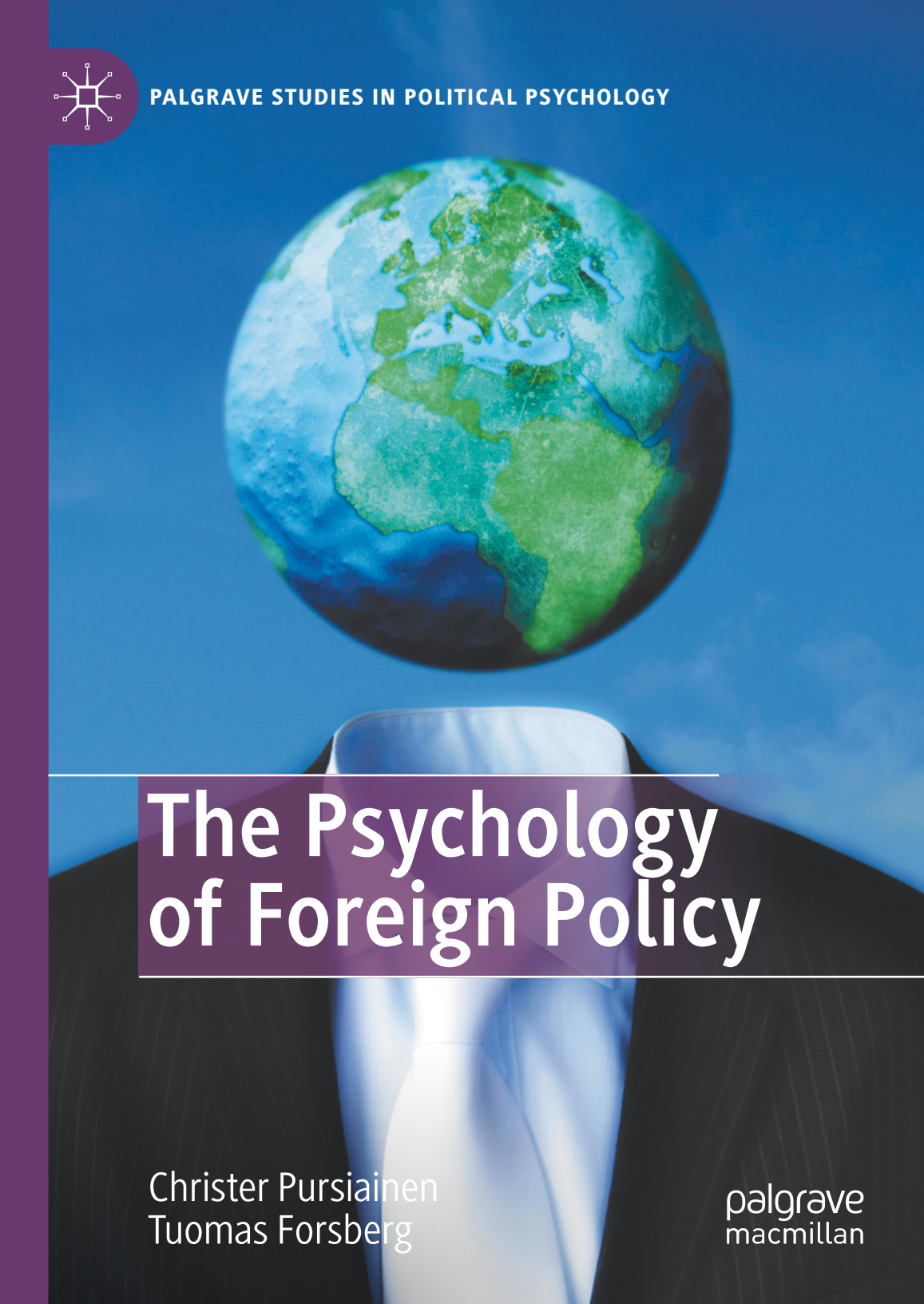
PALGRAVE STUDIES IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY
The Psychology of Foreign Policy
Christer Pursiainen
Tuomas Forsberg
palgrave
macmillan

Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology

The Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology book series profiles a range of innovative contributions that investigate the leading political issues and perspectives of our time. The academic field of political psychology has been developing for almost fifty years and is now a well-established subfield of enquiry in the North American academy. In the context of new global forces of political challenge and change as well as rapidly evolving political practices and political identities, Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology builds upon the North American foundations through profiling studies from Europe and the broader global context. From a theoretical perspective, the series incorporates constructionist, historical, (post)structuralist, and postcolonial analyses. Methodologically, the series is open to a range of approaches to political psychology. Psychoanalytic approaches, critical social psychology, critical discourse analysis, Social Identity Theory, rhetorical analysis, social representations, and a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies exemplify the range of approaches to the empirical world welcomed in the series. The series integrates approaches to political psychology that address matters of urgency and concern from a global perspective, including theories and perspectives on world politics and a range of international issues: the rise of social protest movements for democratic change, notably in the global South and the Middle East; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its broader implications; patterns of global migration and associated challenges of integration and religious accommodation; the formation and deformation of political, economic, and strategic transnational entities such as the European Union; conflicts and violence resulting from local and regional nationalisms; emerging political movements of the new left and the new right; ethnic violence; legacies of war and colonization; and class conflict. To submit a proposal, please contact Senior Editor Ambra Finotello ambra.finotello@palgrave.com.

More information about this series at
http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14600

Christer Pursiainen · Tuomas Forsberg

The Psychology of Foreign Policy

palgrave
macmillan

Christer Pursiainen
Department of Technology
and Safety
UiT The Arctic University of Norway
Tromsø, Norway

Tuomas Forsberg
Helsinki Collegium for Advanced
Studies
University of Helsinki
Helsinki, Finland

Tampere University
Tampere, Finland

Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology
ISBN 978-3-030-79886-4 ISBN 978-3-030-79887-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79887-1

Cover illustration: Blackout Concepts/Alamy Stock Photo

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book focuses on the role of psychological theories in International Relations (IR) and its subfield Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), with a particular emphasis on decision-making. From time to time, every academic field requires comprehensive reappraisal to gain a clearer understanding of the state of the art, and to further its development. We considered that a thoroughly researched, critical and updated analysis of the current field would not be out of place at the present time.

Our fervent wish is to make a meaningful contribution to the debates on our subject. The book paints a detailed picture of its subject area, making a holistic, structured and comparative case for the significance of psychological factors in the study and practice of foreign policy decision-making. We will highlight the achievements and potential of the diversity of psychological theories, as well as identify their challenges and limitations. While being pluralistic in its theoretical and methodological spirit, the book introduces well-justified alternative angles to explore the roots, processes, and outcomes of foreign policy decision-making.

We envisage that the audience for the book will comprise scholars and students of IR, FPA, political psychology, and beyond. For those already specialized in psychological theories with a view to understanding or explaining foreign policies, the book aspires to become a source of inspiration and critical thinking both now and in the future. The content also contributes to more general IR debates about such issues as levels of analysis, agent–structure relations, cause and effect, rationality, and

the reliability and validity of research methodology and data-gathering, among many other topics.

We maintain that psychology is ever-present in any decision-making and should be taken into account in efforts to explain or understand foreign policy. This is not a ground-breaking claim as such, and is more akin to common sense. Yet we argue that this notion is not duly reflected in the mainstream study of international politics. In our discussions with our colleagues, our aim has sometimes been referred to as a call to 'take agency seriously'. We hope to take some steps towards that goal.

Our comparative look at the array of psychological theories that are applicable to foreign policy studies shows that the research field itself is far from monolithic. It is in essence a diverse collection of approaches based on widely different ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions, as well as methodological solutions and practices. This obviously presents a challenge to the efforts to integrate such a complex and incoherent field more closely into IR. Given the breadth of the theme in general, we inevitably pose more immediate questions and problems than we provide definitive answers and solutions. Yet the book seeks to identify the key challenges of the subject and provide some promising directions for addressing them.

The IR/FPA literature is rooted in research and theoretical constructs born from within the American IR scholarship. For many, this is a disturbing fact that needs correcting in a globalized world. The current mainstream of IR is skewed not only in neglecting the growing power of the non-Western world and various transnational forces, but the Western dominance is also apparent in the theoretical assumptions and practical examples. Although we have sought both theories and empirical applications outside of the dominant Western and particularly Anglo-Saxon repertoire, we also wanted to account for the origin of the key theoretical approaches in the field, as well as explore existing research in the main academic outlets as comprehensively as possible. Our chances of turning the tide with this book are limited. We acknowledge that this state of affairs in IR/FPA is changing slowly and can be seen as a bottleneck, slowing down the progress of research. This bias does not invalidate the existing achievements, however.

