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A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on the Domestic Politics Turn in IR Theory[1]

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Over the last 25 years, there has been a noteworthy turn across major International Relations (IR) theories to include domestic politics and decision-making factors. Neoclassical realism and variants of liberalism and constructivism, for example, have incorporated state motives, perceptions, domestic political institutions, public opinion, and political culture. These theoretical developments, however, have largely ignored decades of research in foreign policy analysis (FPA) examining how domestic political and decision-making factors affect actors' choices and policies. This continues the historical disconnect between FPA and "mainstream" IR, resulting in contemporary IR theories that are considerably underdeveloped. This article revisits the reasons for this separation and demonstrates the gaps between IR theory and FPA research. I argue that a distinct FPA perspective, one that is psychologically-oriented and agent-based, can serve as a complement, a competitor, and an integrating crucible for the cross-theoretical turn toward domestic politics and decision making in IR theory.

Current International Relations (IR) theory is marked by a paradox concerning the role of domestic politics and decision making: Domestic politics and decision making are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. On the one hand, recent developments in realism, liberalism, and constructivism have incorporated domestic level and psychological factors. Compared to 20 years ago, domestic political and decision-making concepts are very much part of contemporary IR theory and theory-informed empirical investigations. On the other hand, much of IR theory ignores or violates decades of research in foreign policy analysis (FPA) on how domestic political and decision-making factors affect actors' choices and policies.

The disconnect between FPA and IR theory is not new, and there are many reasons for it. But as IR theory increasingly incorporates domestic and decision-making factors, it makes sense to revisit this disengagement. Domestic and decision-making factors and conceptions of agency are undertheorized and underdeveloped in contemporary IR theory. If FPA research continues to be

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excluded (or self-excluded) from "mainstream" IR approaches, it is to the detriment of IR theory, FPA, and our understanding of international politics.

This article begins with the observation that FPA is not typically acknowledged as part of "IR theory," despite the increasing role that domestic politics and decision making (the domain of most FPA research) play in prominent theorizing. I then summarize the development of IR theory's attention to domestic politics and decision making, focusing on neoclassical realism, liberalism's democratic peace thesis and related institutional perspectives, and constructivist attention to culture, identity, and norms. With each of these theoretical perspectives, I show ways in which FPA research challenges or enhances the treatment of domestic and decision-making factors. In this regard, I develop a critical analysis of the domestic politics and decision-making turn in IR theory.

I conclude by arguing that FPA offers more than complementarity (although this in itself would be a viable role for FPA to play). A psychologically-oriented and agent-based FPA also offers an alternative, but not necessarily superior, perspective on international relations. This perspective, or approach, stresses the role of the central decision-making unit and the subjective understandings of leaders as funnels for other international and domestic factors. This perspective is not only a distinct ontological orientation to understanding international politics; it can integrate IR theories that currently focus on different aspects of domestic politics and decision making. While others have recently called for more dialogue between FPA and specific IR theories (for example, Houghton 2007) and there are long-standing, existing critiques of IR theories, this essay differs by looking at the connection across a set of theories, beyond bilateral engagements and appraisals of single theories. I highlight that the trend toward incorporating domestic and decision-making factors is occurring *across* IR theories—this development is noteworthy for the field as a whole. I explore (i) how this is happening, (ii) how different theories are following distinct trajectories in their turn toward domestic politics and decision making, and (iii) how FPA can steer this turn.

This essay is meta-theoretical and seeks to develop theoretical and conceptual understanding about world politics. This purpose stands in contrast to calls for "the end of IR theory," by which most mean an end to distracting interparadigmatic debates (between incommensurable "camps") that do not further knowledge. I do not advocate a return to the "paradigm wars" of the past, although those debates did facilitate theory development and guide research (Jackson and Nexon 2013). Consistent with contributions to the special issue on "The End of IR Theory" in the *European Journal of International Relations*, I see theoretical development as a worthwhile endeavor for the discipline, alongside theory testing. The "isms" of IR are heuristics for intradisciplinary communication—and meta-theoretical questions underpin all research (see Bennett 2013; Dunne, Hansen and Wight 2013; Mearsheimer and Walt 2013; Reus-Smit 2013). As Bennett notes, "IR theory cannot sidestep meta-theoretical debates" (2013:461). Reus-Smit remarks: "one can bracket meta-theoretical inquiry, but this does not free one's work, theoretical or otherwise, of meta-theoretical assumptions" (2013:590). I address theoretical assumptions across the mainstream IR approaches that continue to inform scholarly activity and situate FPA *vis-à-vis* recent theoretical developments.

FPA: Subfield and Perspective

FPA is a vibrant subfield of IR with roots in the 1950s (see Hudson 2005, for review). Kubálková offers a comprehensive definition:

> FPA refers to a complex, multilayered process, consisting of the objectives that governments pursue in their relations with other governments and their choice of means to attain these objectives....Thus foreign policy encompasses the complicated communications within governments and amongst its diverse agents, plus the perceptions and misperceptions, the images of other countries, and the ideologies and personal dispositions of everyone involved. An important part of the study of foreign policy has been the nature and impact of domestic politics. (Kubálková 2001a:17–18)

Key areas of research have long pedigrees and remain vibrant areas of research (Hudson 2005). These include the following: (i) individual- and small group-level psychological factors in foreign policy decision making, (ii) variation in institutional decision-making processes, and (iii) elite–mass relations. While FPA is a large tent, home to a wide range of substantive, methodological, and theoretical orientations, FPA research tends to focus on explaining governments' foreign policy decisions through specified factors at multiple levels of analysis.[2]

I conceptualize FPA in two ways. First, FPA is *a subfield, or area of research.* As a subfield, FPA's parameters are fairly identifiable, following Kubálková's definition above. FPA includes scholarship that has foreign policy processes or behaviors as the explicit *explanandum* and domestic and decision-making factors as the starting place for explanations. FPA research does not, by definition, ignore external factors—much of the research in this area takes seriously the difference between domestic policy and foreign policy. Research on the role of public opinion in foreign policy, for example, examines the distinctive characteristics of the public's views on policy involving interactions with actors and conditions outside a state's borders. FPA research on images, identities, and national roles focuses on self or ego relations *vis-à-vis* external "others" or alters. But attention to domestic politics or decision making is an essential characteristic of FPA research—FPA scholarship does not "black-box" the state, although the focus of internal dynamics varies considerably within FPA.

As with any area of research, the boundaries of FPA are not hard-shelled or hermetically sealed. Scholarship often situates itself simultaneously in FPA and in other subfields such as security studies, human rights, or international organizations. And, not all who work within FPA parameters self-identify as such, but many do and FPA has the typical organizational features (that is, a section in the International Studies Association, a journal) that support and distinguish it as an independent subfield. Conceptualizing FPA as an area of research, this article examines the way in which the domestic and decision-making turn in IR theories (notably realism, liberalism, and constructivism) bypasses work in this area and also studies the ways in which FPA challenges some of these developments, offering a bridge between IR theories as they turn in varied directions.

The second way of conceptualizing FPA is as a *distinct perspective or approach.* This conceptualization is more narrow and psychologically based, drawing on Hudson's essentialist statement that FPA has "an actor-specific focus, based upon the argument that all that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision makers acting singly or in groups" (Hudson 2005:1). This is not to say that FPA offers a single theory—but this makes it no different than contemporary constructivist, liberal, or realist perspectives. As a perspective, FPA stresses the role of the central decision-making unit and the subjective understandings of leaders as funnels for other international and domestic factors, including the institutional and societal factors in the broader FPA subfield. It is much more parsimonious than FPA as a subfield, in that the subjective understandings of leaders are the single factor through which all

[2]I do not include the full range of FPA literature here. Excluded is more rationalist work in FPA as I focus on the psychologically-oriented research that challenges rationality assumptions.

others flow. The FPA approach operates from this different assumption and therefore has a distinct starting point for understanding and explaining international relations. In the conclusion, I use this conceptualization of FPA to argue that FPA is a *sui generis* IR perspective with a distinct beginning point for understanding international politics. This perspective can contribute to and bridge theoretical developments occurring across the study of international politics.

