

**THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE OF DIPLOMACY IN DEVELOPMENT OF  
"SMART INTERACTIONS" EXPLAINING THE "COMMUNICATIVE ACTION"  
AMONG THE EMBASSIES OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Published online: 15 July 2016

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**ABSTRACT**

Diplomacy is the most important character of the foreign policy. Embassy buildings also have a unique situation, as nations' physical embodiments abroad and a dimension of foreign policy. These buildings represent "a body of relations between countries". This study focused on the variables in the communicative action of the embassies; and with a qualitative study, communicative action among the embassies of the United States has been analyzed. The results demonstrate that; "the Agents of Diplomacy" as the mastermind of national power, "consciously" can gain the architecture of diplomacy, in order to provide national goals. This is an active and effective participation between "Deputies of Diplomacy, Architects, and Builders (international contractors)". Also the "Smart Interaction", is a "Rational Action", based on "Generalizable Interests" among Actors, with taking advantage of the "Generative Rules", and optimal use of "Language".

**Keywords:** Diplomacy, Embassy, Medium, Smart Interaction.

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doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jfas.8vi2s.71>



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture has always been an “outstanding medium” of culture, power and development of a civil society throughout the history. Therefore, Architecture of Diplomacy has a unique situation. Embassy buildings are nations’ physical embodiments abroad. At their best, embassies may set the stage for building bridges among nations, while at their worst they can aggravate difficult relations. Also, the construction of embassies is a dimension of foreign policy, and thus, embassies may be considered foreign policy outcomes, objectified through architecture. [2] So the most important factor of the national strength is how to use diplomacy in order to provide national goals. Inevitably, quality of using the architecture of diplomacy has been affected by diplomacy and its tendencies. That is why the "Architecture" and "Politics" are inseparable and causally related. Also, the framework of political architecture is a compilation of various fields which has been developed during the past decades. According to the increasing of systems and factors which influence the architecture of diplomacy, these questions are arisen as:

- ✓ How is it possible to assess the “communicative action” among the embassies?
  
- ✓ What are the major “variables” in this regard?
  
- ✓ How is it possible to achieve the structure of a «Smart Interaction”?

Here with a qualitative study, we try to analyze this field more precisely, applying empirical supports, in order to reveal how to develop the “Smart Interactions”. Then, the major variables are discussed, and the communicative action among the embassies of the United States is examined. In this regard, individual observation is very "important", How people understand the architecture of diplomacy, certainly is "important" for political decision makers. So the study is based on Individual observation, library resources, and international research.

## 2. Literature on “Political Architecture”

Surveying the literature on political architecture provides a wealth of information, suggesting effective variables, for examining communicative action among the embassies, presenting “political goals” expressed “through architecture”. The studies in this field are limited, so this is the concern of my study. And its cross-disciplinary essence, itself, is a part of the reason. However, this subject can be studied scientifically.

### **2.1. Harold Lasswell– Architecture as "Signature of Power"**

According to Lasswell, architecture is best understood as the deliberate designing of symbols for the "purpose of communication" and thus, the experiences of those who will be exposed to an edifice must be taken into account. So the architecture can contribute to both legitimizations of power or to the loss of it. [3]

### **2.2. Charles Goodsell – Architecture as "Political Authority"**

Goodsell views, "government architecture as an expression of political ideas" and nonverbal statement emanating from the political culture of the time. In 1988, claims that architecture is a physical presence and a stable reading of current trends in political life. In his most recent examinations on government buildings, he summarizes the role of architecture in politics by introducing Political Architecture through three perspectives or lenses:

- ✓ Expressive: the first, expressive lens seeks concepts of values embedded within the buildings.
- ✓ Behavioral: The second, the behavioral lens looks at the impact of a statehouse on political behavior.
- ✓ Societal: the third, the societal lens reveals the impressions these buildings have on society in general. This lens is best expressed by Winston Churchill's well-known saying that "**We shape buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us**", representing the deterministic treatment of the environment.

Goodsell's major conclusion is that from these three lenses – the expressive, the behavioral and the societal - the American statehouse reveals the complexity and multiplicity of "reading architecture". [4,5,6]

### **2.3. Craig Webster- Embassy buildings as "Strategic Investments"**

Craig Webster views embassy construction as strategic investments and empirically examines what influences the choice of placement of embassies of different countries, without accounting for their symbolic significance. Thus, when considering the design of their embassies, it is apparent that the countries will design and built their most impressive and, most likely, most innovative embassies in the most powerful, the wealthiest states as they have the power to influence the outcomes in the international system. [7]

### **2.4. Natasha Dimitrova Guenova– "Form Follows Values"-Explaining Embassy Architecture**

Recently, in 2012, this dissertation has been presented on the political architecture. [8] She claims that embassy buildings are value-laden and representing four political values of tradition, innovation, wealth and security which also relating to four basic human needs, or

values: 1) stability, continuity, social order; 2) innovation, change or progress, moving forward; 3) wealth or prosperity and 4) safety and security. The study is based on Schwartz' theory of integrated value systems [9], also provides support for the "Realist Perspective" in International Relations. The major finding of this study is that the wealth of host country is the single most important predictor of embassy design as a reflection of values.