We also realize that practitioners may enquire whether the book provides any problem-solving guidelines for their concrete foreign policy decision-making. Can our notions about the psychological dimensions in foreign policy facilitate and enhance practical decision-making? To this

end, the final chapter concludes with some key takeaways for foreign policy practice. In general, however, the particular relevance of the book for policymakers can be seen in the degree to which it can raise awareness of various psychological mechanisms that have influenced, and can influence, foreign policy decision-making, both in their own countries as well as abroad. It is quite another question to determine which mechanisms are effectively at play in a given situation, however. Hence, we are happy to leave more concrete policy recommendations to policy-planning institutions and think tanks that are designed for and dedicated to guiding and assisting practical policy. As both authors have long experience of working for such think tanks, we do not underestimate such policy analysis research.

Our task is, however, both more modest and more demanding—to increase knowledge of international politics and to clarify thinking about the role of psychology in it. That said, we are well aware of the incompleteness and uncertainty of any solutions.

We started working on the book at hand in early 2019. The first drafts of some individual chapters were presented as papers at conferences and workshops, which provided useful arenas for collegial debate and motivated us to sharpen our focus. These events included the London School of Economics, Centre for International Studies (LSE CIS) fellow workshop in May 2019; the Central and East European International Studies Association/International Studies Association (CEEISA-ISA) Conference in Belgrade in June 2019; the 13th Pan-European Conference on International Relations in Sofia in September 2019; and the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) Annual Meeting (Virtual Conference) in July 2020. To compensate for the absence of physical conferences and workshops during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/2021, we also organized our own series of online discussions between November 2020 and early 2021. All of these events unravelled many knots in our book and pointed to new avenues of investigation.

There are a number of people to whom we are indebted for giving their time, constructive comments and feedback on individual draft chapters or the whole manuscript. We owe a debt of gratitude to Chris Alden, Hanne Appelqvist, Hiski Haukkala, Valerie M. Hudson, Tuukka Kaidesoja, Mikael Mattlin, Heikki Patomäki, Kate Seaman, Jaana Simola and Eric K. Stern for their invaluable comments. Sincere thanks are also due to Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto and his special adviser Joel Linnainmäki for their contribution to an online session discussing

the links between foreign policy theory and practice from a psychological perspective. Likewise, we are grateful to former Finnish Foreign Minister Dr. Erkki Tuomioja for an illuminating discussion especially on the role of interpersonal psychology in foreign policy practice. Tuomas Forsberg would like to thank colleagues and friends at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and Tampere University for numerous inspiring discussions that have helped to develop arguments also related to the theme of the book, as well as the Academy of Finland Project 'Cultural Statecraft in International Relations: The Case of Russia' (Project no. 298883, 2016–2021) for financial support. Christer Pursiainen would similarly like to extend thanks to his employer UiT The Arctic University of Norway for its generous research leave policy, which enabled him to work on this book in 2019.

We are also grateful to Lynn Nikkanen and Sean Winkler for copy-editing the manuscript at various stages of its development. Finally, we would like to thank Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature for publishing such a lengthy book, and the editors, series editors and anonymous reviewers for their indispensable contribution.

It goes without saying that any errors, shortcomings, or misinterpretations that not only may, but will, appear in a book as wide-ranging as ours remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

Tromsø, Norway
Helsinki, Finland
April 2021

Christer Pursiainen
Tuomas Forsberg

Contents

About the Authors

Dr. Christer Pursiainen is Professor of Societal Security at the Arctic University of Norway (UiT) in Tromsø, Norway. He obtained a doctorate in Political Science from the University of Helsinki in 1999. Previously, he has worked in leading management and research positions in academic institutions, think tanks and consultancy companies, and intergovernmental organizations in Finland, Sweden, Russia and Italy. His publications deal with a variety of themes such as international relations theory, foreign policy analysis, regional cooperation and integration, comparative politics, state–society relations, Soviet/Russian history and politics, societal security, crisis management, and critical infrastructure protection and resilience, published in different countries and in several languages. Dr Pursiainen's books include the authored *The Crisis Management Cycle* (Routledge 2017), the edited *At the Crossroads of Post-Communist Modernisation: Russia and China in Comparative Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan 2012), the co-edited *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin* (Routledge 2005), and the authored *Russian Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory* (Routledge 2000).

Dr. Tuomas Forsberg is Director of the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (HCAS) at the University of Helsinki and Professor of International Relations at Tampere University (on leave of absence 2018–2023). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1998. Since then, he has worked as the acting director and a

senior research fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs; as Professor of Western European Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; and as Professor of International Relations at the University of Helsinki before transferring to the University of Tampere. His publications include *Russia's Cultural Statecraft* (co-edited with Sirke Mäkinen, Routledge 2022), *The European Union and Russia* (co-authored with Hiski Haukkala, Palgrave 2016), *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship* (co-authored with Graeme Herd, Blackwell 2006), and articles in journals such as *International Affairs*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Review of International Studies*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Security Dialogue*, *Global Society*, and *Journal of Common Market Studies*, among others.

