

Emotions and the Communication of Intentions in Face-to-face Diplomacy

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Seanon Wong

seanonwo@usc.edu

University of Southern California

Abstract

Countries often seek to resolve their disputes through negotiations. But diplomats meeting face-to-face are under both the incentives to cooperate by revealing one's preferences and to compete by misrepresenting them. How, then, do they express and assess each other's intentions? Theories of IR that have studied communication in diplomacy – structural realism, rationalism and the theory of communicative action – offer insufficient answers. To breakthrough, I highlight the communicative function of emotions, leveraging insights from the latest research on negotiations in social and experimental psychology. I argue that when diplomats negotiate, they pay attention not only to what others say, but also to their emotional cues. One's choice of words, tone of speech, and hand and body gestures carry emotive information that reflects how one appraises a situation. Diplomacy is therefore unique as a conduit between states because it enables practitioners to exchange individual-level expressions of intentions – and by extension, the intentions of the government they represent – that are otherwise lost, attenuated or distorted if communications were to occur through other impersonal and irregular channels. To illustrate my argument, I discuss episodes of face-to-face diplomacy during the Fashoda Crisis (1898), July Crisis (1914), Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and US-Syria negotiations on the Middle East (1991).

“Mahmud Qaddur, Syria’s Minister of Public Affairs, leaned over to [President Hafez] Assad. ‘Take care,’ he cautioned in Arabic. ‘He’s really angry.’ Assad seemed puzzled. ‘Why is he angry?’ he asked. ‘We’re negotiating.’ Then he and I made eye contact. He seemed to sense that he’d reached a certain unhealthy threshold.”

– Former US Secretary of State James Baker (1995: 507).

From issues of sovereignty to arms control, trade and military-security crisis, countries often seek to resolve their disputes through negotiations. To secure an agreement, leaders – or more often, their diplomatic representatives¹ – need to make their intentions clear. But to cut a better deal, it also behooves them to be less than forthright about what they want, if not to lie about them. Diplomats therefore frequently find themselves in what is known as the “negotiator’s dilemma”: the simultaneous incentives to create value with others by revealing one’s preferences, and to claim more at the expense of others by misrepresenting them (Lax and Sebenius, 1986). That motives are mixed (Schelling, 1960) means that whatever one claims can rarely be taken at face value.

For negotiations to proceed, diplomats meeting face-to-face must be able to express, and conversely, assess each other’s intentions. How is that possible? In this article, I highlight the communicative function of emotions, leveraging insights from the latest research on negotiations in social and experimental psychology. In essence, I argue that when diplomats negotiate, they pay attention not only to what others say, but also to their emotional cues. One’s choice of words, tone of speech, and hand and body gestures carry emotive information that reflects how one appraises a situation. Diplomacy² is therefore unique as a conduit between states because it

¹ Hereafter, “diplomats” is used as a shorthand for not only those formally delegated the duties of diplomacy (e.g. the US Secretary of State, foreign ministers, ambassadors and career diplomats), but also leaders themselves (e.g. heads of government at summit meetings) and others who practice diplomacy in an unofficial capacity (e.g. Henry Kissinger as National Security Advisor and Robert Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis).

² The term “diplomacy” is often used to refer to a *strategy* of foreign policy, i.e. the resolution of conflict through peaceful means as opposed to the use of force. In this article, my focus is on “diplomacy” as a *practice* – that is, the profession, activities and skills involved – in the management of relationships among states, especially through face-to-face interactions. My literature

enables practitioners to exchange individual-level expressions of intentions – and by extension, the intentions of the government they represent (Jervis, 1970: 32) – that are otherwise lost, attenuated or distorted if communications were to occur through other impersonal and irregular channels.

This article’s contributions are twofold. First, International Relations (IR) – especially in the American academia – has long neglected the need to make sense of diplomacy. As Wiseman (2011) puts it, the literature has shown “little interest in what diplomacy is, in what diplomats do, and, indeed, in what diplomats should do” (in Murray et al., 2011: 710-711). Diplomacy has received more attention in scholarship elsewhere. But most works have been produced by practitioners or diplomatic historians, and “[n]either category of authors has been particularly interested in theory-building” (Jönsson, 2012: 16). The literature, as some have pointed out, suffers from a “theoretical deficit” (Murray et al., 2011: 719). As a result, “quite what diplomacy is remains a mystery... [N]either the diplomats nor those who study them provide much insight into how and why diplomacy works” (Sharp, 2009: 1-2). Inspirations for breakthrough, as Melissen (2011) suggests, can be sought by “look[ing] beyond the IR/political science horizon” (in Murray et al., 2011: 724). In doing so, this article joins the rank of a nascent literature that has adopted an “extra-disciplinary” approach to shed light on diplomacy’s role in world politics (e.g. Hall and Yarhi-Milo, 2012; Holmes, 2013, Neumann 2012; Pouliot, 2008).

Second, this article contributes to the burgeoning literature on emotions in IR. Most importantly, it shows how emotions matter at the “micro” level of face-to-face diplomacy, where interactions are too momentary and personal to be illuminated with the literature’s extant frameworks and methods. Crawford’s (2000) call for greater interest in emotions over a decade

review therefore excludes works that have “diplomacy” as their subject matter, but are more in line with the former meaning of the term.

ago has generated a fruitful research agenda. Most studies, however, are concerned either with conceptualizing emotions as a group, intergroup or systemic phenomenon (e.g. Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Fattah and Fierke 2009; Hall 2011; Lebow, 2008; Löwenheim and Heimann 2008; Ross 2006; Sasley 2011; Saurette 2006; Solomon 2014), or – whenever individuals are the unit of analysis – with how the *intrapersonal* experience of emotions influences decision-making and beliefs (e.g. Hymans, 2006; McDermott, 2004; Mercer, 2010, 2013). By contrast, not much is known about the role of emotions in *interpersonal* interactions – certainly not in the context of diplomatic negotiations (Odell, 2013: 385).

But no explanations for how diplomacy “works” can be complete without accounting for the dynamics of emotions. As Alishar Faizullaev (2006), a longtime practitioner-turned-scholar, suggests, “emotions play a significant role in diplomacy... [They] have a pervasive effect on negotiation behavior and outcomes, especially when negotiators are both motivated and able to act on the information available in the opponents’ emotions” (513). Similarly, James Baker (1995) asserts in his memoir that among other advantages, diplomatic meetings facilitate the communication of tone and body language (460). Madeleine Albright (2003) claims that “[i]nterpreters play a vital part in diplomacy” and the best ones are those who can “translate not only words but also points of emphasis and tone” (254). Practitioners have made the case that emotions matter in what they do; it is the scholar’s job to explain why and how.

