

The Sources of Influence in Multilateral Diplomacy

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The “golden age” of Canadian diplomacy has often served as a touchstone for policymakers asserting that the country’s international standing has diminished and that measures should be taken to bring Canada “back” to a position of international influence. During the golden age, which ran roughly from 1944-1957, Canada exercised significant influence in multilateral fora, helping to establish the United Nations (UN) and negotiate the North Atlantic Treaty. It played a central role in resolving the major international security challenges of the day, helping to deescalate tensions in global hot spots. Never before—and never since, the narrative suggests—has Canada been such an influential global player.

A popular account of this period explains Canada’s impact by pointing to the country’s effective military, its generous international assistance programs, and its able diplomats (Cohen 2004). Other analysts agree with key elements of this thesis, many adding also that the destruction of much of Europe and Asia wrought by the Second World War inflated the country’s relative standing (Bothwell 2007: 132; Holmes 1970: 14-15; Hillmer and Granatstein 2008, 206; Nossal et al 2015: 88). Others, however, consider the golden age a myth. Don Munton (2005: 176), for example, notes that Canadian defence spending dropped sharply following the Second World War and, despite a temporary increase following the outbreak of the Korean War, Canada’s military capacity was not a driver of amplified influence in this period. He similarly observes that Canada’s development assistance allocations and contributions to UN peacekeeping peaked after the

supposed golden age had ended. If resources drive efficacy, the golden age remains a foreign policy “paradox” (Chapnick 2008/2009: 205-221).

At the heart of this paradox is the question of assessing diplomatic impact. The golden age narrative rests to a very great extent on the notion that Canada’s Department of External Affairs and its diplomatic titans, such as Lester B. Pearson, Escott Reid, Norman Robertson, and Hume Wrong, drove Canada’s success on the world stage. Pearson’s 1957 Nobel Peace Prize reinforces the view that Canadian diplomats were among the world’s best. A true test of the golden age thesis, therefore, requires an evaluation of diplomatic impact. Yet the analytic tools for such an assessment in International Relations theory do not exist. How can we systematically determine if one country’s diplomacy is more effective than another’s, for example? If a state’s diplomacy is superior, in what respect? What factors determine influence, apart from the possession of superior resources? How do we explain variation in diplomatic impact?

This article intervenes in the debate by presenting a model of diplomatic impact, using the tools and concepts of Social Network Analysis. It argues that, by assessing the centrality of a country’s position within intergovernmental networks, we can begin to estimate diplomatic influence in more objective terms. This approach must, however, be adapted to the study of diplomacy. In particular, it is necessary to complement quantitative measures of networks with micro-level, qualitative indicators catered to assessing diplomatic links and the influence associated therewith. By specifying indicators of influence tailored to analyzing intergovernmental networks, comprising what I term the “Diplomatic Impact Framework,” we can consider how diplomats exercise influence within global networks.

My analysis begins with a discussion of the theoretical challenges of evaluating influence in diplomacy. I then draw on the tools of Social Network Analysis, particularly measures of network centrality, to develop a theory of influence in multilateral diplomacy and propose a set of conceptual tools for the evaluation of diplomatic centrality. I specify two hypotheses and probe the plausibility of the Diplomatic Impact Framework through a comparative case study analysis of Canada's diplomacy within the UN General Assembly following the outbreak of the Korean War and during the Suez Crisis. These cases, which are important for considering the golden age thesis, represent least-likely ones for a theory of diplomatic impact.

Assessing Diplomatic Impact within International Relations

There is a significant divide in the literature on world politics between the accounts of current and former practitioners, on the one hand, which recount the often-decisive role that diplomats play in international negotiations, and the majority of International Relations theory, on the other, which is largely uninterested in diplomats. The literature on diplomacy is rarely in theoretical or methodological conversation with the wider IR discipline, often focusing on cases of national historical interest where diplomatic choices seem to have mattered. Thus, IR scholars maintain, these contributions are prone to selection bias and frequently lack an explicit comparative lens (King et al 1994). Although worthwhile, insights emerging from policy-oriented and historical contributions provide few immediately relevant insights into the question of *how* to assess diplomatic impact. It is difficult to separate analytically the impact of diplomatic choices from the possession of relevant material capabilities, for example.

The paucity of analytical tools leads many studies toward tautology. A country's diplomacy is considered effective because it was successful. It was successful, of course, because it was effective. Few such accounts clearly conceptualize diplomatic impact, derive testable hypotheses, or propose alternative explanations based on explicit theoretical assumptions. It is the scarcity of such theoretical accounts that make it so difficult to weigh diplomatic impact. The analytical and policy stakes of such an assessment are high. Divergence between IR scholars and the first-hand observations of current and former policymakers suggests that a potentially important explanatory factor is being overlooked within theoretical accounts. There are, furthermore, other relevant literatures, such as negotiation analysis, that suggest that the tactics chosen around the bargaining table matter and regularly affect outcomes of interest (Raiffa 1982; Lax and Sebenius 1986). In a period when the budgets of foreign ministries are under stress, the ability to more conclusively demonstrate the contribution of diplomacy to advancing national interests has implications for statecraft. A more systematic account of the determinants of diplomatic success could provide a hardnosed justification for reinvesting in the tools of diplomacy.

Diplomacy is about connection. Diplomats in bilateral and multilateral settings advance their country's interests by building a web of relationships that facilitate the gathering of useful information and the diffusion of key messages.¹ Other diplomatic functions, such as negotiation and representation, are furthermore predicated heavily on the quality of information and communication channels established.² Actors with well-developed networks are, furthermore,

¹ Consistent with the findings of Iver B. Neumann (2012: 33), this article regards information-gathering as the principal activity of modern diplomats.

² Effective representation, for instance, relies heavily on being able to access the right contact to further a particular governmental aim. Negotiation analysts highlight the importance of moving past negotiating positions to probe the underlying interests that form the basis for negotiating preferences. See, for instance: Raiffa 1982.

more likely to be well-attuned to the multilateral setting, demonstrating competence and “feel” for the informal “rules of the game.”³ While there can be substantial informal hierarchy in global politics, diplomacy takes place in a relatively “flat” and decentralized context, with states navigating relational webs horizontally in pursuit of common objectives (Pouliot 2016). Those that are able to build better networks, gathering superior information and communicating effectively, are more likely to project influence. Any analysis of diplomatic impact must encompass this uniquely social and profoundly relational form of power.

