přibáň, 2019, p. 153).

### 2.1.1 Emerging Domestic actors

The collapse of local and foreign social, geopolitical, and socioeconomic barriers, or the "globalization" of government policy, is one of the most important trends that define the 21st century. This is related to the reality that challenges once considered being nearly solely internal, like trends of energy usage or even vaccination levels have emerged as global concerns and the focus of coordinated efforts, in addition to the increasing interconnectedness between countries and the fresh global ideology.  As a consequence, it is getting harder and harder to think of a single national policy issue that does not involve foreign issues (Cooper, 2020, p. 401).

Historically, a nation-foreign state's department was thought to be the only entity in responsible of carrying out its relations. All formal activity with the receiving Country assigned to the missions by the sending Government shall be performed with or via the Department for Foreign Relations of the receiving Country, according to the 1961 Vienna Agreement on Diplomatic Relationships, which enshrines international norms. It may be argued that foreign departments and their officials have never had total control over how foreign affairs are handled (Přibáň, 2019, p. 153).

For example, in order to pursue comprehensive warfare, several departments and administrations were engaged in diplomatic operations overseas during the World War II. But in modern days, this process has increased and grown more significant. Virtually all domestic departments are currently engaged in some capacity in the implementation of foreign policies. As a result, the bulk of internal ministries in most Western nations have their own global department and have personnel and intelligence provider’s overseas (Kanetake, 2017, p. 157). Moreover, many divisions of government are also engaged in international relations in federal governments where governmental power is distributed among independent governing institutions. In addition to the disintegration of the domestic/international division, the intricacy of global matters has expanded and become more technical, necessitating the understanding and intervention of administrative and sectorial professionals. As a consequence, the operating environment for diplomats has grown extremely congested. For example, fifteen state ministries, six agencies, and three provinces2 were sponsored by Canadian embassies overseas in 2005, while just 23% of the 1,600 people working for the Canadian state overseas were Foreign2 Office agents from the Canadian department2 of foreign affairs (Varol, 2017, p. 5).

In direct connection to the aforementioned, the rise in direct interactions involving heads of governments and other top state personnel, often known as trans-governmental cooperation, is another comparatively recent development that has an influence on diplomacy. Trans-governmental relationships have grown in size and breadth over the past 20 years or more, becoming a significant aspect of global administration. The convenience of current air transport and technical advancements have made it simpler for the political elites to communicate with their counterparts, either physically or via the utilization distant telecommunications. As a result, the frequency of bilateral and multilateral meetings between heads of government and officials has increased nowadays. Conventions have grown much more common, along with formal and informal trips, and are frequently supplemented with emails and direct communications (OECD, 2015, p. 21).

Foreign affairs office logs reveal a consistent stream of cabinet members from the agencies in charge of overseeing the environmental, agricultural, education, and various other areas of the contemporary state apparatus, contacting their equivalents abroad. In other cases, networking executives communicate with each other individually instead of going via foreign government departments and their embassies. The current state of affairs makes it more challenging for diplomatic delegations to get a clear picture of what is unfolding in bilateral ties (Lyons, 2018, p. 155).

Networking administrators are today's new ambassadors, operating on the front lines of matters of foreign policy. The public "might be forgiven for assuming that diplomacy is performed by anyone but the ambassadors" given the frequency of cabinet conferences and foreign trips. The comparison involving ambassadors and innkeepers is popular, and some observers claim that ambassadors have been limited to hosting, entertaining, and enlightening foreign dignitaries. It is undeniable that ambassadors no longer play a key role in managing international affairs, especially when it comes to negotiation. A lot of the bargaining task can now be done effectively between the leaders involved in each pertinent matter, who have the benefit of having a rigorous comprehension of the intricacies of their special technical sector, as opposed to the resident embassy who used to be his nation's first-level bargainer (McCann, 2020, p. 99).

For example, it is conceivable that the agricultural production cabinet members of two nations may mutually decide on the details of a prospective bilateral pact over the telephone, by webcam, or in person following one of their travels. However, whereas diplomats' direct participation in trans-governmental discussions may be less significant, these could not be feasible with the absent their unique experience and the crucial background work that they carry out. The development of trans-governmental networks may have changed the role of the diplomat, but it hasn't diminished it (Ahmed, 2018, p. 33).

Traditionally, federal governments have had the sole authority to administer international affairs. However, in some circumstances, sub-national institutions have been permitted to open cultural and tourism bureaus overseas. Theoretically, this should render regional or municipal administrations insignificant in the arena of diplomacy, but in reality, things are different. Sub-national authorities, and even the municipal authorities of major cities like London, Tokyo2, or New York2, are progressively exchanging delegates with other diplomatic stakeholders and engaging in specific diplomatic interactions that go far beyond cultural matters, covering topics like commerce and investment, the fight against terrorism, the delivery of social2 services, and climate change (Wohlforth, 2016, p. 181). Instances of this sub-national participation in international relations include Wales in the Great Britain, Catalonia2 in Spain, Bavaria2 in Germany, and the Canadian provinces2 of Quebec, Ontario2, and Alberta. The advocacy, discussion, and dialogue that are fundamental to foreign relations between independent nations are frequently carried out by these sub-national bodies. They create direct contacts with federal agencies and their rivals by setting up headquarters in international cities and other significant global cities, sending their executives on increasingly regular journeys, and opening offices there (Kanetake, 2019).