This article continues as follows. First, I review how the relevant schools of thought in IR – structural realism, rationalism and the theory of communicative action – construe face-to-face diplomacy, and underscore their limitations. To breakthrough, I introduce in the second section the socio-functional perspective of emotions in psychology, and discuss the interpersonal effects of emotions in negotiations. I anticipate the skepticism that in diplomacy, the incentive to feign

or conceal emotions would nullify their communicative function. In response, I explain in the third and fourth sections how such function is retained when diplomats interact, using Jervis' (1970) distinction between indices and signals of intentions. Throughout, I provide supporting evidence from episodes of diplomacy during the Fashoda Crisis (1898), July Crisis (1914), Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and US-Syria negotiations on the Middle East (1991). In the conclusion, I elaborate on the contributions this article makes and suggest what can be done in future research, both methodologically and substantively.

My argument, however, calls for two important qualifications. First, by suggesting that there is much to learn from social and experimental psychology, I am aware of the necessity to bring to the fore the ontological and epistemological assumptions implicit in that literature, contrast it with how IR has conceptualized and studied emotions in the past, and as such, make explicit both its strength and inadequacy.

The psychological approach is – as I explain below – premised on the reverse application of what is known as the appraisal theory of emotions. Under such an approach, an emotion is considered an *objective* piece of information that an observer can utilize to infer how its expresser appraises a situation. As a “scientific” approach, it also assumes that a researcher is able to identify and measure the discrete emotions at work in an interaction, develop generalizable hypotheses on their communicative function, and subject them to testing through further observations, usually in laboratory experiments.

But constructivists – especially “strong” constructivists (Crawford, 2000: 128-129) – might find such approach objectionable, since its positivist assumptions about emotions and how to study them are at odds with their conviction that an emotional experience can only be understood *in context*. Psychological studies, as Bleiker and Hutchison (2008) put it, “fall short

of explaining how emotions are enmeshed in larger socio-political dynamics” (117). As such, they recommend the use of “various interpretative approaches” from the humanities (126). Fattah and Fierke (2009) maintain that emotions are “socially meaningful expressions, which depend on shared customs, uses and institutions” (70). Bially Mattern (2011) similarly contends that emotions are practices that emerge from and are as a result irreducible to any of its constitutive components: cognitive, biological and social (63-69). A practice theory of emotions therefore calls for an “anthropological empirical research method”, which “requires the analyst to decode the international social meanings expressed by human bodies-in-action [i.e. emotions] in particular international social settings” (82).

However, decades of debate among psychologists and cultural anthropologists have led to the emerging consensus that while context influences emotional experiences through the imposition of *display rules* – i.e. the “socially learned, often culturally different... rules about the management of expression, about who can show which emotion to whom and when they can do so” (Ekman, 2003: 4) – emotions themselves and their underlying appraisal “themes” are innate and universal.³ Anger, for instance, signifies dissatisfaction and blame; only in the most unimaginable context would its expression be motivated or meaning interpreted in the opposite direction. Emotions are social, but not “all the way down”.

My objective for this article is not to engage this debate *per se*. Instead, I follow the psychological approach and assume that nomothetic knowledge about emotions – for instance, the observations that *ceteris paribus*, anger conveys resolve (e.g. Van Kleef et al., 2004a), but persistent anger decreases interpersonal trust (Filipowicz et al., 2011) – is attainable. That, I

³ For an overview of this debate, see Ekman, 2003: chapters 1-2.

argue, is what makes its introduction into the IR literature on emotions a timely one.⁴ At the same time, I acknowledge that the psychological approach's claim to generalizability only goes so far, bearing in mind the constructivist caveat that the expression and meaning of an emotion are ultimately bounded by the intersubjective understandings that interlocutors share. As I demonstrate below, diplomatic behaviors do in general conform to the hypotheses that proponents of the psychological approach have affirmed experimentally. Yet often times, what diplomats make of their emotional exchanges is mediated through certain display rules specific to the context of diplomacy.

My second qualification concerns the limitation of the empirical evidence this article offers. It is difficult to ascertain what happened – let alone to prove conclusively that factors as ephemeral and personal as emotions mattered (Crawford, 2000: 118) – in any historical episode of diplomacy. Diplomats often meet privately; what transpires behind closed doors may never be accessible to outsiders. The episodes this article discusses should therefore be seen as a “plausibility probe” (George and Bennett, 2005: 75) into emotions' empirical relevance, intended less to provide definite evidence than to underscore IR's current “blind spot” in diplomacy, and hopefully, encourage further research on the subject.

How IR theories construe diplomacy

According to structural realists, the lack of a higher authority under international anarchy to hold diplomats accountable means that there is very little reason to take what they say to each other seriously. One's proclaimed intentions may not be true. But even if he is speaking his mind, there is no way for others to know for sure. In Mearsheimer's (2011) words,

⁴ As Sasley (2011) observes in his review of this literature, “[u]nfortunately, many... of these studies fall within the poststructuralist or critical constructivist approach to IR, which means that other paradigms are under-represented... [B]ut... emotions [are not] only... a constructivist or postpositivist ‘thing’... [E]motions are relevant for all IR approaches” (455).

“[i]ntentions... are ultimately in the minds of policymakers, making them impossible to observe and measure” (29). Because of fear and mistrust, diplomats rely on their relative power – rather than what others claim – as proxy for intentions (Press, 2005). Hence, a diplomat who proposes to cooperate at the negotiation table should not be trusted if he is powerful enough to defect with impunity. Conversely, he could threaten to punish his counterpart if a demand is not met. But he should not expect others to take his message seriously if he lacks the power to back it.

Paradoxically, Mearsheimer (2011) concludes that misrepresentation is more the exception than norm in international politics. Diplomats rarely attempt to lie or bluff when they negotiate, regardless of the issue involved (40-41). This might sound counterintuitive given realism’s association with the Machiavellian practice of diplomacy. But it cannot be otherwise if the theory is to remain consistent. Since diplomats are unlikely to trust each other unless what is being said can be readily verified (28) – and intentions are ultimately unverifiable – any attempt to communicate them can only fall on deaf ears. Hence, misrepresentations are rare not because diplomats are honest, but because they do not expect others to be trusting enough to fall for them. A corollary of such reasoning is that whatever diplomats say to each other must be very likely to be true, yet so self-evident that they hardly convey anything one does not already know or cannot readily verify. Face-to-face or otherwise, communication is epiphenomenal, if not redundant.

