RISING POWERS
QUARTERLY

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2018

Regional Leadership and Multipolarity in the 21st Century

Guest-edited by
Hannes Ebert & Daniel Flemes

RISING
POWERS
in
GLOBAL
GOVERNANCE

RISING POWERS
QUARTERLY

Volume 3, Issue 1
February 2018

Regional Leadership and Multipolarity in the 21st Century

Guest-edited by
Hannes Ebert & Daniel Flemes

CONTENTS

Rethinking Regional Leadership in the Global Disorder

Hannes Ebert

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
ebert@giga-hamburg.de

Daniel Flemes

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
flemes@giga-hamburg.de

Abstract

Current power transitions in the context of China's rise and US retrenchment have significantly conditioned the forms and effects of regional leadership across different world regions. Against this empirical background, this *Special Issue* gathers innovative conceptual and theoretical perspectives to study the links between regional leadership and multipolarity in Europe, the Middle East, post-Soviet Eurasia, South America and South Asia. The introductory article provides a conceptual base for defining and explaining regional leadership and discusses the key arguments and findings of the individual articles.

Keywords

Regional Leadership, Multipolarity, Power Transition, Balancing, Rising Powers, China

Introduction

The debate about how and why contemporary rising powers project their influence regionally, rooted in post-Cold War observations of power transitions, is in need of a review. With the potential strategic retreat of US leadership in some regions, the form and effectiveness of regional leadership projects will likely be tested more than ever in contemporary times. Available frameworks of regional leadership still insufficiently account for this scenario.

Most importantly, the concept of regional leadership is fragmented in the field of International Relations (IR) theory. First, scholars have added secondary connotations such as "cooperative", "political" or "economic leadership" without first conceptualising leadership itself, thereby reducing conceptual clarity. Second,

scholars have used the concept interchangeably with related terms such as "hegemony", "primacy", and "domination". Third, linking both positive and negative connotations to regional leadership has charged the concept with different and partly diverging normative values.

This special issue of *Rising Powers Quarterly* seeks to mitigate some of these conceptual shortcomings and contribute to our understanding of the evolving conditions under which regional leadership operates by providing empirical perspectives on power politics in Europe, the Middle East, post-Soviet Eurasia, South America and South Asia.

Conceptualizing Regional Leadership

To begin with, analyses of regional leadership in multipolar systems need to account for the complexity in which interactions between structures and actors are embedded. The most promising IR scholarship has developed multidimensional concepts of regional leadership that reflect the possibility that power could increase in one dimension and, at the same time, shrink in another. Baldwin (2002, pp.178–179) has inspired more recent analyses by outlining the key dimensions of regional leadership variation:

1. *Scope.* Referring to the possibility that an actor's power might vary in different policy fields (economics, security).

2. *Domain.* Defining the size of an actor's influence on others (regional, global).

3. *Weight.* Describing the reliability of an actor's power (the chance to put one's will into practice against the will of others).

4. *Costs.* Indicating the price an actor is willing and able to pay to achieve other actors' compliance.

5. *Means.* Including symbolic, economic, military and diplomatic methods of exercising power.

States that play a regional leading role in the sense of rule making are also given special importance when the treatment of global problems is concerned. This applies to questions of global norm-building, world trade, and transnational security risks. Attempts to solving problems in these areas can be organised at the regional and global levels. In both cases some state actors play a more important role than others in the course of cooperation and negotiation processes and therefore have more influence on the results.

The reason for this could be the greater military or economic potential of these

actors. Similarly, their legitimacy, diplomatic effectiveness, moral authority and representative function for a region or group of states might generate advantages in international bargaining. Depending on their relative power resources the regional leaders choose different strategies in regional and international bargaining processes. The most promising leadership strategy that defines the foreign policy instruments applied by the regional powers can differ according to the systemic level (regional, global). A key objective of this special issue is to identify the foreign policy resources and instruments that regional powers apply under consideration on different systemic levels.

With regard to the global level of analysis, the status of a regional leader implies that dominant actors of the international system accept this status. What is even more important is the degree to which regional powers manage to influence the global economic and security order. The degree of assertion of interests in global governance institutions such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization is supposed to serve as an indicator for power over outcomes.

A crucial reason for the declining but enduring US hegemony in international relations is its military supremacy. Washington still accounts for more than half of for global defense expenditures. In conventional military terms the US will remain the dominant global power for a long time. From a Realist perspective a multipolar system could be the results from the emergence of balancing coalitions against the global system's dominant power by regional powers who successfully achieved the position of the unipole in their regions (Wohlforth 1999, p.30). Linking this statement with the developing countries' lack of power in the international system (measurable for instance in IMF voting power or permanent seats at the UN Security Council) multipolarisation becomes a priority foreign policy objective of developing states. In addition to forming balancing coalitions, these regional powers will likely seek to advance the transformation toward multipolarity by increasing their influence in international institutions. In particular, the governments of Southern states that have the capacity to build regional unipolarities,must be interested in finding an effective way to challenge the current international hierarchy and to transform themselves into power poles of a future multipolar system. One way to project significant global influence (decision-maker status) is by consolidation regional powerhood as a base for pursuing national interests in the multipolar order.

In other words, rising powers need to determine which role they seek to play in their respective regions and whether they are willing to bear the cost of regional leadership before defining their global policy and status goals. With the exception of Russia, which is the only case under consideration that is permanant UN Securiy Council member, all articles in this special issue deal with global-level middle powers instead of great powers on the global stage. As Cox (1996, p.241)

has suggested, "the middle-power role is not a fixed universal" but a concept and set of practices that continually evolve in search of different forms of actorness. If sharing some similar characteristics on the need for rules and order in multilateral institutions, middle powers differ significantly on their regional roles such as pursuing divergent preferences on the region's direction and pathes of regional institutionalisation.

With regard to the (intra)regional level of analysis, the degree of coordination, formalisation and institutionalisation of trade and security policies is an indicator of the quality of the intraregional cooperation. In addition to free trade agreements, bilateral and multilateral measures in the sectors infrastructure, technology and energy are included in the investigation. The mutual transparency between the states in key areas such as defence planning, arms trade and military budget indicates the degree of confidence building between the neighbouring countries, and transnational threats can encourage the creation of cooperative security policies in the investigated regions. In particular, non-military security challenges imply direct threats to the states: drug trafficking and arms trade as well as money laundering as forms of organised crime, activities by guerrilla organisations across the national borders, transnational terrorism and the proliferation of means of mass destruction. On the contrary, it is possible that the regional power itself poses a regional threat or is perceived as such.

Considering these observations, the case selection of this special issue is based on the following definition of regional powerhood. As suggested by Flemes and Nolte (2010, p.23), a regional power

1. Is part of a geographically delimited region;

2. Is ready to assume leadership;

3. Displays the necessary material and ideational capabilities for regional power projection; and

4. Is highly influential in regional affairs.

Conceivable further criteria for distinguishing and classifying different types of regional powers are

1. Economic, political and cultural interconnectedness of the regional power within its region;

2. The provision of collective goods for the region;

3. The existence of an ideational leadership project; and

4. The acceptance of the leadership by potential followers.

We argue that Brazil, Colombia, Germany, India, Russia, and Saudi Arabia fulfil at least the four basic criteria of regional powerhood.

Explaining Regional Leadership

This special issue aims to develop novel approaches to analysing and modelling the foreign policies of regional powers in the multipolar system. More specifically, the authors present innovative concepts from different theoretical perspectives to explain and manage the complex challenges related to regional leadership. Each article outlines a particular theoretical lens and applies it to a world region that is distinct from the others by a particular power structure and politics, culture of interaction and domestic system. We invited analyses from two main theoretical camps that have generated the most inspiring contributions to the debates on regional leadership and multipolarity over the past decade: (Neo)Realism and Constructivism. Both grand theories have constantly been complemented and developed further. Each of the six articles of this special issue outlines a particular theoretical lens and applies it to a world region that is distinguished from others by a particular power structure and politics, culture of interaction or domestic system.

Rethinking Realist Perspectives

Realist perspectives on leadership are often associated with the concepts of power and/or hegemony. However, both concepts are strongly contested in the literature. Classical Realists depict international cooperation as "a necessary function of the balance of power operating in a multiple state system" (Morgenthau 1967: 175). For those traditional Realists, international institutions are always a function of state power and interests. Neorealism assumes that states ally to balance against the superior power capabilities of other states. Power capabilities are the determining factor of states' choices (Waltz 1979). It has been common for Neorealists to use the term 'hegemony' as a synonym for dominance or disproportionately preponderant capabilities (Waltz 1979). It would be rational for a hegemon to use its preponderant power in the interest of the system as a whole, because his power only exists relative to the systemic context in which it is embedded.

Three of the special issue's contributions engage with variations of (Neo)Realism: First, Alcides Costa Vaz (University of Brasilia) examines regional leadership in South America. In the past 10 years of IR scholarship, South America's ... viewed through the prism of Brazil's rise as the region's primary rising power and its potential function as a bridge between aspiring and established powers (e.g., Burges 2016). Brazil, which is South America's largest country in terms of population, territory, GDP and defence expenditures, has experienced sustained

high economic growth since 2002 and has become the eight largest economy by GDP in 2017. Gradually, Brasilia raised its regional and global diplomatic profile, increasingly vocally claiming a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, pushing for reforms in the international financial institutions and taking a proactive stance in new institutions such as the G20, the BRICS and the IBSA forum. A key novelty was Brazil's emergence as an informal spokesperson for both South America and the emerging world order (Rachman 2017). In this role, Brazil pursued varying forms of "concertación" (literally concertation) (Merke 2015) or consensual and cooperative hegemony (Burges 2015) that were perceived favourably or met with modest soft and institutional balancing by South American neighbours (Flemes & Wehner 2015).

However, a series of recent crises has severely challenged overly optimistic depictions of Brazil's trajectory as a pivotal regional leader and aspiring great power. Brazil's economy has suffered a huge recession that has combined weak growth with high deficits, and low investments, and its state plunged into a political crisis following corruption scandals that engulfed the political and business elite. Costa Vaz (University of Brasilia) puts this situation into perspective by adopting the analytical framework of "restraint" developed by Brent J. Steele and Barry Posen to assess the prospects of Brazil's regional leadership after the Workers Party (PT) era. Steele and Posen understand restraint as a merger of selective engagement and isolationism. Since taking office in 2016, Brazil's President Michel Temer has sought to reinvigorate the state's foreign policy, but his efforts have been severely constrained by domestic political and ideological polarisation on one hand and regional political and economic fragmentation on the other. Thus, domestic and regional constraints have thus contributed to a shift towards restraint as a constitutive feature of Brazil's foreign policy. Again, the waning role of the US as a semi-engaged hegemon and the increasing footprint of China in South America are likely to create conditions to which Brazil's restraint will have to adapt in the future.

Second, Nicolas Blarel (Leiden University) and Hannes Ebert (GIGA Institute of Asian Studies) assess India's regional leadership in South Asia. India is a particularly instructive case for studying the ambivalences in the linkages between regional leadership and global aspirations. While successive governments partly succeeded in reinventing India's global role after the end of the Cold War, increasing its voice in international institutions and enhancing its strategic ties with multiple regional and great powers such as the US, their efforts to garner regional followership were lukewarm and overall ineffective (Ganguly 2018). In particular, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, redressed New Delhi's efforts to break the deadlock in South Asian cooperation when coming into office in 2014. The government took steps to aggressively defend India's proclaimed dominant role

in the region against the never-ending opposition of its enduring rival Pakistan, rising Chinese investments and influence in South Asia, and growing nationalism tied to anti-Indian sentiments in states such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Jaishankar 2016). This included emphasising South Asian but also wider Indo-Pacific regionalism (Pant 2017). IR scholarship on regional leadership still struggles to adequately account for the arduous transformation of India's South Asia policies (Ebert & Blarel 2018).

Against this background, Blarel and Ebert observe that Realist and Liberalist expectations on the effects of a unipolar regional distribution of power capabilities in South Asia have not materialised. Attempts by the Indian state to establish a stable order through coercive or deterrent force or generate followership through institutions and public goods provision failed, and high levels of interstate violence and low levels of regional integration persist in the region. This is puzzling given that India has enjoyed overwhelming superiority of conventional power capabilities in the region since its independence in 1947 and, in particular, since Pakistan's breakup in 1971. Blarel and Ebert suggest that leadership in the region is profoundly conditioned by the social interactions between leader and potential followers of the South Asian post-Cold War order. As a first step of building a contextualised understanding of leadership, both authors refer to English School conceptualisations of hegemony that propose constructing regional leadership through observations of the social interactions associated with the primary power's expected regional roles and responsibilities. By tracing India's regional leadership roles and responsibilities in a set of interactions during Indo-Pakistani crises in the post-Cold War, Blarel and Ebert conclude that the Indian state is still searching an effective strategy to adopt to a two-decades-old context: the presence of nuclear weapons and non-state militants, used by South Asia's secondary power Pakistan to prevent at all costs India's regional dominance.

Finally, through their analysis of distinct dyadic military crises, the authors demonstrate that India's traditional deterrence doctrine has failed to dissuade non-state militants from engaging in asymmetric attacks against India's symbols of leadership such as its political capital Delhi and its commercial centre Mumbai. Thus, in an attempt to adapt to this context, New Delhi sought to reform its deterrence toolkit and revive its military deterrence capacities' credibility as a precondition for effective leadership, devising military options such as the public re-branding of cross-border firing as "surgical strikes" to efficiently target militant groups and other forms of coercive diplomacy. However, this transformation is ongoing and is far from terminated. Thus far, the conventionally more powerful state has felt compelled to limit its ambitions and install new mechanisms for credible deterrence. Thus, Blarel and Ebert suggest that IR scholarship should further investigate the ways in which non-state actors in a nuclearised rivalry

context truncate the stabilising effects of unipolar regional systems.

Third, Anna Sunik (Heidelberg University) analyzes Saudi Arabia's leadership aspirations in the Middle East. The Middle East has not featured prominently in the IR study of regional leadership and multipolarity, partly because of the lack of one precipitously rising power with rapid high economic growth and increasing global clout (Fawcett 2013). Even before the so-called Arab uprisings that began in 2010, observers argued that the Middle Eastern regional order was broken (Salem 2008). Structures and power balances established in the late 1970s and amended since the end of the Cold War eroded with the collapse of Iraq as a centralised sovereign state and the cessation of its function as a buffer between the aspiring regional powers Iran and Turkey. Today, 15 years after the US invasion of Iraq, aspiring states militarily escalate their claims in multiple proxy conflicts and civil wars. Having sensed waning US commitment to the Middle East, whose military capabilities in the region had outweighed those of all other regional states, contenders for leadership - including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates - have jostled for influence and status to promote their diverging economic, ideological, nationalistic and sectarian agendas (cp. Cook, Stokes & Brock 2014).

However, the fact that "the Middle East features for not having produced a regional power" (Beck 2014, p.2) does not mean that understanding international politics in the region through the lens of regional leadership would not yield value. In contrast, the current transformations of regional order in the Middle East require us to update and refine our interpretations of the past and prospective structural parameters. Against this background, Sunik examines Saudi Arabia's new interventionism as part of its leadership bid in the Middle East as exemplified in its intervention in Yemen. To date, Saudi Arabia has been able to mitigate conventional military disadvantages vis-à-vis Iran by capitalising on its greater wealth ("riyalpolitik") and close alliance with the US. Since 2011, Saudi Arabia not only ramped up its defense spending but also intensified its regional foreign policy activities, participating in the coalition against the so-called "Islamic State", engaging in Bahrain, supporting anti-government rebels in Syria, building a multilateral coalition to fight terrorism, and co-initiating a pro-longed military intervention in Yemen. The last of these actions, initiated in March 2015, is particularly noteworthy as it was the first full-scale military operation by Saudi Arabia and its partners exclusively under regional leadership.

Sunik demonstrates that this resurgence has been driven by a combination of power-driven balance-of-threat impulses and regime security considerations linked to identity issues that construct Iran as a threat to domestic stability, as extent studies on "omnibalancing" rightly revealed. In particular, the power vacuum that ensued US withdrawal compelled the kingdom to step up its efforts to inde-

pendently guarantee its regional interests. After the collapse of Iraq, the hitherto tripolar Persian Gulf system transformed broadly into a bipolar struggle with Iran, only exacerbated by the post-2011 turmoil. While "omnibalancing" explanations sufficiently uncover this dynamic, they fail to account for the specific shape (multilateral "coalition of the willing") and location (Yemen instead of Syria) of the intervention. To fill this gap, Sunik draws on the scholarship on authoritarian institutions and their symbolic functions. Authoritarian states form alliances not just to provide security but also to build reputation and prestige. From this perspective, Sunik finds that the kingdom intervened multilaterally in Yemen to signal ability, resolve and commitment to replace US dominance in the region and thereby foster its claim for broader regional leadership. Thus, by combining domestic and systemic drivers of regional leadership, Sunik highlights how potential regional powers feel compelled or willing to expand their traditional foreign policy toolbox in order to adopt to novel regional opportunity structures in the transition toward global multipolarity. Again, whether Riyadh's signalling of regional leadership resolve garners sufficient followership to back-up its claims remains an open empirical question.

Rethinking Constructivist Perspectives

The status of a regional power is also a social category and therefore depends not at least on the acceptance of this status, and the associated social hierarchy, by others. Thus, it is important to include the role conceptions, ideas, norms and perceptions in the discussion on regional leadership and global disorder. Social interactions can have transformative effects on the interests and identities of state actors and their continuous cooperation is likely to influence intersubjective meanings. Effectively formulating and implementing a consensual idea-driven regional project could help regional powers to enhance legitimacy of their leadership role. An ideational leadership project as such aims at producing common norms and ideas among the regional states. Three of the special issue's contributions engage with variations of Constructivist thinking:

The first is Hanns W. Maull's (German Institute for International and Security Affairs) analysis of Germany's leadership role in Europe. Again, Europe is not among the "usual suspects" of regions discussed in IR scholarship on regional leadership and multipolarity. From the view of regional power politics, Europe is first and foremost home to established powers, two of which, France and the UK, are nuclear states with a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. Recent debates have focused on Germany's growing power capabilities and diplomatic influence, examining how that country's rising regional and global ambitions will shape and be shaped by what is still a multipolar European system and the evolving global order. Amidst recent calls to become "more active" in solving the multiple simultaneous crises in and beyond Europe, some observers

concluded that the 21st century's second decade is Germany's 'unipolar moment' in Europe (Brattberg & De Lima 2015) and the 'German moment in a fragile world' (Bagger 2015). A consensus has emerged that Germany has shifted from Europe's 'sick man' in the early 20th century to being its leading economic powerhouse, driven by a chancellor with international acclaim, a public attractiveness as the 'most popular country' (Chokshi 2016), and the football World Champion, as well as its peers' relative weaknesses.

However, the hegemonic traits of Germany's position in the evolving European hierarchy of power have been subject to heated debate (cp. Harnisch 2014; Flemes & Ebert 2017). While some contended that "the world waits for Germany" (Blyth & Matthijs 2012), that "Germany must lead or leave [the euro]" (Soros 2012), that "Germany is a great power" and "should act like one" (Burrows & Gnad 2016), and that Germany in the context of the refugee crisis has evolved as the world's "new can-do nation" (Cohen 2015) and as "enforcer, facilitator and benefactor in Europe's triple crisis" (Matthijs 2016, p.135), other commentators have stressed the limits of German power (Kleine-Brockhoff & Maull 2011; Perthes 2016), framing its position and policies in terms of "contested hegemony" (Jürgens 2013), "semi hegemony" (Kundnani 2014) or "reluctant hegemony" (Paterson 2011; Bunde & Oroz 2015; Kornelius 2015) and discrediting Germany's acclaimed 'unipolar moment' as a "myth" (Schwarzer & Lang 2012; Nicholson 2015). Historical Institutionalist analyses of Germany's emerging international role have highlighted the country's structural embeddedness in Europe (Crawford 2007; Bulmer 2013). Realist analyses, meanwhile, have argued that Germany's political leadership has tangibly strived for a more autonomous, power-based, unilateralist foreign policy (Hellmann 2011).

Maull engages with this debate by drawing the evolving German leadership status in Europe through the lens of role theory drawing on the civilian power approach. Domestic and regional pressures have compelled the German state to significantly adjust both its "ego" and "alter" components of its foreign policy role concept, that is, the expectations regarding its role by itself and by others. Role theory postulates that these normative expectations have the power to shape foreign policy behavior. At the domestic level, the emergence of a right-wing populist party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) constituted the first impactful challenge to Germany's traditional pro-European policies. At the regional level, multiple crises related to socio-economic challenges in some Eurozone states, migration, and the Ukraine conflict brought Germany into a position of a broker of a common European or even Western positions. Maull illustrates how throughout these crises, Berlin was preoccupied with reconciling internal and external expectations regarding its expected role, which have become increasingly diverse and contradictory. Except during the Eurozone crisis, where German leadership

was forceful and sing-minded, Berlin has managed to garner support for a management mode of "leadership from behind", which remained relatively close its traditional civilian power role concept, although this continuity might become increasingly contested both from within and abroad in the future.

Eduardo Pastrana and Diego Vera (Javeriana University) offer a second refinement of Constructivist thinking on regional leadership in an era of evolving multipolarity. Their contribution draws attention to a sub-region that has not been substantially studied from a regional leadership perspective: Central America and the Caribbean and the Pacific Alliance. Thus far, IR scholarship on the region has focused on intrastate violence, its regional and international repercussions, and the role of extra-regional states as conflict mediators. Scholarship failed to notice that in the context of a transition from civil war to peace, the Colombian state has cautiously sought ways to envision and play a role of regional leader in the region.

From a theoretical angle similar to that of Maull, Pastrana and Vera explore the leadership role of post-conflict Colombia in the Caribbean Basin and the Pacific Alliance. They frame the new role conception of the Colombian foreign policy by adopting the concepts of functional leadership and niche diplomacy. In President Juan Manuel Santos's two terms in power since 2010, Colombia sought to expand its foreign policy previously focused on narrow trade and security concerns and increase its influence in the region through so-called South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation. Bogotá has sought to step up its contribution to conflict resolution and knowledge transfer. Pastrana and Vera conclude that, in doing so, it has paved the way for thematic and geographical niche diplomacy as a form of Colombian leadership.

Finally, Regina Heller's (Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy) exploration of Russia's leadership in post-Soviet Eurasia provides a third Constructivist-inspired perspective on regional leadership. One of the developments that has most exigently revealed the need to rethink some of IR's dominant power politics propositions is Russia's recent efforts to redress the stark decline in its presence in post-Soviet Eurasia. Scholars and policy-makers have debated Russia's credentials as the predominant power in the region and self-proclaimed status as a great power (MacFarlane 2018). While the country's military prowess and political influence make it a key global player, its weakening economy has sparked doubts about the sustainability of its aspirations, and growing opposition to its regional initiatives even by some of its traditional regional allies such as Kazakhstan and Armenia following the annexation of Crimea have challenged Russia's claims for leadership (Meister 2018). With the 2013-2014 crisis in Ukraine, the Kremlin's fixation with great power status and with the West as an "object of emulation or as a defining other" (Wilson 2017, p.19) has become even more linked to its ongoing national identity construction and domestic legitimation.

Regina Heller engages with social psychology and emotions research in IR to trace the drivers of Russia's regional leadership in post-Soviet Eurasia, exemplified by its recent foreign policy towards Ukraine. From the outset, Heller challenges dominant Realist approaches to explain Russia's annexation of Crimea and interference in Eastern Ukraine with exclusive reference to power politics considerations. Contrary to these approaches, Moscow's Ukraine policy has not exclusively - and not even predominantly - been driven by the objective to maximise its relative power position and influence in the region by occupying strategic locations and coercing post-Soviet states into submission. How else, Heller asks, would these approaches account for the observation that Russia has overall lost influence over the country and the overall region and compromised its principled defence of the norms of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Rather, Russia's Ukraine policy and by extension its leadership aspirations toward the post-Soviet region has primarily been driven by the urge for social recognition as a regional leader. Russia is willing to restore its status even at the risk of losing influence.

Based on a social psychology perspective, Heller analyses the official Russian discourse in the Ukraine crisis to trace the process in which unresolved behavioural and cognitive anger over Russia's perceived status deprivation as well as unfair, unreliable and humiliating treatment by the West in the context of the Soviet Union's dissolution has driven Moscow's regional policies. Under Russian President Vladimir Putin, the attempt to establish regional primacy in the post-Soviet Eurasia has become increasingly linked to efforts to construct a collective identity in which Russia is a central and equal entity in a global order that has so far been dominated by the West. By illustrating the core signifiers in this conception, Heller's article exhibits how in a period of power transitions the aspirations for regional hegemony are linked to social status seeking in the global order. However, in post-Soviet Eurasia it remains unclear whether the strategic use of moral justifications of aggressive foreign policy behaviour will suffice to not only increase domestic legitimation but also establish regional leadership.

Together, these articles represent empirical and analytical refinements of IR debates on regional leadership and multipolarity. All of the assessments highlight the need to take stock of the considerable geopolitical changes related to the rise of China and the evolving retrenchment of the US, and to assess the domestic pressures related to the upsurge of nationalist and populist politics – macro challenges to leadership across regions that will certainly further occupy future IR scholarship.

Funding

Bio

Hannes Ebert

Hannes Ebert is a postdoctoral research fellow at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, conducting research on rising powers, territorial dispute management, and cyber security in Asia.

Daniel Flemes

Daniel Flemes is Schumpeter Fellow of the Volkswagen Foundation at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, where he leads a project on foreign policy strategies of rising powers. He currently serves as a visiting professor at the Fundaçao Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

References

Bagger, T 2015, 'The German Moment in a Fragile World', The Washington Quarterly, retrieved January 28, 2015, from <http://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/german-moment-fragile-world>.

Baldwin, D 2002, 'Power and International Relations', in W Carlsnaes, T Risse, & BA Simmons (eds), Handbook of International Relations, Sage, London, pp. 177–191.

Beck, M 2014, 'The Concept of Regional Power as Applied to the Middle East', in Regional Powers in the Middle East, The Modern Muslim World, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 1–20, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137484758_1>.

Blyth, M & Matthijs, M 2012, 'The World Waits For Germany', Foreign Affairs, retrieved June 15, 2012, from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137697/mark-blyth-and-matthias-matthijs/the-world-waits-for-germany?cid=nlc-this_week_on_foreignaffairs_co-061412-the_world_waits_for_germany_3-061412>.

Brattberg, E & De Lima, B 2015, 'Germany's Unipolar Moment', retrieved September 30, 2015, from <http://berlinpolicyjournal.com/germanys-unipolar-moment/>.

Bulmer, S 2013, 'Germany and the Eurozone Crisis: Between Hegemony and Domestic Politics', West European Politics, vol. 37, no. 6, pp. 1244–1263.

Bunde, T & Oroz, A 2015, Munich Security Report 2015: Collapsing Orders, Reluctant Guardians?, Munich Security Conference, Munich.

Burges, SW 2016, Brazil in the World: The International Relations of a South American Giant, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Burrows, M & Gnad, O 2016, 'Germany Is a Great Power—It Should Act Like One', The National Interest, retrieved March 11, 2016, from <http://nation-

alinterest.org/feature/germany-world-power%E2%80%94it-should-act-one-15455>.

Chokshi, N 2016, 'These are the world's best countries. (Sorry, America — you're No. 4.)', The Washington Post, retrieved January 21, 2016, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/01/20/these-are-the-worlds-best-countries-sorry-america-youre-number-4/>.

Cohen, R 2015, 'Germany, Refugee Nation', The New York Times, retrieved December 21, 2015, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/22/opinion/germany-refugee-nation.html>.

Cook, SA, Stokes, J & Brock, AJ 2014, 'The Contest for Regional Leadership in the New Middle East', Middle East Security Studies, retrieved August 17, 2016, from <http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS_RegionalLeadership_CookStokesBrock_0.pdf>.

Cox, R 1996, 'Middlepowermanship: Japan and the Future of the World Order', in R Cox & T Sinclair (eds), Approaches to World Order, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 67–78.

Crawford, B 2007, Power and German foreign policy: embedded hegemony in Europe, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Ebert, H & Blarel, N 2018, 'Power, Territory and Learning: Explaining Pakistan's Persistent Contestation', in H Ebert & D Flemes (eds), Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Fawcett, L (ed.) 2013, International Relations of the Middle East, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Flemes, D & Ebert, H 2017, 'Bound to Change: German Foreign Policy in the Networked Order', Rising Powers Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 251–269.

Flemes, D & Nolte, D 2010, 'Introduction', in Regional Leadership in the Global System: Ideas, Interests and Strategies of Regional Powers, Ashgate, Farnham, pp. 1–14.

Flemes, D & Wehner, L 2015, 'Drivers of strategic contestation: The case of South America', International Politics, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 163–177.

Ganguly, S 2018, 'India as a Regional Power: Opportunities and Constraints', in H Ebert & D Flemes (eds), Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Harnisch, S 2014, Germany's role in regional and global security governance, European Union Institute, Florence.

Hellmann, G 2011, 'Normatively Disarmed, But Self-Confident. German Foreign Policy 20 Years After Reunification', Internationale Politik, vol. 3, pp. 45–51.

Jaishankar, D 2016, 'India is on the defensive in its neighborhood', Washington Post, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2016/09/21/india-is-on-the-defensive-in-its-neighborhood/>.

Jürgens, H 2013, 'Germany's contested hegemony', Clingendael, retrieved February 15, 2016, from <http://www.clingendael.nl/publication/germanys-contested-hegemony?lang=nl>.

Kleine-Brockhoff, T & Maull, H 2011, 'Der überforderte Hegemon. Ziele und Grenzen deutscher Macht', Internationale Politik, vol. 6, pp. 50–61.

Kornelius, S 2015, 'Deutschland: Europas zögerlicher Hegemon', sueddeutsche.de, retrieved July 26, 2015, from <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/deutschland-europas-zoegerlicher-hegemon-1.2580542>.

Kundnani, H 2014, The Paradox of German Power, Hurst, London.

MacFarlane, SN 2018, 'Contested Regional Leadership: Russia and Eurasia', in Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 275–299, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-73691-4_10>.

Matthijs, M 2016, 'The Three Faces of German Leadership', Survival, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 135–54.

Meister, S 2018, 'Hedging and Wedging: Strategies to Contest Russia's Leadership in Post-Soviet Eurasia', in Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 301–326, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-73691-4_11>.

Merke, F 2015, 'Neither balance nor bandwagon: South American international society meets Brazil's rising power', International Politics, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 178–192.

Nicholson, P 2015, 'The Myth of a Mighty Germany', Foreign Affairs, retrieved July 19, 2015, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/germany/2015-06-01/myth-mighty-germany>.

Pant, HV 2017, 'Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives', Rising Powers Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 7–17.

Paterson, W 2011, 'The Reluctant Hegemon? Germany Moves Centre Stage in the European Union', Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 49, no. S1, pp. 57–75.

Perthes, V 2016, 'The Limits of German Power', Project Syndicate, retrieved February 10, 2016, from <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/german-leadership-european-foreign-policy-by-volker-perthes-2016-02>.

Rachman, G 2017, 'Brazil and the crisis of the liberal world order', Financial Times, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <https://www.ft.com/content/43900a92-

89ae-11e7-bf50-e1c239b45787>.

Salem, P 2008, The Middle East: Evolution of a Broken Regional Order, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, DC, retrieved March 19, 2018, from <http://carnegieendowment.org/2008/07/30/middle-east-evolution-of-broken-regional-order-pub-20333>.

Schwarzer, D & Lang, K-O 2012, 'The Myth of German Hegemony', Foreign Affairs, retrieved October 8, 2012, from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138162/daniela-schwarzer-and-kai-olaf-lang/the-myth-of-german-hegemony?cid=nlc-this_week_on_foreignaffairs_co-100412-the_myth_of_german_hegemony_4-100412>.

Soros, G 2012, 'The Tragedy of the European Union and How to Resolve It', The New York Review of Books, retrieved March 30, 2016, from <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/09/27/tragedy-european-union-and-how-resolve-it/>.

Wilson, J 2017, 'The Russian Pursuit of Regional Hegemony', Rising Powers Quarterly, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 7–25.

Wohlforth, W 1999, 'The stability of a unipolar world', International Security, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 5–41.

Restraint and Regional Leadership after the PT Era: An Empirical and Conceptual Assessment

Alcides Costa Vaz

Institute of International Relations, University of Brasilia

alcides@unb.br

Abstract

The text analyses the prospects of Brazilian regional leadership after the thirteen year cycle of leftist governments led by the Worker´s Party. The analysis relies on conceptual and analytical contributions of Brent J. Steele and Barry Posen on restraint as a defining trait of foreign policy strategy. It is argued that despite the efforts of Michel Temer´s government to reinvigorate Brazilian foreign policy, political developments at the domestic and regional levels make it difficult to envision a rising, enduring Brazilian approach to regional affairs having regional leadership at its core. It is argued, on the contrary, that restraint has become an important feature of Brazilian policy towards South America since the presidency of Dilma Rousseff extending, though with substantive differences, into the government of Michel Temer.

Keywords

Brazil, Foreign Policy, South America, Regional Leadership

Introduction

During the presidencies of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), Brazil rose as a promising emerging actor at the global stage. Under Lula da Silva, an eventual Brazilian regional leadership became an object of mounting expectations abroad and disagreement within domestic political and diplomatic spheres. For Brazil´s most important extra-regional partners, regional leadership was a natural corollary of its economic, territorial, diplomatic and strategic endowments and a necessary endeavor for it to consolidate the intended status of an influent global actor. At the domestic level, the commitment of limited resources in the region, at the expenses of immediate and urgent domestic needs and of a more intense and effective relationship with developed countries, became a controversial issue.

Despite such controversies, Lula da Silva embraced the task of forging a structured South American political ambience as a major foreign policy priority. Initiatives were launched to foster a South American political identity, expand technical cooperation, integrate infrastructure and set up institutions and mechanisms to advance regional integration. Actually, those initiatives were decisive to reshape and reinvigorate the South American political landscape. However, bringing reluctant neighbors together to forge a coherent collective approach to address the challenges the region faced internally and internationally proved to be hard task, one that defied Brazilian willingness and ability to lead.

In the domestic realm, opponents argued that the emphasis on ideological, political and economic ties with neighbors would drive Brazil away from the core shaping trends of world politics and global economy, deepening its peripheral condition and limiting its international insertion. Such criticism towards the prevailing foreign policy orientation and its approach to South American affairs, as pursued by Lula da Silva, and to a lesser extent, by Dilma Rousseff regained strength with the rise of Michel Temer to power in 2016. With the support of a wide right-wing political coalition, the new Brazilian government moved swiftly to deconstruct the major tenets of Brazilian foreign policy pursued by its immediate predecessors. Despite the new emphasis in strengthening relations with major economies, expectations also rose as to a renewed Brazilian regional engagement and active role in fostering liberal political and economic premises and practices, along with newly elected right wing leaderships in the region.

We argue, however, that a rather different trait has emerged in the realm of Brazilian foreign policy, one that reflects both, the limits of Brazil´s external actions derived from its own political and economic domestic crisis and from transformations observed in the regional and global political landscapes. Domestic political stalemates, diminished political, economic and diplomatic resources and powerful external constraints have contributed to the rise of a sense of restraint as a prevailing trait of Brazilian foreign policy at large, and a more visible one in its regional dimension.

It is against this emerging background that the prospects of Brazilian regional leadership after the Workers Party´s rule will be assessed. The following analysis relies on recent studies on restraint as a foreign policy strategy carried out by Barry Posen (2014) and Brent J. Steele (2016). Their work, as most studies on foreign policy restraint do, have American foreign policy as a primary object. However, the conceptual and analytical framework they have developed provides very useful insights to approach the prospects of Brazilian regional leadership from a, so far, untested perspective. It is our goal to apply and test it.

In order to do so, we offer a brief overview of Brent J. Steele´s and Barry Posen´s

recent contributions to the study and to the political debate on restraint as a possible option for a grand US foreign policy strategy. Such overview highlights those aspects of Steele´s contributions that are regarded useful to the analysis of Brazilian foreign policy regional dimension. The second section provides a concise account of how regional leadership raised as a central issue in the debates on Brazilian foreign policy since the Cardoso years to gain wide visibility during Lula da Silva´s administration. This section also relies on the contributions of prominent experts on Brazilian foreign policy to assess the liabilities Brazil faced in pursuing an active policy orientation towards South America, with a specific focus on Lula da Silva´s government (2003-2016). The third section resumes Steele and Posen´s propositions regarding contextual challenges and the instrumental dimensions of restraint to discuss it as an emerging trait of Brazil´s policies towards the region, particularly under the Presidency of Michel Tamer's. The final section discusses the prospects of Brazilian regional leadership in the near future.

Foreign Policy Restraint: The Conceptual and Analytical Framework

The Cambridge Dictionary (2016) defines restraint as "calm and controlled behavior, something that limits the freedom of someone or something or that prevents something from growing or increasing." In such a sense, restraint bears two distinct behavioral referents: the first is one self, referring to the sustained intent of setting limits to one self´s objectives and actions for the sake of individual or shared interests. This conception evolves around the idea of self-restraint as a behavioral pattern through which one chooses to manage relations with his own environment and with others. It implies the acceptance of self-imposed constraints to one´s behavior and to the employment of available material and non-material capabilities that could be, otherwise, fully resorted to.

Alternatively, restraint may have an external referent, an outsider whose intents, capabilities and actions can or shall be purposefully constrained for the sake of one´s own interests or for the promotion of collective objectives. Differently from the previous sense, it implies a purposeful mobilization and the employment of capabilities available as a core feature of either an individual or collective endeavor.

In International Relations literature, restraint has become a recurrent concept and foreign policy approach, usually inspired by and applied to the analysis of the United States foreign policy and of the desired or actual level of U.S. engagement at the world stage (Steele 2016, p.1). It has acquired greater visibility due to the profound changes that U.S foreign policy has experienced, the polarized debate on the fate of the U.S as a global hegemon and on the values, strategies and goals that should drive its international policies at the world stage in the near future.

The US role and proneness towards activism at the world stage has been usually

depicted in binary terms. On the one hand, it is directly associated to greater and active international engagement and interventionism in boosting U.S power and in fostering its global hegemony, an approach that Brent S. Steele (2016) names *vitalism*. At the opposite, there is retrenchment, an orientation that encompasses restraint, but whose original matrix and absolute expression would be isolationism.

