

**Multistakeholder Diplomacy: foundations, forms, functions
and frustrations.**

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It has become increasingly obvious to many – if not all – observers of diplomacy in an age preoccupied with modes of global governance, that its forms and functions are increasingly complex. At one level, traditional concerns such as the distinction between bilateral and multilateral diplomacy have become less clear and, arguably of diminishing significance. But at another it is obvious that the array of actors engaged in the diplomatic arena are far more diverse and that, in some senses, we are witnessing the return to pre-modern forms of diplomacy rather than its modern manifestations associated with the emergence of the integral state of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This has attracted varying terminologies of which *multistakeholder diplomacy* (MSD) is one. But the ideas in which these are rooted are similar. Actors, including the traditional generators of diplomacy, namely states, are no longer able to achieve their objectives in isolation from one another. Increasingly, diplomacy is becoming an activity concerned with the creation of networks embracing a range of state and non-state actors focusing on the management of issues demanding the application of resources in which no single participant possesses a monopoly.

However, in what sense can this be described as diplomacy? Simply pointing out that more actors are involved in international policy processes may say relatively little about the nature of contemporary diplomacy, either in terms of its processes or structures. After all, non-governmental actors have been participants in diplomatic processes in earlier eras and the inclusion of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in multilateral agencies can be traced back at least to the International Labour Organisation. Rather, what is potentially significant is how the rules of the diplomatic environment are adapting to changing circumstances. In other words, what we are concerned with is the culture of diplomacy as it is evolving in the 21st century – an era in which the state and the apparatuses through which it conducts its business are responding to a plethora of internal and external challenges leading some to question the relevance of diplomacy as a feature of contemporary world politics. In short, is MSD a new model of diplomacy and how does it relate to conventional models rooted in state-focused intergovernmental processes?

MSD and `two cultures' of diplomacy

John Ruggie helps to set the scene for our discussion in drawing attention to the challenges confronting the United Nations (UN) as it responds to criticisms of its humanitarian operations. On the one hand, he argues, there is a traditionalist diplomatic culture to be found in the UN reflected in the administration of the Iraq oil-for-food programme. This sees UN multilateral diplomacy as beginning and ending with responsibility to the member states as represented in its institutions such as the Security Council, shrouded in relative secrecy and with minimal accountability. By contrast, there is also to be found a `modernist culture' rooted in transparency, and engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. The traditionalists, he argues, regard opaqueness and exclusiveness as a strategic asset whilst `for modernists transparency is the key to institutional success'.¹ Whilst presented in obviously stark terms, this clash of cultures is symptomatic of an international system undergoing profound change and one in which diplomacy reflects this change. As Mattingly notes, diplomacy is a functional representation of the political system in which it operates.² However, the contemporary context of diplomacy is characterised, it is one in which Ruggie's two cultures are constrained to coexist. To put it in terms of the concerns of this conference, an older, state-based form of diplomacy exists alongside an emergent form or forms, one label for which might be multistakeholder diplomacy. But what kind of a diplomatic system does this represent, and, to put it at its simplest, how does it work

Identifying diplomacy

As a number of analysts have noted, the study of diplomacy has either been ignored by those preoccupied with the phenomena of globalisation and global governance or has been locked into analytical frameworks rooted in statehood and sovereignty. In this sense, Ruggie's traditionalist culture has dominated the literature on diplomacy. A key problem here is that much of what has come to be regarded as `diplomatic studies' is limited by its vision, particularly the tendency to equate diplomacy with a system of sovereign states rather than seeking out its essential characteristics that transcend time and space. In dissociating diplomacy from the states system, Sharp has suggested the need to recognise the fundamental qualities of diplomacy which rest in the intersection of two conditions: separateness and the need to communicate.³ Der Derian notes that the continual shaping and reshaping of diplomacy over time sits uncomfortably with the tendency to assume that it has attained its ultimate expression, `that we have reached – or even that we are approaching

¹ J. Ruggie, `Modernists must take over the United Nations', *Financial Times*, 24 January 2005.

² G. Mattingly *Renaissance Diplomacy*, London, Penguin, 1973.

³ P. Sharp, () `For diplomacy: representation and the study of international relations', *International Studies Review*, 1(1) 1999: 33-57.

