Does Successful Diplomacy Rely on 'Ripe Moments'?

https://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/20/does-successful-diplomacy-rely-on-ripe-moments/

CHRISTIAN SCHEINPFLUG, SEP 20 2015

Does Successful Diplomacy Rely on 'Ripe Moments'? Answer with Reference to at Least Two Case Studies.

For many diplomat scholar-practitioners, successful diplomacy is less a matter of substance than a problem of perfect timing. So-called 'ripe moments' are crucial periods in which antagonists recognise that talking, not fighting, advances their goals. These moments, however, do not contain new solutions; actors just view older proposals as feasible (Zartman, 2001: 8). Indeed, analysts claim that although conflicts supposedly follow a predetermined trajectory, neither success automatically follows from ripeness, nor that diplomats should wait hands-in-pockets until time has come (Zartman, 2001: 8). Despite this argument, theorists make the boldest claim by insisting that successful diplomacy relies on the presence of ripe moments (Zartman, 2000: 226; Haass, 1988: 232).

Two case studies discussed in this paper, the Congress of Vienna and the Bolivian demand against Chile, highlight evidence to the contrary. The first case re-arranged social order far beyond its immediate and already challenging geographical context (UNESCO, 1997: accessed 09/06/2015) and illustrates the wide-ranging consequences of diplomacy. The Congress, though imperfect, still shines as an example of diplomatic success, although ripeness did neither play a role for the participants, nor did it arise objectively when it should have according to ripeness theorists. Moreover, granted there was one such moment at a possible juncture, influence on the result cannot be discerned. Likewise, Bolivia's demand against Chile.

This issue will not go away any time soon and thus may still take a dramatic turn. Yet, for more than 130 years both parties abstained from violence, even though they argue over territorial sovereignty and did not even entertain diplomatic relations for most of the time. This also suggests that mainstream diplomatic theory, with its domination of French and Renaissance systems, reveals flaws when pitched against real-life events.

To bolster the claims made and support the central thesis the Part I of the paper creates a working definition of 'successful diplomacy' and introduces the notion of 'ripe moment'. The next section dissects ripeness theory, specifically drawing on Mitchell's four models, and presents several charges levelled against the importance of timing. Then, ripeness theory is discussed and applied to the two case studies. Last, the conclusion sums up the argument and elicits the relevance of materialist conditions for successful diplomacy, whereas ripeness theory should be swallowed with a grain of salt.

Part I: Diplomacy and the Ripe Moment

At its most basic, 'diplomacy' refers to the representation necessary for establishing peaceful contacts between separate actors (Berridge and James in Berridge and Lloyd, 2012: viii), here states, although social movements and NGO's may function similarly. In these representations states maintain missions with specially trained personnel which is knowledgeable about cultural particularities and specific human conventions to support inter-state exchange. One function of such interaction is the promotion of international negotiations to advance trade, or manage conflict and crisis (Berridge and Lloyd, 2012: 98). This focus on the activity, not the person, is most prevalent in the so-called French system, whose founders were the first to develop diplomatic theory (Keens-Soper, 1973: 501).

The French system of diplomacy sees leaders' agency limited by the historical system of the respective epoch (ibid, 502), and as systems change, so do relations. Thus one of the school's key thinkers, Cardinal Richelieu, developed the practice of *négociation continuelle*. Continuous negotiation, the French mastermind reckoned, would keep the normal conflicts and tensions between sovereign and selfish states in check because actors keep in touch and get accustomed to each other's interests and fears. This is therefore an approach for the long-term management of international relations and stability trumps swift intervention (Bergin et al., 1992: 62/63).

The sibling of the French system of diplomacy is the Renaissance system. Its most popular representative was Nicolo Machiavelli. For him power is essentially tragic and dangerous. Machiavelli advises the 'Prince', i.e. the ruler, should not adhere to popular notions of morality, but instead should deceive and pretend wherever and whenever possible in order to further the interest of the state. This national interest, according to Machiavelli, ranks above any individual hardships (Machiavelli, 2006: accessed 06/2015). Hence, the Renaissance system focuses more on personal style (Wiethoff, 1981: 1104). On the system-level, however, both schools of thought agree that the state is main actor on the international stage and naturally pursues its self-interest, which creates tensions. Thus, and for the purpose of this essay, 'successful diplomacy' is the management of competing national interest without resorting to violence.

