

The Effect of Conflict on Diplomatic Representation: Analysis of Baseline and Short-
Term Changes

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Abstract

This research's purpose is to examine how armed conflict, diplomatic representation, and the international order are intertwined. First, new datasets are created for diplomatic representation, which include annual data and separate baseline changes and short-term changes. Second, one-way ANOVA shows that the mean difference in short-term changes, but not in baseline changes, between conflict and no-conflict years is significant. Third, the 26 most impacted countries are selected and divided into five categories for a case study. The results indicate that a shock to the legitimacy of a government or state leads to a downward change in diplomatic representation in the host country's capital. These shocks, strong or not, include conflicts such as coups, revolutions, massacres, and international and interstate wars (the conflict effect). On the other hand, a celebratory event such as independence, democratization, a peace agreement, or the establishment of an international organization's headquarters expands the size of diplomatic corps (the celebration effect). This observation follows our thesis even in a hard case with a long duration of conflict. Last, the author notes that no international obligation tells an ambassador to remain in a country experiencing conflict, and argues that decision-makers are required to consider that a conflict

threatens people's human security and to ask themselves if they have the responsibility not to leave under given circumstances.

Interrelation of conflicts and diplomacy

Old diplomacy, so dubbed by Harold Nicolson, survives and has been taken as a good representation of international order by researchers.¹ Scholars say that state actors are still the most important actors and that their formal communications through diplomatic channels are key to peace, prosperity, and civilization. Not only functionally but also structurally, the number of ambassadors a certain country attracts to its capital indicates that country's prestige or diplomatic importance; few people doubt that Washington, DC; Brussels; and Beijing are at the top of such a hierarchy. The size of a diplomatic corps may expand or shrink depending on the quality of governance, business cycles, and internal and international conflicts.

On the other hand, many armed conflicts occur at the grassroots level. The Khmer Rouge, the Taliban, and the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) were not organized by diplomats and have fiercely rejected foreign influence. Nevertheless, their activities have led to remarkable diplomatic and humanitarian outcomes, e.g., UN peacekeeping operations and NGO field work, which supplement the state's responsibility to protect and feed civilians. From this viewpoint, bilateral diplomacy is no

¹Nicolson, 1977: 73–77. However, old diplomacy's Eurocentrism is weakening.

less important, but foreign missions are usually more silent and more fugitive.

Diplomatic flight is also the flight of trade, finance, and human resources, because foreign business is protected by embassies. This tragedy is an unintended consequence for many dictatorships, a story once described as a “failed state.”

Thus, armed conflict, diplomatic representation, and the international order are intertwined. This study’s purpose is to examine how these variables are correlated.

Compiling a new dataset

Scientifically oriented researchers have paid great attention to diplomatic relations data. Among them, Singer and Small (1966) and Small and Singer (1973) have been highly influential.² They counted the number of diplomatic missions dispatched to a state and used it as an indicator of that state’s importance. Certainly, sending a mission to another country is an act of voting with one’s feet or an investment in the host country’s state power. However, there are reasons for why the Small-Singer dataset is not suited for analyzing the interrelation of armed conflict and diplomatic representation. The foremost reason is that the data are only available for every fifth

² Among most recent debates are Renshon 2016, Renshon 2017, and Ward 2020.

year, which is insufficient to determine what caused a rise or a decrease in the number of ambassadors. This is unsurprising, because their dataset was intended to be processed through statistical or large-N analysis and was inevitably not adapted to case studies and historiography. A clear solution to this problem is to compile a more detailed dataset, as annual data are expected to enable a more accurate narrative of a case. For this purpose, the author used the *Europa World Year Book* (1963-2015) for each year, which is the same series that Small and Singer relied on. A raw data table is created based on this compiling protocol.

Another reason why a new dataset is necessary is related to short-term changes in diplomatic representation.³ A typical case of such a change is the appointment of a chargé d'affaires *ad interim* instead of an ambassador. This type of change may occur after the head of a mission is either recalled, dismissed, or passes away and usually ends after a few years when the ambassador returns or when a new envoy comes to present the letter of credence to the head of the host state. For the purposes of this article, imagine that a war, a coup d'état, or a massacre induces a third-party

³The usage of long-, middle-, and short-term changes in this article closely corresponds to the Braudelian triad of *longue durée*, *conjonctures*, and *événements*. Braudel, 1980: 25–54.

government to recall its ambassador residing at the location of conflict. Sometimes, this measure forces into international isolation his or her former host country and changes the baseline relationship between the two countries. At other times, such a practice is just an ostensible and ineffective resistance on the part of the ambassador's sender, and the next ambassador is appointed after a period without even the provision of public notice. In this way, a short-term change can indicate that some shocking event occurred, although its impact did not ultimately deteriorate the bilateral relationship. By contrast, a change in the baseline relationship is more dependent on permanent structural factors such as economic, security, and institutional conditions.