– after a long odyssey the best, final form of diplomacy⁴ In a not dissimilar vein, Jönssen and Hall argue the case for resisting the inclination to associate diplomacy with a state centric perspective, adopting in their analysis of diplomatic communication over time a definition of diplomacy as ‘an institution structuring relations among polities, that is, political authorities of various kinds with distinct identities.’⁵ Lee and Hudson have, equally, pointed to the distortions that the assumption that diplomacy is essentially a dialogue between states poses to our broader understanding of its character and evolution.⁶ In sum, Ruggie’s traditionalist diplomatic culture is underpinned by a traditionalist image of diplomacy rooted in a symbiosis between scholarship on the one hand and attitudes and practices to be found amongst some of its practitioners.

This leads us back to Ruggie’s characterisation of tensions in the current UN diplomatic milieu and, more specifically, where MSD fits as a concept in the continually evolving patterns of diplomacy. If one argues that the principal discourse of diplomacy from, say, the sixteenth to the twentieth century has focused on the emergence and development of what we might term ‘national diplomatic systems’, whose essence is rooted in a system of sovereign states, how does the concept of MSD relate to this? Does it represent a fundamental shift in the character of diplomacy such as that which accompanied the transition from the medieval to the Renaissance era – or is it simply a minor modification of well-established patterns of communication that have dominated international politics for several centuries? These questions invite us to extend the form of analysis that students of diplomacy such as Raymond Cohen have applied when considering the broader issue of the impact of globalisation on diplomacy. Arguing that a dispassionate analysis of diplomacy in a turbulent environment demands a conscious attempt to distinguish the ‘permanent from the transitory’ Cohen invites us to identify the core characteristics of differing diplomatic systems which have emerged over time.⁷ Pursuing the same theme, Jönsson and Hall, in identifying changing modes of diplomatic communication over time, argue the importance of analysing the interaction of change and continuity on evolving patterns of diplomacy divorced from culture-bound assumptions regarding its origins and fundamental characteristics.

One of the difficulties here, as Winham points out in reflecting on Mattingly’s analysis of the evolution from medieval to Renaissance diplomacy, is that of perspective. What is now clear with the benefit of hindsight would not have been apparent in, say, the fourteenth century. The same point applies now. If we are moving through a phase in international politics of

⁴ J. Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: a Genealogy of Western Estrangement*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987: 3.

⁵ C. Jönsson and M. Hall, ‘Communication: an essential aspect of diplomacy’, *International Studies Perspectives*, 4, 2003: 196.

⁶ D. Lee and D. Hudson, ‘The old and new significance of political economy in diplomacy’, *Review of International Studies*, 30(3) 2004; 355-6.

⁷ R. Cohen, ‘Reflections on the new global diplomacy: statecraft 2500BC to 2000AD’, in J. Melissen, *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*, London, Macmillan, 1999: 1-2.

significant change, the precise contours of the resultant landscape are uncertain. But it seems reasonable, and appears to accord with the contemporary diplomatic environment, that we are witnessing the intersection of what we have referred to – following Ruggie – as a traditionalist and modernist diplomatic culture. Assuming that we can denote the latter as a form of multistakeholder diplomacy, how can we describe its parameters and how do they relate to earlier phases in the long evolution of diplomatic practice? It should be said immediately that the complex environment in which diplomacy now operates means that we are confronted not with one but many styles and forms of diplomacy. Cohen suggests, the overarching challenge to – and opportunity for - contemporary diplomacy is that presented by patterns of inter-cultural tensions. These require, he suggests, the deployment of the features of a mature ‘polycultural’ diplomatic system such as that of the Amarna era.⁸ But the qualities ascribed to such systems are inward-looking and stress, for example, the guild-like qualities of the diplomatic system.

What we are concerned with here is the adaptation of diplomatic systems to internal cultural challenges of the kind that Ruggie identifies as older and newer forms of diplomatic environment and practice intersect with one another. In the accompanying table, I seek to sketch out in a very preliminary form how traditionalist state-based diplomatic environment contrasts with that of the MSD image. It should be stressed that these are not discrete diplomatic systems but exist alongside and intersect with each other. In other words, the point is that the character of significant areas of contemporary diplomacy can only be understood in terms of the interaction of sets of norms and expectations generated by the interrelationship of the two images.