In terms of international theory Renaissance and French diplomacy are closest related to realist and neoliberal theory, respectively. Neorealism views the state as supreme actor as well, which pursues rationally its self-interest of survival, whereas neoliberalism argues that organised group behaviour affects state behaviour and thus diplomacy (Mearsheimer, 1994: 9/10; Keohane, 1990: 174). Another group, social constructivists, point out states have wielded the power to control violence for a remarkably long time and thus have substantial influence over social order (Wendt, 1999: 8).

The successful application of diplomacy, however, is an antidote to violence. To make the most of this antidote theorists developed the theory of 'ripeness', which would aid diplomats propel crisis negotiations towards a happy end. William Zartman is a pioneer of this theory and the so-called ripe moment. He locates its emergence between the initial stages of a conflict teleology. Conflict according to him, always runs from phase one, decision to initiate talks; to phase two, defining the problem; after which phase three, setting up of talks comes up, until finally in phase four concrete discussion in search of solution takes place (Zartman, 1989: 238). The ripe moment arises during the passing of phase one into two when parties discuss what they want to resolve, and become aware of whether a non-violent solution is feasible at all (ibid, 240). Although Zartman insists that ripeness is absolutely necessary for successfully concluding peace talks, he also cautions that ripeness is a condition, not a result and therefore success is not a given (Zartman, 2000: 226/227). Fortunately, ripeness announces its arrival through objective elements – lack of military gains on both sides, loss in terms of blood and treasure, remarks suggesting to seek a "Way Out" -, or subjective ones – reserves in terms of money and people, or expressions of agony or having reached a dead end (Zartman, 2001: 9/10). It is therefore possible to clearly identify when the time for putting down arms has come, even though objective elements do never represent the actual ripe moment. Only the subjective aspects create actual ripeness and only if parties act upon them (Zartman, 2000: 231).

Richard Haass, diversifying the theory, points to the importance of leadership to sell the deal and the need for hard compromises, so no party feels it conceded too much, as well as maintaining a strict focus on the problem, not the geopolitical context in which it takes place (Haass, 1988: 245/246). Additionally, antagonists must possess equal military capability, or else fighting will continue without generating ripe conditions (ibid, 234). Even though talks may be ultimately in vain, both Zartman and Haass insist dialogue does not emerge in the first place without ripeness (Zartman, 2001: 12), respectively with any of its components missing (Haass, 1988: 245). Mitchell (2015) adds analytic value by forming four models of ripeness, each of which explains the path to initial talks differently. The first and second, Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS) and Imminent Catastrophe (IMC), draw mainly on Zartman (2001) and Haass (1988). The third, Entrapment (ENT), borrows from psychological studies, and fourth, Enticing Opportunity (ENO) represents an optimistic approach.

Four Models of Ripeness

The first model, MHS, assumes a situation in which actors (should) realise the conflict has stagnated. Damage they either inflict or sustain is insufficient to swing the pendulum towards victory or defeat (Zartman, 2001: 8). Due to the highly subjective nature of ripeness, though, parties may either opt to wilfully ignore this situation, or do not notice it at all, and carry on fighting, in which case solutions are actually there but only acted upon once violence further escalates to break the stalemate (ibid, 9/31). That means aggression has to plateau long enough for actors to recognise the time is ripe to seek a 'Way Out' (Zartman, 2000: 228), most importantly through subjective elements. If clashes do not level out, Zartman suggests with a Machiavellian twist, a third party, possibly a mediator, should inject violence via intervention in order to push decision-makers to the table, as happened for instance in Bosnia 1995 (Zartman, 2001: 13/15). In cases where injecting violence is not enough an imminent catastrophe like an invasion could trigger parties' reaction or bring about ripeness (Mitchell, accessed 2015: 3). Mitchell illustrates such a case by referring to the imminent catastrophe (IMC) model.