List of Figures

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

Why Does Psychology Matter in International Relations?

How remiss would it be to claim that international politics, which is essentially a human affair, has nothing to do with psychology, such issues as perceptions and misperceptions, beliefs and ideologies, emotions and personalities? Yet while such factors are a central element in diplomatic and media reporting on international politics, the main scholarly theories in this field have largely neglected psychology in their explanations.

This book focuses on foreign policy decision-making from the viewpoint of psychology. Foreign policy can concisely be defined as the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor in international relations (Hill, 2016), with the reservation that the concept is historically developed and more ambiguous than the above simple statement (Leira, 2019). The book contends that psychology is always present in human decision-making, constituted by its structural determinants but also playing its own agency-level constitutive and causal roles, and therefore it should be taken into account in any analysis of foreign policy decisions. Located within the discipline of International Relations (IR) and its subfield Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the study is also part of the research area of political psychology (Houghton, 2015; Huddy et al., 2013; Nesbitt-Larking et al., 2014), which aims at applying what is known about human psychology to the study of political behavior.

C. Pursiainen and T. Forsberg, *The Psychology of Foreign Policy*, Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79887-1_1

The research remit of the current book is twofold. First, we aim to present a means of better integrating various psychological theories into IR, as partial explanations themselves but also as facets of more holistic understandings. Second, we analyze the most prominent psychological theories in FPA from a comparative perspective, identifying their achievements and added value as well as their limitations and shortcomings. In so doing, we aim to pinpoint some potentially fruitful avenues to explore in the study of foreign policy decision-making.

Metatheorizing Psychology in International Relations

In the current book, we will present a number of psychological theories that can and have been applied to the study of international politics and foreign policies. Nevertheless, we emphasize that psychology is not embedded in a specific set of theories only. Nor is it committed to strong methodological individualism and should not be strictly set apart from structures. Unpacking, deconstructing, questioning and revising such assumptions is a critical function of psychological approaches to IR. To elaborate our approach, it is necessary to provide a concise overview of some key metatheoretical debates that constitute IR as a discipline, and explain how we locate psychology and the respective theories within this more generic framework.

Explaining and Understanding

One of the stereotypical dividing lines in the social sciences runs between the approaches of explaining and understanding. Explanation is sometimes regarded as a straightforward concept—something either is or is not an explanation. Understanding then is conceived as a slow process-like accumulation of knowledge, creating the ability to interpret an event, or rather a phenomenon, in a deeper sense. A phenomenon can be explained by simply stating the causes. Understanding is characteristic of historical study, which usually develops a plausible multifaceted narrative that can be gradually revised when new evidence emerges. Explanation thus reflects the positivist image of natural sciences, and understanding the interpretivist image of the humanities. In this deductive nomological scheme, an explanation is a statement of a causal relationship that affects the behavior of an agent (or actor), 'from outside' so to speak.

When the researcher discovers an external force that caused the event, it is taken to count as an explanation. An explanation involves the idea of a general regularity that determines a cause-and-effect relationship in certain circumstances. Understanding, on the other hand, looks at an action or event 'from within'. The action is seen as resulting from subjective reasoning. Intuitively, if we apply psychology to analyze foreign policy decisions, the latter may seem more appropriate. Yet psychology as a discipline, while it involves understanding psychological capacities and their functions, is conventionally seen as reflecting the model of natural sciences in providing causal explanations for human behavior (c.f. Cummins, 2010; Keil, 2006).

In the above scheme, causal explanation and interpretivist understanding are two different forms of scientific activity (von Wright, 1971). Martin Hollis and Steve Smith (2003, pp. 213–214) famously disseminated this dichotomy in their 1990 book *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, arguing that "there are always two stories to tell and they cannot be merely added together." One story is told from outside about the human part of the natural world and the other from inside in a separate social realm. The generation of IR scholars that studied Hollis and Smith as a key textbook were supposed to make a clear choice between understanding and explaining. Such a solution comes at a price. If explanation and understanding were two different stories, the respective scholars could not really learn from and draw upon each other because they would represent truly incommensurable paradigms (see Kuhn, 1970). Two scholars, one representing the explanatory paradigm and the other that of understanding, would both be right in their own way. Researchers would not be able to make a rational choice with regard to their approach, but it would be the result of socialization according to the schools, contingent upon the purpose, or simply a matter of taste rather than argumentation.

