

# **The Implications of State Resources And Gender**

## **Diplomatic Networking by Male and Female Ambassadors with Limited Resources**

*A Pilot and Theory-Building Study of the Diplomatic Networking by  
Resource-Deprived Ambassadors Posted in Stockholm*



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## ABSTRACT

Networking is viewed as essential to successful diplomatic performance. Existing scholarship on diplomatic networking is nevertheless limited and therefore yet to explore and examine diplomatic networking in conjunction with fundamental structural factors, such as the financial resources of the embassy and gender. Thus, the thesis aims to explore whether resource-deprived diplomats face particular challenges when networking, and whether these challenges, and responses to them, may be gendered. Based on in-depth interviews with ambassadors and high-ranking diplomats from resource-deprived embassies in Stockholm, I conduct a pilot study to develop propositions about how state resources and gender may shape diplomatic networking. The thesis concludes that diplomatic networking appears to be complicated by structural factors, such as diplomats' state resources, as these entail specific challenges that diplomats need to manage. Encountering these challenges, resource-deprived female and male diplomats may strategize in different ways that link with notions of gender. Interviewed female diplomats may leverage gender notions via all-female networks and gender-specific locations to overcome resource-related impediments. Interviewed male diplomats might instead be able to leverage gender roles to facilitate networking participation at post-work hours, thereby overcoming resource-related impediments. In each case, gender can take the form of a double-edged sword to resource-deprived diplomats; advantageous in some ways, less favorable in others. Thus, generally, the specific challenges themselves do not appear gendered, but responses to alleviate them nevertheless seem to be.

**KEYWORDS:** Diplomacy; Diplomatic Networking; State Resources; Gender; Resource-Deprived Diplomats; Hierarchies; Gendered Networks

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“Diplomacy is fundamentally working with people,  
bringing people together to deal with difficult issues”

- John Roos, former U.S. Ambassador  
to Japan (2009 - 2013)

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## I. Introduction and General Aim

Contemplating diplomacy’s impact on the shaping of humankind, its celebrated commitment to pacifying and bridge-building immediately comes to mind. Indeed, the values of diplomatic practice represent an essential pillar on which human society organizes itself, in that the values favor mutual understanding instead of issue escalation, thereby underscoring its pertinence as a peace encouraging institution. Thus, employing diplomatic channels, international society can seize the opportunity to further itself, as diplomacy’s integrative contribution rests on underscoring and facilitating trust and cooperation whilst discouraging means and instruments of violent nature (Balzacq, Charillon & Ramel 2020).

Beyond this idealized view of diplomatic practice, diplomacy simultaneously remains closely associated with notions of grandeur and elitism. In capitals around the world, one can spot physical manifestations of diplomacy - that is, embassies. Many embassies are located in upscale neighborhoods and ‘embassy rows’, where one beautiful and lavish embassy is followed by the next. In part because of these buildings, in part because of its aristocratic history and current elite social foundation, and in part because of the constant stream of dinners, cocktail parties, events and galas that ambassadors need to host or attend - diplomacy evokes ideas of a highly distinguished and prestigious profession (Towns 2020). Indeed, an impactful memory of mine is walking down a street in Oslo, surrounded by embassy buildings left and right that were signaling an almost regal sense. Although being merely eleven years old then, the memory of these ornately decorated exteriors remains vivid.

Nevertheless, these palatial-looking embassies do not necessarily represent the whole story. Dispatching diplomatic staff and maintaining embassies carry substantial financial expenditures, which can be more or less daunting to countries. Constrained by a delicate budget situation relative to others, less affluent countries are unable to maintain spacious and upscale embassy buildings, employ a large diplomatic staff or host grand events similarly to their resourced counterparts. Instead, these countries’ embassies may survive on scant funding, resulting in embassies consisting of an apartment with a mere room or two, very few staff and a limited hosting budget. The situation of diplomats posted by less affluent countries is therefore in stark contrast to the opulent picture that is most often painted of the diplomatic profession.

This thesis connects the level of resources of embassies to diplomatic networking and gender. Identified as an integral part of diplomacy, diplomatic networking holds a central role in

facilitating successful diplomatic performance. Moreover, countries' diplomatic networks vary in terms of their reach and density (Berridge 2002; Neumann 2013; Niklasson 2020; Lequesne 2020; Towns 2022). While there is research on diplomacy and networking, scholarship is yet to incorporate a focus on the varying levels of financial resources possessed by diplomatic representations when examining networking practices by diplomats. Put differently, we know little, if anything, about diplomacy and diplomatic networking as viewed from the perspective of resource-deprived diplomats.

What is more, as Enloe's highly influential examination of politics and diplomacy notes, “[...]most of the time we scarcely notice that many governments still look like men’s clubs, with the occasional woman allowed in the door” (2014, p. 28). Diplomacy has indeed historically rested on gendered infrastructures, where the ‘male’ and associated masculinized practices have permeated its modus operandi, including networking. Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable increase of women in diplomacy, contributing to its increasingly heterosocial milieu (Aggestam & Towns 2018, b). However, the scholarship on gender and diplomatic networking remains limited. Indeed, the nexus between financial resources and gender in diplomatic networking remains hitherto unexplored.

Thus, redirecting the spotlight to this nexus, the overarching aim of this thesis is to examine how diplomatic networking may be shaped by the resources of the sending state and by gender. Building on separate scholarship on diplomatic networking, hierarchical state resources and gender, the thesis forms an exploratory pilot study that seeks to develop new propositions about diplomatic networking. More specifically, the aim is to explore whether resource-deprived diplomats face particular challenges when networking - and whether these challenges, and responses to them, may be gendered. A more specified statement about the aim and questions will follow after chapters discussing prior scholarship as well as the theoretical foundations and framework of the thesis.

The thesis is organized as follows: first, the literature review takes on existing scholarly contributions on diplomacy and details the lessons learned thus far. The review is thereafter followed by a theoretical chapter, which delineates key theoretical conceptualizations: from basic definitions of networks, gender and diplomacy to theoretical insights on hierarchies of state resources and gendered networks. The chapter culminates with the analytical framework, which integrates disparate insights and begins to theorize the intersection of diplomatic networking, state resources and gender. Taking into account previous chapters, the thesis’ aim and research questions are then presented. Thereafter, the methodological framework is detailed, where key methodological decisions are introduced and discussed. Anchored by the thesis’ research questions, the empirical results and analyses are presented. This chapter is aligned with the structure of the analytical framework and introduces newly discovered insights on the diplomatic networking of resource-deprived female and male diplomats. Lastly, the thesis’ contributions are summarized and discussed.

## II. Literature Review: Contributions on Diplomacy

This thesis engages with and contributes to scholarship on diplomacy. Encompassing a broad line of research, existing scholarship discloses salient knowledge. However, as the discussion below will show, while ‘diplomatic networking’ has been embraced by accounts conforming to traditional approaches to diplomacy, it is yet to receive a broader gender-sensitive literature. As is also displayed, domestic resources and the role these play during networking represents a largely overlooked dimension.

The literature review begins with a brief look at the diplomacy scholarship. Noting that a gender perspective has only recently begun to be applied, the review turns to research on diplomacy as a gendered institution. Thereafter, scholarship on diplomatic networking is presented. Unfortunately, this literature is limited and generally short of perspectives that entertain structural factors such as gender and state resources. Lastly, the few articles on diplomatic networking that are mindful of gender are presented.

### **Takes on Diplomacy, Practice and Theory**

Diplomacy has received a generous share of scholarly attention. Yet, Sending et al. (2015) note that writings on diplomacy have tended to adopt a rather practitioner-oriented position in which attempts to theorize the field have remained few. Nevertheless, some scholars have arranged for a theorizing agenda and have therefore begun to nest diplomacy within existing theories of political science and international relations (Sending et al. 2015; Jönsson & Hall 2005; Bjola & Kornprobst 2013; Pouliot & Cornut 2015). A takeaway from this literature is the misalignment between IR theory and diplomacy, in that the former tends to adhere to substantialist thinking while the latter subscribes to a relational orientation (Sending et al. 2015; Adler-Nissen 2015; Sharp 2009). These scholarly contributions certainly bring plenty to the table. However, much of the diplomacy scholarship nonetheless fails to incorporate gender.

Accounting for this shortcoming, scholarship such as Enloe’s *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (2014) has contributed to the important fusion of diplomacy and theoretical discussions on gender. This union links with the concept of ‘gendered institutions’, which redirects the spotlight onto the gendered structures and practices that inform various institutions of society (McGlen & Sarkees 1993; Connell 2006; Conley et al. 2014; McCarty 2014).

### **Diplomacy... A Gendered Institution?**

Despite remaining a generally understudied field, the studies put forth by scholars illuminating diplomacy and gender have yielded productive observations. These unveil hitherto neglected insights - that diplomatic infrastructures have been, and continue to be, gendered. Diplomatic historians have detailed stories of womens’ unofficial yet essential roles within diplomacy



(Hickman 1999; Wood 2007; McCarthy 2014). Moreover, inquiring into ambassadorial appointments on an aggregate scale, Towns and Niklasson (2018) investigate whether there exist gender patterns that impact said appointments. Turning to the geographical and hierarchical aspects of diplomatic positions, the authors conclude that gender patterns do exist which put the women at disadvantage (2018). In a similar vein, Calin and Buterbaugh assert that male career diplomats remain privileged in securing prestige-filled ambassadorial appointments (2019).

Complicating the understanding of diplomacy as a gendered institution, Towns (2020) skillfully observes that femininities are also at play; certain diplomatic paths are rendered legitimate or dismissed by referring to gendered figurations. As such, diplomacy is at times assigned feminized characteristics, although this often represents an attempt to delegitimize in favor of alternatives deemed 'tougher'. Generally, however, the diplomatic institution remains closely associated with masculinized practices and the male, which at the end of the day implies that the woman, and characteristics deemed 'feminine', remains a marginalized outsider (2020).

From studies on the gendered nature of diplomacy which seek to convey the (re)creation of diplomacy as an institution favoring masculine attributes (Aggestam & Svensson 2018; Towns & Niklasson 2018), and studies that highlight particular cases of diplomatic practice and gender bias (de Souza Farias & Fernanda Do Carmo 2018; Erlandsen, Hernández-García & Schultz 2022; Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm & Rumelili 2022) to studies that aim to not only unveil gendered structures but also to complicate and challenge prevalent notions on the durability of gender inscriptions (Towns 2020), the research field's relevance is anything but unequivocal.

## **The Role of Diplomatic Networks and Diplomatic Networking**

A central element of diplomatic practice appears both well-traversed and overlooked - namely, diplomatic networking. That networking is part and parcel of diplomacy is fairly uncontested (Berridge 2002; Neumann 2013; Niklasson 2020). With the seismic transformation brought by globalization, the 21st century international society is one of dynamic networks and diligent networking. From traditional realist outlooks where 'hard power' such as military strength constitutes a key tool, today's internationalized trade flows and communicative interconnectedness have instead imbued contemporary nation-states and their foreign ministries with a different set of conditions. Emphasizing this, Heine argues that nation-states and their diplomats must acknowledge, reassess and acclimatize accordingly (2013).

In a networked society, continuing the path of conducting 'club diplomacy' (i.e. engaging only with government officials and other diplomats) is not a viable option. Instead, the shifting to a 'network diplomacy' represents the vital step whereby diplomacy accommodates the new order of transnational interconnectedness (Heine 2013). In a similar vein, Metzler emphasizes that diplomatic influence is derived from "[...]the capacity to coordinate diffuse actors" (2001, p. 78). Practicing this latter version entails, as its name suggests, sharp networking capabilities and

relationship-building that extend beyond the private clubs and closed salons that have previously formed the preferred locational scene (Heine 2013).

The practice of diplomatic networking has also been featured in works focusing on the politics of the European Union. With the tectonic plates of international society shifting to a networked post-Westphalian order, Uilenreef (2014) explores the plausible extensions of the customary 'resident embassy' representational mode. Aiming to optimize diplomatic relations and networking endeavors, the EU ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) can embark on three different tracks: 1) secondment within member states' capitals, 2) visiting ambassadors or 3) co-location and operation (2014).

Globalization is also accompanied by transformative processes of technological development. Investigating diplomatic networks and networking by emphasizing the tools of technology, Sevin and Manor (2019) compare offline and online versions of diplomatic networks. Asking how the networks move into digital platforms, in times where brick-and-mortar embassies wrestle high maintenance costs, the authors explore the link between networks and digitalization. Detailing their findings, the authors note that digital diplomatic networks and networking should be viewed as necessary extensions, rather than replacements, of the traditional presence-bound networks (2019).

From the scholarship, it is clear that networks and networking are key in contemporary diplomacy. Yet, the scholarship displays a palpable deficit as only a few studies, to my knowledge, have searched into it with gender lenses. What is more, the resource dimension remains largely overlooked. Thus, the literature is in need of additional contributions.

## **The Diplomacy–Network–Gender Nexus**

There are only a handful of studies examining gender and diplomatic networking. Identifying gendered scripts of femininities and masculinities within the Norwegian MFAs, and communicating the way these are carried out, Neumann remains one of few to have explored the gendered nature of diplomatic networking (2008). In 2019, Aggestam and Towns wisely pointed to the need for further studies exploring diplomatic networking from a gender-sensitive point of view, whilst also calling for perspectives going beyond the Eurocentric vantage point (2019). Recent articles produced by Niklasson (2020) and Towns (2022) take on this diplomacy-network-gender research deficit in commendable ways, yet remain to my humble knowledge the only ones to have done so. In part utilizing previous contributions by Neumann, Niklasson (2020) also uses Kanter's classical theory of gender tokenism (1977) to explore diplomatic networking by interviewing female and male Swedish diplomats posted abroad. A conclusion drawn is that female diplomats either legitimize their presence by asserting their uniqueness - which puts the female diplomats close to the roles of diplomatic wives - or they decide to blend in with their male colleagues (2020).

