# Theorizing Foreign Policy in a Globalized World

Edited by

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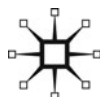# Theorizing Foreign Policy in a Globalized World

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# Preface

The origins of this volume date back to an authors' workshop in Bad Homburg, Germany, during the football world championship in the summer of 2010. Now we are past the world championship 2014 and can look back at five additional years of international relations and foreign policy analysis advances and can conclude that the rationale of the volume is as relevant as ever. If anything, the gap between the two scholarly communities has increased and the challenge they face, represented jointly by the processes of globalization and global governance, seems to have triggered entrenchment rather than reflexive dialogue. We hope this volume will contribute to reverse these tendencies to reproduce separate solitudes.

Back in 2010, the two of us had been engaged in separate research projects which suggested synergies by joining forces. Luckily, funding and support had been made available by the Cluster of Excellence 'Formation of Normative Orders' at Goethe University – where three contributors to this volume were involved in research projects on 'the West' and the 'emergence and transformation of foreign policy' – and the Thyssen Foundation. We are grateful to both institutions for their financial support and to the staff of 'Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften' in Bad Homburg for providing a very pleasant and stimulating environment. We also thank Benjamin Herborth and Ulrich Roos for their support in writing the initial grant proposal for Thyssen. Lisbeth Aggestam and Amelia Hadfield contributed to the success of the initial workshop in Bad Homburg with papers and comments. Finally, we appreciate the technical assistance of Christina Andrä, Carina Berg and Daniel Fehrmann in preparing the Bad Homburg workshop and the final manuscript.

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Gunther Hellmann and Knud Erik Jørgensen
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# 1
# Introduction

*Gunther Hellmann and Knud Erik Jørgensen*

In an increasingly globalized world, classical images of foreign policy as a political practice conducted by sovereign states seem less and less adequate. However, rather than tackling the transformation of foreign policy as a process of both scholarly and immediate political interest, foreign policy analysis and International Relations (IR) theory have over the past decades become separate fields of study, yet in a state of mutual and more or less benign neglect.[1] This volume aims at systematically exploring the links among classical foreign policy analysis, IR theories and more recent approaches focusing on processes of global transformation. More specifically, the authors aim at establishing these linkages by offering answers to the question of how we – in the 21st century, that is to say, under increasingly globalized conditions – can or should understand and theorize the term as well as the field of political practice named 'foreign policy'.

Since the 'Peace of Westphalia' in 1648 foreign policy has been defined in terms of the pursuit of external interests by sovereign states. In this sense sovereignty differentiates between the internal and external sphere of states along territorially defined borders and thus turns out to be a necessary condition for foreign policy (Wæver, 1994, 238–239). As more recent research has shown, however, the frontiers between the internal and the external have become ever more blurred (Bartelson, 1995, 2011; Krasner, 1999). In no other field are the consequences more apparent than in the field of European foreign policy (Jørgensen, 2004; Larsen, 2009). At the same time a global monopoly of force is considered ever more urgent (Deudney, 2006). Hence it doesn't come as a surprise that foreign policy is increasingly portrayed as yesterday's fad rather than as a constitutive practice of contemporary global politics. A transformation of the internal–external relationship modifies the idea

of sovereignty and consequently alters our traditional ways of thinking about foreign policy as well. In particular, the ever more prominent global governance approaches are questioning the future relevance of foreign policies, the idea of the nation-state as such and the meaning of territorial boundaries (Bjola and Kornprobst, 2011). Altogether, one cannot help thinking that the spreading disinterest in foreign policy analysis (Carlsnaes, 2002, 331) goes hand in hand with a strengthening of global governance research, which attributes a minor role at best to foreign policy.