A relational emphasis differs from the dominant treatment of power as an attribute of particular actors. This approach focuses heavily on the military or economic resources available to particular states and expects that these will be the principal sources of diplomatic power. Power therefore emanates from states themselves (Waltz 1979). The wider structure of connections is a secondary feature in this analysis. In accounts focusing on the capabilities possessed by states, there is little space for analysis of the strategies and tactics employed by governments. Relational views of state power are then inconsistent with the dominant approach, explaining the relative disinterest in diplomacy within much IR literature. The ability of states to achieve their international aims is explained by variation in state resources and shifts in relative capabilities internationally. Diplomatic choices are an epiphenomenon, a surface-oriented factor that reflects wider international power dynamics.

The sociological sub-field of Social Network Analysis offers many comparative advantages for the evaluation of the relational forms of power exercised by diplomats. The field

³ For a discussion of informal hierarchy, see: Pouliot 2011 and 2016.

investigates social structure through networks and socio-graphical representations, examining the existence, depth, and nature of connections. By assessing the structures and properties of networks, as well as a node's position within that structure, sociologists can shed light on key dimensions of social life. With the spread of online social media, the data available to understand connection has exploded, lending itself particularly to the analysis of social media, business, and knowledge-based ties, as well as the dissemination of information. Analysts have developed a number of metrics to evaluate the importance of particular nodes within networks and the social power that central network positions confer. Network ties are unevenly distributed, with some actors possessing a disproportionate number of connections relative to others within the system. Actors enjoying network centrality can link otherwise unconnected players, facilitating—or restricting—connection. By virtue of their position within broader network distributions, actors at the centre of networks are highly influential.

Scholars employing the tools of Social Network Analysis have largely utilized degree centrality to assess patterns of connection among states. Degree centrality, which measures the total number of direct connections, has been used to assess preferential trade agreements, membership within intergovernmental organizations, as well as factors that affect the likelihood of bilateral diplomatic relations (Duque 2018. Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006; Kinne 2014; Milewicz et al 2016). While valuable, a focus on degree centrality and the social power inhering to it fails to capture important dimensions of the multilateral game. Multilateral diplomacy is defined principally by coalitional dynamics. As Fen Osler Hampson and Michael Hart note, negotiation among coalitions is the “predominant defining characteristic of multilateral diplomacy” (Hampson with Hart 1995: 19). Effective states are not necessarily those that possess

the most connections, therefore, but those that are integral to building a winning coalition among states, bringing together disparate actors. These actors bridge diverse, weakly-connected players through forging agreements to achieve joint welfare gains. Those positioned to bring different coalitions together, filling structural “holes” within networks, are thus positioned to enjoy bargaining power or leverage (Kahler 2009: 12).

This form of network centrality is most commonly associated with *betweenness* centrality. Actors with high betweenness centrality serve as the shortest path to connection between otherwise unconnected or weakly connected players. Those positioned to serve as a bridge between factions are central players in this metric. Actors enjoying high levels of betweenness centrality are not necessarily connected with the largest number of players, but they do sit at an intersection between sides. While this form of centrality does not capture all aspects of effective multilateral diplomacy, actors enjoying high levels of betweenness centrality are positioned to impact key dimensions of the multilateral game. A strategic position within intergovernmental networks allows them to exert considerable influence over flows of information and communications, for example, setting agendas and controlling access to key fora. Figure 1 illustrates this dynamic. Although less connected than Nodes A and C (each with three connections, versus B’s two connections), Node B serves as a critical connector between subsections of the population and thus enjoys high levels of betweenness centrality.

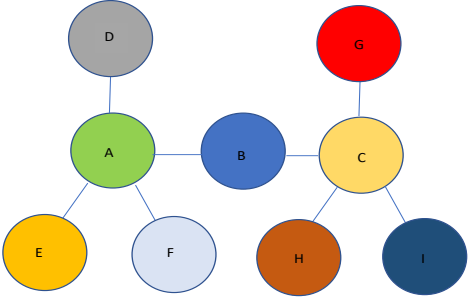


Figure 1: Illustration of Betweenness Centrality

IR scholars have increasingly employed the insights of Social Network Analysis to understand patterns of actor influence. A significant proportion of this research has focused on *networks as actors*, examining networks of transnational advocacy, criminality, or terrorism (Asal and Rethemeyer 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Podolny and Page 1998). Literature on trans-governmental networks seeks to explain the growing relationship between lower-level national officials cooperating on technical and regulatory matters (Manulak and Snidal 2020; Raustiala 2002; Slaughter 2005). Others have treated *networks as structures* and evaluated the influence of wider network configurations on international outcomes (Avant and Westerwinter 2016; Carpenter 2011; Hafner-Burton et al 2009; Kinne 2018; Manulak 2019). In this literature, network structures—emergent properties of persistent relational patterns—highlight dimensions of social power often overlooked in world politics. Other analysts, with a more prescriptive focus, have evaluated the importance of “webcraft,” “hard gatekeeping”, and “network power” for world politics (Slaughter 2017; Ramo 2016; Grewal 2008). Implicit in all of these treatments is a recognition that broader network structures are highly relevant to foreign policy practice, particularly in an “age of networks.”

There are two chief limitations associated with employing Social Network Analysis in the study of diplomatic impact. First, this field tends to focus on the quantity, rather than the quality, of connections. Metrics of social networks map the spread of connections within a given network. These are frequently treated as binary variables: a connection exists or it does not. In highly connected diplomatic networks, however, the quality of relationships typically matters more than their existence. There are not easily quantifiable reasons why two connected actors may wish to

work through an intermediary, for instance. Context matters. A second limitation of this approach is a limited interest in power. Networks emerge and evolve in a relatively spontaneous manner, with little deliberate or strategic positioning among actors. There is, in the words of one IR scholar, a need for a refresh of network analysis and a questioning of its “overly consensual and trust-laden view of networks” (Kahler 2009: 11-12). Rather than acting as passive nodes within a network, there is reason to believe that diplomatic actors deliberately and self-consciously seek to move themselves into power positions within networks (Ferguson 2017). In this respect, a detailed, theory-driven analysis may be necessary to adapt and devise hypotheses appropriate for understanding diplomatic practice.