Whereas Niklasson and previous scholarship appear to ascribe to the idea of gender as enduring and coherent, as opposed to fraught and incongruent, Towns (2022) emphasizes the latter. Demonstrating the ways in which diplomacy is discursively reproduced and reversed as a masculine institution, all while challenging the notion of gender inscriptions as coherent, Towns interviews a female-only diplomatic network in Warsaw, Poland. The article describes membership and activities, to then examine the kinds of gendered identities at play in such all-female networks and diplomacy more broadly. Interestingly, diplomacy was described in quite diverging ways - from gender neutral to categorically gendered. Indeed, “[...]‘womanhood’ alternated between being irrelevant, daunting, and empowering” (Towns 2022, p. 363). This portrayal of diplomacy and gender as fraught, rather than coherent, invites interesting discussions. However, we still know little as to during which circumstances these portrayals shift and the reasons underpinning the shifts.

Furthermore, we still know little about the impact of gender on diplomatic networking in conjunction with other factors. For instance, structural factors such as domestic resource levels and the host states’ level of progressive character remain, amongst other avenues, unexplored. It has been swiftly recognized that diplomats posted abroad inherit relationships and conditions in which diplomatic networking is embedded. Naturally, unique individual-level factors such as charismatic drawing power and relationship-building skills are also at play (Towns 2022). Nevertheless, the scholarship generally lacks contributions dedicated to this dimension of diplomatic networking. As such, we are yet to learn about diplomatic networking in conjunction with domestic state resource levels - and whether there are any gender patterns to discern that will bring additional nuances to our understanding of it.

Taking these trailblazing studies into account, and more specifically viewing diplomatic networking as a case of the gendered nature of diplomacy, there is room for development. Therefore, utilizing Niklasson (2020) and Towns’ (2022) articles as stepping stones - which puts this thesis in exceptionally good, but scarce, company - this study offers additional nuances on gender and diplomatic networking. As noted, however, previous scholarship is also yet to uncover in what ways gender balances with and towards other structural factors. More specifically, existing scholarship does not examine whether resource-deprived diplomats may face particular challenges when networking, and whether these challenges in turn may be gendered. With this in mind, the overarching aim of the thesis is to explore the conditions that underpin diplomatic networking and the way networking intersects with structural factors, such as gender and the resources diplomats have at their disposal. Thus, the contribution offered is complementary nuances that aim to inspire a development of an otherwise neglected research field.

### III. Conceptualizing Networks, Resources, Gender and Diplomacy: Theoretical Foundations and Expectations About Networking Patterns

The scholarship on diplomatic networking is in need of studies that aim to unpack, not only the impact of gender on networking behavior, but also the intersection of gender and structural factors hitherto unexplored within this line of research. In order to accomplish this objective, however, key theoretical conceptualizations need first be clarified, along with the establishment of the research tool, namely - the analytical framework.

The chapter starts with a rundown of conceptualizations of the basics: networks, gender and diplomacy. This is followed by a theoretical section on the diplomat's resources, which depend on the sending state's resource levels (hereafter 'DRL'). As previously mentioned, this factor remains largely understudied within the diplomacy-network-gender nexus. Thereafter, the concept of 'gendered networks' is split into four dimensions - with whom, where, when and in what ways does the diplomat network? These dimensions are treated separately, yet remain connected and will therefore overlap. As there is not much literature on diplomatic networking and gender, part of the theory relies on scholarship on networks and gender more generally. However, the few existing diplomatic networking insights are also presented. Lastly, summarizing previous sections, an analytical framework is developed - the tool guiding the empirical analysis. This new framework integrates previous disparate insights and begins to theorize the intersection of DRL and gender on diplomatic networking. Finally, as this thesis intends to explore, its empirical analysis should be classified as descriptive research.

#### **Basic Definitions: Networks, Gender and Diplomacy**

Firstly, it is necessary to recognize a basic definition of a 'network'. In the most abstract, a network is defined as a set of interconnected nodes. From this, it follows that networks and networking provide opportunities in which important bonds of reciprocal exchange can be pursued and created (Sevin & Manor 2019; Bapna & Funk 2021). With this basic definition of the network, one can distinguish further by adding the term 'social'. A social network, then, is widely understood and defined as...

[...] a specific set of linkages among a defined set of actors, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behavior of the actors involved (Durbin 2011, p. 92).

Any social network can furthermore be categorized into 'formal' or 'informal networks', in which the former enjoys an established and recognized character whereas the latter operates in an off-the-record and unofficial manner. As a result, the informal network is particularly difficult to identify (Durbin 2011). Formal and informal networking entails a range of behaviors; relationships between actors can be established and maintained through informal socializing pre-

and post formal meetings, partaking in social functions, extending and receiving professional advice and favors, participating in off-the-record work-related conversations, tête-à-tête-ing and also engaging in non-work chitchats - all of which constitute common networking behaviors (Yukl & Michael 1993).

Next, how can we understand 'gender'? Towns and Niklasson (2017) utilize Scott's well-known definition from 1986, theorizing gender as "[...]a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes" (2017, p. 525). The understanding of the male and female as inherently relational particularizes associated connotations and norms. As such, gender is argued to embody socially constructed norms that delineate allowable behaviors, which in turn correspond to the relational differentiation between the sexes. Resting on the understanding of gender as relational, a hierarchical structure of social power distribution has been established. Thus, the socially constructed gender norms and expectations are understood to be power-laden given their capacity to allocate social power along lines of gender roles (2017).

So, in what ways do networking and gender connect? While there is little scholarship on gender and diplomatic networking, there is scholarship on networking and gender. Within social network theory, prior research has asked whether there exist differences between men and women in terms of networking access and outcomes. The scholarship notes that professional networking differs, in that women encounter more barriers than men, which severely impede networking efforts. From broader areas such as business and management (Ibarra 1992, 1993; Aldrich 1989) to specific areas such as IT (Michie & Nelson 2006; Bapna & Funk 2021) and the renewable energy sector (Emmons et al. 2019), women's network connections and opportunities are decidedly less favorable (Singh et al. 2010).

Discussing this imbalance, Ibarra (1993) emphasizes that it is imperative to consider the organizational context; existing structural factors generate constraints, which subsequently impact networking endeavors. However, Ibarra also highlights the need to entertain the role of strategic action; more specifically, "[...] authors who ignore individual agency, by contrast, will, by definition, produce highly deterministic perspectives on women's and minorities' organizational experiences (1993, p. 80). Thus, while the structural configuration of the context generates burdensome constraints, the individuals are nonetheless viewed as 'active agents' who partake in the shaping of said context (1993). I will develop the discussion of how diplomatic networking may be gendered in later sections.

Moving from notions on networks and gender, how can 'diplomacy' be conceptualized? Viewed as an integral part of contemporary international politics (Towns 2020), diplomacy has been on the receiving end of scholars presenting their many takes on the appropriate theoretical delineation. In their chapter, Sending et al. discuss the pertinence of diplomacy, describing it as "[...]an infrastructure for the making of world politics" (2015, p. 7) and more specifically, the art of resolving negotiations in a peaceful manner (2015). Furthermore, 'diplomatic relationships'

can be vaguely described as ties between countries and their (political and diplomatic) actors, thereby constructing meaningful bridges (Li et al. 2017). Oftentimes, the terms ‘diplomat’ and ‘ambassador’ are used interchangeably. As head of the diplomatic representation abroad, the ambassador is the highest-ranking diplomatic representative. Whereas the ambassador also necessarily is a diplomat, this does not translate the other way around (Balzacq, Charillon & Ramel 2020; Hocking 2020; Lequesne 2020). Furthermore, the concept of ‘diplomatic activity’ implies two key functions: representation and negotiation. Via representation, the diplomat acts as a state representative, having been accredited diplomatic status anchored in the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* of 1961. Hence, the diplomat speaks on behalf of the sovereign state and the various interests deemed to be of pertinence (Cornut 2015; Lequesne 2020). Negotiation, in turn, is conceptualized together with communication, in that negotiation is contingent on communication processes. Negotiation is ultimately about communicating the parties’ interests and intentions with the goal of finding common ground - or to curb disagreements that risk instigating conflicts down the road (Balzacq, Charillon & Ramel 2020; Hocking 2020; Lequesne 2020).

Fulfilling their task of representing and negotiating, diplomats need to utilize networks. Historically, by partaking in these networks, the diplomats were able to connect with their (male) colleagues and people deemed part of ‘high society’. Thus, the networks primarily consisted of economic-political elites. However, with the reorganization of its landscape, diplomacy has connected with increasingly diverse networks. Given the dynamic and inclusive configuration, networking endeavors are exercised towards not only economic-political elites but also towards civil society (Uilenreef 2014; Hocking 2020). As a result, the term ‘networked diplomacy’ has emerged, which underlines a less hierarchical vision of diplomacy. As previously stated, a network has been described as a set of interconnected nodes. In conjunction with diplomacy then, a diplomatic network is understood as the sum of the linkages that connect diplomatic actors with one another (Metzl 2001).

During the first half of the 20th century, diplomacy consisted almost exclusively of men. Since then, however, there has been a noticeable increase of women venturing into the diplomatic sphere. From high-ranking ambassadorial posts to lower-level diplomatic positions, women are joining the diplomatic force (Towns & Niklasson 2017; Aggestam & Towns 2018a; Aggestam & Towns 2018b). However, it is unfortunately rather easy to fail to recognize that women have participated in diplomacy long before their diplomatic contributions were acknowledged. For instance, in their roles as diplomatic wives, women have undertaken unofficial (and unpaid) responsibilities underscored as essential to the establishment, facilitation and endurance of diplomatic relationships (Enloe 2014).

Diplomacy has been acknowledged as an institution that engages with gender-stereotypical postulations, in turn manifesting as institutionalized hierarchical structures. Firstly, given that the diplomat generally is scripted male, categorizing as a woman creates a contrast to that of the

masculinized diplomat. This normative understanding creates impetus for structures, expectations and norms to form (Enloe 2014; Aggestam & Towns 2018). Secondly, these structures, expectations and norms coalesce into an environment that signals gender-based inhospitality. For instance, by taking on the role of diplomatic ambassadorial posts, women face a heavy workload. Given that male diplomats are expected to rely on their spouses to perform supportive tasks (e.g. managing household responsibilities and hosting social events), they are enabled to focus solely or primarily on professional duties. However, this expectation is not extended similarly to spouses of female diplomats. Additionally, parental leave policies and childcare provision structures - or the lack thereof - precipitate yet another dilemma that female diplomats need to manage (Aggestam & Towns 2019; Niklasson 2020)). Altogether, this alliance of norms and structures permeates the architecture of diplomacy, rendering it an arena that echoes gendered notions.

## **International Hierarchies and State Resources: Networking Among Resource-Rich and Resource-Deprived Actors**

Diplomatic networking is potentially complicated by the fact that networking is shaped by power-laden factors, such as class, race, nationality, and more. Thus, this section highlights contributions on international hierarchies and state resource levels, whilst noting that scholarship on diplomatic networking in conjunction with these dimensions remain overlooked and sparse.

### **International Hierarchical Structures**

The concept of ‘hierarchy’ is indeed central in contemporary discussions on international relations. Generally speaking, a hierarchy can be described as a system of “[...]relations of super- and subordination in which actors are formally differentiated according to the degrees of their authority, and their distinct functions” (Mattern & Zarakol 2016, p. 626). The authors moreover recognize two insights; first, hierarchies represent an unswervingly common phenomena within international politics. Second, it is this ubiquity that enables it to produce impactful dynamics. Thus, what follows are wide-reaching processes of hierarchical differentiation that are aligned with the particular relations of super- and subordination between states and actors (2016).

In the international arena, hierarchical relationships of authority among states have become anchored and advanced via unofficial mechanisms and practices, rather than legal inscriptions. Furthermore, as small states are generally associated with less domestic resources at hand and thus, weaker influence in the international sphere (MacDonald 2018; Mathiasen 2022), their position within the hierarchical structure tends to correspond to these conditions. On the link between hierarchies and networks, oftentimes the argument is that “[...]in fact, networks run counter to hierarchies” (Sevin & Manor 2019, p. 327), as networked structures are argued to disperse power and influence across its nodes (Metzl 2001). Nevertheless, that does not necessarily mean that networks are immune to processes of hierarchical differentiation.

## Hierarchies and Resources in Diplomacy

As concerns diplomacy and its relation to hierarchies, Barkawi (2015) scrutinizes the naturalized equation of diplomacy with peace and progress. Whereas scholars have underscored that “[...] diplomacy oils the gears of international society, makes cooperation happen, and undergirds multilateralism” (2015, p. 78), Barkawi maintains that diplomacy simultaneously contributes to and facilitates the hierarchical order and arrangement of international society, and its continued reproduction (2015). It has furthermore been suggested that domestic resources play a part in determining the reach and density of a country’s diplomatic network (Lequesne 2020). In general, diplomats representing countries that are categorized as ‘financially developed’ may thus encounter less demanding experiences related to networking, while ‘developing’ countries’ diplomats may experience networking challenges more palpably. Contributing to this understanding, Towns writes that diplomats’ networks are “[...]a function of the positionality and resources” (2022, p. 355) of the diplomat. Put differently, diplomatic networks appear to hinge on structural factors such as the diplomat’s accompanying state resources. As Towns skillfully underscores:

No ambassador of a small and impoverished state, no matter how skilled and savvy, can make up for the structural inequalities among diplomatic missions. And the ambassador of a superpower, no matter how inexperienced, socially inept or ignorant, will always have access to a large range of important actors (Towns 2022, p. 355).