Meanwhile, scholars in the rational choice tradition concur that intentions are in the end only privately known, but they disagree with the structural realists on the willingness of actors to take risk given such uncertainty. They assume that diplomats remain receptive to signals that are informative, and update their beliefs about each other following Bayesian logic (Rathbun, 2007: 542-543). But rationalists also dismiss diplomacy as a credible channel to communicate. Behind

closed doors, a diplomat may say that he is sincere about cooperation, resolute about his position, serious about a threat or committed to an agreement, but so may someone who is insincere, irresolute, bluffing or uncommitted. Private communication is so much “cheap talk”. Countries “cannot always use quiet diplomatic conversations to discover mutually preferable settlement” to a dispute (Fearon, 1995: 400).

Instead, Fearon (1994) echoes Schelling (1960) and posits that – among other types of “costly” signals – credibility is established when a leader is willing to state his intentions *publicly*. Since his constituency at home would punish him if he fails to honor his words abroad, he is considered more credible than if the same message were relayed privately. Fearon’s thesis has spawned a prodigious literature over the past two decades exploring the dynamics of so-called “audience costs” in world politics.⁵

However, it appears that under the influence of this literature, mainstream IR (especially in the United States) has come to accept the premise that public statements are “costly”, without realizing how its converse – that is, private communication is “cheap” – is more an inevitable assumption under rationalist epistemology than an empirical truth (Johnson, 1993). Otherwise, why would diplomats bother to meet with or talk to each other at all?

The “elephant in the room” of private communication has not gone unnoticed. As one rationalist scholar notes, “direct ‘cheap talk’ diplomacy... at least occasionally... reveals private information... [B]ut no immediate answer as to why this is possible” (Ramsay, 2011: 1003). Tingley and Walter (2011) similarly conclude that “[v]erbal claims about one’s intentions may be costless, but... they appear to influence behavior in ways we do not fully understand” (997-998). Yet, the game-theoretical models that have been offered as remedy are no less dependent on costs. If private communication is at all credible in these models, it is because interlocutors

⁵ For a review, see contributions in *Security Studies* 21(3), 2012.

are disinclined to misrepresent themselves to begin with, and their opponents know it (e.g. Kurizaki, 2007; Sartori, 2002; Trager, 2010), not because they are able to make anything of the interaction itself.

But just as the verbal content of any conversation has been found in social psychology to carry only a fraction of its meaning (Mehrabian, 1972), “nonverbal messages or ‘body language’ constitute important aspects of diplomatic communication” (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 84). As Darwin ([1872]1999) observed long ago, “[t]he movements of [emotional] expression [in the face and body] give vividness and energy to our spoken words. They reveal the thoughts and intentions of others more truly than do words” (359). Even if we concede to the idea that talk is in and of itself “cheap”, there is still much that goes on when diplomats interact at close range that rationalism has no explanation for. After all, game-theoretical models are “not designed to illuminate explicit negotiator behavior at the micro level, and typical models do not come with nuanced empirical observations at that level” (Odell, 2013: 387). What IR needs is to develop or leverage from other disciplines a framework to make sense of such dynamics.⁶

Before I embark on such a task, however, a review of the theory of communicative action is necessary. The theory has in the past decade or so served as the main counterpoint against the “cheap talk” paradigm that has dominated IR (Johnson, 1993; Müller, 2004). Drawing upon the works of Jürgen Habermas, its proponents contend that when actors communicate, their behaviors do not only follow the “logic of consequentialism” – as rationalists often emphasize – but also the “logic of arguing”. Much of what goes on in diplomatic interactions involve the exchange of “validity claims” – in other words, arguments – based on an intersubjectively constituted rationality, with the aim of reaching consensus for the collective good.

⁶ Policymakers seem to be making better progress in this regard. The governments of Russia, Israel and the US, for instance, have recently invested in programs that study the body movements of foreign leaders, purportedly because they reveal “a person’s thinking processes and relative truthfulness when matched with what the person says” (Locker, 2014; see also *The Economist*, 2015).

Communication is therefore less about bargaining for the maximization of individual interests than persuading others – through the medium of a shared language – to submit to the better argument (e.g. Crawford, 2009; Lose, 2001; Mitzen, 2005; Müller, 2004; Risse, 2000).

But Habermas' theory and the research it has generated in the broader sociological literature have been criticized for overlooking the affective basis of communicative action – an issue that IR scholars have occasionally remarked upon but not sufficiently addressed. As Crossley (1998) puts it, the literature has in general failed to explicate how “communication is... more than exchange of symbols and ideas; that it is a process of mutual affecting in which interlocutors make emotional as well as cognitive appeals” (46-47). Within IR, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) note – in reference to research in psychology – that to bring about persuasion, “both cognition and affect work synergistically to produce changes in attitudes, beliefs, and preferences” (915). More recently, Crawford (2009) asserts that “argument and persuasion [are not] simply rational in the broader sense of giving logical reasons for the validity of claims that one makes and where one's counterpart... either accepts those reasons, or challenges them on the basis of better reasons... [W]e will miss important features of the process if we leave emotion and normative beliefs... out of our account” (107). Mercer (2010) similarly contends that constructivists have previously emphasized that persuasion “depends on argument, debate, evidence, logic, and deliberation. ... [But it] also depends on emotion” (20).

Emotions are in fact important to the “logic of arguing”, because they constitute a crucial mechanism through which interlocutors contest the different types of validity claims that Habermas has identified: that is, in terms of the facts of the situation (“do they warrant the emotions expressed?”); in terms of an interlocutor's sincerity – or in Habermasian language, authenticity (“is his emotional expression sincere or authentic?”); and in terms of the moral

rightness that underlies his claim (“is his relations to the situation such as to warrant his emotional reactions?”) (Crossley, 1998: 50). Simply put, the act of arguing is emotional and persuasion involves emotions. Any theory of communication that overlooks such function of emotions is therefore inadequate. For inspiration, I turn to some of the latest research in social and experimental psychology.