A Theory of Diplomatic Impact

Actors occupying a central position within intergovernmental networks are positioned to act as pivotal diplomatic players. Those that enjoy better connection with key sources of information and influence are well-positioned to advance the interests of their government. Weakly-connected players, on the other hand, are marginalized within the diplomatic game. Thus, a principal aim of diplomacy is to build productive connections and overcome communication gaps. Understood this way, it is possible to assess the quantity and quality of diplomatic connection. It is possible also to evaluate how different social structures are likely to impact intergovernmental relations. By conceiving of diplomacy as the exercise of influence *within* networks, employing available conceptualizations of network centrality as a guide, we can more effectively estimate the influence of particular diplomatic players. The Diplomatic Impact Framework systematizes this assessment.

To contextualize the question of network distribution in global affairs, it is first essential to discuss the role of intermediaries between two unconnected or weakly connected actors. No matter how transparent and well-intentioned the intermediary, the act of channeling communications and information flow through a more central actor within a given network affects the message and intent of a given interaction. Messages can be intentionally or unintentionally delayed, decontextualized, or otherwise distorted by the intermediary. Central players can impart, sometimes unconsciously, introduce interpretive frames or biases. Despite these drawbacks, state relations regularly feature such facilitative connections. States elect to employ intermediaries because their involvement enhances the likelihood of productive connection. For unconnected actors, it may be too slow or too costly to establish direct links and, as a result, they work through a more central player. In other instances, the actor enjoying network centrality may feature more dense relations or trusting ties with key sides and thus add value as an interlocutor. For less connected actors, central diplomatic players improve communication in some respect.

In world politics, we assume that within a given structure, actors must justify the resources invested in an interaction. In some cases, the intermediary's interests may be aligned with the other actors. In other instances, the central actor may be positioned to extract rents in order to motivate its participation. The size of the rent that can be extracted depends heavily on its replaceability in the diplomatic equation. When there are a number of potential intermediaries available or direct connections are easy to establish, the central player can be easily replaced and has minimal bases to manipulate outcomes in its favor. Actors that are irreplaceable links within the social structure may, on the other hand, enjoy considerable leverage to shape the flow of information and communications.

Replaceability has two elements. The first equates in qualitative terms to betweenness centrality. An actor that constitutes an irreplaceable link within a network is characterized by a high centrality. If the link that they provide is easily replaced or can be easily forged, the actor is less central. If the central actor is the most efficient—or shortest—path between subsections of the institutional population, their capacity to influence relations will be proportionate to the degree of the efficiency they provide. This link is likely to be most irreplaceable when it bridges multiple factions or can connect multiple relevant networks.⁴ The second element of replaceability is the extent to which the connection enabled by the central actor is necessary to achieve some objective. If, for example, a state could forge a winning coalition by establishing links to more than one possible bloc, then the link provided by brokers to each individual bloc will be more replaceable. Thus, while a central actor may be able to provide an irreplaceable connection to key, less-connected actors, the leverage that such a position entails can be diminished if that link can be substituted for others.

Although networks are dynamic, diplomatic change is gradual. A country's diplomatic ties or its participation within intergovernmental organizations evolve progressively. Bureaucratic inertia, political considerations, and institutional stickiness hinder swift adaptation to shifting global conditions and circumstances (Neumann 2012). These factors are compounded by the costly nature of diplomatic relations, necessitating tough choices, and slow, antiquated procedures for establishing formal ties (Kinne 2014: 249). Thus, diplomatic change tends to lag global change. Even such shrewd decisions, as the iconic Nixon/Kissinger opening to China, capitalizing on

⁴ For Manuel Castells (2012: 8-9), actors who sit at the intersection of multiple networks are labelled “switchers.”

system-level incentives opened up by the Sino-Soviet split, took years to develop. While dynamic, therefore, intergovernmental network structures should be treated as relatively fixed over the short run.

In a particular international event or crisis, therefore, the diplomatic resources available to states are usually a reflection of longer-term strategy and foreign policy choices. The scope of states—or diplomats—to alter substantially the structure of intergovernmental networks on short notice is limited. As Stacie E. Goddard (2018: 768) observes, once formed, network ties are sticky and highly path dependent. This puts a premium on government instruments of policy planning and strategic analysis, where global trends are read and translated into policy recommendations concerning the extent of participation within intergovernmental organizations, links to non-state actors, and bilateral ties. In building diplomatic capital, choices involve both an expansion (or contraction) in the number or the depth of relationships, a choice analogous to investing in bridging versus bonding capital (Putnam 2000: 22-24).

Central actors have two main sources of influence. Better-connected players—or those linked to a more diverse array of actors—enjoy better access to information than others. By virtue of their contacts, and the fact that a comparatively large proportion of information flows through them, they are on average in possession of information that others are not (Freeman 1978/1979: 215-239; Hafner-Burton et al 2009). Diverse, weak ties can contribute more to the possession of new information than stronger links that occupy a similar network position (Granovetter 1973). Network brokers may also contribute to an increased propensity to supply “good ideas” in large institutional contexts because they are more familiar with alternative ways of thinking and more

able to devise options that would otherwise be overlooked (Burt 2004, 349-399). Actors occupying a position at the intersection of multinational clusters are positioned also to control the flow of information to less connected ones. Information asymmetries can be exploited in interstate interactions, conferring influence (Neumann 2012: 179).

Another source of power is the capacity to gatekeep. Actors at the centre of networks have a strong influence over who is included in international interactions. “Hard gatekeeping,” advocated by Joshua Cooper Ramo (2016), involves exploiting central network positions to control who has access to certain social environments. This control, and the leverage it confers, can be used to manipulate social relations to the advantage of those positioned to gatekeep. In addition to controlling *who* is *at* the table, gatekeepers can often exercise considerable influence over *what* is *on* the table. Gatekeepers can set the agenda (Manulak 2019). Actors enjoying network centrality are frequently convenors of key discussions among less-connected players and can shape the context and pretext of discussions. Through these means, central players can control the negotiation “arithmetic” of multiplayer interactions, affecting the likelihood of agreement and, potentially, manipulating outcomes in their favor (Sebenius 1983).