The FPA–IR Disconnect

Despite its long history of research and the large number of IR scholars who identify with FPA, the FPA subfield is often seen as marginal to the "grand" IR theoretical debates. If IR textbooks are a proxy for the field, many introductory and IR theory texts (for example, Burchill et al. 2009; Baylis, Smith, and Owens 2011; Sterling-Folker 2013) and specific textbooks on security studies, international political economy, and international organizations do not address FPA research and rarely offer domestic politics and decision-making explanations as part of the theoretical terrain for understanding international politics.[3] Brown's (2013) review of contemporary IR theories makes no mention of FPA. University courses on IR theory rarely dedicate much time and space in syllabi to domestic politics and decision making.

In 1986, Smith asked whether FPA as a "distinct (if eclectic) approach to the study of foreign policy has anything to offer other than footnotes to grand theories of international relations or historical case studies?" (Smith 1986:13). Over 20 years later, Houghton reiterated the point that FPA has a "persistent 'minority status' within IR: it has not fully engaged with the rest of the discipline and does not appear to fit anywhere within the framework of the contemporary debates going on in IR" (Houghton 2007:26). More recently, Flanik agreed, "FPA is often treated indifferently by nonpractitioners and lacks its own chapter in most IR textbooks, which shoehorn it into approaches (realism and liberalism) that—at best—fit awkwardly with FPA's focus on decision makers" (Flanik 2011:1). What explains this disconnect between FPA and IR? The primary reasons, in my opinion, clearly lie with the historical development of the IR discipline, the evolution of and problems in the FPA subfield itself, misperceptions of FPA research, and a belief that FPA and IR are, and should be, separate enterprises. Here, I address each of these reasons for the disconnect between IR and FPA as a subfield.[4]

The birth of IR as a distinct field of study was very much affected by realism, the then-dominant IR theory. Realism foundationally asserted that international politics, due to the condition of anarchy, differed from domestic politics. Although early realists such as Morgenthau and Herz advanced political realism (and realist concepts of interests and the security dilemma) as a theory to explain all politics, the degree of anarchy in the international system created a Hobbesian dynamic typically absent from domestic politics (Morgenthau 1946; Herz 1950). Classical realism acknowledged that statesmen need to cultivate domestic support for legitimacy, but it also cautioned leaders to ignore fickle publics that led them away from national interests. More generally, early realists argued that because external threats are the primary danger to states, politics stopped at the water's edge for the sake of state survival (Lippmann 1922; Morgenthau 1946).

[3]Of these, international political economy (IPE) is the subfield that incorporates domestic political factors (mainly institutions and principal–agent relations) the most, but there is little cross-fertilization between IPE and FPA scholarship. See Vertzberger 2002 for the missed connection between FPA and IPE.

[4]For discussions of the FPA–IR relationship, see Smith (1986), Kubálková (2001b), Carlsnaes (2002).

This separation of domestic and international politics continued. According to Schmidt:

> To determine how and why the deeply entrenched analytical distinction between domestic and international politics took hold, we need to turn to the disciplinary history of political science. Within the field of IR, the presumed differences demarcating domestic and international politics gradually became cemented first under Kenneth Waltz's levels of analysis schema introduced in the 1950s, and then in terms of his distinction between reductionist and systemic theories that have informed the field ever since the publication of *Theory of International Politics* in 1979....[A] gradual division arose between those studying domestic politics on the one hand, and international politics on the other. (Schmidt 2002:25)

Early on, FPA's focus on domestic cultures, institutions, decision making, and the psychological milieu (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 1954; Sprout and Sprout 1956; Rosenau 1966) were seen closer to the study of comparative politics or public policy (Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne 2008). The trajectories of FPA and IR continued along very different parallels. As foreign policy researchers first searched for a grand theory of comparative foreign policy (Rosenau 1968) and then delved into the microprocesses of organizational and psychological making (for example, Allison 1971; Jervis 1976), Waltz's structural realism specifically excluded a theory of foreign policy as part of neorealist theory (Waltz 1979, 1986). IR theorists largely ignored his call for a supplementary theory of foreign policy, focusing instead on systemic characteristics. This was not unique to realism. Liberalism morphed, from Keohane and Nye's complex interdependence (which incorporated internal factors) to neoliberalism, which assumed unitary and rational actors (Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1984).[5] Wendtian constructivism is also largely systemic in its approach to international politics. Although Wendt argues that structures only have effects based upon agents' attributes and interactions, he clearly states: "like Waltz, I am interested in international politics, not foreign policy" (Wendt 1999:11). In sum, by the end of the 1980s, constructivism, liberalism, and realism largely divorced international politics from domestic politics and decision making.

Weaknesses and proclivities within the FPA subfield also help explain its distance from IR theory. Rosenau, in his launch of the study of comparative foreign policy, eschewed deductive theorizing for "pretheory" and a positivist, inductive, quantitative search for general patterns, causal laws, and a grand theory of foreign policy (Rosenau 1966, 1968). When a grand theory did not materialize, the comparative foreign policy project was pronounced dead. Much FPA research in the late 1970s and 1980s focused on single-country, single-case studies and islands of middle-range theories, with little cross-fertilization, accumulation of knowledge, or attempted connections to IR.[6] Efforts to redefine the subfield in the 1980s and 1990s did not seriously engage with IR (for example, Hermann, Kegley, and Rosenau 1987; Neack, Hey, and Haney 1995). Many theoretically minded FPA researchers grew weary of their challenges to neorealism falling on seemingly deaf ears and turned to engage, arguably more productively, with psychologists within the interdisciplinary field of political psychology.

With its inward-looking orientation, the FPA subfield missed key opportunities to connect with IR theory. In the 1990s, FPA largely overlooked the neo-institutionalist turn in liberalism, despite shared concerns with political institutions (Vertzberger 2002). Similarly, FPA failed to grasp the significance of the constructivist–ideational turn, despite common concerns with ideas and discourse.

[5]Other versions of liberalism, however, did not have the unitary actor assumption (see Moravcsik 1997).

[6]For discussions of this period of decline and self-reflection, see Smith (1986), Carlsnaes (2002), Vertzberger (2002), Hudson (2005).

FPA scholars did eventually engage constructivism (for example, Kubálková 2001a), but there was considerable lag in its response, missing chances to influence formative constructivist research agendas. Finally, FPA generally did not attempt to connect to work in international political economy (IPE), new security studies, or new research on ethics in IR.

A third reason for the FPA–IR disconnect lies with perceptions that many IR theorists have about FPA research. These will be covered more directly below, in relation to specific IR theories, so I will simply note them here. First, FPA is often seen as excessively individualistic, with little or no social or intersubjective component. Second, FPA is often seen as "ultra"-positivist, not fitting with the "thin" positivist epistemologies of some IR theories. Third, FPA is criticized for offering an unparsimonious laundry list of variables, not a single theory. I return to each of these in later sections. For now, the point is that these perceptions continue to divide FPA from IR theory and that addressing any misconceptions is important if FPA and IR are to engage more directly and fruitfully.