A more practical solution to this dilemma is to perceive explanation and understanding not as incompatible approaches, but as working in tandem and answering slightly different types of questions. If the study of social life is question-driven and not methodology-driven, both can have their place (Wendt, 1991, p. 392). Explanation is better suited to large patterns and trends, while understanding is needed to make sense of individual cases. Following the rather recently popularized idea of analytical eclecticism or pragmatism in IR (Haas & Haas, 2002; Sil & Katzenstein, 2010), it is possible to combine the two approaches, or at least some of

their explanatory elements, into a more comprehensive problem-solving account for a specific case.

However, it is also possible to deny the whole juxtaposition of explanation and understanding (see e.g., Manicas, 2006, pp. 12–16). Even linguistically, explanation and understanding are not separate but related activities: if I understand something, I can explain it to you, and then you may understand it as well. More importantly, the distinction between understanding and explanation on the basis of external causes and internal reasons is not tenable. It rests on Humean empiricism and the view of causality as constant conjunctions (Ducasse, 1966; Pallies, 2019). Cause is an ambivalent concept in studying international relations (Lebow, 2014). The idea that reasons cannot be causes, because they do not exist independently of the action, is largely a semantic question. We may describe the action's intentions, but the same action can be redescribed with a vocabulary that is devoid of intentions, and intentions can exist even without a resulting action. For this reason, a number of philosophers, most famously Donald Davidson (2001), have argued that reasons are causes. According to the standard model that Davidson inspired, reasons consisting of beliefs and desires are mental states that explain action. As Heikki Patomäki (1996, p. 122) states, "we always need to involve both 'understanding' and 'explanation' in our analyses of international relations" (see also Bieler & Morton, 2000; Carlsnaes, 1992, 1994; Norman, 2021; Wight, 1996, pp. 315ff.).

The difficulty in neatly separating explaining and understanding becomes quite clear if we look closely at Hollis and Smith's (2003) account of causal and interpretative agency. For them, rational choice is the category of causal agency whereas interpretivist agency is based on reasoned choices. All the same, if rational choice is the only assumed mechanism of agency, then all the variation that explains the choices must be located at the structural level, such as the different choice matrixes in game theory: "the theory gets its explanatory power from structure-generated interests and not from actual individual psychology" (Satz & Ferejohn, 1994, p. 72). If rational choice, however, is not the only possible mode of human reasoning, then it can be seen as one type of reasoned choice that needs to be studied 'from within'.

Yet there remains a crucial difference between reasons and causes, even if they can be seen as partly synonymous. In English, the difference is that we can choose reasons but not causes, even if we can manipulate the latter.

If effective reasons are chosen, there is always an aspect of underdetermination at play. As John Searle (2001, p. 73) notes, psychological causes do not necessitate the effect if it is voluntary. The antecedent psychological factors, such as the perceptions and beliefs that underlie reasons, are not sufficient to automatically cause the action of a free agent. We can have many reasons and yet choose not to act upon them. Insofar as reasons are effective reasons, they are causes, but why exactly they are effective in a given situation may remain a mystery.

We assert that psychological factors can be located on both sides of the traditional but somewhat fuzzy explaining/understanding divide. As far as psychology is understood as the allegedly objective personality traits of agents, a scientific view of human nature or electrical impulses of neurons, it belongs to the category of explaining. When psychology alludes to the human mind and to the subjective beliefs and desires of agents, it belongs to the category of understanding. Yet with regard to many psychological factors, the strict distinction between explaining and understanding is not justifiable. If emotions are regarded as physiological arousals, they are considered explanations, but if they are seen as appraisals, they require understanding. However, as in the case of emotions, such external and internal factors may interact. Seemingly objective personality traits are conventionally based on subjective reporting, and subjective belief systems can be shaped by external factors such as political and economic conditions. Similarly, framing the situation and acting in line with, say, prospect theory, which is one of the semi-rational approaches discussed in this volume, can be seen as a universal tendency, but it still presupposes a subjective understanding of the situation.

Levels

The question of the level-of-analysis problem in IR was most famously raised by David Singer (1961). Singer distinguished between parts and the whole, micro and macro. He argued that the levels could not be combined, and that a choice between them was inevitable. Whether it is a question of the natural or the social sciences, the researcher must choose to examine either parts or the whole, components or the entire system. One must choose between flowers and a garden, or an individual and society, and so on. In IR, the two levels were the nation-state and its foreign policy and the international system with its structures. Singer's premise was pluralistic in one sense: either level of analysis, part or whole,

was justified. Yet the researcher had to choose one and avoid confusing them when conducting analyses.