By clarifying the principal sources of power available to actors at the centre of intergovernmental networks, we can see how the existence of alternative pathways to connection (i.e. an increase in the replaceability of central actors) would diminish the capacity of central players to influence outcomes of interest. The information advantages associated with network centrality cannot be easily exploited when less central players can obtain information from other

sources (Fletcher 2017: 17-18). If multiple players control access to key fora, gatekeepers have less leverage over those who wish to gain access.

Observing Network Centrality in Diplomacy

Analysts of world politics lack a means of evaluating diplomatic impact. The preceding analysis has argued that the study of network centrality holds many comparative advantages for explaining influence within diplomatic networks. The proposed approach focuses attention on how distinct patterns of relations can affect diplomats' capacity to advance national aims.

To evaluate the role of network centrality in qualitative terms, it is first necessary to specify indicators of it. Three conditions must hold to demonstrate that a given actor is positioned to enjoy network centrality. First, there must be evidence of an inefficiency in intergovernmental relations. Inefficiency is typically manifested in observed "holes" within intergovernmental networks, such as the absence of diplomatic relations, but may encompass other forms of inefficiency. Obstacles to efficient communications can arise from a number of network characteristics. Owing to a large number of actors, high decentralization, or the nature of institutional arrangements, information does not flow to all actors in an efficient manner. Difficult personal or political relations among leaders may also contribute to inefficiency.

Second, central players must offer more efficient links between sides, by virtue of their position in the chain of relations. In some instances, central actors represent the only viable link between sub-sets of intergovernmental actors. In other cases, they may be the preferred—but by

no means the only—link. While some connections may not be direct, the central actor increases efficiency by shortening the chain of communications and enhancing information flow.

Third, it is necessary to determine whether the central player *acted* as an intermediary among relevant sides or a hub for intergovernmental exchange. It is not enough to demonstrate that central players enjoyed relatively strong links to weakly-connected players or had the potential to enhance efficiency, but that they actually *served* as a chief link over a period of time, facilitating communications. Evidence that central actors served as a main conduit for communications suggests comparative advantages derived from network position.

Centrality Indicator	Assessment
(1) Inefficiencies in connections across network	Are there significant inefficiencies in connections across intergovernmental networks?
(2) Comparative advantages of central actor	Do central actors have comparative advantages in facilitating communications, overcoming or mitigating identified breakdowns or inefficiencies in relations? Are central actors better connected than others, by virtue of the number or character of their intergovernmental links?
(3) Indications of intermediation or network facilitation	Do central actors play a facilitative, intermediating role within networks? Is there evidence of a central player serving as a chief conduit for the exchange of information among actors? By virtue of their high connectivity, do central actors act as agenda-setters?

Table 1: Indicators of Centrality within Intergovernmental Networks

These indicators provide compelling evidence that a certain player occupied a central position within networks. The relational approach adopted suggests that actors that occupy such a brokerage or bridging position in multilateral institutions are able to exert considerable influence

in intergovernmental bargaining. This contrasts with the expectation of an actor-as-attributes approach that expects diplomatic impact to be highly proportionate to the resource that an actor possesses. By focusing on the quality, not the quantity of connection, this approach also differs from networked approach that emphasizes degree centrality.

H1: By acting as a broker or bridging force within intergovernmental networks, actors exercise influence in multilateral relations.

The qualitative assessment detailed above is reinforced and extended through an analysis of factors that produce variation in the degree of influence exercised by centrally-positioned actors. A crucial factor is the replaceability of the connection that they facilitate. At a logical extreme, an actor can serve as the only viable link between multiple, unconnected actors. This actor would experience a high degree of leverage in the pursuit of its own interests in its dealings with unconnected actors. Notably, the degree of replaceability of that actor is, all things being equal, increased by the number of relevant players that it can bring together. If an actor enjoys superior links to multiple relevant players and there are no alternative coalitional partners, they are likely to be more difficult to replace and their influence over outcomes will increase correspondingly. At the other extreme is a network distribution with many possible means of connection or alternative coalitional partners. In this case, the actor would be less central within the network distribution and would enjoy less influence.

H2: Diplomatic impact is inversely related to the replaceability of that actor within intergovernmental networks.

To probe the plausibility of the hypotheses specified above, I will conduct a comparative analysis of two case studies of Canada's golden age diplomacy: Canada's crisis diplomacy at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and during the 1956 Suez Crisis. These cases were chosen for three reasons. First, they are important cases for evaluating the golden age narrative. The narrative would be supported by a finding that Canadian diplomats were central actors and exercise influence through bridging structural holes in networks. Second, these cases represent *least-likely* ones for demonstrating network influence. Both the Korean War and the Suez Crisis were major international security events, privileging hard power resources. In the 1950s, Canada was not a leading military power and, relative to great powers, had modest resources to leverage. If there were arenas where softer forms of social power would be disadvantaged relative to hard power, these cases would be those. These cases also represent *most-likely* ones for an actors-as-attribute perspective, since we would expect to see such cases favoring actors with superior resources.

In addition, the two cases control for a number of potential alternative explanatory factors. The resources available to Canadian diplomats are held roughly constant in both cases. Although Canada embarked on a military build-up following the outbreak of the Korean War, the increase in Canadian military resources between 1950 and 1956 did not significantly alter Canada's relative standing globally. Canada's relevant capabilities should not explain variation in the two cases. In addition, by choosing two discrete instances of crisis diplomacy that played out in the same institutional setting—the UNGA—we control for the impact of procedural or institutional resources.

Comparing Canada's Multilateral Diplomacy during the Korean and Suez Crises

In the immediate post-Second World War period, Canadian policymakers recognized a strong interest in promoting a stable and predictable world political and economic order (Keating 2013: 12). In doing so, Canadian diplomats were keenly aware of the limits of Canada's power resources, particularly relative to the great powers, and of the value that international organizations held for helping to promote global order. The United Nations was chief among these organizations.

In seeking to further its aims, Canada's multilateral diplomacy aimed principally to aid other countries in locating common ground for the peaceful resolution of disputes and in advancing shared interests through international cooperation. In addition to dampening disruptive conflict, such diplomacy helped to strengthen the institutions that served as a vehicle for projecting Canadian influence. Rather than acting as a principal in most negotiations, therefore, Canada's diplomacy was mediatory in an important sense. Canadian diplomats sought to bring other actors together, cultivating brokerage positions within networks and realizing global welfare gains. From this perspective, we would expect indicators of *betweenness centrality* to be of particular relevance for assessing the impact of Canadian diplomacy. Canada's diplomats aimed to bridge structural holes in intergovernmental networks. If Canadian diplomats were effective in doing so, we would expect to see evidence that they served as a channel of information and communication between weakly-connected elements of intergovernmental networks.