Those sub-national actions seem to be especially important for foreign relations on two fronts. First, before beginning significant diplomatic initiatives, state diplomatic operators progressively ought to involve sub-national institutions. This results from the premise that nation-states are progressively entering into agreements at the global stage that are subnational in scope. Even if dialogues between core diplomatic players are fruitful in certain situations, execution is certain to collapse if sub-national authorities' opinions are not brought into consideration beforehand. Another effect of sub-national operations is that entire spheres of global trade are being conducted without the oversight and frequently without the awareness of diplomats and foreign departments as they forge direct relationships with foreign equivalents. The third result that follows from this is an increase in the likelihood of disputes and disarray in how a nation conducts its international affairs (Berni & Cubito, 2021, p. 9).

### 2.1.2 Emerging Non-governmental agencies

Non-governmental or non-state entities are another group of participants that diplomatic personnel presently must take into consideration in addition to the multiplicity of domestic entities active in diplomacy. According to and Richard Langhorne, the term "non-state operator" is a novel label for a very old occurrence in world politics. While it is true that private players have contributed to global affairs since at least the end of the 19th century, their numbers and impact have increased dramatically during the past four decades. Due to space constraints, only two non-governmental entity categories—civil society entities and multinational corporations—are examined in this section, despite the fact that others, including terrorist groups, would also merit more investigation (Hamilton & Langhorne, 2010, p. 5).

Transnational corporations (TNCs) are an instance of significant non-governmental players. Commerce and economic deregulation, as well as the international coordination of production, have all been brought about by globalization process, which TNCs are both the main cause of and a natural outcome of. The size and level of transnational operation of today's businesses vary substantially. While some businesses transact little to no commerce over state lines, more and more even smaller businesses are multinational in some capacity. While certain multinational corporations have exceptionally strong ties to one or two nations, most TNCs have lost their financial connections to their nation of origin and have become international. According to Daryl Copeland, the placement of their operations is inconsequential to their strategic objectives and goals: they generate cash in global financial hubs, carry out their design work in locations with an abundance of resourceful talent, consolidate their goods in locations with favorable workforce market environments, sell their goods in locations with high demand, and so on (Copeland, 2016, p. 631).

The most influential TNCs in the international control marketplaces, investments, capital inflows, and information, and their extensive cross-border operations frequently escape national regulation. Moreover, several TNCs seem to possess even greater economic clout than specific nation-states: at the start of the twenty-first century, multinationals accounted for 51 of the top 100 advanced economies, and the total revenues of the 200 biggest companies were greater than those of 182 governments (Kruck & Schneiker, 2017).

When thinking about how TNCs have an influence on the global order, the worldwide negotiating objective is typically the first item that springs to mind. TNCs have a significant impact on global administration due to their economic dominance and extensive multinational networking. This influence extends beyond just economic matters like economic reform to include a growing number of environmental regulations and norms. For the current analysis on diplomacy, it is most intriguing to note that TNCs can significantly affect a nation-domestic state's and foreign policy. Modern multinational corporations must foster positive relationships with the administrations of the nations in which they do commerce since this affects their capacity to conduct international commerce. Corporations must bargain with states and work to sway legislation in ways that are advantageous to their own objectives in the nations where they are incorporated and where they manufacture or distribute substantial amounts of their merchandise or services. As a result, companies attempt to influence industrial, economic, personnel, and ecological legislation (Prihandono, 2011, p.79).

Even the bigger international corporations have historically placed a great deal of reliance on the ambassadors and authorized embassies from their "host" state to advocate their interests to other countries. Currently though, TNCs progressively run their independent state affairs departments overseas and create their respective networks of expert mediators due to the scale of the representational tasks that must be undertaken and the deterritorialization of corporations' activities (OECD, 2018, p. 44).

Today, the likelihood of this state-firm collaboration is increasing as the goals of states and businesses steadily align. On the one side, as was previously indicated, huge transnational corporations have a propensity to develop formal mechanisms of self-representation for diplomatic reasons that are comparable to those of countries. States, on the other side, now resemble the administration of a sizable company striving to thrive in the international economy by attempting to hold onto high-value professions, draw in funding, stabilize currency exchange levels, encourage exportation, etc. Deng (2009) further argues that by changing their position from that of controllers to marketers, international diplomatic entities may best prosper from this convergence of agendas. Diplomats as promoters seek to use diplomatic techniques and negotiation in relationship with firms in such a way as to benefit their citizens and the finances of their countries to the greatest possible extent (Deng et al., 2009, p. 72).