A short-term change can be defined as one that reverts to the former condition in the third year. To obtain the baseline table, the short-term changes are removed from the raw data table. The baseline table's sequences of differences constitute the baseline change table. Furthermore, the short-term change table is obtained by subtracting the scores in the baseline table from the corresponding scores in the raw data table. The specific principles for creating these tables are explicated in the Appendix.

Effects on baseline and short-term changes

To analyze the interrelation of conflict and diplomacy, the dummy variable *Conflict year* for each country is applied as a control variable. This variable is adapted from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019). If there is an entry of a governmental primary party in a certain year, *Conflict year* is 1 for that country. All the governments that have no entry of 1 for *Conflict year* are removed from the analysis. If a government has at least one entry of 1, every entry from 1965 to 2012 is retained except for the years of non-membership, according to "Appendix 1 List of System Members Since 1946" (Pettersson, 2019). Thus, this new table is no longer dyadic.

Next, baseline change and short-term change in diplomatic representation are also converted to a non-dyadic form. By definition, an envoy has both a sender and a receiver. The sender represents the supply side, and how and when to send an envoy are basically at the will of the sending government. The receiver represents the demand side. It is basically a country's prestige that attracts foreign missions; this is why Singer and Small (1966) and Small and Singer (1973) regard foreign missions' size in the capital of a country as an indicator of that country's "diplomatic importance." Thus,

receiving scores are more relevant for measuring the effect of a conflict on diplomatic representation. The whole table named “Changes in Receiving Scores” includes the variables *Government*, *Year*, *Conflict year*, *Baseline change in receiving scores (BC)*, and *Short-term change in receiving scores (SC)*. Descriptive statistics are presented below (Table I).

Table I. Descriptive statistics of the variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Year	5184	1965	2012		
Conflict year	4791	0	1		
Baseline change in receiving scores (BC)	4791	-46	64	1.18	4.712
Short-term change in receiving scores (SC)	4791	-99	11	-.71	2.393
Valid N (listwise)	4791				

Table II. One-way ANOVA

		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Baseline change in receiving scores (BC)	Between Groups	57.828	1	57.828	2.606	.107
	Within Groups	106286.732	4789	22.194		
	Total	106344.560	4790			
Short-term change in receiving scores (SC)	Between Groups	93.197	1	93.197	16.329	.000
	Within Groups	27333.609	4789	5.708		
	Total	27426.806	4790			

The results of one-way ANOVA are mixed (Table II). With regard to the *SC*, the mean difference between conflict and no-conflict years is significant, and therefore, the existence of the conflict effect is proven. However, the mean difference in *BC* between those years is not statistically significant. This is because the elements of *SC* are homogeneous; those of *BC* are not. An *SC* often results from unpredictability or speculation concerning an event that is under way. An act of internal violence such as a coup, a revolution, or a frontier war is the epitome of an event that has already reached the critical point domestically but has not spilled over into diplomacy. However, factors that change the baseline relationship seem to be more varied and more dependent on structural conditions such as economic growth, security partnerships, and both domestic and international institutions.

Most impacted countries

The above thesis that an event's nature determines diplomatic outcomes will be corroborated hereafter by scrutinizing the countries showing the greatest impacts.

Armed conflicts are expected to push down diplomatic representation in the capitals of these countries. This implies that the averages of *BC* or *SC* for conflict years should be much lower than those for no-conflict years. Hence, the greater the difference in

averages between the conflict and no-conflict years, the graver is the impact for a country.

For a case study, the 10 most impacted countries are selected among those having the greatest differences in the averages of the *BC* (*BCDA*) and the *SC* (*SCDA*), respectively, between no-conflict years and conflict years.⁴ However, this is insufficient, because other things being equal, longer durations of conflict may make the averages for conflict years less impressive. Therefore, the 10 countries with largest *BC* sum of squares in conflict years (*BCSS*) are listed, although a *BCSS* may not be the same as the impacts of conflict. Altogether, 26 countries are selected. Some of them are listed for two of the three variables *BCDA*, *SCDA*, and *BCSS* (Table III).

Table III. Categories of most impacted countries

Category	<i>BCDA</i>	<i>SCDA</i>	<i>BCSS</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Average number of conflict years</i>
1,0,0	x			9	7.11
0,1,0		x		7	12.29
0,0,1			x	6	35.83
1,0,1	x		x	1	26.00
0,1,1		x	x	3	42.67

⁴Here, “greatest differences” mean smallest values ensuing from the subtraction of averages for no-conflict years from those for conflict years.