IMC challenges the claim made by Haass the equal military strength nurtures talks over fighting. From IMC perspective a catastrophe like an invasion would make both parties think twice about the current state of affairs and so they would take up solutions they hitherto saw as unrealistic (Haass, 1988: 237/238). Yet, an invader almost always calculates being the superior force, even if it is clear from the outset that such a move could end in disaster, like the invasion of the Normandy (Anderson, 2011: accessed 06/2015), even if ripeness is not the goal. Most significantly, consequences from the imminent catastrophe must be felt by both parties equally, or else actors will not be scared by a potential new crisis (Mitchell, accessed 2015: 3; Zartman, 1989: 253). In some cases, like D-Day, the invasion went ahead without causing notable inclination to negotiation, though. Aside from weakening Zartman's claim that using violence against certain "'true believers,' 'warriors,' or hardliners" is useless to create ripeness, because only resistance is their goal (Zartman, 2001: 12) this suggests that other models are needed to explain the rise of the right moment to end conflict.

Thus, the third model, Entrapment (ENT), focuses on violence injected from outside and runs contrary to MHS. ENT analyses how the violence generated by actors inside the conflict leads to a path towards resolution. As fighting continues, this school of thought argues, leaders become entrapped by overspending on limited resources and create ripeness unintentionally (Mitchell, accessed 2015: 4/5). Their initial assumption is that benefits will materialise only after all costs have been incurred, or that current costs already peaked and benefits begin to materialise, albeit slowly. This thinking leads to more violence and higher the costs, as leaders expect even higher returns from such behaviour (Mitchell, accessed 2015: 4). Ripe moments develop when leaders begin to realise that current costs bear no relation with the expected result, and so they gradually lower expenditure but simultaneously aim to increase impact (ibid, 5). Over time, absolute resources dwindle and relative costs rise, but impact is ever weaker and war automatically runs out of steam, leaving only talks as avenue to exit conflict and save face and remaining resources. Like MHS and IMC, ENT focuses on violence as tool for conflict resolution. Yet, enticement could equally influence the capacity to create, and act on, a ripe moment.

The Enticing Opportunity (ENO) model takes an optimistic approach towards ending conflict. It assumes that parties respond to potential rewards, like international prestige or acquiring power and financial advantages that might come cheaper via elections and cutting deals as the result of ending bloodshed (Mitchell, accessed 2015: 6). Enticements may include access to (semi)important international fora or improved economic relations and aid. Once actors realise that killings bar the acquisition of gain power, they may seize the moment and act accordingly. Deepening economic relations between Japan and China, for example, helped a great deal to ease their mutual suspicion during the Cold War and normalised Sino-Japanese relations (Burns, 2015: 27/57/58).

Notwithstanding the overall agreement in the literature on the usefulness of ripeness theory, criticism has been issued, too. A vocal critic is Eamonn O'kane, although he also joins the consensus (O'kane, 2006: 281). O'kane takes issue with key pillars of the theory, like the heavy reliance on subjectivity. He rightly argues that since no person views the world exactly as the other, the line between unripe and ripe moments is rather blur, and so actors can never be sure when time has actually come. This shortcoming weighs heavier in multi-actor negotiations, like the Congress of Vienna, because actors do not have certainty about the way their opponent interprets the situation. This uncertainty surrounding peace talks has participants insecure about who might agree to which formula (O'kane, 2006: 271/276/277). As case study I makes clear, the Congress has been extraordinarily successful, implying that

O'kane's criticism does not run deep enough. Yet another problem of subjectivity is that while parties may realise they are in a mutually hurting stalemate, they might be much more resilient, and contrary to what the MHS model predicts, willing to bear higher costs and ripeness theory loses precision (O'kane, 2006: 273). Zartman's claim that such behaviour is to be expected in 'resistance cultures' (Zartman, 2001: 12), does not hold up against evidence in case study II, where the pretty weak Bolivia maintains its demands against Chile without invoking religion or a hardline course. Against accusations in this direction, Bolivia would just point out its national interest, which then shows the hollowness of Zartman's terminology.