While it is true that political elites and their ambassadors cannot afford to overlook the possibilities that arise from diplomatic interaction with multinational corporations, it would not be recommendable for the collaboration between multinational companies and government agencies to progress to the point where diplomatic stakeholders totally resemble private corporations and their strategies (Magra, 2015, p. 774).

# 3.0 The changing functions of diplomats

If diplomacy is still important in today 's interconnected society, it has also been proven above that there have been significant alterations over the past four decades in how foreign affairs are conducted and how diplomacy is conducted. Today's political diplomats must cope with both the more volatile and combative ties between nations as well as the extremely sophisticated and multilayered interconnections within those governments. They must interact with a number of non-governmental actors, such as transnational companies and civil society groups and work together with them when appropriate. Due to the disintegration of the barrier separating the local and the transnational, as well as the growing impact of general belief, they must interact with local and overseas audiences more frequently. The amount of representation in diplomacy engagement, dialogue, and interaction has risen dramatically as the variety of stakeholders in the international network has grown (Rüland, 2017, p. 33). The following subsection discusses how representation and public diplomacy has changed over the years.

## 3.1Representation

Diplomacy has always consisted of representing, creating, and reproducing personalities, beliefs, and state interests. According to some analysts, modern innovations, free movement, and trans-governmental networking have shifted the conventional representational role of ambassadors to other players. If diplomats' representational2 function has evolved, it could be in the advocacy of the home state’s foreign objectives, which should ordinarily be the envoy's first focus. The optimal ambassador is dependably the chief actor, guardian, and champion of state interests in his state of accreditation2. (Baehr, 2009, p. 105).

This responsibility is still as important today as it was before, but its sophistication has increased. A state  Interests are not just strategic and geopolitical, but also economical, corporate, cultural, scientific, judicial, and even ethical. Diplomats must contend with the issue of establishing what comprises state interest, which differs with time and situation in each of these domains. Furthermore, they must contend with the frequently substantial disagreements that arise between competing state interests. This has always been accurate to some extent, but it has grown even more difficult with the engagement, as previously discussed, of a plethora of domestic ministries and sub-national administrations in international policymaking. Diplomats must progressively be able to establish an in-depth awareness not just of foreign affairs, but also of the domestic issues of their native country, which provides additional dimensions to their profession (Stephan, 2010, p. 47).

## 3.2 Public diplomacy

The increasing importance of public affairs can be attributed to modern information and telecommunication innovations, as well as the greater importance of popular perception on federal policies. The modern media has not only revolutionized information access and increased people' awareness of governmental activities, but it has also offered worldwide general populace the capacity to speak back and comment openly or implicitly to decision-makers regarding policies with which they might or might not approve. Furthermore, the breakdown of the distinction separating the local and the international, as well as the knowledge that foreign activities can have a significant influence on their daily lives, has made civilians more concerned with watching and shaping states' overseas operations. The existence of strong non-governmental players, who may also affect nation policies via continuous pressure or implicit widespread support rallying, is another factor connected to the increasing emphasis on public diplomacy (Bowman, 2018, p.225).

Collectively, these changes have the effect of making publics more important than they were previously. Whether accurate or incorrect, the information distributed by a variety of people and organizations has the power to rapidly traverse the globe and start a chain reaction that could be harmful to a nation's interests. The public's opinion of an overseas nation has the potential to influence specific interstate operations like foreign investment and tourism as well as a nation's reputation as a reliable partner in international business. This is particularly more relevant for those developing nations that rely on their credentials and perceptions to accomplish crucial goals but lack significant military or economic strength (Johnson, 2016, p. 81).

# Conclusion

This essay has demonstrated that many of the presumptions that conventional diplomacy was founded on have changed to some degree over the last thirty years. No longer2 are diplomatic stakeholders thought to have a stranglehold on global relations, and diplomacy2 as a whole is no longer viewed as a purely government - to - government and centralized operation. Instead, it is acknowledged that networks made up of states, the wider population, nongovernmental organizations, and business entities must be developed in order to influence policy results due to the intricacy of the modern worldwide structure.

We can also draw the conclusion that there has been a significant shift in the framework for diplomatic operation, notably competition from emerging domestic actors as well as the external undermining of the traditional diplomatic agents' stranglehold on international affairs. According to some scholars, this position represents a decentralization of global affairs, indicating that an increasing number of actors effectively manage their own "international affairs" and are no longer dependent on governments to advocate them or their interests overseas. Because of this circumstance, some academic analysts have come to the conclusion that conventional foreign policy operators are becoming less relevant and will eventually be replaced by non-governmental entities.

# Reference



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