Context

In terms of the broad setting, or context, in which diplomacy functions, the chief distinguishing feature relates to the significance of the sovereign state as the ‘terminal authority’ within the international system. Whilst MSD does not deny the continuing significance of the state, as Cohen notes, ‘one of the by-products of globalisation is an erosion of the exclusive functions and prerogatives of the state and the professions that served it’.⁹ Using Rosenau’s terminology, we now live in an era marked by multiple ‘spheres of authority’ whose agents are not constrained by domestic arenas, but whose interests are pursued in whatever policy arenas are appropriate to the attainment of their objectives.¹⁰ In terms of the evolution of diplomacy, this represents a return to pre-modern forms where non-

⁸ R. Cohen, ‘Reflections on the new global diplomacy: statecraft 2500 BC to 2000 AD’, in J. Melissen, *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*, Macmillan 1999.

⁹ Cohen, *op.cit.*, 2.

¹⁰ J. Rosenau ‘States, sovereignty and diplomacy in the information age’. *Virtual Diplomacy Series no.5*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, February 2000.

sovereign actors exercised the right to engage in diplomatic processes which would come to be regarded as the prerogative of the representatives of the state.

One of the characteristic qualities of state-based diplomacy has been its exclusivity. Diplomats are defined in terms of their role as representatives of national governments; at the international level, their presence and activities reflect practices and procedures that emphasise a sense of community enshrined in codes of behaviour and protected through conventions of diplomatic immunity. In short, they can be regarded as a *guild* sharing responsibilities deriving from the twin roles of diplomacy as a mode of statecraft and as an institution of the international system.¹¹ Integral to this image is the proposition that diplomacy is separated from other spheres of activity. Most obviously, this is expressed in the concept of the diplomat as gatekeeper, or mediator between the domestic and international environments which are inherently separate. Diplomacy is also traditionally differentiated from policy making and from politics, points stressed by Nicolson in his writings.¹²

MSD, by definition, poses very different characteristics as can be seen from definitions to be found in the literature describing multistakeholder processes (MSP). The fundamental concept of MSP is based on inclusiveness and partnership rather than on exclusiveness. Such processes 'aim to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of common decision-finding (and possibly decision-making) on a particular issue'.¹³ Furthermore, they assert that 'influence and the right to be heard should be based on the value of each stakeholders' unique perspective and expertise'.¹⁴ As is often pointed out, this modifies the dominant democratic paradigm. At the same time, it also modifies the dominant diplomatic paradigm in significant ways. Not only does it challenge the rationale of its guild-like characteristics, it offers a very different picture of who is involved in diplomacy. In particular, the image of diplomacy offered by MSD is one in which private actors – such as firms and, of course, non-governmental organisations – can and should play a significant role.

That is not to say that non-state actors are unknown in the state centred model: rather, they play a different role. This might be described as *consumers* of diplomacy whereas the MSD model provides for a far more proactive role in which the private sector can become *producers* of diplomatic outcomes. However, these roles are likely to depend on the dynamics underpinning the trisectoral interactions between governments, NGOs and business. As Teegen and Doh have suggested, the patterns of relationships between business and NGOs exist on a spectrum between what he terms 'stakegiver' roles in which

¹¹ A. Henrikson *Diplomacy for the 21st century: 're-crafting the old guild'*, Wilton Park Occasional Paper 1, 1997.

¹² H. Nicolson *Diplomacy*, London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939.

¹³ M. Hemmati, *Multi-stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability: beyond deadlock and conflict*, London, Earthscan, 2002: 19

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 7.