From the sparse literature which only topically addresses state resources (DRL), it nonetheless appears that resource levels are suggested to hold a role in diplomatic practice. With varying resource levels at their disposal, resource-deprived and resource-rich diplomats need to approach networking differently as their DRL-related point of departures differ. Indeed, while diplomacy and its networking is associated with upscale settings and other lavish conditions, this association might not reflect every diplomat’s experience with diplomatic networking. As was introduced in the introduction, there are both ornately decorated embassies *and* modest embassies comprising of a shared two-room space, thus bringing a more nuanced picture than what has been scholarly recognized. Indeed, as of yet, this particular dimension remains largely overlooked.

That resource-deprived and resource-rich diplomats are forced to network differently is treated as a theoretical premise in this study, as there will be no direct comparison between the two. Instead, the focus is directed to resource-deprived diplomats and the way they approach and manage diplomatic networking. Altogether, it is expected that state resources matter during diplomatic networking, and that this in turn plays out differently depending on the state-given resources that the diplomat possesses. As such, the resource-scarce diplomats are expected to encounter challenges that are particular to their resource level, which they in turn need to manage. In the next sections, we will zero in on networking and its connection with gender.



## **Gendered Networks in General and in Diplomacy: Theoretical Points of Departure**

This section concentrates on 'gendered networks', by borrowing disparate insights from previous scholarship on gender and networking. The gendered networks concept is split into four dimensions, all of which align with the structure of the analytical framework summarized later in this chapter. These dimensions, a) with whom b) where c) when and lastly, c) in what ways, are treated separately, yet remain intricately connected and will therefore overlap.

### **Networking with Whom?**

Let us begin with the first dimension of gendered networks: towards whom are formal and informal networking efforts directed? How are network connections gendered? To make sense of this question, one needs to entertain the concept of homophily. Homophily is the tendency to form network relationships based on shared characteristics. When women try to network in male-dominated spheres, they may thus end up operating on the margins of male homosocial networks (Ibarra 1992; Bapna & Funk 2021; Brass 1985). Regarding homophily and networks, McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001) emphasize that homophily represents a basic organizing principle, pervading networks of people by its way of organizing members along lines of shared social features. From ethnicity, race, education, social class, age and gender, homophily utilizes socially constructed labels and identities to localize information (2001). Highlighting Huckfeldt and Sprague's study performed in 1995, McPherson et al. note that it detected significant levels of homophily by gender in networks dedicated to political discussions, as 84% of the men discussed only with other men (2001).

Generally, studies show that men's network connections are more homophilous compared to women's, whose ties are more heterosocial in character (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook 2001; Durbin 2011; Bapna & Funk 2021). Indeed, diverse networks can enable a gathering of diverse resources (de Klerk & Verreynne 2017), but this does not translate similarly to dominant groups. The dominant groups stand to benefit more from homophilous network connections than if they were to pursue heterosocial ties. Contrastingly, investing in primarily homophilous connections will not produce the same yield for the subordinate group, but instead be 'limiting' (Durbin 2011; McDonald 2011). These revelations are important not only by themselves, but also because they can be located within a larger context: that is, the significance of networking on job performance. Access and participation in formal and informal networks enable the collection of organizational resources crucial to performance and thus, career advancement (Podolny & Baron 1997; Durbin 2011).

The diplomatic institution displays a less homophilous character today than historically. With a more diverse group of actors, its environment has become decidedly more heterosocial (Aggestam & Towns 2018, b), which by extension indicates more room for heterosocial networking. With women appointed to key diplomatic positions, formal diplomatic networks

host a mix of male and female actors. Thus, formal networking is more diverse in terms of whom the networking is exercised towards. However, around the capitals of the world, formal and informal ‘Women Ambassador Networks’ also exist, which sees female diplomats establish themselves as a network cohort (Towns 2022). While formal networking generally appears more heterosocial today, the phenomena of gender segregation might instead endure in cases of informal networking. In these instances, gender homophily patterns might remain. As this also relates to the specific networking setting, this will be elaborated on in the next section.

Besides gender homophily, diplomatic networking also relies on notions of historic and present state relationships; diplomats tend to engage in formal and informal networking with diplomats representing like-minded countries. Therefore, with whom diplomatic networking is exercised also depends on pre-existing diplomatic and political relationships established over the years. As Towns writes:

The network is by and large institutional and anchored in the embassy, with new ambassadors inheriting much of the network of their predecessors (Towns 2022, p. 355).

However, Towns also underscores that the tradition of inheriting network connections does not cancel out the impact of individual diplomats’ networking skills, as these also shape networking access (2022). Thus, from these insights it follows that formal diplomatic networking is expected to be inclusive and heterosocial in terms of who the networking is directed towards (with some exceptions, e.g. formal all-female network). Networking informally, however, the expectation runs in the other direction; ‘with whom’ is expected to be more gender-based and segregated. From before, we also expect that resource levels might also matter, by imposing particular access challenges that require management.

### **...where?**

Shifting to the second theme, we turn to networking environments and settings. That is, where do formal and informal networks operate? How is space gendered? Gender scholars have argued that the locational whereabouts matter; access to networks also tends to correspond to the location. Specifically, some scenes remain difficult for women to gain access to. In male-dominated professions such as diplomacy, diplomatic clubs reserved for men and the infamous sauna constitute informal settings that generate barriers for women striving to engage with the network. Although less difficult to access than men’s clubs and saunas, the diplomatic get-togethers at the pub and the golf course are also informal locations that complicate access for women, as these have traditionally been ‘male’ spheres. In these settings, diplomatic networking tends to rely on features of gender sameness (Durbin 2011; Nair 2020). However, gender-based joining criteria appears relevant also to the women-only networks. These networks meet in more or less formalized settings such as diplomatic luncheons and seminars - but also get together at more informal scenes such as ice cream parlors or wine-tastings (Towns 2022).

Clearly, these examples of networking settings also make use of gendered identities to delineate the network composition.

Having undergone some sort of paradigm shift, Niklasson (2020) contends that diplomacy operates in a relatively different manner today. Where informal gatherings at men's clubs and saunas previously formed the preferred networking scene, more formal settings such as diplomatic receptions have become a given networking scene (2020). As such, diplomatic networking sites have undergone a formalization, which has generated more inclusive structures. However, Durbin emphasizes that the informal old boys' network is not obsolete in any way and as such, informal gatherings at the pub, golf tee and in the sauna linger on (2011).

Although the setting is theorized to have shifted towards more formal and inclusive standards, this move does not necessarily ensure equal participation. Niklasson (2020) and Towns (2022) similarly note that female diplomats encounter situations where organizers of formal events assume that the female diplomat is the spouse and address her as 'the wife'. In other situations, the professional title might be recognized, but organizers might still signal that the proper procedure hinges on female diplomats spending "[...]the evening with the other ladies" (Niklasson 2020, p. 33). Similarly to the 'with whom' expectation, diplomatic networking at formal locations is expected to be mixed and inclusive. However, with informal locations, gender patterns are expected to manifest more clearly. As noted previously, resource levels are expected to also matter, by imposing particular access challenges that require management.

### **...when?**

The settings also elicit questions that relate to the time and hour of network gatherings. Oftentimes, 'time' and 'space' are referred to as a dyadic union - inevitably merging, thereby compounding their impact. With that in mind, we now turn to the question of 'when' diplomats network: when is formal and informal networking exercised - and does this have different implications to men and women? As highlighted by existing contributions on professional networking, gendered expectations impact networking opportunities. It is not uncommon for members of formal and informal networks to socialize after work, and as these networking gatherings take place during later hours it becomes an issue of prioritization for some members. Generally, the traditional take on the appropriate division of labor stipulates that the woman should bear responsibility for managing the domestic- and childcare sphere at post-work hours. With women assuming this responsibility, men are able to spend these hours in ways deemed worthwhile. Without socially prescribed responsibility to care for children or elderly, the schedule allows for formal and informal networking events in tandem with leisure activities such as playing sports and joining the pub hangout (Durbin 2011).

Thus, women are more likely to be forced to prioritize between post-work formal and informal networking on one hand - and household responsibilities on the other. For women whose profession is located in diplomacy, attending formal and informal networking events (e.g. the

diplomatic reception or the cocktail circuit) becomes complicated, as these tend to commence after work (Niklasson 2020; Towns 2022). Thus, availability during post-work hours becomes a requisite in order to attend said gatherings, where these diplomatic get-togethers in turn represent opportunities for valuable networking. Therefore, it is not a lack of ambition, skills or awareness that necessarily impedes women diplomats from partaking in networking gatherings - rather, it is the timing of these that may leave women with greater constraints (Durbin 2011; de Klerk & Verreyne 2017; Niklasson 2020).

As previously mentioned, diplomatic networks have shifted towards more formally structured events - but this is more a matter of network configuration and location, rather than time. As such, networking is still exercised at post-work hours at cocktail circuits and the likes, which suggests that female diplomats still face prioritization challenges, given persistent and dominant gender roles, inadequate parental leave policies and childcare provisions (Aggestam & Towns 2019; Niklasson 2020; Towns 2022). Therefore, the expectation is that when formal and informal diplomatic networking takes place at post-work/weekend and evening hours, stereotypical gender duties limit the networking of women to a greater extent than to their male counterparts. Resource levels are expected to also matter, by imposing particular participation challenges that require management.

### **...and in What Ways?**

Lastly, we have arrived at the question of 'how'. In what ways is formal and informal diplomatic networking practiced? In what ways are the practices gendered? Prior scholarship has linked negotiation to practices of communicative exchanges, that is - 'small talk'. Research has underscored the importance of partaking in small talk centered on trivial everyday topics unrelated to the negotiation theme in question. This social-communal exchange indicates consideration whilst facilitating trustworthiness and cooperativeness (Shaugnessy, Mislin & Hentschel 2015). As negotiation, along with representation, has been established as key to diplomatic activity (Balsacq, Charillon & Ramel 2020), which in turn is accomplished during formal and informal networking (Uilenreef 2014; Hocking 2020), small talk necessarily plays a role in diplomatic networking. Providing additional nuances, gender scholarship has unveiled small talk (also 'linguistic politeness') as a gendered communication tool (Mullany 2006). On the naturalized association between small talk and female stereotypes, scholarship notes that:

Women, for example, are stereotypically perceived to be more communal than men, and thus are expected to behave in a manner that is more communicative, sociable, and focused on the well-being of others (Shaugnessy, Mislin & Hentschel 2015, p. 106)

In contrast, men are stereotypically associated with agentic and assertive behavior, thereby much less associated with social-communal interactions. Having performed multiple empirical studies, Shaugnessy, Mislin and Hentschel conclude that there is support for "[...]the notion that men and women, in the same situation, engaging in the same behavior, result in distinct reactions due to

the behavioral expectations associated with their gender” (2015, p. 113). Furthermore, male negotiators who engaged in small talk reaped positive benefits, as they were perceived ‘cooperative’ and ‘likeable’. This did not translate similarly to female negotiators who instead were expected to interact in a social-communal manner, thereby offering no additional benefits (2015).

In a networked diplomacy, diplomats will need to wield exceptional communicative and relationship-building skills (Heine 2013; Sevin & Manor 2019). Yet, as the gender-conscious scholarship has shown, ‘exceptional’ might not always be sufficient. As highlighted earlier, diplomacy has been acknowledged as an institution which rests on fundamentally gendered notions of the sexes. As Towns writes, “[...]what is formally recognised as diplomacy consists of masculinized practices” (2020, p. 578). Similarly, Nair (2020) emphasizes that sociability practices are raced, classed and gendered. Crystallizing into concrete expressions, these practices enable a continuation of social hierarchies. For instance, the sociability of sport connects in various ways to class, gender and race. Exemplifying this, Nair turns to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its utilization of male-homosocial practices:

The sociability fostered from ASEAN’s golf was not only elite and upper class (addressed earlier) but also a profoundly masculine sociability. Barring the occasional female diplomat from the Philippines, ASEAN historically operated as an elite club of men striking gentlemen’s agreements (Nair 2020, p. 206)

Despite an increased descriptive representation of women, diplomacy nonetheless remains a male-dominated field where ‘the male’ is treated as interchangeable to ‘the diplomat’ (Towns & Niklasson 2017; Aggestam & Towns 2018a; Aggestam & Towns 2018b). As tokens of their subgroup, women diplomats’ visibility and contrast is clear. Encountering this scene, Niklasson (2020) suggests that female diplomats employ different practices. For instance, drawing on the existence of unique attributes, female diplomats can approach formal and informal networking in a way that legitimizes not only their presence, but also their unparalleled ability to network differently - with ‘gentle charm’ and warmth (2020). Therefore, in formal and informal networks where masculinized practices constitute the norm, gender is expected to manifest as women being assigned the role of small-talking with warmth, whereas men are assigned the role of small-talking with agency and assertiveness. Resource-levels are expected to matter, by posing particular challenges to diplomats’ networking conduct.

Considering both resources and gender on diplomatic networking, networking might become more complicated. More precisely what the added complexity entails remains to be seen, but an expectation is nevertheless that DRL and gender - and their interplay - will impact diplomatic networking. As existing research has yet to examine this dimension, it is about time to begin the exploration of the diplomatic networking of resource-deprived diplomats.