Each of these concurring foreign policy paradigms has its own value framework and set of prescriptions. The first is inspired by Woodrow Wilson´s principled universalism and finds its expression in the global pursuit and uphold of global hegemony through an active and strong commitment to the promotion of a liberal international order and the reliance on both, soft and hard power. The second is inspired by a nationalist mood and a conservative bias in favor of the prominence of national interests over universal or cosmopolitan commitments. Isolationism is a recurrent trait of American politics at large, one that has a strong appeal in contemporary times in face of the greater risks and costs deriving from the U.S. unprecedented exposure to the negative externalities of its international presence and commitments in the security and economic realms in particular.

Drawing on these distinct, concurring views, Barry Posen (2014) makes a strong case in favor of restraint as a foundation of a U.S grand strategy. In his view, restraint would result from the merging of selective engagement and isolationism. It represents a viable and necessary approach to U.S foreign policy strategy to counter the major negative outcomes of U.S excessive international exposure resulting from what Steele (2016, p. 9) names *vitalism*. It is also a response to the negative externalities of the liberal world order in the post-Cold War period. According to Posen (2014, pp.5-11, apud Steele, 2016, p. 1) restraint represents the best alternative grand strategy to the one embraced by the recent Administrations, that, according to that author, results from the fusion of primacy and cooperative security. Restraint would be, in this sense, the proper approach to reassert and adapt U.S global hegemony to the post-Cold War era.

As the major driver of a grand strategy, restraint implies the reduction of too costly and unsustainable U.S political commitments and military deployments abroad. It sustains that the U.S must share the burden of international stability and security with its major and minor allies alike (Posen 2014, p. 71; apud Steele, 2016, 2; Preble & Ruger 2014). Critics of such view, like Robert Lieber (2016), John Ikenberry; Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth (2012) consider it a dangerous strategy of disengagement that will not lead to greater global stability, as such stability still relies largely on American leadership and power resources as well as on the liberal institutions it forged after the Second World War.

Despite these critics, Steele makes a strong case in favor of restraint for the U.S, its

citizens and for global politics at large (Steele, 2016, 4). He argues that restraint - despite of its own liabilities and temporal and contextual aspects that make it difficult to realize - may yet be the "best of all the worst alternatives" available for a U.S foreign policy grand strategy (Steele, 2016, p. 4). He bases this view in three *meta-normative reasons*: (i) restraint would be less subject to manipulation than vitalism; (ii) it has produced more grounded results, and (iii) it not only prevents community fragmentation, but may even promote its revitalization.

His argument in favor of restraint, however, does not preclude the factors that make such a choice and its own implementation difficult at the present historical circumstances. In order to take such difficulty properly into account, Steele embraces a more comprehensive understanding of restraint, one inspired by Nicholas Onuf´s constructivist approach (Onuf, 1989) which he summarizes in three basic precepts:

a. restraint involves agents and structures simultaneously; therefore, in order to understand the challenge of restraint, one must not focus on just either agent or structure, but on both (Steele, 2016, p. 7). While discussing the methodological and prescriptive implications of locating struggles over restraint within agents and structures simultaneously, Steele (2016, p.7) introduces the idea of *identity costs*, those associated to the effort of changing expectations about commitments and habits that comprise an established sense of identity. It is also related to the burden that changing expectations about commitments may bring to public and elites.

b. restraint does not derive from an ontology centered only on ideational elements but from one that recognizes material considerations as well. In his own words, "restraint involves physical as well as ideational and dispositional features. Restraining a polity involves not only a policy of change, but the removal of forces and the withdrawal of force 'postures' that such a policy may have become otherwise used to in its recent or historic past." (Steele 2016, pp. 8-9). In this case, restraint might be resisted by those who were used to benefit from the actions and resources being provided to them. Such reliance entails attitudes that are, thus, hard to change, observes Steele.

c. restraint holds a moral quality, in the sense that it deals with the limits of one´s own power and with arguments for restraining others, as well as with the moral (and often emotional) judgments concerning the acceptance of self-restraint or the condition of being restrained by others. (Steele 2016, p. 9).

Having gone through core conceptual and contextual aspects of restraint and the

reasons that justify its choice as a foreign policy grand strategy, Steele considers the resources mobilized in its implementation. He distinguishes *institutional* (democratic institutions and norms, international institutions) and *normative* resources for restraint (those found in the culture of a democratic society, the prevailing strategic culture at a given time). A striking feature of such analysis is the emphasis on the existence of proper democratic political, institutional and cultural frameworks as a requisite for restraint to operate, since restraint itself is a matter of political decision made by elites, but whose burdens will be felt by a much larger constituency who is expected to support it. It encompasses then the complex issue of foreign policy legitimacy.

In advanced plural societies, foreign policy decisions that mobilize important resources and capabilities usually acquire some level of sensitiveness and public visibility and, therefore, demand a properly framed political and social debate. In societies where the democratic pillars and the very value of democratic institutions are not entirely consolidated, foreign policy issues are usually less permeable to a wider political debate, being yet highly vulnerable to manipulation and corruption. Thus, the legitimacy of foreign policy decisions (or its deficit) - namely those associated to a change of strategic orientation - becomes a forefront issue due to its potential overarching political and normative implications.

Steele´s effort to provide a realistic account of the feasibility of restraint as a core trait of a U.S foreign policy strategy leads him to consider the actual circumstances that challenge such endeavor. Being a matter of a political choice, restraint is influenced by what Steele names *contextual challenges* (2016, p. 15). He identifies three major contextual challenges for a U.S policy of restraint, namely: (i) the importance of globalization and the insecurity and uncertainties it brings about; (ii) the end of U.S primacy and leadership; (iii) an envisioned future which is hard to predict and to be assimilated into a strategic narrative that can provide predictability and, therefore, less insecurity.

Finally, Steele asserts that a consistent strategic narrative of restraint is needed to support and endorse it as a viable and better alternative foreign policy grand strategy than the one centered on greater U.S. international engagement (including the willingness to intervene whenever necessary). Having gone through the basic conceptual tenets of Posen´s and Steele´s approaches to foreign policy restraint, we now discuss the emergence of restraint as a trait and a possible interpretative approach to contemporary Brazilian foreign policy.

The Case for a Restraint Approach to Brazilian Policy Toward South America

What matters in Posen´s and Steele´s approaches for the sake of the present analysis is the conceptual framework the analytical and interpretative possibilities

it provides to the ongoing debate on the (re)definition of foreign policy strategy and on the desired level of international engagement and place and importance of the region in this regard. It is important to remark that such contributions are essentially of a conceptual and methodological nature. They do not comprise a proper and broader theoretical framework for an accurate analysis on Brazilian foreign policy strategies at large. Rather, the major value of their contribution lies in the provision of a simple and insightful set of conceptual tools (normative and institutional resources, identity costs and contextual challenges being the most prominent among them) that allows Brazil`s policy towards South America to be interpreted from a different perspective. The very concept of restraint and a more comprehensive understanding of it, as Steele suggests, are themselves valuable tools to discuss current Brazilian foreign policy trends and approaches to South America and the immediate prospects of Brazil´s regional leadership. Before moving further in this preliminary and tentative scrutiny of the analytical possibilities that restraint provides to identify and analyze current trends in Brazilian foreign policy and in its regional dimension in particular, it is necessary to qualify it. As previously seen, restraint implies the willingness of an agent towards voluntary self-restraint and/or the willingness to restrain someone else. It also implies the renouncement to the full employment of one´s own resources to influence others or, alternatively, the willingness to employ them partially or extensively for that same purpose. In the case of Brazil´s relations to its neighbors, a restraint component is identifiable in both senses. It can be firstly associated to resources endowment. What is at stake in this case is whether or not capabilities and resources available are sufficient to underscore the intent to exert a desired level of influence on regional affairs. In the case of Brazil in the context of the 2.000s, the material and immaterial resources available were certainly limited, but they provided important points of departure to the pursuit of a regional endeavor that was actually taken up. But equally important to the feasibility of that endeavor in the region is the ability to inspire trust and to motivate others to join and support that endeavor. As observed by Malamud (2011), Brazil´s such ability was limited to the point of it being depicted as a "leader without followers". In both cases, Brazil faced important constraints, but these, we argue, were not the fundamental explanations for restraint having become a core trait of its policy towards its region.

Conceptually, a rather different situation emerges when an actor with enough available resources gives up the pursuit of an attainable objective for any reason. In such a case, self-restraint is in course. We argue that this is precisely what has happened to Brazil´s policy to South America under Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer. Under Dilma Rousseff, there was a strong decrease of the political, diplomatic and economic investment in the pursuit of what still was, at least nominally, a formal foreign policy priority due to a political decision to do so. With Temer, what once was a feasible priority has been given up.

Restraint is also identifiable in Brazil´s stances towards extra-regional actors` interests or presence in South America. Both, Brazil´s foreign and defense policies display a vivid concern with regional stability and, therefore, with regional sources of instability and the eventual display of military power by extra-regional actors in the neighborhood. Under Lula da Silva, a political decision was made to strengthen political, diplomatic and economic ties with its neighbors and to develop military capabilities to reduce the options, to dissuade and, eventually, react effectively to any undesired external intent in the territory under Brazilian jurisdiction, as overtly stated in Brazil´s 2005 National Defense Policy and in the 2008 National Defense Strategy. In such a sense, Brazil would be seeking the ability and the resources to restrain others.

In both senses, restraint emerges an important trait and an appealing, viable approach to interpret recent developments of Brazilian policy towards its neighborhood. In the following section, we will carry out an analysis of the rise and fall of regional leadership as a forefront issue of Brazilian foreign policy as a means to provide empirical ground to the argument of a gradual rise of restraint as a core trait of current Brazilian policy towards South America.

Rise and Descent of Regional Leadership in Brazilian Foreign Policy

Brazilian regional leadership rose as controversial issue in the realm of Brazilian foreign policy in the past two decades as Brazil definitely tried to improve its international status quo. The quest for greater influence at the global level led Brazilian foreign policy observers domestically and abroad to associate it to a necessary corresponding effort to attain and exercise regional leadership (Flemes 2010). The manifested willingness to play active regional roles seemed to endorse the premise that there was a real, genuine but undeclared Brazilian intent either to take up the role of regional leader or, at least, to be recognized as such.

However, denying the intent of regional leadership had been part of a sustained effort of the Brazilian diplomacy to avoid misgivings and misinterpretations by the neighbors regarding Brazil´s regional interests as related to a quest for regional hegemony. Actually, Brazilian foreign policy had been long driven by a quest for autonomy both at the global and regional levels. To such quest, one must add to the asymmetric nature of relations with the neighbors, raising uncertainties as to Brazil´s actual underlying interests and motivations towards them: were they regarded actual partners or were they privileged spaces where Brazilian political, economic and strategic national interests were to be displayed and pursued?

Previous Brazilian initiatives of political dialogue, trade liberalization, infrastructure integration and the ideological proximity observed in the mid-2000´s were important to counter political misgivings of the neighbors and provided

enough confidence for them to support Brazilian stances in the region. However, there was a real concern in avoiding an excessive reliance on their friendly, but self-interested, giant neighbor: Argentina, struck by a deep economic crisis, moved closer to Venezuela in the early 2000s; Bolivia and Ecuador adhered to Venezuela´s bolivarianism while Chile continued to purse an independent path towards its regional and global insertion. Peru moved to strengthen its ties to the Pacific Rim and Colombia, under Alvaro Uribe, insisted in sustaining closer ties with the U.S.

Besides that, Brazil was not the sole, uncontested candidate to the status of regional leader. With Hugo Chavez in power in Venezuela in 1999, an unprecedented condition gradually took form in South America political landscape. For the first time, two important countries led by leftist forces embraced convergent but distinct political projects to address regional challenges collectively and made consistent moves to implement them (Burges, 2007). In other words, regionalism had become, through different means and perspectives, a core feature of both Brazil´s and Venezuela´s respective foreign policy strategies, what posed meaningful political obstacles for the pursuit of regional leadership.

Despite that, the issue became the object of a domestic debate which started yet in 2003, when Brazil led efforts to comprise the Friends of Venezuela Group to provide immediate assistance to that country when workers of PDVSA, the stated owned oil company, went on a strike that severely affected the provision of basic needs of the Venezuelan population. It evolved significantly in the wake of the controversial regime change in Haiti, in February 2004, and with the following UN decision to deploy a peace mission to stabilize the country, with Brazil leading its military component. It gained additional strength with the creation of the South American Community of Nations (CASA) in April 2004, a Brazilian initiative intended to forge a South American institutional framework for political dialogue and cooperation.

In that same context, South America was formally regarded a priority for Brazil´s national defense, being the core dimension of Brazil´s Strategic Environment, a concept embraced by the 2005 National Defense Policy and reasserted in the 2008 National Defense Strategy. The same happened in two other important issue areas: development assistance (Pinheiro & Gaio, 2014) and infrastructure financing (Couto, 2010). The international prestige achieved by Brazil in fighting poverty and promoting economic and social inclusive growth, as well as its engagement in multilateral fora helped elicit its profile of an emerging power. By the end of the 2000´s, several political, economic and academic voices, both in the United States and in Europe, had also linked Brazil´s aspirations to the status of a global actor to the need to take up greater responsibilities in its own region and abroad (Bethell, 2010; Flemes, 2010; Wehner, 2011). Altogether, these factors

nourished perceptions that regional leadership had become an undisputed trait and a major driver of Brazilian foreign policy. However, doubts still existed as to the actual willingness and capabilities of the Brazilian government to accept and take up the costs of regional leadership (Almeida, 2006). Simultaneously, strong criticism emerged domestically as to the way Lula da Silva´s government dealt with asymmetric relations with the neighborhood, namely with Bolivia and Paraguay. While the Brazilian government made important concessions, in both countries demands and decisions regarded as contrary to Brazil´s national interests emerged (Almeida, 2006; Seitenfus, 2008). In that same context, Venezuela´s regional assertiveness and its intent to shape a regional environment based on its Bolivarian ideology – and, therefore, at the expenses of former sub-regional integration mechanisms like MERCOSUR and the Andean Community of Nations - posed important constraints to Brazil´s political and diplomatic regional initiatives.

The extinction of the South America Community of Nations in 2006, and the subsequent creation of the South American Union of Nations - UNASUR in 2008 exemplified the impending need of the two major South American political actors to find common grounds in their often parallel efforts to strengthen political and economic regionalism. Their competing views on regionalism had become apparent enough to be regarded solely as differences of style or emphasis; there was an actual diplomatic struggle over the premises, the contents and the expected outcomes of their respective conceptions of regionalism (Burges 2007). This struggle was exacerbated by their different views regarding the relations with the United States and with other extra regional powers. In such a polarized context, regional leadership, either by Brazil or Venezuela, was an endeavor doomed to failure, as subsequent developments demonstrated.

In January 2011, when Lula da Silva handled power to Dilma Rousseff, South America did not enjoy the political appeal and visibility it had a few years before in the framework of Brazilian foreign policy. More than that, the new Brazilian government did not succeed in sustaining most of its predecessor´s foreign policy accomplishments and Brazil´s international profile receded accordingly.

Actually, there were very few meaningful foreign policy accomplishments during the mandate of Dilma Rousseff, and they were all displayed at the multilateral level. In 2011, in the realm of the United Nations debates on the fate of peace operations and the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Brazil presented a paper on Responsibility While Protecting (RWP) as an additional normative approach to humanitarian intervention, one that addressed the concerns with the possibility of R2P being misused for the sake of other political and strategic goals other than humanitarian concerns. RWP gained important international attention, even though Brazil refrained from giving it additional support or strength.

In a rather different front, in January 2012, Rio de Janeiro hosted the third United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Widely acknowledged as a forefront player in the multilateral negotiations on environment, Brazil did have a unique opportunity to reassert its influence in that issue area. Despite of succeeding in providing all the necessary conditions for that Conference, the very limited advancements achieved prevented Brazil capitalizing foreign policy gains from it. A third issue area where Brazil managed to act proactively during Rousseff´s presidency was Internet governance. Following Edward Snowden´s revelations of massive U.S surveillance activities abroad, Brazil played an active role in questioning existing multilateral mechanisms for internet governance and hosted another international summit (NETmundial), in April 2014, to discuss the fate of internet governance. The initiative became a landmark in multilateral debate on that issue.

These achievements were, however, obfuscated by setbacks in other fronts. Brazil´s initiatives towards development assistance receded strongly, frustrating expectations as to what had been perceived as a core feature of Brazil´s proposals to reinvigorate South-South relations. Brazil also became a secondary player in the realm of coalitions like the BRICS, as China, backed by Russia, took the lead in crafting the group´s agenda and initiatives. IBSA, the trilateral mechanism set up in 2004 comprising India, Brazil and South Africa to foster political dialogue and cooperation among them in a wide array of issue areas lost visibility and relevance both at the global stage and in Brazilian foreign policy. In its own region, Brazil witnessed the gradual weakening of UNASUR and its Defense Council, stances whose creation it had led successfully, while MERCOSUR, once regarded a core leveling platform for Brazil´s political and economic regional insertion, lost relevance. At the bilateral level, relations with Cristina Kirshner´s Argentina dropped to its lowest level in years. Strong difficulties were also experienced with the U.S in the aftermath of National Security Agency (NSA) spying President Rousseff and the Brazilian oil giant PETROBRAS; with the European Union, no relevant achievements in trade negotiations with MERCOSUR and in fostering Brazil-UE bilateral strategic partnership were observed.

Such external retreat took place as economic slowdown, widespread corruption and social discontentment evolved quickly in the domestic domain, leading to an acute political crisis which culminated in the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2017, and a great loss of confidence in political institutions. These issues gained much more visibility and had a far greater impact on Brazil´s external image than the few foreign policy accomplishments.

Therefore, recent literature on Brazil´s foreign policy has placed great emphasis on the causes of the country´s international and regional retreat (Gratius and Saraiva 2013; Wehner, 2015; Malamud 2016). Most authors converge on the basic

explanations for that. Malamud, who had previously asserted that Brazil was a leader without followers (Malamud 2011), argues in a recent work (Malamud, 2016) that a combination of unfavorable conditions at home and abroad determined Brazil's drastic rollback from the international stage, what was exacerbated by insufficient resource endowment and cumulative policy mistakes. He also attributes foreign policy inertia to the absence of Brazilian political leadership in South America. Kai Enno Lehmann endorses the same reasoning by arguing that Brazil´s inability to lead is a direct consequence of an incoherent pattern of conditions to which the economic crisis contributed but did not start (Lehman 2016). For him, reassuming a leadership position is still a feasible task, as long as the country manages to identify the conditions that form and sustain the pattern of incoherence which characterizes Brazilian foreign policy at the moment. Vaz (2014), in turn, attributes Brazil´s foreign policy retreat to the inability of both Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in crafting a new political and economic strategy to orient Brazil´s international actions in changing global and regional scenarios, with mounting domestic political grievances and the emphasis on economic performance diverting attention from foreign policy.

Therefore, by the end of the Workers Party rule, Brazil was, in fact, deprived of proper conditions to respond assertively to global and regional challenges, thus exhibiting an unprecedented foreign policy low profile which contrasted strongly with the activism it had displayed less than a decade before. It is from this background that a case for restraint becoming a defining trait of Brazilian policy towards South America can be made and the prospects for regional leadership assessed.

Brazilian Foreign Policy at the Present: A Case of Restraint?

The retreat Brazilian foreign policy experimented under Dilma Rousseff provided opportunity for the new government led by Michel Temer to deconstruct several initiatives undertaken by its immediate predecessors. This was a declared intent to correct what the new political leaders rendered as flawed and ideologically biased choices that contributed decisively to keep Brazil isolated from major current political and economic trends to which other emerging powers were successfully adapting to.

Actually, Michel Temer´s first moves in this domain were intended to convey not only a sense of change, but of rupture, particularly with those initiatives that, according to their critics, responded primarily to political and ideological concerns of the Workers Party rather than to Brazilian foreign policy interests.

The basic guidelines of Temer´s proposed foreign policy were elicited in ten directives announced by Minister José Serra in his inauguration speech on May 18,

2016 (SERRA, 2016) comprising the distancing from the ideological perspectives of a single political party, the defense of democracy, civil liberties and human rights, the acceleration of trade negotiations through a greater emphasis on bilateralism and not on the World Trade Organization multilateralism and on the opening of export markets for Brazilian products and a closer interaction with the private sector. Altogether, these directives encompassed a more liberal approach to the country´s immediate needs and concerns, especially in the economic realm. A strong emphasis on foreign trade and a decisive move towards traditional partners in the developed world should then become the core features of Brazilian foreign policy.

However, Michel Temer´s initial foreign policy moves had a much more symbolic impact than a substantial one, as they privileged the ideological deconstruction; foreign policy actually became subject to the logics of a highly polarized political environment rather than to a balanced assessment of the necessities and opportunities to be pursued internationally. The nomination of José Serra - a former presidential candidate and a would-be pre-candidate for the 2018 presidential run – as Minister of Foreign Relations, was an evident signal of the submission of foreign policy to domestic political interests. Due to political injunctions, Mr. Serra left office in March 2017 and Aloysio Nunes, a former President of Senate´s Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee took office, with no major or substantial change in relation to his predecessor.

Under Temer and Aloysio Nunes, foreign policy has been instrumental to convey a sense of change, to broadcast domestic economic accomplishments and gain external support for the agenda of economic reforms. The visions and initiatives towards South America serve the first purpose primarily. The resumption of trade negotiations between MERCOSUR and the European Union, the intent to reinvigorate relations with Argentina, Chile and Colombia, the resumption of infrastructure projects in the framework of UNASUR, the decision to suspend Venezuela from MERCOSUR and the first South American ministerial meeting to deal with drugs and arms were, indeed, important moves of Temer´s diplomacy at the regional level. But, taken altogether, they do not comprise a regional strategy, but a set of parallel initiatives through which the Brazilian government intends to distance itself from those inherited from Lula da Silva.

South America has undergone important political transformations leading most countries to search opportunities and partnerships in other spaces - Asia in particular - while political and economic regionalism fades. An eventual intent of regional leadership will, therefore, face a more heterogeneous, fragmented and outward looking region with individual countries pursuing external objectives either through independent initiatives or through specific arrangements, like the Pacific Alliance. The rise of an increasingly fragmented region contrasts with what had

been envisioned and pursued by Brazilian diplomacy a few years before. In face of that, Brazilian regional policy has evolved through a predominantly double track approach. The first aims at the protection of Brazilian economic and commercial interests in order to help resume economic growth. Bilateralism emerges as a major stance for that purpose. The second track consists in muddling through South American political agenda by taking advantage of eventual convergences with neighbors like Argentina, Peru and Colombia to deal with regional issues (the Venezuelan crisis and borders security at large as prominent ones) and, to a less extent, with political, economic and strategic interests of extra-regional powers as displayed in the region.

The most prominent signs that Brazil has refrained from playing active roles in relevant South American issues derive from its very marginal presence in two decisive processes for the shaping of the political, economic and security regional landscape: Colombia´s peace process and the crisis in Venezuela. Brazil´s little influence in them is a strong sign that it has become less relevant to its neighbors as a desired or necessary referent. Therefore, an immediate political task for Brazil in its region is to restore positive expectations as to its role and regain prestige and influence onto its neighbors.

As to extra regional partners, there has been a deliberate option to prioritize relations with developed countries, thus correcting what was regarded as an excessive reliance on South-South relations. The major assets potentially available for Brazil to exploit opportunities in this respect lie in the mid and long terms positive externalities of economic recovery and of the ongoing reforms. There are, with no doubts, positive external expectations as to the outcomes of economic reforms embraced by Michel Temer, but these expectations have been countered by the government´s own political liabilities, by uncertainties as to legislative willingness to endorse critical and unpopular economic measures by a high level of unpredictability as to the next government compromise with the current economic agenda.

This brief account of the domestic and regional political landscape clearly shows that a sense of restraint has been evolving in Brazil´s policy towards South America, leaving very little grounds for regional leadership to become a relevant issue of Brazilian foreign policy in the near future. Actually, there are very few incentives and conditions either for Brazil to take up the issue or for the region to abide to an eventual Brazilian endeavor towards it. As previously mentioned, a shift towards restraint as an orientation to Brazilian regional policy brings about an identity cost for its elites and population whose self-image and those related to the region have always elicited the differentials of capabilities in favor of Brazil, leading to the flawed perception that Brazil mattered much more to the region than the contrary. Ultimately, each Brazilian neighbor may find viable alternatives to avoid a reliance on Brazil´s potential contribution to its economic and social

development and to its political and social stability. China has emerged quickly as a privileged partner while other Asian countries like Japan and South Korea have tried to make their own way towards South America.

Due to its very position in South America and to the distinct dynamics of the relationship with each of its ten territorial neighbors, Brazil cannot escape the reliance on them to foster his own interests and objectives in the political, economic and security realms. It is, therefore, highly paradoxical that, at the present, Brazil finds in restraint "the best of all the worst alternatives", in Steele´s words, to deal with the consequences of power asymmetries in the relations with the neighborhood and with the growing display of interests of extra regional powers in the region.

In such a scenario, the contextual challenges identified by Steele gain relevance. They forge a complex environment comprised by political, economic and security dynamics whose interfaces are not easily identifiable, but whose consequences in terms of higher unpredictability confirm Steele´s assertion that the difficulty faced by global and regional powers in forging shared views on a jointly envisaged future represents itself a sound contextual challenge for the exercise of a restraint policy. In this regard, it is worth considering the regional impacts of the asymmetric interdependence entailed by economic globalization on Brazil´s relations with and its neighbors.

In previous economic crisis, like those experienced from the early seventies to the mid-eighties, Latin American countries reasserted the importance of regional cooperation and integration. Differently from that, the 2008 economic crisis and the imbalances derived from asymmetric interdependence have fostered an unprecedented sense of vulnerability and a pattern of accentuated fragmentation. This, in turn, has facilitated the display of interests of extra-regional powers in South America. As already mentioned, the growing presence of China and, to a much less extent, of Russia in South America tends to reinforce the sense of relative decline of the US as global hegemon.

The little attention dedicated by the U.S.A to the region since the end of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations in 2003 provided an opportunity for both Brazil and Venezuela to place themselves as referents to the promotion of political and economic regionalism. At the present, however, there is a clear leadership gap in what refers to regional political dialogue and economic relations as well as to the challenges associated to the increasing display of interests of extra-regional actors in South America. Under Temer, Brazil refrained from filling in that leadership gap.

Actually, Brazil continues to face great limits as to its ability to deal with current

political developments and with fragmentation in its own immediate environment as well as with the increasing presence of extra-regional powers in it. Developing capabilities to restrain extra-regional actors in the pursuit of their interests in South America may be advocated both in the diplomatic and defense realms, but such dimension of an eventual restraint policy must remain as an intended, but not an actual one, in the near future. Therefore, Brazil´s evolving profile of foreign policy restraint is, therefore, an unbalanced one associated only to self-restraint.

So far, Brazil´s policy towards South America has not generated a consistent strategic narrative to underscore it, neither is it a part of a grand international strategy that provides guidance and explanatory foundations to policy decisions. According to Steele, the inability of power elites to forge a strategic narrative (and an international grand strategy, we may add) represents one of the three obstacles identified to the effective pursuit of a restraint-oriented foreign policy. In such a context, both the legitimacy gap and identity costs tend to increase, making restraint potentially fruitless as an approach to Brazil´s regional policy.

Concluding Remarks

Restraint holds interesting possibilities as a conceptual and theoretical perspective to describe and interpret current trends of Brazilian foreign policy, particularly in what concerns its regional dimension and the fate of Brazilian regional leadership as an eventual endeavor. However, as a core feature of foreign policy and a strategic orientation it is difficult to materialize and succeed if the array of viability factors previously regarded is not properly taken into account.

Brazilian foreign policy and its regional expression are now subject to the intent of pursuing a daring agenda of economic reforms, having as its major point of departure a strong criticism of priorities and alignments envisaged by Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff for being too ideological, costly and counterproductive in political and economic terms. The same reasoning has been applied to its South American dimension which was, according to such criticism, driven primarily by ideological preferences and a voluntarist and paternalistic bias that led ultimately to Brazil´s dissociation from major contemporary political and economic trends.

Therefore, under present conditions, there are no sound prospects for the resumption of greater Brazilian activism at the regional level, not to say for the pursuit of regional leadership as an eventual core dimension of its foreign policy. Not only the domestic political landscape has been changing in unfavorable terms to that endeavor; the region itself has experienced important transformations that have resulted in more fragmentation than cohesion and integration. The choice for greater freedom has prevailed over collective action in framing current foreign

policies in the region.

There would be important potential incentives for Brazil to resume an active high profile towards South America. But this possibility has been given up in favor of a political decision equally underscored in ideological motivations to concentrate efforts in bringing Brazil closer to developed nations, becoming, consequently, less focused and engaged in South America. Therefore, its policies towards the region will continue to display some level of restraint, either as matter of political choice, as at the present, or as an outcome of unfavorable structural trends and contextual circumstances at the domestic and external levels simultaneously.

Maybe it is too soon to assert that restraint will consolidate itself as a core defining trait of Brazilian foreign policy in the near future. In the course of the past two decades, Brazil has tried to relate its diversified array of natural, political and economic endowments to a proper regional profile and to grasp the benefits of its regional initiatives for the sake of its own development and of its international insertion whenever opportune. We should not expect that Brazil remain passive or reactive in its own region. Restraint is not the same as passiveness or inaction. There will always be room for assertiveness in Brazil´s policy towards South America. The extent and the scope of it, the way it will be framed politically and institutionally and its actual impacts in the neighborhood will define Brazil´s regional profile in the coming years; how enduring the present trait of self-restraint will be a decisive factor in the shaping of South America´s political environment in the future.

Bio

President of the Brazilian Association for Defense Studies. Former Director of the Institute of International Relations, University of Brasilia.

References

Albuquerque, JAG 2013 'El liderazgo de Brasil en América del Sur – 2002/2012.' in B Sorj & F Sergio (eds), Brasil y América Latina: ¿Qué Liderazgo es Posible?, Plataforma Democrática, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, pp. 275-300.

Almeida, P.R 2006, 'A new diplomatic framework in Brazil? - Contrasting interpretations about Lula's foreign policy (2003-2006)', Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional, vol. 49 n. 1, pp. 95-116.

Barbosa, R.A 2017, 'A política externa do governo Temer: uma primeira avaliação registra avanços em relação aos últimos 15 anos nessa área.' O Estado de São Paulo, 14 February, p.2.

Bethel, L 2010, 'Brazil: regional power, global power.' Open Democracy. 8 June, retrieved 10 October 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/leslie-bethell/

brazil-regional-power-global-power>.

Burges, S 2007, 'Building a Global Southern Coalition: the competing approaches of Brazil's Lula and Venezuela's Chávez.', Third World Quartely, vol.28, n.7, pp. 1343-1358.

Couto, L 2010, 'Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South-America – IIRSA', Global Forum on Governance: Modernizing Government: strategies & tools for change. OECD, Paris, 5 October, retrieved 7 October, 2017, <https:www.oecd.org/site/govgfg/39612363.pdf>.

Flemes, D 2010, 'Brazil: Strategic Options in the Changing World Order', in D. Flemes (ed), Regional Leadership in the Global System: Ideas, Interests and Strategies of Regional Powers, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 93-112.

Gratius, S & Saraiva, MG 2013, 'Continental Regionalism: Brazil's prominent role in the Americas',. CEPS Working Document, n. 374, February.

Hurrell, A 2006, 'Hegemony, liberalism and global order: what space for would-be great powers?' International Affairs 2006, vol. 82, n.1, pp. 1-19.

Inkenberry, J 1998, 'Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Persistence of American Postwar Order', International Security, vol.23, n.3, pp. 43-78.

Inkenberry, J; Brooks, S.; Wohlforth, W, 2012, 'Don't Come Home America: The Case against Retrenchment', International Security, vol.37, n.3, pp. 7-51.

Lehman, KE 2017, 'Can Brazil Lead? The Breakdown of Brazilian Foreign Policy and What it Means for the Region', Rising Power Quartely, vol.2, n.2, pp. 125-147.

Lieber, RJ 2016, 'Diplomacy´s aversion to power: consequences of retreat' World Affairs, vol 179, n. 1, pp.35-45.

Lustig, C 2016, 'Soft or Hard Power? Discourse Patterns in Brazil's Foreign Policy Toward South America', Latin American Politics and Society, vol. 58, n. 4, pp.103-125.

Malamud, A, 2017, 'Foreign Policy Retreat: Domestic and Systemic Causes of Brazil's International Rollback',. Rising Power Quartely, vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 149-168.

_____ 2011, 'A Leader Without Followers? The Growing Divergence Between the Regional and Global Performance of Brazilian Foreign Policy', Latin American Politics and Society, vol. 53, n. 3, pp. 1–24.

Meiser, J 2014, 'Power and restraint: the rise of the United States, 1898-1941', GeorgetownUniversity Press, Georgetown, USA.

Pinheiro, L & Gaio, G 2014, 'Cooperation for Development, Brazilian Regional Leadership and Global Protagonism', Brazilian Political Science Review, vol. 8, n.2, 25 June, retrieved 5 November, <http://www.scielo.br/scielo.

php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1981-38212014000200008>.

Posen, BR 2014, 'Restraint: a new foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy', Cornell University Press, Cornell, USA.

Preble, C; Ruger, W 2014, 'The problem with primacy', in C. Preble; E. Ashford; T. Evans (Eds), Our foreign policy choices: rethinking America´s global role, Cato Institute Press ,Washington D.C, USA, pp. 5-10.

Serra, J 2016, Inauguration speech as Minister of Foreing Affairs. Brasilia, 16 May retrieved 10 September, 2016, <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/discursos-artigos-e-entrevistas-categoria/ministro-das-relacoes-exteriores-discursos/14038-discurso-do-ministro-jose-serra-por-ocasiao-da-cerimonia-de-transmissao-do-cargo-de-ministro-de-estado-das-relacoes-exteriores-brasilia-18-de-maio-de-2016>.

Seitenfus, R 2008, 'Líder solidário ou potência egoísta? Os dilemas do Brasil frente ao novo Paraguai', Interesse Nacional, vol. 1, pp. 47-55.

Steele, BJ 2016, 'Restraint and International Relations: a proposal". Annual Meeting of the ISA-South, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA, retrieved 11 November 2017, <http://www.academia.edu/29084496/Restraint_and_International_Relations_a_proposal>.

Trinkunas, H 2015, 'Brazil´s global ambitions', Brookings, 5 Feb, retrieved 11 November 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/brazils-global-ambitions/>

Vaz, AC 2014, 'La política exterior de Brasil en perspectiva: del activismo internacional a la continuidad y pérdida de impulso', in A. Bonilla & G. Jaramilo (eds). La CELAC en el escenario contemporáneo de América Latina y del Caribe. FLACSO, San José; pp. 145-158.

_____ 2013, 'La Acción Regional Brasileña bajo las ópticas de la Diplomacia y la Defensa: Continuidades y Convergencias', in B.Sorj & S.Fausto (eds), Brasil y América Latina: ¿Qué Liderazgo es Posible? Plataforma Democrática, Rio de Janeiro, pp. 241-274.

Wehner, L 2011, 'Roles and actions of leadership: Brazil and the South American others', in N. Godehardt & D. Nabers (eds), Regional Powers and Regional Orders, Routledge/Garnet, London, UK, pp. 137-154.

Wehner. L 2015, 'Role Expectations as Foreign Policy: South American Secondary Powers' Expectations of Brazil as a Regional Power', Foreign Policy Analysis, n. 11, pp. 435-455.

Deterring to Lead? Nuclear Crises, Non-State Proxies, and India's Regional Leadership

Nicolas Blarel

Leiden University
n.r.j.b.blarel@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Hannes Ebert

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
hannes.ebert@giga-hamburg.de

Abstract

Why is India unable to maintain regional leadership in a nuclearized South Asia? In this paper, we explore the impediments to India's regional leadership by examining Delhi's foreign policy behavior within the nuclearized rivalry with Pakistan since 1998. Based on a comparison of Indian foreign policy elites' responses to a set of dyadic crises since overt nuclearisation in 1998, we argue that structural parameters of South Asia's current security environment undermine the prospects of coercing or influencing the behavior of India's most potent contender. More specifically, we argue that Delhi's failure to develop an effective strategy to deter armed resistance is largely due to the combined presence of militant groups and inadequate deterrence strategies. Recurrent, undeterred militant attacks have thus become a symbol of resistance against India's predominance in the region.

Keywords

Regional Powers, Complex Balancing, India, Pakistan, Deterrence, Nuclear Terrorism

Introduction

Extant International Relations (IR) scholarship on contemporary power transitions has largely focused on the activism of rising powers in their relations to established great powers and in specific policy areas in global governance (Gray & Murphy 2013; Kahler 2013; Paul 2016; Stuenkel 2016a). While there is neither academic nor policy consensus on which countries should be defined as "rising" or "emerging" powers, most studies in the past decade have included China, India, Brazil, and South Africa in this category based on material (mainly economic and military) indicators (Stuenkel 2016b). As a result, there is little discussion in this

literature over how the situation of these so-called rising powers first emerged and eventually came to dominate a particular regional order. Are rising powers automatically regional powers or leaders? Is regional power status a static one or does it need to be maintained? Barring a few exceptions, much of the existing literature has neglected the process of formation, and especially of the maintenance, of regional leadership. To contribute to this debate, this paper addresses the following puzzle: why has India not been able to maintain regional leadership in a nuclearized South Asia?

More specifically, this paper seeks to understand the impediments to India's regional leadership by examining Delhi's foreign policy behavior within the nuclearized rivalry with Pakistan since 1998 in four steps. First, the paper reviews the literature on India's deliberate and indirect claims to regional leadership in South Asia, and its limitations in accounting for regional dynamics since 1998. Second, the paper discusses the theoretical assumptions about the links between regional leadership and nuclear deterrence as well as their limitations in accounting for the complex regional dynamics in South Asia. A third section looks at the increasing use of non-state actors as a foreign policy tool by Pakistan since the late 1980s and examines India's attempts to manage proxy contestation in order to preserve its regional leadership in nuclear South Asia. Finally, we conclude and suggest ways in which our empirical observations from the South Asian case can inform scholarship on contested regional leadership and deterrence.

The South Asia case illustrates that neither does economic capacity necessarily translate into military capabilities nor do capabilities automatically correlate with influence (cp. Brooks & Wohlforth 2016). While "economic growth and a large and diverse economy are certainly necessary preconditions of power" and "a basic component of India's rise", it is less clear "how economic growth could provide the strategic basis for India's rise" (Khilnani 2015, p.688). Contemporary South Asia thus purportedly constitutes a case of "unipolarity without hegemony" (Wilkinson 1999; Buzan 2011) with India's role limited to that of a "reluctant hegemon" (Mitra 2003). This feature complicates applying existing IR models premised on a close correlation between capabilities, influence, and domination to South Asia and renders it a deviant case of systemic Security Studies scholarship and thus an illustrative and critical example of regional leadership in times of multipolarity (cp. Thomas 2004, p.326).