Singer did not explicitly consider the fact that entities are themselves parts of something, and parts are entities in relation to their own parts, and that, accordingly, we can always distinguish between more than two levels of analysis. A couple of years before Singer, Kenneth Waltz (2001) had actually introduced his three levels of analysis, or 'images' of what causes international wars: human nature and behavior; the regime type of state; or the international system. The latter notion famously led Waltz (1979) to develop his structural realism, which suggests that wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them—in a state of international anarchy. Anarchy in this context refers to a situation where there is no single global state and no corresponding monopoly of coercive machinery as there is within states.

In addition to the conventional three levels of analysis—the individual, the state, and the international system—a number of other levels can be considered. James Rosenau (1966, p. 48) distinguished between individual, role, governmental, societal, and systemic variables. Graham Allison (1971) introduced models of bureaucratic politics and organizational foreign policy that can be seen as additional levels of analysis located between the state and an individual decision-maker. A dyad or a regional complex can be set up as a level between the state and the international system (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Poast, 2016). We can regard transnational civil societies, connections between multinational companies, or various cross-border networks as levels of their own, being located between the individual and the international system. If we probe the individual level, we can also distinguish multiple levels down the ladder such as neurons. Or we can add an ecosystem, a biosphere, or a planetary system as a new level. All in all, it is always possible, or indeed academically fruitful, to propose new levels or to scrutinize different subsystems within each level of analysis. Indeed, Nicholas Onuf (1995, p. 37) has noted that there seemed to be as many levels as researchers agreed there were.

Yet the fundamental question does not concern the number of levels. The ultimate dilemma is whether the levels should or can be kept analytically separate, or in which ways they may relate to or even explain each other (Temby, 2015). In mainstream positivist debates, this issue culminates in the juxtaposition between reductionism and structuralism. The former advocates the view that an entity is nothing but the sum of its parts

and their properties. Such an ontology is associated with behaviorism in the study of international relations. We may say that the international system is equal to the states of the world and their interrelationships, and that state behavior can only be understood through the individual agents that act on behalf of a state. In stark contrast, structuralism represents the idea that the whole defines the nature of its parts. In essence, the whole must be seen as something more than just the sum of its parts, and the parts are constituted by virtue of the whole. The international system is something more than the states and individuals of which it is composed, as the qualities of this system cannot be reduced to its individual parts and their aggregates. When this debate had its heyday in IR in the 1960s and 1970s, there was no definitive conclusion, at least before the so-called agent-structure debate entered IR in the late 1980s. Instead, the practical solution that a taxonomy of levels could be useful not only for organizing purposes, but also for analysis as each level has something to contribute, eschewed the principal question of causal hierarchy or importance (e.g., Holsti, 1967).

The issue of levels becomes further complicated by similar debates about causality within the very concept of psychology and the study of it. Thus, the American Psychological Association (APA, n.d.; cf. Brown, 2007; Colman, 2015; VandenBos, 2007) defines psychology as "the study of the mind and behavior" or "the supposed collection of behaviors, traits, attitudes, and so forth that characterize an individual or a group." A somewhat broader avenue is provided by social psychology, which, according to APA, is the study of "how an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by the actual, imagined, or symbolically represented presence of other people." The definition goes further by distinguishing between psychological social psychology and sociological social psychology. "The former tends to put greater emphasis on internal psychological processes, whereas the latter focuses on factors that affect social life, such as status, role, and class." Another prominent related field of study has traditionally been mass psychology, which, again following APA, deals with phenomena related to "the mental and emotional states and processes that occur in a large body of individuals," such as mass movements or collective hysteria. More recently, scholars focusing on political psychology have argued that psychology is related to, and partially constituted by, globalization and other international phenomena (e.g., Arnett, 2002). Viewed from the other extreme, eliminative materialists contend that we understand the human mind best

when reducing it to the study of neurons (e.g., Bickle, 2015; cf. criticism in Fumagalli, 2018; Krakauer et al., 2017). Physicists and others who follow a similar chain of inference may argue further that quantum mechanics explains human decision-making (e.g., Wendt, 2015).

In IR/FPA, psychology is habitually associated with state leaders and is sometimes seen as an attempt to explain social phenomena exclusively from the angle of the individual. 'Psychologicalization' has a negative connotation, partly because researchers rarely have reliable evidence of psychological factors in international politics. Even if they had, the psychological explanations seem to render social or structural forces irrelevant or secondary. Underlying this view lurks the question of whether social facts can exist independently of the psychological states of individuals or whether social forces penetrate individual minds (Leon, 2010).