State-centred and Multistakeholder Diplomacy

	State centred model	Multistakeholder model
Context	State as unchallenged terminal authority.	Multiple spheres of authority.
Forms	Government-led using bilateral and multilateral channels.	Diffuse: may be led by governments or other stakeholder. Developing and fluid forms.
Participants	Professional diplomatic guild. Diplomats whose credentials are based on principles of sovereignty. Non-state actors as consumers of diplomacy.	Multiple participation based on varying models. Frequently based on trisectoral model incorporating governments, NGOs and business. 'Stakeholders' whose credentials based on interests and expertise. Non-state actors as producers of diplomacy.
Roles	Diplomat as gatekeeper	Diplomat as boundary-spanner: facilitator and entrepreneur. Stakeholders performing multiple roles: stakegivers v. staketakers.
Communication patterns	Government focused. Relations with stakeholders defined as 'outreach'. Hierarchical information flows focused on governments. Exclusive but with recognition of need for outreach.	Networks. Open and inclusive. Can be fluid and unstable. Multidirectional flows of information.
Functions	Managing relations between sovereign entities Defining and promoting national interests	Compensate for deficiencies in diplomatic processes by exchanging resources through policy networks. Information exchange Monitoring proceses Defining and promoting global interests
Location	Outside domestic arenas Diplomatic sites: intergovernmental	Crosses domestic-international arenas Multiple diplomatic sites
Representation patterns	State-focused. Mixed bilateral and multilateral with growing emphasis on mission diplomacy.	Multilateral and mission oriented. Variable permanent representation.
Rules	Clear normative expectations of behaviour derived form sovereignty-related rules. Centrality of protocol. Immunity of diplomatic agents. Confidentiality	Underdeveloped rules. Clash of sovereignty and non-sovereignty based rules. Openness, accountability and transparency. Institutional tensions. Clash of expectations between stakeholders.

positive outcomes are produced to 'stakeholder' roles in which NGOs become opponents of the interests of other parties.¹⁵

It should be stressed, however, that the MSD model does not necessarily imply a diminished role for the professional diplomat. Indeed, that role might be enhanced but, at the same time, redefined. Rather than that of gatekeeper, the diplomat becomes what might be termed a boundary-spanner, recognising that boundaries between organisations, far from being irrelevant, are fluid and continually reconstitute themselves, becoming sites of intense activity.¹⁶ In such an environment, actors – such as diplomats – able to assume the role of mediators or brokers, assume a special significance. But their role assumes different forms encapsulated in terms such as that of facilitator and entrepreneur.¹⁷ Indeed, Rosenau sees a crucial role for diplomats in assisting the creation and legitimisation of new patterns of social contract between individuals and a plethora of spheres of authority.¹⁸

Communication patterns

In contrast to the traditional, hierarchical model of diplomacy which stresses the centrality of intergovernmental relations, MSD is a reflection of a much more diffuse, network model. Underpinning the various definitions of networks is the proposition that they are now indispensable in managing increasingly complex policy environments through the promotion of communication and trust. In this sense, a policy network can be defined as 'a set of relatively stable relationships which are of a non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that co-operation is the best way to achieve common goals'.¹⁹ This is the fundamental principle on which Reinecke's concept of global public policy networks rests.²⁰ Starting from the premise that globalization has highlighted the deficiencies of governments, both acting alone or in concert, in terms of their scope of activity, speed of response to global issues and range of contacts, he identifies the significance of the emergence of networks incorporating both public and private sector

¹⁵ H. Teegen and J. Doh, 'Conclusion: globalization and future of NGO influence' in Doh and Teegen, op cit. 204-6.

¹⁶ C Ansell and S. Weber, 'Organizing international politics: sovereignty and open systems', *International Political Science Review* 20 (1) 1999: 73-94.

¹⁷ K. Rana, *The 21st Century Ambassador: plenipotentiary to chief executive*, Malta and Geneva, DiploFoundation, 2004.

¹⁸ J. Rosenau, 'States, sovereignty and diplomacy in the information age', *Virtual Diplomacy Series no 5*, Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace, 2000: 12-13.

¹⁹ D. Stone, Networks, second track diplomacy and regional co-operation: the role of Southeast Asian think tanks; paper presented to 38th International Studies Convention, Toronto, March 1997.