The most impacted countries can be divided into five categories. Between the *BCDA* and the *SCDA*, there is no overlap, while the *BCSS* overlaps with both. With regard to conflict years, the countries with the top *BCSS* values most consistently experience conflict; for all of them, the conflict years cover more than half of the period under study.

Table IV. Category (1,0,0)-only BC's difference between averages (*BCDA*)

Government	<i>BCDA</i>	<i>Number of conflict years</i>	<i>UCDP Dyadic Dataset Conflict-id</i>
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	-13.34	4	384, 385, 412
Chile	-8.47	1	321
South Africa	-7.53	23	298, 345
Kuwait	-7.41	2	371
Syria	-6.69	9	299, 302, 13042
Ghana	-6.36	3	295
Congo	-5.6	5	408
Guinea	-4.2	2	307
DR Congo (Zaire)	-3.08	15	283, 429

Category (1,0,0) is a combination of a large *BC* value and short durations of conflict (Table IV). A large *BC* value is caused by a strong shock having a lingering effect. A business cycle and a shooting incident at the border, not in the capital, are unlikely to cause a drastic fall. Institutional factors, inter alia, those pertinent to the

legitimacy of a government or state, could have a lingering and serious effect. In fact, the most impacted country, Yugoslavia, underwent such a shock in 1991, which pushed down the *BCDA* (Figure 1). This challenge started with the wars with its constituent republics, Croatia and Slovenia, leading to the dissolution of the federation and the dissipation of its national prestige.

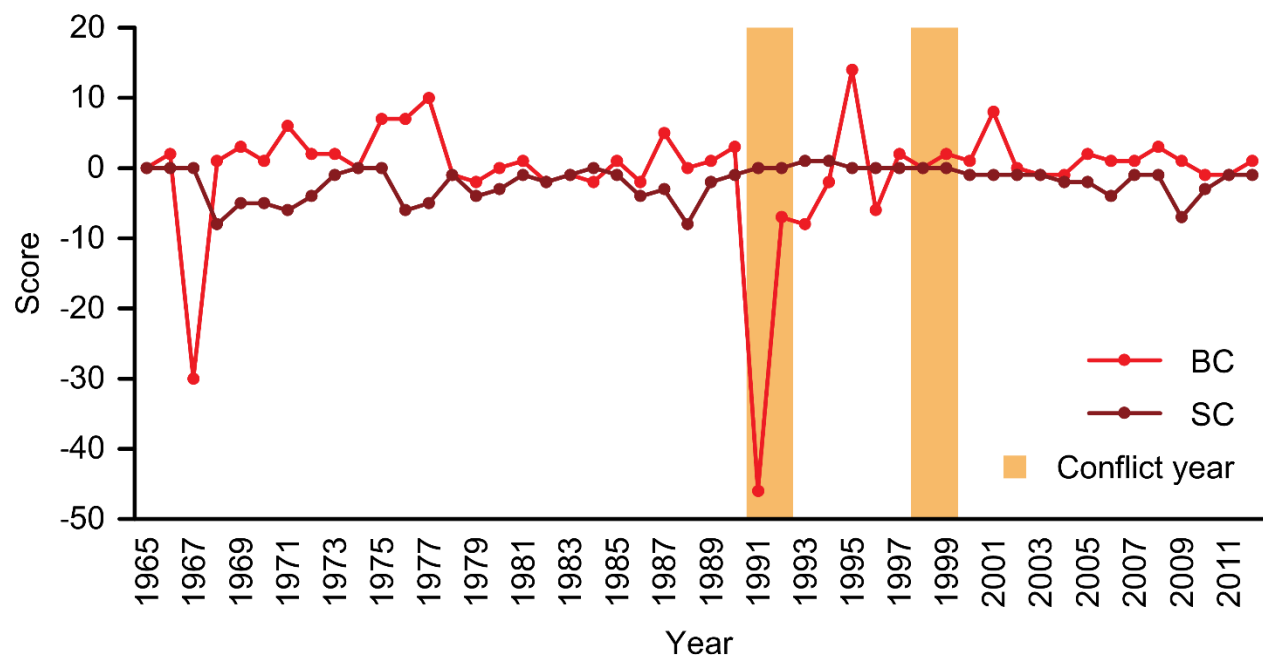


Figure 1. Yugoslavia's baseline change and short-term change. Data compiled by the author from the Europa World Year Book series and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019)

The decline in legitimacy is seen in most of the other cases in Category (1,0,0).