Where the erosion of national governance is assumed to be in favour of transnational governance, the decreasing interest in foreign policy analysis comes hardly as a surprise (Joerges, 2001, 2006). The same holds for approaches which describe the transformation from the 'national towards the post-national constellation' (Zürn, 1998; Zangl and Zürn, 2003; Leibfried and Zürn, 2006). All these theoretical considerations conceptually deviate from the image of global politics as a zero-sum game (Ruggie, 2004, 519; Sending and Neumann, 2006, 651; Neumann and Sending, 2007). In other words, explaining the rising influence of transnational non-governmental actors goes hand in hand with assuming both the nation-states' loss of power and a decline in the importance of foreign policy (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Consequently, political authority is increasingly transferred from the nation-state to transnational policy networks understood as 'spheres of authority' in which states do have a share of impact but do not necessarily take on a dominant role (Rosenau, 1999). Globalization is taking place above and beyond the reach of states but it nevertheless changes the system's units' identities and interests (Cerny, 1995, 596; 1997, 253–273; Sassen, 1996; Bartelson, 2000, 188). Understood in this way, states and their foreign policies are considered as mere transmission belts of global dynamics which lie beyond their control. From such a perspective, globalization appears as a process driven forward by its own dynamics (Bartelson, 2000, 189).

Back in the early 1950s, IR as a discipline had already split into two schools of thought with different research foci (Kubálková, 2001, 15; Hudson, 2008, 12–17; Hill, 2011). The first group attended to international politics research on a systemic structural level, thereby focusing on single events in IR by means of the nomothetic-deductive model of explanation; the second group comprised comparative foreign policy and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the latter turning towards the internal functioning of the system's units and opening up the 'black box' in order to explain behaviour by the specific characteristics of the state. For

whatever reason, the counter-intuitive belief took hold that theorizing foreign policy is inordinately more difficult and complex than theorizing international politics at the system's level. While systemic theorists preached the blessings of parsimony (Waltz, 1975, 1979), foreign policy analysts laboured on mere 'pre-theories' (Rosenau, 1966, 1974).

Although good arguments have been urged on the question of why foreign policy analysis on the one hand and systemic explanations of international relations on the other hand do not necessarily embody irreconcilable endeavours (Elman, 1996a, 1996b; Baumann et al., 2001; Rittberger, 2004; Hellmann, 2009a), prominent voices have defended the view that 'patterns of state behaviour at the aggregate or population level, i.e., the states system' are to be distinguished from 'the behaviour of individual states' (Wendt, 1999, 11). In essence, Waltz and Wendt, two of the most influential IR theorists, joined forces in order to defend the view that foreign policy theorizing cannot be done in a meaningful and systematic fashion at the level of agency. Waltz, for instance, held that scholars interested in theories of foreign policy often

> confuse analysis with theory. Neither realists nor anyone else believe that unit-level factors can be excluded from foreign-policy analysis. The question is not what should be excluded from one's account of foreign policy, but what can be included in a *theory* of international politics. Much is included in an analysis; little is included in a theory. Theories are sparse in formulation and beautifully simple. Reality is complex and often ugly.
>
> (Waltz, 1996, 56, emphasis added)

Accordingly, Walter Carlsnaes concluded that interest in IR theories has significantly increased over the past decades whereas the number of articles on foreign policy has dramatically declined (Carlsnaes, 2002, 331). The only exception seems to be the field of European foreign policy, that is, the foreign policy of the EU as well as the nexus with national foreign policies in Europe (Jørgensen, 2004, 2007; Larsen, 2009).

Foreign policy analysis in its classical (FPA) form focuses on the decision-making process and its conditions (for example, research on decision-making; group dynamics; bureaucratic politics; analogies to cybernetic processes; as well as research on perceptions and misperceptions). Due to its actor-centric focus of research (Allison and Zelikow, 1999; Hudson, 2005) it appears to lack a conceptual toolkit capable of addressing processes of global (or 'systemic') transformation. This assumption holds even after the post-behaviouristic turn (Holsti et al.,

1968; Axelrod, 1976; Hermann, 1980). In a nutshell one might say that Foreign Policy Analysis has lost the intra-disciplinary race for attractiveness and attention against systemic IR theories and, more recently, global governance research.