²⁰ W. Reinecke, *Global public policy: governing without government?* Washington DC: Brookings 1998; W. Reinecke, 'The other world wide web: global public policy networks', *Foreign Policy*, 117, 2000: 44-57.

actors. It is not, he suggests, that multigovernmental institutions are irrelevant but that the more diverse membership and non-hierarchical qualities of public policy networks promote collaboration and learning and speeds up the acquisition and processing of knowledge.²¹ Furthermore, as an Aspen Institute report argues, centralised decision making processes are at a disadvantage when confronted by decentralised networks in that the latter face fewer transactional barriers and are able to direct relevant information speedily to where it will have greatest effect.²²

Functions

Far from assumptions of control exercised by the agents of government over international policy, the logic of the MSD image resides in the limitations confronted by all actors – both state and non-state – in achieving their policy objectives. Challenged by evermore complex, multifaceted agendas, there is a necessity to establish relationships of varying scope and composition, which, for example, bring together governmental actors, CSOs and business. Quite clearly, the motivations for developing relationships will vary. Business has come to recognise that NGOs are now a critical element of the environments in which it has to operate and cannot simply be ignored. Indeed, taxonomies drawn from various stakeholder theories developed in the corporate political strategy literature have been used to analyse the motivations of business in engaging with NGOs and the variety of relationships that such engagement produces.²³ In general terms, these relationships seek to compensate for three forms of deficit that actors confront in achieving their diplomatic objectives: legitimacy, knowledge and access which underpins the goal of resource exchange identified by Reinicke as a feature of global policy networks. This is clearly demonstrated in the trade agenda where the pattern of a closed, club-like diplomatic environment is being transformed – in the light of enhanced interest by civil society in trade issues and the activities of the World Trade Organization (WTO) - into multistakeholder processes.

The first deficit, that of legitimacy, reflects a decreased level of trust in the institutions of government. As Ostry has noted, accompanying the changes in the nature of the trade agenda there is a more general decline in public confidence in the institutions of representative democracy, mirrored in aspirations towards modes of participatory democracy.²⁴ Haynal sees this development as having a particular significance in the realm

²¹ In a recent book, Anne-Marie Slaughter argues the case for a network approach to diplomacy but does so in the context of exclusively governmental networks. See A-M. Slaughter, *A new world order*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004.

²² Bollier, *The rise of netpolitik*, op. cit., p. 9.

²³ J. Doh and H. Teegen, *Globalization and NGOs: transforming business, government and society*, Westport, CT, 2003.

²⁴ S. Ostry, Trade negotiations and civil society: the trade policy-making process at the national level, paper presented at the Fourth Meeting of the Trade and Integration Network, Inter-American Bank, Washington, DC; 17-18 September 2002.

of diplomacy which represents a form of mediating institution between people and policy arenas. What he terms the growth of 'disintermediation', namely a rejection of such institutions in all areas of society, poses particular challenges to those charged with the conduct of international policy.²⁵ The involvement of a broader cross-section of societal interests as represented in civil society organisations, particularly the NGOs, is thus a logical strategy for dealing with this alienation.

Not surprisingly, in the wake of the experiences of the abortive Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) negotiations in 1998 and the Seattle WTO ministerial, policy makers have made much of the need to consult domestic constituencies if support for trade liberalization is to be sustained and anti-globalisation forces resisted. Thus the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is clear in its objectives regarding consultative procedures:

By mobilizing popular opinion and keeping people fully informed of the issues and the direction of trade negotiations, transparency and engagement combine to establish the legitimacy, consistency and the durability of policy decisions and outcomes.²⁶

Very similar sentiments have been voiced in the USA and the European Union (EU). In evaluating the US system of trade consultation, Huenemann suggests that its biggest weakness is its failure to engage the public in a discussion on the aims of trade policy.²⁷ In Brussels, the Seattle experience led Commissioner Pascal Lamy to introduce a DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue designed to 'develop a confident working relationship among all stakeholders interested in trade policy, to ensure that all contributions to EU trade policy can be heard...'²⁸ The underlying goal is, as Ostry suggests, for government to engage in capacity-building within civil society if the anti-globalisation backlash is to be contained.²⁹

The second deficit that underpins the growing interest in developing multistakeholder processes relates to knowledge. In the trade sphere, negotiators have long recognised that advice from the business community is an essential component in the framing of trade policy. Hence, for example, the advisory structures put in place by Cordell Hull following the

²⁵ G. Haynal, 'DOA: diplomacy on the ascendant in the age of disintermediation', paper presented at a conference on *The Future of Diplomacy*, Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 22 April 2002.

²⁶ www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/tna-nac/consult. Last accessed 12 June 2003.