In this book, we mainly refer to individual or small groups of decision-makers, and occasionally to political elites as our units of analysis. FPA traditionally focuses on states and their leaders, but psychological approaches to decision-making can be flexibly applied to all kinds of actors. Moreover, explaining foreign policy behavior cannot be reduced to specific levels representing agency, such as the psychology of an individual, because all levels are interrelated. The social character of the individual is constituted by the structural relations of power (Nesbitt-Larking et al., 2014, p. 426), and social structures in turn are both constitutively and causally dependent on agents and practices (Wendt, 1999, p. 185). This notion inevitably leads us to address the agent-structure debate in some more detail.

Agent and Structure

If both reductionism and structuralism are problematic, we need a third way that does not allow either parts or the whole to predominate. This is called a structurationist (or reflexive, relational or evolutionary) approach in social theory. According to this view, the individual and societal levels are not only interconnected but mutually constituted. An agent is not only self-observing and self-correcting, but also socially influential in relation to the situations in which that agent acts. By its own activities, the agent can contribute to either maintaining or changing these social situations and their conditions. On the other hand, the social structures constrain and enable human agency as well as constitute subjectivity (Giddens, 1984).

However, if the idea of mutual constitution is taken too far, we face yet another problem. Margaret Archer (1995) has criticized Anthony Giddens for his view that agency and structure cannot be decoupled and has suggested instead that agents, with their own psychological characteristics and structures need to be treated separately and on their own terms. Just as there are emergent properties at the level of the whole that cannot be reduced to the properties of the parts, there is also an autonomy at the level of parts (Wight, 2006). The extent to which the parts are self-contained is seen as an issue of modularity: should we accept modularity, we can and should make sense of psychological or social mechanisms by first treating them as separate components, and then study how they interact with other components and the larger system to which they are connected (Kuorikoski, 2012). Such a view would be in line with 'weak' methodological individualism, which does not deny the impact of structural factors (Udehn, 2001, 2002).

Where does this lead us? The structurationist position has become mainstream in social theory, instead of being a challenger. What is supposed to follow in terms of empirical research is not always as self-evident, however. The above-mentioned debate concerning the levels in IR was to a large extent replaced by the agent-structure discourse, when the debate permeated IR from sociology and philosophy in the late 1980s (Coleman, 1990; Giddens, 1979, 1984; Searle, 1995). Alexander Wendt's (1987) and David Dessler's (1989) articles were seminal in deconstructing some key premises of structure in IR theories in general, and in Waltz's structural realism in particular. Both advocated the structurationist theory that gave agents and structure equal ontological status. Structure was seen as a field of action that only exists by virtue of agency and that could change as a result of it, but agency itself would not be possible without a structure. If there is no dominant level of causality, agent and structure constantly interact and define each other. It is an ongoing process of dialectical adaptation and change that will never end (see also Qin, 2018; Wendt, 1999).

This view is a rather commonsensical solution that has long been both explicit and implicit in much historical research on international relations. It seems intuitively undeniable that our own agency can potentially make a difference in our society, but simultaneously that the societal structure also defines the conditions in which we are situated by both enabling and constraining our actions. Yet this "anarchy is what states make of

it" (Wendt, 1992) idea of structuration in the rather immature discipline of IR challenged the key assumptions of the then popular structural realism, and other holistic theories that assume an independent power for structures (e.g., balance of power, accumulation of capital).

As the discussion on the relationship between agency and structure, if abstracted far enough, moves more at the level of metatheory, it does not directly answer the question of what those agents and structures are. The agent can, in principle, be any subject; in foreign policy, it can be the president, the foreign ministry, the cabinet, the foreign policy elite, or the state. Yet the extent to which states can be seen as persons having consciousness is a quite different question (Lerner, 2021; Wendt, 2004). Although states are sometimes seen metaphorically as persons with legal and moral responsibilities, and have capacities to act when individuals act on behalf of them, the anthropomorphic analogy is misleading if personhood is seen as unitary and corporal. Structure, in turn, is multidimensional, too. It can be understood largely as material, based on resources and their distribution, but also including rules and norms of international politics, or perceived identity relationships between self and others, that constitute the power of the material structures.