The disciplinary trend to withdraw conceptual and empirical attention to foreign policy analysis stands, however, in stark contrast to actual political developments in world affairs. Even a cursory glance at three recent crises in world affairs – the end of the East–West conflict, the fight against terror(ism) and the world economic crisis that began in autumn 2008 – shows how misleading it would be to argue that foreign policy no longer matters. The quite sudden end of the East–West conflict created a grave crisis for most systemic IR theories. None of the predominant approaches had been able to even broadly project (not to mention 'predict') anything similar to what actually took place (Gaddis, 1992/1993; Lebow and Risse-Kappen, 1996). Instead, what happened in 1989/1990 quite plainly demonstrated the relevance of the foreign policy of individual states (in this case, the relevance of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, the United States and West Germany) and even individuals, like Mikhail Gorbachev (Zubok, 2002). In reaction to these events, a whole series of theoretical innovations were introduced which (at least ex post) tried to explain what had happened. Still, a major theoretical and/or conceptual advance in foreign policy analysis did not result from these events. However, one might argue that this particular combination of real-world events and (perceived) disciplinary 'failure' helped to bring about a wave of different 'turns' in IR (such as the 'interpretative turn', the 'linguistic turn', the 'cultural turn' and the 'practice turn') which propelled different new '-isms' to the forefront of theorizing (Kratochwil, 2007; Lebow, 2008). The traditionally dominant external (or explanatory) perspective came under pressure from an internal perspective emphasizing the need to understand how individual and collective actors make sense of political occurrences (Kratochwil, 1989; Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1992; Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009; Hellmann, 2009b).

One might even wonder whether the 'structure–agency debate' would have gained the prominence it did (Wendt, 1987; Dessler, 1989; Carlsnaes, 1992, 1993, 2008; Friedman and Starr, 1997; Wight, 1999) had there not been a whole series of events at the turn of 1990s which revealed the limitations of narrowly conceived agency- or structure-oriented theorizing as exemplified in the 'neo-neo' debate of the time. Yet none of this did, by and large, lead to a stronger theorization of foreign policy. Instead, models were pushed into the limelight which

some might see as mere social constructivist updates (Wendt, 1999, 2003) of former IR system theories in the tradition of Waltz (1979), thus explaining world affairs once again almost exclusively in terms of macro-structural variables. This seems all the more surprising as Wendt's proposal to understand international structure as a product of state action actually did open up a plausible entry point for foreign policy analysts (even though Wendt himself chose to stick with structural perspectives at the systemic level).

Two of the most recent crises in world affairs, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and subsequent 'fight against terror(ism)', and the world economic crisis starting in autumn 2008, did not alter the debate either. *Prima facie* these cases seem to lend further plausibility to the idea that foreign policy is, indeed, becoming ever less significant. Both originated from developments operating outside of what is traditionally considered as the sphere of foreign policy. While the first crisis resulted from the state's limited ability to preserve its monopoly of force against globally operating terrorists, the second crisis indicates the unintended consequences of deregulating the global economic and financial system. However, if we focus on *the political response* to these crises, classical foreign policy channels and efforts at multilateral coordination never ceased to play a crucial role. Just recall the centrality of US foreign policy in initiating the 'global war on terror' – not to mention the not too far-fetched counterfactual of a US President Al Gore (cf. Review Symposium, 2013). What is more, one might say that both cases underline the continuing relevance of foreign policy – and render it ever more puzzling why it still remains largely marginalized in IR theories and global governance research – calls for theoretically informed projects to link the different co-existing bulks of knowledge within IR notwithstanding (Hill, 2003; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, 2008; Keukeleire and Schunz, 2008). One might consider whether this state of affairs is due to the prominence of general theory theorizing or the relative lack of theorizing at the meso-level.

It is against this background that the contributors of this volume convened for a conference in 2010 in order to systematically explore the links among classical foreign policy analysis, IR theories and more recent approaches focusing on processes of global transformation. Getting the *explanandum* or subject matter (foreign policy) right seemed to us to be a precondition for adequate conceptualization and subsequent employments of various *explanans*, whether the objective is understanding or explaining the changing boundaries of foreign policy in an increasingly globalized world. In this fashion this volume aims

at addressing and reconsidering the classical issue of defining the relationship between foreign policy analysis and IR theory. While previous attempts have contributed to improving our knowledge about trade-offs between emphasizing one or the other, they have not sufficiently explored a broader array of issues associated with the present conditions of globalization.