How emotions communicate intentions in diplomacy

The proposition that emotions communicate intentions in social interactions traces its origin to the works of Darwin ([1872]1999), James (1884), and more recently, Ekman (1993). But in contemporary psychology, emotions have long been considered an individual phenomenon, with the bulk of scholarly attention devoted to their *intrapersonal* rather than *interpersonal* effects (Parkinson, 1996; Van Kleef et al., 2010: 46). In the past two decades, scholars have called into question such slanted conception of emotions, and argued for the need to better understand their role in overcoming the asymmetry of information that otherwise hinders coordination and cooperation among individuals (Barry et al., 2004: 71). According to the socio-functional perspective, emotions are “other-directed, intentional (although not always consciously controlled) communicative acts that organize social interactions... Within these interactions, emotional expression communicates social intention, desired course of actions, and role-related expectations and behaviors” (Morris and Keltner, 2000: 13). The outward display of emotions should not be construed as epiphenomenal to individual affect.

But how exactly does an emotion communicate intentions from its displayer to its observer? Recently, some psychologists have proposed to conceptualize their “micro logic”

through the reverse application of what is known as the appraisal theory of emotions.⁷ According to the theory, the emotions that an event elicits in an individual are mediated through his assessment of the event – conscious or not – along a myriad of cognitive dimensions with respect to his goals and beliefs. Scholars disagree on their proper conceptualization, but commonly suggested dimensions include “[n]ovelty, intrinsic pleasantness, certainty or predictability, goal significance, agency, coping potential, and compatibility with social or personal standards” (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 572). For instance, unexpectedness (i.e. high in the cognitive dimension of novelty) engenders surprise; a combination of low coping potential, uncertainty and unpleasantness leads to fear; and the attribution of responsibility (i.e. agency) for goal obstruction to oneself, others or the circumstance determines if one experiences the negative emotions of anger, guilt or sorrow.

If cognitive appraisal gives rise to emotions, then “observing a particular emotion in another person provides relatively differentiated information about how that person regards the situation” (Van Kleef et al., 2010: 48). In other words, emotions enable an observer to “reverse engineer” their displayer’s cognitive process to tap into his underlying intentions (De Melo et al., 2014; Hareli and Hess, 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2012). In the context of a negotiation, emotions enable interlocutors to ascertain how each other assesses progress at various stages of interaction, to realize if a deal is at all attainable, and if so, to identify a possible range of cooperative outcomes (Barry et al., 2004; Morris and Keltner, 2000).

Experimental works on the interpersonal effects of emotions in negotiations assumed momentum only a decade ago; their results have thus far yielded strong support for the socio-functional perspective. To begin, they demonstrate that discrete emotions – anger, happiness, sadness, fear, etc. – communicate intentions in ways that are consistent with their respective

⁷ For a review, see Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003.

appraisal “themes”. In a series of publications, Van Kleef and his colleagues demonstrate that subjects who negotiate with an angry opponent in a mixed-motive game tend to make greater concessions, because anger conveys higher limit for an acceptable proposal. Emotional displays reveal one’s “reservation price”, and as such, allow the observer to maximize his claim without overreaching and jeopardizing an agreement altogether (e.g. Van Kleef et al., 2004a, 2004b). Furthermore, supplication emotions (such as sadness, disappointment, fear and worry) are more likely to induce concession than when no emotion is communicated (Van Kleef and Van Lange, 2008), but only if the negotiators share a certain level of common identification (Lelieveld et al., 2013), while emotions that signify appeasement (such as guilt, shame and embarrassment) yield opposite results (Van Kleef et al., 2006).

Moreover, Hareli et al. (2009) have found that when a claim presents room for doubt about its credibility (such as a complaint), “communication that includes an emotional signal that matches... [its] meaning... [is] perceived as more credible than an identical verbal message that does not include such a signal” (631). Emotions, in other words, are particularly informative when negotiators know others have the incentive to misrepresent and are thus motivated to look beyond a message’s literal meaning for authentication.

Emotions do not only provide negotiators information about what is and is not acceptable, but also about each other’s “type”. An angry counterpart is perceived as tougher than one who is emotionless, and is more likely to extract concessions in subsequent rounds of bargaining (Sinaceur and Tiedens, 2006). Individuals who react angrily to blame are perceived as more aggressive and self-confident and less gentle and warm than those who react with sadness (Hareli and Hess, 2010). Van Doorn et al. (2012) discover that compared to happiness or disappointment, anger is more likely to cause an observer to construe a social situation as

competitive, even when information that suggests otherwise (e.g. that the displayer was cooperative in the past) is provided. De Melo et al. (2014) similarly find that in a game of iterated prisoner's dilemma, subjects rely on emotional cues to infer if one's counterpart is cooperative or competitive and adjust their strategy accordingly.

Lastly, the back-and-forth of emotions reveals intentions, and thus the "game" the negotiators are playing. In Pietroni et al. (2008), subjects are instructed to negotiate over two issues of distributive consequences (i.e. one's gain over each issue is another's loss). But unbeknownst to them, the negotiation has integrative potentials: one party considers an issue more important, while the other party sees greater value in the other. Since the rational strategy is to maximize claim on both issues, "parties may be reluctant to explicitly exchange information about preferences and priorities, and readily suspect ulterior motives behind their partner's communications" (1444). However, persistent expression of anger is a sign that one cares about an issue, while happiness reveals relative complacency. Repeated rounds of exchanges enable subjects to realize that one's higher priority issue may actually be the other's low priority issue, and vice versa, and arrive at an outcome that maximizes payoffs in the issue they care about most respectively (1448). The authors conclude that "[a]ccurate recognition of particular patterns of emotional expression may thus help negotiators to revise their fixed-pie perceptions and discover mutually satisfying win-win agreements" (1451). In short, emotions communicate intentions in ways that are predictable.⁸

Skeptics in IR might consider the extrapolation of findings in laboratory experiments to how diplomats behave in real-life problematic. Specifically, the settings of a laboratory lack

⁸ But they are by no means straightforward. The literature has also identified important structural-, dyadic- and individual-level factors that moderate or even reverse an emotion's communicative function. For instance, while anger generally communicates resolve and induces concessions in one-off negotiations, it can backfire in repeated interactions because of the negative impression it produces (Filipowicz et al., 2011) and because it obstructs coalition-building from potential partners in multilateral negotiations (Van Beest et al., 2008). For more detailed reviews, see Van Kleef et al., 2010: 71-79; and Van Kleef and Sinaceur, 2013: 108-115.

what experimentalists call the “mundane realism” (McDermott, 2011b) necessary for subjects to experience the stakes involved in diplomacy. For diplomats, the consequences of misreading intentions can be grave – certainly much graver than losing several dollars worth of reward that are typically used as incentives in experiments. They should therefore be more inclined to discount information that is uncertain. Moreover, even if diplomats were willing to give each other the benefit of the doubt, the incentive to feign emotions strategically would nullify their communicative function.