### Reviewing the main points of the study:

- ✓ The study provides comprehensive information in the literature of Political Architecture and its definitions.
- ✓ It is based on "The Schwartz' Theory of Integrated Value Systems" which is considered as the relationship between values and their conflicts.

## 2. Communicative Action in an "Era of Globalization"



Fig.1. The Communicative Action in an Era of Globalization

In an era of globalization, communication is complicated, also competitions are intertwined. Therefore, it is essential to be supported with more knowledge and purposeful diplomacies. what is new is the speed, the scale, the scope and the complexity of global connections. Today Interactive approach is neither passive, nor active (offensive), but is situated based on "cooperation and mutual understanding". There was a conflict of interests during the colonial period, while in an era of globalization, it can be expressed as sharing benefits among actors. [10]

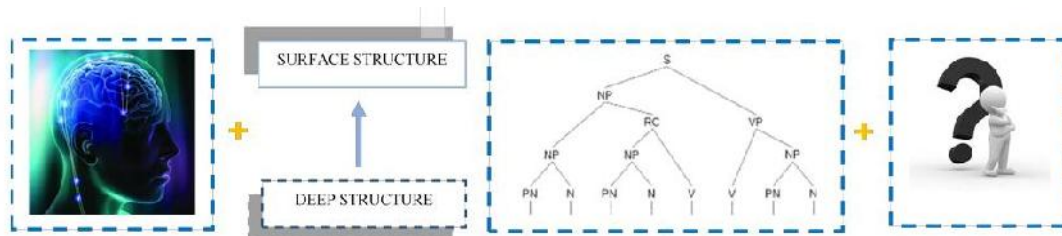
### 3.1. Jürgen Habermas- The Theory of "Communicative Action"

Here two or more actors establish a relationship and "seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of interpretation refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit of consensus. ...". Habermas spends a great deal of time on "language", and how "the use of language" differs in the different "models of action". The very word "communicative" right away signals concern with language [11]

- ✓ There are two other related fields which can be studied along with the communicative action:

1. The first one is the "Generative Grammar" and accuracy in "deep structures". There are so many similarities among the languages in the world. These similarities have been situated in their "Deep Structures". In return, the differences situated in their "surface structures".

Deep structures are mostly related to the "Logical Structure of the Human Mind", situating elements of the language in tree diagrams. So the interpretation of meaning is deeply related to deep structure. [12]



**Fig.2.** Logical Structure of Mind, Deep and Surface Structures, Type of Language

2. Also "The Type of Language " is closely related to this Theory. For example: Applying "the Semiotics" (Symbol, Index, Icon, Text, Intertextual, Context...).

#### **4. The Effective Variables in Explaining the "Communicative Action" among the Embassies**



To study the parameters affecting the Designing of Embassies, it is necessary to comprehensively survey the variables in its context.

##### **4.1. The Current Era and the Variables**

A particular period of time contains its own variables, which undoubtedly influence the trends and attitudes.

**Table 1.** The Globalization and the Effect of Media

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Globalization	The Effect of Media
	
<p>In the era of globalization, reducing the role of government and increasing the role of global cities, the diversity, and complexity, the pattern of effective interactions, rapid changes, and fragile orders have arisen. So, the role of the architecture of diplomacy is highlighted. The effects of globalization in the economic, political and social areas are considered important, it seems that</p>	<p>With the arrival of “Mass Media” in the field of “International Relations”, in the twentieth century, especially, after the World War II, the face of “Traditional Diplomacy” has been changed. and we are facing a phenomenon which is called “Media Diplomacy” and has a unique situation. Formerly, the embassies supply information for their governments, today leaders in countries obtain informati</p>

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economics and politics can't be globalized  
without "culture".

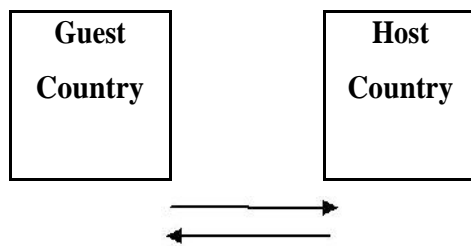
about the international situation from the  
selected "Mass Media".