In Chile, the 1973 coup certainly spurred the shrinking of the diplomatic corps in Santiago. This downsizing had already begun in 1969 and did not end in the early Pinochet era. The Syrian civil war was triggered by the 2011 Arab Spring, and Western powers have completely severed diplomatic relations. Ghana's conflicts in 1966, 1981 and 1983 were accompanied by coups and invited diplomatic dishonor. Kuwait experienced a struggle after the Gulf War for its regime's survival, and foreign missions did not come back immediately. Zaire's dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, died in 1997, but foreign envoys left Kinshasa when a new war erupted in 1999. The cases of the Congo and Guinea are less explicit, but difficulties in both countries certainly resulted from political strife. In contrast, South Africa had many years of conflict. What places it high on the *BCDA* list is the contrast between the periods before and after Apartheid's end. Apartheid was a cause of diplomatic isolation as well as internal and interstate wars; the conflict years were an era of diplomatic stagnation. However, in the no-conflict years, a remarkable boom in diplomatic reception buoyed the *BCDA*.

Category (0,1,0) is a combination of a large *SC* value and short durations of conflict, with the exception of the Philippines (Table V). The effect of the disrupting event was ephemeral, but its shock was perceived as a crisis. As in Category (1,0,0),

the legitimacy of the government or state may be relevant, as in the case of Romania (Figure 2). In 1989, the former leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, was executed after some hostilities, but the new government was soon recognized by foreign countries. Thus, the consequence of a short-term change tends to be less grave and less perennial than that of a baseline change.

Table V. Category (0,1,0)-only SC's difference between averages (SCDA)

Government	SCDA	<i>Number of conflict years</i>	<i>UCDP Dyadic Dataset Conflict-id</i>
Romania	-5.53	1	370
Philippines	-4.57	44	209, 308
Uruguay	-3.23	1	319
China	-2.68	13	274, 304, 305, 334, 11349
Russia (Soviet Union)	-2.27	22	305, 376, 377, 399, 401, 414, 431, 432
Libya	-2.15	2	361, 11346
South Yemen	-1.66	3	320, 359

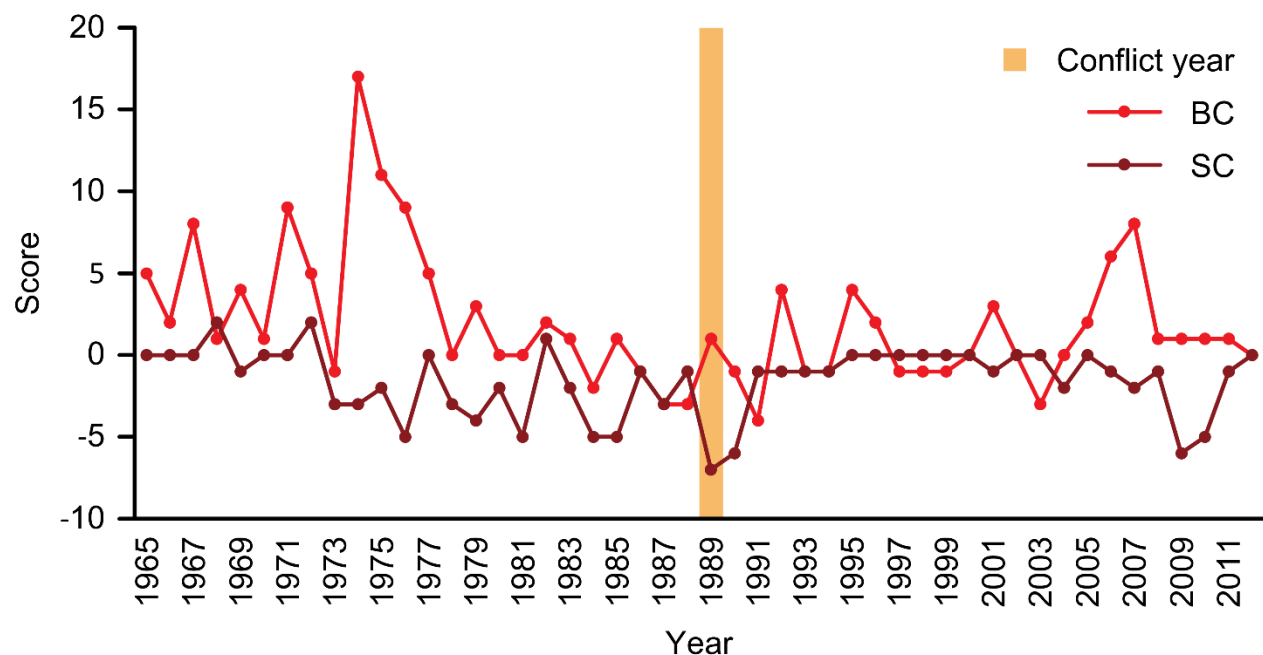


Figure 2. Rumania's baseline change and short-term change. Data compiled by the author from the Europa World Year Book series and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019)