Regional Leadership in South Asia: Limits to India's Claim?

Leadership can be understood as "the ability to make others follow goals and positions which these others did not previously share and/or to make others support an increase in status and power of the emerging power" (Schirm 2010,

p.200).[1] Leadership is distinct from the traditional Realist definition of regional hegemony which understands hegemons as states that are "significantly stronger than other states in the system on both economic and military dimensions; (b) aware of its power preponderance and willing to use it to shape its international environment according to its interests and values; and (c) active in the building, developing, and sustaining of various international institutions, which reflect the negotiation and renegotiation of hegemonic bargains with other states in the system" (Jesse et al. (2012, p.7). In contrast, we build our understanding of leadership inductively by tracing the social interactions and the roles played and responsibilities assumed by the Indian state, an approach inspired by more recent English School conceptualizations of hegemony (Clark 2011).

Regional leadership is commonly associated with three factors: power resources, claim to leadership, and acceptance of leadership by other powers in the region (cp. Prys 2012). While the Indian state has possessed considerable advantages in terms of national power capabilities compared to its South Asian neighbors and made some claims for leadership since 1947, it has overall failed to garner regional acceptance of this status. First, regarding the evolution of the distribution of power capabilities, the contemporary South Asian region has been characterized by a unipolar system with a highly unequal distribution of material capacities, with India as the sole pole and Pakistan lagging far behind as the secondary regional power (Ebert & Blarel 2018). In fact, the distribution of power capabilities between India and Pakistan (and thereby with other regional actors) since 1947 has been constantly asymmetric and substantially favorable to India. Second, Indian leaders have long sought to play a role commensurate to India's geographic size, economic capacity and political standing in South Asia. Since its independence in 1947, Indian elites have perceived India as the main regional power in the South Asian subcontinent.

With regard to the third criteria, most accounts have noted that while India might have been capable and willing to establish regional leadership, its effectiveness to do so has been limited. In contrast to traditional Realist assumptions on the stabilizing effects of hegemonic power concentrations, India was unable to use its national power capability advantages to establish a stable, peaceful hegemonic order (Mukherjee & Malone 2010, pp.57–63). In South Asia, the dissatisfied yet materially far weaker secondary power, Pakistan, has traditionally initiated armed conflict irrespective of the relative power disadvantage, including three out of four wars fought between the two rivals. In 1947, when relative capabilities were already substantially favouring India, which received 70 percent of the colonial British Indian army's movable military infrastructure and military officers,

---

[1] For a discussion of the different types of regional leadership, see the introduction to this special issue by Flemes and Ebert.

Pakistan's political-military leadership provoked the first war over Kashmir, again defied its relative capability disadvantage in the second Kashmir war in 1965, supported an insurgency against the central government in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir in 1990, and launched a military operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kargil heights in 1999 (Ganguly 2001, pp.19–20). Similarly, deviating from wide-spread Liberal Institutionalist propositions, the rising regional power has been unable to build institutions to increase its legitimacy or foster regional integration through the provision of public goods. South Asia thus remains the "world's politically and economically *least* integrated, as well as one of the most violent regions" (Cohen 2015, p.341).

Despite its national power capability advantages, New Delhi has been unable to formulate a way of dispatching, compromising with, or ignoring its regional challenger Pakistan (Chari, Cheema, and Cohen 2007, 190). India's former Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, even acknowledged that India's current Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as his two predecessors, Manmohan Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had been conscious that "heightened tensions with Pakistan constrain India's ability to play a larger regional and global role" and "create space for intervention by major powers, in particular the US and China" (Saran 2015). Moreover, India's more recent foreign policies toward its Eastern neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka illustrate how predominantly hegemonic strategies failed to generate followership (Destradi 2012).[2]

India's regional policies have varied over time, from a more or less benign leadership under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to more assertive hegemonic bids under Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi (Hagerty 1991; Prys 2012). Since the early 1990s, India's mostly deliberate strategy of regional dominance has waxed and waned depending on the personalities of Prime Ministers and the political constellations in power. India has resorted to measures ranging from outright military intervention to coercive economic diplomacy to induce

[2] By contrast, former Indian Foreign Secretary Dixit (2001, pp.56–7) argued that the "assertion that India has hegemonistic ambitions is irrational" given "India's own internal problems, resource constraints and preoccupations with national consolidation (in the face of continuing domestic centrifugal challenges)", even if "India's physical size, demography, resources, technological capacities and the size of its defence forces make its regional power status an existentialist reality". Interpreting India's past interventions into Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka as indicators for hegemonic or expansionist ambitions was misleading, as these were requested by the respective governments, resulted from developments in these countries conversely affecting India's security, and ended as soon as the mission was completed or the respective government asked for withdrawal. Echoing these observations, Sridharan argued that India does not even qualify as a 'regional power', as it only fulfils one of three criteria for a regional power. While post-independence India has always been preeminent in terms of power resources with the size of its territory, population, economy and military larger than the rest of South Asia combined, it has neither been accepted by regional neighbors as a "natural leader and spokesperson" nor has it had the power of compellence over its neighbors. With the exception of perhaps Bhutan, all other South Asian states, in particular "Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, or even Nepal or more recently the Maldives (…) have resisted India's wishes or demands" (Sridharan 2015, p.703).

various neighbors to conform to its expectations. Less discussed as a component of the regional leadership toolkit is the strategy of deterrence. Deterrence has been a key instrument of India's strategy to maximize regional security. India's then-National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, outlined in 1999 that through its conventional military superiority and a credible nuclear deterrent since 1998, India has aimed to preserve an "environment of durable peace" in the South Asian region (Mishra 1999). Regional stability and peace are deemed essential for Indian decision-makers to ensure its primary goals of domestic "economic, political, social, scientific and technological development" (ibid.). This supports the general argument that unipolar powers carry out a "defensive-dominance strategy" to preserve the status quo, mainly existing territorial boundaries and political alignments, as well as freezing the distribution of power in the region (Monteiro 2012, p.23). As a result, while followership presupposes that subordinate actors in the regional system have incentives to support and conform to a hierarchical order, notably because the regional leader provides a type of social order to legitimize its authority (Bukovansky et al. 2012, pp.6–7; Ikenberry 2011, p.6), we argue that a prior condition for the establishment for such an institutionalized regional leadership role is the acceptance of the unipolar security order by subordinate powers.[3] If deterrence is not a tool to ensure social acceptance of regional leadership, it is nevertheless an important instrument to ensure territorial and security stability.

However, this paper will illustrate how India's traditional nuclear deterrence strategy, which had been an important tool to ensure a relatively stable security order, failed to cope with the changing post-Cold War environment and strategies of Pakistan. The combined impact of the nuclearization of the subcontinent and of cross-border militant activity has created an environment prone to low-level violence and persistent contestation of India's regional leadership status. A peculiar set of conditions has emerged that involves a series of previously overlooked non-state actors that have capitalized on the presence of nuclear weapons and increasingly shaped the strategic calculations of New Delhi and Islamabad.[4] These conditions have also increased the costs for India to maintain its regional leader status. To our knowledge, there is no precedence in the literature on regional system leadership management and maintenance for such complex nuclearized environments involving non-state actors. We trace the development and impact of these new dynamics in the next section.

---

[3] Compare the argument developed by Monteiro (2012, p.23).

[4] Other deficiencies of classic nuclear deterrence theory applied to South Asia have already been covered sufficiently, namely the "deficiencies in deterrence theory pertaining to conflictual dyads involving states differing vastly in size, resources, and power", see Karnad (2005, p.173), and the misleading reliance on unitary models of deterrence stability, see Perkovich (2012)

Regional Leadership and Deterrence: Moving Beyond Traditional Assumptions

Contested regional leadership is a widespread phenomenon and affects the rise of many contemporary rising powers. Responses to concentrations of regional power have taken varying forms (Flemes & Lobell 2015; Ebert & Flemes 2018). A common finding within the literature on strategies of contestation and leadership is that explanatory frameworks traditionally used to account for *global* systemic power interactions (such as balancing and bandwagoning) have not been particularly useful to understand *regional* sub-systemic dynamics, mainly due to specific regional factors and configurations.

This also applies to the attempts made by various scholars to adopt traditional models of nuclear deterrence to explain regional power contests. The study of nuclear deterrence and its implications for regional leadership emerged from the experience of the US-Soviet global nuclear confrontation. Much of this literature has focused on the bipolar opposition and the implications of the nuclear revolution in reducing large-scale wars. Traditional theories of nuclear deterrence modelled nuclear competition as a confrontation between two unitary, rational actors aspiring global dominance (Mesquita & Riker 1982). Building on these assumptions, nuclear "optimists" such as Kenneth Waltz argued that the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons had the potential to reduce the recurrence of conflict (Waltz 1981). Nuclear "optimists" maintained that the possession of nuclear weapons raised the costs of conventional conflicts, increased the risks of escalation, and therefore deterred leaders from engaging in war against nuclear-armed states. Other scholars have been more skeptical, and even actively "pessimistic", about the alleged stabilizing effects of nuclear weapons. They pointed to the risks of preventive wars, crisis instability, and accidental nuclear detonation (Sagan 1995). According to these nuclear "pessimists", the possession of nuclear weapons actually contributed to greater levels of international instability.

The end of the Cold War and the spread of nuclear weapons to new players, most of them regional powers, encouraged scholars to reassess the conventional wisdom which had prevailed around deterrence as a leading theoretical and policy framework. Moving away from the US-USSR confrontation and parsimonious models derived from microeconomic theories, some scholars attempted to resume the debate on the effects of nuclear deterrence on stability in new regional settings like the India-Pakistan nuclear confrontation (Sagan 2009; Sagan & Waltz 2002). However, by trying to translate the same theoretical debate to regional contexts, the existing scholarship has overlooked other important factors, especially whether nuclear proliferation may have changing effects over varying regional contests of leadership.

Building on this observation, some scholars have emphasized the differential effects of nuclear proliferation over certain regions and actors. Most recently, Vipin Narang argued that regional powers face different constraints and opportunities than superpowers, have arsenals that are orders of magnitude smaller, and must manage different conflict environments and projected their power and ambitions in smaller geographic areas than the US and USSR did, thus facing different strategic opportunities and constraints (Narang 2014, pp.24–25). These actors had varying success in deterring regional conflict. For instance, India has not been able to deter Pakistan's use of force, such as the 1999 Kargil conflict demonstrated. Israel has also not been able to deter its regional adversaries in 1973, in spite of having nuclear weapons. Consequently, Narang claimed that not all nuclear states act the same way and that state intentions ultimately inform the way nuclear-armed states will behave (ibid.). Both the regional hegemon and the regional subordinate power(s) can choose a diverse array of nuclear postures and strategies (capabilities, employment modes, and command-and-control procedures) that diverge significantly from those pursued by nuclear great powers during the Cold War.

Deterrence dynamics in contemporary South Asia provide strong evidence for this deviance from traditional deterrence and security management models. The South Asian subcontinent has witnessed a series of bilateral crises following the acquisition of nuclear weapons from both India and Pakistan in 1998.[5] Various studies argued that the stabilizing effects of nuclear proliferation were hardly automatic in the region (Ganguly & Hagerty 2005; Basrur 2009), and that the possession of nuclear weapons actually facilitated limited or proxy wars (Kapur 2007; Narang 2013). These works notably built on the concept of the "stability-instability paradox" to oppose the strategic stability argument of deterrence.[6] Some scholars demonstrated that the conditions of this phenomenon were for instance present in South Asia: the nuclearization of the subcontinent could be perceived as an insurance policy against the most dangerous types of escalation, thereby encouraging war-making below the nuclear threshold (Krepon 2003).

However, the evolving scholarship on the intricacies of regional deterrence in South Asia has yet to address the issue of how changes in traditional deterrence dynamics and strategies have affected the maintenance of India's regional leadership. In regions with unipolar military balances which had been correlated with a relative absence of major conflicts like South Asia, nuclear weapons have actually

---

[5] This paper will not delve into the empirical details of the different South Asian security crises of the last 20 years, encompassing both the "opaque" or de facto nuclear period of the 1980s and 1990s before the nuclear tests, and the more recent post-test conflicts, but will instead focus on their theoretical implications for the study of deterrence. For more detailed accounts of these standoffs, see Ganguly and Hagerty (2005), Chari, Cheema, and Cohen (2007), and Ganguly and Kapur (2008).
[6] Robert Jervis presented a definition of the paradox: "to the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out nuclear war, it will become less stable at lower levels of violence", see The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984),

emboldened states with traditional revisionist ambitions, such as Pakistan, into risk-acceptant behavior (Montgomery & Edelman 2015). India has enjoyed a conventional military superiority over Pakistan since 1947, but in particular since the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971. This military imbalance was correlated with almost 30 years of reluctant Pakistani acquiescence of Indian regional leadership and the absence of any major conflicts in the Subcontinent (Ganguly & Kapur 2010, pp.15–16). After 1998, nuclear weapons actually disrupted this military balance and encouraged a more secured Pakistani leadership to resume its historical revisionist territorial goals (Kapur 2007, pp.115–140). As a result, overt nuclear capacities not only failed to deter Pakistan from accepting India's military primacy, but actually created favorable conditions for Pakistan to adopt "aggressive, extremely risky policies" (Ganguly & Kapur 2010, pp.29–30). The following section makes an effort to model how, under conditions of nuclear bipolarity and proxy warfare, the renewed Pakistani contestation of India's regional leadership status and India's ensuing attempts to preserve its deterrence capacities and leadership status have encouraged the outbreak of lower-level crises after decades of regional stability.

Mischief Under the Nuclear Umbrella: Implications for Regional Hegemony and Contestation

The most immediate threat to stability in South Asia since the late 1990s has been the role of non-state groups in instigating major diplomatic crises with escalatory potential between India and Pakistan. There has been a long history of Pakistani-sponsored militants against Indian interests starting immediately after independence. Pakistan's use of these non-state proxies can be explained by two factors. First, due to limited internal resources and extraction capabilities, the Pakistani government has sought to counter-balance the dyadic asymmetry with India by resorting to militant proxies (Kapur 2016). Second, the Pakistani army's strategic culture has also led Pakistan to favor Islamic militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) as regular instruments to contest India's hegemony and the territorial status-quo in Kashmir (Fair, 2014).

Pakistan's use of non-state proxies resumed in the 1980s and became more systematic in the Kashmir region in the late 1980s. Islamabad had previously used mujahedeen forces to destabilize the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and applied a similar strategy in Indian Kashmir when an indigenous uprising erupted in December 1989 (Ganguly 1997). Feeling constrained by India's conventional military superiority, Pakistan has armed, trained, and given sanctuary to these militant organizations through its Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI), dedicated to establish Pakistani sovereignty over Kashmir (such as the LeT) and used them as tools of asymmetric warfare to tie down large numbers of Indian soldiers in Kashmir.

Following the open nuclearization of the subcontinent in 1998, Pakistan-backed militant groups have launched increasingly aggressive terror operations in India (Fair 2014). For instance, the LeT attacked the Indian Parliament while it was in session on December 13, 2001, and again led a series of carefully planned attacks against civilians in Mumbai in November 2008. Accused by India of helping and harboring terrorists, Pakistani authorities have either denied links with the perpetrators of the attacks, or placed their leaders, like Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the head of the LeT's charitable front organization, under temporary house arrest.[7]

While Pakistan has benefited from this asymmetric warfare strategy, militant organizations like the LeT have not always shared the aims and/or serve the interests of their sponsor and host state (Ganguly & Kapur 2010; Perkovich 2012). Gradually, the LeT started pursuing a broader global ideological agenda that transcended revisionist territorial ambitions in Indian Kashmir (Phillips 2012; Tankel 2011). Some jihadi organizations in Pakistan like the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) have also turned against the Pakistani government because of its cooperation with US anti-terrorism efforts (Kapur 2016, pp.116–121).

Given the militants' increasing operational and ideological autonomy, the most imminent threat to stability in South Asia arguably results from major diplomatic crises with escalatory potential instigated by these non-state actors. Under conditions of persistent refusal from Pakistan to accept the regional status quo, the escalatory conditions are ripe for terrorist groups to operate with impunity through the protection of the nuclear umbrella, which inherently limits any possible military reprisals. As a result, India was compelled to confront such transnational threats to preserve its regional leadership.

Nuclear postures are traditionally designed to discourage another state from taking military action by making the prospect of costs and risks outweigh prospective gains, in order to freeze the existing territorial status quo. But what happens if nuclear proliferation actually emboldens secondary powers to become revisionist? In addition, what if a third party, such as a transnational non-state actor (like LeT), enters the equation? In the traditional logic of deterrence, India can signal credible nuclear threats, which then make Pakistani-sponsored attacks against India prohibitively expensive. Instead, the fear of nuclear escalation has limited India's strategic options for retaliation and truncated the traditional asymmetry in regional politics.

Non-state groups do not share the same interpretations of the costs and benefits that are presumed to guide the Pakistani authorities when dealing with India

---

[7] Hafiz Mohammed Saeed walked free from house arrest in November 2017 after a Pakistan court ordered his immediate release and planned to run for Pakistan's general elections in 2018. See The Indian Express (2017).

(Adler 2009). First, in its official doctrine, India does not aim to deter cross-border terrorism or insurgency with the use of nuclear weapons. However, faced with repeated cross-border proxy attacks, India has engaged in debates on how to adapt to this new situation in order to both preserve the credibility of its nuclear deterrent and of its regional leadership. As argued above, dominant powers in unipolar systems have adopted approaches to preserve the status quo and to limit any revisionist efforts. India's determination to maintain its regional leadership status have led New Delhi to develop ad-hoc strategies to counter Pakistan's nuclear blackmail in the context of three major diplomatic crises in 2001–2, 2008, and 2016.

India's efforts to deter further asymmetric attacks by Pakistan have been visible through two different strategies. The first strategy that India has opted was to directly threaten to punish the host state of terrorist groups, Pakistan. By recasting the strategic interaction into a traditional deterrence confrontation between two states, India attempted to maintain its no-first use pledge and its assured retaliation posture intact (Basrur 2009; Narang 2010). By applying nuclear and conventional pressure, India sought to convince the Pakistani host state of the costs of permitting continued attacks. India notably attempted to use this traditional deterrence strategy during the 2001-2002 crisis through a strategy of coercive diplomacy aiming to pressure the Pakistani government into reining its home-based terrorist groups.[8] However the months-long mobilization procedure limited India's window of actual offensive action and proved that such traditional deterring strategies were rendered obsolete by Pakistan's nuclear deterrent. Consequently, the failure of "Operation Parakram" in 2001–2 to obtain definitive Pakistani guarantees to fight terrorism within its own territory demonstrated the practical difficulty of deterring such unconventional, low-level threats with conventional coercive diplomacy (Ganguly & Hagerty 2005).

The realization by the Indian authorities of the failure of traditional deterrence led the Indian military to consider a second option: striking at the militants themselves, notably through its "Cold Start" doctrine (Kanwal 2006; Ladwig 2008; Ahmed 2012; Khan 2012). Following the assault on the Parliament in December 2001, Indian authorities quickly blamed JeM and the LeT but could not retaliate following the attack. These two groups had their camps on Pakistani territory. The 2001-2002 crisis, which followed only two years after the Kargil conflict, encouraged the Indian military to seek a new military doctrine and the capabilities to deter Pakistan from undertaking or from permitting similar low-intensity aggression in the future. The objective of this new informal doctrine was to take hold of an important part of Pakistani territory large enough to harm Pakistan,

---

[8] Coercive diplomacy can also be directed at multiple audiences. With Operation Parakram, Indian authorities also attempted to induce external actors like the US to weigh in the crisis and to put pressure on Pakistan to cease its support of terrorist groups.

but not to threaten the state's survival. This strategy partially solved the problem of attribution, which is determinant for successful deterrence.

However, the difficulty with the operationalization of the Cold Start doctrine was that it could have created conditions for escalation and nuclear war. In future crises, Pakistan might not perceive the Indian reprisals as 'limited' and could decide to escalate the confrontation. The situation has further been complicated by the fact that Pakistan continually denied having any connection with or control over the perpetrators of the attacks. Furthermore, these strategies did not solve the long-term problem of militancy based in Pakistan (Ladwig 2008). The absence of any military retaliation following the Mumbai 2008 terrorist attacks, despite clear actionable evidence leading back to elements within Pakistan, demonstrated the difficulties of actually implementing conventional military retaliatory options against this particular type of attack.

Instead, following the attack in September 2016 by four men, identified by Indian authorities as members of the Pakistan-based JeM terrorist outfit, against an Indian army base located in the Kashmir town of Uri, killing a total of 19 soldiers, the Indian government announced that it had undertaken a series of undertaken military strikes against terrorist launch pads across the border and into so-called Azad Kashmir (Singh 2017). The deliberate decision to opt for a very limited retaliatory strike was the outcome of an ongoing strategic debate on how to deter and retaliate against terrorist infiltration into India while also limiting the possibilities of crisis escalation. Departing from its traditional retaliatory policy, India publicly branded its cross-border firing as "surgical strikes" and integrated them into a composite response which also included attempts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan at the regional and international levels. For instance, India supported global trade sanctions against Pakistan and considered rescinding Pakistan's Most Favored Nation status (Sharma 2016; Singh 2016). India also threatened to unilaterally withdraw from the Indus Waters Treaty, a bilateral agreement ratified in 1960 to share river waters (Jacob 2016). Finally, India successfully lobbied South Asian states to boycott the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit that Pakistan was to host in the weeks following the Uri attack. After Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka followed India's decision to not attend the summit, Pakistan chose to postpone the summit (Roche 2016).

The Indian post-Uri strategy demonstrated that India had opted for an unprecedented mixed strategy to deter Pakistan's use of non-state proxies. The use and public announcement of limited surgical strikes to directly target militants was part of a more conventional strategy to ensure the credibility of its military deterrence capacities. In addition, India used economic sanctions to increase the economic costs linked to Pakistan's resort to low-intensity warfare. Finally, In-

dia also opted for strategies which are usually used by secondary powers to bind the unipolar powers' behavior such as institutional balancing and cooperation through the SAARC to isolate Pakistan (for the concept, see He 2015). The use of institutional balancing strategies was reinforced through the mobilization of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit in September 2017. The BRICS Xiamen declaration condemned a series of extremist groups, including the Haqqani network, LeT, and JeM, which have been active in Pakistan (Aneja 2017). These composite efforts have sought to highlight the military, economic and reputational costs for Islamabad to use non-state proxy warfare to further its gains. While the long-term strategic consequences of this new strategy are not completely clear when it comes to deterring and shaping Pakistan's behavior, these new developments lead to a renewed policy and scholarly debate about the process of leadership maintenance in a nuclearized maintenance.

Conclusion: Stability in a Complex Region

Understanding and managing the conditions for regional leadership maintenance in a nuclearized environment where terrorist activity has been proliferating is an understudied task. The first contention of this paper is theoretical: IR scholarship on leadership and multipolarity should further explore how under the condition of nuclearized rivalry states use non-state proxies to truncate power asymmetries in regional unipolar systems. More systematically incorporating non-state militant actors in models of nuclear deterrence and leadership recognizes both the theoretical and policy challenges to traditional regional polarity dynamics. The existent IR scholarship on power shifts has often concentrated on dyadic interstate standoffs, often at the global role, and missed the disruptive role of non-state actors in the outbreak and/or escalation of Indo-Pakistani nuclear crises.

The entanglement of militant non-state actors in India's and Pakistan's regional strategies creates an even grimmer outlook and threatens to undermine the potentially stabilizing effects of traditional nuclear deterrence. If a regional leader cannot deter "nuclear" militants, what alternative options remain for enabling stability and order in the region? Does this undermine broader efforts to institutionalize regional hierarchy in the Subcontinent? The 2016 Uri attacks allegedly committed by Pakistan-based militants and India's ensuing military retaliation as well as trade and institutional sanctions against the Pakistani state seem to have presented Pakistani policy-makers with new costs and a strategic dilemma. Will India manage to take back the initiative and to limit Pakistani possibilities of nuclear blackmail? Addressing this question is of immediate scholarly and policy relevance.

Second, while this paper has argued that the scholarship on regional leadership maintenance dynamics has built too exclusively on models of global hegemonic

contests, there are nevertheless important and underexplored lessons from the Cold War bipolar system which can be applied to the South Asian context. For instance, encouraging regular and institutionalized dialogue between regional nuclear rivals may provide opportunities to address the challenges posed by complex South Asian security dynamics more effectively. This is not a completely unique situation as it could be argued that the U.S. and USSR, as two rivals competing for global hegemony, faced similar issues in the initial stages of their nuclear weapons programs. While one could argue that Cold War models did not explicitly integrate the problem of non-state actors, the two rivals did learnt to rein in the actions of their bloc allies and to put into place dialogue mechanisms to limit any escalation. Further research in early Cold War doctrines, command and control mechanisms, and gradual recognitions of red lines can help understand how nuclear learning has or has not occurred in the South Asian sub-system context (Khan, Jacobs & Burke 2014; Nye 1987, 1987).

Acknowledgements

Bio

Nicolas Blarel

Nicolas Blarel is Assistant Professor of International Relations at Leiden University, Netherlands.

Hannes Ebert

Hannes Ebert is a postdoctoral research fellow at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies.

References

Adler, E 2009, 'Complex Deterrence in the Asymmetric-Warfare Era', in TV Paul, PM Morgan, & Wirtz (eds), Complex Deterrence. Strategy in the Global Age, Chicago University Press, Chicago, pp. 85–109.

Ahmed, A 2012, 'Cold Start: The Life Cycle of a Doctrine', Comparative Strategy, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 453–468.

Aneja, A 2017, 'BRICS lists Pak-based JeM, LeT as global terror groups', The Hindu, retrieved February 2, 2018, from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/brics-voices-concern-over-terror-groups-including-those-in-pakistan/article19619137.ece>.

Basrur, R 2009, Minimum Deterrence and India's Nuclear Security, NUS Press, Singapore.

Basrur, RM 2009, 'Nuclear Weapons and India–Pakistan Relations', Strategic Analysis, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 336–344.

Brooks, SG & Wohlforth, WC 2016, 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century: China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position', International Security, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 7–53.

Bukovansky, M, Clark, I, Eckersley, R, Price, R, Reus-Smit, C & Wheeler, NJ 2012, Special Responsibilities: Global Problems and American Power, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Buzan, B 2011, 'The South Asian Security Complex in a Decentring World Order: Reconsidering Regions and Powers Ten Years On', International Studies, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 1–19.

Chari, PR, Cheema, PI & Cohen, S 2007, Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.

Clark, I 2011, Hegemony in International Society, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York.

Cohen, S 2015, 'India and the Region', in DM Malone, CR Mohan, & S Raghavan (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 341–356.

Destradi, S 2012, Indian Foreign and Security Policy in South Asia: Regional Power Strategies, Routledge, London.

Dixit, JN 2001, India's Foreign Policy and Its Neighbours, Gyan Books, New Delhi.

Ebert, H & Blarel, N 2018, 'Power, Territory and Learning: Explaining Pakistan's Persistent Contestation', in H Ebert & D Flemes (eds), Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave, New York.

Ebert, H & Flemes, D (eds) 2018, Regional Powers and Contested Leadership, Palgrave, New York.

Fair, C 2014, Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Flemes, D & Lobell, S 2015, 'Contested leadership in international relations', International Politics, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 139–146.

Ganguly, S 1997, The Crisis in Kashmir, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC.

Ganguly, S 2001, Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947, Columbia University Press, New York.

Ganguly, S & Hagerty, DT 2005, Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crises in the

Shadow of Nuclear Weapons, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Ganguly, S & Kapur, P 2010, India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia, Columbia University Press, New York.

Ganguly, S & Kapur, SP (eds) 2008, Nuclear proliferation in South Asia: crisis behaviour and the bomb, Routledge, London.

Gray, K & Murphy, CN 2013, 'Introduction: rising powers and the future of global governance', Third World Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 183–193.

Hagerty, DT 1991, 'India's Regional Security Doctrine', Asian Survey, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 351–363.

He, K 2015, 'Contested regional orders and institutional balancing in the Asia Pacific', International Politics, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 208–222.

Ikenberry, GJ 2011, Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Jacob, J 2016, 'Uri attack aftermath: Modi to review Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan', Hindustan Times, retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/modi-to-chair-meeting-to-review-indo-pak-water-sharing-treaty-tomorrow/story-FidEDvcAvhSjQzkbaKg60N.html>.

Jesse, NG, Lobell, SE, Press-Barnathan, G & Williams, KP 2012, 'The leaders can`t lead when the followers won`t follow. The limits of hegemony', in KP Williams, SE Lobell, & NG Jesse (eds), Beyond great powers and hegemons: why secondary states support, follow or challenge, Stanford Security Studies, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp. 1–33.

Kahler, M 2013, 'Rising powers and global governance: negotiating change in a resilient status quo', International Affairs, vol. 89, no. 3, pp. 711–729.

Kanwal, G 2006, 'Cold Start and Battle Groups for Offensive Operations', Strategic Trends, vol. 4, no. 18.

Kapur, P 2016, Jihad As Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State, Oxford University Press, New York.

Kapur, SP 2007, Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Karnad, B 2005, 'South Asia: The Irrelevance of Classical Nuclear Deterrence Theory', India Review, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 173–213.

Khan, FH, Jacobs, R & Burke, E 2014, 'Nuclear Learning in South Asia: The Next Decade', retrieved February 7, 2015, from <http://nps.edu/Academics/Centers/CCC/Research/NuclearLearning/Nuclear%20Learning%20in%20South%20Asia_June2014.pdf>.

Khan, Z 2012, 'Cold Start Doctrine: The Conventional Challenge to South Asian Stability', Contemporary Security Policy, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 577–594.

Khilnani, S 2015, 'India's Rise: The Search for Wealth and Power in the Twenty-First Century', in DM Malone, CR Mohan, & S Raghavan (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 681–699.

Krepon, M 2003, The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia, The Henry Stimson Center, Washington, DC.

Ladwig, WC 2008, 'A cold start for hot wars? The Indian army's new limited war doctrine', International Security, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 158–190.

Mesquita, BB de & Riker, WH 1982, 'An Assessment of the Merits of Selective Nuclear Proliferation', Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 283–306.

Mishra, B 1999, 'Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine', retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/Draft+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine>.

Mitra, SK 2003, 'The Reluctant Hegemon: India's Self-Perception and the South Asian Strategic Environment', Contemporary South Asia, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 399–418.

Monteiro, NP 2012, 'Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful', International Security, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 9–40.

Montgomery, EB & Edelman, ES 2015, 'Rethinking Stability in South Asia: India, Pakistan, and the Competition for Escalation Dominance', Journal of Strategic Studies, vol. 38, no. 1–2, pp. 159–182.

Mukherjee, R & Malone, D 2010, 'Polity, Security, and Foreign Policy in Contemporary India', in TV Paul (ed), South Asia's Weak States: Understanding the Regional Insecurity Predicament, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp. 147–170.

Narang, V 2010, 'Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability', International Security, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 38–78.

Narang, V 2013, 'What Does It Take to Deter? Regional Power Nuclear Postures and International Conflict', Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 478–508.

Narang, V 2014, Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Nye, JS 1987, 'Nuclear learning and U.S.–Soviet security regimes', International Organization, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 371–402.

Paul, TV 2016, Accommodating Rising Powers. Past, Present, and Future, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Perkovich, G 2012, The Non-Unitary Model and Deterrence Stability in South Asia, Stimson Center and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., retrieved February 8, 2013, from <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/George_Perkovich_-_The_Non_Unitary_Model_and_Deterrence_Stability_in_South_Asia.pdf>.

Phillips, A 2012, 'Horsemen of the apocalypse? Jihadist strategy and nuclear instability in South Asia', International Politics, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 297–317.

Prys, M 2012, Redefining Regional Power in International Relations: Indian and South African Perspectives, Routledge, London.

Roche, E 2016, 'Pakistan postpones Saarc Summit after India-led boycott over Uri attack', Live Mint, retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/waHWF3HUajmf66JdNwnCqJ/Pakistan-cancels-Saarc-Summit-after-Indialed-boycott-over-U.html>.

Sagan, SD 1995, The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Sagan, SD 2009, InsideNuclear South Asia, Stanford University Press, San Francisco, CA.

Sagan, SD & Waltz, K 2002, The Spread of Nuclear Weapons. A Debate Renewed, W.W. Norton, New York.

Schirm, S 2010, 'Leaders in Need of Followers: Emerging Powers in Global Governance', European Journal of International Relations, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 197–221.

Sharma, V 2016, 'Avenging Uri: Seeking global sanctions against Pak India's best option?', Hindustan Times, retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/avenging-uri-seeking-global-sanctions-against-pak-india-s-best-option/story-fPjx1afzPfPev9k1G6nhaP.html>.

Singh, K 2016, 'Review of MFN status to Pakistan may prove key to PM Modi's economic war', The Indian Express, retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/web-edits/review-of-mfn-status-to-pakistan-may-prove-key-to-pm-modis-economic-war-3052420/>.

Singh, S 2017, 'What the surgical strike achieved', The Indian Express, retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-pakistan-tensions-what-the-surgical-strike-achieved-4862739/>.

Sridharan, E 2015, 'Rising or Constrained Power?', in DM Malone, CR Mohan, & S Raghavan (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 699–713.

Stuenkel, O 2016a, Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers Are Remaking

Global Order, John Wiley & Sons.

Stuenkel, O 2016b, Emerging Powers and BRICS, retrieved August 31, 2016, from <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/id/obo-9780199743292-0187>.

Tankel, S 2011, Storming the World Stage: The Story of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Columbia University Press, New York.

The Indian Express 2017, 'JuD to contest Pakistan general elections in 2018, says Hafiz Saeed', retrieved December 13, 2017, from <http://indianexpress.com/article/pakistan/hafiz-saeed-jud-to-contest-pakistan-general-elections-in-2018-4965476/>.

Thomas, R 2004, 'The South Asian Security Balance in a Western Dominant World', in TV Paul, JJ Wirtz, & M Fortmann (eds), Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp. 305–334.

Waltz, KN 1981, 'The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better: Introduction', Adelphi Papers, no. 171, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

Wilkinson, D 1999, 'Unipolarity Without Hegemony', International Studies Review, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 141–172.

Regional Leadership in Authoritarian Contexts – Saudi Arabia's New Military Interventionism as Part of Its Leadership Bid in the Middle East

Anna Sunik

Heidelberg University and GIGA Institute of Middle East Studies
anna.sunik@giga-hamburg.de

Abstract

Saudi Arabia's coalition-based intervention in the Yemeni Civil War in March 2015 marked a stark departure from its previous foreign policy characterized by the leverage of its financial power ("riyalpolitik") instead of military interventionism. Saudi Arabia's "new assertiveness" in recent years has been analyzed as a form of balancing against Iran and a reaction against regional instability in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings since 2011 and the US withdrawal from the region. While this explains the heightened foreign policy activity and militarization, it does not present a convincing rationale for the Saudi intervention in Yemen: Why not confront Iranian expansionism in Syria or Iraq? And why would a largely reclusive autocracy model its alliance formation after the Western "coalition of the willing"? By adding insights from literature on autocratic institutions to the existing systemic arguments, this article suggests that while regional power shifts provided the opportunity structure for Saudi assertiveness, the symbolic dimension of the coalition to signal regional leadership explains the shape of its new regional foreign policy.

Keywords

Regional Power, Regional Hegeomny, Autocratic Foreign Policy, Military Coalitions

Introduction

When Adel al-Jubair, then Saudi Ambassador to the United States, announced in a press conference on March 26, 2015 that Saudi Arabia had launched a military operation together with nine other countries in Yemen to "defend the legitimate government of President Hadi from the takeover attempts by the Houthi militias in Yemen" who had taken over the capital Sana'a (Al Arabiya 2015a), many observers were dumbfounded. That Saudi Arabia and its neighbors took military

initiative seems to herald a new era of Gulf foreign policy. How did this come to pass? And is it more than an ephemeral phenomenon?

Bringing IR, Middle East area studies and autocracy research together, this article aims to explain the shape of Saudi Arabia's recent foreign policy activity focusing on the intervention in Yemen. It thereby follows a recent call for IR approaches to account for the changed regional context since the transformative wave of the Arab Uprisings since 2011 (Valbjørn 2017). While the Saudi Arabian foreign policy activism and its militarization has already been illuminated by a combination of Neorealist balance-of-threat approaches and identity factors, the choices of tactics and arenas of the struggle for regional hegemony have not yet been adequately covered. This article attempts to illuminate these choices exemplified by the formation and leadership of the "Decisive Storm" coalition in Yemen by utilizing research on symbolic functions of autocratic institutions. It proceeds by sketching the puzzle of the militarization of Saudi politics and the decision to intervene in the Yemeni Civil War, followed by a structured presentation of the research explaining this heightened activity and the introduction of insights from autocracy research to explain the intervention in Yemen by symbolic functions of authoritarian institutions.

The Rediscovery of the Gulf Military Ethos: From *Ghazwa* to Riyalpolitik and Back?

Up to the early 20th century, wars, skirmishes and raids by desert warriors were a ubiquitous experience for the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, these were so common that the Arabic word for raid – – has made it into European languages in the version of the "razzia". The history of state formation in the Peninsula is essentially a history of war and conquest as much as it is a history of the political economy of oil and colonial politics. The most "militarized" of these states, up to the early 20th century, was Saudi Arabia, founded in 1932 by 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Saud. Also known as Ibn Saud in the West, he was a major military leader, often stylized in the Western image as a "desert warrior" (Al-Rasheed 2010, p.5).

Yet, for the rest of the century, military action was almost completely discarded. After the 1934 Saudi Arabian-Yemeni War, Saudi troops were rarely utilized abroad apart from token divisions sent to the Arab effort against Israel. Of the 444 militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) between 1945-2001 involving participants from the Middle East, Saudi Arabia appears as a participant merely 34 times (out of 748 Middle East participants overall; in 7.7% of disputes and forming 4.5% of all dispute participants) (Ghosn, Palmer & Bremer 2004).[1] This

---

[1] Compared to its neighbors in the region it remains a very low number, especially for its size. All other large states in the Middle East (except for Morocco and Algeria) and even tiny Lebanon participated more often, referring Saudi Arabia to the 7th rank in terms of MID involvement. The figures cover the

is despite its long history of independence and ample reason (many unsolved territorial conflicts) and opportunity (being large and wealthy) for militarized action.