Following the argument that small parties are perhaps more resilient at times does also expose the risk of Zartman's advise to escalate conflicts until violence plateaus. Such an escalation might actually increase resistance from the side which suffers from intervention, and forego a diplomatic solution for some time to come. The NATO bombing campaign serves as a timely example. Although there were incredibly brutal atrocities before the bombing, Serbia did not carry out genocide. After the NATO campaign, however, systematic and large-scale killings of civilians commenced and violence in the region went from bad to worse (St. Clair and Cockburn, 2013: accessed 06/15) In such a case, the intervening power puts itself at risk of being seen as helping the other side, which might even draw formerly uninterested neighbouring countries into alliances. Ignoring geopolitical context, as Haass does, would be of mortal danger then. Furthermore, escalation rests on an entirely irrational assumption of rationality. Such escalation would certainly claim victims normal low-level conflict would not. This impacts on real people – which notably do not figure in neither Haass nor Zartman – who would certainly not follow this kind of rationality. Moreover, conflict escalation could transform an MHS situation into an ENT, where parties initially bear heavier costs because they believe they could win against the onslaught, which would promise even more benefits and glory (Lieberfeld, 1999: 64). Still, not only subjectivity weakens ripeness theory. Supposedly objective elements are equally flawed.

An objective element foreboding ripeness is parties' suggesting they seek a 'Way Out', yet, this may actually be a Machiavellian tactic to deceive the opponent (ibid, 213) and be part of wider war strategy. Conversely, parties might shirk from signalling interest in compromise because the negotiators' popular power base could interpret such an outcome as weakness. Working up ripeness this way therefore poses a risk of even more instability in the form of a violent overthrow or the change of government during a crucial juncture of a country's foreign policy (Nathan, 2013: 212). This line of argument also casts doubt on the supposed objectivity of the 'way out', since leaders consciously choose not to utter the words. The calculation of the balance of power is problematic too, in such a situation. Conflict periods are extremely tense and demand robust mental strength to make rational decisions. Yet as conflict wears on leader may not be able to coolly assess costs and benefits, and so miscalculate power relations in the presence or, worse, the future. Given such uncertainty, power relations might not as they appear to individual leaders, showing that the balance of power is actually too subjective to serve as confident indicator whether talks should start and ripeness emerge (Nathan, 2013: 216/217).

The following case studies, the Congress of Vienna and the Bolivian demand against Chile, illustrate these criticism but also illustrate that ripeness theory should be question even deeper. They both play(ed) out in different geographical and cultural context. While the former one finished with the beginning of World War I, the latter is still ongoing. Thus, one can evaluate the former more conclusively than the latter, which theoretically at least could still deteriorate into violence and challenge the central thesis that successful diplomacy is not at all reliant on ripeness. This thesis, nonetheless, gathers more steam when put in theoretical context, considering both the nature of the demand and the time frame (130 years) it exists already without hostilities breaking out. In both case studies, Richelieu's *négociation continuelle* and the French school of diplomatic thought figure strongly and therefore seem to be the main element to challenge ripeness theory.

Part II: Ripeness Applied

Case Study I: The Congress of Vienna

The Congress of Vienna is one of the most important diplomatic undertakings in history, comparable to the Treaty of Versailles (Chapman, 1998: 1). The Congress had an incisive impact on European and global social order, and indeed the trajectory of humankind. The Vienna settlement lays at the heart of the longest history of peace Europe

has experienced yet (UNESCO, 1997: accessed 09/06/2015; Chapman, 1998: 1). Therefore, the Congress represents most unequivocally successful diplomacy – and undermines claims of the necessity for ripe moments.

To evaluate the utility of ripeness in the context of the Congress the space between the end of Napoleonic France and the initiation of negotiations must be highlighted. Without the French Revolution and the resulting opening up of high office for talent instead of patronage, Napoleon would never have gone where he went. Though a geopolitical genius he seemed entirely ignorant of Richelieu's teachings a mere 250 years earlier in absolutist France. Napoleon realised that the biggest threat to his reign came from the British, and so he aimed to block the continental system for the island in 1806, to which end he invaded Portugal and Spain in 1807 (Polley, 2000: 99). On the Peninsula, however, he came under pressure from British who eventually pushed into France by the end of 1813. The British, however, started trade with Russia in 1810 already which undermined Napoleon's 'continental blockade' to starve Britain. Thus, the French decided to invade Russia (ibid, 99), and the downfall of the Napoleonic order commenced.