Many decisions resulting in low *SCDAs* were made in unpredictable and speculative situations. In Uruguay, the increase in foreign envoys' short leaves coincided with the 1972 urban guerrilla activity carried out by the Tupamaros. A Chinese example is more complex but corroborates the author's thesis because the flight of foreign missions in 1967 was not triggered by an armed conflict, i.e., the boundary war

with the USSR, but by a political movement, i.e., the Cultural Revolution, both of which were culminations of the Maoist crisis. The chronic low *SCDAs* from the late 1970s to the 1980s were more setbacks from the preceding diplomatic boom than criticism of China's wars with Vietnam. Together with the Chinese cases, the Soviet or Russian cases reveal that great powers are relatively immune to downward change. The border conflict in 1969, the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the war in Chechnya were all criticized internationally, but diplomatic relations were not as damaged as might be expected. Additionally, the internal and international wars in Libya and South Yemen met with modest diplomatic reactions. The anomalous Philippines has been in conflict since 1969, but the Ferdinand Marcos administration had enjoyed apparent halcyon days, with a growing diplomatic corps in Manila.

Table VI. Category (0,0,1)-BC's sum of squares in conflict years (BCSS)

Government	<i>BCSS</i>	<i>Number of conflict years</i>	<i>UCDP Dyadic Dataset Conflict-id</i>
Cambodia (Kampuchea)	265.62	33	294, 300, 328
Iran	244.47	29	205, 324, 338, 339
Afghanistan	233.87	35	333, 431, 13692
Angola	207.86	31	327, 387
Israel	184.60	48	234, 301, 302, 426, 11343
Sudan	177.71	39	282, 309, 11344, 11348

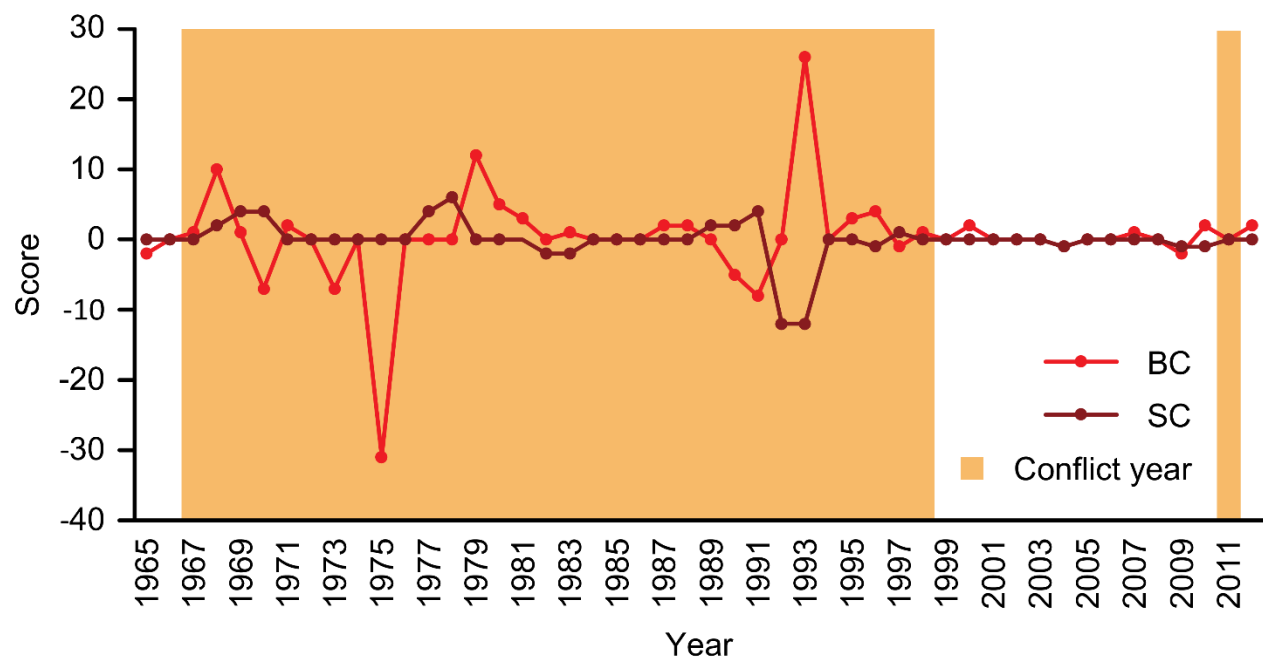


Figure 3. Cambodia's baseline change and short-term change. Data compiled by the author from the Europa World Year Book series and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019)

Category (0,0,1) is a combination of the highest *BCSS* and long durations of conflict (Table VI). This means that the conflict never ends, irrespective of whether the diplomatic corps grows or not. For example, Cambodia's state legitimacy was not fully recovered with the defeat of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 (Figure 3). The conflict continued even as people celebrated the end of UN rule in 1993. The celebration effect often

neutralizes the effect of a conflict on the *BCDA*. On the other hand, the nadir year, 1975, is worth noting because it was a year of exodus for the diplomatic corps and the beginning of the Killing Fields for ordinary citizens. These facts are interesting because they indicate that both the celebration effect and the conflict effect were at work in the same Cambodian case. Moreover, this juxtaposition can make the *BCs* in conflict years less homogeneous.