But such skepticism is unfounded. Otherwise, diplomats might as well remain emotionless when they negotiate (since any attempt to influence others would be futile), or if emotions were displayed, their observer would be unwilling to make much of them (since they might be feigned). Consider the following episodes, both of which concern diplomacy in times of military-security crisis. The high stakes invoked would render them “least likely” cases for emotions to play a role (George and Bennett, 2005: 121-122). In fact, they have both been cited as *prima facie* evidence for the futility of diplomatic communications.

During the Fashoda Crisis of 1898, Edmund Monson, the British ambassador in Paris, met frequently with French foreign minister Théophile Delcassé. At the height of the crisis on September 30, Monson visited Delcassé to assess French willingness to back down as their troops crossed paths in the Upper Nile. During the opening minutes of their meeting, Delcassé “sensed that the British ambassador was carrying a written ultimatum in his coat. In an effort to prevent the document from being delivered, [he]... quickly declared that France would go to war rather than swallow ‘such an insult to the national honour.’ ‘I am able to sacrifice material interests,’ the agitated Foreign Minister continued, ‘but in my hands the national honor will remain intact. It is not from the minister before you that you can expect a capitulation.’” Monson

“immediately grasped the reality behind Delcassé’s bombastic show of patriotism.” In his report to London afterwards, he opined that Delcassé “was definitely not ‘bluffing’ and that ‘he thoroughly meant what he said’” (Brown, 1970: 99). Consistent with the socio-functional perspective, emotions were integral to how Delcassé’s expressed his intentions, and to how Monson assessed what he claimed.

Realists have previously cited Britain’s power advantage (Layne, 1994: 28-30) and rationalists underscored prime minister Lord Salisbury’s “public speeches” (Fearon, 1994: 582) and his deliberate attempt to stoke outrage in the public (Schultz, 2001: 186-187) as explanations for why Britain prevailed in the crisis. But the fact that Monson – as representative of the stronger of the two powers – was convinced of Delcassé’s otherwise “costless” claim of resolve confounds such explanations. The two governments were in fact in constant, behind-the-scene negotiations throughout the crisis, not only between Monson and Delcassé but also between Lord Salisbury and the French ambassador in London (Brown 1970). They would not have bothered to meet if they did not expect to learn something about each other.

Monson’s reaction was not an anomaly. On July 21, 1914, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Sazonov told Count Pourtalès, the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, that “Russia would not be able to tolerate Austria-Hungary’s using threatening language to Serbia or taking military measures.” According to Fearon (1995), “[s]uch verbal statements had little effect on German leaders’ beliefs... since they knew Russian leaders had a strategic incentive to misrepresent” (397). But what transpired in a follow-up meeting several days later flies in the face of rationalist predictions. According to Pourtalès’ memorandum that day, Sazonov was “enraged” by the suggestion that Russia remain neutral and “vented his feelings in boundless accusations... declaring with the utmost resolution that Russia could not possibly admit that the

Austro-Serbian differences should be settled between the two parties alone.” Sazonov’s outburst clearly affected the ambassador, who, according to witnesses, was “agitated and distraught when he emerged from [the] hour-long interview”. Later that day, he confided in his diary that “war with Russia seemed unavoidable unless Austria backed down” (Lebow, 1984: 128).

It is perhaps correct to argue that war ultimately broke out (and almost so in the Fashoda Crisis) in part because decision-makers in their home capitals could not ascertain from afar if others were bluffing, but it would be hasty to suggest that no one in their diplomatic establishments could. Through regular and personal interactions, diplomats on the ground were able to develop rather accurate assessment of their opponent’s intentions.

These episodes demonstrate that diplomats are no less inclined than negotiators in the laboratory or other “natural” settings to rely on emotions as information. But what prevents emotions from being exploited for strategic advantages, and as a result (and paradoxically), losing their communicative function? This question assumes that diplomats are free to manipulate their emotions, have no way of authenticating the sincerity of displays, have no qualms about deception, and are inherently distrustful of each other. These assumptions, however, stand on rather flimsy grounds upon better understanding of the nature of emotional exchanges and the context of diplomacy.

Emotions as indices

To begin, emotional displays are to a certain extent beyond an actor’s conscious control. According to Jervis (1970), indices are “statements or actions that carry some inherent evidence that the image projected is correct because they are... inextricably linked to... capabilities or intentions” (18). At the interpersonal level, “much behavior is taken as an index because it is

thought to be essentially unplanned and uncalculated. The display of anger, grief, joy, etc. is often thought to be spontaneous” (63). As opposed to mood, emotions are directed toward specific external stimuli, and are innate biological reactions to one’s milieu. In fact, the involuntary nature of emotions is thought to serve important evolutionary functions (Keltner et al., 2006). From a rational point of view, an actor might under certain circumstances prefer to keep his emotions and their outward display in check (such as a show of sympathy, guilt or fear), since doing so might compromise his immediate payoff. But in the long run, emotional expressions are conducive to social engagement (Frank, 1988). Expressivity, defined as “the accuracy with which an individual displays/communicates his or her emotions”, is predictive of trustworthiness and facilitates communication and coordination (Boone and Buck, 2003: 164).

The argument here is not that individuals – diplomats included – can never put on a “poker face” or manipulate emotions to deceive others. But as one student of IR puts it, “[s]uppose... that diplomats, much like poker players, have ‘tells’. Then if we... introduce the assumption that there is a small but non-zero probability that a state inadvertently reveals its true type when communicating with its opponent, regardless of the actual content of their statement, then diplomacy would reveal information, but it would be essential that diplomacy takes place in person” (Arena, 2012). All that is required for emotions to be informative is that their genuine expression cannot be fully suppressed.