²⁷ J. Huenemann, 'Nongovernment actors and the making of trade policy', *Looking Ahead*, (National Policy Association, Washington DC), 23 (1): 3-5.

²⁸ See DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue website: http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil_soc/intro1.php. Last accessed 14 August 2003.

²⁹ S. Ostry, 'Preface', in INTAL-ITD-STA, (Inter-American Development Bank), *The Trade Policy-Making Process. Level One of the Two Level Game: Country Studies in the Western Hemisphere*, Occasional Paper 13, Buenos Aires, 2002; p.iv.

enactment of the US Trade Reciprocity Act of 1934.³⁰ But in the face of growing resource constraints, the knowledge capacity of government has, in general terms, diminished just as the demands imposed on it have grown. Against this background, NGOs have a window of opportunity to fill this gap by capitalising on their own expertise. As Curtis puts it:

...they possess...a reservoir of knowledge, skills and perspective that could be deployed to great advantage for policy development. This includes information that bears on the gamut of trade policy issues, from negotiations to administration of the multilateral system to the effective disposition of trade disputes.³¹

In this context, Aaronson has suggested that one of the key functions that consultative processes in trade policy performs is to establish a 'common language' regarding the nature and objectives of trade agreements.³²

Looked at from the CSO perspective, there is a resource deficit of a third kind – namely that of access. Whereas the point is often made that the growing role of NGOs in world politics is underpinned by the diminishing obstacles to non-state actors operating at a global level and that there are advantages inherent in the 'non-sovereign' qualities of such actors, it is still the case that access to key diplomatic networks are dominated by governments and the sovereignty-related rules governing the international system. Despite some movement at the WTO toward greater NGO access, it still remains the case that its intergovernmental qualities place a premium on opportunities provided by modes of consultation at the national level. In short, the conduct of many areas of contemporary diplomacy, including that relating to international trade policy, involves the trading of resources between different species of actor, each possessing resources that the others need.³³ Consequently, diplomacy is becoming more of a networking mode of activity and less hierarchical in both its structures and processes as its demands favour the establishment of coalitions of diverse actors to manage complex policy agendas and the communications revolution facilitates the creation and maintenance of horizontal networks.³⁴

There are numerous examples of these processes (I have described them elsewhere as 'catalytic' diplomacy) in a variety of areas.³⁵ The example of the Ottawa Process relating to land mines is one of the most oft-cited examples. More recently, the establishment of the Kimberley Process dealing with the problem of the sale of illicit 'conflict' or 'blood' diamonds

³⁰ S. Aaronson, *Redefining the terms of trade policymaking*, Washington DC, National Policy Association, 2001: 27.

³¹ J.M. Curtis, 'Trade and civil society: toward greater transparency in the policy process', in *Trade Policy: Research 2001*, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada, 2001; p. 305.

³² Aaronson, op. cit., 12.

³³ See A. Cooper and B. Hocking, (2000) 'Governments, non-governmental organisations and the re-calibration of diplomacy', *Global Society*, 14(3): 361-376.

³⁴ Curtis, op. cit., p. 306.

³⁵ B. Hocking, 'Catalytic diplomacy: Beyond 'newness' and 'decline' 'in J. Melissen (ed.) *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*, London: Macmillan. 1999: pp. 21-42.

is a good example where an NGO, Global Witness, acted as a catalyst to a process in which national diplomats, especially British and American, the EU Commission together with journalists and De Beers, the global diamond firm, each contributed to the establishment of a diamond regime.

Location

Location refers to the primary sites within which diplomatic activity occurs. As noted earlier, Nicolson in his writings stressed two aspects of diplomacy which he deemed significant to its successful operation: the first was the separation of policy from its execution – the latter being the rightful province of diplomacy. The second is the separation of foreign and domestic policy. It is arguable to what extent the 'old' diplomacy maintained these separations but it is undoubtedly the case that they are no longer features of the diplomatic environment. The underlying rationale of MSD implies a mode of democratisation of diplomacy that renders both assumptions redundant in the contemporary negotiating environment. Moreover, the character of the stakeholders – particularly NGOs which operate in domestic and international environments simultaneously – means that the precise location of diplomacy becomes harder to determine. The linkage between domestic and international negotiating arenas is a well-established feature of contemporary negotiation with its requirements to link the two levels of negotiation if successful outcomes are to be achieved.³⁶ The effect of MSD is to enhance the phenomenon and to project the domestic environment more definitely into the international environment. But, quite clearly, the MSD model is likely to embrace a more diverse range of diplomatic sites reflecting a varying degree of governmental involvement. In this context, Coleman and Perl have suggested a typology of four sites ranging from intergovernmental through multilevel governance and private regimes to what they term 'loose couplings' where interactions between governmental and transnational actors are sparse and unstructured.³⁷ The nature of the site reflects objectives and the form that MSD assumes.