The concern here is whether the peaks and nadirs of the *BC* corresponded to celebrations and conflicts. Iran's nadir in 1981 ensued from the outbreak of the war with Iraq in the previous year, and, in turn, the peak was reached in an ameliorated circumstance after the Gulf War. Afghanistan's *BC* rose steeply from its nadir in 2000 under Taliban rule to a peak under Hamid Karzai's Interim Administration, which was launched in late 2001. Angola's internal war co-occurred with the celebration of independence, contributing to its positive *BCDA*, a phenomenon common in many newly independent countries. Israel's turning point was the peace agreement with Egypt in 1978, after which successive peaks of the *BC* rose ever higher. In Sudan, the peace agreement between its northern and southern regions was concluded in 1972, an event accompanied by a surge of foreign missions to Khartoum.

Table VII. Category (1,0,1)-BC's difference between averages (BCDA) and sum of squares in conflict years (BCSS)

Government	BCDA	BCSS	Number of conflict years	UCDP Dyadic Dataset Conflict-id
Somalia	-3.21	199.59	26	268, 337

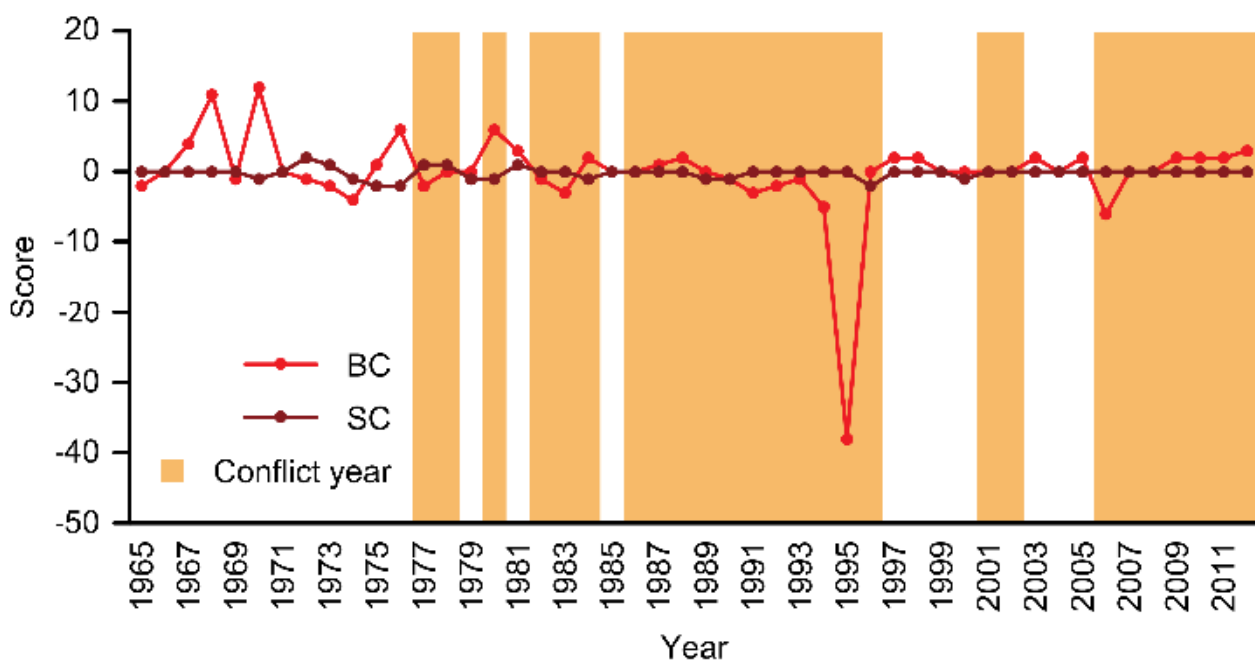


Figure 4. Somalia's baseline change and short-term change. Data compiled by the author from the Europa World Year Book series and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019)

Somalia is the sole case in Category (1,0,1), a complex category with both the *BCDA* and the *BCSS* being checked (Table VII; Figure 4). In 1995, the UN peacekeeping force left there without making peace, and most of the diplomatic missions also left. Unique to Somalia, however, is the fact that no celebration has since occurred. Accordingly, the *BC* in 1995 permanently pushed the *BCDA* down to the lowest level.