But even if emotions are perfectly manipulatable, an actor might be “deterred” from attempting deception if his counterpart is able to discern authentic from feigned emotions, and insincerity invites punishment. Ekman (2003) argues that lies can be detected with considerable accuracy based on the physical attributes of an emotional display. Decades of research has led to the discovery of what he calls “micro expressions, very fast facial movements lasting less than

one-fifth of a second” that reveals “an emotion a person is trying to conceal.” As such, a “false expression can be betrayed in a number of ways: it is usually very slightly asymmetrical, and it lacks smoothness in the way it flows on and off the face” (15).

Furthermore, psychologists have posited that some individuals are more sensitive to and better at discerning emotions. Van Kleef et al. (2004b) show that individuals with lower needs for cognitive closure are more receptive to emotional cues and utilize them to guide their behavior in negotiations. Researchers have also suggested that people differ in emotional intelligence, i.e. the ability “to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey and Mayer, 1990: 89).

While students of diplomacy do not write in the terminology of psychology, the ability to “read” others has been a longstanding theme in the literature on the “ideal diplomatist”. In his treatise on diplomacy published three centuries ago, De Callières ([1716]1963) avers that “[t]he negotiator must... possess that penetration which enables him to discover the thoughts of men and to know by the least movement of their countenances what passions are stirring within, for such movements are often betrayed even by the most practiced negotiator” (19). Nicolson ([1939]1988) similarly advises against the “[loss of] interest in the psychology of others... since psychological alertness is one of the most vital factors in negotiation” (65). Satow (1932), in his *Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, asserts that among other “essential qualities”, the “perfect diplomatist” is one who “easily detects insincerity”. One of the “distinguishing characteristics of a success negotiator” is the “knowledge of men, which enables one to interpret looks and glances” (122). These works have since their publication become classic readings for the recruitment and training of diplomats worldwide.

To my knowledge, the proposition that diplomats are particularly adept at “reading” others has not been systematically evaluated. But anecdotal evidence suggests such possibility. In their study on emotions recognition, McClelland and Dailey (1972) find that high-performing American diplomats scored significantly higher than their average colleagues. Among other personality traits, what differentiates the former is their ability to “‘tune into’ others’ feelings” (Spencer and Spencer, 1993: 7). More recently, Faizullaev (2006) observes that “experienced diplomats develop professional sensitivity and can detect even minor emotional changes in their counterparts” (513). IR scholars are beginning to investigate if certain individuals have come to assume their role as international negotiators because they bring to the table certain traits that are conducive to successful outcomes, such as their level of patience and ability to think strategically (Hafner-Burton et al., 2014), and their need for cognitive closure and social value orientation (Rathbun 2014). It is also possible that diplomats are selected – or have selected themselves – into their position because of their ability to emotionally connect with others (I return to this point in the conclusion).

Furthermore, emotional deception is “deterred” for punitive reasons. Experiments have shown that actors who are perceived as emotionally earnest are considered more trustworthy and credible (Kaufmann et al., 2003: 21). Trust, in turn, is a prerequisite for such emotions as disappointment to have a behavioral impact on their observer in a negotiation (Van Kleef et al., 2006). Moreover, those considered emotionally insincere are less likely to be reciprocated with cooperative gestures. Subjects exposed to counterparts displaying authentic smile in trust games and games of prisoner’s dilemma report a higher rate of cooperation than those assigned to counterparts with an inauthentic smile, with trustworthiness being the mediating factor (Krumhuber et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2010). In a recent series of experiments (Côté et al.,

2013), subjects are asked to negotiate with confederates who display no emotion, “surfaced acted” (feigned) or “deep acted” (genuine) anger. Subjects exposed to feigned anger are more likely to consider their opponent untrustworthy and become intransigent compared to the control group, while those who negotiate with a “deep acting” confederate are more likely to yield to the latter’s demands. In short, feigning emotions, if discovered, backfires. Emotional insincerity does more harm than good to one’s trustworthiness, which – as I explain shortly – is a much-valued asset in diplomacy.

Emotions as signals

The IR literature has in general come to assume that costless signals are incredible. But in Jervis’ (1970) original conceptualization of the term, signals are “statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tacit or explicit understandings among the actors” (18). What this implies is that even if emotions are perfectly manipulatable and unverifiable (i.e. they are through and through “cheap” and can in no way be indices of intentions), their expression may still be meaningful if a social context enables them so. In the context of diplomacy, three features underpin their signaling effectiveness.

First, contrary to popular beliefs, diplomats are expected to be more or less sincere in their dealings with each other, especially in person. As Jervis (1970) suggests, “reliance may be placed on messages delivered personally by a high official of one country to the leaders of another. It is one thing to lie in a written document; it is another to lie to a person’s face” (92). Moreover, emotional expressions are more likely to be genuine, and be construed as such, if it is common knowledge that deception despoils a code of honor that all deem vital to diplomacy’s integrity as an institution. Again, in Jervis’ (1970) words, “[t]he fact that states send and pay

attention to signals indicates that statemen feel they are more apt to give true than false information... [T]here must be some restraints on lying... [States] all have a stake in the collective honesty of the signaling system” (71). Nicolson ([1939]1988) traces the misconception about diplomatic duplicity to Machiavelli’s writings on the perils of keeping faith in politics, which, in his view, have promoted the “incorrect impression that such principles, rather than honesty and good sense, were... the root of all international negotiation and were those which any aspiring diplomatist was bound to observe” (46). Such misconception has persisted into the modern days. After having interviewed dozens of diplomats in some of the most critical negotiations in recent memory, Watkins and Rosegrant (2001) conclude that it is a “persistent fallacy” to think that the “expert negotiators’ repertoires consist of a grab bag of tactical tricks and ploys, bluffs, and psych-outs” (xii).

In other words, the realists have been right about diplomatic honesty, but for the *opposite* reason. Diplomats do not see much value in deception not because mistrust renders its successful use unlikely, but because the damage that deception does to one’s trustworthiness can be irreversible. As De Callières ([1716]1963) writes, “[i]t is a capital error... [to think] that a clever negotiator must be a master of the art of deceit... [T]he negotiator will perhaps bear in mind that he will be engaged throughout life upon the affairs of diplomacy, and that it is therefore his interest to establish a reputation for plain and fair dealing so that men may know that they can rely upon him” (31-32). In a similar vein, Jönsson and Hall (2005) remark three centuries later that “there are obvious restraints on lying in diplomatic communication, the most important of which is the loss of reputation should the deception fail” (76). The time-honored display rule against insincerity means that diplomats are more willing to make something of their interactions

– including through the exchange of emotional signals – than the nihilistic view that realists tend to portray.