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**4.2. The Variables Related to the Features and Goals of the “Host and Guest Countries”**

While national and international factors are expected to explain the embassy design. Individual perceptions also matter. Here the purpose is to derive scientifically effective variables in the

“communicative action” of embassies which can explain what factors influence what “political goals” are purposefully expressed – or just reflected – by the embassy architecture and thus to understand, explain and predict changes in the architectural landscape of embassy building.



**Table 2.** The Variables Related to the Features and Goals of the Host and Guest Countries

Variables	Features and Goals
<b>Wealth</b>	<p>The wealth is the first and most important reason for a country to build an embassy abroad. To promote its economic interests, and thus, its economic growth and national prosperity. When considering what the design of an embassy should be, it is apparent that it must express the country’s wealth and thus convince foreign partners in the worthiness of doing business. So, the major foreign policy objective is wealth. If a country is wealthy, this should be reflected even more in its symbolic representation abroad. In the current era of globalization, Wealth is also expressed through the novelty of material, technological innovations, and techniques as well as</p>



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impressing – and impressive - landscaping of the surrounding area.

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## **Power**

If a country is a world power (political, economic, military), this should be reflected in the embassy design. The powerful countries

have a key connection with the construction of embassies and explicit statement of their objectives. These countries most recently would be expected to make bold statements of wealth and innovation. Consequently, facing more security concerns.

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## **2 Tradition**

Nowadays, a tradition in buildings is expressed through classical architectural forms, usually decorated. The traditional symbolic forms as the search for legitimacy by tracing roots to the past. According to Goodsell (2001), the “temple front” is almost

universally recognizable around the world as probably the strongest visual design ever produced in Western architecture, symbolizing authority, while classical architectural forms -in general- impute implicit order and are a universal sign of government power. Subsequently, in other countries tradition can be presented through concepts and values of their traditional architecture.

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## **3 Neighborhood**

The neighborhood should make a difference. Common beliefs and interests, common language and cultural similarities, in order to

build a peaceful and stable international environment, observing in

neighboring countries. So its impact on the quality of architectural design is evident. According to the geographical

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principle, interests generally decline over distance, when all else is considered. It seems reasonable that neighboring countries care about developing stable and good relations with neighbors, based on more than just pure realist self-interest. This is mostly seen among countries with more interests.

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**4 Diplomatic** Embassy buildings present a rich set of information, which can

**Relations** evidently indicate diplomatic relations between the host and guest countries. This can be understood from the perspective of quality in

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the architectural design.

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**5 Security** It seems that, the threat of political violence prompts increased security measures at and around embassies and pose the question whether embassies will retain their role as “civic landmarks”, political symbols and cultural beacons, concluding: “Only time will tell.” although the likelihood of large-scale international armed conflicts seemed to be receding, regional ethnic confrontations and civil war have become salient. Today security is normally achieved through restricting access. If the building is in an urban environment with no visible barriers and there are people walking along and cars passing by, then the building is accessible. Conversely, if the building is walled, situated outside the city on a hilltop, its main purpose is security.

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### **5. Explaining the “communicative action” among the embassies of the United States**

To study the communicative action among the embassies of the United States, in the European Neighborhood, Asian and Muslim Contexts; demonstrating the interaction of embassies and major variables. Thus, these variables represent "the goals and priorities of interactive structures". Here this is discussed.

**Table 3.** The “communicative action” among the embassies of the United States

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**The Communicative Action  
among the Embassies of  
the United States**



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the UK



**Figure3:** The British Embassy

in the United States



**Figure 4:** The U.S. Embassy in

The embassy of the United Kingdom in the United States is not

representing the country's position (wealth and power). Besides, the embassy is not enclosed by a high fence, with sitting places for people, interacting with its surrounding. The building

of ambassador's residence also representing "tradition".

The new design for the embassy of the United States in London, employing

smartly the landscape design for gaining the "security and interaction".

The situation, quality of relations, common interests and goals between two countries, is demonstrated in the architectural design.

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Both embassies are responding to their "contexts".

**Figure 5:** The Embassy of Germany in the United States



The Embassy of Germany in the United States, presenting a modern architecture and a "receptive situation".

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**Figure 6:** The U.S. Embassy in

Germany

While, the embassy of the United States in Germany, is not expressing the country's situation.

Demonstrating the "security concerns" in its context.



**Figure 7:** The Embassy of France in the United States

The embassy of France in the United States, presenting a modern architecture, reminding the "Le Corbusier points of Modern Architecture".



In contrast, the embassy of the United States in France, demonstrating a classical architecture, Pointing out to its context (tradition).

**Figure 8:** The U.S. Embassy in

France

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**Figure 9:** The Embassy of

Sweden in the United States



**Figure 10:** The U.S. Embassy in

Sweden



The Embassy of Sweden in the United States, known as the "House of Sweden"; is a successful example of “modern

architecture”, expressing fewer

security concerns, which can indicate

the quality of relations between two countries, according to some critics, this embassy, is an example of:

“Embassy as Art”.