If both levels define each other and neither can be given a superior position in advance, it follows that we need to study both agency as well as structure from their own vantage points. In principle, this would be possible to do simultaneously, with several subfactors involved, if social research were based on identifying quantitative nonlinear functions of many explanatory factors, as in conventional causal dependence research in engineering. Yet something of this sort was already attempted in the 1960s and 1970s in FPA, in terms of the efforts to develop an all-encompassing theory of foreign policy. As at that time, such efforts today would be unlikely to bring much more to the discipline than a vast amount of data on different correlative relationships, nonlinear curves and possible futures. Although sophisticated simulation methods may offer some opportunities to understand and avoid the worst pitfalls, in practice it is difficult to examine several moving parts at the same time in this fundamentally social and psychological sphere called foreign policy. In a sense, engineering social sciences is doomed to fail, which is precisely where psychology comes into the equation.

In empirical research, agency and structure are typically separated and taken in turn as temporarily given in order to be able to study how one explains the other. At first sight, the idea that structures can be

'frozen' or 'given' may be seen as conflicting with the basic idea of the dynamic agent-structure schema. In practice, the idea that social structures have to be bracketed when conducting situational foreign policy analysis is, however, not a serious problem. The constitutive structural determinants, namely such issues as the structure of the international system and its balance of power, state identities, or domestic political systems are not likely to change unobtrusively. Therefore, structural-historical research may require one to take "social structures and agents in turn as temporarily given in order to examine the explanatory effects of the other," especially if both social identity and interests appear to be relatively stable (Wendt, 1987, pp. 356, 364–365; 1994, p. 386). Constructivist FPA models (Carlsnaes, 1992, 1994) clearly implicate this type of research design and sequency, even if the intention were to continue the analysis of a situation-specific decision with a view to discussing its intended and unintended effects on the existing structural conditions.

As we have now deconstructed both the dichotomy of explanation/understanding as well as that of the levels of analysis and agency-structure, it is no longer possible to locate psychological theories exclusively to any neatly demarcated box. Although the psychological theories that we examine in this book mainly seek to examine agency 'from within', it has to be taken into account that this agency is always embedded within, constituted by, and able to potentially affect its structure.

International Relations Grand Theories and Psychology

The grand theories of IR, such as realism, constructivism, and liberalism, together with post-structuralist and other critical theories, have constituted the self-image of the discipline from the 1980s onwards. None of these theories says much about the role of individuals and their psychology in world politics. Indeed, "IR scholars have seemed not to know what to do with psychology" (Houghton, 2015, p. 314). However, to the extent that such theories are not committed to methodological holism, a causally relevant agency level of psychological factors may not only be complementary but compulsory to account for the importance of the structural factors.

Comparing or Combining Theories?

In order to locate psychology in the context of IR grand theories, it is necessary to briefly refer to some well-known philosophy-of-science debates about how theories could be compared and, in some cases, combined. A less discussed issue concerns the logic of dealing with these matters through IR. To start with Thomas Kuhn (1970), he saw scientific development as a dynamic process, in which phases of 'normal science' and revolutionary phases alternate. While normal science operates within a relatively stable frame of accepted beliefs and methods, a new paradigm grows from its increasing number of anomalies that cannot be successfully treated by the old paradigm. Eventually the new paradigm replaces the old one, partially incorporating its vocabulary and apparatus, but seldom employs these borrowed elements in a traditional way. What primarily differentiates the old and new paradigms is their incommensurable views of seeing the world and of practicing science in it. Another philosopher of science, Imre Lakatos (1970), argued instead that there is no sense in waiting for a growing number of anomalies to emerge within existing theories; rather, one should try to falsify those theories by producing a better theory as soon as possible. His falsification concept was a considerable modification of Karl Popper's (1958, 1994) logic of scientific discovery. Instead of the Popperian idea of falsifying individual theories based on error elimination, Lakatos thought that the clash was not so much between a theory and the facts, but between theories themselves. What he termed sophisticated falsificationism meant that a theory can be falsified if one can produce a new theory that explains the previous success of the challenged theory while having excess empirical content, meaning that it predicts and can at least partially corroborate some novel facts. In essence, the empirical application area of phenomena is expanded in the challenging theory.

While representing only two of a variety of metatheoretical constructs, the Kuhnian and Lakatosian understandings of scientific progress, sometimes in curious combinations, have been widely applied to mainstream IR debates. The neoliberal or institutionalist challenge of structural realism claimed to identify some anomalies in structural realism's explanatory power. The school of thought then produced some additional components added to the original scheme of realism that would fill these gaps. In a pure Lakatosian fashion, institutionalists accepted structural realism's basic assumptions but added that international institutions and regimes