By 1950, the dynamics of intergovernmental relations within key multilateral institutions were being transformed by decolonization and the emergence of what was known as the Afro-Asian bloc of countries. Among these, India and its prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, were

emerging as especially influential players within the UN and the now multiracial Commonwealth of Nations. Recognizing this emerging dynamic and aided by the absence of colonial baggage, Canada had been instrumental in helping to modernize the Commonwealth, including through devising a formula to accommodate the participation of South Asian countries. Canada sought to develop a “special relationship” with India, in particular (Reid 1981: 24).

The Korean War

War broke out on the Korean peninsula in June 1950 and triggered the creation of a U.S.-led UN force to repel the North Korean offensive. The war reached a new and dangerous phase in October 1950 following the intervention of 300 000 Chinese “volunteers.” The Chinese intervention caused alarm in Ottawa, as many believed that the world was seeing the beginnings of a worldwide communist offensive (Menzies 2007). While Canada had contributed three destroyers and an infantry brigade group to the UN force, leading officials believed U.S. consultations with troop contributing countries to be inadequate. Seemingly casual talk of the possibility of using nuclear weapons and the unpredictability of the UN commander, General Douglas MacArthur, caused further alarm (DCER 1950: 254). Canadian diplomats sought to de-escalate the conflict by promoting a ceasefire agreement within the UN General Assembly.

By late 1950, the principal players in the Korean crisis were the United States, which commanded the UN force, and China. Any ceasefire would need support from both sides. The realization of this objective was hindered by the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The continued recognition of the Taiwan-based government of Chiang Kai-shek as the legitimate government of China also meant that the Beijing-based regime of Mao Zedong did not

have formal representation at the United Nations. Relations in this period were further hampered by the popular debate in the U.S. over whether President Harry Truman had “lost” China. Throughout the crisis, India emerged as the most important channel of communications with China, both through Nehru himself and through its ambassador in China, K.M. Panikkar.

While India brought valuable information about Chinese attitudes to Lake Success, the UN’s temporary home, India’s links with the United States were poor. Nehru had made an uncomfortable visit to Washington in fall 1949. There, he and U.S. secretary of State, Dean Acheson, had “rubbed each other the wrong way” (Acheson 1987: 334-335). Nehru had made an unsuccessful appeal that autumn to the U.S. for large-scale U.S. aid, further complicating bilateral relations (Breacher 1959: 587). Truman’s dismissive attitude toward Indian policy is reflected in his memoirs, where the president describes India’s Korean War diplomacy as an attempt “to perform the rope trick” (Truman 1956: 424). There was mistrust in Washington over India’s intentions in this period and concerning Nehru, in particular, believing that New Delhi was too sympathetic to the Communist bloc. While U.S. officials at Lake Success did engage directly on numerous occasions with India’s UN ambassador, Sir Benegal Rau, these links were infrequent relative to other key players (FRUS 1951).

A breakdown of U.S.-Indian relations, so essential to de-escalating the crisis, created an opening for Canadian diplomacy. Deep links between Washington and Ottawa were combined with growing Canadian-Indian ties, positioning Canadian officials at the centre of intergovernmental networks. As Canada promoted a ceasefire, exercising a diplomacy of constraint vis-à-vis the U.S., it frequently acted as an intermediary between the U.S. and India

(Stairs, 1974). In December 1950 and January 1951, Canada's UN delegation sought to delay a U.S. resolution in the General Assembly to condemn Chinese aggression by producing a statement of principles for a ceasefire. The principles would demonstrate, particularly to Afro-Asian countries, that the West was pursuing all available means to avoid escalating tensions. Should the principles be rejected by China, a condemnatory resolution might enjoy wider support in the General Assembly. Canadian diplomats negotiated a U.S. commitment to delay introduction of the condemnation and to not oppose the ceasefire principles. At the same time, Canada pursued aggressively India's association with the principles. In addition to the direct participation of Canada's foreign minister at the General Assembly, Canada's Embassy in Washington and its High Commission in New Delhi were heavily involved in the effort. St. Laurent, furthermore, engaged Nehru directly both via cable and at the January 1951 Commonwealth Prime Minister's meeting.

Upon China's rejection of the principles, communicated in New York by India's ambassador, Canada worked closely with India to explore potential areas of flexibility in the Chinese response. St. Laurent asked Nehru to use India's diplomatic links to seek clarification of Chinese intentions (DCER 1951: 48). The Canadian questions, which reached Beijing via Panikkar, produced a more conciliatory Chinese response. The outcome of this diplomacy produced an angry outburst by U.S. diplomats, who believed that the joint Canadian/Indian effort signalled weakness in the context of a military conflict (NYT 1951: 4). Canadian and Indian diplomacy were in such tight alignment in this period that American officials began to refer derisively to Canada's foreign minister as "Swami Pearson" (Holmes 1982: 151).

Canadian diplomacy at the UNGA therefore demonstrated a high degree of network centrality. A breakdown in communications between the principal players in the Korean crisis—the United States and China—created the need for intermediation. India enjoyed the best links to the Chinese leadership, but poor Indian-U.S. relations created a need for a player with strong links to both sides to facilitate connection. Through the most dangerous phase of the Korean War, Canadian diplomats pursued their desire to achieve a ceasefire by facilitating communications between American and Indian officials. The Canadian government used a number of channels, both in Lake Success and via its embassies, to advance its aims. A review of diplomatic documents through this period confirms the frequency in which Canadian officials intermediated this challenging relationship. Since it had good relations with both sides, Canada offered comparative advantages as an intermediary.

The amount of leverage Canada exercised in this context was limited somewhat by the presence of alternative channels of connection between India and the United States. The United Kingdom, in particular, was reasonably well-positioned to intercede between the two countries. UK-U.S. relations were strong and, despite colonial baggage, ties between London and New Delhi did exist. India and the UK did engage directly, both at Lake Success and—via their respective prime ministers—at the Commonwealth prime minister’s meetings in January 1951. Thus, there existed a readily available alternative to Canadian intermediation in this period.