Table VIII. Category (0,1,1)-SC's difference between averages (*SCDA*) and sum of squares in conflict years (*BCSS*)

Government	<i>SCDA</i>	<i>BCSS</i>	<i>Number of conflict years</i>	<i>UCDP Dyadic Dataset Conflict-id</i>
Ethiopia	-1.66	428.08	47	267, 268, 275, 329, 363, 409, 413, 436, 437
India	-2.00	200.35	41	218, 227, 251, 274, 296, 335, 347, 351, 364
Iraq	-3.23	193.19	40	259, 271, 324, 371, 420

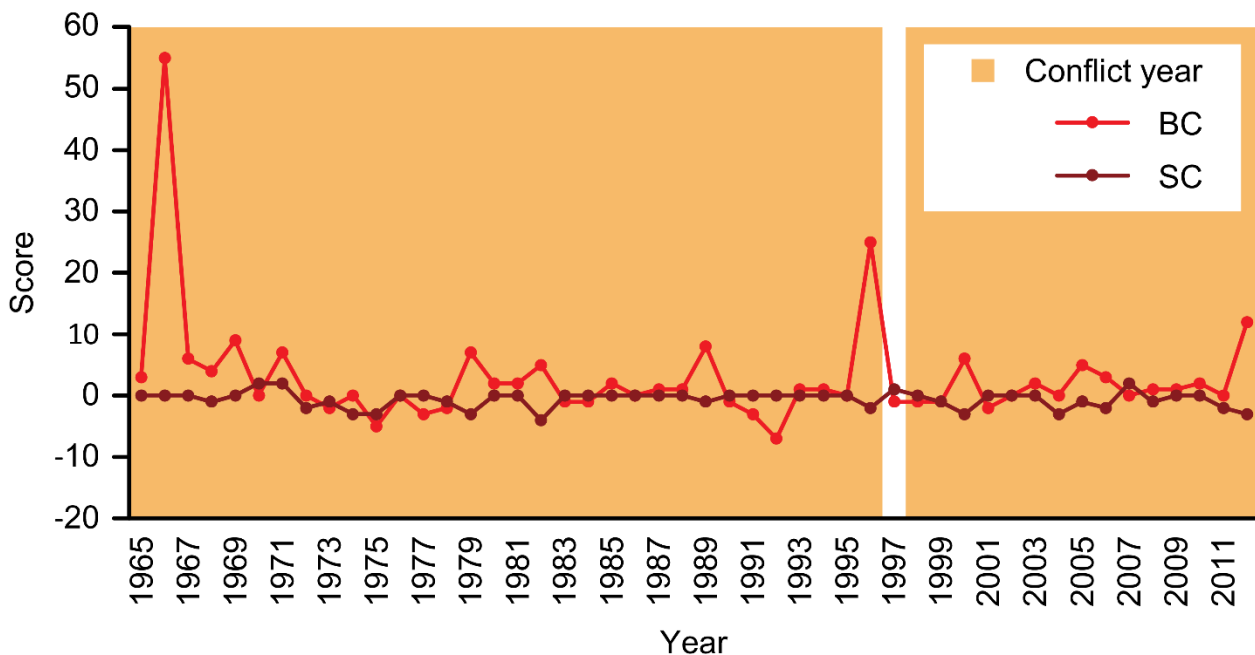


Figure 5. Ethiopia's baseline change and short-term change. Data compiled by the author from the Europa World Year Book series and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's UCDP Dyadic Dataset, ver. 19.1 (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008; Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019)

Category (0,1,1)'s three countries, i.e., Ethiopia, India, and Iraq, have the lowest SCDA's by chance (Table VIII). They were almost always in conflict in the period under study. Their SCs were certainly higher in no-conflict years, but these values might be accidental. In the case of Ethiopia, 1997 was the only no-conflict year, and its SC was +1, only a slight difference (Figure 5). Regarding the BC, there were two celebrations in

Ethiopia, even during conflict years. The first one was the establishment of the OAU (now AU) in 1963, the headquarters of which came to Addis Ababa, and the second one was the country's democratization in 1995. Both celebrations pulled up its *BCDA* significantly, and this observation follows the thesis that an event's nature determines diplomatic outcomes even in a hard case with a long duration of conflict. India's SCs were relatively high in the peaceful mid-1970s. Iraq's SC plummeted in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

Toward the responsibility not to leave

It is found that a strong shock to the legitimacy of a government or state leads to a downward change in baseline diplomatic representation in the host country's capital. A less grave shock or a mere crisis incites a short-term change. These shocks, strong or not, include conflicts such as coups, revolutions, massacres, and both international and interstate wars (the conflict effect). Of course, all changes do not necessarily result from conflicts. In particular, a celebratory event such as independence, democratization, a peace agreement, or the establishment of an international organization's headquarters expands the size of diplomatic corps (the celebration effect). Thus, there is an explicit interrelation between conflict and diplomacy.