In contrast, the embassy of the United

States in Sweden, demonstrating the

“security concerns”.

Both Embassies, presenting a

“receptive situation”, and quality of interaction with their environments.



**Figure 11:** The Embassy of  
Canada in the United States



It could be indicated the “quality of relations, common interests and goals”, between two countries in the “neighborhood”.

**Figure 12:** The U.S. Embassy  
in Canada



**Figure 13:** The Embassy of  
China in the United States

**Figure 14:** The U.S. Embassy  
in China



The embassy of China in the United States, is more enclosed, expressing

“Tradition and the Security Concerns”.

In contrast, the Embassy of the United States, in China, responding to its

context -garden features and traditional roofs - demonstrating fewer obvious security concerns. A presence of “power and wealth”, according to the features of the context.

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The embassy of Jordan in the United States, demonstrating “traditional

features and security concerns” in the architectural design.

**Figure 15:** The Embassy of The embassy of United States in Jordan; at first sight, reflecting the design features of those embassies in countries, with the “high-security concerns”.



These embassies are fortress-like; demonstrating the features of their contexts more in their

architectural design.

**Figure 16:** The U.S. Embassy in

Jordan

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## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The studies of “Communicative Action” among the embassies indicate that:

The quality of architectural design is demonstrated in “Avant-Grade Embassies” of the United States, especially in those contexts with "maximum common interests" and "recent powerful countries". The U.S. embassies in “London and China”, are examples of those mentioned.

The quality of “diplomatic relations”, Essentially, is not reflected in the architectural design of embassies.

The communicative action "in the neighborhood", representing the best quality of architectural design. As referring to the embassies of Canada and the United States.

The communicative action in the contexts with “high-security concerns”, reflecting more features of the context”. These embassies mostly are fortress-like; and more homological with their contexts. Pointing out to the Embassy of United States in Jordan.

The landscape design consciously is employed for the embassies of the United States, in order to gain “security and interaction”; as the new architectural design for the embassy in England.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Embassy buildings represent "a body of relations between countries". Thus, it is expected to reflect the relations. The best Communicative Action (quality in the architectural design and interaction with the environment) occurs between the “neighboring countries”, where the common interests are maximum. These buildings represent the national policies of “one country” in the international atmosphere. Thus, it is expected that embassies reflect the "important concerns" with a "Smart Expressive Way ". Besides, with their analyzing, comprehensive and a wealth of information can be obtained from the policies of "one country" for a particular period of time. Also, the architecture of diplomacy is a "smart communication tool", in order to gain "bold political statements in the international atmosphere". On the other hand, according to Winston Churchill: " We shape buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us “. The attitudes, policies, behaviors and processes will be affected by the political architecture. So, the embassies are employed in this regard. In response to the questions; the communicative action among the embassies entirely is situated based on the features, goals and the potential of the host and guest countries, also the variables of its era. If this is so, we are facing this final goal: Representing “what kind of

image, and what kind of language" for a Smart Interaction in a context. Studies also indicate that: The

Smart Interaction, is "Rational Action", Based on "Generalizable Interests" among Actors, with taking advantage of the "Generative Rules", and optimal use of "Language".

In an era of globalization, neo-liberalization, the global financial systems, and the effect of media are discussed. The analysis of embassies program suggests that economic prosperities; are the major concern of the foreign policy. The purpose of the economic benefits is considered for all the countries in the international relations. Thus, the Global Economy is focused on "ideas, information and communication" and its components are strongly linked.

So, the embassies should be designed and constructed "smart and expressive". Then, they can have an influence on the results in the international systems. The results demonstrate that; "the Agents of Diplomacy" as the mastermind of national power, "consciously" can gain the architecture of diplomacy, in order to provide national goals. This is an active and effective participation between "Deputies of Diplomacy, Architects, and Builders (international contractors)".

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## 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to my advisors:

Dr. Kaveh Bazrafkan and Pro. Ali Akbar Saremi. It was My Honor to work with Them.

The Members of My Defence Committee: Pro. Mohammad Reza Nasir Salami, Dr. Iman Raeisi, and Engineer Mehrdad Zavareh Mohammadi.

And Dr. Natasha Dimitrova Guenova, whose studies inspired me in examining the “Communicative Action” among the embassies.

### How to cite this article:

Naeimabadi Sh, Bazrafkan K, Saremi A. The role of architecture of diplomacy in development of "smart interactions" explaining the “communicative action” among the embassies of the united states. J. Fundam. Appl. Sci., 2016, 8(2S), 1493-1514.