The fourth reason for the FPA–IR disconnect is what I call the "division of labor" argument. This is related to Waltz's insistence on separating a theory of foreign policy from a theory of international politics, but it is not necessarily a realist argument; it is broader and transcends a particular theory. The basic idea is that theories of foreign policy are ontologically oriented toward explaining discrete behaviors, or as Waltz put it, "why state X made a certain move last Tuesday" (Waltz 1979:121). IR theory, on the other hand, is oriented toward explaining systemic patterns (for instance, decline in great-power wars, levels of protectionism in trade, or changing norms for humanitarian intervention). Thus, the argument goes, there is a division of labor in IR research and a good, functional reason for the disconnect. As Waltz puts it: "economists get along quite well with separate theories of firms and markets. Students of international politics will do well to concentrate on, and make use of, separate theories of internal and external politics" (Waltz 1996:57).

I have three responses to this claim. First, not all IR theory relates to general, systemic patterns. As Elman has demonstrated in detail, neorealists (including Waltz) consistently offer foreign policy explanations and predictions (Elman 1996; see also Fearon 1998; Barkin 2009). Mearsheimer clearly states that his brand of neorealism is a theory of international outcomes and a theory of states' foreign policy (Mearsheimer 2001:422, footnote 60). Moravcsik (1997) asserts the same with regard to liberalism, and many constructivists apply their approach to foreign policy (Katzenstein 1976; Hopf 2002).

Second, FPA research is not necessarily tied to making pinpoint predictions or explaining specific choices. Most FPA studies are not idiographic accounts, but seek to contribute to our understanding of nomothetic trends. Schafer and Crichlow's work on groupthink, for example, examines many cases of foreign policy to specify the conditions under which group, situational, and leadership factors facilitate high-quality decision making (Schafer and Crichlow 2010). Even studies of a single case typically seek to advance knowledge of general trends or repeating processes. Larson's (1985) work on the origins of US containment policy and Khong's (1992) research on policymaking in the Korean and Vietnamese wars, for example, draw broader implications regarding the psychological decision-making dynamics that affect international conflict. While FPA abandoned, by the 1970s, the search for a grand, single theory of foreign policy, FPA research today is theoretically informed and orients itself to theory building and theory testing.

Third, discrete behaviors are not easily separated from systemic patterns, as patterns are rooted in discrete actions. As Goldgeier notes, "a concern with developing a theory of international politics leads scholars to debate the structure of the international system and the resulting general patterns of interstate behavior. States interact, however, through their foreign policies" (Goldgeier

1997:139). Moravcsik also makes the argument that "systemic predictions can follow from domestic theories of preferences" (Moravcsik 1997:523). Bueno De Mesquita writes: "systems become bipolar or multipolar, balanced or unbalanced, nuclear or nuclear-free, polluted or clean, growing or contracting because of the interdependence among individual decisions. International politics are not... some predetermined exogenous fact of life....International politics are formed by the aggregated consequences of...individual and collective decisions" (Bueno De Mesquita 2002:7).

This last point is, of course, connected to the relationship between agents and structures. Although a detailed discussion of this debate is beyond this article's purview,[7] it is important to note here that the "division of labor" argument rests on a demarcation of agents and structures that is rejected by most contemporary IR theory. It is also rejected by the very roots of FPA. As Houghton has pointed out, Waltz's separation of foreign policy and international relations "would have made little sense" to Snyder and his colleagues with their focus on how agents define situations and structures (Houghton 2007:41). FPA may indeed focus on agents' choices and behaviors (and this may be one of its limitations), but it sees these behaviors as acts that constitute all international interactions.

The growing attention to domestic politics and decision making in IR theory (illustrated below) is a strong indication that many IR theorists are beyond this division of labor. If this ontological wall is dismantled, the disconnect between IR and FPA has no real justification, and serious engagement between FPA and IR should occur. There are beneficial reasons for engagement. FPA research has consistently shown the significance of domestic politics and decision making to issues central to international politics, including international interventions, state cooperation in financial crises, regional dynamics, and nuclear proliferation. Many have suggested that FPA has much to offer IR theory with respect to preferences, motives, and agent–structure relationships (Schafer and Walker 2006a,b; Breuning 2011). More generally, Carlsnaes argues that "the divide between domestic and international politics...is highly questionable as a feasible foundational baseline for a sub-discipline that needs to problematize this boundary" (Carlsnaes 2002:342; see also Caporaso 1997; Hill 2013). Current IR theory does problematize this distinction and is increasingly incorporating domestic politics and decision-making factors. This move is happening, however, without much attention to or consistency with FPA research. Moreover, this turn is driving different IR theories in variant directions. FPA as a subfield and as a distinct perspective, while certainly not omnipotent or flawless, does offer a bridge spanning these developments.

The Domestic Politics and Decision-Making Turn in IR Theory

One seminal piece of research that marks the turn away from the neoliberal vs. neorealist debate is Putnam's (1988) two-level game article. Putnam's argument that leaders stood at the intersection of international and domestic win-sets was not particularly surprising to FPA scholars, although it did offer a novel way of integrating levels of analysis. It also captured the attention of the larger IR community and refocused some attention on domestic politics and decision making (Milner 1997; Gourevitch 2002). Putnam's article came at a time when IR was experiencing other significant challenges and changes, including the constructivist turn, the "Third Debate" (Lapid 1989), and the rediscovery of liberalism in

[7]For treatments of the relationship between the agent–structure debate and FPA, see Carlsnaes (1992), Kubálková (2001b), Hill (2003).

quantitative studies of the democratic peace. These developments brought attention to culture and identities, subjectivity, and domestic institutions.

The following sections discuss the role of domestic politics in three contemporary (post-1990) IR theoretical schools: liberalism, realism, and constructivism. A few caveats are important to note. First, I only focus on certain variants of these theories, as will become clear. Not all realists, liberals, or constructivists include domestic and decision-making factors. Second, I generalize about these areas of research. Not all ignore FPA or get it wrong; there are exceptions that I note. I do believe, however, that I capture important central tendencies in these research areas. Third, while arguably the most prominent, these theories do not represent the full range of "IR theory." Although my main arguments might indeed apply to some versions of other theories (including neo-Marxist, postcolonial, and feminist perspectives, the English School), my scope here is limited to the IR theories chosen. Finally, while there is work on domestic politics and decision making happening outside and across particular theoretical frameworks, my focus is on research within these three theoretical traditions.

Liberalism

Current liberal theory is perhaps the most logical and expected place to find domestic political factors. Indeed, the importance of domestic institutions and public opinion is often folded into and presented only as part of liberalism in IR texts (for example, Dunne, Kurki, and Smith 2010). According to Doyle, "liberals pay more attention to domestic structures and individual differences than do realists" (Doyle 2008:59). This has not always been the case for liberal IR theory. Although Keohane and Nye's (1977) liberalism in the form of "complex interdependence" included multiple channels for substate actors to influence states, Keohane (1984) later transformed liberalism into its neoliberal variant (with assumptions about rationality and the unitary actor) in order to challenge realism on its own grounds. Liberal-inspired regime theory also did not directly incorporate domestic political variables (for example, Krasner 1983). In the 1990s, however, variants of liberalism (ideational, commercial, and republican) abandoned the unitary state assumption. According to Moravcsik (1997), all versions of liberal IR theory assume that individuals and private groups are the fundamental actors in international politics. The suppositions made by liberalism about domestic politics and government decision making, however, do not sit comfortably with much FPA research. In particular, assumptions about individual and group rational actions, states as mere transmission belts for domestic interests, and constraints on government policy by interest groups and the public (see Moravcsik 1997:517–18) are antithetical to an FPA approach.