While Arab states in other sub-regions of the Middle East and North Africa modernized their militaries, waged major interstate wars and used the military to transform society and state, Saudi Arabia instead saw a "military modernization in reverse" (Cronin 2013, p.2). In fact, in the late 1970s, the Saudi National Guard (SANG), the tribally-based military counterbalancing the regular army and making up one third of all troops, remained the "only force in over thirty Third World countries unable to maintain and service its own armoured vehicles!" (Ayubi 1995, p.283). Financial support – "Riyalpolitik" – was pursued instead of military participation in war and conflicts in post-statehood years: examples include the support of the Royalists in the 1962-1967 Yemeni Civil War, of various factions in the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), and of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Only with the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990 did Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states in general provide an (albeit limited) number of troops to the coalition (Allison 2012, pp.120–122; Heard-Bey 2006, p.205).

The lamentations about Gulf military efficiency have a long tradition – from being showcases of politicized fragmentation and deliberate weakening of the military aimed at coup-proofing the regime (Quinlivan 1999; Hertog 2011) to forming the culmination of a general tendency towards military inefficiency in Arab militaries (Pollack 2002). Already in 1995, Ayubi notes the discrepancy between the high military spending, both in absolute terms and terms relative to GDP, and the lacking military effectiveness and performance of the Saudis: "In short therefore the state of Saudi Arabia's military capability leaves much to be desired" (1995, p.280). Pollack reserves the most scathing assessment of the inefficacy of Arab militaries for the Saudi case, blaming the oil wealth and strong reliance on the US for magnifying the effect: "In the end, they had little to show for their billions of dollars spent on defense since the first oil boom. Saudi troops suffered from all of the same problems as other Arab armies, only worse" (Pollack 2002, p.446).

In light of these long-term developments, the sudden flurry of military adventurism of the kingdom and its smaller neighbors seems all the more surprising. There have been early signs of an increased foreign policy activism and military outlook of the Gulf states in the last few years, catalyzed by the turmoil ignited by the Arab Uprisings. Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait have passed laws to introduce compulsory military service for citizens in 2013-2015 (Smith Diwan 2015; Sophia 2015). Hitherto, their militaries were mostly composed of foreign nationals, who made up most of the workforce in all other work areas seen as "menial" in the states whose populations are overwhelmingly composed of guest workers. These

---

time period 1945-2001 and exclude Sudan and Turkey. Otherwise, the tendency would be even more pronounced.

activities have been accompanied by a steep rise in defense spending and weapons procurement (although the budget especially in Saudi Arabia has slumped since 2015 because of low oil prices) (IISS 2017).

Following the 2011 uprising, Peninsula Shield Force (the military component of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the GCC) troops were sent to Bahrain to quell protests (Guzansky 2014). In August 2014, the UAE and Egyptian air forces surprised observers when they conducted joint airstrikes against the Islamist "Dawn" (*Fajr*) alliance in Libya (Kirkpatrick & Schmitt 2014). Since 2014, the monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE as well as Jordan and Morocco were the Arab participants in the US-led anti-Islamic State (IS) coalition ("Inherent Resolve") that flew airstrikes against IS targets on Syrian territory (Jordan later expanded to Iraq). However, the contributions of the GCC states were limited and criticism of a lack of commitment on the Arab part abounded (Thompson 2015). Saudi pledges to commit more resources and possibly ground troops in Syria were soon forgotten (or retracted) (Mustafa & Mehta 2016).

An effective military slowly became a greater priority for the GCC states with Saudi Arabia pushing greater cooperation and coordination in the security sphere. In its 34th summit in December 2013, the GCC had agreed on the establishment of a joint military command that was to be instituted alongside the Peninsula Shield Force and to have a force of 100,000, half of which to be provided by Saudi Arabia (Saidy 2014). At the summit the following year, the institution of a joint police force (based in Abu Dhabi) and a joint navy (based in Bahrain) were decided (Vela 2014). A project that transcends the Gulf is a joint military command in the Arab League frame supposed to number 40,000 (Mustafa 2015) which has, however, not progressed since 2015.

Saudi Arabia's regional engagement grew extensively since 2011. Apart from its participation in the anti-IS coalition and its engagement in Bahrain, its notable activities include the intensive support of rebels in Syria (Hokayem 2014). Many of Saudi Arabia's projects include large-scale multilateral coalition-building. In December 2015, the kingdom announced the formation of a by now 37-members-strong Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAFT) (although some of the alleged members initially expressed surprise at their inclusion) (Gaub 2016), and conducted a major military exercise in February 2016 ("North Thunder") which reportedly involved 150,000 troops from 20 countries (Riedel 2016). Following years of enormous defense spending, it now has the best-equipped military after Israel (IISS 2017, p.401).[2]

---

[2] Although the title for the most capable armed forces in the Gulf is held by the UAE (IISS 2017, p.409).

The intervention in the Yemeni Civil War: Operation "Decisive Storm" (*Asifat al-Hazm*)

The most impactful engagement which will form the focus of the analysis is, however, the military intervention in Yemen initiated by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in March 2015. In September 2014, the Houthis, a Zaidi Shia militia, took over the Yemeni capital Sana'a. After encroaching on the provisional capital in Aden on May 25, 2015, the Houthi invasion caused President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia from where he called for military support against the rebels, citing Article 51 of the UN charter. Saudi Arabia announced its intentions of forming a military coalition and launched airstrikes overnight on March 26, 2015. Apart from the kingdom, nine countries agreed to join from the outset: the UAE, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Morocco, Pakistan and Sudan – including all GCC members except for Oman. Senegal, Somalia and Eritrea later also agreed to join the coalition (Binnie 2015a; Madabish 2015). US President Barack Obama authorized logistical and intelligence support which was soon expanded (Hennigan, King & Al-Alayaa 2015). The main drivers behind and architects of the Yemen intervention were Saudi Arabian and the UAE decision-makers.[3]

Saudi Arabia contributed the most resources to the coalition and reported deploying 100 fighter jets and 150,000 troops while Qatar sent 10, Bahrain and Kuwait 15 jets in the first hours (Shaheen & Kamali Dehghan 2015).[4] Except for Pakistan, where parliament resisted military participation, all the other initiative countries sent fighter jets as well, the UAE 30, and Jordan up to six (AFP 2015). Saudi Arabia and the UAE also deployed Special Forces in July (Binnie 2015b). In contrast to "Inherent Resolve" in Syria and Iraq, the intervention in Yemen also included ground troops from the outset, initially 3,000 from Saudi Arabia and the UAE alone (Salisbury & Kerr 2015). Qatar reportedly provided another 1,000 troops before dropping out of the coalition following the row with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain in June 2017 (El Yaakoubi 2017). Apart from the high material costs of the coalition, great losses were also incurred in terms of casualties. Having been mostly unaccustomed to war and war casualties, battlefield deaths had a dramatic effect. One of the most shocking events for the Gulf monarchies transpired on September 4, when 52 Emirati, 10 Saudi and 5 Bahraini soldiers were killed during a single operation (Smith Diwan 2015). In June 2016, the UAE announced the end of the military part of its operation, but Emirati troops remained in place, even leading to further casualties (Kedem 2016). Saudi

---

[3] Especially the Crown Princes of Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, Muhammad bin Salman and Muhammad bin Zayed, are most often identified as the architects of the intervention (Henderson 2017).

[4] All troop numbers are based on open-source media information and are probably highly exaggerated. More credible estimates put the numbers of Saudi combat troop numbers at about 3,500 (with 6,500 support personnel) (Mustafa & Mehta 2016).

Arabia suffered the greatest losses although the casualty number are a matter of great debate, ranging from officially 300 to up to tenfold the number (Law 2016). Never before had the Saudi rulers sacrificed their own citizens in wars for their national goals on such a scale.

To be clear, it was not the first time that Arab states formed military coalitions against a common threat (the multiple Arab-Israeli wars from 1948 to 1973). It was also not the first time Saudi Arabia was involved militarily in Yemen (e.g. in the Yemeni Civil Wars and airstrikes against the Houthis in 2009-2010). But it was the first time that Saudi Arabia and its neighbors, militarily weak and inexperienced, especially in ground combat, designed and lead a prolonged military operation involving heavy burdens and commitment on their own, under purely regional leadership. Even in conflicts of vital importance to the Saudis, as during the Yemeni Civil War 1962-1967 and the two Yemeni border clashes in 1972 and 1979, the kingdom has never committed its own armed forces for offensive purposes. For most of its history, Saudi Arabia "could not credibly threaten either [South or North] Yemen with direct military attack" (Gause 1990, p.10).

But the puzzle is not just Gulf or Saudi military initiative per se, but also its shape. The coalition that carried out "Decisive Storm" (*asifat al-hazm*) resembles "coalitions of the willing" which are usually initiated and led by multilateral-minded democracies (mostly, the US). It is no accident that even the name invokes the "Desert Storm" (*asifat al-sahra'* in Arabic) operation against Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait. Being an autocratic monarchy, Saudi Arabia always eschewed "friendships that are too close and also enmities that are too intense" (Gause 1994, p.121) and did not initiate large-scale committed coalitions.

The choice of intervention location also warrants an explanation. The main justifications for the intervention cited by the coalition members are the restoration of the "legitimate government" of Yemen and the containment of Iranian expansionism. However, most researchers concur that the evidence for Iranian involvement in Yemen has been minor to non-existent – at least before the intervention (e.g. Juneau 2016). Given its broad activities in the region and its major investment in the Syrian Civil War, why open another battle ground, one which is not even well suited to balance and contain the main rival?

Why Militarization? Shifts in Regional Power Constellations: The Withdrawal of the US, the Rise of Iran

Traditionally, foreign policy in the Middle East and especially of Saudi Arabia has often been explained with variants of Neorealist *balance-of-power* (Waltz 1979) and *balance-of-threat* approaches (Walt 1990). Already implied in Walt's theory, ideational factors regarding threat perception were inseparable from material ca-

pabilities. These approaches were then enhanced by the concept of *omnibalancing* (David 1991) that adds the dimension of regime security that is especially relevant for autocracies (see e.g. Nonneman 2005). According to the omnibalancing approach, states, and especially autocracies, do not only balance against external, but also domestic threats and the external powers allied with them. To that end, they may even align with secondary adversaries (David 1991, pp.235–236).

These approaches, combining external and domestic security as the main drivers of foreign policy, are still dominating explanations of heightened foreign policy activity of Saudi Arabia and the international relations of the Persian Gulf in the last few years (Legrenzi & Gause 2016, p.306). The geopolitical restructuring of the region since 2011 has fundamentally changed the regional security context and opened windows of opportunity for heightened activism of regional actors (see e.g. Colombo 2017; Gause 2017; Salloukh 2017; Mabon 2015).

The timing of Saudi activism coincides with major shifts in the behavior and capabilities of its main ally – the US – and its main rival – Iran. As the US, previously an extra-regional hegemon, withdraws, a power vacuum ensues – to be filled by one of the regional powers. The withdrawal created an opportunity structure that enabled the foreign policy aspirations and activity of non-traditional regional powers like Qatar and the UAE (Ulrichsen 2017; Kamrava 2013) and boosted the activity of the dominant power on the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia.

Whereas previously, Persian Gulf dynamics were shaped by the power triangle of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq (Fürtig 2007), the collapse of Iraq following the US invasion in 2003 turned the tripole into a bipolar competition. When faced with the Scylla of Iran and the Charybdis of Iraq, Saudi Arabia had to remain wary of both. With the collapse of Iraq as a relevant state actor, the kingdom could turn its focus to an arms race with the only remaining regional power – Iran. Catalyzed by the turmoil since 2011, a classic security dilemma ensued – both on the material and ideological/identity level (Mabon 2015, 2017; Partrick 2016).

US-Saudi relations were already tense following the superpower's perceived reneging on alliance commitments to long-standing US ally Hosni Mubarak in Egypt in 2011, a dynamic the rise of Iran in a contested regional system exacerbated (Fawcett 2015; Baxter & Simpson 2015). US behavior towards Iran fueled Saudi suspicions. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), the agreement between the P5+1+EU (and thereby the US) and Iran on nuclear non-proliferation, deepened the Iran-Saudi rivalry in the short run. Not only did it provide Iran with greater economic capabilities, it also bestowed international recognition on the pariah state and thus re-incorporated it into regional power constellations (Bahi 2017). This additional sign of US "abandonment" parallel to the boost of Iranian capabilities further stoked fears that induced self-reliance,

even in the nuclear sphere where a nuclear arms race seems likely in case of an Iranian nuclear breakout (Cigar 2016).

Identity and perception are inseparable from balance-of-threat explanations in the Middle East (cf. Gause 2017; Hinnebusch & Ehteshami 2014). The perception of the Iranian threat is governed not only by material capabilities but also by two major identity-linked ways in which it undermines Saudi domestic stability. First, it challenges the core of the ruling family's religious legitimacy by showing an alternative form of Islamic government: an "Islamic Republic" instead of the Islamic monarchy. Secondly, it is seen by Saudi Arabia as fostering "sectarianism" and instigate rebellion and separatism of Shia groups in a Sunni-majority Arab world (al-Saud 2004; Hubbard & Sheikh 2015). That Saudi Arabia chooses to balance against Iran is therefore no surprise, whether the Iranian ascendancy is real or imagined by the kingdom.

However, Saudi Arabia's ability to form an alliance against Iran is impeded by two main problems. First, the traditional regional hegemon, Saudi ally and balancer against Iran, the US, is unable and unwilling to fulfill this role anymore. While the military bases are still present, the political will to be involved is weakened. The last two presidents, Donald Trump as well as Barack Obama campaigned on policies calling for isolationism or a "pivot to Asia", i.e. away from Europe and the Middle East.[5]

Second, attracting regional allies for the purpose of balancing is impeded by ideological obstacles that lead to "underbalancing", i.e. the failure of multiple regional states who also see Iran as a threat (like Israel, Egypt and Turkey or Sunni states in general) to ally (Gause 2017).

The rise of Iran and withdrawal of the US are the main drivers for the new Saudi "assertiveness" and militarization. But additional explanation is warranted to explain the shape of that assertiveness and the engagement in Yemen. While balance-of-threat approaches can also explain why Saudi Arabia chose to tackle the Houthis instead of IS, they do not explain why it chose Yemen instead of the Assad regime in Syria. Fighting IS in Syria or Iraq would strengthen Iran as it would ultimately benefit the allied Syrian regime. But Assad's Syria, as the only "state" ally to Iran apart from the weak and fragmented Iraqi government, is so vital to the Islamic Republic that it invests massive resources and parts of its own military to avoid regime change. The periphery Houthis tribal warriors and their allies, however, are of low strategic importance and consequently do not enjoy priority in Iranian calculations and little tangible support. Weakening Assad in Syria

---

[5] Given the erratic nature of Donald Trump's foreign policy thus far, the current administration's anti-Iranian rhetoric is unlikely to lead to a long-term change towards a return to Cold-War-era interventionism.

would harm Iranian influence much more than weakening the Houthis and their allies – still, Saudi Arabia's battleground choice took the opposite route. Instead of allying with the militarily most powerful states in the region (most of which are anti-Iranian), it chose to amass a "coalition of the willing", a cooperation form known from democracies, with itself at the helm. Saudi Arabian coalition-building in Yemen, but also in the IMAFT mostly consists of inactive and militarily weak members who do little to contribute and strengthen the alliance – which runs counter to the idea that a key parameter for the choice of alliance partners is reliability and state reputation (Crescenzi et al. 2012, p.260). Clearly, the explanation cannot lie in power or security maximization alone (cf. Gause 2017).

One way to resolve these discrepancies is by focusing on secondary functions of alliances and coalitions. Neither Decisive Storm nor the IMAFT are primarily about material military capabilities and the ability to project power. Instead, they can be better understood by looking at its functions as generators of symbolic capital and the accumulation of prestige that are meant to bolster the Saudi claim to regional leadership.

Why Yemen? Coalition-Building as a Means of Signaling Leadership

As Levy and Barnett argued, there is more to an alliance than just its provision of security and/or power (1991). An alliance can also serve internal aims such as resource-provision or regime security (David 1991). Other, secondary functions include reputation-building and prestige which may also drive policy. These secondary functions are usually complementary to security-seeking and power maximization, but can also stand on their own or even contradict them (Kim 2004).

Although this applies to both autocracies and democracies (see e.g. for the case of Canadian coalition engagement: Massie 2013), the systematic study of such factors has tended to focus on democracies. For many IR scholars, states might have been "like units" (Waltz 1979, p.93), but some units have been "more like" than others. As Reed described it: "Scholars are consistently finding that the international behavior of democracies differs from that of other regime types" (1997, p.1078). Democracies are said to be more durable, more prosperous (Halperin, Siegle & Weinstein 2005), less warlike (Ray 2013) and more successful in war (Lake 1992). During conflict, they are described as more reliable allies (Leeds 2003), more likely to ally in the first place (Lai & Reiter 2000), and potentially more successful with their coalitions at war (Pilster 2011), especially when they consist of other democracies (Choi 2004).

Not all these assessments are undisputed. That democracies are really more efficient and effective at military coalitions has been controversial for some time (Simon & Gartzke 1996; Lai & Reiter 2000). Additionally, the focus on democ-

73

racies – while helping broaden the scope of alliance theory – diminished the role of non-democracies to a mere mirror-image. However, "autocratic" foreign policy is more than just the opposite of democratic behavior, an impression which overly "mystifies" autocratic behavior in two ways: first, it obscures their similarities to democracies and second, it ignores that the specificities of autocracies that do exist are not mere opposites of democratic behavior.

The period of heightened autocratic cooperation following the "Color Revolutions" in Central Asia and Eastern Europe and the Arab Uprisings in the Middle East prompted relevant research on the topic (e.g. Soest 2015; Odinius & Kuntz 2015). Especially scholars of Comparative Politics have slowly started to put authoritarian cooperation on the agenda (Erdmann et al. 2013; Mattes & Rodríguez 2014; Young 2014). Some of these studies show convincingly that many assumptions about the differences between autocracies and democracies do not hold and if we look closely at different kinds of autocratic regimes we find evidence that at least some sub-types might not be that different from democracies after all, even regarding key "democratic features" such as institutional constraints and accountability (Mattes & Rodríguez 2014) or audience costs (Weeks 2012, 2014a).

The Yemen coalition is an example of cooperation in the military realm, a new phenomenon for a (sub-)region where military autocratic cooperation and coordination seldom encompassed more than two or three allies at a time. Research on military cooperation and coalition-building has nevertheless remained sparse. Especially the question of why autocrats would want to cooperate in the first place remains understudied (Weeks 2014b). The study of further functions of military coalitions beyond the immediate provision of security is a promising avenue of research and insights from autocracy research can help illuminate this field as they provide an especially nuanced picture of the importance of the symbolic power of alliances. Alliances and especially their more ephemeral manifestation, coalitions, can serve many of the same functions as other institutions do for authoritarian regimes.[6]

Among the most salient (secondary) functions of authoritarian institutions are "operating manual, billboard, blueprint, window-dressing" (Ginsburg & Simpser 2013, p.2). An operating *manual* provides a description, giving clear rules and guidelines toward a particular aim; a *billboard* is an advertisement, signaling intentions or policies – this function is especially likely to be found in democratic institutions as well. The last two functions point to the discrepancies between the actual situation and either an aspired one in the future (*blueprint*) or an expected normative ideal that is not matched by reality, as in the difference between constitutional aspirations and constitutional reality (*window-dressing*) (Ginsburg &

---

[6] A definition of institutions as "humanely devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction" (North 1991, p.97) is used here to include coalitions.

Simpser 2013, pp.6–8; Ginsburg 2015).

Although these concepts have been used mainly for constitutions, they are useful for an analysis of alliances and especially coalitions as well. Coalitions are less formal, more ad-hoc and often less durable than alliances (Kober 2002, pp.1–2) and are more applicable to the abovementioned functions which are malleable, often overlapping and likely to change under different circumstances. Changes and adaptations to the more formal and durable alliances incur greater costs if "prime" functions as security and regime security are not addressed as a priority.

These secondary functions are related to the topic of symbolic politics, prestige and signaling of states in international politics (cf. Kim 2004). In this sphere, democracies were also regarded as superior due to their supposedly better ability to create audience costs to signal credible commitment (Fearon 1997). Later studies looking closer at the specificities of autocracies have uncovered that no absolute superiority exists as the ability to generate audience costs depends on specific institutions that vary with regime sub-types. E.g., Saudi Arabia, as a dynastic monarchy, is one of the autocracies that have no relative inferiority to democracies in signaling credible commitment (Weeks 2008). The Saudi decision to assemble a military coalition to fight in Yemen can be thus explained as an attempt to signal the ability to lead in place of the US and to attain prestige to bolster its claim to regional hegemony.

These symbolic functions of authoritarian institutions outlined above can all be traced in the anti-Houthi coalition. First, it took previous US-led "coalitions of the willing", including Inherent Resolve against the IS (as well as the coalition in the two Gulf Wars of 1990/91 and 2003) as an *operating manual* providing guidance how an effective or at least legitimate military intervention should look like. This makes the Yemen coalition a *blueprint*, showing the potential of the Yemen coalition: a stronger integration of regional security institutions. This blueprint is connected to other Saudi initiatives towards regional integration which have failed before (such as the integration of the GCC), but have in recent times re-emerged with the invitation of Jordan and Morocco to the GCC, financial support towards poorer GCC states (cf. Odinius & Kuntz 2015) as well as military cooperation and coordination attempts and plans for a joint police force (*Al Arabiya* 2015b). By providing multilateral legitimacy and acceptance, the coalition also masks (*window-dresses*) the fact that the Yemen intervention is heavily criticized, both for its claims to efficiency as well as its aims which in all likelihood more directly relate to regime security and hegemonic ambitions of kingdom (cf. Darwich 2015) and its allies than to any humanitarian or security-maximizing goal for Yemen itself.

At the same time, the coalition is a *billboard* to showcase its leader's – Saudi Ara-

bia's – international commitment, qualification as a regional political and military power and its ability to replace the reclining US, to which it previously outsourced military leadership, by fighting its fights.[7] The modeling of Decisive Storm on Inherent Resolve (and Desert Storm and other US-led multilateral military coalitions) is therefore in all likelihood not due to accident, but underlines the Saudi bid for succession of the US as regional hegemon and security provider in the Middle East. To become a regional hegemon and to attract allies to overcome underbalancing against Iran, Saudi Arabia needs to prove that it can take over the US military role. This is different from balancing as it refers to the *symbolic* aspects of signaling commitment and military prowess instead of enacting it. This matches the general pattern of the stronger "assertiveness" of Saudi foreign policy and some of its recent efforts, like the announcement of the formation of a large 37-member IMAFT and can be generalized towards Saudi Arabia's foreign policy behavior in general. The Saudi-led alliance is not the first example of an autocracy participating in military endeavors not for security, but to signal leadership. According to Al-Ahram, Egyptian troops in the coalition against Saddam 1990/1991 were not there as "part of the U.S.-European armada, but to prove to Arab brothers and friends alike" that Egypt was able to take a leadership role (cited in: Long 2004, p.37).

The difference between material and symbolic capabilities is crucial for the dynamics of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. Saudi Arabia has less than half the population of Iran and although it has almost caught up with Iran in terms of active military personnel (it now has the third-largest armed forces after Iraq and Iran) (IISS 2017, p.363),[8] the Saudi military is much less capable and experienced than the Iranian one. Iran has fought interstate wars, insurgencies and proxy conflicts in the last decades. This experience and manpower once led US general John Abizaid to describe its military as "the most powerful in the Middle East" among the Muslim-majority states (Hussain 2012).

In contrast, as described in the introductory section above, Saudi Arabia has very little military experience and its track record in Yemen since 2015 has demonstrated that up-to-date equipment alone is not enough to win wars (Brimelow 2017). In brief, Saudi Arabia, although much wealthier, is not a match for Iran in military terms and could not win in direct confrontation. It could, however, still win on symbolic grounds and by providing a rallying post against Iran. This explains the chosen location for the military engagement. In Syria (or Iraq or Lebanon for that matter), where Iranian involvement is direct and intensive, the effectiveness of Saudi Arabia's attempts to signal leadership ability and military prowess would be countered. Saudi Arabia is therefore confined to a mainly fi-

---

[7] Media framing shows signs that this advertising seems to work (see e.g. Trofimov 2015; Obaid 2015).
[8] While Saudi Arabia now boasts 227,000 active personnel, Iran still has 523,000, although the 2016 Saudi Arabian defense budget was more than three times that of its neighbor (IISS 2017, pp.376, 401).

nancial and diplomatic role there (Hokayem 2014). In Yemen, where no Iranian troops are present and only weak ties between Iran and the Houthis and their allies exist, such signaling is stronger.

Nevertheless, signaling is not completely divorced from material capabilities. To bolster legitimacy and provide credibility, it must be costly (Fearon 1997). This explains the immense financial commitment in Yemen as well as the willingness to sustain heavy unprecedented casualties. It is mirrored in the intense domestic and regional propaganda campaign surrounding the coalition and the fight against Iran in general (see Matthiesen & Sons 2016; Hashemi & Postel 2017).

This does not mean that this policy has been successful. To the contrary, most evidence implies that it failed. Iran was dragged into the conflict in Yemen and began supporting the Houthis, of which there was no prior evidence before the operation, becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Saudi and Emirati efforts to sideline Qatar and strengthen their position against Iran backfired as no unified block emerged. To the contrary, Iran and Turkey strengthened their relationships with Qatar and underbalancing is even more pronounced than previously. The Yemen war drags on for more than two years with little visible success (cf. Nasser 2016; El Yaakoubi 2017). Given the amount of investment in the effort by Saudi Arabia, ending the war without tangible results would be problematic for the ruling elite.

Conclusion

As many scholars have so far pointed out, Saudi Arabia's drive to an "assertive" foreign policy is induced by national and regional power and security concerns, given the perception of Iran as the main threat and the US withdrawal from the region. However, systemic balance-of-threat-theory, even if enhanced by ideational elements, struggles to explain the emergence of the multilateral coalition in the first place and the Saudi preference for engagement in Yemen instead of Syria, where Iranian influence is more entrenched and balancing attempts would therefore be more effective. Supplementing this well-established systemic element of regional power shifts with a domestic, regime-type centered element – symbolic functions of authoritarian institutions – helps explain these choices as a means to overcome underbalancing and establish itself as a candidate for regional leadership.

Autocracy research helps demystifying autocratic cooperation, with the emergent literature showing that autocracies are not necessarily that different from democracies when it comes to foreign policy behavior. Literature on the functions of authoritarian institutions illuminates the incentives for autocracies to instigate cooperation and bridges the gap between IR and Comparative Politics. Besides external and regime security, military coalitions have additional symbolic and signaling functions for some authoritarian states. The multilateral cooperation and

coalition-building by Saudi Arabia helps to illuminate the features and drivers of authoritarian cooperation.

At the same time, we need to embed these institutional functions into a regional and global scenario where a superpower is withdrawing from the region, creating a power vacuum which creates balancing behavior by aspiring regional hegemons. This is possibly the first time since the formation of the modern Middle East regional system that an external hegemon hands over the reins completely to regional actors, thereby enabling them but also forcing them to fend for themselves. This marks a watershed for regional actors' security cooperation and a constitutive phenomenon that might cement Saudi assertiveness as a more durable mark of Middle Eastern politics. It appears that the kingdom can no longer rely on "riyal-politik" alone, marking a return to the old-new politics of the "ghazwa".

Bio

Anna Sunik is a recent PhD graduate at Heidelberg University and an associate research fellow at GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg

References

AFP 2015, 'Saudi says Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan joining Yemen operation', Daily Star, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Mar-26/292153-saudi-says-egypt-morocco-pakistan-joining-yemen-operation.ashx>.

Al Arabiya 2015a, Ambassador al-Jubeir: 'Having Yemen fail cannot be an option', Washington D.C., retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://ara.tv/m2dpu>.

Al Arabiya 2015b, 'UAE endorses hosting HQ for joint GCC police force in Abu Dhabi', retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/04/19/UAE-endorses-hosting-HQ-for-joint-GCC-police-force-in-Abu-Dhabi.html>.

Allison, WT 2012, The Gulf War, 1990-91, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England] ; New York.

Al-Rasheed, M 2010, A history of Saudi Arabia 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ayubi, NN 1995, Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East, I. B. Tauris, London.

Bahi, R 2017, 'Iran, the GCC and the Implications of the Nuclear Deal: Rivalry versus Engagement', The International Spectator, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 89–101.

Barnett, M & Levy, JS 1991, 'Domestic sources of alliances and alignments: the case of Egypt, 1962-73', International Organization, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 369–

395.

Baxter, K & Simpson, K 2015, 'The United States and Saudi Arabia through the Arab Uprisings', Global Change, Peace & Security, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 139–151.

Binnie, J 2015a, 'Senegal joins the Saudi-led coalition', IHS Jane's Defence Weekly 360, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.janes.com/article/51161/senegal-joins-the-saudi-led-coalition>.

Binnie, J 2015b, 'Saudi, UAE forces deployed to Yemen', IHS Jane's Defence Weekly 360, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.janes.com/article/53117/saudi-uae-forces-deployed-to-yemen>.

Brimelow, B 2017, 'Saudi Arabia has the best military equipment money can buy — but it's still not a threat to Iran', Business Insider, retrieved March 14, 2018, from <http://www.businessinsider.de/saudi-arabia-iran-yemen-military-proxy-war-2017-12>.

Choi, A 2004, 'Democratic Synergy and Victory in War, 1816–1992', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 663–682.

Cigar, N 2016, Saudi Arabia and Nuclear Weapons: How do countries think about the bomb?, Routledge.

Colombo, S 2017, 'Foreign Policy Activism in Saudi Arabia and Oman. Diverging Narratives and Stances towards the Syrian and Yemeni Conflicts', The International Spectator, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 54–70.

Crescenzi, MJC, Kathman, JD, Kleinberg, KB & Wood, RM 2012, 'Reliability, Reputation, and Alliance Formation1', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 259–274.

Cronin, S 2013, 'Tribes, Coups and Princes: Building a Modern Army in Saudi Arabia', Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 2–28.

Darwich, M 2015, Machtprestige als Motiv des saudischen Krieges im Jemen, retrieved November 9, 2015, from <https://giga.hamburg/de/system/files/publications/gf_nahost_1506.pdf>.

David, SR 1991, 'Explaining Third World Alignment', World Politics, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 233–256.

El Yaakoubi, A 2017, 'Qatar crisis strains Saudi-led Arab alliance in Yemen war', Reuters, retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gulf-qatar-yemen/qatar-crisis-strains-saudi-led-arab-alliance-in-yemen-war-idUSKBN1A51XM>.

Erdmann, G, Bank, A, Hoffmann, B & Richter, T 2013, International cooperation of authoritarian regimes: Toward a conceptual framework, GIGA, retrieved November 11, 2015, from <http://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/77916>.

Fawcett, L 2015, 'Iran and the regionalization of (in)security', International Poli-

tics, vol. 52, no. 5, pp. 646–656.

Fearon, JD 1997, 'Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs', The Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 68–90.

Fürtig, H 2007, 'Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf: The Interregional Order and US Policy', Middle East Journal, vol. 61, no. 4, pp. 627–640.

Gaub, F 2016, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic alliance, EUISS, retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_1_Saudi_Islamic_alliance.pdf>.

Gause, FG, III 1990, Saudi-Yemeni relations: domestic structures and foreign influence, Columbia University Press, New York.

Gause, FG, III 1994, Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States, Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York.

Gause, FG, III 2017, 'Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the New Middle East Cold War', PS: Political Science & Politics, vol. 50, no. 03, pp. 672–675.

Ghosn, F, Palmer, G & Bremer, S 2004, 'The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description', Conflict Management and Peace Science, vol. 21, pp. 133–154.

Ginsburg, T 2015, 'Constitutions as Political Institutions', in J Gandhi & R Ruiz-Rufino (eds), Routledge Handbook of Comparative Political Institutions, Routledge, pp. 101–112.

Ginsburg, T & Simpser, A 2013, Constitutions in Authoritarian Regimes, Cambridge University Press.

Guzansky, Y 2014, 'Defence Cooperation in the Arabian Gulf: The Peninsula Shield Force Put to the Test', Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 640–654.

Halperin, MH, Siegle, JT & Weinstein, MM 2005, The democracy advantage: how democracies promote prosperity and peace, Routledge, New York.

Hashemi, N & Postel, D (eds) 2017, Sectarianization: mapping the new politics of the Middle East, Hurst & Company, London.

Heard-Bey, F 2006, 'Conflict Resolution and Regional Co-operation: The Role of the Gulf Co-operation Council 1970-2002', Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 199–222.

Henderson, S 2017, 'Meet the Two Princes Reshaping the Middle East', Politico, retrieved September 15, 2017, from <http://politi.co/2rtvbFI>.

Hennigan, WJ, King, L & Al-Alayaa, Z 2015, 'U.S. boosts support role in Saudi-led airstrikes on Yemen', LA Times, retrieved November 18, 2015, from

<http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-us-yemen-20150817-story.html>.

Hertog, S 2011, 'Rentier Militaries in the Gulf States: The Price of Coup-Proofing', International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 43, no. 03, pp. 400–402.

Herz, JH 1950, 'Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma', World Politics, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 157–180.

Hinnebusch, RA & Ehteshami, A 2014, The Foreign Policies of Middle East States, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado.

Hokayem, E 2014, 'Iran, the Gulf States and the Syrian Civil War', Adelphi Papers, vol. 54, no. 447–448, pp. 39–70.

Hubbard, B & Sheikh, ME 2015, 'WikiLeaks Shows a Saudi Obsession With Iran', The New York Times, retrieved November 6, 2015, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/17/world/middleeast/wikileaks-saudi-arabia-iran.html>.

Hussain, M 2012, 'Why war with Iran would spell disaster', Al-Jazeera English, retrieved September 15, 2017, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/201291194236970294.html>.

IISS 2017, 'Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa', The Military Balance, vol. 117, no. 1, pp. 351–416.

Juneau, T 2016, 'Iran's policy towards the Houthis in Yemen: a limited return on a modest investment', International Affairs, vol. 92, no. 3, pp. 647–663.

Kamrava, M 2013, Qatar: Small State, Big Politics, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Kedem, S 2016, 'Death of Emirati soldier in Yemen brings death toll to 99', 7Days UAE, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://7days.ae/death-emirati-soldier-yemen-brings-death-toll-99/93089>.

Kim, Y 2004, 'Does Prestige Matter in International Politics?', Journal of International and Area Studies, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 39–55.

Kirkpatrick, DD & Schmitt, E 2014, 'Arab Nations Strike in Libya, Surprising U.S.', The New York Times, retrieved January 16, 2017, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/26/world/africa/egypt-and-united-arab-emirates-said-to-have-secretly-carried-out-libya-airstrikes.html>.

Kober, A 2002, Coalition Defection: The Dissolution of Arab Anti-Israeli Coalitions in War and Peace, Greenwood Publishing Group.

Lai, B & Reiter, D 2000, 'Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992', Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 203–227.

Lake, DA 1992, 'Powerful pacifists: democratic states and war.', American Politi-

cal Science Review, vol. 86, no. 01, pp. 24–37.

Law, B 2016, 'Yemen war rapidly becoming as messy and complicated as the conflict in Syria', The Independent, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/yemen-war-rapidly-becoming-as-messy-and-complicated-as-the-conflict-in-syria-a6937026.html>.

Leeds, BA 2003, 'Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties', International Organization, vol. 57, no. 04, pp. 801–827.

Legrenzi, M & Gause, FG, III 2016, 'The international politics of the Gulf', in L Fawcett (ed), International Relations of the Middle East, Oxford University Press, pp. 304–323.

Long, JM 2004, Saddam's war of words: politics, religion, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1st ed., University of Texas Press, Austin.

Mabon, S 2015, Saudi Arabia and Iran: Power and Rivalry in the Middle East, I.B.Tauris.

Mabon, S 2017, 'Muting the trumpets of sabotage: Saudi Arabia, the US and the quest to securitize Iran', British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 0, no. 0, pp. 1–18.

Madabish, A 2015, 'Yemen: Hadi loyalists prepare to attack Sana'a as Saudi warplanes pound Houthi positions', Asharq Al-Awsat, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://english.aawsat.com/2015/08/article55344851/yemen-hadi-loyalists-prepare-to-attack-sanaa-as-saudi-warplanes-pound-houthi-positions>.

Massie, J 2013, 'Canada's war for prestige in Afghanistan: A realist paradox?', International Journal, vol. 68, no. 2, pp. 274–288.

Mattes, M & Rodríguez, M 2014, 'Autocracies and International Cooperation', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 527–538.

Matthiesen, T & Sons, S 2016, 'The Yemen War in Saudi Media', Muftah, retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://muftah.org/yemen-war-saudi-media/>.

Mustafa, A 2015, 'Arab League Sets New Defense Force at 40,000', Defense News, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/warfare/2015/04/01/united-arab-emirates-defense-force-league/70786878/>.

Mustafa, A & Mehta, A 2016, 'Syria: "Quicksand" for Saudi Forces?', Defense News, retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.defensenews.com/story/war-in-syria/2016/02/14/syria-quicksand-saudi-forces/80282096/>.

Nasser, A 2016, 'How long can Saudi Arabia afford Yemen war?', Al-Monitor, retrieved January 26, 2016, from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/origi-

nals/2016/01/yemen-war-saudi-arabia-economic-repercussions.html>.

Nonneman, G 2005, 'Determinants and Patterns of Saudi Foreign Policy: "Omnibalancing" and "Relative Autonomy" In Multiple Environments', in Saudi Arabia in the balance, Hurst & Co., pp. 315–351.

North, DC 1991, 'Institutions', The Journal of Economic Perspectives, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 97–112.

Obaid, N 2015, 'The liberation of south Yemen proves Saudi Arabia's power is growing', Telegraph, retrieved September 21, 2015, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudiarabia/11824954/The-liberation-of-south-Yemen-proves-Saudi-Arabias-power-is-growing.html>.

Odinius, D & Kuntz, P 2015, 'The limits of authoritarian solidarity: The Gulf monarchies and preserving authoritarian rule during the Arab Spring', European Journal of Political Research, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 639–654.

Partrick, N 2016, 'Saudi Arabia and Iran', in Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation, I.B.Tauris.

Pilster, U 2011, 'Are Democracies the Better Allies? The Impact of Regime Type on Military Coalition Operations', International Interactions, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 55–85.

Pollack, KM 2002, Arabs at war : military effectiveness, 1948-1991, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Neb. [u.a.].

Quinlivan, JT 1999, 'Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East', International Security, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 131–165.

Ray, JL 2013, 'War on Democratic Peace', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 198–200.

Reed, W 1997, 'Alliance Duration and Democracy: An Extension and Cross-Validation of "Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations"', American Journal of Political Science, vol. 41, no. 3, p. 1072.

Riedel, B 2016, 'Are latest war games just a face-saver for Riyadh?', Al-Monitor, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/saudi-arabia-military-exercises-goal-iran-isis-yemen.html>.