Hereafter, the interrelation of diplomatic representation and the international order is at issue. No international obligation tells an ambassador to remain in a country experiencing conflict, and the foregoing discussion has demonstrated that exit by ambassadors is prevalent. Importantly, the flight of foreign missions causes serious damage to the host country's economy and society. According to Kalevi J. Holsti, Western Europe is a pluralistic security community, whereas Africa is a zone of war (Holsti, 1996:21–27, 141–149). The cause of such a state of war in Africa is African states' weakness or lack of legitimacy. It is a vicious cycle if a weak state and its people become weaker as a consequence of the eruption of conflict. As stated above, the closure of an embassy gives rise to the loss of goods, money, and human resources within a country's borders, and therefore, bilateral diplomacy matters no less than multilateral organizations such as the WTO and the World Bank, which have no jurisdiction over immigration.

Nevertheless, the international community has not given enough consideration to the role of diplomatic corps in human security. The UNGA did not make a special remark on diplomatic corps in 2012. Its resolution reads, "Human security requires greater collaboration and partnership among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society" (A/RES/66/290: cl. 3(g)). Clearly, this statement

mentions “Governments” only generically. However, it is ambiguous which “Governments” are being referred to. The national government with territorial sovereignty? UN members at large? The diplomatic corps in the capital? The first is the most likely. If the UNGA truly feared foreign missions’ flight, it should have included the responsibility not to leave, because in reality, most ambassadors are not escaping from violence.⁵ States decide to leave after considering their national interests. Conflict certainly devastates economic interests, partnerships with the former rulers, and the human flow of the sending state’s own nationals. Notwithstanding, decision-makers are required to consider that a conflict threatens people’s human security and to ask themselves if they have the responsibility not to leave under given circumstances.

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⁵The situation in the historic Boxer Rebellion Case needs more scrutiny. Before the siege of the legation district, the Chinese government had declared war against foreign powers.

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Appendix the compiling principles for the diplomatic representation dataset

The raw data table

This study's compiling protocol has three major differences from Singer and Small (1966) and Small and Singer (1973).

First, the heads of a mission's ranks are classified into two levels: the ambassadorial level (including the Commonwealth's high commissioners and the Papal nuncios) and the non-ambassadorial level (e.g., ministers, internuncios, and chargés d'affaires). Small and Singer's study treats these as having the same value. Those authors were preoccupied with a historical trend, i.e., diplomatic 'inflation,' in which formerly existent differentiation between ambassadors and ministers disappeared (Small and Singer, 1973: 584–585, 588). This inflation was a long process that began in the early twentieth century when the United States accredited Latin American ambassadors instead of ministers. Now, we know that distinguishing between ambassadors and chargés d'affaires is necessary. Therefore, this article assigns the ambassadorial level 2 points and the non-ambassadorial level 1 point.

Second, state system membership is not restricted to a certain list in this dataset because the diplomatic relations of a self-purported country, such as Abkhazia, are important when considering current international rivalry.

Third, this article deems Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic to be the same entity, as well as the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation and West Germany and Germany after unification, because the fact that their capitals did not move has real meaning in diplomatic life.

The raw data table thus created is a time series ranging from 1965 to 2013.

The baseline table and the baseline change table

The raw data table thus compiled reflects short-term changes. A short-term change can be defined as one that reverts to the former condition in the third year. For example, a two-year vacancy interposing a long-term chargéship is a short-term change. By removing all short-term changes from the raw data table, a modified table, i.e., the baseline table, is created. Generally, the former table shows superficial fluctuations; the latter outlines smoothed or structuralized relationships.

In removing short-term changes, a problem of priority is unavoidable. In the case of repeated alternation between the presence and absence of ambassadors, which

status should be removed? The author's solution to this is to presume that diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level continue following an ambassador's first taking office, even if he or she is temporarily absent. Put concisely, this article makes it a rule to prioritize the presence of a higher-ranking head rather than that of either a lower-ranking head or a total absence.

The baseline table ranges from 1965 to 2013. Furthermore, its differences year by year are titled the baseline change table, for which the period ranges from 1965 to 2012.

The short-term change table

The short-term changes are separable by subtracting the scores of the baseline table from those of the raw data table; the period ranges from 1965 to 2013, and values range from -2 to 2.