## **A Summary: Theoretical Claims and Expectations on Diplomatic Networking**

It has been swiftly suggested that states which possess larger domestic resources, thereby classifying as hierarchically ‘dominant states’, can be aided networking-wise by these resources. In contrast, less domestic resources might be associated with more networking difficulties. Thus, the theoretical premise is that resource-rich and resource-deprived diplomats network differently given their differing DRL. From this, we expect that the latter will face challenges that are unique to their resource levels (e.g. hosting networking events; managing to attend a multiplicity of events; and, receiving invitations, particularly to informal gatherings).

Gender-wise, we have learned that homophily is a recurrent theme that permeates networks. Overall, men’s connections are more gender homophilous, whereas women’s are more differentiated. Although diplomacy is suggested to display a more heterosocial milieu today, gender homophily also remains. Second, some settings of diplomatic networking, particularly the informal settings, display more gender segregation. Formal settings instead move towards more formalized and gender inclusive settings. Third, diplomatic networking can be scheduled at post-work hours, thus theorized to disproportionately impact women (‘traditional division of labor’). Fourth, networking practices such as small talk rests on associating women with being ‘warm’ and possessing ‘gentle charm’, and associating men with ‘agentic’ and ‘assertive’ approaches. Given these, we expect that female and male diplomats network differently due to norms and masculinized practices that equate ‘the male’ with ‘the diplomat’ (how), features of gender homophily (with whom) and structural barriers in the form of uneven workload (when) and persisting elements of informality (where).

Lastly, how do these components fuse? In other words, are there networking patterns and challenges among diplomats that connect with the given allocation of resources, and are these DRL-related challenges and responses to them gendered? Below, the foregoing claims and expectations are summarized in the analytical framework.

### **Analytical Framework: Resources, Gender and Diplomatic Networking Among Resource-Deprived Diplomats**

This section embarks on the last part of the framework journey - synthesizing disparate theoretical insights into an analytical framework. The framework aligns with Ibarra’s suggestion: considering imposed structural constraints whilst acknowledging the individual as indirectly partaking in its creation. Employing this approach, one reduces the risks of delivering conclusions that are either excessively deterministic or overly anchored in individual agency. Thus, the diplomats’ networking experiences will be viewed as “[...]reflections of purposeful strategic action within a context characterized by structural constraint” (Ibarra 1993, p. 57).

The analytical framework resonates with previous theoretical sections, thereby displaying the four dimensions: a) with whom, b) where, c) when and d) in what ways, whilst presenting space for discoveries on DRL-related dynamics and their possible connection to notions of gender. The questions posed are theoretically anchored, but the analysis will be performed in an inductive manner, as the aim is to explore. Indeed, whereas the theoretical anchoring of the analytical framework has generated cautious expectations, the inductive phase of the analysis explores the empirical substance of these expectations and additional patterns that relate to diplomatic networking.

### Analytical Framework: Resources, Gender and Diplomatic Networking Among Resource-Deprived Diplomats

	Previous Research: Claims and Expectations	New Insights: Differences among Resource-Deprived and Resource-Rich Diplomats	New Insights: Gender Differences among Resource-Deprived Male and Female Diplomats
<b>Networking: with whom?</b>	<p>All diplomats network formally with access to key actors (in heterosocial configurations)</p> <p>Men network informally with men (homophily), women network informally with both (heterosocial)</p>		
<b>Networking: where?</b>	<p>All diplomats network with access to key formal settings (in heterosocial configurations), such as the diplomatic reception</p> <p>Men network at informal sites such as hotel bar, sauna, golf tee. Women network at informal sites such as luncheons, wine-tastings</p>		

<p><b>Networking: when?</b></p>	<p>All diplomats network during work and at post-work hours (e.g. evenings)</p> <p>Men network post-work hours. Women can also network after, but trad. division of labor can complicate</p>		
<p><b>Networking: in what ways?</b></p>	<p>All diplomats network with small-talk. Men network with 'agency' and 'assertiveness', women network with 'warmth' and 'gentle charm'</p> <p>Similar to formal practices, although less formalized in comparison</p>		



## IV. Specified Aim and Research Questions

The intersection of diplomatic networking and structural factors, such as domestic resource levels and gender, displays a puzzling research gap. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to contribute with an exploratory and theory-developing study of how resource-deprived ambassadors network and whether this differs by gender. To fulfill this aim, the thesis addresses the following questions:

1. Do resource-deprived ambassadors face particular networking challenges, in terms of a) with whom, b) where, c) when and d) in what ways they network? If so, what are some of these challenges?
2. Do the challenges (a-d) that resource-deprived ambassadors face differ between men and women? (a) If so, in what ways? (b) How do male and female ambassadors respond to these challenges?

## V. Methodological Framework: Qualitative Case Study

In this section, research design and methods choices are detailed. The chapter starts with the research design, to then move to case selection and sampling criteria. Next, the semi-structured in-depth interview is presented as the tool for data collection. Throughout the chapter, methodological conundrums and solutions are reflected on. The last chapter is purely reflexive, in that it gathers additional reasonings on various methodological aspects.

### Research Design: Single Case Study

This thesis takes the form of a qualitative case study. The very essence of the case study rests on the idea that the chosen phenomena is complex, contemporary and exhibit context-close features (Yin 2014). Given that diplomacy is integral to international society and its complex operations - and that diplomatic networking, in turn, is integral to diplomacy - this phenomena is argued to embody the *raison d'être* of case study research. Moreover, this study categorizes as 'single case study' as it zeroes in on a particular case of diplomatic networking - that is, the diplomatic site of Stockholm. Embarking on a single case project entails methodological hazards that require caution. Indeed, the lack of multiple cases constitutes an empirical disadvantage, but when timetable and financial means are scant - and for pilot studies whose aim is to develop theoretical propositions - the single case study represents a sensible option (Yin 2014; Marshall & Rossman 2016).

Moreover, the thesis is to be understood as a qualitative exploratory 'pilot study'. Thus, the objective is not to test nor consume theory in the literal sense, but rather to contribute to theory development by proposing additional factors worthy of consideration (Esaiasson et al. 2017), in this case the domestic resource level of the diplomat. As emphasis is given to theory

development, it is important to underline the limitations that come with the territory. This thesis will not claim theoretical or result generalizability in the statistical sense. Instead, it emphasizes the possibility of analytical generalizability and modest nomothetic contributions. Theoretical generalizability would entail proper theory testing, and had this project instead formed a theory-testing study, the design would look quite different. For instance, it would need to collect a larger number of networking cases coupled with a larger number of informants (Esaiasson et al. 2017). Additionally, there would have to be a comparison between resource-deprived and resource-rich diplomats, not just a comparison between previous research and resource-deprived diplomats (noting the previously mentioned theoretical premise). Nevertheless, given that the research nexus of resources, gender and diplomatic networking reflects a generally neglected area, theory development seems like an apt contribution.

## **Case Selection and Sampling Criteria**

### **Case Selection: Stockholm as a Single Case of a Diplomatic Site**

The case and site selected for this endeavor is the capital of Sweden, i.e. Stockholm and the diplomatic networking located there. The capital, and the networking it hosts, can be argued to represent a critical case - and more specifically a critical 'least likely' case (Esaiasson et al. 2017), where gender might be expected to not shape networking as distinctly as in more gender segregated contexts. The diplomatic corps of Stockholm is located in Sweden, a country with firmly established laws against gender discrimination (see *The Discrimination Act* 2008:567; Swedish Gender Equality Agency) and one of the most astute levels of gender equality - landing on a score of 82.3 out of 100 (EIGE 2021). With this in mind, it is expected that diplomatic networking is in part shaped by this gender context. After all, women represent 40% of the diplomats of the Swedish diplomatic force (Niklasson 2020). In terms of analytical generalizability of results, the implication is that should this study find gender differences in diplomatic networking in Stockholm, we are likely to see such differences elsewhere. However, should the networking not be characterized by gender differences, we cannot draw the conclusion that gender differences will be absent in other diplomatic sites.

However, viewed in terms of the domestic resource levels of diplomats, Stockholm can also be treated as a typical case, in that it hosts a plethora of international diplomatic actors accompanied by varying DRLs. This also holds true for other diplomatic capitals around the world. With this in mind, it is expected that diplomatic networking is in part shaped by this context. Hence, for the generalizability of the results, should this study find resource-related dynamics and challenges, we can expect such differences elsewhere. However, as stated earlier, a research design more appropriate for theory testing would be required to establish this firmly.

### **Sampling Criteria: Selecting Diplomats for Interviews**

With the focus set on Stockholm diplomatic networking, the sampling criteria will benefit from employing purposive and intensity sampling (O'Reilly 2009; Esaiasson et al. 2017). Firstly,

diplomats enjoy diplomatic status once they have been accredited by the host country. The highest diplomatic rank is an ambassador, which is the head of the diplomatic mission, and thus also the most visible (Cornut 2015; Balzacq, Charillon & Ramel 2020; Hocking 2020). All diplomatic missions consist of at least an ambassador and often more staff. Because ambassadors are avid networkers, this thesis focuses on the networking activities of ambassadors. However, being that ambassadors are busy professionals and thus not necessarily available for an interview with a master student, it is also possible that interviews will be held with other high-ranking diplomats. Therefore, resource-deprived female and male ambassadors posted in Stockholm represent the target sampling population - with the possibility of including diplomats should circumstances require so.

The next question concerns how to sample this population. Firstly, how do we recognize a diplomat? The Stockholm Diplomatic List (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2022) lists all accredited diplomats and ambassadors. The list contains information on the diplomatic envoys: personnel list, email and postal addresses. Furthermore, verifying the presence of the title 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary', content validity is strengthened (Esaiasson et al. 2017). Ambassadors may furthermore be posted in Stockholm as their main posting, but some may also possess multiple/side accreditation as per Article 5 in the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* (1961), and may thus reside elsewhere. On the Stockholm List, there are 126 ambassadors with accreditation to Stockholm. Among these 126, a total of 98 ambassadors enjoy their main posting in Stockholm.

Next, who is recognized as a resource-deprived ambassador? Operationalizing the domestic resource level (DRL) is tricky, as it lacks a scholarly-derived definition to begin with. Nevertheless, going back to basics, this study understands DRL as an aggregation of 1) economic development of the sending state, and 2) diplomatic presence. Economic capital provides means to influence the international agenda, and diplomatic presence in turn is related to the wealth level as the former is in part indicated by the latter (Lequesne 2020; Towns 2022; Mathiasen 2022). Thus, to facilitate content validity, DRL will be measured based on the economy size of sending states, i.e. the ranking of nominal GDP via the World Population Review (U.S. Census Bureau 2022), as this is one crucial determinant of the economic capacity to maintain and resource embassies. Whether a national economy is 'large' or 'small' is understood in relative terms, meaning that a 'large' economy is appreciated as larger than others and that national economies are ranked vis-à-vis one another. The World Population Review list contains 212 national economies, ranked in order where the United States of America ranks as no. 1. From this list, the 100 smallest economies have been selected as 'resource-deprived'. Lebanon ranks as no. 100 with an annual GDP of USD 27,32 Bn while the rest of the countries demonstrate a GDP below that (U.S. Census Bureau 2022). Drawing the line at 100 is in some respects arbitrary (Esaiasson et al. 2017), but it is nevertheless argued to represent a first good step to selecting embassies with less resources than others in Stockholm. Furthermore, among

these 100 economies, 22 of them have an ambassador posted in Stockholm with the capital as their main posting.<sup>1</sup>

The embassy size and the resources it wields are not only related to the sending state's economy, but can also be a function of the priority that the state places on the specific diplomatic mission in question. Some states with lower GDP may very well prioritize their mission in Stockholm, thereby enjoying a larger and better resourced embassy than the GDP otherwise would suggest. Recognizing this, the sample corresponds to an additional demarcation, i.e. size of embassy staff - in this case, embassies with a diplomatic staff of five or less (displayed in the Stockholm Diplomatic List). Again, this number is somewhat arbitrary, however, embassies with personnel of five or less are clearly small. Combining the two criteria, there are 20 countries represented in Stockholm that measure as possessing low DRL.<sup>2</sup> Of course, there are nuances in terms of resource levels, where one can arguably spot countries across a full spectrum of resource levels (as opposed to categorizing in binary terms). Nevertheless, that represents a level of sophistication out of scope for this pilot endeavor, simultaneously as it is also called on to future studies to incorporate this aspect.

The next task concerns the selection of these diplomats. The optimal selection is an equal number of male and female ambassadors. The gender category is derived from the theoretical gender dichotomy. Thus, we measure gender in a binary and mutually exclusive manner, simply by differentiating among the titles of Mr. and Mrs./Ms. on the list. There are eleven male ambassadors and nine female ambassadors in the sample of resource-deprived embassies in Stockholm. Of course, the binary gender distinction is a simplified construct, as highlighted by LGBTQ literature (Carlson-Rainer 2019). However, as this study is limited resource-wise (the irony is not lost on anyone), the hope is that future scholarship can take these important nuances into consideration.

What number of interviews is adequate? As this study is qualitative, it is the content of the interviews that constitutes the focal point rather than the number of interviews. Therefore, priority is given to theoretical saturation and the final number of interviews should ideally reflect this. In terms of generalizability, it is reiterated that there will be no claims on sample generalizability. Instead, the hope is that this sample will provide insights that are valuable to the research field, and that this in turn will underscore the need for future scholarship to incorporate robust statistical tools. Thus, the aim is to contribute with analytical generalizability (Esaiasson et al. 2017); the experiences that relate to DRL and gender of the sampled diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan; Albania; Armenia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Cuba; Cyprus; El Salvador; Georgia; Kosovo; Laos; Lebanon; Libya; Moldova; Mongolia; Mozambique; Namibia; North Macedonia; Palestine; Rwanda; Somalia; Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan; Albania; Armenia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Cuba; Cyprus; El Salvador; Georgia; Kosovo; Laos; Lebanon; Moldova; Mongolia; Mozambique; Namibia; North Macedonia; Rwanda; Somalia; Zimbabwe

representations should provide insights about other diplomatic sites - as these factors presumably matter during networking elsewhere too.