Saidy, B 2014, 'The Gulf Cooperation Council's Unified Military Command', Foreign Policy Research Institute, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://www.fpri.org/article/2014/10/the-gulf-cooperation-councils-unified-military-command/>.

Salisbury, P & Kerr, S 2015, 'UAE flexes military muscle alongside Saudis in Yemen', Financial Times.

Salloukh, BF 2017, 'Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State', PS: Political Science & Politics,

vol. 50, no. 03, pp. 660–663.

al-Saud, F bin S 2004, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf: Power Politics in Transition, I.B.Tauris.

Shaheen, K & Kamali Dehghan, S 2015, 'Gulf states consider Yemen ground offensive to halt Houthi rebel advance', The Guardian, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/26/gulf-states-yemen-ground-offensive-to-halt-houthi-rebel-advance>.

Simon, MW & Gartzke, E 1996, 'Political System Similarity And The Choice of Allies Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?', Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 617–635.

Smith Diwan, K 2015, 'Soldiers and the Nation', Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, retrieved November 11, 2015, from <http://www.agsiw.org/soldiers-and-the-nation/>.

Soest, C von 2015, 'Democracy prevention: The international collaboration of authoritarian regimes', European Journal of Political Research, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 623–638.

Sophia, M 2015, 'Kuwait Reintroduces Compulsory Military Service For Citizens', Gulf Business, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://gulfbusiness.com/kuwait-reintroduces-compulsory-military-service-citizens/>.

Thompson, N 2015, 'War on ISIS: Why Arab states aren't doing more - CNN.com', CNN, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/10/middleeast/isis-what-arab-states-are-doing/>.

Trofimov, Y 2015, 'Saudis Show Their Military Might in Yemen Conflict', Wall Street Journal, retrieved November 18, 2015, from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/in-yemen-conflict-saudis-show-military-might-1429747534>.

Ulrichsen, K 2017, 'Transformations in UAE's Foreign Policy', retrieved July 24, 2017, from <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2017/06/transformations-uae-foreign-policy-170608095838131.html>.

Valbjørn, M 2017, 'Strategies for Reviving the International Relations/Middle East Nexus after the Arab Uprisings', PS: Political Science & Politics, vol. 50, no. 03, pp. 647–651.

Vela, J 2014, 'GCC to set up regional police force based in Abu Dhabi', The National, retrieved September 23, 2016, from <http://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/gcc-to-set-up-regional-police-force-based-in-abu-dhabi>.

Walt, SM 1990, The origins of alliances, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Waltz, KN 1979, Theory of international politics, Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Weeks, J 2008, 'Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve', International Organization, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 35–64.

Weeks, J 2012, 'Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict', The American Political Science Review, vol. 106, no. 2, pp. 326–347.

Weeks, J 2014a, Dictators at War and Peace 1 edition., Cornell UP, Ithaca; London.

Weeks, J 2014b, 'Why Cooperate? Authoritarian Cooperation in the International System', International Studies Quarterly Online, retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.isanet.org/Publications/ISQ/Posts/ID/284/Why-Cooperate-Authoritarian-Cooperation-in-the-International-System>.

Young, J 2014, 'Even Dictators have Friends: Autocratic Cooperation in the International System', International Studies Quarterly Online, retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.isanet.org/Publications/ISQ/Posts/ID/283/categoryId/102/Even-Dictators-have-Friends-Autocratic-Cooperation-in-the-International-System>.

Germany's Leadership in Europe: Finding Its New Role

Hanns W. Maull

German Institute for Security and International Affairs (SWP)

hanns.maull@swp-berlin.org

Abstract

Against the background of the socio-economic difficulties in parts of the Eurozone, migratory pressures and a crisis of the project of European integration at home and a new geo-political environment in its neighborhood in the East and South, German foreign policy finds itself confronted with new expectations and demands from its partners. At the same time, Germany also faces, for the first time, a significant challenge to its traditional pro-European policies at home from the AfD, a new, right-wing populist party. This article draws on role theory to analyze how German foreign policy is adjusting to this new situation, focusing on both the *ego* and the *alter* parts of Germany's foreign policy role concept.

Keywords

German Foreign Policy, Role Theory, Civilian Power, Leadership, European Union

Introduction

Since the onset of the crisis in international financial markets in 2007, the European Union has been in the throes of a deep, perhaps existential crisis. Germany, while initially heavily affected by the fall-out of the turmoil in world markets, managed to overcome the resulting economic contraction rather quickly, drawing on some of the traditional strengths of its socio-economic and political model. As a result, Berlin found itself increasingly pushed into a key position within both the Eurozone crisis triggered by Greece's deteriorating public finances and the travails of the European Union under the onslaught of refugees from the South and South East. Reluctantly at first, but then with increasing confidence Berlin assumed the mantle of European leadership.

Yet to many observers (Kundnani 2011; Szabo 2015; Hellmann 2016; Roos 2017), this new Germany seemed to have moved away from its traditional, multi-lateralist foreign policy orientation as a "civilian power" (Maull 2007; Maull 2014; Szabo 2004: 74f). Does Berlin still pursue the civilizing of international relations,

within Europe and beyond, as this ideal-type role concept (Kirste/Maull 1996) suggests? Or was it shifting to another, less benign role concept that threatened to re-open the perennial "German question" (Kundnani 2014)?[1] This article tries to answer these questions by looking fist at Germany's European policies during the last decade, then at the expectations of others in Germany, and finally at the changing context, both at home and abroad, and within Europe and beyond, to which German European policies had to adapt.

Germany as a Civilian Power: Background

The notion of Germany (and Japan) as "civilian powers" originated from the observation that both West Germany and Japan – who by the late 1980s were again among the leading economic and military powers[2] - pursued foreign policies that diverged significantly from the traditional patterns of great power politics: both countries essentially had transferred responsibility for their national security to the United States (Maull 1990/91; Maull 2014). The explanation for this unusual foreign policy behavior seemed to lie with the specific identities and role concepts those two countries had adopted over the course of the second half of the last century.

Role Theory

The theoretical perspective this essay employs is role theory (Holsti 1970; Kirste/ Maull 1996; Aggestam 2004; Harnisch/Frank/Maull 2011). Role theory postulates that states, like individuals, are embedded in a social context in which they behave on the basis of norms they have acquired (through processes of socialization) and developed themselves (on the basis of beliefs about their own identity, past experiences and external circumstances). Role concepts reflect the expectation states have about their own behavior (*ego* dimension), but also the expectations of others (*alter* dimension).

Since national role concepts involve complex descriptions of identity (e.g., Germany as a Western European democracy, and a member state of the UN, the EU, NATO and the OSCE, to name just a few attributes) and desirable behavior (e.g., close cooperation with and integration into both the EU and NATO, remaining internationally competitive as an economy, and promoting human rights and

---

[1] The German question referred to the historical observation that Germany was too strong to be dominated by the rest of Europe but too weak to dominate the continent herself, producing recurrent struggles to establish control over Germany by other European powers or German hegemony in Europe.

[2] In 1989, West Germany's military expenditure, at USD 58.1 bill., was the fifth-largest defense budget worldwide, practically on par with that of the UK (59.9 bill.) and France (58.4 bill.; figures are in constant USD at 2015 prices. Data taken from SIPRI Database: Military expenditure by country, available at: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-2015-USD.pdf [March 24, 2018]). With a total strength of close to 500,000 soldiers, the Bundeswehr was the largest conventional NATO force in Europe.

democracy worldwide), they tend to be marked by inherent tensions and even contradictions between different norms. Role concepts therefore can provide no more than broad foreign policy guidelines, and they are in constant need of re-affirmation and/or modification to reflect changing circumstances (Maull 2014). In fact, they therefore represent no more than the dominant interpretations of national role concepts by political elites that resonate with their publics at any given moment of time, yet they usually are quite "sticky", often displaying surprising continuity.

Germany's Role Concept, 1949 to 2009

Continuity certainly has been the hallmark of (West) Germany's foreign policy role concept. This developed out of the constraints of a Germany and a Europe that was divided by the Cold War. The Cold War obliged West Germany to join NATO, and it brought massive opportunities for reconstruction and economic revival with the Marshall plan, which West Germany used as its vehicle to economic rehabilitation and integration. The choices made to integrate West Germany into the Western alliance system reflected external demands and exigencies as well as the preferences of the West German political leadership from 1949 onward. Those choices, in turn, conveyed important elements of a new political identity to West Germany, and therefore created a virtuous circle in which political culture, domestic politics and foreign policy worked to enforce each other mutually in a positive way (Hanrieder 1989; Haftendorn 2006).

The West German role concept, as it developed through the 1950s and 1960s to reach maturity in the early 1970s, closely resembled that of an ideal-type "civilian power". This particular role concept strives to "civilize" international politics, i.e. to transform them in ways that resemble the logic of domestic politics within a liberal democratic policy (Kirste/Maull 1996; Maull 2007, 2014). Its three most important elements are a) the will to shape future world politics (*Gestaltungswillen*), b) renunciation of autonomy (*Autonomieverzicht*) and c) policies that promote international norms even without specific national interests involved (*interessenunabhängige Normendurchsetzung*) (Fraenkler et al 1997).

(West) Germany's particular civilian power role concept closely resembled this ideal-type. Among the three most important aspects of Germany's role concept have been its dedication to **multilateralism** in general and to **European integration** in particular as means to transform interstate relations, within (Western) Europe and beyond. Traditionally, European integration was conceived as a supranational project that required a new concept of sovereignty ("shared sovereignty") that stood in stark contrast to the Westphalian concept of sovereignty that considered sovereignty as indivisible (Mattli 2000). West Germany found it easy to adopt such a "post-modern" concept of sovereignty for two major rea-

sons. First, it had to rely on external security guarantees provided, in the last analysis, by U.S. nuclear weapons, rather than on its own military strength, which was bound to alarm its neighbors. To reassure them, West Germany refrained from developing or acquiring any weapons of mass destruction and even from any unilateral national capacity of military power projection: the *Bundeswehr* was fully integrated into NATO's chain of command and therefore unable to conduct autonomous military operations. Second, West Germany, in Peter Katzenstein's felicitous phrase, was a "semi-sovereign country" also with regard to its domestic politics: the Länder shared in the exercise of power at the centre of the West German state.

Another important principle that West Germany pursued in its foreign policies was **rehabilitation**. The atrocities of Nazi Germany (military conquest and sub-jugation of much of Europe, the holocaust) had ended in 1945 not only with military and political defeat, but also with a moral catastrophe for the Germans. To re-establish respectability, West Germany therefore insisted on developing a democratic polity in which the rule of law and the respect for human rights would be central concerns. It also accepted the need for atonement, notably in its relationship with Israel, the Jewish state. Consequences flowing from this desire to gain rehabilitation and respectability were the acceptance of international law as superior to regular West German laws in the *Grundgesetz*, the West German constitution, the expectation that German foreign policy would be "principled" (*wertorientiert*) and uphold the international rule of law.

Finally, with regard to pan-European security, West Germany from the 1970s onward strove for **peace and stability** no longer primarily through deterrence, but through diplomacy, as well. This was the logic of *Ostpolitik*, which was initiated in 1969 and largely completed by 1972. The Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation) had to be accepted as part of and thus integrated into the pan-European order security order – a notion first systematically pursued in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that was convened for the first time in July 1973, passed the Helsinki documents in 1975 and on January 1st, 1995 became the "Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE). The basic assumption behind this policy was that war in Europe had to be prevented at all cost: military power simply did not hold any good options for Germany once deterrence had failed.[3]

Finally, West Germany's role concept also included the norm of **reconstruction and prosperity**. To overcome the destructions of World War II and integrate some twelve million Germans from the Eastern parts of pre-war Germany into

---

[3] The most succinct way to summarize these three core principles of Germany's foreign policy role concept are: "never alone", "never again" and "politics before force". See Maull, in: Colvin (ed) 2014, p. 404

West Germany, West Germany needed open markets provided within Europe, across the Atlantic and beyond. Benefitting from an undervalued currency in the system of fixed exchange rates established as part of the liberal international order of Bretton Woods, West Germany from 1950 to 1973 experienced a remarkable economic boom on the basis of the strong performance of some of its export industries (such as chemicals, steel, engineering, machine tools, and motor cars) (Abelshauser 2011).

Germany's Role Concept Revised

One of the great puzzles of German foreign policy have been the remarkable continuities between the foreign policies of West Germany until unification, and of united Germany since then. Why would the basic orientations of Germany in international relations essentially remain largely unchanged while both Germany itself and the world around it had been transformed profoundly? The explanation of this paradox needs to recognize, first, that West Germany's foreign policies had been hugely successful, with its ultimate achievement the peaceful reunification of the two Germanies within the framework of the 2+4 Treaty, i.e., with the blessing of the victorious powers over Nazi Germany, as well as the international community at large (Zelikov/Rice 1997). The very success of West Germany's foreign policy orientation naturally predisposed the German foreign policy establishment to extrapolate it into the future (a phenomenon that largely characterized the internal aspects of unification, as well, resulting in what has been described as "unification by absorption"). Secondly, however, this role concept was also deemed to be, and indeed probably was, well suited to the new European and international context in which German foreign policy now had to be conducted (Kohl 2007, 2014; Genscher 1995: 709ff, Heumann 2012: 284ff)

Still, the foreign policy role concept of the newly united Germany could hardly be expected to survive unification completely unchanged, and change there was, despite the essential continuity in foreign policy orientations. The most important of those modifications concerned the use of military force. As we have seen, as part of its strategy to build trust and gain acceptance with its Western allies, West Germany had accepted important constraints on its military power, most notably in renouncing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (Haftendorn 2006: 97f). The 2+4 Treaty reconfirmed some of those self-imposed constraints and imposed new upper limits on the personnel strength of the *Bundeswehr* (*Vertrag über die abschließende Regelung in Bezug auf Deutschland*, 12. September 1990, available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zwei-Plus-Vier-Vertrag. pdf?uselang=de [Sept. 10, 2017].

During the 1990s, Germany's attitude towards the use of force changed, driven by the wars of disintegration of the former Yugoslavia that took place in the

immediate neighborhood of Germany (Philippi 1996). While during the Gulf war in 1991 to liberate Kuwait, newly united Germany had come under strong criticism for its military abstention and its "cheque-book diplomacy", the foreign policy establishment subsequently came to accept the need for Germany to participate, under certain circumstances, in multilateral military operations to keep or even to enforce peace, and it eventually also was able to build public support for *Bundeswehr* participation in military operations beyond individual and collective self-defense (Meiers 2006). All such operations had to be authorized by parliament, however, and they were to be confined to multilateral interventions that enjoyed international legitimacy.[4]

Other changes were less apparent at first. Thus, there was a reversal in the relative importance of Germany's political partners and institutional memberships. While it was axiomatic that West German foreign policy would do anything to avoid having to choose between its two principal allies, the United States and France, and between NATO and the European Community during the Cold War, the security relationship with the United States and NATO ultimately were paramount. After 1990, while Germany continued to emphasize the importance of both partners and both organizations, France and the European Union came to be more important than the security alliance with the U.S. A first sign of this subtle shift came when Chancellor Helmut Kohl politely ignored the invitation of U.S. President George H.W. Bush in 1989 (Bush 1989) to become America's "partner in leadership". Germany also changed its attitude towards European integration from a federalist position that emphasized the supranational aspects of the European project towards an intergovernmental approach that relied less on European institutions and more on cooperation between member governments.

In 2003, Germany parted ways diplomatically with U.S. policies towards Iraq when it voted - with France, Russia and China - against the authorization of Washington's policy of counter-proliferation by military intervention and regime change in the United Nations Security Council, in which Germany at the time was a non-permanent member (Szabo 2004; Joetze 2010). The ultimate reason for the split was that Washington expected Berlin to support a policy, based on flimsy evidence and unpersuasive arguments, that fundamentally contradicted Germany's foreign policy role concept as a "civilian power" (Rudolf 2005). This was the first time since unification that Germany failed to meet the expectations and demands of one of its most significant "alter" actors, the United States. More

---

[4] The decisive step in this process was a ruling of Germany's Constitutional Court on the participation of the Bundeswehr in a range of enforcement missions in the former Yugoslavia, as well as in other parts of the world (participation in UN missions in Cambodia and Somalia). The Court found such operations to be constitutional if they were undertaken within the context of "systems of collective security" (the Court somewhat oddly deemed both NATO and the EU, not only the United Nations, to meet this requirement) but stipulated the need for explicit parliamentary authorization in each case (Philippi 1996: pp. 48ff).

remarkably still, the German government in 2002/3 opposed Washington initially on its own; France's position to side with Germany on this issue was taken only in February 2003, shortly before the vote in the UN Security Council (Szabo 2004: 42ff; Joetze 2010: 130f)

Overall, there was a shift towards a more robust and open pursuit of German interests within the European Union: German policies towards the EU, while still favoring further integration in principle, became "weaker, meaner and leaner" (Harnisch and Schieder 2006; Schieder 2014). Examples for this were European policies on immigration or European security and defense. This new, more robust approach to European integration was nicely summarized by the then Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maiziere, in his much-quoted statement: "For our European friends, they need to come to terms with the fact that Germany is going to act just as other European countries do in Brussels", confirming that Germany was now "…defending its national interest with a lot of vigour" (Chaffin 2010).

Expectations in German Leadership

In retrospect, one can see clearly how the reunification of Germany and Europe from 1990 onward changed the relative balance of power within Europe in favor of Germany. During the 1990s, Europe was preoccupied internally with issues of enlargement and deepening, and externally with the wars of disintegration in former Yugoslavia. In this phase, Germany tried to assume a leadership role both with regard to managing the conflicts on the Balkans and (more successfully) in promoting enlargement through assembling political coalitions within NATO and the EU. This eventually led to the "widening" of NATO and EU membership and substantial modifications ("deepening") in the way the two organizations worked (Paterson 2005). In the context of Yugoslavia, however, German leadership was less successful; eventually, it was the alignment of U.S. and French policies that allowed NATO intervene to pacify first Bosnia (1995) and then also Kosovo (1999) (Maull 2000).

Within the European context, the peak of German "leadership from behind", a rather traditional, well-tried form of exercising influence through tenacious and shrewd coalition-building, during this period came with the German EU presidency in the first half of 2007. During that presidency, Berlin was able to help the European Union overcome the deep crisis into which it had fallen as a result of the rejection of the EU Constitutional Treaty by referenda in the Netherlands and France in 2005. The aborted Constitutional Treaty was replaced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which saved much of the substance of the proposed Constitutional Treaty and enabled the EU to regain its footing. During that period, Germany largely met the expectations from its European partners by exercising a leading role through discreetly but effectively organizing diplomatic solutions and finan-

cially underwriting them (Kietz/Perthes 2007). We therefore find a rather close fit between Germany's own European policy role concept (the "ego part") and that of its European and transatlantic partners (the "alter part").

Within NATO, Germany moved from the abstentionism during the Gulf War of 1991/1992 to participation in peace enforcement missions in the former Yugoslavia (1995 in Bosnia, 1999 over Kosovo) and the deployment of Special Forces in Afghanistan as part of the "unqualified solidarity" expressed by the German government with the United States after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. During the Iraq crisis in 2002/2003, German relations with the U.S. as the power that dominated NATO deteriorated dramatically, when Germany not only refused to consider joining the U.S.-assembled "coalition of the willing" to invade Iraq, but also – together with Russia, China and eventually also France - opposed Washington in the UN Security Council.

The Financial Crisis

The world financial crisis ushered in a new phase of German leadership in Europe. It began with the implosion of the frothy American housing market and reached its apogee in September 2008 with the failure of Lehman Brothers, one of the largest U.S. investment banks. This leadership overall was ushered in a new phase of German leadership in Europe. This leadership overall was more forceful, more open and less flexible than what West Germany had practiced before unification and united Germany since. Its foundations lay in Germany's rapid economic recovery from the fall-out of the crisis in 2009 from 2010 onward. This successful recovery has frequently been ascribed to economic and social policy reforms undertaken by the Red-Green coalition government, the so-called Hartz IV reforms that became effective in 2005. Beyond that, it was seen – both within Germany and outside – as vindicating the specific socio-economic and political model that West Germany had evolved (Paterson 2011; Dehousse/Fabry 2010; Bouin 2017: 24ff). Central to this model were an emphasis on the international competitiveness of Germany's traditional export industries, cooperative industrial relations that allowed business and trade unions to negotiate moderate wage demands in line with increases in productivity, as well as sound public finances, low inflation and a vibrant sector of small and medium-sized enterprises (Brunnenmeier/James/Landau 20017: 56-82).

It was the success of Germany in adapting to the consequences of the world financial and economic crisis in 2009/2010 that led many observers to include Germany in the category of "rising powers", such as Chinas, India and Brazil.[5]

---

[5] Thus, in 2013 Germany was for the first time chosen as the most favourably viewed country in the world by a BBC poll that surveyed more than 26,000 people worldwide (BBC poll: Germany most popular country in the world, May 23, 2013, available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22624104 [March 25, 2018], , and by 2017, Chancellor Merkel was designated the "most

The divergence of economic performance in terms of international competitiveness and public finances within the eurozone, which had been going on since the beginning of the introduction of the euro, was dramatically accentuated by the fallout from the crisis when a new Greek government in 2009 announced that Greece's public debt was in fact much higher than previous governments were willing to admit (Sandbu 2015: 51). The resulting upheaval in bond markets soon turned contagious, affecting Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy. This put Germany's leadership in the eurozone on the spot, forcing it to choose between financial solidarity with the Southern eurozone countries and its own public financial objectives. Its policy responses tried to square that circle: they gave precedence to Germany's traditional preference for fiscal probity but also strove to accommodate the acute financial needs of the southern eurozone member countries in order to keep the eurozone intact. The *ego* role expectations in this situation focused on the two objectives of sound domestic public finances and keeping the eurozone together. The *alter* role expectations, however, emphasized Germany's responsibility to help overcome the crisis, downplaying the implications for Germany's own public financial position and the consequences of "moral hazard" through accommodating the economic policy preferences of Southern European countries for debt-financed growth (Dehousse/Fabry 2010; Sandbu 2015).

In fact, by first accepting huge financial rescue packages to help Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain manage their public debt crises and then by tacitly tolerating, if not encouraging, the European Central Bank to smother the crisis with its monetary policy of "whatever it takes", Germany may have chosen the worst of all possible options (Sandbu 2015: 219f). However that may be, it was clear that German policies were decisive in shaping the European responses to the crisis, and that they were controversial: in Greece, both Angela Merkel and her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, who came to epitomize the German policy response in public perceptions across Europe, were reviled in terms that drew explicit parallels to the Nazi period of European history (Hellmann 2016). The specific role segment of Germany's policies within the eurozone now became hotly contested bot within Germany and abroad. The result was that those policies were politicized domestically as well as internationally: Berlin no longer could have its cake and eat it, as it were, by shaping Europe by stealth.

---

powerful woman" in the world for the seventh consecutive time by Forbes Magazine. In 2015, she was also chosen by TIME as the Person of the Year. See also: Minton Beddoes, Zanny: Europe's Reluctant Hegemon, in: The Economist, June 15, 2013 (Special Report), available at: https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21579140-germany-now-dominant-country-europe-needs-rethink-way-it-sees-itself-and [March 24, 2018]. In fact, the German government seemed to adopt that perspective of Germany as a rising power itself with a Policy Paper entitled: Globalisierung gestalten – Partnerschaften ausbauen – Verantwortung teilen. See Bundesregierung 2012, Konzept der Bundesregierung, Berlin 2012, available at: http://www.bogota.diplo.de/contentblob/3606954/Daten/2357167/Gestaltungsmaechtekonzeptdt.pdf [Sept. 5, 2017]

The Migration Crisis

The second major crisis to hit European integration over the last decade was the refugee crisis of 2015 (The Economist 2015). When asylum seekers and migrants, many of them from war-torn Syria, started to flood into Europe via Turkey, the Mediterranean Sea and the Balkan route in their hundred thousands, Berlin unilaterally decided to open Germany's borders to those refugees stranded in South Eastern Europe. Initially, this move was popular within Germany, and it further improved Germany's (and Angela Merkel's) image abroad as the torch-bearer of civilized politics ("Merkel the bold. On refugees, Germany's Chancellor is brave, decisive and right", in: The Economist, Sept. 5, 2015). Yet as in the eurozone crisis, Berlin's initial policy soon changed to reconcile divergent and potentially contradictory domestic, European and international policy objectives. As in the response to the eurozone crisis, the refugee policies quickly became contested both domestically and internationally (The Economist 2015; Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2015). However, in the refugee crisis Germany's power and influence over other EU member states were much more limited. Germany's efforts to distribute asylum seekers within the European Union based on quota for each member state, while formally adopted, were at best partly successful in practice. Faced with contradictory expectations from both within and without, Berlin reverted to a more traditional leadership style that focused on building consensus and brokering compromise solutions (such as the European Union deal with Turkey to contain the flow of refugees from Syria to Europe) that involved Germany accepting a large share of the costs of conflict management (in this case, by accepting – both in absolute numbers and in relative terms, i.e. as a ratio of the population - the largest influx of refugees among the big member states).[6] Still, as a result of the politicization of the refugee issue both within Germany and within Europe, Germany's leadership role and policies once more were heavily criticized.

The Crisis of the Pan-European Security Order

The third recent crisis in which Germany assumed a key role concerned the relationship with Russia. As a result of persistent state failure and political instability in the Ukraine, the pro-Russian leadership in Kiev, torn between conflicting pressures and inducements from Russia and the European Union, was toppled by a public revolt and eventually replaced by a pro-Western government. Moscow responded by occupying and annexing the Crimea and supporting secessionist movements in Eastern Ukraine (Charap/Colton 2017: 114-141).

Again, the key role of brokering a common European and indeed a Western po-

---

[6] In relative terms, Sweden absorbed the largest inflow of refugees, but the left-wing government in Stockholm eventually was forced to shift its policies towards a heavily restrictive approach. Among the large member states, Italy found itself in a particularly exposed position due to geographic factors, but many refugees wanted to move on within the European Union. See The Economist 2015.

sition fell on Germany. Together with France, Germany negotiated the Minsk agreements that to this day define the – as yet unrealized - outlines of a political compromise solution for the conflict. To put pressure on Russia, Germany supported a package of European economic sanctions against Russia but resolutely refused to contemplate military measures advocated by more hawkish elements in the United States, such as arming the Ukraine. Since Germany accounted for the largest share of EU trade with and foreign direct investment in Russia, the costs of the sanctions had to be borne disproportionately by German business (Adomeit 2017).

Once more, Berlin was faced with rather divergent expectations both at home and abroad, and again the government opted for the traditional form of German leadership that combined the search for a common approach with a willingness to assume a disproportionate part of the costs of the policies adopted.

Overall, then, it appears as if Germany's domineering approach in the eurozone crisis management may represent a rather untypical case. Moreover, even in that case, the actual policies of Germany clearly represented an effort to reconcile Germany's domestically induced policy preferences with its traditional pro-integrationist approach to the European Union. This came across most clearly in Angela Merkel's famous phrase: "Scheitert der Euro, scheitert Europa" (Merkel 2010). This statement outlined one crucial assumption made by the Merkel government in this crisis, and it had two important implications. The assumption is obvious: the German government held that any break-up of the eurozone would endanger the whole edifice of European integration and thus undermine the overriding policy objective that German foreign policy had pursued since West Germany was founded in 1949. The first implication is that Berlin would do "whatever it takes" to keep the eurozone together, and – if need be - accept significant costs in doing so. The second implication was that keeping the eurozone together represented a very high, perhaps the highest foreign policy priority for Berlin. Although both at home and abroad role expectations concerning Germany's policies in Europe had become more diverse and more contradictory, Berlin was able to secure support for policies that stayed reasonably close to its traditional civilian power role concept, though they were clearly "leaner and meaner" than before the crisis.

What has changed since 2009 is a widespread perception abroad that Germany's international stature, power and influence had risen recently and would continue to rise further. This perception may have been encouraged by the rather single-minded focus of the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition government led by Angela Merkel from 2009 to 2013 on two foreign policy issues: the eurozone crisis and the pursuit of "strategic" partnerships with the so-called "rising powers", such as China, India, Brazil and Russia, which were pursued to strengthen Germany's export industries. It was therefore perhaps hardly surprising (but still mislead-

ing) that observers found German foreign policies to carry a whiff of mercantilism; they therefore characterized those policies as the policies of a "geo-economic power" (Kundnani 2011; Szabo 2015).[7]

The Domestic Context of German European Policy

Role theory assumes that in international affairs, states function as unitary actors. Modelling states as black boxes implies that their internal workings may be neglected for the purposes of foreign policy analysis. This assumption seems justified if one or both of the following conditions apply. First, the domestic politics that shape foreign policy decisions and, ultimately, a role concept permit coherent and consistent foreign policy results over time and across issue areas. Second, the international environment imposes coherence and consistency on a state's foreign policy. In either case, the domestic politics of foreign policy decision-making are likely to be top-down, with strong leadership by the foreign policy establishment (i.e., the government leaders and their entourage; parliamentary parties; the foreign and security policy bureaucracies; foreign policy-related interest groups; and think tanks, the media and the attentive public).

Do those circumstances apply to German foreign policy? They certainly both did before unification, when German foreign policy was confronted with a dangerous, highly militarized conflict between two antagonistic blocks. Since then, Germany has been surrounded by friendly countries, and external threats to German security have become much less obvious and more diffuse. Coherence and consistency of German foreign policy may also have been affected by a tendency towards complexity and fragmentation in policy-making, driven by the logics of federalism and coalition politics, the proliferation of vested interests and advocacy groups, and a shift in political priorities away from external relations towards domestic issues.[8]

We do not know enough about decision-making processes in German foreign policy in recent years to come to a clear conclusion,[9] but there does seem to be

[7] I explain why this claim is misleading in Maull 2018. If Germany were indeed a geo-economic power of the kind suggested by Kundnani and Szabo, Berlin would not have imposed sanctions on Russia after the annexation of the Crimea. In fact, of course, Germany even took the lead in persuading other EU member states to follow that policy line and has managed to keep this coalition together at least to the time of this writing (September 2017).

[8] That shift is obvious when we consider the changing composition of the federal budget and its development over time: the share of the external sector (which groups together public expenditure on defense, diplomacy and development assistance) fell from over 20 per cent to a low of 13.3 in 2011, to rise slowly again to 15.4 per cent (2017). See Hellmann 2016; own calculations based on official data taken from https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/75833/umfrage/ausgabenstruktur-im-bundeshaushalt/ [Sept. 10, 2017].

[9] But see, e.g., Hellmann, Gunther/Baumann, Rainer/ Bösche,Monika/Herboth, Benjamin/ Wagner, Wolfgang: De-Europeanization by Default? Germany´s EU Policy in Defense and Asylum, in: Foreign Policy Analysis (2005)1, pp. 143-164 und Maull 2012.

evidence for considerable influence of domestic interest groups on German foreign policy, to the detriment of foreign policy cohesion and consistency, and possibly also its quality: if important foreign policy decisions were guided by narrow sectoral domestic considerations or domestic political tactics, this could damage Germany's national interests. An example of this may have been the famous decision of the German government to abstain in the UN Security Council vote on UNSCR 1973 in 2011, which authorized the use of force against the Libyan government to protect the uprising in Eastern Libya against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi (Maull 2011). This crisis coincided with a regional election in Germany, in which considerable stakes were at play for the Free Democrats, the smaller party in Merkel's coalition government; the leader of the Free Democrats, Guido Westerwelle, served as Foreign Minister and may have wanted to polish his credentials as the torch-bearer of the foreign policy "culture of restraint". Others include German policies on asylum and security, on energy and on emissions in the context of the European Union (Hellmann et al. 2004). There also has been what Sebastian Harnisch and others call "domestication": the backlash led by the Länder and the Bundestag against the dominant position of the Executive in foreign and European policy making and the constraints imposed on the latter, in particular, by the Constitutional Court (Harnisch 2006).

To the extent German foreign policy coherence and consistency has been degraded by such intrusions of domestic interests and priorities in ways that would affect Germany's national interests, this would devalue the role theoretical approach as an analytical tool. As I have argued elsewhere, the evidence overall suggests that there has been an erosion in German foreign policy coherence, consistency and effectiveness, but not yet to a degree that would undermine the analytical and explanatory value of a role theoretical approach (Maull 2018).

The International Context of German European Policy

The end of the Cold War dramatically transformed not only Germany itself, but also Germany's foreign policy environment, within Europe, but also beyond. The commitment to foreign policy continuity in the mold of "civilian power" therefore seemingly represented a paradox. From Germany's perspective, however, it still made sense to work for civilizing international relations in this new, uncertain and fluid environment within and beyond Europe, and "effective multilateralism" (EU 2004), an essential aspect of Germany's foreign policy role concept, indeed seemed to be a good way to promote that objective.

Yet Germany's ability to contribute to civilizing international relations depended, apart from its willingness to do so, on three important preconditions largely outside Germany's control. Those three preconditions were a) influential partners that were willing to work closely with the civilian power Germany, b) vibrant

international institutions to help make multilateralism "effective", and c) an international environment that had undergone civilizing processes at least to some extent. They key here was the absence of violence as a way to settle conflicts within and between nations. As the international context in which German foreign policy was conducted continued to evolve since 1990, all three preconditions became increasingly precarious, forcing Germany to re-think and modify its traditional foreign policy orientations.

Partners: France, the US, Russia

Traditionally, West Germany's most important partners had been – in that order - the United States, France (and the other members of the original European Community), the United Kingdom and, in a rather different way, the Soviet Union as the principal threat to West Germany's security and the holder of the key to relations with East Germany. With the end of the Cold War, those countries remained united Germany's most important partners, but with some subtle changes: France, rather than the United States now assumed the number one position as indispensable partner, while Russia, the successor state to the Soviet Union, ceased to be a military threat and became a potential partner in several new ways. Russia was a country in transition towards a new political and socio-economic order that needed external support and looked to Germany as its principal source of modernization. Russia was a key member of the new pan-European order that was now institutionalized in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) (renamed to become the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in January 1995. Finally, Russia represented a defeated former Superpower that needed to be reconciled with its past and its new role in world politics.

With the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, the partnership with the United States underwent important changes, particularly since the year 2000. The first administration of George W. Bush from the beginning sharply veered away from the multilateralist policies of its predecessors on, among other issues, climate change policies, arms control with Russia, and the multilateral regimes to contain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons (Daalder/O'Hanlon 2003). Its response to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001 further exacerbated tensions within the German – U.S. alliance despite the initial strong expressions of solidarity with America and active support for its military intervention in Afghanistan by Germany. The first deep crisis in the transatlantic relationship erupted over the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, which Berlin refused to support in the UN Security Council (Szabo 2004; Joetze 2010). A further shock came with the revelations of Edward Snowden about the activities of U.S. intelligence agencies in Germany, including the hacking of Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone (Kundnani

2016). Finally, there was the election of Donald Trump as 45th president of the United States and the first experiences in their personal encounters that caused Angela Merkel publicly to muse about the reliability of the United States as a partner for Germany.[10] At the time of this writing, in the fall of 2017, there can be no doubt that the relationship between Germany and America has undergone a profound transformation that will weaken the ability of the two governments to work together effectively in civilizing international relations.

Since 1990, Germany's most important bilateral relationship in its foreign relations has been with France, rather than with America (Krotz/Schild 2013: 218f). Yet that relationship, too, has been significantly undermined, mostly by the deep crisis of France's socio-economic model and its political system (ibid.: 242-5). The repercussions of the international financial and economic crisis in 2009/2010 laid bare the profound structural problems of the French economy, and three successive presidents (Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Francois Hollande) showed themselves unwilling or unable to address and resolve those problems. The end of the Cold War and German unification had resulted in a shift in the relative weight of France and Germany within the European Community, now reborn as the European Union; the introduction of the euro, which France had hoped would work against a German preponderance within European integration, did little to halt that shift. Moreover, successive enlargements of the European Union, and notably the "big bang" enlargement of 2004 that brought ten new members into the European Union, significantly diluted the weight of any individual member state; it affected France particularly strongly through the loss of its formerly dominant position in the political culture of European institutions. While Paris and Berlin tried hard to keep up the appearances of the Franco-German tandem, since 2010 at the latest, the imbalances and the inherent weaknesses of that bilateral relationship have become all too apparent. The revival of the Franco-German partnership had to await the denouement of the socio-economic and political crisis of France, which may now have begun with the implosion of the old party system of the French Vth Republic and the electoral victory of Emmanuel Macron.

Since the turn of the century, the German partnership with Russia also has become increasingly fragile (Adomeit 2017; for a different view: Szabo 2015). The

---

[10] How badly the first encounter between President Trump and Chancellor Merkel must have been can be gauged from the remarkable account by veteran journalist and commentator Roger Cohen: The Offender of the Free World, in: New York Times, March 28, 2017, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/28/opinion/the-offender-of-the-free-world.html [Sept. 18, 2017]. The Chancellor later publicly observed that Europe could no longer fully rely on the United States and had to take care of its fate itself („Die Zeiten, in denen wir uns auf andere völlig verlassen konnten, die sind ein Stück weit vorbei und deshalb kann ich nur sagen, wir Europäer müssen unser Schicksal wirklich in die eigene Hand nehmen"). See: Enormer Wandel der politischen Rhetorik, in: FAZ, May 29, 2017, available at: http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/rede-von-angela-merkel-so-reagieren-die-medien-15037304.html [Sept. 18, 2017].

"Modernisierungspartnerschaft" failed because the Russian economy was badly suited for it and the Russian leadership was not interested in reforming it. The pan-European regional order of the OSCE was undermined domestically in many of the former Soviet republics, including Russia itself, by the rise of authoritarianism and corruption, and internationally by a lack of sensibility and the desire to push one's own advantage as the "winners" in the East-West conflict (Sakwa 2015). Finally, the opportunity to reconcile Russia with its past and its new role was undermined domestically by the rise of Vladimir Putin and his associates, and internationally by the aggressive unilateralism of the George W. Bush presidency from 2001 to 2009 that *inter alia* sought to enlarge NATO to include Georgia, Moldova and – most alarmingly for Moscow - the Ukraine (Charap/Colton 2017).

Institutions: The WTO, the EU and the Eurozone, NATO, the UN, the OSCE

As a civilian power, Germany depends on effective multilateral institutions for at least two important reasons. First, the civilian power role concept implies a degree of international specialization and therefore also of vulnerability. It therefore benefits from an environment in which rules are respected and violence shunned, and finds it particularly difficult to operate in environments that are "uncivilized". Second, multilateral institutions can function as "force multipliers" to enhance Germany's international influence and recognition. Germany depends on that, as its power portfolio is skewed towards the "soft" end of the spectrum of power resources, and its overall weight in world politics is limited, despite its strong economy and large export sector, by its size and population.