Research on the "democratic peace" thesis certainly revived the role of domestic politics in liberalism, with institutions and public opinion and cultural values and norms as dominant explanations of dyadic peace (Maoz and Russett 1993; Owen 1994; Lektzian and Souva 2009; Debs and Goemans 2010; Valentino, Huth and Croco 2010; Hayes 2011; Dafoe, Oneal, and Russett 2013). How do liberal treatments of domestic and decision-making variables look from an FPA perspective? The first concern for many FPA researchers is the stark dichotomy drawn between democracies and nondemocracies. This distinction assumes differences between them and uniformity within regime types. FPA scholarship, on the other hand, stresses differences within democracies and how these differences influence foreign policy-making processes and outcomes (for example, Hagan 2001; Hagan and Hermann 2002). For example, in their study on national restrictions in NATO military operations, Saideman and Auerswald (2012) find that a country's particular institutional design (for instance, parliamentary vs. presidential, single party vs. coalition) explains the great variation in the number and type of

conditions countries put on the use and activities of their troops in Afghanistan. This variation in democratic design has critical implications for national credibility, alliance relationships, and the success of multilateral missions.

Although some democratic peace researchers have unpacked the category of democracies and democratic constraints on aggression, these studies have focused on institutional characteristics, assumed that institutional constraints are solely in the direction of peace, and generally not traced the underlying mechanisms that translate institutional constraints into peaceful decisions (for example, Elman 2000; Palmer, London, and Regan 2004). Foreign policy analysts would challenge these tendencies in this research (Kaarbo 2008; Clare 2010). Kaarbo (2012), in process-tracing case studies, found that when parliamentary systems ruled by coalition cabinets do act more peacefully, it is not necessarily caused by a constraining voice for peace. Indeed, coalition partners with the potential to bring down the government (through blackmail, etc.) often advocate for more aggressive policies but fail to influence policy. This finding directly confronts assumptions in liberal democratic peace research.

Much research on the foreign policies of nondemocracies would also challenge the assumption in liberalism that authoritarian leaders are unconstrained by and unaccountable to societal pressures (for example, Lawson 1984; Mendelson 1993; Hagan and Hermann 2002). Hagan, for example, extensively reviews historical work on state behavior in the July 1914 crisis and concludes that "domestic political pressures were...profound for Germany and Russia....Pivotal decisions by William II (approving the 'blank check') and Nicholas II (approving mobilization) were motivated, in part, by the fear that domestic audiences would not tolerate another backing down in a major crisis" (Hagan 2001:20). Additional examples of domestic pressures affecting foreign policies of nondemocratic states come from Telhami's (1993) study of Arab public opinion in the first Gulf War and research by Davies (2008) on Iranian diversionary tactics in its relations with the United States. Rosato's analyses support this point: "there is little evidence that democratic leaders face greater expected costs from fighting losing or costly wars and are therefore more accountable than their autocratic counterparts" (Rosato 2003:594).

In reaction to work on democratic peace, many scholars have more recently taken up this FPA-consistent view that not all authoritarian systems are equally unconstrained. This work is not theoretically founded in liberalism but is connected to liberalism's assumption of differences in regime types. This research ranges from rationalist expectations that authoritarian leaders are motivated to survive and constrained by domestic audience costs and selectorates, to categorizations of types of authoritarian regimes, to those who examine leader age and prior experience (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2003; Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam 2005; Lai and Slater 2006; Debs and Goemans 2010; Weeks 2012). From an FPA perspective, however, the assumption of rationality is problematic and the focus on institutional variation overplays structure at the expense of agency. FPA would support the work on individual differences, but note that much of this research draws on a narrow set of leader characteristics (military experience, age, etc.) and misses the opportunity to build on richly diverse and broad research on leaders' styles, personalities, and beliefs. More generally, these studies typically do not trace the processes in which institutional dynamics or leadership styles translate into foreign policy. While many scholars working in this research area conclude with a call for abandoning liberalism's dichotomy between democratic and nondemocratic regimes, their focus on authoritarian regimes reifies this division.

Another major FPA criticism of democratic peace research concerns the assumption in the institutional explanation that public opinion influences leaders in democracies. Even recent democratic peace-inspired work that unpacks

the role of audience costs, partisanship, information, support for war, and public threat perceptions assumes, and does not directly investigate, the impact that public support has on foreign policy (for example, Tomz 2007; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011; Levendusky and Horowitz 2012; Tomz and Weeks 2013). From the FPA perspective, the relationship between the public's views and elite choices is far from straightforward. The previous "Almond–Lippmann consensus" (consistent with realism), which holds that foreign policy elites are unconstrained by an apathetic, uninformed public with unstable views was challenged, particularly after the Vietnam War (for review, see Holsti 2002). Shifts in foreign policy public opinion, for example, may not stem from instability, but can be predictable and "rational" in that they respond to external cues (Mueller 1973; Page and Shapiro 1992). And while there is little evidence that the public has a high level of factual information about foreign policy, numerous studies have shown that the public's views are structured by underlying core values or orientations (for example, Wittkopf 1987; Jenkins-Smith, Mitchell, and Herron 2004).

How much public opinion actually influences foreign policy (assumed in liberal democratic peace research) is still unanswered. We know that foreign issues influence voting more than was once assumed, that foreign policy issues matter for evaluations of leaders' performance, and that public opinion and foreign policy are significantly correlated (for example, Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Holsti 2002). Case study research has also demonstrated that in the making of many decisions, leaders are both attentive and responsive to public opinion (for example, Foyle 1997, 2004; Sobel 2001; Hayes 2012).

While this research in FPA does offer some support for the *assumption* in liberalism that democratic public opinion (and norms and values) can influence foreign policy via elites, other research challenges this supposition. Case studies show that in the making of many other decisions, leaders ignored or defied public opinion, even in democracies (for example, Elman 1997; Fischer 1997). Kreps (2010), for example, demonstrates that the unpopularity of the Afghanistan mission hardly affected NATO countries' troop commitments. Elite consensus, she argues, inoculated leaders from electoral punishment. And, recent studies have focused on leaders successfully manipulating public opinion to support their own preferences (Shapiro and Jacobs 2000). Rathbun, for instance, demonstrates that German leaders purposefully and effectively "set out to change the German public's approach to the use of force by gradually escalating the scale of participation" (Rathbun 2004:90). Media and framing influences on opinion also challenge the notion that mass views are a stable and independent source of foreign policy (for example, Kull, Ramsay, and Lewis 2003–04; Boettcher and Cobb 2006; Baum and Potter 2008). Research on the influence of public opinion on foreign policy has turned toward investigations of intervening conditions that affect this relationship. Foyle (1997), for example, argues that leaders' beliefs about the appropriateness and necessity of considering public opinion affect the role that the public will play in foreign policy. Dyson's (2006, 2007) studies of Tony Blair trace the prime minister's decisions to override public opposition to the Iraq war to Blair's beliefs and personality traits. Others suggest the type of issue and the stage of decision making are important conditions in the mass–elite linkage (for example, Knecht and Weatherford 2006).

Overall, FPA research questions the assumption in liberalism that democratic institutions allow for public influence. Hayes notes that "structural approaches [to the democratic peace] *assume* the political dynamics that are so critical to their basic underpinnings" (Hayes 2011:773 [italics in original]) and, according to Houghton, "the societal-level image of 'democratic peace' theory leapfrogs over much of FPA, ignoring what goes on inside states" (Houghton 2007:25; see also Hayes 2012). Rosato (2003) compiled a list of the key arguments against democratic peace assumptions: Democratic publics are unlikely to constrain war

proneness because the costs of war fall on a small subset; aversion to war may be overcome by nationalism; democratic leaders are as likely to lead as follow public opinion; there is little evidence that antiwar groups capture the decision-making process more than prowar groups; there is no evidence that mobilization is slow in democracies (many leaders have bypassed constraints); and democracies are as capable of carrying out surprise attacks and not less able to conceal their intentions.