A second aim has been to unpack the problem, not least because the problem appears, on closer inspection, to be several problems in one basket. In the literature, at least three problems figure prominently. An important issue concerns the relationship between theories of foreign policy and IR theories, that is, the appropriate level of theorizing. Among others this involves the question of whether (and to what extent) it is appropriate to conceptualize the subject matters of foreign policy and/or IR in terms of dichotomous 'systemic' versus 'state' levels of analysis. Another important issue concerns the applicability of IR theory in foreign policy analysis and, vice versa, of foreign policy theory to the analysis of international relations. Clearly, this issue belongs to the standard repertoire of the encounter between theory and empirics. If it is appropriate to argue (as most IR/FPA scholars probably would) that the relationship between IR theory and foreign policy analysis is often conceived in such a way that the former is supposed to provide overarching conceptual and theoretical toolboxes which guide the empirical analysis of foreign policy why is it so difficult to imagine (and propagate) a reversal of roles according to which foreign policy theory may similarly guide the analysis of phenomena which we habitually tend to locate at the 'systemic' level of international relations? The final issue concerns the relationship between IR theory and/or foreign policy theory on the one hand and foreign policy on the other, the latter being understood as political or diplomatic practice. Here we are dealing with the relationship between *explanans* and *explanandum*, that is, 'factors of explanation' and 'what we want to understand' and therefore questions about how we theoretically can understand practice. To what extent is it necessary, useful, irrelevant or even counterproductive to reconstruct theoretically how foreign policy is actually understood by foreign policy practitioners? How would answers to this question relate to the question of how abstract and/or parsimonious IR theory and/or foreign policy theory ought to (or must not) become?

All contributions, therefore, address the issue of what it means to 'theorize' foreign policy. Obviously, this begins with different notions of what the subject matter or core 'dependent variable' actually is (to use the concept of dependent variable in the broadest sense, including the

ontological issue of what is 'foreign' about foreign policy and how one should deal with the distinction between inside/outside). Moreover, although the co-constitution of agents and structure is by now standard rhetoric in scholarly disciplinary discourse, this leaves a lot of options as to how one ought to deal with co-constitution in theorizing foreign policy. Indeed specifying different ways as to how processes of co-constitution might be theorized – possibly one of the great lacunae – might help in reconnecting IR theory and foreign policy theory. All contributions address this issue in one way or another. Thus, the contributions by Ursula Stark Urrestarazu, Gunther Hellmann, Ulrich Roos, Daniel Deudney, and Frank Gadinger and Dirk Peters analyse issues related to agency, identity, loyalty or worldviews in a globalized world, whereas the contributions by Mathias Albert and Stephan Stetter, Iver Neumann, Simon Schunz and Stephan Keukeleire, Dan Bulley and Benjamin Herborth take their point of departure in world society, normative structures, processes of globalization or epistemic structures. All authors were asked to address a few overarching themes, such as the question of what it means 'to theorize' foreign policy based on the respective approaches chosen; the conceptualization of foreign policy actorhood and the (shifting?) notions of 'inside' and 'outside' (in other words, what is *foreign* in foreign policy?); the question of the location of foreign policy theory and/or foreign policy analysis in the discipline (IR versus FPA?); and the importance of different foreign policy practices in terms of their constitutive and/or causal powers.

## Note

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# 2

# Linking Foreign Policy and Systemic Transformation in Global Politics: Methodized Inquiry in a Deweyan Tradition

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## Introduction[1]

Foreign policy analysis and International Relations (IR) maintain an uneasy relationship. This holds at least with regard to how the (IR-)field of foreign policy analysis and the broader discipline of IR relate to one another in conceptualizing and theorizing the connection between foreign policy agency and transformative events in international politics. The latter by definition transcend the state and sometimes even amount to structural change at the level of the international system. The former, in contrast, is located at the level of the state. What is more, to the extent that the black box of unitary state agency is opened up (which, for many, is the very rationale for doing foreign policy analysis) we are facing concrete collective actors such as governments, foreign policy bureaucracies, societal actors and sometimes even individuals (Hudson, 2005) – with all the complications this raises in handling a complex set of factors or variables.