This alternative channel had real implications for Canada’s ability to achieve its objectives. For example, in January 1951, Canadian diplomats sought to build support among the principal players for a statement of principles that might help to bridge the U.S. and Chinese positions. At

the most delicate phase of this effort, a British initiative at the Commonwealth prime ministers' meeting presented an alternative channel for crisis diplomacy. With prime minister Clement Attlee's leadership, Commonwealth prime ministers—which included Nehru and St. Laurent—raised the possibility of Korean negotiations that would include discussion of a wider set of Asian security issues, including the status of Taiwan. The proposal implied that such talks could begin without a ceasefire. The British proposal made no reference to the efforts underway at the UN to promote a ceasefire and, it was implied, would supersede this effort (DCER, 1951: 39). The result was confusion in Lake Success, Washington, and London (FRUS 1951: 54-55; FRUS 1951: 50-51; DCER 1951: 1036). At the UN, Pearson and Rau had been awaiting Nehru's support for full Indian association with the ceasefire principles. The Commonwealth prime ministers' line, which was more conciliatory, produced further delay and jeopardized the entire process. More importantly, the proposal had no chance of attracting U.S. support and undermined Canadian efforts to bridge the Indian and U.S. positions (Pearson 1973: 290).

Negotiations in London ultimately resulted in a Commonwealth proposal much less ambitious than was originally intended by Attlee (DCER 1951: 1033), with UK officials coming to acknowledge that negotiations without a ceasefire were “absurd” and giving precedence to the ceasefire principles (FRUS 1951: 57). The eventual adoption of the principles did not detract from the impact of the British effort on Canadian intermediation. The British initiative, which appeared to have the backing of Commonwealth prime ministers and failed to mention the ceasefire principles, undercut Canadian diplomacy at Lake Success. Any leverage that Canadian officials enjoyed vis-à-vis the U.S. was derived from the belief that its ceasefire efforts held the potential to bring India and other players to a more favorable view of Western policy. In negotiations with

India, Canadian diplomats represented a bridge to American policy and, when they indicated a lack of flexibility and the need for an urgent response, it was assumed that this was based on an understanding of what was in the realm of the possible vis-à-vis the Americans. The sudden initiative of another U.S. ally suggested that a more flexible Western line may be possible and likely contributed to further delay from Nehru. The inability to get a response from Nehru undermined Canadian credibility in Washington. Thus, the freedom of diplomatic maneuver, already thin, was reduced by the British initiative. Canada's replaceability within the chain of connections diminished its centrality and limited its diplomatic leverage.

The 1956 Suez Crisis

In spring 1956 British Prime Minister Anthony Eden pushed a reluctant cabinet to evacuate the last British troops from the Suez Canal zone in hopes of commencing a cooperative phase in Anglo-Egyptian relations (Fry 1989: 288). Eden's hopes were dashed just six weeks later when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. When a diplomatic resolution was not immediately forthcoming, Eden was enticed by a French/Israeli plot that would allow Britain to recapture the Canal in response to a pre-planned Israeli attack on Egypt. The plan unfolded as expected with Israel cutting deep in to Egyptian territory on 29 October. The next day, while the UN Security Council was still seized of the matter, the British and French issued an ultimatum to Israel and Egypt to agree to a ceasefire and to withdraw to ten miles from the Canal zone (Pearson 1973: 237-240). As anticipated by the British and French, the ultimatum was rejected by Egypt. After vetoing two Security Council resolutions on 30 October, the British and French began bombing selected points along the Canal zone on 31 October. A Uniting for Peace resolution sent the matter to an Emergency Session of the UN General Assembly on 1 November.

Canada was vitally interested in resolving the crisis as swiftly as possible. The prospect of two permanent members of the UN Security Council taking military action while the Council was still deliberating undermined the UN's collective security machinery. The action reeked of old-style imperialism and badly enflamed opinion within the Afro-Asian bloc, potentially undermining the new multiracial Commonwealth. Indeed, the British action added fuel to domestic factions within India calling for it to withdraw from the Commonwealth (Reid 1986: 70-71). British/French collusion with Israel was, furthermore, undertaken without consultation with the United States and threatened to split the Atlantic alliance. U.S. officials were incensed with British involvement in such a scheme (Kitchen 1996: 251). To deescalate the situation and, in effect, get the British off the hook for what was clearly a serious blunder, Canada proposed the creation of a UN-led "police force" that would position itself between the Israeli and Egyptian forces, freezing hostilities and providing an opening for a wider peace process.

Pearson was again despatched to the UN to seek a solution. Upon his arrival, a U.S. resolution calling for a ceasefire was already under debate (Reford 1968: 104). Although this was a mild resolution, the Canadians thought that it did not go far enough to resolve the causes of the dispute. Pearson approached U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who agreed with Pearson's assessment but argued that it was too late to amend the resolution. Dulles offered to support a Canadian initiative, however (Robertson 1964: 188). Determining that the creation of a UN force could enjoy wide support, Canada abstained from the U.S. resolution (Reford 1968: 104). Rising to explain the surprising abstention, Pearson floated a trial balloon on the

establishment of a United Nations force. Dulles immediately supported Pearson's suggestion in the General Assembly and welcomed the development of a concrete proposal (Pearson 1973: 247).

A major obstacle to crisis resolution had been the breakdown of regular communication among many key states. The principal players during the Suez crisis were the United Kingdom, the United States, Egypt, and India.⁵ U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower was "very angry" over the French/British ultimatum (DCER 1956-1957: 184). The UK/French action had "so bitterly divided" U.S. and UK officials that all but routine links between the two countries had been severed (DCER 1956-1957: 251). Even those links, observed Canada's U.S. ambassador, were "far from normal" (DCER 1956-1957: 218). For their part, UK officials felt that the U.S. had hypocritically "led the hunt" against them (FRUS 1956-1957: 1123-1125). India remained a leader within Afro-Asian bloc and its support would be essential for any action undertaken within the UN General Assembly. More importantly, India emerged as a principal conduit for access to Nasser. Throughout the crisis, India's permanent mission in New York transmitted all meeting minutes and updates on the state of negotiations to Cairo (Krasno 1990: 16, 18, 22). Direct UK-Egyptian bilateral ties had been cut off with the outbreak of hostilities and the UK's bilateral ties with India, while formally intact, had been badly damaged (Reid 1986: 83).