Some democratic peace theorists have incorporated the decision-making factor of perceptions in their theoretical framework. Owen, for example, argues that "history shows many cases where perceptions tripped up democratic peace....To determine which states belong to the pacific union, we must do more than simply examine their constitutions. We must examine how the liberals themselves define democracy" (Owen 1994:96–97). FPA would agree with this subjective conceptualization and decision maker focus, but criticize this research for not explicitly theorizing and investigating how perceptions and their inherent biases and information processing tendencies unfold.[8] Research on leader perceptions by FPA scholars has taken up this challenge (for example, Farnham 2003; Schafer and Walker 2006a,b). But, as Hayes notes, "scholarly understanding of the mechanisms of the democratic peace remains uncertain" and "much work... remains to be done relating the psychological processes of leaders to the foreign and security policies of democracies" (Hayes 2011:782–83).

Constructivism

The rise of constructivist perspectives in IR also brought more attention to domestic politics. Although some variants of constructivism focus on the social construction of international politics and the importance of shared norms of appropriateness at the systemic level,[9] other constructivists go inside states, attending to societal-level normative and ideational forces. Constructivist concepts of culture, identity, ideas, discourse, and roles, for example, have been used to explain why the foreign policies of some states defy realist and liberal expectations.[10] Constructivist discourse analyses focus on how language constitutes meaning (often seeing in language residue of underlying cultural understandings) and note that language is powerful in its own right.[11] More recently, constructivists have examined internal norm contestation and internalization.[12]

For many, the link between constructivism and FPA is natural, given constructivists' notions of agency and ideas. As Smith notes, "social construction starts from the assumption that actors make their worlds, and this assumption lies behind most of the foreign policy literature...Social construction and foreign policy analysis look made for one another."[13] Kubálková also notes that "the active mode of foreign policy expressed even in the term 'making'...resonates with the constructivists' stress on processes of social construction" (Kubálková 2001a:19).

[8]For detailed reviews of the role of biases and information processing in foreign policy analysis, see Vertzberger (1990), Levy (2000); for a psychological criticism of liberal neo-institutionalist claims, see Goldgeier and Tetlock (2000).

[9]For example, Tannewald 1999; Wendt 1999.

[10]For example, Katzenstein 1976; Banchoff 1999; Barnett 1999; Duffield 1999; Brysk, Parsons, and Sandholtz 2002; Hopf 2002.

[11]For example, Onuf 1989; Weldes 1996.

[12]The special issue of *International Organization*, introduced by Checkel 2005; Cortell and Davis 2005; Wiener 2007.

[13]Smith 2001:38; see also Houghton 2007; Breuning 2011; Shannon 2012.

Checkel agrees that constructivists and FPA scholars share "a strong focus on agency" (Checkel 2008:74). He argues, however, that constructivism is not "simply warmed over FPA—highlighting only the dynamics the subfield discovered many years ago" (Checkel 2008:74). Instead, Checkel sees key differences between constructivism and FPA—namely constructivism's epistemological split between positivist and interpretive branches (contra FPA's "loose" positivist orientation) and constructivism's social focus (contra FPA's supposed individual focus). Checkel suggests that FPA sees actors as rational, even if bounded and asocial: "They decided alone, as it were. If they are instrumentally rational, individuals simply calculate in their heads; if they are boundedly rational, they look to organizations and routines for cues. In neither case is there any meaningful interaction with the broader social environment" (Checkel 2008:74).

Others (for example, Goldstein and Keohane 1993) have made similar comparisons between constructivism and FPA, and FPA is often characterized as ultra-positivist, individualist, and asocial. Many in FPA, however, would reject these general categorizations. Epistemologically, much FPA scholarship is indistinguishable from the "conventional," "neoclassical," or "thin" constructivists who accept many tenets of positivist epistemology. Borrowing from Hill, I would characterize FPA as generally consistent with positivism without being positivist. In other words, "it accepts that some of the painstaking work...coming out of the behavioural stable, on crises, misperceptions and bureaucratic politics, is of great use, being suggestive and systematic. On the other hand, the belief that political and social behaviour can be reduced to law-like statements, made on the basis of value-free observations of a whole 'class' of phenomena, is taken to be axiomatically mistaken" (Hill 2003:23).

Indeed, the early era of comparative foreign policy research of the 1960s and 1970s, with its positivist search for general laws, is generally seen by FPA scholars as an unproductive and unsuccessful period (Kegley 1980; Smith 1986). In a sense, FPA went through its own "Third Debate" before the rest of IR. Contemporary FPA focuses on context, multi-factor explanations, middle-range theory, and conditions and contingencies (Neack et al. 1995; Hudson 2005). Moreover, FPA's ontological focus on subjectivity rejects positivist assumptions of a single, knowable, objective reality. FPA research on opinions, cultures, beliefs, motives, perceptions, and decision-making processes violates the neopositivist requirement of focusing only on directly observable forces and puts FPA closer to transfactualist critical realism (as outlined by Jackson 2011).

The classification of FPA as individualist and asocial is also questionable. Although FPA certainly does focus on agents, its conceptualization of agency incorporates agent–other interactions and agent–structure relations. FPA research draws heavily on *social* psychology (Flanik 2011:2). Indeed, constructivists and FPA scholars often cite the same social psychological research (for example, Wendt 1999; Checkel 2001). Even those who focus on single leaders typically examine how leaders interact with advisors (for example, Hermann 1993; Kowert 2002). Following Janis, many FPA researchers investigate how small decision-making groups are more than the sum of their parts—and process information, engage in social influence, and make decisions in ways that are different from (and inherently more social than) actions by individuals (for example, 't Hart, Stern, and Sundelius 1997; Schafer and Crichlow 2010). This work is grounded in social psychological research on social obedience, conformity to social pressures, and social communication. Vertzberger's assessment of India's aggressive and unsuccessful foreign policy *vis-à-vis* China in 1962 is but one example of the importance of social relations in FPA: "the unchallenged prevalence of misperceptions and the associated risky policy can substantially be attributed to the nature of *social relations* within the influential group of decision makers centered around Nehru" (Vertzberger 1997:287; italics added).

Other research examining individuals' beliefs also incorporates relationships between agents and external others. Recent work on leaders' "operational codes," for example, specifically "captures the subject's beliefs about self's best approach and strategy [in international relations] *and* self's beliefs about other's likely approach and strategy" (Walker and Schafer 2006:11; italics in original). Image research focuses on how perceptions of other states (as, for example, enemies or allies) are critically related to maintaining cognitive balance and positive images of self (for example, Cottam 1986; Herrmann and Fischerkeller 1995). And, a long tradition of research on role theory in FPA draws on sociological symbolic interaction theories to understand *ego* and *alter* roles and role relations (Walker 1987; Thies 2013).

With this attention to social interactions, FPA research looks very similar to Checkel's description of "communicative agents in constructivism": "They decide by deliberating with others....Individuals do not come to the table knowing what they want; the whole point of arguing is to discover what they want" (Checkel 2008:76). Indeed, as Smith has argued, constructivism's

> view of the social world fits well with the foreign policy analysis literature. That literature focused exactly on the linkage between social structures and calculating agents. Bureaucratic politics, for example, seems almost a paradigmatic example of social constructivism, as does Irving Janis's work on groupthink. In short, FPA looks at the interface between institutions, agents, and rules with the aim of showing how these led to the foreign policy choices made by the collective agents as states. (Smith 2001:52–53)

To be sure, FPA's conceptualization of the social is different from constructivist conceptualizations (that is, it is more social psychological than sociological), but the point here is that FPA cannot be accurately characterized as only individualist and asocial.

Setting aside constructivists' characterizations of FPA, how do FPA scholars read constructivist accounts of foreign policy and their attention to internal factors such as culture and ideas? Generally, FPA research would challenge constructivism for privileging social structures over agency, despite its original aim to challenge (material) structural accounts. Flanik writes that "constructivists endorse co-constitution in principle, but in practice, much constructivist works favors structure" (Flanik 2011:9). Barnett offers a similar critique: "constructivism has tended to operate with an oversocialized view of actors, treating them as near bearers of structures and, at the extreme, as cultural dupes. The real danger here is the failure to recognize that actors have agency, can be strategic, are aware of the cultural and social rules that presumably limit their practices, and as knowledgeable actors are capable of appropriating those cultural taproots for various ends" (Barnett 1999:7; see also Breuning 2011). FPA, on the other hand, approaches politics from a much more agent-centered standpoint. This stance not only provides the microfoundations of agents' relationships to structure, it allows for the instrumental use and varying interpretations of and responses to structures.