Patterns of representation

Diplomatic systems are marked by two basic modes of representation: diplomacy by mission and that of permanent representation which Nicolson regarded as the essence of effective diplomacy. The recent history in the evolution of state-centred diplomacy has emphasised the importance of mission over permanent bilateral diplomacy – 'diplomacy when and where you need it' as opposed to 'diplomacy whether you need it or not' to use Winham's terms. - reflecting the growing complexity and the technical nature of negotiations in, for example, the

³⁶ P. Evans, H. Jacobson and R. Putnam (eds), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

³⁷ R. Coleman and A. Perl, 'Internationalized policy environments and policy network analysis', *Political Studies*, 47 (4) 1999: 701-7.

trade, arms control and environmental spheres.³⁸ Here, there is a direct linkage to MSD since one of the central impulses underlying it is to bring expertise lying outside government to areas of complex negotiations. But as we have seen above, the world of state-centred diplomacy has had to adjust to changes whose roots lie on the political and economic configuration of the international order as well as its social underpinnings. National diplomatic systems around the world confront, to a greater or lesser extent, similar problems: how to bear the burden of greater demands with fewer resources whilst responding to the internal challenges emanating from the claims of 'domestic' sectoral departments to act as their own representatives in international environments. Hence the experiments with various models of 'alternative' representation such as hub-and-spoke systems and co-location of missions. The more complex the environment – as in the case of the EU with the proposed reforms in EU external policy contained in the 2004 constitution – then the greater the challenge to national diplomatic systems and the greater the opportunity for creative responses to these challenges.

The concept of MSD adds another layer to the dilemmas of representation. Alongside statecraft comes what Cooper terms 'society-craft' or the weaving together of the diplomatic resources of the state with those of non-state entities, particularly the NGO community.³⁹ This poses challenges to governments in deciding with whom to engage in projecting their interests in regional and global environments but also to multilateral organisations who have to decide with whom to engage and on what terms. Here, of course, engagement with stakeholders is not a new idea – the International Labour Organization is commonly regarded as one of the earliest instances, establishing in 1919 trisectoral representation from governments, unions and employers. But since the creation of the UN, the trend has grown apace with many of the concepts relating to stakeholder activity deriving from the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. As Dodds notes, a significant aspect of the subsequent Agenda 21 was its status as 'the first UN document to recognise the roles and responsibilities of nine stakeholder groups'.⁴⁰ Since then, the creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development has seen a gradual expansion of stakeholder engagement. But the intersection of the two diplomatic cultures creates tensions. This takes us back to a point made earlier: namely the significant degree of control that state-based diplomacy exercises over access to the diplomatic environment. This is made evident when comparing the development of stakeholder engagement in the UN system with that of the World Trade

³⁸ G. Winham, 'The impact of system change on international diplomacy, Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Carleton University, Ottawa, 7 June, 1993: 33

³⁹ A. F. Cooper, *Test of Global Governance: Canadian Diplomacy and United Nations World Conferences*, Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 2004.

⁴⁰ F. Dodds, 'The context: multistakeholder processes and global governance', in M. Hemmati, op. cit., 28-9.