However, as discussed briefly above, ambassadors' busily structured days allow for few windows of interviewing possibilities. Thus, there is a risk of having interview invitations declined - and scheduled interviews postponed or canceled. What is more, in some cases the embassy might wish to contribute, but due to scheduling conflicts, the solution is to send a diplomat. As this thesis explores patterns, rather than the specific individual ambassador at hand, interviewees can be replaced should circumstances demand so. Therefore, although the aim is to sample purposively, some elements of snowball or convenience sampling might also occur (Marshall & Rossman 2016), provided that the sampling nevertheless complies with the key criteria.

Approaching the interview phase, invitation letters were distributed to selected countries' embassies and ambassadors (for Invitation Letter template, see appendix 1). The aim was to secure interviews with as many as possible and to cover an equal number of female and male ambassadors. Out of the total sample, the final number of interviews landed at six<sup>3</sup>, with three women and three men (see table below and appendix 3), which is a true testament to what was underscored previously; ambassadors are indeed busy professionals. There were generally great difficulties establishing contact, to then receive an acceptance of said invitation and lastly, scheduling an interview date preferably within the limited timetable. Also, one ambassador wished to contribute, but could only do so in written participation. Another embassy resorted to sending a high-ranking diplomat to participate, given previously scheduled engagements in combination with unexpected diplomatic affairs. Thus, these aspects engender methodological circumstances that need to be considered when delivering analytic interpretations. More on this in later sections.

**Table 1: Interviews and Participating Countries**

Participating Countries	Gender Category
The Republic of Armenia	Male
The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Female
Georgia	Male
The Republic of Kosovo	Female
The Republic of Mozambique	Male
The Republic of North Macedonia	Female

<sup>3</sup> Armenia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Georgia; Kosovo; Mozambique; North Macedonia

## **Method of Data Collection: In-Depth Interviews**

Networking can be studied with various methods; from surveys, ethnographic observations to interviews - each of these methods provide a valuable entry. With surveys, broader issues and larger numbers of voices can be heard. With ethnography, the physical presence enables close observations. Lastly, with (in-depth) interviews, as with ethnography, one can move beyond the general and superficial (O'Reilly 2009; Marshall & Rossman 2016; Esaiasson et al. 2017). In a dream scenario, one would employ all three methods to produce a study with both breadth and depth. However, due to a limited timetable and lack of financial muscles, prioritization is required - as often is the case. As the objective is to highlight granular and rich reasonings, the interview forms an apt tool. Thus, collecting the empirical data was managed via semi-structured in-depth interviews, also known as a topical approach, wherewith ambassadors act as informants. This decision rests on the unique centrality and knowledge (Esaiasson et al. 2017) that their ambassadorial position entails. Whereas interview respondents are asked questions anchored in the culture of the researcher, the questions posed to an informant are derived from the informant's culture, thereby tapping into the centrality and knowledge the informant possesses (Gabor 2017). Ultimately, the topical approach, where predetermined topics are addressed in a manner that is somewhat scripted and structured but which nonetheless leaves room for flexibility (Marshall & Rossman 2016), encourages a deep-diving of the uncharted territory which the study's research questions aim to cover.

As detailed in the previous section, in one case, participation took the form of a written response. Given the aim to explore beyond the superficial level with the in-depth interview, this situation naturally posed a conundrum. Hence, the questions had to undergo slight modifications in order to ensure that they would extract long and detailed written answers (absent the possibility of the interviewer to ask follow-up questions). However, as the total number of ambassadors that agreed to be interviewed was smaller than expected, any participation would be better than none.

Utilizing the pre-structured interview question guide (see appendix 4) while retaining flexibility, resource-deprived ambassadors and diplomats posted in Stockholm were queried about their networking. Noting that the interview is a communicative interchange between interviewer and informant, it is of importance to acknowledge that collected data constitutes locally collaborated material (Atkinson & Delamont 2001). As always, there is a need to perform an adequate number of interviews - yet, what constitutes 'adequate'? This discussion is adjacent to the matter of theoretical saturation. Put differently, at what point is the data collection complete? Ideally, the researcher should feel that more material would at most verify what has already been unearthed (Esaiasson et al. 2017). In this specific case, it was not possible to gather as many interviews as initially hoped, however, the ones that were held provided truly valuable insights that in turn can serve as a foundation and inspiration for future studies. While reaching theoretical saturation is a desired result, one should also bear in mind that saturation fulfillment is an ideational

destination; drawing inferences is always a perilous phase of the research process that requires an approach resting on transparency and reflexivity.

The richness of the interview also relies on the quality of the questions; from descriptive open-ended questions to elaborative ones. Guided by the analytical framework, key thematic questions were formulated. As such, these are inextricably linked to the dimensions delineated in the theory discussion: the DRL and a) with whom, b) where, c) when, and d) in what ways networking is exercised. The thematic questions' purpose is to provide the pathway to deeper elaborations, in turn building the foundation for analytic contributions. Given that the aim is to explore beyond the surface layer, building trust is key. Navigating the interview situation with an open-minded and professional aura whilst steering clear of 'why questions' (in favor of 'how, where, what' and 'can you tell me more about'...) trust can be built. Furthermore, as an interviewer, one must also remember the virtue of staying silent, thereby allowing elaborations room (Rapley 2001; Lilleker 2003; Marshall & Rossman 2016; Esaiasson et al. 2017).

Recording the interviews represented another step, as it enabled a minimisation of misunderstandings, which by extension facilitates reliability. Prior to the interview, the interviewees were able to accept or decline recording. This choice is displayed in the Informed Consent Form (see appendix 2) and is also double-checked verbally. After the interviews, the material was transferred to a secure digital study database (Yin 2014) via Gothenburg University. Only the researcher and the supervisor have access to the case study dataset (as is detailed in the consent form).

Transcribing the material constituted the next step, which rested on a dual approach of manual and digital transcription (the latter managed with the assistance of the Microsoft 365 Word transcription tool). The transcriptions were also transferred to the secure database. As concerns the issue of anonymity and consent, the Informed Consent Form sent to the diplomats detailed that this study would present a list of the diplomatic representations interviewed, but that no empirical material would be traceable to any specific diplomat. As such, the only distinction that is made during the analytic phase is whether or not the diplomat categorizes as male or female (e.g. 'female diplomat 1'). Now, having explained the data collection process, the next section details the methods for analyzing the collected material.

## **Methods for Analyzing the Interview Transcripts**

The analytic phase adheres to the principles of abduction. Departing from this approach, the data collection process oscillates between induction and deduction. Whereas induction provides the opportunity to unveil otherwise overlooked themes, the logic of deduction offers theoretical direction, thereby helping the researcher avoid the perils of traveling astray (O'Reilly 2009; Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009; Yin 2014; Marshall & Rossman 2016). Firstly, guided by disparate theoretical scholarship, insights have been sorted into overarching themes. These themes have in turn guided the development of the analytical tool. When collecting the empirical material,

inductive elements are introduced. As such, previously overlooked aspects that relate to the specific themes are allowed room to present themselves. Thus, the analytical tool is developed further, where oscillating between deduction-derived foundations and induction-led sharpening is key. For instance, answers to ‘where’ questions brought new aspects, which enabled framework sharpening. Similarly, questions on other themes were honed along the way, in that certain terms were unearthed and could be utilized going forward.

The empirical analysis primarily took an inductive stance as the objective was to let the material speak. Reading, re-reading and coding, with time passed in between, nuances were picked up - if not the first time, then hopefully later. Thus, the analytic phase was to be less ‘tainted’ by existing knowledge and unintentional biases, but also by previous readings. Insights from the collected and transcribed material were systematically sorted into analytical themes, codes and subcodes (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009; Esaiasson et al. 2017). For instance, unearthed challenges were coded as DRL-related and in turn pertaining to a specific theme (e.g., ‘when’), subcoded into an overarching challenge type (e.g., ‘lacking access’) and thereafter sorted gender-wise, both in terms of the specific challenge and associated responses. Via this coding process, insights were organized and structured in order to facilitate meaningful comprehension. As such, networking conditions unique to resource-deprived diplomats were mapped out as well as whether these challenges, and responses to them, appeared to hold gender notions. Performing both deduction and induction, it is possible to alleviate risks whilst fusing advantages. However, marrying the two will not *eliminate* risks as reflexive judgment is required at all times (O’Reilly 2009; Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009; Yin 2014; Marshall & Rossman 2016).

## **Some Reflexive Remarks**

First, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the context in which my upbringing is located. Growing up in a society that values gender equality and embraces progressive measures (i.e. Sweden), this experience is nevertheless anything but common. Prior to conducting interviews, it is crucial that these types of experiences are reflected on, so that they do not unconsciously accompany and ‘taint’ the interviews. After all, it is the informants’ experiences that are at the heart of this study. This process of conscious reflexive disentanglement is decidedly easier said than done. However, reflecting on preconceived biases and the subtle way these nudge subconscious understandings, one is best prepared to enter the research process as unbiased as possible.

Second, the network studied is located in Sweden, which ties with the above-mentioned. What is more, literature such as Aggestam and Towns’ article (2019) have rightfully stressed that future scholarship needs to move beyond the dominant Eurocentric vantage point. While much remains to be realized in terms of this objective, this study has redirected the spotlight onto diplomatic voices that tend to be overlooked relative to others (i.e. smaller/resource-deprived embassies). Thus, the hope is to provide some sense of perspective-widening, as modest as it may be. Also,



as Sweden is considered a critical least likely case, there are knowledge benefits associated with exploring it; observations from this context can provide hints about other parts of the world.

One must also remember the essence of diplomacy - that is, diplomatic posture. Diplomats are known to weigh words wisely and to contemplate meticulously. In the words of Will and Ariel Durant, “[...] to say nothing, especially when speaking, is half the art of diplomacy” (1961, p. 502). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge potential implications of this; after all, no diplomat wishes to detail aspects that might suggest an undermining of their position, and therefore they might refrain from describing their experiences as transparently as this study wishes to. Instead, they might opt for a portrayal that is rather transparent, indeed, but which also avoids undercutting their diplomatic presence. At the end of the day, this is quite understandable, as diplomacy holds values such as integrity, honor and capability close to heart. With more resources at hand, the combination of in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations would constitute a sound alternative. Hopefully, this methodological suggestion is an endeavor that future scholarship can take on.

Also, constructing operational indicators and demarcating accordingly is a delicate project; both because there are multiple ways of understanding any chosen phenomena, and because no researcher can claim monopoly on determining what is ‘universally correct’. For instance, drawing the line at 100 (i.e. smallest economies) and five or less (i.e. diplomatic embassy staff) when sampling resource-deprived diplomatic representations is in some ways arbitrary, but nevertheless also deduced with as much reason as possible. There are often lively debates on issues relating to content validity, yet these debates represent the very key to healthy development; we propose, we discuss - and we learn.

Lastly, due to hectic schedules, a limited timeframe, frail budget and the ever-changing dynamic landscape that is international relations and diplomacy - these conditions meant that the task of scheduling interviews represented a weighty challenge. While the study certainly would prefer a larger number of interviews, it nonetheless was not possible given a variety of external factors. However, the interviews held yielded the sharing of important and fascinating experiences - and these represent valuable insights. Hopefully, future studies can pick up the torch and add more material that enables a continued exploration of diplomatic networking and its intersection with DRL and gender.

## VI. Resources, Gender and Diplomatic Networking: Results and Analysis

Holding interviews with ambassadors and high-ranking diplomats, this thesis has begun to explore diplomatic networking as exercised by resource-deprived diplomats. What has emerged, above all, is that while some might understand networks as horizontal and thus non-hierarchical, diplomatic networking is nevertheless not able to escape hierarchical and gendered structures completely. To resource-deprived male and female diplomats, this might take the form of various challenges to diplomatic networking.

In the sections below, results and analyses based on collected material are discussed. After having introduced general insights that relate to Stockholm as a context; the role of networks and networking; and lastly, the distinction between formal and informal, the remaining sections follow the structure of the analytical framework. Furthermore, the diplomats will be referred to as, for instance, ‘Female/Male Diplomat 1’ and/or associated abbreviations (e.g, FD1; MD1 etc).

Stockholm hosts a plethora of international diplomatic representations, thus representing a large-sized diplomatic choir with varying resources levels at their disposal. Out of 126 ambassadorial accreditations to Stockholm, there are 98 that have the capital as their main posting. Adding the DRL criteria, there are 20 diplomatic representations that suit said criteria. From the interviews, Stockholm was labeled a large and diverse diplomatic community with abundant networking opportunities; “Stockholm is one of the largest diplomatic capitals in the world, it is a prominent site for conferences and workshops” (MD3). Sweden and Stockholm moreover also represent a context renowned for its progressive policies and initiatives honoring gender equality and inclusivity. Therefore, offering an environment where gender integration is more or less institutionalized (e.g. subsidized childcare and parental leave measures), Sweden is considered a forerunner of the gender equality movement. Indeed, the interviews concurred that the Swedish capital offers a gender-unique atmosphere, as it was recounted that “[...] it is a very nice place to be, as a woman” (FD3), and that:

[...] especially in Sweden, one of the most gender equal countries, every position is shifting into more equality between man and woman... (Male Diplomat 2).