Second, emotions are often considered anathema to diplomatic best practice. For instance, the US Department of State (2013) stipulates thirteen “dimensions” of personality traits it considers “essential” to the work of a diplomat. At the top of the list is “[c]omposure”. The diplomat needs to “stay calm, poised, and effective in stressful and difficult situations” and to “maintain self-control”. According to Nicolson ([1939]1988), “[t]he quality of calm, as applied to the ideal diplomatist, should express itself in two major directions. In the first place he should be good-tempered, or at least he should be able to keep his ill-temper under perfect control. In the second place he should be quite exceptionally patient” (117). Echoing De Callières ([1716]1963: 108), Bull (2002) posits that the diplomat is to be “governed by his reason rather than his passions,” and is expected to “subordinate the latter to the former in the conduct of foreign policy” (163). Emotions should be purged and suppressed, lest they get in the way of sound judgment and proper relationships.

But the display rule of composure appears to pay dividends not only when it is observed, but also – paradoxically – when it is violated *on occasion*. Diplomats are normally self-restrained. They are, as Faizullaev (2006) puts it, “well-known for their ability to control the emotional aspects of their behaviour” (513). But diplomats do occasionally “lose their cool” in order to get a point across, and their credibility derives as much from the inherent forcefulness of an emotional signal as from its departure from what is considered acceptable behavior. Counterfactually, a diplomat who operates in a system replete with emotional outbursts would find his signal overwhelmed by “noise”. At the personal level, those burdened with a track record of “squandering” emotions would find their credibility much diluted. As Jervis (1970)

puts it, “[d]ebasing” of a signal “occurs... when [it] is given to a large number of actors” and “also when [it] has been repeatedly given to one actor” (107). The display rule of composure in effect amplifies an emotional signal whenever it is displayed. James Baker’s recollection of his negotiations with Syrian President Hafez Assad over a proposed peace conference on the Middle East is a case in point.

The former US Secretary of State takes pride that in his fourteen years of public service, he had only lost his composure once – during his emotional farewell speech at the Department of State in the summer of 1992 (Baker, 1995: 27). But he did “lose his cool” at at least one other occasion. By the spring of 1991, he had met with Assad several times. When the two reconvened in Damascus on May 11, Baker learned that the Syrian President planned to renege on two important compromises. As a “matter of principle,” Baker explains, “I’d insisted on sitting through Assad’s interminable soliloquies in each of our previous four meetings, no matter how pedantic or irrelevant to the topic at hand. But now he’d crossed the line”. Finding it difficult to maintain composure, Baker “slammed [his] portfolio shut with all the intensity [he] could muster”, and announced his intention to leave. Baker’s performance was hardly “diplomatic”, but it was because so that his effort to protest made a mark on his otherwise unyielding interlocutor. “For the first time,” he recalls, “Assad seemed a trifle defensive” (Baker, 1995: 460-462). Baker understood that an effective emotional signal requires caution against “debasing” it in the first place.

Lastly, the strength of an emotional signal depends not only on the amount of “noise” in the system, but also on what diplomats are accustomed to receiving at the “dyadic” level. Experiments have shown that subjects negotiating with a happy counterpart who becomes angry in the process make greater concessions than those with counterparts who remain angry

throughout. In comparison, subjects in the former condition are more convinced that the emotional turnabout is attributable to their own action in the negotiation – such as making an offer that is too high – rather than to the displayer personally (i.e. he is dispositionally angry) (Filipowicz et al., 2011).

In diplomacy, relationships are rarely a *tabula rasa*. Interlocutors are often acquainted with each other from previous encounters, and they make as much of an emotion per se as its contrast and consistency with its displayer's behavior in the past. For instance, an angry message from a diplomat known for his equanimity constitutes a stronger signal than one who has a reputation for a hot temper. In the example of the Monson-Delcassé relationship discussed earlier, the British ambassador was receptive to the French foreign minister's outburst because his interlocutor "remained calm" in most of their previous meetings (Brown, 1970: 115). Conversely, ending a history of angry exchanges with signs of anxiousness conveys seriousness in striking a deal (Morris and Keltner, 2000: 31-34). Take, for instance, the Kennedy-Dobrynin relationship during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The rationalist literature has in the past highlighted the US' ability to generate costly signals relative to that of the Soviet Union as explanations for how the crisis unfolded. Fearon (1994), for example, suggests that it was President Kennedy's "televised speech" demanding the Soviets to back down that made his signal of resolve credible (582). On the contrary, Brown and Marcum (2011) argue that Khrushchev was more constrained by "audience costs", since he was more vulnerable to punishment from other members of the Soviet Presidium than Kennedy was from the American public.

Underappreciated in these interpretations, however, is the "principal private channel to Moscow" established between the US President's "closest confidant... his brother Robert

Kennedy”, and the Soviet ambassador, Anatoly Dobrynin. During the crisis, the two had “almost daily conversations”, the last of which – according to Dobrynin himself – “turned the tide in Moscow” (Dobrynin, 1995: 75-76, 88) and was “critical” to the crisis’ resolution (Lebow and Stein, 1994: 126). In that October 27 meeting, Kennedy made clear to Dobrynin that the US was ready to take out the Soviet missiles in Cuba by force. At the same time, he relayed the President’s pledge to secretly remove the Jupiter missiles in Turkey within months. But why – from a “cheap talk” perspective – should his words be taken seriously (Tingley and Walter, 2011: 997)?

The contrast between Kennedy’s past and present emotional states offers some clue. Dobrynin wrote in his telegram to Khrushchev immediately after: “[D]uring our meeting R. Kennedy was very upset; in any case, I’ve never seen him like this before. True, about twice he tried to return to the topic of ‘deception’ (that he talked about so persistently during our previous meeting),” accusing the Soviets for their secret build-up in Cuba. But this time round, “he did so in passing and without any edge to it. He didn’t even try to get into fights on various subjects, as he usually does, and only persistently returned to one topic: time is of the essence and we should not miss the chance” to come to an agreement (Dobrynin, 1962). In his account of this “culminating moment” of the crisis, Khrushchev (2007) describes Kennedy as “[i]n a state of great nervous tension... [and] kept appealing for prudence and good sense” (339). Kennedy’s behavior made a lasting impression. He “was very nervous throughout our meeting,” Dobrynin recalled three decades later. “It was the first time I had seen him in such a state” (Lebow and Stein, 1994: 138). As Lebow and Stein (1994) note, “[p]rior meetings... had sometimes degenerated into shouting matches. On this occasion... the attorney general kept his emotions in check and took the ambassador into his confidence in an attempt to cooperate on the resolution

of the crisis” (524). Dobrynin – and by extension, Khrushchev – would probably not be as convinced of Kennedy’s otherwise “costless” pledge had he not observed the latter’s emotional turnabout up close.