The further Napoleon's troops advanced towards Moscow the further Alexander I. retreated and left only scorched earth (Chapman, 1998: 12). This way Napoleon's supply lines stretched to unsustainable length and when he finally entered Moscow in September 1812 his army was as weak as the one of Tsar Alexander I. The Tsar, riding a wild horse, denied Napoleon negotiations and so left the Emperor no choice but to return to France. Russia fended of the militarily successful invasion with the brazeness of its ruler (Polley, 2000: 99). While in retreat the French fell victim to sustained Russian attack which, coupled with a merciless winter and dismal morale, wiped the Napoleonic force almost out (ibid, 99). France's other European adversaries noticed the kind of pressure and thus welcomed Castlereagh's initiative to seize the moment and form the Fourth Coalition with the Treaty of Kalisch. This alliance in the east and Russia from the west effectively created a pincer movement and consumed the French army in early 1814 (Chapman, 1998: 12; Polley, 2000: 100).

As the end was so decisive it is difficult to locate a ripe moment. Following Zartman's conflict teleology it should have arisen when fighting took place between October 1812, when Napoleon's retreat from Moscow began and May 1814 when the Treaty of Paris formalised French defeat (Polley, 2000: 99, 100), and agreement to initiate the Congress was reached. Yet, Napoleon only could negotiate over his terms of retirement (Chapman, 1998: 12, 13; Polley, 2000: 100), not at all the conditions he would consider to end conflict. This demonstrates that the victory, or defeat respectively, was decisive, and negotiations commenced under clear pre-conditions (Chapman, 1998: 13). Going further back, a ripe moment might have been the brief period between Napoleon entering Moscow and Alexander I. refusing negotiations. According to all four models of ripeness the conditions during that period to initiate talks were perfect. From MHS perspective, violence plateaued as no party could exert sufficient force upon the other to dictate the terms. The IMC perspective would argue that France at the gates of Moscow could spell even greater catastrophe, not only for the Russians but also from a French perspective, because Muscovites' resistance would certainly drain French resources and morale. The ENT model would predict that in light of lack of resources war gradually vanished without big fanfare. ENO theorist would argue that negotiations at this point could have brought Russia huge benefits, like improved access to treasures France held, due to its large territorial possessions. The course of history, however, disproves all these models.

Although violence plateaued, Alexander I. just refused to give in although Russia was neither a smaller actor than France nor was Alexander I. a religious hardliner. By the time of his refusal the French could not occupy Moscow and Russia in turn could not throw them out. If in such a situation any third party would have broken the stalemate by injecting violence, Napoleon would have surely not just withdrawn. The catastrophe was also not sufficient enough although both parties were equally devastated by France's invasion. ENT did not work because the situation did not allow to draw on more resources, and fighting resumed, as Napoleon withdrew. Still, this fighting was not sufficient to beat France without the help of allies and natural cause. ENO could not work either, because Napoleon was at the height of his power and could not accept less than conquest. Alexander I. on the other hand could have gained much from making peace with France but chose not to. The failure to instigate negotiations in Moscow, however, did not negatively impact on European stability and the success of diplomacy. Although skirmishes and great power rivalry remained features of post-Napoleonic Europe it was much longer stable than before (Chapman, 1998: 93). The eventual breakdown was not due to lack of ripeness, but the result of the emergence of Prussia and Piedmont which upset the balance of power and reinforced the increasing importance of a strong economy and bureaucracy (ibid,

90/91), apart from the maintenance of continuous diplomatic relations (ibid, 76).

Case Study II: Bolivia's Demand against Chile

Unlike case study I this issue is still unresolved and so could well further deteriorate. Still, in light of the definition of successful diplomacy as based on the French school of thought, diplomacy has been extraordinarily successful, especially considered the problem at hand.

For a long time already Bolivia demands sovereign access to a corridor leading through Chilean territory in the Atacama Desert, allowing sovereign access to the Pacific. Bolivia had attempted various times to gain such access through war, negotiation, or business (Kain, 1937: 704/709; COHA, 2015: accessed 06/2015), before, in 2013, the Plurinational Republic submitted a lawsuit to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (BBC, 2013: accessed 06/2015). To date, the ICJ still deliberates and will deliver its verdict in "due course" (ICJ, 2015: 1). Sovereign access preoccupies Bolivia ever since the Republic's founding fathers, Sucre and Bolívar, realised that a complicated geography imposes sever limits on agriculture and sovereign commerce (Kain, 1937: 705; COHA, 2015: accessed 06/2015).