In advancing its proposal, Canadian diplomats were well-positioned within intergovernmental networks to bridge multiple sides. Canada-U.S. relations remained strong, with both Dulles and U.S. permanent representative to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, having strong links with Pearson (Robertson 1964: 188; Stursberg 1980: 146-147). Crucially, while the crisis badly

⁵ France and Israel were also, of course, involved, but would follow the UK's lead.

strained Canada-UK relations, a Canadian initiative at the UN was regarded as a sympathetic one in London (Krasno 1990: 16 and 18). Throughout the crisis, Canada's high commissioner, Norman Robertson, enjoyed privileged access to leading UK officials. Canada's ties with India had also deepened through the 1950s. In 1952, Canada sent Escott Reid, one of its most senior and distinguished diplomats, to New Delhi as High Commissioner. Reid was regarded as the "only Western diplomat who could speak frankly to Nehru" (Reid 1986: 83).⁶ The position of Canadian diplomats in New Delhi was particularly important as the U.S. did not have an ambassador in the country at the time (Reid 1989: 281).

Through Robertson, Canada maintained an active channel to London. Although Ottawa aimed to help Eden out of a blunder, this was a delicate affair. The realization of just how appalling the British/French/Israeli plot was for many actors sunk in slowly in London. Indeed, Eden was originally "aghast" when Canada did not back the British adventure (DCER 1956-1957: 197-198). Any effort, therefore, needed to be advanced with good information on current UK thinking. Robertson's links paid immediate dividends in this regard when he learned confidentially ahead of time that Eden would state, rhetorically, in a House of Commons speech that, if the UN were able to take over the task of separating the Egyptian and Israeli forces, "no one would be better pleased than we" (DCER 1956-1957: 191). In learning of Eden's intention, Pearson pitched just such a plan in New York that same day. The timing of the Canadian maneuver led British foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, to later muse about whether telepathy had been at play (Lloyd 1978).

⁶ For a discussion of Nehru's attitude to the crisis, see: Breacher 1959: 22.

In addition, in formally moving forward with a resolution to establish the UN Emergency Force (UNEF), Canada drew on close ties with the UK's permanent representative in New York, Pierson Dixon. Confidentially, Dixon advised Pearson that, should a snap vote be called in the General Assembly, he would be forced to abstain due to the fact that Eden had in principle endorsed the idea of a UN force and there would not be time to get further instructions from London (DCER 1956-1957: 219-220). Pearson proceeded with the snap vote and the UK and France abstained. The UK's abstention at this crucial stage proved critical to helping Eden's government to help itself out of the Suez mess.

Links in Washington were also crucial. Recognizing the breakdown of normal relations between the UK and U.S., Canada's U.S. ambassador noted that "implications for our own position are obvious" (DCER 1956-1957: 218). Throughout, Canada served frequently as a source of information for the U.S. on British attitudes. Bridging the American/British position was fundamental to resolving the crisis.⁷ U.S. officials were opposed to the British/French action and, to add pressure, had precipitated a run on the British pound. Any initiative at the UN would, moreover, need U.S. backing to fly. At the same time, an American face on such an initiative could prove polarizing. Recognizing this, Canada's diplomats took a draft American resolution that proposed that the UN secretary-general—rather than an intergovernmental committee—submit a plan to the General Assembly for the establishment of an international force (Stursberg 1980: 146-147). Canadian officials in New York and Washington collaborated closely with their American colleagues on diplomatic tactics, ensuring support at the highest levels of the U.S. administration.⁸ On a number of occasions, Canada received crucial intelligence on the status of British troop

⁷ See, for example: FRUS 1955-1957: 865 and FRUS 1955-1957: 953-954.

⁸ See, for example: DCER 1956-1957: 199-200 and FRUS 1955-1957: 953-954.

movements from American sources—including internal reports marked Top Secret—that influenced timing and tactics in New York (DCER 1956-1957: 217-218).

Finally, the strong links forged by Canadian diplomats in New Delhi and Cairo were instrumental in building a broad basis for support for UNEF. Prime Minister St. Laurent was in contact with Nehru throughout the crisis and emphasized Indo-Canadian collaboration through the UN. The symbolic importance of Canada's unwillingness to support the British action, furthermore, was not lost in New Delhi and may have been essential to helping Nehru resist domestic pressure for India to leave the Commonwealth (Rajan 1962: 374). In New York, India's permanent representative, Arthur Lall, worked with Pearson on a vote-swapping arrangement that secured broad Afro-Asian support for the Canadian resolution establishing the UN force (DCER 1956-1957: 212-214). Lall and Pearson also collaborated closely on practical arrangements to set-up UNEF, since Canada and India were the only two countries "in close touch with the Egyptians" (Krasno 1990: 23). Indeed, at a critical phase in the crisis, Canada's ambassador Herbert Norman met directly with Nasser and secured his support for establishing UNEF on Egyptian territory (Bowen 1984: 76).

The Canadian initiative generated momentum, launching UNEF and defusing a dangerous international security situation. The proposal preserved the Atlantic Alliance from a deeper Anglo-American split and safeguarded the Commonwealth. Just as importantly, the initiative helped to institutionalize peacekeeping as a central security function of the United Nations. In all of these respects, Canada advanced its international security interests. While the Canadian initiative helped to induce British/French support and, in hindsight, served their interests, London was slow to

realize the extent of its error and was not seeking assistance in the early stages of the crisis. Canadian ties with leading UK officials in London and New York enabled access to information that informed the diplomatic tactics that prevented British self-sabotage. Canada's deep ties with the UK, furthermore, also allowed Canadian proposals to prevail over India's preferred vehicle for a resolution: the expansion of the existing UN Truce Supervisory Organization. India's permanent representative to the UN was unequivocal in his assessment of why India ultimately had to back the Canadian proposal: "Because the proposal had been made by Canada, the foreign minister of Canada, and the foreign minister of Canada was supposed to be a much more acceptable person to the British than the Indian representative." Canada's ties with the UK, according to Lall, also explain the immediate willingness of Dulles to back the Canadian initiative (Krasno 1990: 16).