Among the international institutions that are crucial for underpinning Germany's foreign policy, only one continues to function reasonably well. This is the **World Trade Organization**, the successor to the old General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that had governed world trade outside the socialist block during the Cold War. When the WTO was established on Jan. 1st, 1995, this was a hugely important international achievement; it significantly strengthened the international order in a key realm that was particularly important and beneficial for Germany. Although there are significant uncertainties that overshadow the future of the WTO (notably its failure to complete any significant new measures of trade liberalization during the Doha Round, and the shift towards regional and bilateral free trade agreements), the WTO at the time of writing represents one of the few vibrant elements in the present international order (Hoekman forthcoming).

Enlargement and the deepening of the **European Union**, including the Economic and Monetary Union that led to the establishment of the euro as the single currency for (at this time) 19 member states of the EU, were similarly important and consequential for Germany. Unlike the WTO, however, the eurozone and the

European Union have been in crisis since 2010 at the latest (Bouin 2017). This has two important implications for Germany as a civilian power. First, the crisis of European integration absorbs a lot of German energy and resources that otherwise might be available for other purposes. Second, the crisis of the EU largely deprives Germany of the force multiplier that a vibrant EU could represent as a force in world politics. In many ways, the EU itself may be considered a civilian power; it thus could be an ideal partner for Germany 's efforts to civilize international relations. Yet so far, the record of the EU in promoting that objective has been underwhelming (Toje 2010).

NATO continues to be important as the ultimate guarantor of Germany's hard security against certain types of threats, as well as the institution that in many ways both represents and embeds the bilateral partnership with the United States. NATO's troubles probably are less severe than those of the EU, but they are real nonetheless. Some of them are, in fact, related to the problems of the EU. As the commitment of the United States to European security battles against the rise of China in East Asia and a new wave of American isolationism domestically, Europe will have to take on greater responsibility for providing security in Europe and its neighborhood to the East and South. This, however, presupposes effective multilateral security cooperation among the Europeans, be it in NATO or in the EU. So far, however, they have not been willing to assume that burden in either of the two organizations.

Finally, there is the OSCE, as the institutional framework for the pan-European regional order and the multilateral context for Germany's relationship with Russia. The OSCE has always been the weakest of Germany's multilateral institutional force multipliers. In the early 1990s, it was unable to prevent the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, and could do little to contain similar conflicts between former Soviet republics. It suffered from a blatant misfit between the liberal democratic and humanitarian vision of its Charter of Paris and the authoritarian and repressive realities in many of its member states. And it did nothing to sustain the pan-European regional order when Russia and the West moved apart over the last decade, and very little to contain the violence and tensions between the two sides when they fell out with each other over Ukraine in 2013/14 (Charap/Colder 2017).

Violence and the Use of German Forces

Already in the early years of the 1990s, events in the Persian Gulf demonstrated that the world, that even Europe were much less civilized places than Germany would have liked. At that time, however, it still was preoccupied with the aftermath of unification, and therefore decided to confine its participation in the liberation of Kuwait largely to a huge check to underwrite the U.S. war effort. Then

came the wars in former Yugoslavia. They taught a reluctant Germany that under certain circumstances it had to accept the use of military force as a necessary means to advance civilizing international relations. Thus, the *Bundeswehr* participated in the NATO enforcement missions in Bosnia in 1995 (with a mandate by the UN Security Council), and over Kosovo in 1999 (without such a mandate, which had been vetoed by Russia). It also played an important role in stabilizing the precarious peace in the Balkans since 1995 (Philippi 1996; Maull 2000).

The decision to support the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and international efforts to re-build the Afghan state after the Taliban regime then hammered the lesson home: the *Bundeswehr* mission in Afghanistan, the Germans came to realize, was not humanitarian and development work carried out by soldiers but a brutal war involving casualties and moral uncertainties. Public support for military force projection vanished, the "culture of restraint" once more flourished. Germany would be a civilian power, not a warrior state (Flemes/Ebert 2016: 6-8; Peltzer 2017).

Conclusion

Is Germany a "rising power"? We have considered this question with regard to Berlin's new role in Europe, and the answer, unsurprisingly, is nuanced. There certainly has been a change in the perception of Germany's role, both abroad and within the country itself. There also have been instances (such as the eurozone crisis) where German leadership has been forceful and single-minded. Against this, there are other cases, however, in which German leadership has been more traditional (as in the migration crisis and, most obviously, in the Ukraine crisis). This traditional form of German leadership within Europe might be called "leadership from behind": it relies on assessing not only Germany's own stakes, but also the interests of its partners, and on carefully building and sustaining policy coalitions based on common positions hammered out through patient diplomacy. This form of leadership also involves significant side payments: Germany will often assume a disproportionate share of the collective burden of those policies.

In both forms of leadership exercised by Germany, its "European vocation" (Paterson 2010) plays an important role: both Berlin's foreign policy establishment and the attentive public continue to believe in the centrality of European integration. In that sense, as well as in its other core orientations, it is not so much Germany's role concept that has changed as the context in which it has to be played out and the policies of its partners, as Frank-Walter Steinmeier, then still Foreign Minister, claimed with some justification (Steinmeier 2016).

Yet there are worrying signs of erosion and attrition surrounding Germany's role as a "civilian power", both abroad and at home. Internationally, it is changes within its key partner countries, such as the United States, Russia, and France (as well

as the UK and Italy) and the persistent difficulties of important international institutions (such as the EU, NATO, and the OSCE) that hamper the effectiveness of German foreign policy. Domestically, it is the growing constraints imposed on Germany's foreign policies by vested interests and civil society, and the robust intrusion of calculations of domestic politics into foreign policy decisions that interfere with Germany's foreign policy conduct. Behind all those new constraints, troubles and challenges in German Foreign policy are two ultimative troubling questions. First, what does Germany's commitment to Europe mean? What kind of Europe does Germany want, what kind of Europe would it be willing to accept and support, and to what extent would it be prepared to make sacrifices for this commitment? Second, what would Germany do if it had no effective multilateral institutions anymore, nor reliable partners?

Bio

Hanns W. Maull is Senior Distinguished Fellow at the German Institute for Security and International Affairs (SWP) and Senior Policy Fellow for China's Global Role at the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS), Berlin. He teaches as Adjunct Professor of International Relations and Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins SAIS Europe Bologna Center. Until 2013, he held the chair for Foreign Policy and International Relations at the University of Trier, Germany.

References

Abelshauser, Werner: Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart, München: C.H. Beck 2011.

Adomeit, Hannes: German - Russian Alienation: Kremlin is to Blame, August 2, 2017, available at: https://www.raamoprusland.nl/dossiers/europa/667-german-russian-alienation-kremlin-is-to-blame [Sept. 15, 2017].

Aggestam, Lisbeth: A European Foreign Policy? Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in Britain, France and Germany, Stockholm: Stockholm University Dept. of Political Science 2004 (= Stockholm Studies in Politics 106).

Bouin, Olivier: The End of Europe as We Knew It, A Political Economy Analysis, in: Castells, Manuel (ed): Europe's Crises, Oxford: Polity 2017, pp. 11-48.

Brunnenmeier, Markus K./James, Harold/Landau, Jean-Pierre: The Euro and the Battle of Ideas, Princeton, NJ & Oxford: Princeton University Press 2017.

Bundesregierung: Globalisierung gestalten – Partnerschaften ausbauen – Verantwortung teilen, Konzept der Bundesregierung, Berlin 2012, available at: http://www.bogota.diplo.de/contentblob/3606954/Daten/2357167/Gestaltungsmaechtekonzeptdt.pdf [Sept. 5, 2017].

Bush, George H.W.: A Europe Whole and Free, Remarks to the Citizens in

Mainz by President George Bush, May 31, 1989, available at: https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga6-890531.htm [Sept. 10, 2017].

Chaffin, Joshua: Germany takes more assertive stance in EU, in: Financial Times, May 21, 2013, available at: https://www.ft.com/content/85060530-6431-11df-8618-00144feab49a [March 13, 2018].

Samuel Charap/Timothy J. Colton: Everyone Loses, The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia, London: IISS/Routledge 2017.

Daalder, Ivo M./Lindsay, James M.: America Unbound, The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy, Washington, DC: Brookings 2003.

Dehousse, Renaud/Fabry, Elvire (eds): Where is Germany Heading? Paris: Notre Europe 2010, available at: http://www.institutdelors.eu/media/whereisgermanyheadingdir.dehousse-fabrynejuly10.pdf?pdf=ok [Sept. 15, 2017].

The Economist: The migration crisis, Sept. 16, 2015, available at http://www.economist.com/migrationcrisis [Sept. 15, 2017].

European Union: A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, Brussels: European Union 2002.

Flemes, Daniel/Ebert, Hannes: The Contested Use of Force in Germany's New Foreign Policy, Sept. 15, 2016, available at: http://www.e-ir.info/2016/09/09/the-contested-use-of-force-in-germanys-new-foreign-policy/   [Sept. 18, 2017].

Fraenkler, Ulf/Harnisch, Sebastian/Kirste, Knut/Maull, Hanns W./Wallraff, Wolfram: Deutsche, amerikanische und japanische Außenpolitikstrategien 1985-1995: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Zivilisierungsprozessen in der Triade, Trier 1997 (= DFG-Projekt 'Zivilmächte', Schlussbericht und Ergebnisse), available at: https://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb3/POL/Projekte/civil.pdf.

Genscher, Hans-Dietrich: Erinnerungen, Berlin: Siedler 1995

Haftendorn, Helga : Coming of Age, German Foreign Policy Since 1945, Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield 2006.

Hanrieder, Wolfram F.: Germany, America, Europe, Fourty Years of German Foreign Policy, Newhaven, Ct: Yale UP 1989.

Harnisch, Sebastian/Schieder, Siegfried: Germany's New European Policy: Weaker, Leaner and Meaner, in: Maull, Hanns W. (ed.): Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy in the Berlin Republic, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2006, pp. 95-109.

Harnisch, Sebastian: Internationale Politik und Verfassung, Zur Domestizierung des sicherheits- und europapolitischen Prozesses der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag 2006.

Harnisch, Sebastian/Frank, Cornelia/Maull, Hanns W. (eds): Role Theory in International Relations, Approaches and Analyses, Abingdon: Routledge 2011.

Hellmann, Gunther: Germany's World, Power and followership in a crisis-ridden EUrope, in: Global Affairs 2:1 (2016), pp.3-20, available at: http://www.academia.edu/31010645/Germany_s_World._Power_and_Followership_in_a_Crisis-ridden_Europe_in_Global_Affairs_2_1_2016_3-20 [Sept. 15, 2017].

Heumann, Hans-Dieter: Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Die Biographie, Paderborn et al.: F. Schöningh 2012

Hoekman, Bernard: The international trade order: performance and challenges, in: Maull, Hanns W. (ed): The Rise and Decline of the Post-Cold War International Order, Oxford University Press 2018 (forthcoming).

Holsti, K.J.: National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy, in: International Studies Quarterly 14 (1970), pp.233-309.

Joetze, Günther: Der Irak als deutsches Problem, Baden-Baden 2010.

Kietz, Daniela/Perthes, Volker (eds): Handlungsspielräume einer EU-Ratspräsidentschaft, Eine Funktionsanalyse des deutschen Vorsitzes im ersten Halbjahr 2007, Berlin: SWP 2007 (= SWP Studien 2007/S 24), available at: https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/eu-ratspraesidentschaft-spielraeume/ [Sept. 15, 2017].

Kirste, Knut/Maull, Hanns W.: Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie, in: Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen 3:2, (1996), pp. 283-312.

Kohl, Helmut: Erinnerungen 1990 – 1994, München: Droemer Knaur 2007.

Kohl, Helmut: Vom Mauerfall zur Wiedervereinigung, Meine Erinnerungen, München: Droemer Knaur 2014.

Konrad Adenauer Foundation (ed): Flucht und Migration, Weltweite Reaktionen, Berlin: Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2015, available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_42726-544-1-30.pdf?151007084056 [Sept. 9, 2017].

Krotz, Ulrich/Schild, Joachim: Shaping Europe, France, Germany and Embedded Liberalism from the Elysée Treaty to Twenty-First Century Politics, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013

Kundnani, Hans: Germany as a Geo-economic power, in: The Washington Quarterly, 34:3 (Summer 2011), pp. 31-45.

Kundnani, Hans: The Paradox of German Power, London: Hurst & Co. 2014.

Kundnani, Hans: The United States in German Foreign Policy, Washington: German Marshall Fund 2016 (= GMF Policy Brief 119/2016), available at: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/united-states-german-foreign-policy [Sept. 18, 2017].

Longhurst, Kerry: Germany and the use of force, The evolution of German security policy 1990 -2003, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2004.

Mattli, Walter: Sovereignty Bargains in Regional Integration, in: International Studies Review 2:2 (2000),pp. 149-180.

Maull, Hanns W.: Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers, in: Foreign Affairs Vol.69 No.5 (1990/91), pp. 91-106.

Maull, Hanns W.: Germany and the Use of Force: Still a `Civilian Power`?, in: Survival, 42:2 (Summer 2000), pp.56-80.

Maull, Hanns W.: Deutschland als Zivilmacht, in: Schmidt, Siegmar/ Hellmann, Gunther/Wolf, Reinhard (eds): Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik, Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2007, pp.73-84.

Maull, Hanns W.: Deutsche Außenpolitik: Orientierungslos, in: Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft (2011) 1, pp. 93-114.

Maull, Hanns W.: Außenpolitische Entscheidungen in Krisenzeiten, Was sind die deutschen Interessen? in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ 10/2012, 5.3.2012), pp. 34-40.

Maull, Hanns W.: "Zivilmacht", Ursprünge und Entwicklungspfade eines umstrittenen Konzeptes, in: Harnisch, Sebastian/Schild, Joachim (eds): Deutsche Außenpolitik und internationale Führung, Ressourcen, Praktiken und Politiken in einer veränderten Europäischen Union, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2014, pp. 121-147.

Maull, Hanns W.: From 'civilian power' to 'trading state'? in: Colvin, Sarah (ed): Routledge Handbook of German Politics and Culture, Abingdon: Routledge 2014, pp. 409-424.

Maull, Hanns W.: Agency and role change, The Obama factor in the reconstitution of US hegemony, in: Harnisch, Sebastian/Frank, Cornelia/Maull, Hanns W. (eds): Role Theory in International Relations, Approaches and Analyses, Abingdon: Routledge 2011, Ch. 10

Maull, Hanns W.: Foreign Policy: from 'civilian power' to 'trading state'? in: Colvin, Sarah (ed): Routledge Handbook of German Politics and Culture, Abingdon 2014, pp. 409-424 .

Maull, Hanns W.: Reflective, Hegemonic, Geo-economic, Civilian…? The Puzzle of German Power, in: German Politics, Special Issue (forthcoming) 2018.

Meiers, Franz-Josef: Zu neuen Ufern? Die deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in einer Welt des Wandels, 1990 – 2000, Paderborn: F. Schöningh 2006.

Merkel, Angela: Scheitert der Euro, dann scheitert Europa, Rede vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 19. Mai 2010, available at: https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2010/29826227_kw20_de_stabilisierungsmecha-

nismus/201760 [Sept. 17, 2017].

Minton Beddoes, Zanny: Europe's Reluctant Hegemon, in: The Economist, June 15, 2013 (Special Report).

Paterson, William E.: European Policy-making: Between Associated Sovereignty and Semisovereignty, in: Paterson, William E./Green, Simon (eds); Governance in Contemporary Germany: The Semisovereign State Revisited, Cambridge: CUP 2005, pp. 261-282.

Paterson, William E.: Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation? in: German Politics 19:1 (March 2010), pp. 41-52.

Paterson, William E.: The reluctant hegemon? Germany moves centre stage in the European Union, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 49 (2011), pp. 57-75.

Peltzer, Fabian: Jenseits des Hindukusch, Erfahrungen und Handlungsregeln der militärischen Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands nach dem Ende des ISAF-Einsatzes der Bundeswehr, in: Roos, Ulrich (ed): Deutsche Außenpolitik, Arenen, Diskurse und grundlegende Handlungsregeln, Wiesbaden: Spring VS 2017, pp. 247-276.

Pew Research Center: The New Sick Man of Europe: the European Union, May 13, 2013, available at: http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2013/05/Pew-Research-Center-Global-Attitudes-Project-European-Union-Report-FINAL-FOR-PRINT-May-13-2013.pdf [Sept. 17, 2017].

Philippi, Nina: Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze als außen- und sicherheitspolitisches Problem des geeinten Deutschland, Frankfurt/M. 1996.

Roos, Ulrich (ed): Deutsche Außenpolitik, Arenen, Diskurse und grundlegende Handlungsregeln, Wiesbaden: Spring VS 2017.

Rudolf, Peter: The Myth of the "German Way": German Foreign Policy and Transatlantic Relations, in: Survival 47:1 (Spring 2005), pp.133-152.

Sakwa, Richard: The death of Europe? Continental fates after Ukraine, in: International Affairs 91:3 (2015), pp.553-579.

Sandbu, Martin: Europe's Orphan, The Future of the Euro and the Politics of Debt, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2015.

Schieder, Siegfried: Führung und Solidarität in der deutschen Europapolitik, in: Harnisch, Sebastian/Schild, Joachim (eds): Deutsche Außenpolitik und internationale Führung, Ressourcen, Praktiken und Politiken in einer veränderten Europäischen Union, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2014 , pp. 56-91.

Steinmeier, Frank-Walter: Germany' s new global role, Berlin steps up, in: Foreign Affairs (July/Aug. 2016), available at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2016-06-13/germany-s-new-global-role [Sept. 18, 2017].

Szabo, Stephen F.: Parting Ways, The Crisis in German-American Relations, Washington, DC: Brookings 2004.

Szabo, Stephen F.: Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics, London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2015.

Toje, Asle: The European Union as a Small Power, After the Post-Cold War, Houndmills, Basingstroke 2010.

von Krause, Ulf: Die Afghanistaneinsätze der Bundeswehr, Politischer Entscheidungsprozess mit Eskalationsdynamik, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2011.

Zelikov, Philip/Rice, Condoleezza: Germany United and Europe Transformed, A Study in Statecraft, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP 1997 (second edition).

The New Role Conception of Colombia and its Leadership Projection in Central America and the Caribbean in the Post-Conflict Context

Eduardo Pastrana Buelvas

Department of International Relations, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia

epastrana@javeriana.edu.co

Diego Vera Piñeros

Department of International Relations, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia

verad@javeriana.edu.co

Abstract

This article tries to understand the leadership aspiration of Colombian foreign policy during the two presidential terms of Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2014-2018) in a context of transition to the post-conflict period and the material limitations of the country as a secondary regional power. Role theory, the concept of leadership as process, and niche diplomacy are used. This case study focuses on the projection of Colombia in Central America and the Caribbean (CAC) through the offer of South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation (TrC). Empirically, the configuration of a new role conception is identified, represented by cooperation with CAC in the resolution of similar problems to those faced by Colombia, by knowledge transfer. Subsequently, the role performance of Colombia in the two sub-regions through SSC and TrC is analysed. The result is that Colombia has a favourable asymmetry in CAC through its roles as "partner" and "pivot" country, approaching the type of projection described by the concepts of issue-oriented and functional leadership, building a thematic and geographical niche diplomacy.

Keywords

Colombian Foreign Policy, New Role Conception, Leadership, Central America and the Caribbean, South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation

Introduction

Since the arrival of Juan Manuel Santos to the presidency in 2010, the international agenda of Colombia, has been diversified in both geographic and thematic

terms (Pastrana, 2011, p.98). The approach of extreme subordination and alignment with the United States of America (US) during the presidential terms of Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006-2010), when Colombian foreign policy focused almost exclusively on trade and security issues, has been reduced (pp.75-78). Hence, Colombia has returned to the Latin American scenario and has actively participated and promoted regionalisation projects, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC with its Spanish initials), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Pacific Alliance (PA). Additionally, Colombia resumed important relations with Europe and formulated, then started, an insertion strategy insertion towards the Asia-Pacific. In thematic terms, the Santos government has incorporated issues such as the environment, food security, human rights, migration, south-south cooperation (SSC) and triangular cooperation (TrC) in different areas, renewable energies, and the need for a new approach in the fight against drugs, amongst others, into its foreign policy agenda (Pastrana, 2014, p. 127-128).

Between 2012 and 2016, President Santos negotiated and concluded a set of peace agreements with the FARC, to find a political solution to the Colombian internal conflict. Colombia sought to internationally legitimise the peace process and its foreign policy played a key role. It designated Venezuela and Chile as facilitators of the process, while Cuba and Norway were guarantors. Moreover, it incorporated the United Nations as a verifier of the agreements, whose mission is conformed of the states of CELAC (Pastrana & Gehring, 2017, pp. 13-14).

In this context, Colombia has started to project, during the two presidential terms of Santos (2010-2014-2018), the image of a trusted country, no longer a source of insecurity or a threat to its neighbours. Moreover, it has started to deploy an active foreign policy in Central America and the Caribbean (CAC), materialised in SSC initiatives (p. 19). Accordingly, this article aims to answer the following question: What type of leadership is Colombia building through its foreign policy towards CAC in the post-conflict context?

The problem of the search for leadership by non-powerful countries, such as secondary regional powers, will be discussed theoretically through a constructivist framework based on role theory. The article will analyse the connections between the search for leadership, role conception, and Colombian objectives towards CAC, with two empirical sections. First, the Problem Representation (PR) and role expectations of foreign policy, as defined by the Santos government, and second, the initiatives and actions of Colombia towards CAC in terms of the SSC and TrC it offers.

The first section will allow the identification of the definition and self-attribution of the roles of Colombia. What is important, what is sought and expected, and

the *with whoms* and *hows* of this diplomacy can be traced in the public declarations of Santos and in official foreign policy documents. It may be noted that the acquisition of positive international recognition and the search for leadership opportunities are transversal elements, linked to what will be foreign policy in the post-conflict or the conception of a more ambitious diplomacy for a nation in transformation. CAC emerge as geographical areas suitable for the construction of niches of cooperation diplomacy that Colombia needs to inaugurate its self-promotion as a leader through the exercise of certain functions or specialties.

In the second empirical part, Colombian cooperation activities in the two subregions will be analysed, in comparison to that which it offers in South America, to understand and interpret, through role theory, the performance of the roles previously defined. SSC and TrC initiatives will allow the analysis of the scope of the new positioning of Colombia and its route to achieving this leadership, signalling potentialities, weaknesses and contradictions.

Interpretive Framework

A "problem" is understood as "a perceived discrepancy between present conditions and what is desired" (Hermann, 2001, p.53). Subjectivity operates from the moment in which the perceptions of decisionmakers appear, and a "foreign policy problem" begins when they consider that a concern or opportunity exists in the external environment (Pastrana & Vera, 2014, p.37).

The search for opportunities to build international leadership using available resources and foreign policy instruments is both an analytical and practical problem. It depends on several factors and the level of material capabilities of a country, but begins with a clear intentionality. The search for leadership can be verified as a "foreign policy problem" for decisionmakers when their cognitive representations reflect an aspiration or expectation related to the achievement of the objective. The worldviews of government leaders, influence greatly a country's foreign policy (Rosenau, 1966, pp.207-208), determining, for example, the proclivity to, or rejection of, assuming external positions that imply a leadership role of their country, or can be perceived as something with that intention.

Worldviews are a cognitive framework, usually containing images or representations of the individual or state, and the "other", causal beliefs, prescriptive beliefs, and expectations (Mowle, 2003, p.562). Although they are not directly observable, given that they exist in the minds of leaders, they can be inferred through the reconstruction and interpretation of the Problem Representation (PR from hereon) that they formulate, formally or informally, facing challenges or opportunities in foreign policy. PR has been defined as:

> "a mental model of goals, constraints, preferred solutions, and expectations about

the effectiveness of various tactics" (Mowle, 2003, p.564).

PRs can be inferred from the public declarations of decisionmakers and, in general, from documentation or official stances related to the guidelines and objectives of public and foreign policy; the combination of these factors can reveal patterns in postures or "policy stances" (Mowle, 2003, p.564).

Role theory allows one to establish ways of inferring these behavioural expectations and using them as an independent variable to try to explain both the formulation of the frameworks of the decision problem (the PRs) and the adoption of concrete decisions. It is a heterogeneous approach, but it has a common origin in symbolic interactionism within sociology, associated with authors such as George Mead, John Dewey and Charles Sanders (Benes & Harnisch, 2015, p.148).

Role is a normative concept that prescribes the behaviour someone should adopt in relationship with others and a certain position in a social structure, and is distinct from the factual way, appropriate or inadequate, in which it is performed (Holsti, 1970 p.238). Holsti (1980, cited in Bailin, 1980) argued that national role conceptions contain the perceptions of decisionmakers regarding the measures, rules, commitments and enduring international functions that their nations favour, and which would permit the explanation of foreign policy patterns (p.533). Role conception can be considered an independent variable to partially explain foreign policy behaviour in terms of role performance (Holsti, 1970, p.245).

These conceptions may change, depending on the position of the actor in a social structure, making it necessary to verify the role expectation, or the role an actor wants to play, and compare it to the expectation of the recipients and to that of its "audience" (Thies, 2009, p.9). Social structures – for example a security community, a military alliance, etc. – are constituted by elements like shared knowledge, material resources, and practices (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p.165). These conceptions are related to specific social structures because role has two components: the expectations of a country's decisionmakers or the construction of the *ego*, and the prescriptions and expectations of others who define the *alter*, principally the direct recipients of the role (Benes & Harnisch, 2015, p.148). Wehner (2014) has identified that the expectations of South American secondary powers regarding Brazil (the *alter*) have influenced the rise of the country as a regional power, as they shaped the way in which its role was conceived and executed, although they reflect the obstacle of the diversity of understandings that exist between countries about what is the region in which they interact (p.436).

Constructivism assumes that material elements such as economic, military and diplomatic resources are important in the constitution of identities, roles and structures, but are subordinate to and dependent on the meaning attributed to

them (Jackson, & Sorensen, 2006, p.165). In certain social contexts, the quantity of material resources possessed by an actor may not significantly affect, or not correspond to, the perception of the role and its performance.

It also assumes that the justification that gives meaning to a role is defined through social interaction, as positions inside a social structure help to define their functions, scope and duration. In turn, these positions depend on the collective conception of the purpose of the group (Benes & Harnisch, 2015 p.148). There are four elements to analyse the presence and development of a role: the national self-conception of the role, the expectation of the role by the international actors and setting, the position in a structure or system, and the performance of the role (Holsti, 1970, p.240). The adequacy of a role obeys a relative balance between these four elements.

However, unlike other human relations, the international relations of states operate in less defined structures, with a national prescriptive predominance given by the principle of sovereignty, where the functional concept of "position" is difficult to apply and the idea of status or ranking is usually used to classify the states (Holsti, 1970, p.242). These classifications are usually polemic, because they depend on diverse factors and how they are prioritised, and because the categories of "great power", "middle power" and "regional power" do not necessarily reflect their influence or leadership (p.242). Sociological constructivism assumes that roles and interests are defined *through* relations and not a *priori* (p.243). But the tendency in the diplomatic world is that foreign policy is principally derived from the needs and priorities of decisionmakers, while the prescriptions of the environment – customs, norms, treaties – are usually more flexible or undefined (p.243).

Evidence indicates that the more ambiguous or contradictory the expectations of others are, is greater the possibility that "self-restraint" is lost and the "I-"part is superimposed (Benes & Harnisch, 2015, p.147). When the role prescriptions of the recipient and observers (the *alter*) are not clear for the executor, the ideas and values that the role intends to play (the *ego*) may be more influential.

A country may try to assume incompatible roles, obliging it to choose, or to play a role which exceeds its available resources, leading to "overload" (Thies, 2009, p.7). This could happen with the assumption of new roles. Inconsistencies are also found in role performance when one distinguishes between the roles an actor seeks to perform (ascribed roles) and the roles they currently play (achieved roles). It has been found that new and emerging states who improve their status usually respond more to ascribed roles than achieved ones, while more established and better positioned states have multiple roles already consolidated (Thies, 2009, p.8).

The relationship between roles and leadership is even more complex than the link between status and roles in terms of foreign policy. The concept of leadership in international relations is controversial. A similar interpretation to that of the concept of role indicates that leadership is not an attribute or an achievement, but rather a type of social relation in which the existence of followers can be verified, where possessing power resources is insufficient, and it is necessary that the position assumed by each country within a social order is recognised by others (Vu, 2017, p.2). Likewise, the connection between positional improvement and leadership is not direct. Studying rising or emerging powers it is desirable to recognise when they either fail to become global or regional leaders, despite improved capabilities, or when they have very delimited leadership in a geographical area or group, categorised as "issue-based leadership" or "problem-based leadership" (Vu, 2017, p.3-6). In line with the latter, we propose the use of the synonym "issue-oriented leadership", as its emphasis can be geographic but is predominantly thematic, based on agenda-setting in a specific field. Instead of aiming for a construction of hegemony, this type of leadership aspiration is based on what has been called the "functional model" or "functional leadership". Some units of the system become promoters of action and responsibility in certain international affairs, without aiming for dominance, instead trying to shape cooperation dynamics based on their capacity to propose attractive initiatives (Vu, 2017, p.4).

Countries without power in material terms do not necessarily assume a purely passive foreign policy, or bandwagoning, and can also reflect expectations of international projection and recognition. They can identify opportunities to excel in specific matters of the global, regional or sub-regional agendas, through specialisation. Some have defined this type of foreign policy as "niche diplomacy", indicating that small states and those with a great capacity to play notable roles in the international system, but not enough to impose positions or solutions, opt to exercise persuasive influence instead of coercive (Henrikson, 2005, p.67). Even if they do not achieve consideration as "middle powers" or intermediates in the international hierarchy, they can play significant supporting roles such as intermediaries or providers of assistance (p.67).

This type of projection is highly relevant for countries with strong material limitations, like Colombia and secondary powers in general. These are defined as states which occupy the second position of power in a regional hierarchy when their material and/or symbolic capabilities are compared to the superior regional power(s), permitting them to partially compete with regional powers in the moment of defining policy areas (Bach 2006; Flemes & Wojczewski, 2011, cited in Flemes, 2012, p.33). They are characterised by ambitions such as participating in regional and sub-regional leadership and promoting issues in collective agendas, while maintaining a limited projection at the global level (Flemes & Castro, 2015,

p.2; Flemes, 2012, p.25; Pastrana & Vera, 2012a, p.189; Pastrana & Vera, 2012b, p.614).

Therefore, participation in SSC and TrC schemes allows this type of country to exercise a niche diplomacy through which they gain recognition as specialists in a specific cooperation area. SSC has been defined as: "a methodology of development which facilitates the exchange of knowledge, experience, technology, investment, information and capacity between and among Southern countries through governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, national institutions and networks to accelerate political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical development." (UNIDO, n.d.). For its part, TrC has been defined as: "The tripartite collaboration and partnerships between South-South-North countries (…) (and) is the result of technical cooperation among two or more southern countries (South-South) that is supported, through financial, technical or other means by northern donors or by international organizations (UNIDO, n.d.).

The personification of the state is assumed by some constructivists, arguing that it is a social and conscious (collective) person and that it even imitates some traits of a biological organism (Wendt, 2004, p.291). In this sense, psychological theories of leadership may support the theoretical bases of this "issue-oriented and functional" leadership. Some of them emphasise the control, by some actors, of highly valued social resources (Huang, L. et. al., 2011 p.95). Conventionally, it is believed that hierarchical roles within an organisational structure are those which can naturally determine the results of the actions or thinking of others, for example, because they can reward and punish (Yukl & Falbe, 1991, cited in Huang, L. et. al., 2011 p.95). Nevertheless, there are situations in which the body expansiveness of an individual versus others, independently of the nominal role they possess, can influence the observable conduct or thinking of others (Huang, L. et. al., 2011, p.100). Hence, foreign policy instruments are the equivalent of the corporal extension of states (as constructed social "beings"), through which they make others "feel" their physical presence outwards. This extension may be independent of the nominal or formal position a state possesses in any social structure.

Another approach suggests that leaders oriented towards specific tasks can increase the efficiency of group actions and the optimism of participants, while "classical" leaders, or those oriented to defining hierarchies and formal positions, achieve a greater level of group cohesion but have less impact on outcomes (Tabernero et al., 2009, p.1391). Thus, "coordinators" act more as motivators of participation and guides of collective action to jointly establish strategies and tasks, while conventional leaders, "directors" or "commanders", tend to formulate strategies rigidly, assign the positions and tasks of each actor and supervise fulfilment (Durham, Knight & Locke, 1997, cited in Tabernero et al., 2009, p.1394).

119

Therefore, the search for issue-oriented or functional international leadership in the absence of conventional hegemony, dominant hierarchy or the conferral of a superior role by potential or actual recipients, can be verified in two ways. Firstly, finding a relation between the change of leaders' national role conception and the expansion of the instruments with which a state secures its physical presence in the territory of others, for example, armed forces, diplomatic missions, exports, investment, cooperation, etc., and secondly, verifying the awareness of leaders about their possession of a social resource collectively valued or demanded by the potential or actual recipients of the social interaction. For instance, knowledge or experience positively valued by others. These may be delivered thorough SSC and/or TrC, and they may evolve into recognised niche diplomacy practices. Hence, a secondary regional power may focus on the projection of its leadership in regional and sub-regional spheres in specific thematic issues, promoting and executing delimited cooperation programs or activities, based on a specific *know-how* like public or homeland security, peace-building or institutional reform.

Thus, the perception of positional improvement, the change in national role conception, the attribution of new roles, and the consciousness of leaders about the expectation of valuable social resources demanded by other actors can be connected to the search for international leadership. However, the self-restraint of decisionmakers, limitations of the international setting, and a modest position in material terms could incentivise the deployment of delimited projection roles, seeking a pragmatic and non-strategic, or non-power-oriented leadership.

Leadership can thus be based on the construction of diverse roles in an intersubjective process of various stages, of which three are highlighted: change in the distribution of material power or status, the emergence of role expectations between the aspirant leader and potential followers, and the eventual institutionalisation of practices associated to the role that emerges (Vu, 2017, p.2). Thus, leadership is a complex and relational process more than a result, but it has some indicatory uses that can be traced despite the inconsistencies or weaknesses of the emerging countries. With time, the social interaction facilitated by the offer of cooperation can have visible effects on the interests and identity of both parts (offeror-recipient), which is to say that a relationship of persuasion and intersubjective exchange can eventually become one of transformation and the emergence of followership (Nabers, 2010, p.55).

For a leadership under construction, like that of Colombia, it is plausible to associate the projection of its new roles with the perception of a partial improvement in its capabilities and international status in an increasingly multipolar context and with the change in the expectations of national role conception of the Santos administration. Due to the incipient character of the roles projected by Colombia towards the sub-regions of CAC, referring to the specific expectations of the *alter*

or the degree of institutionalisation of the roles makes little sense, giving priority to the formulation by the *ego* and the (self-)attribution of sub-regional roles, making it difficult to verify the existence of acquired or permanent roles.

Problem Representation and Role Expectations in the Foreign Policy of the Santos Administration

Colombia, is considered one of the three secondary regional powers in its region, along with Argentina and Chile (Flemes & Castro, 2015, p.2; Pastrana & Vera, 2012a, p.189). It can´t be considered a middle power because of its weak or inconstant global projection. Nor is it a primary regional power because it does not exercise predominance in its own geographical area, as Brazil does in South America. But Colombian foreign policy is committed to a greater international projection as a mechanism to transform its external image and *alter* expectations. The possibility of limited leadership, subregional and thematic, is coherent with Colombia's limited capabilities and secondary position in the region. It allows Colombia to modify its traditional image as an economically and militarily dependent country, a drug exporting country, a violent country submerged in armed conflict, and an underdeveloped country.

Colombia has been improving its position and international image under Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2014, 2014-2018). In part, it has been benefited by the external bonanza of raw materials (2010-2013), by partial improvements in its internal security, and by the search for peace with the insurgent groups. Its foreign policy focus on the possibility of offering international cooperation. Although primarily localized, such offer supports the construction of new external images, such as a stable and safe country, a country that seeks peace, and a country in the process of modernization and development. This niche diplomacy geographically concentrates where Colombia can positively influence countries with similar or greater security and development problems, seeks a relative balance between limited capabilities, geographical proximity, costs, partial dependence on the resources of strategic partners or funders of cooperation, and the search for a leadership based on persuasion, positive interaction, and recognition of the country's experience in specific topics.

South America, Central America and the Caribbean are conceived as neighborhood zones or subregions of Latin America and priorities for Colombia. In particular, the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) and the basin of the Caribbean have had security and development problems similar to those of Colombia or have submitted their interest in the knowledge and experience of the Andean country. Building leadership in South America is more difficult than in Central America and the Caribbean because of the predominant role of Brazil and the small relative distance between secondary powers, which does

not allow for positive asymmetry. This offer of cooperation in CAC also strengthens the diplomatic activism and the credibility of the country in the multilateral organizations of the global level, such as the United Nations, and reinforces Colombia´s contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.[1]

The international initiatives of Santos reflect a worldview in which opportunities are perceived for Colombia to begin projecting itself as a leader based on the offer of cooperation. PRs, as stimuli and frames of reference for executing foreign policy, can be related to the identity that states assume facing other actors in the international system, as this orients instrumentally and normatively the type of relations a state will have with others. In the case of Colombia, the search for international leadership in the midst of post-conflict construction, and despite the necessary search for external support for peace-building, tends to be a recurring problem to solve in its policy stances and appears to be a method to transform the identity of the state.

In his inaugural speech in 2010, Santos stated that the country would "play a highly relevant role in new global spaces", and would assume "the appropriate leadership role in international scenarios" (Presidencia, 2010). This global projection ambition appears to contradict the limits of the category of a secondary power, but Colombian foreign policy itself points to a concentration in the subregional scenario. This is better explained by the adaptation of the new roles the country is seeking, sometimes surpassing the possibilities of its factual diplomacy in the leader's discourses. Santos declared the commitment of Colombian diplomacy to the promotion of human rights for conviction, not for "external pressures or impositions" (Presidencia, 2010), thus affirming the principle of multilateralism and a relatively autonomist stance facing the US or other leading powers. He also referred to the search for international recognition based on the achievement of "world-class" national economic, business and technological capabilities.

Applying role theory, the stage of attributing roles can include inconsistences and dualities because it deals with new functions that the state aspires to assume and not functions that are already acquired or are widely recognised by others. Thus, Colombia is "testing" options of global and regional projection, although it remains a secondary power, and it will try to become an offeror of cooperation even though it still depends on international help as a recipient and is in the process of transformation towards stability and comprehensive development.