The current claim originates in the Pacific War 1879-1883, involving Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. The war itself resulted from geoeconomic and geopolitical rivalry over land and precious natural resources between the three countries. After minor clashes, and misinterpreted legal issues Peru and Bolivia allied against Chile, and lost decisively with Chile even occupying Lima for a while and annexing much of hitherto disputed territory (COHA, 2015: accessed 06/2015).

Despite this, both countries set up a 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Commerce' (*Tratado de Paz, Amistad i Comercio entre Chile i Bolivia*) in 1904, which builds on the definitive truce signed in 1884. The 1904 document, claims Chile, clearly defines the territorial limits of both countries, so that no such issues exist today (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2014: 22-30). Indeed, an amendment of this document clearly states that Bolivia acquiesces to Chilean sovereignty "between the 23rd and 24th parallel…from the sea to the current demarcation with the Republic of Argentina" (Tratado de Paz, Amistad i Comercio entre Chile i Bolivia, 1904: 10). Still, in a show of the validity of international contracts, Bolivian President Evo Morales declared the contract "dead, not valid for me," citing non-compliance issues on part of Chile (Morales, 2013: min 00:26).

According to ripeness theory the issue should have been resolved with the 1904 amendment. The Pacific War produced a relatively a clear winner and two losers, Chile being triumphant (although it lost Patagonian territory to Argentina exploiting the southern flank's vulnerability) and Peru and Bolivia defeated. It is therefore difficult, too, to locate a ripe moment. Proponents of ripeness theory could easily explain that the issue persists simply because there never was a ripe moment and it is therefore unrealistic to expect the conflict gets resolved with the 1904 amendment. This line of argument, however, is unscientific and tautological (O'kane, 2006: 271).

A starting point would be phase when Bolivia agreed to initiate negotiations in 1884, i.e. after defeat. The version of the Treaty of Peace and Friend of this time applies generous language in that Article II demarcates the limits, but also accommodates potential disagreements. Any disputes would be brought to the attention of the German Kaiser who would act as mediator (Tratado de Paz, Amistad i Comercio entre Chile i Bolivia, 1904: Art. II). After that Bolivia still fought a number of wars in an attempt to gain sovereign access to a port (Kain, 1938: 706-709) and brought up the demand for negotiations with Chile time and again (St John, 2015: accessed 06/2015), indicating that even if Bolivia acted on a ripe moment Chile did not. This line bears striking similarities with Alexander I. refusing negotiations with Napoleon, and in the South American case ignoring a supposed ripe moment did not lead to bloodshed either.

As for applying the models of ripeness it is difficult to see where an MHS or IMC could have taken place. Although Bolivia clearly had still resources to make war after 1884 (Kain, 1938: 706-709) conflict with Chile was practically solved and Chilean-Bolivian relations, although tense are non-violent ever since. A case could be made for ripeness emerging out to entrapment. As such Bolivian presidents were vary of Chilean military power and used non-violent resources, like the lawsuit in The Hague, to the greatest extent possible to inflict harm on Chile. Following this model

the conflict should have quietly died long ago. It is unlikely that a verdict will alter the nature of the problem. A ruling against Chile would result in fierce stalling on Chile's part because after so much time this territory is firmly part of the nation-state and therefore impossible to negotiate over. Furthermore, in line with the critics of ripeness theory, ceding territory would amount to political suicide (COHA, 2015: accessed 06/2015). The last model, ENO which relates to reputation, does not hold much promise either. Chile already hurt its reputation significantly over the issue (Jiménez-Martínez, 2013: 45) but is even more determined to keep this land. Bolivia giving in is equally unrealistic. Recalling the duration of 130 years, access to the sea is not just a goal, it is part of Bolivian identity and culture expressed and affirmed in hugely popular public celebrations on 'The Day of the Sea' (*Día del Mar*), taking place every year March 22 – 23. It follows, neither country cares much about global reputation while pursuing national interests.