Thus, as any diplomatic endeavor is undertaken within a given context, the interviews should be embraced accordingly; interviewed diplomats work and network in Stockholm, a relatively gender integrative context with a large and active diplomatic community. However, as noted throughout the thesis, not every diplomat is blessed with vast financial means. From resplendent embassy buildings, large staff and residences that optimize hosting - to small apartments and understaffed personnel, the diplomatic community of Stockholm encompasses actors with different sets of resources at their disposal.

Next, the interviewees agreed on the importance of diplomatic networking. Awarded terms such as ‘crucial’ and ‘of utmost importance’, networks were given an unequivocal role and most clearly displayed in the following quote:

If you do not have good networks, you will not be able to do anything [...] If it would be easier for me to reach these people, then I would do it by myself. Then I would not need the networks. But since that is not the case...  
(Female Diplomat 2).

As is detailed in the sections below, access and participation in these diplomatic networks are however complicated by certain factors - for instance, domestic state resources and gender.

While utilized as a tool to sort and digest insights on networking, the distinction ‘formal/informal’ is idealistic by nature. Not only was ‘informal’ made to represent slightly different meanings to different diplomats, but the given formality of diplomatic events need not preclude informal elements from emerging. Even within the confines of the strictest formal networking, space *can* be held wherein informal elements can exist. Having acknowledged that, the distinction is nevertheless useful. Diplomatic networking can be more or less formal and informal and comprise both - but regardless, it appears to link with DRL and gender in various ways.

## **Networking with Whom?**

As previously detailed, oftentimes the argument is that networks stand opposite to that of hierarchies, yet this appears to be a truly simplified take. Networks can, indeed, contribute to the shattering of otherwise persistent structures anchored in hierarchical dynamics. Nevertheless, as is brought to light by the interviews with resource-deprived diplomats, networks also have their way of aligning with hierarchical structures. For instance, a diplomat noticed that she had to work hard to have her country taken as seriously as others, thereby being “[...] in a constant struggle to try to convince rapid commerce countries” (FD1). In general, resource-deprived diplomats appear to face particular challenges that relate to their DRL, most notably gaining access to key networks and actors. These challenges were felt across both genders, but the various strategies put in place to alleviate them signal that gender is also at play.

Firstly, the formalization of diplomatic events appears to have delivered more inclusive network configurations. Regarding formal networking, a common theme amongst the resource-deprived diplomats was that of ‘access and inclusivity’. From diplomatic receptions to meetings with interlocutors in the form of governmental leaders and their cabinets; Ministry for Foreign Affairs officials; Swedish Parliament (Riksdag); political party representatives; chambers, departments and similar institutional actors, it was underscored that “[...] here, everyone has the right to partake” (FD2), which underscores a degree of guaranteed formal access. Indeed, formally - everyone is invited, but that need not necessarily translate into actual connection; hierarchies may be invisible to the naked eye, yet remain ever so present and continuously performed. Thus,

formal diplomatic networking may have created inclusivity, albeit modestly so in terms of neutralizing existing hierarchical structures. As one diplomat explained: “[...] even at the reception, the mingling is done on a selective basis” (FD1).

Most emphasis was given to informal diplomatic networking. Oftentimes, it was said that in the informal networks is where the diplomatic heavy lifting occurs. As was shared, “[...]without these informal meetings, informal communications, you can’t have your job done (MD1). However, resource-deprived diplomats worried about missing out on sought-after invitations to these informal gatherings. Informally, the challenge of resource selectiveness appeared clearest:

[...] not only smaller in size, but also in terms of influence [...] people call one another and those are very selective gatherings, I mean, the bigger embassies, influential ones, they mingle with one another... (Female Diplomat 1).

Lacking powerful connections with other countries, resource-deprived diplomats found that their position complicated access, particularly to informal networks. As these networks have been awarded key significance, diplomatic networking becomes severely constrained if one is not able to access them.

[...] but I know also that it is easier for the countries who have long standing networks from before [...] We do not have as long standing and powerful contacts ourselves... [...] The invisible, that is something that is... Everyone does not have access to the people who really decide (Female Diplomat 2).

When asked about potential strategies put in place to manage these conditions, resource-deprived male diplomats generally subscribed to the idea that “[...] it’s our destiny, we can’t change it and we are not trying to, we have to deal with it” (MD1). In contrast, female diplomats were particularly keen to underscore the importance of all-female informal networks (e.g. female spouses of diplomats). For instance, one female diplomat shared: “[...] and then I remember well, I have this ex-wife ambassador in pilates, I can talk to her, you know, during coffee” (FD1). What is more, the role of diaspora communities was highlighted, in that they mitigated resource and budget issues by offering their qualifications without demanding financial compensation. Trying to circumvent suboptimal resource conditions, resource-deprived female diplomats appear to be practicing Heine and Metzl’s ‘network diplomacy’ to the best of their (structurally constrained) ability. Indeed, to these, gender was found facilitative to overcoming DRL challenges, as the value of female-dominated networks in a male-dominated field was voiced pronouncedly and explicitly. As was shared, the informal network with female colleagues and spouses of diplomats “[...] contributed a lot to my formal network...”, which was based on the observation that “[...] politics was not affecting our relations” (FD1). From this, a connection based on gender sameness was established, which in turn facilitated otherwise hard-to-reach connections with resourced colleagues down the road:

[...] and I could see the impact. For example, where I would meet the ambassadors. You know, the spouses of the spouses... they were much more friendly (Female Diplomat 1).

To the male diplomats, however, networks based on gender sameness, such as male-only groups, were quickly dismissed. Notably, it was met with diplomatic aversion and found rather intolerable.

[...] things are changing and there is no such thing as something that will be a man-only show. It's universal human issues [...] There are no issues that should be segregated. There is nothing that can't be discussed altogether (Male Diplomat 1).

Indeed, it was emphasized that although diplomacy previously had found itself a male-dominated field, today the institution tells a different story with a heterophilous milieu. Being that these resource-deprived male diplomats reside in Stockholm, known to represent an institutionalized gender equal culture, this aversion towards male configurations is very much in line with the environment in which it is embedded. Instead of gendered networks, the resource-deprived male diplomats faced DRL challenges by diversifying information sources whilst diplomatically acknowledging and sitting with their limited resources.

In general, female and male resource-deprived diplomats appear to face networking challenges that are unique to their less resourced position. Lacking access to powerful networks, DRL seemingly constitutes a hindrance to diplomatic networking. However, responding to this, the diplomats turned to different strategies. The females emphasized diaspora communities as well as all-female networks in their pursuit of accomplishing diplomatic networking when faced with resource-related impediments, where the latter constituted a bridge to key informal networks with powerful actors. Contrastingly, their male counterparts relied on diplomatic and somewhat laconic postures, acknowledging that 'it is our destiny' and distinctly disassociating themselves from similar gender-based networks. Altogether, informal network configurations appear to reign, and gender-based networks are used by resource-deprived female diplomats as an advantageous alternative pathway when faced with DRL-related challenges of entry. As is elaborated in the next section, these insights also link with the theme of 'where'; certain network configurations appear to invite certain settings and locations.

## **Location, Location, Location: Networking Where?**

It is often emphasized that, "...location, location, location" matters. Indeed, this saying has traveled from anecdotal and unsubstantiated advice to scoring status as an axiom of general knowledge. Although it might display its peak relevance in the world of real estate management and acquisition, it also seems to lend itself well to diplomatic networking. Firstly, the Stockholm context offers certain conditions for diplomatic networking. Besides encompassing a diplomatic corps that is described as lively, big and impressively organized, its equality norms also deliver a

distinct impact on the atmosphere. Notably, this translates into the settings for diplomatic networking, in that much of the formal networking is held at locations deemed inclusive by the resource-deprived diplomats. From official meetings and conferences at formal locations such as embassies, governmental offices the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Parliament (Riksdag) and the likes, to formal diplomatic receptions held at museums and hotels, this type of setting is associated with - to little surprise - uncomplicated inclusivity and access.

[...] if they need to inform us about... brief us about any important issue, they convey it to us, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and then we go there and there are opportunities for us to clarify something or to make questions or to make a comment (Male Diplomat 3).

Although these settings themselves are rendered a prototype of the ‘formal diplomatic event’, there are nevertheless instances during the formal event wherein informal elements of diplomatic networking emerge. As was explained by a female diplomat:

[...] the formal reception, it also has its very private moments [...] because you meet the same people, the same diplomats very often (Female Diplomat 3).

Thus, when encountering one another every so often, the formality of the setting is naturally lessened. Therefore, the distinction ‘formal/informal settings’ is helpful, but as any ideal type is also unequipped to capture the most fine-grained nuances. Generally, however, the formalized settings appear to create a physical space in turn enabling the masking of structures based on DRL-related notions. This generates no elimination, however, as they seemingly continue to exist though in less pronounced expressions. For instance, recalling the previous section, it was noted that even formal events can hold a degree of hierarchical selectiveness.

Nevertheless, there were also rays of sunshine - although few compared to the challenges faced by resource-deprived diplomats. For instance, ‘the glass is half-full’ sentiments underlined that having to do ‘everything’ meant that one would be in great intellectual shape. Furthermore, the embassies would reflect a tight-knitted group of people able to spend holidays and birthdays together. However, the financial inability to host diplomatic networking in grand settings similarly to more resourced embassies remained a distinct challenge:

I mean, I will never have as great chances as diplomats from the U.S. who have a great deal of better economic resources at hand to organize things I cannot. I don’t have the budget for this, and therefore, we do not have an equal takeoff... (Female Diplomat 2).

Stockholm as a diplomatic site also contributed to the diplomats’ budget headache, as “[...] receptions here are a bit specific due to the cost of life...” (MD3) and that this in turn complicated reciprocity, “[...] very often I feel a bit inferior, because I’m not in a position to reciprocate” (FD1). As concerns the resource-deprived diplomats’ willingness but also inability

to reciprocate, this can generate potential issues down the road - since diplomacy 101 is attributing 'reciprocity' significant value.

When discussing informal locations of diplomatic networking, there were sentiments that indicate palpable resource challenges. Informal settings scored high by resource-deprived diplomats as being particularly facilitative in producing fruitful networking exchanges. As was described, these settings are "[...] absolutely much more efficient, I would say, and interesting" (FD1). Advocating similarly, another diplomat underscored the benefits of the informal setting: "[...] you could even sense the ambience being less tense and more 'relaxed' in some way" and that "[...] it is easier in terms of meeting and connecting with people" (MD2). However, as mentioned previously, it was also noted that while these settings provide key opportunities for productive networking, the access to them also rests on ideas and structures not always in favor of every diplomat - for instance, the position as a diplomat representing a less affluent country. For instance, a resource-deprived diplomat explicitly stated that she knows that she is not invited to certain informal gatherings and settings, as her country "[...] is not regarded as powerful enough" (FD2). As was detailed in the previous section, the 'where' of diplomatic networking also overlaps with the 'with whom', in that access to certain locations also links with the resource-related difficulties experienced with gaining access to the very people who network there.

There were specific locations highlighted by interviewed diplomats: restaurants, cafés, residences and concerts represent common informal networking locations. While male resource-deprived diplomats also tended to refer to locations such as golf and tennis courses, hotel bars and other sporting events, their female counterparts instead opted to highlight pilates and yoga, walks and art classes as valuable informal networking settings. Thereafter, when asked about the potential existence of gender-specific settings within diplomacy, the general consensus was to downplay their existence. Simultaneously however, male and female diplomats did highlight different informal settings, thereby seemingly aligning with the theoretical suggestion that diplomacy encompasses gender-specific networking settings. Nevertheless, although being gender-specific, these settings are necessarily not themselves unique as viewed from a DRL perspective. However, as detailed in the previous section, responding to resource-related networking limitations (that do involve 'with whom' and 'where'), these responses displayed strategies that were unique compared to their resource-deprived counterparts (and theoretically also well-resourced colleagues). The resource-deprived female diplomats utilized diaspora communities and most pronouncedly leveraged all-female networks in order to circumvent resource-related challenges, where the latter tended to meet in settings such as yoga, pilates and coffee shops. Indeed, as well-resourced female diplomats may also gather in these settings, they are not DRL unique per se. However, the way they were used suggests a unique feature: lacking resources to gain access to network with key people in key settings, and limitations to host events in certain locations, resource-deprived female diplomats utilized gendered settings (and networks) in order to overcome resource-related impediments. To well-resourced female

diplomats who wield more central status representing more affluent countries, these settings might represent just another networking setting they can access beyond the crucial informal setting, the latter which resource-deprived female diplomats appear to struggle obtaining access to. While there might exist similar dynamics amongst male diplomats in terms of settings, this was nevertheless not shared or unearthed.

In general, female and male resource-deprived diplomats appear to face networking challenges in terms of 'where', which ultimately is intricately connected to 'with whom'. These challenges in turn links with the diplomats' DRL positions, in that access to certain networking settings were suggested to hinge on resource-related hierarchies. This was voiced most distinctly in terms of informal settings, which were recognized as crucial but also difficult to access. Managing this challenge, the diplomats chose different strategies. While resource-deprived male diplomats relied on acknowledging the DRL limitations with a proud and diplomatic 'it is our destiny' mindset, similarly as found in the previous section, resource-deprived female diplomats found aid in homosocial settings. Indeed, during yoga, pilates, coffee gatherings and the likes, it was possible to establish connections with other females, which subsequently facilitated otherwise hard-to-reach connections with well-resourced and influential diplomatic counterparts. Thus, gender appears to yet again provide an alternative pathway in times where DRL-related challenges impede diplomatic networking, which appears utilized particularly by resource-deprived female diplomats.