In his 2014 speech after re-election, Santos argued that Colombia had recovered a preeminent role in the world and showed willingness to contribute to regional

---

[1] See Colombia's proposals regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of Río+20. In: http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/rio/abc

integration, coordination and cooperation despite differences, protecting the interests and sovereignty of the state (Presidencia, 2014). This reflects his own perception of the changed status of the country. He also clarified that some medium-term goals, until 2025, would turn Colombia into a country of peace, equity and with the highest level of education in Latin America, achieving an image of the country as "prosperous. Admired. Respected. A leader" (Presidencia, 2014). There is not yet a clear role conception, but an expectation of emphasis on the ascent of the country's status and a willingness to assume various, though limited, regional responsibilities.

In 2015, in the international presentation of advances in the peace process with the FARC, Santos commented that: "countries like Mexico and the Central American nations, where drug cartels affect the population more and more, would benefit from the achievement of peace in Colombia" (Presidencia, 2015). Additionally, he suggested that the external image of Colombia had changed from one of a "a violent and failed state" to a new and better one. Based on this, one can perceive the general political objectives of leadership and a changed international image. Thus, the presidential expectation of a new role conception is to begin contributing to countries of the region which have experienced similar difficulties – underdevelopment, armed conflict and narcotrafficking – based on the lessons learned in Colombia's own processes of internal adjustment, although it has not yet fully overcome these issues. However, what is not clear are the strategies and instruments to achieve said objectives, which are required to fully construct the PR.

The "Foreign Policy Guidelines of Colombia" offer some clues. These establish, among other specific objectives, that: a) bilateral and multilateral agendas will be consolidated, prioritising the sustainable development of the country, and b) countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) will receive "priority attention" (MRE, n.d. a). In this sense, two items are offered to build niche diplomacy: the theme – human development – and the geographical destination – LAC. Among other methods and instruments, it was prescribed in 2010 that Colombia would: 1) deepen integration with LAC to generate more opportunities in trade, investment and technology transfer, 2) seek to position itself internationally in diverse technical and scientific areas, 3) consolidate the receipt and offer of SSC and TrC as foreign policy instruments (MRE, 2010).

Regarding this dual role, the "Roadmap of International Cooperation 2015-2018" is a point of reference, mentioning two strategic objectives. First, to focus and stimulate the cooperation Colombia receives to: a) support the construction of peace, sustainable rural development and environmental conservation and sustainability, and b) achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enter the OECD (APC, 2015). Second, to share valuable knowledge

to contribute to foreign policy, the development of the country and the development of partnerships in SSC and TrC, offered through bilateral mechanisms, regional strategies, strategic alliances and regional integration (APC, 2015). This willingness to "share" a valuable social resource (Huang, L. et. al., 2011 p.95) corresponds to the concepts of "issue-oriented and functional" leadership. This pretention of leadership may be based more on sharing *know-how* than on transferring material capabilities, and not necessarily on the aspiration to lead an ideational project trying to define a regional identity, or a common long-lasting regional or sub-regional project (Nolte, 2012, p.35).

Additionally, in the PR of Colombian decisionmakers, lies the implicit question of how to build leadership relations within a position of duality as both a recipient and offeror of cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises that although the economic status of the country has changed to a "high-middle income country" meaning it is not a priority recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA), it continues to require ODA. Although Colombia wants to be an OECD country offering cooperation, it does not try to – nor can it – assume the role of "emerging ODA donor" and, as such, will not become a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (MRE, s.f. b). In fact, despite the change in its status in 2010, Colombia has remained one of the countries in LAC that receives the most ODA: in 2013 it received ODA of 862 million USD, increasing to 1505 million USD in 2015 (Banco Mundial, 2017).

From the perspective of role theory, a country may try to assume incompatible roles, obliging it to choose, or to play a role which exceeds its available resources, leading to "overload" (Thies 2009, p.7). In the role conception of Colombian policymakers, attempts to resolve the dilemma have led to the offer of experience and knowledge rather than ODA, and the use of principles in SSC and TrC such as "horizontality, solidarity, interest and mutual benefit", which prescribe shared responsibility in the formulation, financing, execution and evaluation of initiatives (APC, s.f.a, p.3). These are prescriptions of the *alter* internalised by Colombia, because they are part of the new, non-traditional cooperation methodologies endorsed by the community of offerors and recipients, as reflected in the Declaration of Paris (2005) and the Accra Action Plan (2008). An intermediary role is defined between that of donor and recipient, a "partner" country, which takes responsibility for the analysis and implementation of ODA, although OECD countries remain the main donors (OCDE, n.d., p.5). Consequentially, issue-oriented and functional leadership, with the backup of donors, seems preferable because of the constraints derived from modest material and ideational capabilities.

In the case of TrC, one can identify a relationship of three roles following the model of other countries which promote SSC, and not only those which are underdeveloped or developing: the presence of a "facilitating partner" or a developed

country of the North which finances the project, the intervention of a "strategic partner" or a "pivot country", like Colombia, and the acceptance of a "receiving partner" (APC, 2016a, p.15). This apparently allows a country of moderate capabilities to lead, coordinate and distinguish itself by utilising the resources or back-up of an actor with a superior position in the social structure. As a role, the "pivot" is equivalent to a "coordinator" and is a position which defies somewhat the role expectation traditionally attached to a leader, in which the autonomous use of material resources or the asymmetric aggregation of capabilities of others in favour of the leader is expected, or in which a normative superiority or capability to instil in others the leader's rules, values and beliefs is supposed. In this triangular scheme, the functions assumed by the pivot are to offer their tested experience or good practice, lead network activities, meet with counterparts, coordinate resources, and synchronise offers and requests for cooperation (APC, 2016a, p.16).

Such arguments are useful to interpret the new role conception of Colombia and the leadership it is starting to build in CAC via SSC and TrC. Such forms of cooperation are formulated and implemented in the framework of flexible schemes of reciprocal exchange, oriented to specific tasks and projects in themes of human development and security, in which Colombia assumes a posture more of coordinator and bridge between financers and recipients, than that of a directing and hierarchic role. The following section will deal with its offer of SSC and TrC in CAC to verify in practice this new role conception and role performance.

Colombia in Central America and the Caribbean and its Role Performance in SSC and TrC

The data of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) exposes facts that are incomplete in the official pages of the Foreign Ministry and the Presidential Agency for Cooperation. SEGIB has an Integrated Ibero-American Data System on SSC and TrC with American States since 2015, based on the information and experience of more than ten years of cooperation between Spain and Latin America and the Caribbean (SEGIB, 2016, p.14). However, SEGIB recognizes that there is greater clarity in measuring traditional cooperation than SSC and CTR (p.33), so it depends on guides, surveys, and information provided by the agencies and cooperation offices.

Regarding Colombian SSC and TrC, a substantial increase in the role of CAC as recipients can be observed. From 2008, with the initiative of Uribe´s government to offer SSC to the Caribbean, and the 2010 decision to participate in the "Mesoamerican Regional Cooperation Program" (PRCM with its Spanish acronym)[2],

---

[2] This is directed to Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

in the framework of the "Tuxtla Dialogue and Coordination Mechanism"[3], Colombia changed from being a passive member of the "Mesoamerican Project"[4], trying to become a SSC manager, following the path of Mexico (SEGIB, 2012, p.117). There are two sub-regional strategies which represent the guidelines of the Colombian offer and which try to build cooperation networks between the public sector, the private sector and civil society organisations from both sides.

Firstly, between 2008 and 2009, the "Strategy of Colombian Cooperation with the Caribbean Basin" was formulated and its implementation started, promoting projects in bilingualism, technical education, natural disaster management, food security, academic mobility, culture and environment (APC, s.f.a, p.7).

Secondly, in 2010, the PRCM was formulated. The program promotes initiatives in issues of social mobility, quality management, public services, local governability, public security among others (APC, s.f.a, p.8). In 2016, greater coordination between the PRCM and the guidelines of the Central American Integration System was adopted, additionally promoting themes such as transport, energy, telecommunications, trade facilitation and health (APC, 2016b). Here one can note the effort to reconcile the role conception of Colombia based on the *ego* with the prescriptions of the *alter*, which allows the identification of the specific themes valued by the recipients to deploy niche diplomacy consistently through the role of "partner" or "pivot" in international cooperation.

As a complement to the two regional strategies, the Strategy of International Cooperation in Comprehensive Security of Colombia was formulated (ECISI with its Spanish acronym), emphasising the fight against transnational organised crime and directed at applicant countries from Central America, the Caribbean, South America and Africa, but prioritising the first three sub-regions (MRE, s.f.a, p.2). The four axes of the offer and its sub-themes are: a) homeland security, b) anticorruption, c) human rights and international humanitarian law, and d) strengthening operative capabilities (MRE, s.f.a, p.11).

Here, one can observe that decisionmakers do not appear fully conscious of the limitations of Colombia as a secondary regional power in their planning of its issue-oriented diplomacy beyond LAC, which could open geographic niches that are difficult to maintain. There is also a duality in the attributed role, because some of the themes in which Colombia seeks to transfer its expertise are weak areas in its own public management or are tied to the still unresolved causes of its armed conflict. For example, the weak territorial presence of the state, represented in the
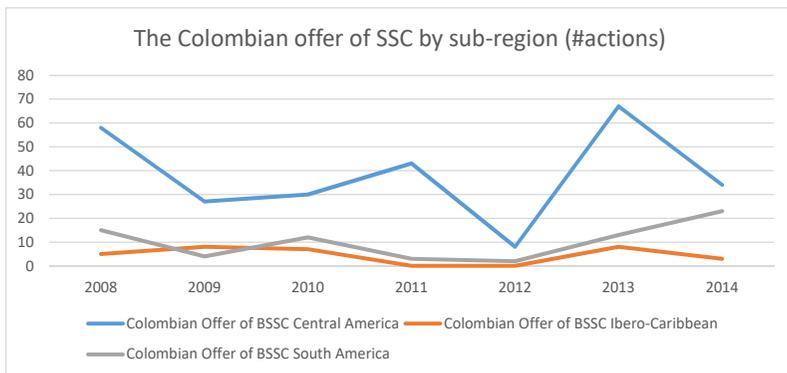
---

[3] This forum has its origin in the 1991 Summit, where the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico participated, deliberating on the main issues linked to the development of Central America and Mexico. See: http://www.sela.org/es/cumbres-regionales/tuxtla/

[4] Colombia was incorporated to this sub-regional integration mechanism in 2006. See: http://www.proyectomesoamerica.org

precariousness of transparent public policies and police and justice institutions in many areas of the country. However, from role theory, this is understandable because the country is going through a stage of transformation of its self, and because several objectives derived from the new role conception will be corrected by trial and error. Concrete practices may allow attributed roles to become acquired ones.

In quantitative terms, the roles of partner and pivot played by Colombia can be shown in bilateral SSC by sub-region and the number of cooperation actions. First, it stands out that between 2008 and 2014, Central America tends to concentrate between 30% and 70% of the bilateral SSC activities offered by Colombia in Ibero-America, except for the harsh decline in the year 2012 (SEGIB, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013-2014, 2015, 2016). Second, within irregular patterns, the supply of bilateral SSC to Central America remained higher than that directed to South America and the Caribbean, with emphasis on the increase in supply to the three sub-regions between 2012 and 2013, which is partially explained by the creation of the APC in 2011-2012. In sum, in Central America appears to be a solid geographical niche strengthening, making the issue-oriented and functional leadership more sustainable than in other areas.
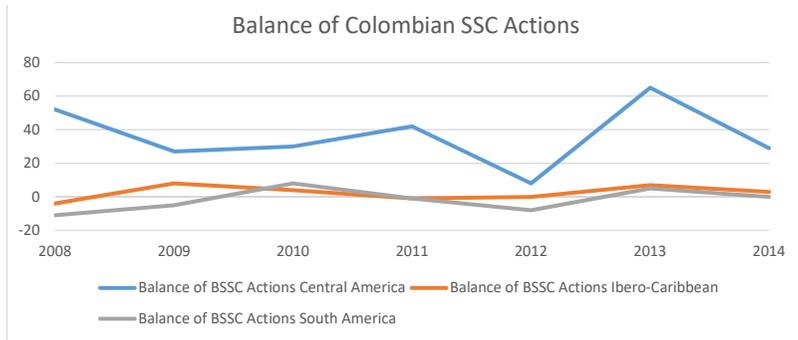
The following graphs help to identify the importance of the SSC for Colombia, but they do not allow solid comparative inferences between the Uribe and Santos administrations because of the only period available (2008-2014), except that it can be assumed that the highest point in number of SSC actions from Colombia has occurred during the Santos government.

Source: authors with data from SEGIB (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013-2014, 2015, 2016).

An even more revealing fact about the favourable asymmetry that Colombia tries to build in CAC can be perceived by calculating the balance of bilateral SSC

actions, when SSC actions received by Colombia from countries in the three sub-regions are subtracted from the SSC actions Colombia supplies. It is assumed that SSC has a reciprocal and symmetric character, making it difficult to distinguish a "leader", but the balance shows that while SSC with South America does not have a clear surplus, with the Caribbean there is a slight predominance, and with Central America there is a clear predominance of Colombian supply.

Source: authors with data from SEGIB (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013-2014, 2015, 2016).

Although the SSC data for the Caribbean appears low, it is worth remembering that SEGIB considers the supply of pivots towards the non-Ibero-American Caribbean separately. There, Colombia improves its asymmetrical position, given that between 2012 and 2014, sixty-one further SSC actions were registered in this geographical zone.

Regarding TrC, it is noted that between 2011 and 2016, Colombia acted as a pivot in twenty-two projects with twenty-three beneficiary countries: three in 2011, six in 2012, seven in 2013, six in 2014, one in 2015 and eight in 2016 (APC, n.d., p.6). Among the destinations were six countries in Central America[5] and four in the Caribbean[6]. These individual TrC projects are added to other collective projects in CAC in the framework of the two sub-regional strategies of Colombia (p.7). It should be added that TrC with Central America increased slightly in the framework of the ECISI. To better understand what Colombia offers as a pivot, data from 2016 indicates that of eight projects approved by participants in that year, with a total value of 5.2 million euros, Colombia committed itself to contributing 800,000 euros (APC, n.d., p.9). Regarding donors, US support has represented backup for the SSC and TrC offered by Colombia, but it is not the only one. Between 2011 and 2016, the country reported that of twenty-two TrC

---

[5] Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua.

[6] Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

projects executed, one in development, ten approved and two in the call phase – thirty-five in total as a "pivot" – the US was the backup in only five, with Germany also taking this role in five cases (APC, 2016a, p.7).

Despite the growing importance of Colombian CSSC and TrC, it is worth emphasising that, in a comparative analysis, Colombia is not the main supplier in Latin America. There have been years in which, in numbers of coordinated actions, Colombia has been found among the top suppliers, for example, achieving first place in bilateral SSC in 2014, with eighty-five initiatives of a total of three hundred and thirty-three in Ibero-America (SEGIB, 2016, p.48). But in SSC in general, it remains behind the supply of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Chile, as the fifth partner in LAC (APC, s.f.a, p.10). In terms of TrC, in the period 2010-2014, it was only in 2012 that Colombia arrived to the top three suppliers, behind Chile and Mexico (SEGIB, 2016, p.178).

However, the differentiating factor for Colombia, or its "added value" compared to other SSC and TrC offers, appears to be thematic. All pivot countries direct projects and initiatives in specific themes related to the promotion of sustainable development. In fact, the SEGIB (2015) groups all offers into four broad areas: economics, institutional strengthening, social issues, and environmental policies. Thus, there are two thematic issues in which Colombia wants to distinguish itself from the "regional portfolio", based on what it considers its greatest expertise: public security and peace-building. They may be issues in which the country still has significant domestic challenges, but they are the axes of the projection discourse that is building the image of Colombia as an issue-oriented and functional leader.

Conclusions

This article used a simplified version of role theory based on authors such as Holsti (1970) and Thies (2009) to try to explain the basis of the new international role conception of Colombia during the two terms of Santos and its foreign policy PR in terms of how to make the country an international leader in the midst of transition to the post-conflict period, and despite the material limitations its faces as a secondary power.

The concepts of issue-oriented and functional leadership (Vu, 2017) and niche diplomacy (Henrikson, 2005) were used to interpret the role conception and role performance of Colombia in CAC, in comparison to its cooperation in South America, with the aim of identifying the relevance of these areas. Additionally, the article incorporated the deployment of socially valued resources to examine the expansion of the foreign policy instruments of Colombia.

The first empirical section sought to reconstruct and understand the interaction

between the new national role conception of the Santos government and its ways of representing the problem of the search for Colombian leadership, based on the revision of presidential discourses and the analysis of official documents that orient foreign policy decision-making. Some objectives and strategies designed to promote that incipient leadership were identified, and the assumption that the perception of the main decisionmaker points to a positive meaning attributed to domestic and international changes, and to a change in status, was verified.

Although the country has not resolved its internal problems, the presidential expectation of a new role conception is to begin contributing to countries of the region that have experienced similar difficulties, like underdevelopment, armed conflict and narcotrafficking, based on the lessons learned in its own internal adjustment processes. This pretention to leadership appears to be based more on sharing *know-how* than on transferring material incentives or capabilities, and seeks its development in non-hegemonic matrixes of cooperation.

In the second empirical section, the "partner" and "pivot" roles of Colombia were identified as functions that approach the type of projection described by the concepts of issue-oriented and functional leadership. It was verified that despite the prescription of reciprocity in the SSC it offers and receives, Colombia maintains a favourable asymmetry, above all in Central America, but also a growing asymmetry in the Caribbean when the non-Spanish-speaking countries of the region are taken into account. The themes of peace promotion and citizen security appear as differential aspects facing other offers of SSC and TrC and with a geographical emphasis in the most vulnerable countries of Central America, becoming, for the moment, pillars of a niche diplomacy. Colombian participation in the "Mesoamerican Regional Cooperation Program" and the formulation of instruments such as the "Strategy of Colombian Cooperation with the Caribbean Basin" and the "Strategy of International Cooperation in Comprehensive Security" are frameworks to define role expectations, both in the *ego* and the *alter*, although they tend to reflect more Colombian aspirations.

As the Colombian case shows, the stage of role attribution can include inconsistencies and dualities, above all because this secondary power is "testing" options of global and regional projection in a process of trial and error. As the shared practices and concretisation of expectations, and evaluations, of the *alter* are consolidated, Colombia could pass from the second phase of leadership construction to the third, institutionalising what are currently short-term initiatives. That is, converting the attributed roles within the new national role conception into acquired and externally legitimised ones.

Bio

Eduardo Pastrana Buelvas

Eduardo Pastrana Buelvas has a doctorate degree in International Law from the University of Leipzig, Germany, and is a Lawyer from the Universidad Santiago de Cali (USC), Colombia. He was Vice-Chancellor and Director for Research at USC. Currently he is a Professor of International Relations and International Law at the Pontifical Xaverian University in Bogotá (PUJB). He is also heading the research group of International Relations, Latin America and Integration (GRIALI). Eduardo advises the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Colombia and the Military Academy of Warfare of the Colombian Armed Forces. He is a member of the Academic Committee of the Regional Think tank of Economic and Social Research (CRIES) and Coordinator of the Network of Studies on the Pacific Alliance from the Konrad Adenauer Centre of International Relations and Security Studies (KACIRSS). He has regularly been invited as a Research Professor by the Institute of Political Sciences of University of Leipzig, and by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg. He has published numerous books and articles on topics of International Law and International Relations. He is a member of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) and the International Studies Association (ISA). He is a member of the Latin American Political Science Association (ALACIP).

Diego Vera Piñeros

Diego Vera is political scientist with an emphasis in International Relations from the Pontifical Xaverian University (Bogota). He has MA degree in Political and International Studies from the Rosario University (Bogota). He is Assistant Professor of the International Relations Department at the Xaverian University. He has been researcher and co-author for several projects for the same University, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Colombia (FESCOL) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) in Colombia, some of them with support from the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg. His research topics have been essentially Foreign Policies in South America, the Colombian Foreign Policy, and Security and Defense affairs in Latin America.

References

Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación de Colombia (APC) (s.f). Lineamientos para la cooperación Sur Sur en Colombia. En: http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/node/258

Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación de Colombia (APC) (2015). Hoja de ruta de la cooperación internacional 2015-2018. Recuperado de: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/hojaderutadelacooperacioninternacional.pdf

Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación de Colombia (APC) (2016a). Marco Estratégico de Cooperación Triangular. En: https://www.apccolombia.gov.co/sites/default/files/archivos_usuario/publicaciones/marco_estrategico_de_cooperacion_triangular_de_apc-colombia.pdf

Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación de Colombia (APC) (2016b). Colombia, actor relevante en el desarrollo de Mesoamérica. En: https://www.apccolombia.gov.co/noticia/colombia-actor-relevante-en-el-desarrollo-de-mesoamerica

Bailin, N. (1980). Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions. International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Dec., 1980), Wiley Pub. pp. 532-554

Banco Mundial (2017). AOD neta recibida (US$ constantes de 2014). En: https://datos.bancomundial.org/

Beneš, V. and Harnisch, S. (2015). Role theory in symbolic interactionism: Czech Republic, Germany and the EU. Cooperation and Conflict 2015, Vol. 50(1) 146–165.

Flemes, D. & Castro, R. (2015). Institutional Contestation: Colombia in the Pacific Alliance. In Bulletin of Latin America Research 2015, pp. 1-14.

Flemes, D. (2012). Actores estatales y regionalismo estratégico: Brasil y Colombia en el orden multipolar. En: Pastrana, Jost y Flemes (Eds). (2012). Colombia y Brasil: ¿socios estratégicos en la construcción de Suramérica? Bogotá, 2012. Bogotá: Editorial Javeriana. pp. 25-50.

Henrikson, A. (2005). Niche Diplomacy in the World Public Arena: the Global 'Corners' of Canada and Norway. In: Melissen, J. (2005). The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 67-87.

Hermann, M. (2001). How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework. International Studies Review. Vol. 3. No. 2. Summer 2001. pp. 47-81.

Holsti, K. J. (1970). National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy. International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Sep., 1970), pp. 233-309.

Huang, L. et., al. (2011). Powerful Postures Versus Powerful Roles: Which Is the Proximate Correlate of Thought and Behavior? Psychological Science, Vol. 22, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 95-102.

Jackson, R. and Sorensen, G. (2006). Introduction to International Relations Theories and Approaches. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford university press.

Mowle, T. (2003). Worldviews in Foreign Policy: Realism, Liberalism, and External Conflict. Political Psychology, Vol. 24, No. 3 pp. 561-592

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (MRE) (s.f.a). Estrategia de cooperación in-

ternacional en seguridad integral de Colombia. En: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/politica_exterior/estrategia_de_seguridad_integral.pdf

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia (MRE) (s.f. b). Principios y lineamientos de la política exterior colombiana. En: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/ministry/policy

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia (MRE) (2010). Lineamientos de la Política Exterior de Colombia. Recuperado de: http://nuevayork-onu.mision.gov.co/sites/default/files/politica_exterior.pdf

Nabers, D. (2010). Power, Leadership and Hegemony in International Politics. In: Flemes, D. (Ed.) (2010). Regional Leadership in the Global System: ideas, interests and strategies of Regional Powers. Ashgate, England. Pp.51-69.

Nolte, D. (2012). Regionale Führungsmächte: Analysekonzepte und Forschungsfragen. In En D. Flemes, D. Nabers & y D. Nolte (Hrsgeds.), Macht, Führung und Regionales Ordnung (pp. 17-52). Baden-Baden, Deutschland: Nomos.

OCDE (n.d.). Declaración de París sobre la eficacia de la ayuda al desarrollo y programa de acción de Accra. In: https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34580968.pdf

Pastrana, E. & Vera, D. (2012a). Estrategias de la política exterior de Colombia en su calidad de potencia secundaria en Sudamérica. En Pastrana, Eduardo/ Jost, Stefan/ Flemes, Daniel (editores). Colombia y Brasil: ¿socios estratégicos en la construcción de Suramérica? Bogotá: Editorial Javeriana. 187-236.

Pastrana, E. & Vera, D. (2012b). Los desafíos de Colombia frente a la proyección de Brasil como potencia regional y jugador global. En: Colombia: una potencia en desarrollo. Escenarios y desafíos para su política exterior. Ed. Jost, Stefan. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. 2012. Pp. 613-642.

Pastrana, E. y Vera, D. (2014). Análisis de política exterior en el marco de procesos de regionalización: interrogantes que plantea la creación de la Alianza del Pacífico. Pastrana, E. y Gehring, H. (Eds) (2014). In: Alianza del Pacífico: mitos y realidades. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. GIGA. Universidad Santiago de Cali. p.29-74.

Presidencia de Colombia (2010). Discurso del Presidente Juan Manuel Santos Calderón. En: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2010/Agosto/Paginas/20100807_15.aspx

Presidencia de Colombia (2014). Palabras del Presidente Juan Manuel Santos en su posesión para el período presidencial 2014-2018. En: http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2014/Agosto/Paginas/20140807_03-Palabras-del-Presidente-Santos-en-su-posesion-para-el-periodo-presidencial-2014-2018.aspx

Presidencia de Colombia (2015). Palabras del Presidente de la República de Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, ante el Foro de Oslo. En: http://wp.presidencia.

gov.co/Noticias/2015/Junio/Paginas/20150616_01-Palabras-Presidente-Re-publica-Colombia-Juan-Manuel-Santos-Foro-Oslo.aspx

Rosenau, J. (1966). Preteorías y teorías sobre política exterior. En Vásquez J. (Comp.) (1994). Relaciones Internacionales: El pensamiento de los clásicos (pp. 206-219). México D.F.: Editorial Limusa.

SEGIB (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013-2014, 2015, 2016). Informe de la cooperación sur sur en Iberoamérica. Secretaría General Iberoamericana, Madrid. En: http://segib.org/documento/

Tabernero, C. et al. (2009). The role of task-oriented versus relationship oriented leadership on normative contract and group performance. Social Behavior and Personality, 2009, 37(10), 1391-1404. Society for Personality Research (Inc.). DOI 10.2224/sbp.2009.37.10.1391

Thies, C. (2009). Role Theory and Foreign Policy. Forthcoming (2009), International Studies Association Compendium Project, Foreign Policy Analysis section, http://www.isanet.org/compendium_sections/2007/06/foreign_policy_.html

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (n.d.). South-South and Triangular Cooperation. In: https://www.unido.org/south-south.html

Vu, T. (2017). International Leadership as a Process: The case of China in Southeast Asia. Rev. Bras. Polít. Int., 60(1): e001, 2017. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201600109

Defending Social Status – Why Russia's Ukraine Policy is About More than Regional Leadership

Regina Heller

Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH)

heller@ifsh.de

Abstract

Russia's hard-power policy vis-à-vis Ukraine is not primarily and exclusively about regional power projection, but rather about reclaiming a prime rank in the social order of international relations. My assumption rests on two observations: First, in its coercive attempts to maintain control over Ukraine, Russia is actually losing influence over the country – and the overall neighborhood. Secondly, while discursively putting the Ukraine issue in the context of global power shifts and the renegotiation of world order, thereby advocating for classical principles like state sovereignty and non-intervention, Russia has woefully neglected these principles in Ukraine. I argue that Russia's Ukraine policy is an attempt of the Russian elites to cope with the unresolved anger over earlier negative experiences of status deprivation in their relationship with the West. The socio-emotional logic is behaviorally traced via a cost-benefit analysis, and cognitively via a constructivist inspired analysis of the official Russian discourse. The socio-emotional perspective helps linking Russia's regional policy conduct with its global status aspirations.

Keywords

Russia, Status, Emotions, Ukraine, Post-Soviet Space

Introduction

One of the prominent narratives about the drivers of Russia's current coercive policy vis-à-vis Ukraine describes Russian conduct as an attempt of a regional power to enhancing its geopolitical supremacy over the region as a means to defend its traditional sphere of influence and, thus, the country's leadership status in the post-Soviet region (e.g. Mearsheimer 2014).[1] In fact, there is much evidence to this geopolitical interpretation: Russia's economic, military and cultural influ-

---

[1] For a discussion of the different explanations, see Götz 2016.

ence in the region has been and – 25 years after the breakup of the Soviet Union – is still strong and one can therefore rightly argue that Russia has an interest to maintain control over the region's resources. Projecting power onto the neighborhood appeared quite easy in the 1990s, as Russia still appeared for its neighbors as the 'natural' force in the region, although the country underwent a severe phase of economic decline and political weakness. By 2000, as the economy and politics was recovering, Russia started to more actively adopt to evolving trends in the region by pushing economic and security integration projects – the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC, entered into force 2001) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO, founded in 2002) in particular. Subsequently, economic integration deepened. In 2010, EURASEC was complemented by a Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, both of which were transferred and integrated into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015 (see also Wilson 2017). With the upgrade of the Shanghai Five into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 and Russia's inclusion into the BRICS forum (formalized in 2009),[2] Russia was seen again as a "rising" hegemonical regional power (Macfarlane 2006; Stent 2006).

The nearly simultaneous appearance of Western integration projects, the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in particular, as well as the emergence of democratic tendencies in the post-Soviet space, however, appeared to threaten Russia's attempts to consolidate its regional leadership role. Russia was especially concerned that the revolutionary developments in Ukraine could spill over to Russia, destabilize the domestic political system, and trigger a regime change in Russia. Spinning this logic through, from the combination of external security and domestic power and stability concerns, Russia was forced to balance against EU's and NATO's eastward expansion more assertively in the wake of the 'Euromaidan' protests and once and for all to secure its sphere of influence around its borders. From a geopolitical interpretation, the conflict between Russia and Western actors seemed unavoidable, and an aggressive move, supported by requirements to sustain power and legitimize authoritarian rule domestically and to bring the countries of the region back into Russia's orbit, pre-programmed (Mearsheimer 2014; Motyl 2014). Russian top officials have themselves rhetorically contributed to this geopolitical interpretation. They have recurrently underlined that Russia holds special and 'exclusive' rights in the region, and that any attempts to penetrate what is informally still termed the 'near abroad' will be pre-empted with adequate countermeasures (Medvedev 2008). All this is rhetorically embedded into a global context, namely the idea that Russia has to fight against Western and in particular U.S. American 'imperialism' or 'colonialism' that creates instability in the world in favor of a new, 'better' and more

---

[2] BRICS is the acronym for a diplomatic forum on economic and financial questions established between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa.

stable global order, in which America is balanced by a multitude of regional poles, amidst them Russia.

However, this interpretation ignores a number of paradoxes: First, in its coercive attempts to preserve regional primacy, Russia's regional leadership status is more challenged than ever. Second, while in the global context Russia discursively promotes structures of international order in which there is no one dominating pole and Westphalian principles such as state sovereignty and non-intervention in domestic affairs as normative anchors of global stability, it has woefully violated Ukrainian sovereignty and deliberately created instability. These paradoxes require us to revise our thinking – both about Russia's motives and about the logics of contemporary geopolitics. I suggest an alternative approach, which puts socio-emotional factors in the center of attention. I argue that Russian 'geopolitics' is not primarily driven by the goal to securing regional leadership but by the objective to fulfil its global social status aspirations. From the perspective of social psychology, Russia's policy has its origins in the country's elites' concern over international social status, i.e. a positively distinctive identity in the international social order. In the neighborhood, it is a traditional understanding of power and influence that constitutes this positive collective identity. Social psychology and more recent findings from the International Relations (IR) research on emotions help to understand that Russian status concerns are embedded into negative experiences of status deprivation and misrecognition by the West throughout the post-Cold War era.[3] I hypothesize that these experiences shape Russian foreign policy conduct towards Ukraine in the following ways:

1. Risk assessments and judgements about the costs and gains of Russia's policy towards Ukraine are made on subjective, namely socio-emotional, grounds that tend to impede absolute payoffs. We should therefore see a number of costs and unintended effects incurring to Russia that tend to undermine the goal of securing or enhancing regional leadership.

2. The underlying socio-emotional experience turns into a strategic resource for Russia's ruling elite to produce international social status as emotion-based moralization offers effective ways to reinterpret the status-power hierarchy. We should therefore find strong evidences of moral argumentation in the official rhetoric justifying Russia's behaviour towards Ukraine.

In order to probe my claim, I will search for evidence of socio-emotionally induced attempts of social status restoration in Russia's Ukraine policy. I suggest the following path of investigation: In the article's second part, I outline the theoreti-

---

[3] In fact, a number of authors have highlighted Russian fixation with its social status, particularly vis-à-vis the West and pinpointed at increasing dissatisfaction with and complaints from Moscow over insufficient status recognition (Forsberg et al. 2014; Heller 2014; Larson & Shevchenko 2014).

cal basis of my approach, drawn mainly from social psychology, emotions research in IR and the power transition literature. In the third section, I trace the roots of Russian social status concerns. In the fourth section, I analyze the emotion-induced Russian strategy to restore a positively distinctive collective identity for Russia in international relations in the context of its ongoing conflict with Ukraine by a) weighing the gains of Russia's aggressive status-seeking strategy vis-à-vis Ukraine against the costs, thereby assessing in how far Russia's power-politics enhances the country's regional power and influence; and b) showing the strategic use of moral justifications in the official discourse that link back to and take up frames that are connected with past subjective experiences of Western status denial. In the fifth section, I summarize the findings and assess the added value of my perspective.

Failed Great Power Verification as Source for Russian Power-Politics in Ukraine

Status, Identity and Emotions

The status of major powers in international relations, as we know from the power-transition theory, not only relies on and is measured along material capabilities (such as military and economic resources), but also needs to consider a number of other properties including the social recognition of major power status (attribution) by other countries (Volgy et al. 2011, 7; Levy 1983; Fordham & Asal 2007). The literature speaks of 'status-consistent' major powers when they are legitimately recognized as having both capabilities and willingness, as being independent to become involved in international politics, and are expected to do so. Status-inconsistent powers, on the contrary, face a mismatch between capabilities, willingness and independence on the one hand and community-based status attribution on the other (Volgy et al. 2011, 10-12; Danilovic & Clare 2007, 292). Status-inconsistent powers can be subdivided into 'status-overachievers' and 'status-underachievers'. Status-overachievers get status recognition, but lack the attributes to act as such. Status-underachievers are willing and have the power to act as major powers, but do not get the recognition from other states (ibid.).

While status-overachievers are mainly interested in keeping things as they are and are assumed to defend their status in their neighborhood at low costs and risks, status-seeking strategies of underachievers are more dangerous as they are willing to "[...] resolve uncertainty around their status by competing more aggressively than overachievers to create larger roles for themselves in international affairs" (Volgy et al. 2011, 11f.). Most importantly, it is stipulated that status-underachievers evaluate the risks and costs of foreign policy action in a "non-linear manner". In line with Prospect Theory, a psychological theory that explains suboptimal choices of decision-makers, this means that under-achieving powers

"are likely to operate in the 'domain of losses' and will be willing to take greater risks and be willing to pay grater costs to achieve status-consistency" (ibid.). Two important substantiations stem from this psychological explanation: First, judgments taken in the domain of loss are prone to errors and miscalculations, because under the condition of risk and uncertainty "it is difficult to foresee the consequences and outcomes of events with clarity" (McDermott 1998, 15; Kahnemann 2009). Second, decision-makers can interpret the domain they are operating in on the basis of either objective or subjective assessments and judgements (McDermott 1998, 37). In the latter case, it is more important how an actor "feels" about the environment or a specific situation he/she faces.

That the "feeling" of status recognition is relevant in international relations is also highlighted in many other branches of the psychologically inspired IR literature (e.g. Crawford 2000; Mercer 2006, 2017; Kemper 1987, 2007; Wohlforth 2009; Onea 2014; Paul et al. 2014; Renshon 2016). One strand that explicitly links status and emotions is the Social Identity Theory (SIT). According to SIT, it is an actor's (i.e. decision-maker's) social identification and emotional attachment with a specific group (or collective) identity that gives relevance to subjective assessments of status (Tajfel 1978). Larger collectives and their representatives (political decision-makers, people in high state functions) try to develop and preserve a positively distinctive identity and want to be accepted as a valuable member of their status-group or community (Larson 2017). While SIT assumes that status-seeking is primarily intrinsically motivated and directed at the approval of a certain social (collective) identity, it does not exclude that the intrinsic driver also co-constitutes external, material status-goals. It is clear that higher status in the social hierarchy of states provides for access to material assets such as special rights and powers. Vice-versa, when a collective identity is traditionally based on power and influence, a country will most likely define its social status exactly through these material status markers.

Being recognized in one's (collective) self-identity is thus socially and emotionally important also for 'states' – or what should be rather defined as composite actors in official state positions. Perceptions of misrecognition, unfair or deliberately harmful treatment triggers negative emotional reactions and attitudes (Tiedens 2001; Rosen 2005; Kelman 1965) – "affective energies" (Ross 2006) – that come close to what is described as 'anger' in psychological studies on individual behavior (Stets & Burke 2000; Tajfel 1978; Miller 2001). Anger is defined as a "negative phenomenological (or internal) feeling state associated with specific cognitive and perceptual distortions and deficiencies (for example misappraisals, errors, and attributions of blame, injustice, preventability, and/or intentionality), subjective labelling, physiological changes, and action tendencies to engage in socially con-

structed and reinforced organized behavioral scripts." (Kassinove 1995, 7).[4] It is important to note that anger is not only and primarily about aggression (Averill 1983), but a multitude of cognitive and behavioral short- and long-term reactions that aim at reverting the discrepancy between the 'as-is'-situation and the desired and aspired status structure in a social relationship. Gerhards clusters these reactions as behavioral and cognitive "coping strategies" (Gerhards 1988, 212-213). Behavioral coping consists of active attempts to intervene in the social environment with the goal to change the status-power structure and, this way, modulate the virulent emotion. Cognitive coping refers to changes in the mental state through a re-interpretation of 'self' and 'other' representations, which is mainly based on moral categories.

The Sources of Russian Status Concerns

Undoubtedly, post-Soviet Russia possesses attributes that fulfill the criteria for a major power in world politics. Russia holds the second largest arsenal of nuclear weapons after the U.S. Moreover, as the legal successor to the USSR, Russia is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and thus continues to hold an influential position in world politics. Also regionally, as has been outlined earlier, Russia's influence is still significant. However, Russia's economic potential and resources have significantly lagged behind the conceded power attributes, and greater political influence in world politics had not materialized for a long time. Therefore, in Western political as well as academic circles, Russia was perceived as a status-overachiever for most of the post-Soviet period (Freire 2011).