Equally interesting is that both countries re-established diplomatic relations only in 1975 (COHA, 2015: accessed 06/2015). This means that despite lack of contact, as the French system would advise, no violence broke out. A striking parallel to case study I is a delicate balance of power that consists of a Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina, all three of which balance against Chile. As such, diplomacy and theory might not be enough to create stability between the members of the international system of states.

The aforementioned examples have demonstrated the problems with subjectivity and the resulting vagueness of ripeness theory. A feature both cases share, however, is a delicate balance of power that cancels military might as option out. This balance appears also in cases theorists cite to promote ripeness theory. Haass, for instance, argues the Beagle Channel crisis between Argentina and Chile was finally resolved only in 1984 after the Argentina's interests and leading figure changed (Haass, 1988: 238). Recent scholarship demonstrates convincingly that change came as a result of concrete strategic reconfiguration of the United States, not a vague ripe moment (Villar Gertner, 2014: 224), i.e. as part of a geopolitical context Haass dismisses as irrelevant (ibid, 207; Haass, 1988: 246). In the South American case, Chile balances with a superior military and a strong US ally (Global Firepower, 2015) against the Peruvian-Bolivian-Argentine Triple Alliance, each of whose members has or had territorial claims against Chile. Successful, stabilising diplomacy therefore, may be more related to effective (non)use of firepower, instead of continuous negotiations or Machiavellian deceit as suggested by key thinkers on the ripe moment and diplomatic theory itself.

Conclusion

Challenging the academic consensus, the discussion and application of ripeness theory to concrete examples demonstrates the deficiency of notions of 'ripe moments', even beyond the arguments of critics. As a result, it emerged that successful diplomacy is not reliant on ripe moments. Two case studies, the Congress of Vienna and Bolivia's demand against Chile served as vivid examples in support of this conclusion. Both cases illustrate the difficulty of subjectivity as element of ripeness, which clouds the entire concept. In line with critics like O'kane no definitive ripe moment could be unequivocally established, even when following Zartman's conflict teleology. This outcome therefore also reveals certain flaws of a teleological methodology. The end of violence was clearly discernible, without parties finding themselves locked in stalemate, facing huge catastrophe, diminishing resources, or reputational gains the parties would want to chase. Yet conflict either ensued as in South America without bloodshed, or extraordinary peace, as in Europe, followed. Both outcomes, despite a significantly distinct historical and geographical context, count as successful diplomacy as established at the beginning. Both cases share however the presence of a military equilibrium which suggests that possible success of diplomacy is less reliant on timing, but more on materialist conditions.

References

Anderson, D. (2011) 'D-Day: Beachhead', *BBC History*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/dday_beachhead_01.shtml, accessed June, 2015.

BBC, (2013) 'Bolivia takes Chile Sea Dispute to International Court', *BBC News*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-22277407, accessed June, 2015.

Bergin, J., Brockliss, L., Weber, H. (1992) 'Chapter 2 – "Une Bonne Paix": Richelieu's Foreign Policy and the Peace of Christendom', in J. Bergin, J. and Brockliss, L. (eds.) *Richelieu and His Age*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Berridge, G. R., James, A. (2012) 'Preface to the First Edition' in Berridge, G.R., Lloyd, L., *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy Third Edition*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burns, K. (2015) 'China and Japan: Economic Partnership to Political Ends', *Stimson Center,* http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/burnspdf.pdf, accessed June, 2015.

Chapman, T. (1998) *The Congress of Vienna: Origins, Processes and Results*, London and New York: Routledge.

Council on Hemispheric Affairs (2015) 'Bolivia/Chile Pacific Access', *COHA.org*, http://www.coha.org/boliviachile-pacific-access/, accessed May, 2015.

Global Firepower (2015) 'South American Countries Ranked by Military Power', *globalfirepower.com*, http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing-south-america.asp, accessed June, 2015.

Haass, R. (1988) 'Ripeness and the Settlement of International Disputes', *Survival*, Vol. 30 (May/June, 1988), p.232-249.

International Court of Justice, (2015) 'Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile); Conclusion of the public hearings on the Preliminary Objection raised by the Republic of Chile; Court to begin its deliberation', *Press Release,* http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/153/18646.pdf, accessed June, 2015.

Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2013) 'Chile: looking at the Pacific… but not at all of it', *Public Diplomacy Magazine,* LSE Research Online, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/56240/, accessed May, 2015.