## **Timing of Networking... Matters**

A common theme in the interviews was the ever-present difficulty of attending the full variety of events. After all, a day only has 24 hours, and - surprise, resource-scarce embassies do not have *that* many diplomats to dispatch. This is underscored most distinctly in the following interview excerpt:

[...] everyone would prefer to have a lot of people working for him [...] I can't attend all the possible meetings that are going on now in Stockholm, we don't have enough diplomats [...] but the bigger embassies have the advantage of sending a diplomat on each particular event, and have first-hand information... (Male Diplomat 1).

Thus, the resource-deprived diplomats faced a difficult DRL-related challenge to their diplomatic networking, as there simply was not enough time nor staff to cover all networking events as they would wish to. However, encountering this time-related difficulty, the diplomats managed it in different ways. To resource-deprived female diplomats, the aggregated time and timing of networking both mattered - and did not matter too much. In other words, there were conflicting perceptions of the relevance of when networking takes place. Whereas some women diplomats expressed strong ideas on the mechanisms of networking, and how its timing is limiting to women diplomats (mentioning family duties, socially required preparation efforts such as hair, makeup etc), another female diplomat was hesitant to declare the same. Initially, it was shared



that there were no certain hours that would pose gender-specific barriers; “[...]not really, no...” (FD3). However, after some contemplation it was recounted that some times during the day might be more difficult for younger female diplomats with younger children. However, this was delivered as a secondary side note and somewhat down-played. The emphasis on the regretful misalignment between the roles of ‘mother’ and ‘diplomat’ was however reiterated in other interviews:

[...] yes, it had implications, because back then I was doing the cooking myself and then after a while I handed it over to my husband (Female Diplomat 1).

[...] another aspect I had to attend to, for example, was school programs for my kids [...] I don’t think the men have all the obligations a woman has, even in a gender equal society that we are striving for (Female Diplomat 1).

The pressure of having to balance a diplomatic career in a system that still abides by the traditional and gendered division of labor clearly posed prioritization conundrums to the resource-deprived female diplomats. As was recounted:

[...] for me as a female diplomat? I of course have family duties [...] I have a duty, you know, as a mom and wife and, so I don’t think that it is the same for female and male diplomats. I mean, I have to cook. I’m a woman, so I cook, do the laundry and clean... (Female Diplomat 2).

These prioritization conundrums need not however pertain only to resource-deprived female diplomats, as the gendered division of labor prevails more generally. Nevertheless, encountering this challenge to networking, resource-deprived female diplomats did not possess the type of resources to circumvent it (e.g., hiring help to aid with house and family duties) as other resourced female colleagues might have the means to. Thus, weighed down by stereotypical gender roles, resource-deprived female diplomats could not sidestep the DRL challenge that their networking endeavor faced, ultimately leaving them in a catch-22 situation where one role would be fulfilled at the cost of the other.

To the resource-deprived male diplomats, the timing of diplomatic networking was also an issue - yet somewhat differently than voiced by their female colleagues. Indeed, similarly as their resource-deprived female counterparts, they were held back by a budget not allowing time and room for endless networking, thus making networking participation severely constrained. Nevertheless, the timing was also perceived in terms of logistics and transportation, where most emphasis was placed on just how seamless the eventual partaking could be. For instance, one diplomat shared that the timing could also enable seamless movement from work to evening networking: “[...] therefore I perceive it as a benefit rather than a disadvantage” (MD2). Whereas to their female counterparts, it was a matter of being present or not (i.e. prioritizing family duties over networking or vice versa), this kind of predicament was at most briefly mentioned once: “Networking during the weekend is not necessarily something we enjoy, since every diplomat wants to spend time with their family and friends during the weekend” (MD2). However,

mentioned only briefly does not mean that the dilemma is not experienced, as it might very well pose similar pressure. Nevertheless, from the interviews, emphasis was primarily given to the transportational aspect:

[...] nowadays it is changing, because now here in Scandinavia they also hold receptions during working hours [...] this is a very practical issue. Some diplomats live outside Stockholm, but if it is a reception at 6 or 7 PM they have to come back, with this traffic and so many reconstructions going on, they would prefer to not go home and then come back (Male Diplomat 1).

Even more so, when asked about potential implications of aggregate time and specific timing, the following sentiment surfaced: “I would not say there are different implications for both genders. I think that it is equal for both men and women” (MD2). Although not explicitly mentioned by interviewed male diplomats, the absence of predicaments as experienced by their female colleagues elicits questions on how that might come to be. Whereas the female diplomats detailed their prioritization predicament, which suggested the continued presence of socially constructed gender roles (stipulating that the woman bears domestic responsibility), this division of labor might be the very reason for the resource-deprived male diplomats’ ability to circumvent DRL-related challenges. Able to rely on spouses to shoulder and champion domestic sphere responsibilities (instead of hiring help, as well-resourced colleagues might afford), participating at evening and weekend-timed networking might turn out to not be an unfeasible feat after all.

Whilst both resource-deprived female and male diplomats appear to encounter specific networking challenges of ‘time/timing’ given their less resourced position, in that it constrains schedule and participation, their responses nevertheless diverge. More specifically, networking scheduled at post-work hours seems to carry a distinct prioritization predicament to resource-deprived female diplomats, which ultimately requires them to choose one role over the other, thereby possibly missing out on networking. Resource-deprived male diplomats also viewed the timing as somewhat bothersome, although primarily in terms of transportation as participation seemed to be feasible owing to the prevailing gendered division of labor - thereby circumventing the DRL-related challenge.

## **Big on Small Talk? The How of Networking**

Exploring the practices of networking and the way these impact resource-deprived diplomats’ networking, no significant DRL-related challenges were unearthed. Instead, various aspects of diplomatic networking practice appear primarily intertwined to the previous themes, i.e. with whom, where and when. As such, barriers of access to powerful networks, actors and key settings as well as schedule- and timing-related difficulties all represent challenges that have consequences for the practice-oriented ‘how’ of diplomatic networking. Indeed, if one is obstructed by any of these, the concrete networking practices follow suit as one is not there to practice them. Other than experiencing some formal events as modestly selective hierarchical-wise despite inclusivity measures, the position of being a resource-deprived diplomat

did not evoke ideas of particular resource-related challenges associated with the how of networking.

Nevertheless, what was displayed is that networking practices link with gendered notions. The insights are however not novel, as they reaffirm previous theorizations on the gendered nature of networking practices. Indeed, given that diplomacy in general is codified along lines of masculinity, and by extension then the externalisation of femininities, it is logical that these norms also permeate practices of diplomatic networking. Generally, the interviews pointed towards gendered elements, albeit vaguely so. Asked about networking practices, two contrasting themes were discovered. Firstly, the resource-deprived interviewees claimed that gender has no or marginal significance to how diplomats network: “[...] I think women and men approach networking equally” (MD3). However, some of the diplomats also stated that gender does inform networking. For instance, different approaches were noted: “[...] women tend to have a bit more friendly approach, whereas men have a more direct approach in networking” (MD2). Similarly, a female diplomat shared that her male counterparts would take a ‘harder’ posture when networking (FD2).

These gendered notions were translated into the practice of small talk; in line with the claim that men would hold a more transactional networking approach, it was emphasized that small talk would be of lesser relevance as “[...] time is money” (MD3). In contrast, female diplomats labeled small talk as crucial and that without small talk, networking turns difficult. What this paints is a portrait of diplomatic networking practices that in some ways conform to socially prescribed gender roles and behavioral expectations. However, these do not appear to evoke particular resource-related challenges, thus primarily rendering them confirmations of previous scholarly contributions on gender and networking.

## **Summary of Analytical Insights**

The interviews and empirical analysis yielded both expected and unexpected insights. In this section, key points are summarized and brought into the final framework version. Ultimately, this exploratory pilot study concludes that domestic state resources and gender constitute factors that complicate diplomatic networking, albeit in different ways depending on whose perspective it is viewed from.

## Analytical Framework: Summarizing New Insights

	Previous Research: Claims and Expectations	New Insights: Differences among Resource-Deprived and Resource-Rich Diplomats	New Insights: Gender Differences among Resource-Deprived Male and Female Diplomats
Networking: with whom?	<p>All diplomats network formally with access to key actors (in heterosocial configurations)</p> <p>Men network informally with men (homophily), women network informally with both (heterosocial)</p>	<p>Whilst inclusive in some ways, networking segregates between RD and RR diplomats even during formal networking</p> <p>Networking segregates even more informally between RD and RR diplomats (linked with 'where')</p>	<p>Difficulties accessing key networks/actor due to DRL is a common challenge, but managing this challenge differs gender-wise</p> <p>RD females: utilizing formal/informal homosocial networks and diaspora to circumvent DRL-related challenges</p> <p>RD males: diversify sources to some degree, otherwise no mentioning of similar strategies, instead diplomatic 'this is our destiny'</p>
Networking: where?	<p>All diplomats network with access to key formal settings (in heterosocial configurations), such as the diplomatic reception</p> <p>Men network at informal sites such as hotel bar, sauna, golf tee. Women network at informal sites such as luncheons, wine-tastings</p>	<p>Networking is generally inclusive in formal settings, but can also segregate between RD and RR diplomats</p> <p>RD diplomats facing difficulties accessing certain informal sites (linked with 'with whom')</p> <p>Also, RD diplomats can not host events at settings similarly to their resourced counterparts</p>	<p>Inclusive access to formal settings, but difficulties accessing informal sites due to DRL is a common challenge, but managing this challenge differs gender-wise, see 'with whom' (e.g. RD female diplomats networking with formal/informal homosocial networks in yoga/pilates settings etc)</p> <p>Difficulty with hosting is a common challenge, but difference in terms of strategies to alleviate it, see 'with whom' (e.g. diaspora)</p>
Networking: when?	<p>All diplomats network during work and post-work hours (e.g. evenings)</p> <p>Men network post-work hours. Women also network after, but gender roles complicate access</p>	<p>Networking during and post work segregates formally due to DRL (e.g. RD diplomats not having time to attend)</p> <p>Networking segregates even more informally, due to DRL challenges (e.g. not having time to attend)</p>	<p>Schedule-related prioritization issue is a common challenge due to DRL (e.g. both facing time pressure), but difference in managing this challenge as trad. division of labor prevails</p> <p>RD females: unable to hire help due to DRL, coupled with persisting gender role responsibilities</p>

			RD males: able to circumvent DRL challenges by sharing post-work hours household/family responsibilities (e.g. with spouse)
<b>Networking: in what ways?</b>	All diplomats network with small-talk. Men network with 'agency' and 'assertiveness', women network with 'warmth' and 'gentle charm'  Similar to formal practices, although less formalized in comparison	Linking with previous themes in some ways, however, other than that no additional unique DRL-related challenges noted	Linking with previous themes in some ways, but other than that no gendered DRL-related challenges and associated alleviative strategies noted

Positioning as a resource-deprived diplomat appears to engender distinct challenges, in turn impeding diplomatic networking. As the analysis shows, in line with some expectations whilst also unearthing new discoveries, diplomats voiced DRL-related challenges. Generally, these were most prominent in terms of difficulties in accessing key networks and powerful people, entering networking settings and hosting formal events in grand venues, as well as managing a multiplicity of networking events with a scant budget and small staff. Moreover, do these challenges translate similarly gender-wise? Generally, the diplomats agreed on the presence of these resource-related challenges. However, encountering these, gender took different shapes. In some ways, gender was discovered to facilitate networking. When faced with DRL-related barriers of entry to diplomatic networking, all-female networks were leveraged by resource-deprived female diplomats to aid the establishment of powerful network connections otherwise difficult to reach given a peripheral DRL position. These insights overlapped with networking settings, in that the advantage of gender-based networks emphasized by the diplomats also corresponded to certain locations (e.g., yoga/pilates, coffee, art classes etc). This gender-network-setting strategy did not translate to resource-deprived male diplomats, perhaps as they already belong in the dominant group, thereby not reaping as distinct solidarity benefits (other than being generally privileged given a masculine-favoring institution). Well aware of classifying as the minority group, this awareness might manifest as particularly strong solidarity amongst females, thus compensating for experienced systemic disadvantages.

However, it was also discerned that gender brings a different impact to resource-deprived female diplomats, as the traditional division of labor prevails. Indeed, when viewed from the lens of 'when', gender appeared to yield a more constraining impact. The time of diplomatic networking did pose challenges to both male and female resource-deprived diplomats (e.g. not having time to attend, given a scant budget etc), however, their responses to this resource impediment differed gender-wise. Resource-deprived male diplomats did not place as much emphasis on timing as

their female counterparts did, particularly as they did not appear to face the division of labor similarly. To women diplomats, however, a prioritization conundrum was distinctly voiced, in that ‘wife/motherly family duties’ collided with evening/weekend networking. To them, being present at post-hours networking gatherings was never really a given. Indeed, this double-responsibility predicament can also exist to well-resourced female diplomats, however, given the lack of financial assets that resource-deprived females face, they are nevertheless not able to delegate household responsibilities (e.g. hiring help) should they need to. Resource-deprived male diplomats, however, when facing time-related resource challenges, might instead reap the benefits of the prevailing division of labor, thereby utilizing gender to circumvent challenges imposed by their budget. Although this distribution of household responsibilities was not explicitly stated, there was an apparent disparity where the females’ verbalization of a timing-related prioritization predicament stood in contrast to that of the males, who discussed timing more in terms of transportational logistics.

As concerns the practices of diplomatic networking, these appeared to not present distinct DRL-related challenges themselves, but instead hinge on whether the aforementioned ‘with whom’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ challenges were managed successfully or not. Moreover, the experiences shared on practices primarily related to gender notions, thereby reaffirming previous scholarly contributions on networking approaches and small talk.