For FPA, constructivism also lacks attention to how the social is constructed (black-boxing the process) and does not take seriously how ideational factors operate within individuals' belief systems and are aggregated to the social level via institutional, cultural, and small group rules, norms, and processes (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2012). Wiener (2007), for example, notes the importance of and even foundational aspects of the contested meaning of norms. But, his and related research provides little conceptualization of how norms are contested and negotiated.

The more recent generation of constructivist research on norm internalization and socialization has attended to domestic mechanisms that condition internalization of regional or international norms. The framework introduced by Checkel (2005), for example, in the special issue on "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe" specifically includes strategic calculation by elites, and thus agency, as one pathway for socialization of actors. Some of this research, however, is based on rationalist notions of strategic action and is thus quite different from FPA's psychological conceptualization of actors as limited information processers driven by internal beliefs and motives (for example, Schimmelfennig 2005). Other research in this area (for example, Cortell and Davis 2005; Gheciu 2005) also continues to focus more on normative and institutional structures rather than agency (Zürn and Checkel 2005; Breuning 2011). Constructivists themselves recognize the need for more attention to domestic processes. Indeed, Zürn and Checkel conclude: "students of socialization would appear to be operating with an underspecified theoretical apparatus, especially at the domestic political level" (Zürn and Checkel 2005:1072).

Constructivists also often assume a strong connection between culture at the mass-societal level and policymaking at the elite level. Research on identities and roles, for example, typically takes for granted that there is a single national identity or role that is shared between elites and masses (for example, Banchoff 1999; Duffield 1999; Brysk et al. 2002; Catalinac 2007; McCourt 2011).[14] Some constructivists allow for a disconnect between elite and masses, but see cultural values and identities residing at the societal level and constraining elites (similar to some democratic peace explanations) from adopting foreign policies more commensurate with these states' power in the international system (for example, Berger 1998; Duffield 1999). For those that do focus on identity construction, there is often little theoretical mechanism advanced for how multiple identities are aggregated or how societal identities influence elites and foreign policy choices. Ilgit and Ozkececi-Taner note, for example, that Hopf's work on Soviet identity assumes elites represent society and reflect identities but "does not provide a convincing account for how these societal identities are linked to state behavior" (Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner 2012:96). Legro's (2007) work on changes in ideas and grand strategies, while drawing a link between collective, subnational, and individual levels of ideas, similarly does not theorize the domestic–political and individual–psychological processes. Legro concludes his book with a call for more attention to domestic political structures and the agency of leaders.

Both of these assumptions—that identities are shared and that they reside at the societal level and constrain elites—are inconsistent with much FPA research. As we have seen, FPA scholarship points to the complicated relationship between public opinion and values and elite decision making. It is certainly not an automatic determinant as many identity studies assume. On the issue of how shared identities are, research in FPA suggests that elites and masses may disagree on their country's identity. According to Page and Barabas, for example, "the most conspicuous gap between citizens and leaders [in the United States] is a familiar and long-standing one: more leaders than citizens tend to be 'internationalists' at least in the simple sense that they say they favor the United States taking an 'active' part in world affairs" (Page and Barabas 2000:344). Similarly, Risse et al. (1999) argue that elite and mass attitudes toward the Euro differed over a long period, partly due to different conceptions of German identity. Thus, FPA would challenge assumptions of shared identity and cultural constraints on elites. Instead, FPA would point to the disconnects and complicated relationships between elites and cultural values that can involve elite framing and manipula-

[14]One important exception is the framework by Abdelal et al. (2006) that includes internal contestation as definitional to the concept of identity.

tion. Rathbun (2004), for example, argues that the Christian Democratic Party in Germany used peacekeeping policies strategically to "habituate" the public to acceptance of German participation in military interventions. This finding directly challenges constructivist interpretations of a passive, antimilitaristic culture that restrained German foreign policy.

Foreign policy analysis research also suggests that identities and roles are likely to be contested at the elite level and it has much to say about the way in which these conflicts affect both the policy-making process and resulting foreign policy behavior (Kaarbo 2003; Ashizawa 2008; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012). FPA research on elite conflict has concentrated on conflicts between governing elites and political opposition, within governing coalitions, in small decision-making and advisory groups, and across bureaucratic agencies (for example, Hagan 1993; 't Hart et al. 1997; Stern and Vebeek 1998; Wagner 2006; Kesgin and Kaarbo 2010; Marsh 2013; Beasley and Kaarbo 2014). This research has much to say about the following: how ideas and identities are contested; which ideas, identities, and discourses come to dominate or how they are negotiated; and how this process affects both policies and processes. Özkeçeci-Taner (2009), for example, finds that Turkish political parties have promoted competing ideas of Turkish national identity and foreign policy and that the impact of those ideas is conditioned by a variety of institutional, political, and ideational factors.

Contested identities and roles among elites or between leaders and masses are key points at which FPA would intervene in the constructivist project and challenge assumptions that underlie most constructivist research. These assumptions more generally stem from constructivists' greater attention to social structures over agents. Despite common characterizations of FPA by constructivists, FPA offers a complementary but distinct perspective on agent–structure relationships and the role of ideas in world politics.

Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism (NCR) has changed dramatically from its intellectual predecessor with its focus on domestic politics and decision-making factors. This turn is ironic since realism was instrumental in advancing the division between the international and domestic realms of politics. Rejecting neorealist arguments that unit-level characteristics are unimportant and that IR theory is separate from foreign policy theory, neoclassical realists have sought to create a coherent realist perspective on foreign policy (for overviews, see Brooks 1997; Wivel 2005; Barkin 2009; Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009). NCR places primacy on the international system and relative material capabilities, but see these as filtered through the state. State responses are affected by a wide range of domestic political and decision-making factors including perceptions, states' motives, political traditions and identities, domestic institutions and coalition building, and perceived lessons of the past. According to Schweller, "domestic processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces (primarily changes in relative power). Hence, states often react differently to similar systemic pressures and opportunities, and their response may be less motivated by systemic-level factors than domestic ones" (Schweller 2004:164). Neoclassical realists concede that systemic dynamics explain long-term trends, but argue that domestic factors are needed to understand specific foreign policies (Wivel 2005; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009).

There are variations in ontological orientation within NCR. Some focus on domestic politics and state–society relations, putting the national security executive at the center, with the ability to define the national interest. But they must

bargain with domestic actors to extract resources and make policy (for example, Dueck 2009; Lobell 2009; Taliaferro et al. 2009). These elites are constrained by domestic politics. Therein, according to NCR, lies the difference between their approach and alternative models. Other NCR researchers focus more on ideational elements at the domestic level, such as nationalism and ideology (for example, Schweller 2009; Sterling-Folker 2009; Taliaferro 2009). Leaders, for example, may need to inspire the public for war. In doing so, they may invoke nationalist sentiment (Dueck 2006).

Finally, decision-making processes, perceptions, beliefs, and motivations are seen by some as important, as "neoclassic realist foreign policy analysis stresses that foreign policy decisions are made by human beings, political leaders and elites" (Wivel 2005:361). Rose (1998), coining the term neoclassical realism, included decision makers' perceptions as a critical intervening unit-level variable in NCR. Walt's (1987) balance-of-threat (perception) is one example; Van Evera's (1999) study of the "cult of the offensive" as mistaken belief about military strategy is another (see also Edelstein 2002; Lobell 2009). Clearly, according to Wivel, "assumptions about motives and ideas are already integral to the realist framework, and moreover, impossible to escape" (Wivel 2005:368).