Organisation where the dominance of sovereignty-related rules provide a less congenial environment for the development of MSD.⁴¹

Rules

The transformation of multilateral diplomacy and the challenges that it poses emphasises the tensions that underlie the operation of contemporary diplomacy and generates the frustrations that stakeholders of all types frequently express with multistakeholder processes. If we are witnessing the emergence of a new phase in the evolution of diplomacy, a key aspect is the development of rules through which the new processes can function. As Jönsson and Hall note, ritual and protocol in diplomacy reduce transaction costs and are critical to its operation. Viewing the diplomatic landscape from an NGO perspective, Dodds suggests the need for the development of agreed norms and standards by which multistakeholder processes can operate. 'This will require a clearer definition of the role and responsibility of governments, as well as of stakeholders, and an agreement on the modes of interaction'.⁴² The problem is that there are two sets of rules which are frequently in tension with one another. The clear normative expectations of behaviour derived from sovereignty-related rules are not paralleled in the MSD environment wherein patterns of behaviour by some stakeholders clearly reflect different, non-sovereignty related norms. To take one example, this can lead to differing approaches towards the values attached by stakeholders to confidentiality in negotiations as opposed to openness, accountability and transparency.

The character of these problems depends on the nature of the political environment, but in general they can be identified in terms of 'institutional tension' created by attempts to graft newer onto older modes of diplomacy; a 'crisis of expectations' which results from a mismatch of goals and ambitions on the part of the participants in the various processes, and a more general legitimacy debate which is nested within the broader debate about the nature of democratic processes in the face of globalization. The institutional tensions can be clearly seen in the trade policy sphere where conflicts produced by the definition of new rules at both the national and multilateral levels are clearly evident. In terms of national processes of trade consultation the shift from a relatively closed 'club' to a more open multistakeholder model has generated tensions between business and NGOs with the former sometimes resenting what it regards as the incursion of the latter.⁴³

⁴¹ See G. Marceau and P. Pedersen, 'Is the WTO open and transparent? A discussion of the relationship of the WTO with non-governmental organisations and civil society's claims for more transparency and public participation', *Journal of World Trade* 33(1), 1999: 5-49; D. Esty, 'Non-governmental organizations at the World Trade Organization: cooperation, competition or exclusion', *Journal of International Economic Law*, 1 1998: 83-122

⁴² Dodds, *op.cit.*, 37.

⁴³ B. Hocking, 'Changing the terms of trade policy making: from the 'club' to the multistakeholder model', *World Trade Review*, 3(1) 2004: 3-26.

Much of this disquiet, of course, is related to the second factor, namely a crisis of expectations concerning the objectives of consultations, the means through which they are achieved and the likely outcomes. And, equally obviously, this phenomenon is part of the stresses that are more generally manifest in the conduct of international policy making and diplomacy as NGOs, the business community and officials from government find themselves rubbing shoulders with increasing frequency. It is hardly surprising that in the case of trade policy, as elsewhere, differing operational styles, organisational characteristics and, simply, a lack of familiarity between differing categories of participants, condition the workings of consultative processes. This has been the case with the EU DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue in which, as one commentator has noted factors such as these 'make it difficult for the creation of consultation spaces where the actors feel comfortable and, sometimes, frustrations and misunderstandings arise'.⁴⁴

Conclusion

I have suggested in this paper that, firstly, diplomacy to be understood has to be seen in a context broader than that of the state system with which it is associated. Second, that identifying evolving patterns of diplomacy presents us with problems of interpretation and understanding that is as applicable to multistakeholder images as to those of earlier times. But, third, it is possible to recognise the intersection of what, in Ruggie's terms, are two cultures which overlay and inform one another. Whilst reflective of fundamental changes in world politics, their coexistence generates, simultaneously, creative and negative tensions. These reflect differing goals and objectives relating to both issues and processes. One consequence is a clash of expectations regarding what can be realistically achieved through what are essentially bureaucratic processes, especially where some of the participants are seeking to redefine the political agenda in a way that bureaucratic interlocutors are unable to respond to. What appears to be happening is that 'rules of engagement' between the key sets of actors - government, business and NGOs - are gradually being shaped, based on shared interests in trading resources - knowledge, legitimacy and access - which each possess in differing degrees. Not surprisingly, these rules are tenuous and fuzzy. But the success of much contemporary diplomacy, not only in the trade arena, demands that they be developed.

⁴⁴ M.I. Muguruza, 'Civil society and trade diplomacy in the 'global age'. The European case: trade policy dialogue between civil society and the European Commission'. Document for the Fourth Meeting of the Trade and Integration Network, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC, 17-18 September 2002:13.