That said, however, it needs to be firmly reiterated that these analytical insights are based on a small sample of interviews. Given that the study is exploratory and theory-developing (hence renouncing any claim on result generalizability), this study cheerfully calls on future studies to bring statistical sophistication into the picture. Nevertheless, as emphasized before, the hope is that the insights shared will inspire and encourage the development of an otherwise neglected research field. Additionally, there is also the possibility that patterns discerned here are even more pronounced than indicated. At the end of the day, diplomacy still links with that of contemplative cautiousness - that is, ‘saying less’. As such, the diplomats’ answers might represent interpretations that are both genuine - *and* scaled back. Indeed, two things can be true at the same time. Thus, learning about the full spectrum of diplomatic networking mechanisms seems utopian, but refraining from asking questions is nevertheless the real let-down.

## VII. Concluding Remarks on Resources, Gender and Diplomatic Networking

When researching diplomatic networking and its scholarship, the link between the former and gender was found to be spearheaded by only a few scholars. Furthermore, an intriguing research gap was identified - that is, the intersection of diplomats' state resources and gender on diplomatic networking. Thus, the objective of this thesis has been to explore this puzzle and to present a theory-engendering endeavor that addresses whether resource-deprived diplomats face particular challenges when networking, and whether these challenges and responses to them may be gendered. Based on in-depth interviews with ambassadors and high-ranking diplomats representing embassies with less resources at their disposal, this study brings new insights on how resources and gender might structure diplomatic networking. In short, positioning as a resource-deprived diplomat entails specific networking challenges - and strategizing to alleviate these, gender appears as a double-edged sword; advantageous at times, less favorable in others.

From previous scholarship, we learned the fundamental role that diplomatic networking holds to successful diplomatic performance. We also came to understand that diplomacy represents an institution generally favoring masculine attributes, thereby rendering it a gendered institution. From this, we also learned that these gendered structures ought to promote certain conditions for diplomatic performance. Additionally, we noted that diplomatic networks' reach and density might hinge on structural factors, amongst them financial means and resources. Nevertheless, we were yet to understand whether resource-deprived diplomats face particular challenges when networking, and whether gender in turn is at play. Taking on this uncharted research territory, this study presents novel insights and themes surrounding diplomatic networking. Thus, building on the foregoing analysis, this concluding chapter summarizes the main findings whilst underscoring the need for future studies to continue the exploration of resources, gender and diplomatic networking.

Resource-deprived diplomats face challenges that appear particular to their allocated state resource levels. Lacking means to host grand and sophisticated events similarly to their resourced counterparts, not having enough time and staff to attend all gathering whilst also missing out on invitations to key networks (thereby lacking access to powerful actors and first-hand information), these challenges complicate and constrain resource-deprived diplomats' diplomatic networking. As such, placed peripherally relative to other well-resourced diplomats, the resource-deprived male diplomats find themselves in a position not unsimilar to female diplomats in general. Encountering these common challenges, the resource-deprived diplomats' responded in different ways that linked with gender notions. Whilst female diplomats leveraged gender via all-female networks and gender-specific settings to circumvent resource-related challenges, the male diplomats appeared to be able to utilize gender on timing issues of networking, thereby managing resource-related challenges. Particularly in terms of 'when', gender-based predicaments (fulfilling role of mother/spouse or diplomat) came in full

dysfunctional effect to the women, in that operating in an institution still blemished by patriarchal structures whilst positioning as resource-deprived doubled down on some of the unpleasantness of existing gender-stereotypical expectations.

Then, what is the verdict? Well, the verdict is two-fold. One, diplomatic networking, resources and gender constitutes a nexus in need of further scholarly attention. While this thesis has begun to nest and theorize, much remains to be done. Future studies are encouraged to pick up the torch with the newly presented insights, to empirically compare between resource-deprived and resource-rich diplomats and to incorporate statistical sophistication. Two, resource-deprived diplomats' networking appears complicated by resources and gender - and this takes the form of specific networking challenges and gendered responses. Diplomatic networking can therefore be thought of as a paradigmatic case for the ever-presence of hierarchical resource structures and gender. The interplay between these factors furthermore underscores the ambiguous nature of diplomatic networking. Nevertheless, this ambiguousness is not lamentable, but intriguing, as ambiguousness oftentimes serves as a vehicle for the most trailblazing development. The former ambassador of the United States to Japan, John Roos, once emphasized that diplomacy seeks to "[...]deal with difficult issues". Reversing roles, however, 'dealing with difficult issues' can also benefit the institution of diplomacy itself - after all, we can always hold space for introspection and growth. In this instance, diplomacy would not only manufacture and export mutual understanding elsewhere, but to turn inwards and reflect on its own inner machinery. Doing this, 'dealing with difficult issues' would be to acknowledge that the very possibility of successful diplomatic performance is intertwined with the structural system put in place.



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## Appendix 1: Invitation Letter

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### INVITATION TO INTERVIEW

*His/Her Excellency Mr./Mrs./Ms. (First and Last Name),  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Dear Mr/Madam Ambassador

My name is Anna Hageskog and I am a Master's student in Political Science at Gothenburg University, under the direction of Professor Ann Towns - P.I. of the GenDip Research Program on the gender of diplomacy ([ann.towns@gu.se](mailto:ann.towns@gu.se); <https://www.gu.se/en/gendip>). I am currently writing my Master's Thesis, which is a qualitative study that focuses on diplomatic networking by ambassadors of smaller embassies (embassies with a diplomatic staff of five or less individuals). Would it be possible for me to interview you, as an ambassador of a smaller embassy? Learning about your experiences in Stockholm would be very helpful, not just for my thesis but for the study of diplomacy more generally.

The interview would take place at Zoom and it would last approximately 45 minutes. If you consent, the interview would be recorded and transcribed, to ensure accuracy. The contents of the interviews may be referred to and quoted in the thesis and, if you consent, subsequent academic publications by Prof. Towns in her work on diplomacy. In the thesis and subsequent publications, we would list the interviewees by name at the end, but we would not connect quotes from interviews with named interviewees. Instead, interviewees will be quoted as 'male diplomat 2' or 'female diplomat 5' in the texts. The transcriptions of the interviews will be stored on a secure server within the GenDip program at the University of Gothenburg, and other than myself and Prof. Towns, nobody else will have access to the interviews.

If there are any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or Prof. Towns, and we are happy to answer any question you might have. Your contribution is truly appreciated should you wish to participate. I look very much forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
Ann Hageskog

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## Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

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### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### PARTICIPANT'S FULL NAME AND TITLE

Enter: name

#### INTERVIEW DATE

Enter: date

#### RESEARCH PROJECT

Master Thesis: A Qualitative Study on Diplomatic Networking (title is yet to be decided)

#### RESEARCHER

Anna Hageskog, Master's Student in Political Science at the Gothenburg University. For Contact Information, please see below.

#### SUPERVISOR

Professor Ann Towns, P.I. of the GenDip Research Program on the Gender of Diplomacy (<https://www.gu.se/en/gendip>). For Contact Information, please see below.

- I confirm that my participation in this research project is voluntary.
- I understand that I will not receive any payments for participating in this research interview.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that I can stop the interview at any time.
- I understand that my name will appear in a list of interviewees, but other than that, my identity will remain unconnected to specific extracts and the research results. This will be done by disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be referred to and quoted in the thesis and subsequent academic publications by Professor Ann Towns in her work on diplomacy.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be stored in a secure server within the GenDip program at the University of Gothenburg, and other than A. Hageskog and Prof. Towns, nobody else will have access to the interview material.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Anna Hageskog / [gushagesan@student.gu.se](mailto:gushagesan@student.gu.se)

Professor Ann Towns / [ann.towns@gu.se](mailto:ann.towns@gu.se)

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I am giving informed consent to participate in this study

---

(Signature)

(Date)

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER**

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

---

(Signature)

(Date)



## Appendix 3: List of Participants

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### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

This list presents the participating ambassadors and diplomats.

The list follows alphabetical order based on surname.

*H.E. Mr Alexander Arzoumanian, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

The Republic of Armenia

*H.E. Dr Elvira Dilberovic, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

*H.E. Mrs Shkendije Geci-Sherifi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

The Republic of Kosovo

*H.E. Mr Irakli Khutsurauli, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Georgia

*H.E. Mrs Mira Krajachikj, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

The Republic of North Macedonia

*Mr José Mário Nhacuongue, Minister Counsellor*

The Republic of Mozambique

## Appendix 4: Interview Guide

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### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### **Stockholm as a Diplomatic Site**

1. Do you find Stockholm different or unique in any way as a diplomatic site?
  - a. If so, what distinguishes it from other diplomatic sites?

#### **Diplomacy and Networks: General Questions**

2. What is the role of networks and networking within diplomacy?
3. What skills are necessary when networking within diplomacy?
4. How often would you say that you network?
5. Prior scholarship has differentiated between formal and informal networking. What is your experience with these forms of networking? For instance, are they equally important - or is one form more/less important to you in your role as ambassador?
6. What are some of the most important formal settings for networking in Stockholm?
7. Are there informal diplomatic networking sites in Stockholm? If so, can you describe them a little? (Where do people meet - golf course, for tennis, at the bar or somewhere else?)

#### **Questions on Embassy Size and Resources**

8. You represent a smaller embassy with few staff compared to some of the larger embassies in Stockholm. How does being the diplomat of a smaller embassy shape your ability to network, you think?
9. Can you host events to the same extent as other diplomats/embassies?
  - a. If yes, how is this managed?
  - b. If not, then what do you do instead?
10. How does the embassy celebrate 'national day', for instance, do you host an event?
11. What are the main networking challenges for a diplomat representing a smaller embassy?
  - a. What do you do to overcome these challenges?
12. What are the benefits of being a diplomat of a small embassy, in terms of networking?

#### **Diplomatic Networking - Theme 1: With whom?**

13. What are your most important diplomatic networks?
14. When you network with Swedish actors, with whom do you tend to network with? (which type of actor, etc)
15. Previous scholarship has noted that the 'with whom' can differ between formal and informal networking, what are your thoughts on this?
  - a. i.e. in formal settings, who/which actor do you tend to network with?
  - b. i.e. in informal settings, who/which actor do you tend to network with?
16. Some academic studies point to gender-specific networks within diplomacy. Have you noticed any networking activities that are male-only or female-only?

17. To Female Diplomat: There is a formal Women's Diplomat Network in Stockholm, have you had contact with this network?
  - a. If yes, what does this network do? What is its purpose?
  - b. If yes, what other diplomats are members in the network?
  - c. If yes, how often does it meet? And where does it meet? Who convenes the meetings?
  - d. If yes, how is it useful for you?
  - e. If yes, do you ever host meetings with this network?
18. To Female and Male Diplomat: Is there any similar formal network, as the Women's Diplomat Network in Stockholm, with only men?
19. To Female and Male Diplomat: Are there informal all-male (or all-female) networks in diplomacy? If so, can you describe it?
  - a. If yes, what does this network do? What is its purpose?
  - b. If yes, what other diplomats are members in the network?
  - c. If yes, how often does it meet? And where does it meet? Who convenes the meetings?
  - d. If yes, how is it useful for you?
  - e. If yes, do you ever host meetings with this network?

### **Diplomatic Networking - Theme 2: Where?**

20. What is the location of these networks - i.e., where does networking typically occur?
21. Is the setting of networking the same for formal and informal networking, or are there any differences?
22. How do you experience these settings as diplomatic sites?
23. Have these settings always been the same or have you noticed a shift in any way?
24. Are there any benefits/disadvantages to these settings?
25. Are there settings where male diplomats are more likely to gather? If so, where - and why?
  - a. What are the implications of this?
26. Are there settings where female diplomats are more likely to gather? If so, where - and why?
  - a. What are the implications of this?

### **Diplomatic Networking - Theme 3: When?**

27. At what times during the day and the week, does diplomatic networking typically occur?
28. Is the timing of networking the same for formal and informal networking, or are there any differences?
29. Are there any benefits/disadvantages to the timing of diplomatic networking?
  - a. New Question: Recently, there seems to be a shift where diplomatic receptions are sometimes scheduled during working hours. Have you experienced this? What do you make of this shift? What is the reason for it?
30. Prior scholarship has pointed out that the expectations that diplomats are to work and network in the evenings, and during weekends, may have different implications to men and women. Can you give me some thoughts on this?
  - a. New examples uncovered: responsibilities in terms of household duties, such as cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry, assisting with kids' homework, but also in terms of preparation prior to the networking with makeup, hair etc.

### **Diplomatic Networking - Theme 4: In what ways?**

31. Are there any specific conventions or practices that are exercised during diplomatic networking?
  32. Does diplomatic networking differ from other professional networking in any way that you can think of?
  33. How do you approach the networking situation? Do you have any specific networking strategies? (For instance, if there is a particular person you would like to network with but you have no previous relation, how do you go about that?)
  34. Some scholars have argued that women and men approach networking differently. What are your thoughts on this?
  35. Prior scholarship has emphasized the importance of small talk - what are your thoughts on this?
    - a. What is the role of small talk during diplomatic networking? Important/non-important?
  36. Do you small talk when you network?
    - a. If so, what topics does the small talk generally circle around?
    - b. New Question: It has been shared that the type of information you can gather when networking is sometimes different depending on who you network with. For instance, men are claimed to have more 'unique' information. Have you experienced this in any way? If so, in what ways? What do you think is the reason for this?
  37. Are the topics the same during formal and informal networking, or are there any differences?
  38. Are the topics of small talk the same regardless of who you network with?
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