At a very general level the link between foreign policy agency and systemic transformations is largely taken for granted. No IR (or foreign policy analysis) scholar explicitly denies that even systemic transformations are linked in some way to the choices and actions of individual and/or collective actors – and vice versa. However, the problem seems to be that traditional notions of causation render it essentially impossible to more systematically theorize the connection. From the vantage point of foreign policy analysis this relates especially (but not exclusively) to the causal nexus between individual and collective foreign

policy agency on the one hand and systemic transformation on the other.

In this chapter I will argue that epistemological choices and methodological strictures in foreign policy analysis as well as ('systemic' or 'structural') IR theory are responsible for the fact that the link between foreign policy agency and systemic transformation is surprisingly undertheorized. For a long time these strictures and choices have provided incentives to evade rather than tackle the problems associated with theorizing this link head-on. To be sure, the link may be considered to be quite complex and 'causal chains' infinitely long. Yet in terms of our most fundamental beliefs about social action and systemic transformation there is a difference between whether one merely argues that one does not have the means to tackle a problem or whether one denies that the problem actually exists.

This chapter promotes the view that the epistemological hurdles are not as steep as is often suggested and that the methodological challenges in theorizing it should and can be tackled head-on. This is done in the spirit of a pragmatic *Gestaltswitch* – that is, it looks 'away from first things, principles, "categories", supposed necessities' in order to look 'towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts' (James, 1995, 22). Rather than joining never-ending turf wars about what are presumed to be the proper, consistent or coherent conceptions of theory and method I will try to entice the reader into considering whether it might be worthwhile to try a somewhat different way of looking at systemic transformation.

On the basis of a Deweyan (and in many ways more broadly pragmatist[2]) theory of thought and action I suggest conceptualizing systemic transformation as a process of societal re-creation at the global level of interacting states, societies and human beings, which yields changing rules and institutions in international politics. More specifically I will argue that a processual focus on the situated creativity of individual and collective actors in the context of transformative historical events will help to zero in on those dimensions of the link between foreign policy and systemic transformation where the methodological demands for cogent description and explanation can most easily be met. A Deweyan approach is particularly helpful in this regard because it enables us to focus on those aspects of 'inquiry' (Dewey's key concept to unpack the problem-solving routines of everyday coping, including scholarly research, see Dewey, 1991) which have been framed in some contexts as being somehow problematic in 'ontological', 'epistemological' or 'methodological' respects. Dewey helps to dissolve many of these as false problems – dichotomies such as history versus theory,

uniqueness versus generalization, parsimony versus complexity and so on. He also helps to recontextualize key theoretical concepts such as cause, comparison and similarity in such a way that alleged hurdles in the study of foreign policy agency and systemic transformation fall by the wayside. Irrespective of whether a causal account involves long or short 'chains' or whether it postulates simple or complex causal processes it will always have to rely on a narrative reconstruction which takes certain things as facts and weaves them together. The cogency of any such narrative relies on whether it is plausible – that is, whether it resonates.

Although space does not allow for an extended illustration as to how sequential narrative ordering and a Deweyan notion of causation may be linked in accounting for a particular instance of systemic transformation, I will briefly mention the European sovereign debts crisis after 2009 to highlight the potential. Few observers would question that the crisis is causally connected to the introduction of the Euro as a common currency; or, more technically speaking, the creation and subsequent implementation of European Monetary Union (EMU), which dates back to the immediate historical aftermath of German unification in 1990. Moreover, most scholarly analysis would agree that this transformation of European governance is closely linked to the foreign policy agency of the German government in general and former chancellor Helmut Kohl in particular.[3] Germany was instrumental in bringing about EMU not least because of the prevailing belief among German elites that a common currency was a practical and politically necessary response in order to reassure EU partners that the German 'Gulliver' would be tied down still more tightly.[4] In this sense a much more detailed and path-dependent account of connected occurrences and decisions on monetary and fiscal governance in Europe up until the present can (and should) be traced back to the early 1990s with a close look at German foreign policy agency. This does not exclude the possibility that generalizing accounts about *types* of causes which have led to the formation and dissolution of other monetary unions in the past may help in guiding the analysis (for example, Capie and Wood, 2003). Moreover, typological tools such as the ones discussed subsequently in this chapter may help to guide the analysis. However, one also needs to take into account that Europe confronted a unique situation in many respects after German unification. Furthermore, the transformation of economic and monetary governance in Europe can and indeed should be framed in such a way that processes of both socialization *and* societal re-creation come into view as mutually implicating