While NCR looks very similar to many studies in contemporary FPA, and some scholars build directly on FPA research (Ripsman 2009), an FPA perspective would question some NCR assumptions and critique it for its underdevelopment of domestic political and decision-making factors. As Rathbun (2008) argues, NCR treats both ideas and domestic politics in a very limited way. First and foremost, FPA would challenge NCR's primary assumption (and what makes it realist) that privileges the international system over the domestic system. For NCR, domestic politics and decision making are intervening conditions on leaders' reactions to the international system. Ripsman (2009), for example, makes the executive the central filter, but argues that international pressures are prioritized.[15] This ordering is not convincingly justified or accurate from the perspective of FPA research, which sees domestic political and decision-making factors as, at times, equal to or more important than international factors. More basically, as Fordham argues, the "neoclassical assumption that domestic and international pressures are easily separable and identifiable is problematic" (Fordham 2009:251). Neoclassical scholars also often do not justify why certain domestic factors are chosen over others, and the addition of unit-level characteristics seems *ad hoc* (Wivel 2005).[16]

Foreign policy analysis research would also challenge NCR's characterization of how domestic politics influences executives. As we have seen in the case of democratic peace research, FPA work demonstrates that leaders cannot always rise above the fray and have "a view from above" (as Ripsman argues) to respond to international pressures. Unlike liberal approaches, however, FPA research also shows that some leaders ignore or manipulate domestic constraints and are not automatically determined by them. The same holds for international constraints; leaders are not always "driven by international pressures" (Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell 2009:202). FPA presents a more contingent view of the relationship between domestic and international politics. Executives' (or leaders') responses to domestic and international pressures are conditioned by a number of factors, including their own beliefs and perceptions.

Some neoclassical realists, noted above, do embrace the importance of subjectivity—incorporating perceptions, beliefs, and motives. This link is consistent

[15]Ripsman does, however, acknowledge diversionary motives of executives.

[16]An important exception is Ripsman's (2009) discussion of which domestic groups matter, the international conditions and types of states in which they will influence foreign policy, and the ways in which domestic groups have an effect.

with FPA's long-standing tradition of research on subjective understandings. NCR attention to perceptions and beliefs, however, is critically underdeveloped in comparison. As Goldgeier argues, for example, Walt's research "argues for the importance of perceptions, beliefs, motivation, and bias while leaving the origins of these factors to case-by-case empirical study rather than systematic theoretical investigation" (Goldgeier 1997:141). Similarly, Lobell's (2009) focus on "threat assessment" does not unpack the psychological underpinnings of threat perception. According to Wivel, NCR needs more attention to how objective material factors, such as power, are perceived and interpreted by decision makers. He argues: "if we acknowledge that foreign policy is made by real people interpreting their environment, including the structure of the international system, then we need to engage in a discussion of how we understand the interplay between materialist and idealist variables" (Wivel 2005:367–8). Wivel suggests NCR should borrow from psychology for theoretical foundations of perceptions, interpretations, and motivations (see also Goldgeier 1997).

Foreign policy analysis has, however, already incorporated and adapted psychological research. The psychological approach to foreign policy has a long and robust history. Rooted in Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin's work on the policymaker's definition of the situation and Sprout and Sprout's conception of the psychological milieu, it arguably became the dominant approach after the 1990s (Rosati 2000; Levy 2003). The psychological approach in FPA includes a focus on personality traits, leadership styles and beliefs, images, analogies, framing effects, consistency-based and schema-based information processing, attribution biases, threat perception, problem representations and problem solving, and the psychology of small group social influence dynamics.[17]

This FPA research can provide NCR with considerable theoretical and empirical leverage (Freyberg-Inan, Harrison, and James 2009). Edelstein (2002), for example, makes a strong case for the importance of beliefs about others' intentions in great-power relations, arguing that this focus is one of the fundamental differences between offensive and defensive realism. Edelstein's conceptualization of belief system dynamics, however, is limited. Edelstein assumes the cognitive categories that states use to judge others' intentions, rather than investigating the categories (and their meanings) that agents themselves employ. More generally, his argument rests on how states change (or do not change) their beliefs about others' intentions, but lacks conceptualization of how intentions and beliefs change. Research on motivations and belief system dynamics, the focus of empirical work in psychology and applied by foreign policy scholars, is thus an essential (though missing) aspect of NCR's turn toward subjectivity.[18]

Goldgeier and Tetlock (2001) make a convincing and detailed case (drawing on work on behavioral decision theory, information processing in ambiguous situations, misperceptions, evolutionary psychology, and cognitive effects of accountability) for how psychology can speak to realism's internal camps. They suggest, for example, that insights from prospect theory, based upon extensive, empirical experimental research, have the capacity to reconcile the disagreement between offensive and defensive realism: "when states are in the domain of losses...they are more likely to take the irredentist approach that Mearsheimer posits....When states are in the domain of gain, they are more likely to accept the status quo, as Waltz would predict" (Goldgeier and Tetlock 2001:70–1). In addition, a more nuanced understanding of perceptual factors can preempt misuse

[17]For example, Hermann 1980; Larson 1985; Cottam 1986; Vertzberger 1990; Khong 1992; Hermann 1993; Herrmann and Fischerkeller 1995; Kaarbo 1997; 't Hart et al. 1997; McDermott 1998; Sylvan and Voss 1998; Levy 2000; Keller 2005; Dyson 2006; Schafer and Walker 2006a,b; Renshon 2008; Schafer and Crichlow 2010).

[18]Some security scholars do focus on the dynamics of perceptions and beliefs (for example, Hymans 2006; Rousseau 2006), but this research is not explicitly situated within the NCR tradition.

of psychological terms or their inappropriate mixing together of concepts that rest on very different psychological mechanisms with concomitant different effects. More generally, I agree with Wivel that "realists should devote less attention to specific case studies and more attention to the general conceptual and theoretical basis of their foreign policy analyses" (Wivel 2005:374). NCR generally lacks this theoretical basis.

An FPA Perspective of International Politics: Complement, Competitor, and Crucible

With the increased attention to domestic politics and decision making in IR theories, FPA is ideally situated to provide insights to further develop liberalism, constructivism, and realism. Indeed, many have started to link FPA research with each of these traditions in IR theory (for example, Walker and Schafer 2006; Houghton 2007; Ashizawa 2008; Clunan 2009; Ripsman 2009; Thies and Bruening 2012). This *ad hoc* supporting role is one that FPA can certainly play. But FPA can also provide an alternative perspective, approach, or "frame of reference" as Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin proposed as early as 1954. If we take a psychologically-oriented and agent-based FPA as an approach, even while recognizing that it is not a completely hard-shelled area of research, it offers a distinct standpoint from which to look at the world and international relations. FPA as a perspective starts with the role of central decision-making units and subjective understandings of leaders as filters for other international and domestic opportunities and constraints. This includes the dynamics of institutional decision-making processes and elite–mass relations (covered in broader FPA as subfield), but these factors are filtered through agents' subjective understandings.