Moving Forward

In this article, I argue that IR has largely failed to make sense of face-to-face diplomacy, particularly how it serves as a conduit for states to communicate intentions. To breakthrough, I leverage insights from the latest research on negotiations in social and experimental psychology, and highlight the communicative function of emotions.

As such, diplomacy plays a more important role than is often acknowledged. To elaborate on a game often used to analogize the uncertainty that countries face in dealing with each other, “[w]inning at poker has as much to do with judging human personalities as it does with weighing the cards... [P]oker comes down to being able to judge the preferences and characters of one’s opponents” (Gartzke, 1999: 570). If diplomacy is a channel that makes such judgment possible because it enables leaders to express and assess each other’s intentions, then it is fundamental to the management of interstate relations.

My argument also calls into question the belief that emotions play no constructive role in world politics. Emotions have been conventionally portrayed in IR as “epiphenomenal at best and a source of irrationality at worst” (Mercer, 2006: 288). More recent works have strived to do away with the former characterization by demonstrating emotions’ centrality in explaining many phenomena of interest. Yet emotions are still largely seen as a force for bad, either because they interfere with “rational” beliefs and decisions, or because they constitute the psychological

impulses for aggression and conflict.⁹ On the contrary, the socio-functional perspective argues that emotions are critical to engagement and cooperation. Without the back-and-forth of emotions, actors – including diplomats negotiating on behalf of their governments – would find understanding each other a lot more elusive.

This article, however, represents at best an initial foray in a broader research agenda. The reason for IR's past neglect of face-to-face diplomacy may in part be methodological. Material power, public statements and other variables that scholars tend to identify as crucial to interstate communication are to a certain extent observable. On the other hand, the intimate and transient dynamics that transpire in diplomatic interactions are often beyond the reach of outsiders. But methodological expediency should not be allowed to dictate what counts as empirically relevant. Doing so would be akin to “searching for one’s wallet under the streetlight”, since what is important may precisely be where it is the most difficult to see.

One route to proceed would be to consult the primary accounts of those who practice diplomacy, such as memoirs, diaries, meeting transcripts and memoranda, diplomatic cables and – for contemporary cases – interviews, as I have done for some of the episodes discussed. But such accounts may still fail to relay the subtle exchange of body language, gestures and tone. Recollections can also be inaccurate, or even self-serving and biased. For instance, Robert Kennedy’s memoir (1969) contains no description of his interaction with Dobrynin on October 27, 1962 (107-109). Dobrynin and Khrushchev, on the other hand, may have presented their impression of Kennedy honestly. But it is also possible that they were hoping to present the Americans as more anxious of the two parties to yield at the height of the crisis.

Given the elusive nature of emotions, a complementary route would therefore be to follow the psychological literature in its use of randomized laboratory experiments. As

⁹ For citations, see discussion of this literature in the introduction.

McDermott (2011a) writes, the key concern in IR often “revolves around the ability of the investigator to isolate and control the variables of interest in order to determine their influence on outcome, and often the laboratory offers a much better environment in which to assert such control” (504). Skeptics might counter that experiments lack both external validity (with the use of such convenience samples as university students) and mundane realism (because of the relative low stakes involved in a laboratory). But these issues are remediable through – among other research strategies – conducting further experiments with samples of theoretically-relevant populations and different manipulations in experimental designs (Hudson and Butler, 2010: 169-170; McDermott, 2011b). For instance, scholars have in the past sought to enhance the external validity of experiments on foreign policy decision-making and international negotiations by including as subjects those tasked with such responsibilities in real-life, including diplomats, high-ranking military officers, and business and political leaders (Mintz, 2004; Renshon, Forthcoming; Hafner-Burton et al., 2014).

Substantively, an avenue of research would be to investigate how emotions’ communicative function interacts with factors that are of particular interest to scholars of IR. For instance, to what extent does a negotiator’s expression of resolve through anger compensate for his weakness in relative power, as is implied in the Monson-Delcassé episode? How do different identities of the negotiators – such as in negotiations between allies versus enemies – or their existing level of trust mediate their willingness to “read” intentions off emotions? How are emotions used to communicate that one cares about the integrity of a norm or agreement (Mercer, 2006: 298-299)? Do diplomats, who bring with them different display rules from their home cultures, infer intentions differently? How are the communicative functions of emotions modified in a multilateral setting, which is common in diplomacy? Does the expression of

certain emotions – such as anxiety or hope – in a pledge or promise mitigate the problem of commitment that rationalists often highlight, as the Kennedy-Dobrynin episode suggests?

To answer these questions, experiments can be modeled after those in the extant literature on international negotiations and bargaining. For instance, in designs where subjects are randomly assigned to interact with each other anonymously (e.g. Dickson, 2009; McDermott et al., 2002; Tingley, 2011; Tingley and Walter, 2011), the researcher can supplement the messages they send to each other with what is purportedly a picture of the expresser (but is in effect portrayed by an actor) showing different (or no) emotions, and analyze how such treatment interacts with the other factors of interest – including those just discussed – to produce divergent outcomes. For experiments that allow subjects to interact freely face-to-face (e.g. Butler et al., 2007; Majeski and Fricks, 1995), their expressions can be recorded and coded and messages content-analyzed to identify the emotions expressed and measure their intensity. The researcher can then explore if – controlling for other factors – emotions had an impact on how the subjects inferred intentions and therefore a negotiation's trajectory.

Finally, as discussed, diplomats are often noted for their sensitivity to emotional cues. Whether such proposition holds warrants investigation because it suggests that diplomacy's value derives in part from the emotional intelligence among those who practice it. A potential line of inquiry would therefore be to administer to a sample of diplomats a standard test on emotional intelligence – such as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (Mayer et al., 2003) – and compare the results with published norms of other populations.

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