processes, that is, that we examine both the possible transformative systemic effects which flow from, among others, German foreign policy agency *and* the potentially socializing effects of the transformations of EMU governance which shaped German foreign policy (among others). In terms of spatial and/or temporal proximities or distances the combination of narrative reconstruction on the one hand and postulations of causality on the other might actually lead one to apply some variation of classical 'historical methods'. But at least in principle none of this should preclude the critical engagement of propositions which, for instance, link the changing institutional structures of European economic, fiscal and monetary governance after the Fiscal Stability Pact of 2012 (and the increasing German dominance which goes along with a new emphasis on intergovernmentalism in the EU) to choices in the 1990s which were obviously taken in order to produce precisely the opposite effect – that is, a united Germany which is bound in ever tighter ways in a more supranational Europe. Whether (and if so to what extent) the current state of affairs can be causally traced to German agency and/or whether a causal account would largely point to (partially unintended) consequences of interaction would have to be examined in detail. The key point, however, would be to show that the presumed causal distance must not preclude the critical engagement of possible connections which link even temporally distant choices by Germany (and other collective actors in Europe) to the institutional transformations which materialized after the onset of the European sovereign debts crisis after 2009.

The argument will proceed as follows: in the next section I will introduce the notion of systemic transformation as a mutually implicating process of socialization and societal re-creation where socialized (individual and collective) foreign policy agents re-create international society by changing rules and/or institutions in international politics. More specifically I will mobilize Deweyan notions of situated creativity as a non-residual category, historical contingency and event-processes as sites of interaction in order to emphasize the 'existential' (or unique) character of systemic transformation and agential re-socialization. I also spell out the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of such an approach. In particular I argue that the pragmatist demystification of ontology and epistemology helps to maintain focus on the tasks of 'methodized inquiry' in order to render processes of systemic transformation and the role foreign policy plays in this process intelligible. The subsequent section discusses the methodological implications against the background of alternative understandings in the

social sciences in general and IR in particular. I discuss Walter Carlsnaes' 'morphogenetic' approach to studying the interplay between structure and foreign policy agency in order to highlight fundamentally divergent conceptions of social action and the methodological consequences which follow regarding causal accounts in terms of historical narration, comparison and theorization. Following Dewey's argument that methodized inquiry should build on disciplinary experience by creatively adjusting available tools to the problems at hand, the final section discusses how methodological reflections in historical sociology and by IR scholars can help to improve our understanding of processes of systemic transformation.

## A Deweyan approach to theorizing systemic transformation

Systemic transformation is not a central theoretical concept in IR or foreign policy analysis, although the underlying idea is, of course, widely present. To the extent that it is used it is normally taken to relate to changes at the level of the inter-state system as a whole which have consequences for states and human beings. Such change may be caused at the level of states (perhaps due to novel state policies) or it may be caused at the level of the system – be it that certain dynamics lead to changes in the system's organizing principle (for example, a shift from 'anarchy' to more hierarchal forms of global governance) or that certain configurations in the distribution of power change. Systemic transformation may also take place at a level which subverts a state–international binary, such as technology. Consider the effects of the invention of nuclear weapons on war-fighting among great powers after World War II. In all these instances 'two truisms about social life which underlie most social scientific inquiry' have also been taken for granted in IR:

> (i) human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live, and (ii) society is made up of social relationships which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors. Taken together these truisms suggest that human agents and social structures are, in one way or another, theoretically interdependent or mutually implicating entities.
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> (Wendt, 1987, 337–338)

In Wendt's conceptualization of international politics as *social* (inter-)action the crucial 'social' element is defined, in principle at least,