Kain, R.S. (1937) 'Bolivia's Claustrophobia', *Foreign Affairs,* 16:4, pp.704–713..

Keens-Soper, M., (1973) 'Francois de Callieres and Diplomatic Theory', *The Historical Journal*, 16:3, pp.485–508.

Keohane, R.O. (1990) 'Chapter 5: International Liberalism Reconsidered', in Keohane, R., *Economic Limits to Modern Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.pp. 165–194.

Kleiboer, M. (1994) 'Ripeness of Conflict: A Fruitful Notion?' *Journal of Peace Research,* 31:1, pp.109–116.

Machiavelli, N. (2006) *The Prince,* Translated by W. K. Marriott, Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm, accessed June, 2015.

Mearsheimer, J. (1995) 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, 19:3, pp.5–49.

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile (2014) 'Chapter III: The Pact Of Bogotá And The 1904 Peace Treaty Exclude Bolivia's Claim From The Court's Jurisdiction', in *Preliminary Objection of The Republic of Chile*, http://www.minrel.gob.cl/minrel/site/artic/20150504/asocfile/20150504130611/preliminary_objection_of_the_republic_of_chile.pdf, accessed June, 2015.

Mitchell, C.R. 'Cutting Losses: Reflections On Appropriate Timing', *The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Working Paper 9*, Fairfax, Virginia, http://scar.gmu.edu/wp_9_mitchell.pdf, accessed May 2015.

Morales, E. (2013) 'Evo Morales Considea Muerto Tratado de 1904 con Chile', *teleSUR tv,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee9YAVODZv4, accessed June, 2015.

Morris, M.A. (1986) 'Maritime Geopolitics in Latin America', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 5:1, pp.43–55.

Nathan, L. (2013) 'The Intelligence Requirement of International Mediation', *Intelligence and National Security*, 29:2, pp.208–226.

O'kane, E. (2006) 'When Can Conflicts be Resolved? A Critique of Ripeness', *Civil Wars*, 8:3, pp. 268–284.

Polley, M. (2000) *A to Z of Modern Europe, 1789-1999*, Routledge: Florence, KY, USA.

St. Clair, J., Cockburn, A. (2013) 'Kosovo: Where NATO Bombing Only Made the Killing Worse', *counterpunch.com*, http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/08/30/kosovo-where-nato-bombing-only-made-the-killing-worse/, accessed June, 2015.

St. John, R.B. (2015) 'Bolivia v. Chile: Old Story, New Chapter', *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, http://www.coha.org/bolivia-v-chile-old-story-new-chapter/, accessed June, 2015.

Tratado de Paz, Amistad i Comercio entre Chile i Bolivia (1904), *'Actas protocolizadas i suscritas, respectivamente, el 15 de Noviembre i el 24 de Diciembre de 1904, por el Ministro de Relaciones Esteriores i Enviado Estraordinario i Ministro Plenipotenciario de Bolivia'*, http://puertoaricapcs.cl/uploads/2012/07/adjunto_dd5bbfae.pdf, accessed May, 2015.

UNESCO (1997) *Final document of the Congress of Vienna,* http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-3/final-document-of-the-congress-of-vienna/, accessed June, 2015.

Villar Gertner, A. (2014) 'The Beagle Channel frontier dispute between Argentina and Chile: Converging domestic and international conflicts', *International Relations*, 28(2), pp.207–227.

Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiethoff, W.E. (1981) 'A Machiavellian Paradigm for Diplomatic Communication', *The Journal of Politics*, 43(4), pp.1090–1104.

Zartman, I. W. (1989) 'Pre-Negotiations: Phases and Functions', *International Journal*, 44:2, 237-253.

Zartman, I.W. (2000) 'Chapter 6 Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond' in Stern, P. and Druckman, D. (eds.) *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*. Washington: National Academy Press.

Zartman, I. W. (2001) 'The timing of peace initiatives: hurting stalemates and ripe moments,' *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics,* 1:1, pp. 8–18.

Written by: Christian Scheinpflug
Written at: University of Leicester
Written for: Paul Trickett
Date written: June 2015

About the author:

Christian Scheinpflug is Director of the Editorial Board at E-International Relations. He is also columnist at Chile Today.