Table 1 delineates the key differences between these three IR theories and the FPA perspective. Similar to NCR, the decision-making unit (be it a leader, a small group, or a coalition of actors) is a funnel through which other factors are transmitted and interpreted (Hagan and Hermann 2002). The FPA perspective differs from NCR in that systemic pressures are not necessarily given precedence, and FPA pays more theoretical, conceptual, and empirical attention to social psychological processes that influence leaders' interpretations. In line with constructivism, the FPA perspective does not take objective, material forces as given, but instead focuses on their meanings and the ideational environment constructed by agents in their social contexts. The FPA perspective differs from constructivism in its attention to conflicting ideas and understandings in the domestic political system, the institutionalization of ideas, and the instrumental manipulation of ideas such as norms and identities. Similar to liberal perspectives on the dem-

TABLE 1. FPA and IR Theories: Similarities and Differences

	Foreign Policy Analysis	
	Similarities	*Differences*
IR Theories		
Neoclassical realism	Decision unit as funnel	International factors not privileged; more attention to social psychological processes
Constructivism	Subjective and ideational focus	More focus on contested, institutionalized, and manipulation of ideas; more theoretical development of agency
Liberalism	Institutions matter; potential constraint from elite–mass disconnect	Constraints not automatic and operate across regime type; more institutional variation; challenges to rationality assumptions

ocratic peace, the FPA perspective acknowledges the importance of institutions, the potentiality of constraints on foreign policy, and particularly the disconnect between leaders and masses. The FPA perspective differs from liberal research in that it does not assume automatic constraints in democracies, allows for constraints in nondemocratic systems, and generally sees more variation in institutional structures as important for foreign policy and foreign policy processes.

Foreign policy analysis is not a conglomeration of realism, liberalism, and constructivism—it would challenge critical ontological and theoretical aspects of each. But as IR theories have turned toward domestic and decision-making variables, the FPA perspective can bring them together. This integration is important as each theory is developing along different trajectories with regard to these factors. Neoclassical realists tend to focus on elites, liberals on institutions and societal constraints, and constructivists on ideas and discourse. Consequently, FPA has a separate response to each of these developments, has something to offer each of these avenues of thought, and covers all of them, thus offering a bridge for this significant domestic and decision-making turn in IR theory. That they each have turned is a major point of this article; that they have turned in different directions is an opportunity for FPA to integrate this transtheoretical development.

As an alternative perspective, FPA foregrounds the agent decision maker—this is its distinct contribution (Hudson 2005). How decision makers interpret and respond to their domestic and international environments is then subject to a number of factors: psychological, societal, ideational, political, institutional, and material. FPA offers integration of these theories through this psychological experience of agents. My review in this essay supports Goldgeier and Tetlock's observation on IR theory that:

> when we scrutinize what these traditions trumpet as their most distinctive explanatory achievements, we discover that their capacity to explain relevant trends or events hinges on a wider range of implicit psychological assumptions that is useful to make explicit. In this sense, these macro theorists are already more psychological than they think. And when we shift attention to each tradition's explanatory shortcomings, we believe these can be at least partly corrected by incorporating other psychological assumptions in the conceptual frameworks. In this sense, these macro theories are not as psychological as they should be. (Goldgeier and Tetlock 2001:68)

In other words, psychological factors are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere.

This broad development has occurred, in my opinion, because of well-known problems of an artificial demarcation between "internal" and "external" politics and because of the agent–structure "problem" that plagued (predominantly structural) IR theory through the late 1980s. Constructivism was a clear response to that problem, introducing intersubjectivity as one solution.[19] Agency, however, remains underdeveloped across the board. As Hill has noted, IR "as a subject needs to move forward in reconstituting its notions of agency after the waves of attacks on realism in recent decades, which have established the weakness of state-centric accounts without putting much in their place" (Hill 2003:2).

This is more than a levels-of-analysis argument. Even a focus on the psychological subjective understandings of decision makers incorporates other levels. By concentrating on decision making, it does not exclude other factors, although

[19]Interestingly, Johnston (2005:1039) notes that "what is called a sociological turn is really a sociological and psychological turn. It remains to be seen whether this particular application of psychology in IR will meet the same fate as the application of psychology in comparative foreign policy analysis—namely being looked down upon by the field as a whole in favor or pristine deductive theorizing."

the focus is on individual agents. Decision-making theories are not reductionist; they are contextualist (Goldgeier and Tetlock 2001). They include the international context—the international is not by definition exogenous to an FPA approach. As Bueno De Mesquita has argued, "when we examine international affairs through the lens of domestic decision making we provide a way to think about how properties of the international system are shaped by local considerations as part of the larger strategic fabric of politics" (Bueno De Mesquita 2002:7). The international system, however, is no longer presumed to be an analytical "first cut"—a presumption that Moravcsik argues "is both methodologically biased and theoretically incoherent" (Moravcsik 1997:516). By incorporating many levels of analyses and material and ideational factors, an FPA perspective is ontologically richer in its treatment of domestic politics and decision making.

An FPA perspective is not superior to other perspectives, and it continues to suffer from weaknesses outlined earlier. FPA, moreover, is also not a single theory of international relations, but this does not make it unique or less developed than other IR "theories" that are today better characterized as schools of thought or branches of theoretical traditions. An FPA perspective is, however, parsimonious in that other factors and contexts can be funneled through the subjective understanding of the decision maker (although most FPA researchers would sacrifice parsimony in favor of accuracy and validity; Peterson 2006). In addition, FPA has a history of investigating—with a track record of theoretical conceptualization, methodological development, and empirical examination—all of these domestic and decision-making orientations that currently separate dominant IR theories.

The weakest (but nonetheless important) argument for a place for an FPA perspective alongside other theoretical schools is that it can serve as a *complement.* In this way, FPA research can provide nuance and depth to liberalism's treat-

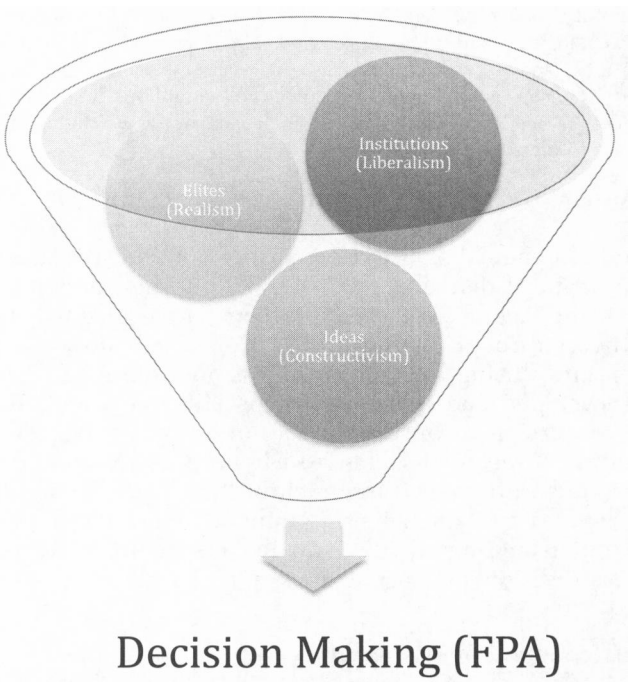

FIG. 1. Foreign Policy Analysis as Crucible for IR Theories' Domestic and Decision-making Factors

ment of domestic institutions and public opinion, constructivism's subjective and ideational focus, and NCR's turn toward domestic mobilization and perceptions. In this way, FPA research can be part of the movement toward analytic eclecticism (Sil and Katzenstein 2010). A stronger role for FPA is that of a *competitor.* As such, FPA insights (and its beginning point of the subjective understanding of the decision maker) can be pitted against other explanations to see which is best suited to a particular research question or appropriate under certain scope conditions. The competitor role is a familiar one in IR's history of paradigm wars. The strongest position for an FPA perspective would be in the form of a *crucible*—a container for melding together other theories (see Figure 1). In this way, insights from other theories would be integrated into the FPA perspective. The crucible role is most consistent with calls for going beyond the "isms" and levels of analyses debates and speaks most directly to agent–structure relationships.

The purpose of this article was not to suggest a singular role for an FPA perspective, but to assert FPA research as a *sui generis* IR perspective that speaks to theoretical developments across the study of international politics. These developments clearly suggest that it is past time to cast aside the division of labor argument that has partitioned our research efforts and our understanding of world affairs.

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