Discussion

The preceding case studies demonstrate the plausibility of the Diplomatic Impact Framework. First, by virtue of the pattern of connections they forge, bridging actors within intergovernmental networks exercise influence in multilateral diplomacy (H1). In the case of the Korean War, Canada and India served as the principal means of connection between the conflict's two main actors: the United States and China. A lack of direct connections between these two sides created a need for bridging actors to facilitate communications and information exchange. In the Canadian case, the government promoted its interest in dampening the conflict by advancing ceasefire principles and maintaining a sympathetic understanding of Western engagement among Afro-Asian countries. By exploiting its central position in the network, Canada pushed for and succeeding in persuading the U.S. to resist mounting domestic political pressure and delay the introduction of a General Assembly resolution condemning Chinese aggression. The U.S. willingness to back Canadian

proposals was rooted in an acceptance that Canada's stronger ties with India positioned it to add value as an intermediary.

During the Suez crisis, a breakdown in communications between the U.S., UK/France, India, and Egypt, created a structural "hole" in intergovernmental networks. Poor communications threatened to further split the Western alliance and undermine the institutional foundations of the Commonwealth. With strong connections to all sides, Canada served as a broker of information and communications both at the UN General Assembly and via its embassies/high commissions abroad. Canada used its network position to orchestrate the creation of a UN "police force" that could help to extricate the British and the French from a serious error. The Canadian initiative needed to be handled with delicacy, however. Any solution needed to generate support from the Afro-Asian countries, on the one hand, where opinion was badly inflamed, and the UK/France, on the other, where the damage done by their Middle Eastern adventure was slow to sink in. At numerous points during the crisis, Canadian officials capitalized on superior access to information on decision-making in London, for example, to inform their tactics at the General Assembly. Canada also acted as a gatekeeper for a coalition of actors backing the introduction of UNEF. This effort deepened the UK's diplomatic isolation and served as a means of intensifying pressure on the UK/France.⁹

The case studies also support the proposition that diplomatic impact is inversely related to the replaceability of that actor within intergovernmental networks (H2). While Canada enjoyed a

⁹ For example, while expressing broad support for the UNEF proposal, the UK insisted that British and French forces should serve as a part of the UN force. Recognizing the difficulties that such a proposal would pose, Canada opposed participation of these forces. In orchestrating the UN General Assembly proposals surrounding the creation of UNEF, Canada was positioned to prevent British/French participation in the UN coalition it had helped to forge.

central position within intergovernmental networks during the Korean War, it was not the only connection between India and the United States. In promoting a resolution, the UK emerged as a potential alternative channel and jeopardized Canada's ceasefire diplomacy. Thus, its replaceability within intergovernmental networks potentially undermined its capacity to achieve its aims and reduced its leverage in negotiations with the U.S. and India. During the Suez crisis, on the other hand, Canada served as a link between multiple players that was more difficult to replace. The extent of Canadian influence over the crisis is explained in part by the diplomatic isolation of the UK. Few alternative channels for connection existed—as they had during the Korean War—to limit Canada's diplomatic impact. As a result, Canadian diplomats enjoyed greater leverage in their intermediation. While central in both cases, therefore, the degree of centrality affected diplomatic impact concretely. By demonstrating that variation in the degree of centrality affected Canadian actors' capacity to influence interstate relations, furthermore, the case studies add further support to H1.

The case studies also demonstrate that the tools of Social Network Analysis capture an important aspect of the way that influence is exercised within diplomatic networks. The specification of indicators of network centrality helps to discipline this process for the purposes of evaluating impact. Through case selection, furthermore, it is possible to isolate analytically the causal impact of network centrality from other potential explanatory factors, such as economic and military capabilities. In so doing, this article helps to fill a major theoretical and methodological gap in the literature: assessing diplomatic impact. In studying diplomacy, there is much to gain by focusing on the broader structure of intergovernmental connection.

Returning to the question of Canada's foreign policy "golden age," the cases support the narrative. During both the Korean War and the Suez crisis, two of the most dangerous international security crises in this period, Canada enjoyed a high degree of network centrality and leveraged its position to advance its diplomatic aims. While the degree of centrality was enabled by resources—such as having well-resourced embassies in key countries—much of this influence owed to questions of diplomatic strategy and policy planning. The prioritization of relations with post-colonial India and the cultivation of links with other delegations within the UN General Assembly, for instance, were fundamental enablers of its multilateral diplomacy during both crises.

Conclusion

The absence of a systematic means of evaluating diplomatic impact has produced disagreement among analysts of global politics. IR scholars have favored state-level theories that emphasize the possession of power resources, such as economic and military assets. Yet this approach leads to a relative disinterest in questions of foreign policy strategies and diplomatic tactics, contributing to a significant divide between IR theory and practice. Disinterest in diplomacy, furthermore, contributes to certain empirical anomalies, such as variation in states' capacity to influence outcomes when resources are held constant.¹⁰ The prevailing approach also cannot effectively account for the significant influence consistently exercised by smaller states, such as the Vatican or Switzerland, that possess limited traditional power capabilities.

By drawing on the tools of Social Network Analysis, this article has demonstrated that diplomats exercise a relational, social form of power that is not well-captured by existing theory.

¹⁰ See, for example: Pouliot 2016: 238.

By specifying qualitative indicators of network centrality, the article has adapted this sociological approach to the study of intergovernmental networks and shown its utility for assessing diplomatic impact. It shows that indicators of betweenness centrality are especially relevant in this connection. The framework also demonstrates that much can be gained by analyzing the structure of diplomatic networks, assessing patterns of connection. The degree of centrality, affected heavily by the extent to which an actor serves as a point of connection among players, has been shown also to explain variation in diplomatic impact. While network centrality is affected by resource capabilities, it is also analytically distinct from these forms of power. By controlling for these other sources of international power, we are able to isolate analytically diplomatic impact.

This framework has both theoretical and policy implications. Theoretically, it adds another analytical lens for explaining the exercise of influence internationally. State power is not based solely on the attributes of states themselves, such as superior resources, but on the strategies and tactics that they employ. While, on average, states with superior resources prevail internationally, the way that they employ these resources also matters. Statecraft matters. The development of this theoretical lens, furthermore, is of interest to policymakers seeking to understand how the choices they make affect the likelihood that they will achieve their international objectives. Choices made concerning the deployment of diplomatic resources can have important implications for foreign policy success. Where states establish diplomatic missions or organize state visits can have important ramifications. Diplomats on the ground might also use network analysis to identify intergovernmental power centre and develop strategies to move to the centre of networks.

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