Within Russia, it was equally clear from the beginning that post-Soviet Russia should remain in a prominent position in world politics. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar system the question of Russia's national identity and role in world politics became a matter of an intensive domestic debate among the political elites (e.g. Tsygankov 2006). As early as 1993, a common denominator emerged in the debate, namely that Russia has always been and must continue to be a great power. Yet, the view from the West that Russia lacked the capabilities to exert influence internationally was not shared among the political elites in the country. In fact, Russia deemed itself a 'natural' member of the elite club of powerful states after the Cold War. This 'natural' right of a prime position is frequently ascribed to Russia's unbroken attitude towards its imperial history that is a driving force for this self-perception and role-definition as a major power (e.g. Light 2014, 215). As the old bipolar system had vanished, Russia had to define itself in a new systemic structure of international relations. Then-Foreign Minister Evgeniy Primakov was the first to establish the idea of an influential, powerful Russia in a multi-polar world in the second half of the

---

[4] On action tendencies see also Novaco 1986.

1990s in Russia's foreign policy strategy (Primakov 1996). This idea of Russia as a great power relied on traditional conceptions, as prescribed in the Russian security culture, and has ever since been a constitutive component of Russia's foreign policy concepts.

Three core signifiers in this conception constitute Russian great power status: *centrality*, *equality* and *regional primacy* (Heller 2017). Centrality refers to Russia's role as a permanent member of the UNSC and its ability to disperse power and influence via this organization, traditionally through diplomacy and negotiations. Equality refers to Russia's perceived right to be consulted, especially when it comes to issues of European security. Regional primacy refers to the assumed right to claim an exclusive zone of influence in the post-Soviet region. However, this traditional approach to great power and international relations brought Russia increasingly in conflict with the West after 1991, which led to a situation in which Russian policy-makers perceived the country's major power status to erode, thus developing a status-underachiever attitude.

Erosions to Russian *centrality* eventually began when Western actors started to introduce new understandings and approaches to security, thereby modifying constitutive norms of the traditional Westphalian structure of the international system. This in particular touched upon the sovereignty norm and put forward the idea that a state's internal as well as external sovereignty can be restrained on the grounds of human security and through external intervention. Moscow was never enthusiastic about the concept of 'human security' and its application in international conflict management at the expense of the valuation of more traditional principles such as state sovereignty and non-intervention. It particularly insisted on its application only in the context and with approval of the UNSC. NATO's military intervention in Kosovo 1999, which was justified as a 'humanitarian intervention' and took place without UN consent, reflected a preliminary culmination of a conflict that continued 2003 in the context of the U.S.-intervention in Iraq and was channeled into the discussion over the validity and interpretation of what by mid-2000 became institutionalized in the framework of the UN as the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) principle (Heller 2014).

Russia's status as an *equal player* (on par with the U.S. and with equal right in European security) started to erode in Russian perception with NATO's decision to enlarge to the countries of Eastern Europe. NATO's enlargement towards the East has been criticized since the beginning of the process in the early 1990s (Black 2000). In the Russian view, the expansion of the Western regional security block cemented the division of security to the expense of Russia in Europe and marked the end of the goal that had been formulated after the end of the Cold War to search for a new, inclusive, pan-European security structure in which Russia and the countries of NATO meet on equal footing. The hope for an undivided

security architecture seemed unrealistic, as particularly the new Eastern European member states aimed for security 'from' and not 'with' Russia. Although Russia was granted a special status in the relations with NATO, it has always complained that Russia is not consulted on equal footing in decisions that affect security in Europe (and issues where NATO disperses its power beyond) (ibid.). Also in the context of American missile defence plans for Europe, Moscow continuously blamed the U.S. for not considering its concerns (e.g. Zadra 2014).

Given these developments, *regional primacy* appeared to remain the last social status marker for Russia. However, the erosion of centrality and equality also affected Russia's status in its neighborhood. Claims for more democracy and civil society participation such as in Georgia and Ukraine, manifest in the 'rose revolution' in Georgia 2003 and the 'orange revolution' in Ukraine 2004, heralded the dawn of more liberal ideas to take root in these countries. Deeper integration of these countries through EU-association in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and later on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative of 2009, or discussion with and within NATO starting by 2005 on the outlook of integrating Georgia and Ukraine into the Alliance in an undefined future, challenged Russia's claim for exclusiveness and regional primacy. The fact that Western inclusive strategies have spurred more anger and resentment among the Russian political elites and its decision-makers becomes evident in the context of the Russian-Georgian war. A statement made by the then-Russian representative at NATO Dmitri Rogozin (2008) immediately after the Russian-Georgian war shows quite amply that maintaining social status became an important variable to Russian foreign policy in the neighborhood. In his statement, he underlined that the West "[…] has now started to look at Russia differently – namely with respect – and I consider this to be Russia's key diplomatic achievement".

Russia's Status-Seeking Strategy in the Context of the Ukraine Conflict

Does Russia's Ukraine policy tie up to the above outlined social status concerns? In how far does it expose typical elements of a socio-emotionally inspired strategy to revert an unfair status structure? In the following section, I assess the behavioral and cognitive dimensions of anger coping on the official state (institutional) level. I assume that in the case of Russia, looking at official policy and state representatives/decision-makers is more important in assessing the level of 'emotionalization' of foreign policy than for example looking at the Russian public, because pluralistic bargaining or negotiation with public opinion is not taking place in the relatively closed political environment.

Behavioral Coping: The Costs of Changing the Social Environment

As a result of its interference in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014,[5] after the breakout of the 'Euromaidan' protests and the dismissal of the pro-Russian Yanukovich-government in Kiev, Russia has changed the geopolitical landscape in a way that it now controls two Ukrainian territories – Crimea directly and the 'Donbas' region. In summer 2014, observers speculated that Russia would try to expand the conflict to other regions in Ukraine, particularly to the South-West, known in nationalist circles as 'Novorossiya' (Robins-Early 2014).[6] Since Russia entered the Minsk process in September 2014, expansion moves have stopped, but Russia has been accused of obstructing a peaceful settlement and of deliberately aiming at a 'freezing' of the conflict in order to keep indirect control over Ukraine and consolidate its geopolitical grip over the country.

Material Costs

However, keeping further control of these territories comes with significant long-term as well as unintended costs, supporting the assumption that Moscow strongly underestimated Ukrainian resistance and resilience to Russia's hybrid warfare. Although Russia invested comparably little financial resources for its immediate operations both in Eastern Ukraine and in Crimea (Jonson & Seely 2015), Russia has faced considerable additional expenditures. As has been calculated by political analysts from data taken from the Russian federal budget for 2017, "[…] the costs of the military involvement in Ukraine are estimated to amount to over $40 billion on military personnel and equipment, on refugees and on subsidies for Crimea" (The Moscow Times 2016). Moscow quite unwillingly also took over financial responsibility for the separatist entities in Donbas after a year of violent conflict. In 2016, Russia started to bankroll pensions and social benefits as well as salaries to local employees in the public sphere and to the armed separatists. The ICG calculated that "[i]f consistently maintained, this will cost [Russia] over $1 billion a year, a substantial sum for the Russian treasury in straitened economic times" (International Crisis Group 2016, 2).

Information about the human costs of the military intervention vary and are contradictory (Demirjian 2015): Estimates from 2016 based on information from the well-known non-governmental organization Russian Soldiers Mothers Associations point to over 2,000 casualties (Shakov 2016). With regard to Crimea, Russia has strengthened the integration of the peninsula into the Russian Federation, mainly by providing subsidies for economic development and modernization. Here, Moscow equally faces long-term costs of modernization and social benefit

---

[5] For a detailed assessment, see International Crisis Group 2016; for a description of how the process developed, see Splidsboel-Hansen 2015.

[6] It was speculated that the pro-Russian separatists wanted to create a corridor between Donbas and the separatist region Transnistria (Kramer & Gordon 2014).

145

transfers. These subsidies and investments already now are estimated to make up to \$4.5-7 billion annually (Berman 2015). Potential economic gains either cannot fully outweigh these investments, for instance through the cancellation of the Kharkiv Agreement (Ukraina & Rossiiskaia Federatsiia 2010), securing the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol until 2042 in exchange for "a \$100 discount per thousand cubic meters for Ukraine's imports of Russian gas" (Bush 2014), or are highly uncertain without the help of Western technology, e.g. through future assets from natural gas exploitation in the Crimea shoreline.[7]

The EU's and U.S. decision to impose sanctions on Russia as a reaction to its coercive policy towards Ukraine again took the leadership in Moscow by surprise, although all in all, their impact on Russia's overall economy is assumed to be rather moderate (Russel 2016).[8] The most serious and long-term effect is presumably the disintegration of Russian firms from Western capital markets and a general worsening of the investment climate. Yet, both President Putin and Prime Minister Medvedev keep insisting that the economic repercussions of the sanctions rather help stabilizing Russia's economy than putting pressure on it (Medvedev 2016). They argue that the country is increasingly facing hostility from its geopolitical environment, which legitimizes the turn away from macro-economic development towards a militarized economy (Connolly 2016, 1). This strategic subordination of the economy to short-term concerns of national security will make the overall costs of Russia's power-politics particularly difficult to absorb and keeps Russia's geopolitical control over Ukraine unstable.

More Legitimacy as a Regional Leader?

With its power-politics vis-à-vis Ukraine, Russia was able to prevent the country from moving closer to NATO, but it could not stop Kiev from rapprochement towards the EU. On the contrary: Ukraine was even more determined to sign the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Political as well as public resistance against any kind of Russian interference in the political processes in the country has strongly increased (Toal 2017, 281). But Russia faces a legitimacy problem well beyond Ukraine. Its severe economic problems in combination with the 'big brother' attitude of its political elites with regard to the post-Soviet neighbors have resulted in a situation where not only the more critical and Western-oriented countries such as Ukraine and Georgia have further distanced

---

[7] The Black Sea is [..] considered to be rich in terms of gas hydrates. There is "reportedly 45-75 trillion cubic meters of natural gas under the Black Sea, and by some estimates 45 trillion cubic meters" (Petrov 2016), but these gas hydrates are presumably difficult to exploit (Merey & Sinayuc 2016).

[8] The dramatic recession that Russia underwent in 2014 and 2015 started already in 2013 and was triggered by a combination of internal institutional problems (lack of property rights, high corruption, etc.) and the fall of global commodity prices. The situation has somewhat stabilized in 2016, although on a low level. On the current economic situation in Russia, see The Bank of Finland Institute for Economies in Transition (BOFIT) 2017.

themselves from Russia, but also those that had so far been loyal to Russia and willing to cooperate. The latter have embarked on a more cautious positioning or started to more independently renegotiate their relations with Russia. Russia's overall weak economic performance since 2013, its conflict with Ukraine and the subsequent Western sanctions, as well as the uncoordinated counter-sanctions against the EU or the temporary sanctioning of Turkey following the diplomatic conflict from 2015 caused significant drawbacks for Russia's economic partners in the neighborhood, particularly those cooperating in the EAEU.[9]

Kazakhstan, for example, is one of Russia's biggest partners in military, economic and political terms in the region. It is member of the EAEU and the CSTO. It has been highly interested in regional economic integration from the very outset and keeps principally committed. At the same time it fears Russian attempts to transform the EAEU into a political instrument and to constrain the sovereignty of other participating states. Moreover the free trade arrangement with Russia and Belarus has negatively impacted the ability of Kazakh products to compete with the increased dominance of Russian goods. Russian counter-sanctions against the EU were imposed without consent from the EAEU member states. Politically, Kazakhstan has to some extent openly distanced itself from Russian foreign policy behaviour vis-à-vis Ukraine and other rhetoric from Russia that seemingly put the history of the independent CIS states in question. In 2014, President Putin for instance claimed that Kazakhstan "never had a state" and that "Kazakhs never had any statehood" – a view he had expressed in relation to Ukraine already in 2008 (cit. in Dolgov 2014). The Kazakh authorities reacted by amending the country's penal code in a way that punishes the threatening of the country's territorial integrity and calls for secession (Laruelle 2016, 2). Kazakh nervousness is driven by the fact that 23.7% of ethnic Russians live in the country's northern territories and could potentially become a source of separatism. In August 2014, President Nazarbayev therefore publicly recalled the country's right to withdraw from the EAEU in case its sovereignty is threatened (Tengrinews 2014).

While Russia's relations with Belarus had occasionally been ambivalent and problematic already before the Ukraine crisis, dissonances have considerably increased thereafter. Belarus has used Moscow's conflict with Ukraine strategically since its outbreak to enhance the country's own political and economic standing vis-à-vis Moscow. While Minsk joined Russia in March 2014 in voting against the UN declaration calling the Crimea referendum invalid, in 2017 President Lukashenka put on a nationalistic and "fraternization" rhetoric claiming solidarity with Ukraine (Sedova 2017). This more critical rhetoric toward Russia evolved in the context of an ongoing economic dispute, mainly about Russian energy delivery and prices for Belarus. Belarus, economically highly dependent on Russia, seem-

---

[9] On the functioning of the EAEU, see also Libman 2017.

ingly tries to push for better conditions in the relationship. Lukashenka intensified his pressure arguing that the EAEU favors the economic interests of Russia (Lavnikevich 2017; Tamkin 2017).

Part of this dynamic is also that especially the Central Asian countries started to balance more between Russia and its main competitor in that region, China. In order to compensate economic losses caused by the ongoing crisis in Russia, they have willfully intensified cooperation with China, e.g. for investment or diminished Russian presence (Schenkkan 2015; Radnitz 2016). Chinese-led models of cooperation, such as the 'One Belt, One Road Initiative' (OBOR), gain more ground in Central Asia and could be perceived as a direct challenge to the EAEU's norms and integration attempts. China's initiative appears to be a "more attractive alternative in practically all industrial, trade, and financial dimensions" (Kobrinskaya 2016). With regard to Armenia, another Russian ally in the region and equally dependent on Russia as Belarus, governmental relations did not significantly deteriorate. Both countries still profit more from cooperation than from conflict. However, the Ukraine crisis amplified the ideological split that exists between pro-Russian and more pro-Western segments of the Armenian society (Minasyan 2015). All this has weakened Russia's position as a regional power center and reinforced centrifugal tendencies in the post-Soviet space rather than tying it together.

Cognitive Coping: Discursive Status Transformation through Moral Devaluation of the West

The geopolitical containment narrative that blames the West of aggressive behaviour and depicts Russia's policy towards Ukraine as a means of defending its security in the neighborhood is only the tip of an iceberg of arguments and frames that, on closer examination, are mainly constructed on moral grounds and are more deeply attached to Russian identity and status-markers. In the Ukrainian context, these arguments and frames are used to re-claim the country's self-defined status as a major power in the international social hierarchy and to discursively transforming the perceived status asymmetry between Russia and the West. They intimately connect with earlier negative experiences and episodes of anger over perceived Western status deprivation.

Re-claiming Centrality: On 'Right' and 'Wrong' Behaviour in International Relations

The international community condemned Russia's Crimea annexation as a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and referred to assurances that were given by Russia to its neighbor after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 to respect and guarantee the borders agreed upon in the dissolution process. Likewise, Russia's military and political support to the pro-Russian separatists in Donbas was sharply criticized as violations of Ukraine's sovereignty (United Nations General

Assembly 2014). Moscow put forward at least two justifications for its policy: First, the Russian government argued that there has been no annexation whatsoever, but that the Crimean people decided themselves via a referendum to exit the Ukrainian state and to seek integration into the Russian Federation. Russia only followed the Crimean application and allowed it to enter Russia in a legal process. Second, Moscow put forward a humanitarian argument. It argued that Russia feels responsible for the protection of its 'compatriot' people – ethnic minorities – in Crimea (and later in Eastern Ukraine) from a "criminal", "fascist" and therefore "illegitimate" regime in Kiev (Putin 2014a). However, there is a strong contradiction between Russia's justification on the normative grounds of humanitarian intervention on the one hand and its previous attitude towards humanitarian intervention on the other.

Both of the above arguments make a strong normative-ethical point, constructing the justification for the intervention along a security logic that takes on a non-state centric perspective. This is interesting because Moscow had become more and more critical about 'human security' and the application of R2P in the global context – especially its military dimension. Russia stood at the forefront of scandalizing the way it was applied by Western powers in the past: "Events such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria have, for Russia, become precedents by which Western powers have 'instrumentalized' the principle of humanitarian intervention, and later R2P, to further their own agendas internationally" (Snetkov & Lanteigne 2014, 122). In Kosovo, Russia accused the West of sidelining the UN (Primakov 1999). In Iraq, Moscow pointed to the false pretenses on which the military intervention was justified. In Libya, where the international military intervention was officially legitimized as an R2P operation by the UN and led to a regime change in the country, it more sharply blamed the West for misusing the international mandate for its own purposes (Putin 2014b).

This moral blaming along the argument that the West acts selfishly and abuses international norms was taken up again in Ukraine. It was applied in particular with regard to insinuated Western 'orchestration' of the Euromaidan protests in Kiev. The West in the Russian interpretation not only supported the "unconstitutional" regime change in Ukraine, but actively engineered the civil society forces that finally enacted the revolution (Lavrov 2014; Churkin 2014; Putin 2014a; Peskov 2014). The Russian framing suggests that the West displayed an interventionist practice that again misrecognizes the internationally formulated limits of ethically-grounded external intervention, that it operates beyond international law and that it instead follows the logic reminiscent of the formulation used by former U.S. President George W. Bush: "You are either with us, or against us" (Shoigu 2015). This is also supported by the formulation chosen by Vladimir Churkin (2014), Russia's representative to the UN, who underlined that the

Western policy towards Ukraine resembles a "game without rules". Hence, rather than justifying its Ukraine policy as objectively 'correct', Russian representatives sought to present their behaviour as morally 'right', compared to a morally 'wrong' Western approach. With this attitude of a 'good' Russian vs. a 'bad' Western interventionist practice, Putin (2014a) sarcastically comments Western protest to the Crimea annexation and reference to international law in the following way:

> "[…] it is a good thing that they [**the West**] finally called to their minds that there is something like international law. Thank you very much. Better late than never."

Re-claiming Equality: On (Dis-)respect and Moral Emancipation in the Relationship with the West

A second important morality-based argument is constructed around Western unfairness, unequal treatment and humiliation of Russia in its relationship with the West. Not only is the West blamed for ignoring (and violating) the rules of the international system, as has been explained above, but also for ignoring and refusing Russia's equal 'right' to be consulted and considered on its policy towards Ukraine. This right is on the one hand justified on historicism and historic re-interpretation, i.e. Russia-Ukraine relations constructed as being "inseparable" (Putin 2014a). On the other hand, there is also an emotionally inspired moral line of argumentation, which takes up the ruminating feeling of Russia being ignored by the West, blindsided, and put on a second-rank position in the international social order. This becomes obvious in official statements that reflect on the way in which Western integration models were introduced in the post-Soviet space. Officially, the cause for contention in Ukraine appeared to be the EU's association policy and the alleged fact that Russia had not been consulted on equal footing on these plans (Medvedev 2014). However, in a relatively high number of statements, various speakers from Russia also refer to their wish of being consulted and their former negative experiences with NATO and NATO enlargement as a proof for Western ignorance, as the following passage from Putin's Crimea speech demonstrates (2014a):

> "We are constantly suggesting cooperation on all key questions, we try to increase the level of mutual trust; we want that our relationship is an equal, open and honest one. But we never saw reciprocal moves. On the contrary: They cheated us over and over again, took decisions behind our back, they presented us with faits accomplis. This happened with NATO enlargement towards the East, and with the rapprochement of military infrastructure towards our borders."

In fact, many of the emotion-inspired rhetoric figures that emerged in the Russian discourse in the context of NATO and NATO enlargement and embarked on felt humiliation re-appear prominently in the anti-Western discourse over the

Ukraine conflict again. One of them is the 'Western dictate' image. Putin regularly criticized the West for its 'dictate' vis-à-vis Russia and blamed the U.S. to treat Russia as a 'vassal'. The dictate-vassal-image is not new: The first time it appeared was after NATO's military intervention in Kosovo. Vladimir Lukin, then chairman of the foreign relations committee in the State Duma, stated that the West must not treat Russia „like some vassal" (Charodeev 1999). The image was taken up again at many occasions by Vladimir Putin in the context of EMDS.[10] In the Ukraine context it is again broadened from the initial context of NATO to the U.S.'s and the EU's policy towards Ukraine. Russian officials argue that the EU forced Ukraine to cooperate and to stop collaborating with Russia within the EAEU (Medvedev 2014). Again, the economic terms of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the eyes of the Russian speakers will lead to a situation in which the relations between Russia and Ukraine are "dictated by Brussels" (ibid.).

As much as the Russian speakers discursively discredit Western intervention practices on moral grounds thereby 'undoing' Russian mistakes, they also attempt to discursively fight against the perceived Western humiliation by turning the tables and rhetorically humiliating the West. In the following statement, for instance, Putin (2014b) in a bitter tone suggests that the troubles Western countries experience after 'meddling' into Ukraine's domestic affairs and ignoring Russia, serve the West right: "The West would have been well advised to consider the consequences of its influencing the situation in Ukraine before." The negative emotional attitude of Schadenfreude, i.e. open displays of satisfaction about Ukrainian and Western political setbacks, is equally expressed in the direction of Ukraine: Ukraine does not deserve Russia's help; it did not listen when Moscow warned Kiev, and it must therefore now pay the price of its decisions which will lead to "very hard times" for the country. Prime Minister Medvedev (2014), for instance, prophesizes:

> *"I feel honestly sorry that the representatives of the Ukrainian elite were not able to neither present nor implement another strategic program for the development of the country. As the head of a government, I can see this every day in the figures, confirming: unfortunately, the hardest part still lies in front of our neighbors [...]."*

Via open expressions of satisfaction about the setbacks and political damages of the West and Ukraine, the Russian officials discursively reject to cooperate with the West on the solution of the Ukraine conflict.

---

[10] E.g. in an interview in the TV-documentary „Kholodnaia Politika" (Cold Politics) broadcasted on Russian television 2012, where he stated that "America does not want partners, but vassals" (Putin 2012).

Conclusion

Prominent explanations see Russia's policy in the Ukraine crisis and the following geopolitical confrontation with the West as a proof for Russia's power-driven strive for regional leadership. This article demonstrated that this explanation carries in itself a number of paradoxes which needed further explanation. I argued that Russian geopolitics is primarily a function to increasing its social status as a major power globally, and not to securing regional leadership in the first place. We need to understand Russia's aggressive stance as an attempt to cope with unresolved anger over earlier incidences of Western status deprivation and to restore a positively distinctive identity for the country. I based my assumptions on theoretical strands in IR that highlight the socio-emotional foundations of foreign policy and the relevance of social status. I argued that the state's political elite over the years developed an underachiever perspective that is firmly rooted in negative experiences and perceptions of misrecognition of its traditional international status by the West. Russia's past experiences and the unresolved status conflict strongly inform Moscow's current Ukraine policy, as the assessment of its behavioral and cognitive dimensions shows.

Behaviorally, Russia clearly acts out of the subjective assessment of a position of loss and pursues a highly risky and costly policy, which has limited geopolitical gains and neglects or miscalculates its immediate and long-term costs and effects. While preventing Ukraine from future rapprochement with NATO seems rewarding at first sight, it might turn out as highly counter-productive in the long-term. Moscow will have to provide subsidies to Eastern Ukraine and Crimea for years to come and find ways of pacifying these regions to prevent the emergence of spaces of insecurity and instability. Ukrainian resistance and resilience as well as Western responses to Russia's policies seem to have been under-estimated by the status-fixated policy conduct of the Russian elite. Neglecting Russia's domestic modernization in favor of promoting a militarized economy will likely have even more serious long-term implications for Russia's economic and political leadership claim. Moreover, traditional Russian allies have started to act more along their own strategic interests than on the basis of accepting Russia as the legitimate power center in the region. If this path is continued, Russia will most likely fail to substantially enhance its material power- and status resources in the post-Soviet space in the future.

On the cognitive level, the analysis revealed a second layer of meaning underneath the dominating geopolitical narrative. Analyzing the official rhetoric put forward in defence of Russia's aggressive stance highlighted the argumentative lines that are based on moral categories and invoke earlier negative experiences of status denial from the West. Putting into question Western practices of intervention, Russia has created highly negative images of the West while depicting Russia in

a positive light and reclaiming centrality. Second, equality is reclaimed through a re-activation of earlier experiences of disrespect and sidelining as well as through a moral rejection of cooperation in the solution of the Ukrainian conflict. In sum, both dimensions constitute a strategic attempt to discursively transform the power-status relationship between Russia and the West with Russia de-legitimizing Western superiority in the global social order and re-claiming a prime rank in a multi-polar world order.

Russian policy conduct towards Ukraine and the neighborhood in general is often described in an all too simplistic manner in categories of 'status quo' or 'revisionism'. My analytical focus on the socio-emotional foundations of Russian power projection vis-à-vis Ukraine shows that it is not primarily about external security or domestic stability, but about forcing the West to accept a new status-power structure and producing a new global narrative, in which Russia's traditional social status – and identity – as a major, influential power is guaranteed. However, I do not seek to undervalue the role played by external security considerations or domestic interests of powerful groups. Rather, I show how strongly earlier socio-emotional experiences can shape present expectations, influence risk assessments and form strategic resources for domestic and international debates in a time when the structure of the international system is being re-negotiated. In the Russian case, social recognition as a regional leader seems more important than real material influence. From this perspective, the gap between Russia's high global power aspirations and its poor regional power performance is most obvious. This gap will grow should external and internal pressures on the country increase in the future. Under these conditions, Russia is likely to remain a highly ambitious, but weak and unstable part in an emerging multi-polar system.

Acknowledgements

Bio

Regina Heller is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH).

References

Berman, I 2015, 'Paradise Lost in Crimea. How Russia Is Paying for the Annexation', Foreign Affairs (online), 8 September, retrieved July 12, 2017, from

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2015-09-08/paradise-lost-crimea>.

Black, JL 2000, Russia Faces NATO Enlargement, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham et al.

The Bank of Finland Institute for Economies in Transition (BOFIT) 2017, Russia Statistiks: <https://www.bofit.fi/en/monitoring/statistics/russia-statistics/>.

Bush, J 2014, 'Factbox – Costs and benefits from Russia's annexation of Crimea', Reuters, 8 April, retrieved July 21, 2014, from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-crimea-costs-factbox-idUKBREA370NY20140408>.

Charodeev, G 1999, 'Vladimir Lukin: Prikaz mog otdat' tol'ko odin chelovek – prezident', Izvestiya, 15 June, p. 2.

Churkin, V 2014, 'Vystuplenie postoiannogo predstavitelia Rossiiskoi Federatsii pri OON V.I.Churkina na otkrytom zasedanii Soveta Bezopasnosti OON po situatsii na Ukraine', New York, 3 March, retreived July 11, 2016, from <http://www.mid.ru/vistupleniya_rukovodstva_mid/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/792739>.

Corbetta, R & Volgy, TJ 2011, 'Status and the Future of International Politics'. In TJ Volgy, R Corbetta, KA Grant, & RG Baird (eds), Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics, Pagrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 203-224.

Crawford, N 2000, 'The Passion of World Politics. Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships', International Security, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 116-156.

Danilovic, V & Clare, J 2007, 'Global Power Transitions and Regional Interests', International Interactions, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 289-304.

Demirjian, K 2015, 'Putin denies Russian troops are in Ukraine, decrees certain deaths secret' The Washington Post, 28 May, retrieved July 11, 2017, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-denies-russian-troops-are-in-ukraine-decrees-certain-deaths-secret/2015/05/28/9bb15092-0543-11e5-93f4-f24d4af7f97d_story.html?utm_term=.c86f7c81a502>.

Dolgov, A 2014,'Kazakhs Worried After Putin Questions History of Country's Independence', The Moscow Times, 1 September, retrieved August 20, 2017, from <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/kazakhs-worried-after-putin-questions-history-of-countrys-independence-38907>.

Fordham, BO & Asal, V 2007, 'Billiard Balls or Snowflakes? Major Power Prestige and the International Diffusion of Institutions and Practices', International Studies Quarterly, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 31-52.

Forsberg, T, Heller, R & Wolf, R 2014, 'Status and emotions in Russian foreign policy', Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 261-268.

Freire, MR 2011, 'USSR/Russian Ferderation's major power status inconcisten-

cies', in TJ Volgy, R Corbetta, KA Grant, & RG Baird (eds), Major powers and the quest for status in international politics: Global and regional perspectives, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 55-75.

Gerhards, J 1988, Soziologie der Emotionen. Fragestellungen, Systematik und Perspektiven, Juventa, Weinheim & München.

Götz, E 2016, 'Neorealism and Russia's Ukraine policy, 1991–present', Contemporary Politics, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 301-323.

Heller, R 2014, 'Russia's quest for respect in the international conflict management in Kosovo', Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 333-343.

Heller, R 2017, ''Normalizing' anger? A comparative qualitative content analysis of angry speech in post-Soviet Russian policy towards the West', paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, 23 February, Baltimore.

International Crisis Group 2016, Russia and the Separatists in Eastern Ukraine, Briefing no. 79, Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia, 5 February, Kiev/Brussels.

Jonson, O & Seely, R 2015, 'Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine', The Journal of Slavic Military Studies, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 1-22.

Kahnemann, D 2009, Judgment under uncertainty: heuristics and biases, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kassinove, H 1995, Anger Disorders. Definition, Diagnosis and Treatment, Routledge, London.

Kelman, HC 1965, International Behaviour. A Socio-Psychological Analysis, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York et al.

Kemper, TD 1987, A social interactional theory of emotions, Wiley & Sons, New York.

Kemper, TD 2007, 'Power and Status and the Power-Status Theory of Emotions', in JE Stets, & JH Turner (eds), Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions, Springer, New York, pp. 87-113.

Kobrinskaya, I 2016, Is Russia Coming to Terms with China's "Silk road"?, PONARS Eurasia Memo no. 439, September, Washington.

Kramer, AE & Gordon, MR 2014, 'Ukraine Reports Russian Invasion on a New Front', The New York Times, 28 August, retreived July 15, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/world/europe/ukraine-russia-novoazovsk-crimea.html>.

Larson, DW & Shevchenko, A 2010, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy', International Security, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 63-95.

Larson, DW. 2017, 'Social Identity Theory: Status and Identity in International Relations', in Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, published online May, <http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-290>.

Larson, DW & Shevchenko, A 2014, 'Russia says no: Power, status, and emotions in foreign policy', Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 47, no. 3-4, pp. 269-279.

Laruelle, M 2016, 'Why No Kazakh Novorossiya? Kazakhstan's Russian Minority in a Post-Crimea World' Problems of Post-Communism, Online first: DOI: 10.1080/10758216.2016.1220257, 24 October, pp. 1-14.

Lavnikevich, D 2017, 'Kak Belorusiia zarabatyvaet na rossiisko-ukrainskom konflikte?'. Gazeta.ru (online), 4 January, retrieved August 29, 2017, from <https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2016/12/26/10450733.shtml#page6>.

Lavrov, S 2014, 'Polnaia versiia ekskliuzivnogo interviu glavy MID RF Sergeiia Lavrova RT', television program, RT, 23 April, retreived July 22, 2017, from <http://russian.rt.com/article/29053#ixzz30AW9Wb6C>.

Levy, JS 1983, War in the Modern Great Power System, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

Libman, A 2017, 'Russian Power Politics and the Eurasian Economic Union: The Real and the Imagined', Rising Powers Quarterly vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 81-103.

Light, M 2014, 'Foreign Policy', in S White, R Sakwa, & H Hale (eds) Developments in Russian Politics, Palgrave, London, pp. 211-230.

Macfarlane, NS 2006, 'The 'R' in BRICs: is Russia an emerging power?', International Affairs, vol. 82, no. 1, pp. 41-57.

McDermott, R 1998, Risk-Taking in International Politics. Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Mearsheimer, JJ 2014, 'Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault. The liberal delusions that provoked Putin', Foreign Affairs, vol. 93, no. 5, pp. 77-89.

Medvedev, D 2008, 'Interview with Euronews, Sotchi', Kremlin.ru, 2 September, retrieved October 15, 2013, from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1294>.

Medvedev, D 2014, 'Rossiia i Ukraina: zhyzn' po novym pravilam', Russia in Global Affairs, 15 December, retrieved February 16, 2015, from <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/global-processes/Rossiya-i-Ukraina-zhizn-po-novym-pravilam-17183>.

Medvedev, D 2016, 'Syria, Ukraine and the economic crisis - an exclusive interview for Euronews', Euronews, 14 February, retrieved July 21, 2017, from <http://www.euronews.com/2016/02/14/medvedev-syria-ukraine-and-the-economic-crisis-an-exclusive-interview>.

Mercer, J 2006, 'Human Nature and the First Image: Emotion in International Politics', Journal of International Relations and Development, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 288-303.

Mercer, J 2017, 'The Illusion of International Prestige' International Security, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 133-168.

Merey, S & Sinayuc, C 2016, 'Experimental set-up design for gas production from the Black Sea gas hydrate reservoirs', Journal of Natural Gas Science and Engineering, vol. 33, July, pp. 162-185.

Miller, DT 2001, 'Disrespect and the experience of injustice', Annual Review of Psychology, vol. 52, no. 1, pp. 527-553.

Minasyan, S 2015, 'Armenia and Russia: pragmatics and stereotypes', Russian International Affairs Council, 30 November, retrieved August 29, 2017, from <http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/armeniya-i-rossiya-pragmatika-i-stereotipy/>.

Motyl, AJ 2014, 'The sources of Russian conduct. The new case for containment', Foreign Affairs (online), 16 November, retrieved July 20, 2017, from <ttps://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2014-11-16/sources-russian-conduct>.

Onea, TA 2014, 'Between Dominance and Decline: Status Aniexty and Great Power Rivalry', Review of International Studies, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 125-152.

Paul, TA Larson, DW & Wohlforth, WC 2014, Status in world politics, Cambridge Univ. Press, New York.

Peskov, D. 2014, 'The National Interest Jacob Heilbrunn vzial interviu u zamestitelia rukovoditelia administratsii i press-sekretaria prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii Dmitriia Peskova', Inosmi.ru, 15 December, retrieved July 11, 2016, from <http://inosmi.ru/politic/20141215/224934006.htm>.

Petrov, S 2016, 'Ukraine discovered large natural gas reserves', in Maritime Herald (online), 14 December, retrieved August 15, 2017, from <http://www.maritimeherald.com/2016/ukraine-discovered-large-natural-gas-reserves-in-black-sea-shelf/>.

Primakov, E 1999, '"Nemedlenno ostanovit' nuzhno etu praktiku bombardirovok"', television program, NTV, Moscow, 25 March.

Putin, V 2012, 'Interviu na programme/dokumental'nyi film "Kholodnaia politika" na Pervom kanale', television program, Pervyi kanal, Moscow, 2 February, reteived February 20, 2014, from <https://www.1tv.ru/doc/pro-politiku/holodnaya-politika>.

Putin, V 2014a, 'Obrashchenie prezidenta Rossii o situatsii v Krymu, Kremlin.ru, 18 March, retrieved July 11, from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

Putin, V 2014b, 'Zasedanie Mezhdunarodnogo diskussionnogo kluba "Valdai"', Kremlin.ru, 24 October, retreived July 11, 2016, from <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860/photos>.

Radnitz, S 2016, 'Strategic Solidarity. How Central Asia Responds to the Kremlin's Exhortations', PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo no. 451, November, Washington.

Renshon, J 2016, 'Status deficits and war', International Organization, vol. 70, no. 3, pp. 513-550.

Robins-Early, N 2014, 'Here's why Putin calling Eastern Ukraine 'Novorossiya' is important', Huffington Post (online), 20 April, retreived August 3, from <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/18/putin-novorossiya-ukraine_n_5173559.html>.

Rogozin, D 2008, 'Ia predstavliaiu sil'nuiu Rossiiu', Russian Mission to NATO, 20 August, retreived March 17, 2010, from <http://natomission.ru/society/article/society/artpublication/25/>.

Rosen, SP 2005, War and Human Nature, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton & Oxford.

Ross, AG 2006, Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Relations, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Russel, M 2016, 'Sanctions over Ukraine. Impact on Russia', Briefing by the European Parliamentary Research Service EN PE 579.084, March, Brussels.

Schenkkan, N 2015, 'Impact of the Economic Crisis in Russia on Central Asia', Russian Analytical Digest, no. 165, 17 March, pp. 3-6.

Sedova, A 2017, 'Soiuz Rossii i Belorussii tresnul v Kieve', Svobodnaia Pressa, 23 July, retreived August 25, 2017, from <http://svpressa.ru/politic/article/177386/>.

Shakov, D 2016, 'Over 2,000 Russian Fighters Killed in Ukraine: President's Spokesman', Newsweek (online), 3 July, retreived August 4, 2017, from <http://europe.newsweek.com/over-2000-russian-fighters-dead-ukraine-presidentsspokesman-434295?rm=eu>.

Shoigu, S 2015, 'Vystuplenie Ministra oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii generala armii S.K.Shoigu na IV Moskovskoi konferentsii po mezhdunarodnoi bezopasnosti', Ministerstvo oboronny RF, 16 April, retreived July 11, 2016, from <http://mil.ru/pubart.htm?id=12016244%40cmsArticle>.

Snetkov, A & Lanteigne, M 2014, "The Loud Dissenter and its Cautious Partner'– Russia, China, global governance and humanitarian intervention', International Relations of the Asia-Pacifc Contemporary Politics, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 113-146.

Splidsboel-Hansen, F 2015, 'Framing yourself into a corner: Russia, Crimea, and the minimal action space', European Security, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 141-158.

Stent, AS 2006, 'Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy', Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 60, no. 6, pp. 1089-1106.

Stets, J & Burke, PJ 2000, 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory', Social Psychology Quarterly, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 224-237.

Tajfel, H 1978, 'The Psychological Structure of Intergroup Relations', in H Tajfel (ed), Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, Academic, London, pp. 27-98.

Tamkin, E 2017, 'What Exactly Is Going on Between Russia and Belarus?' Foreign Policy (online), 6 February, retreived August 28, 2017, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/06/what-exactly-is-going-on-between-russia-and-belarus/>.

Tengrinews 2014, 'Nazarbaev napomnil o prave Kazakhstana na vychod iz EAES', TengriNews, 25 August, retrieved August 15, 2017, from <https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nazarbaev-napomnil-o-prave-kazakhstana-na-vyihod-iz-eaes-260719/>.

The Moscow Times 2016, 'Kremlin Pledges $593M Boost for Crimean Economy in 2017', The Moscow Times (online), 12 May, retrieved August 15, 2017, from <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/kremlin-proposes-593m-boost-for-crimean-economy-in-2017-56418>.

Tiedens, L 2001, 'Anger and Advancement versus Sadness and Subjugation: The Effect of Negative Emotion Expressions on Social Status Conferral', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 86-94.

Toal, G 2017, Near Abroad. Putin, the West, and the contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ukraina & Rossiiskaia Federatsiia 2010, 'Dogovor Ianukovicha i Medvedeva o bazirovanii flota do 2024 goda', text printed in Ukrainskaia Pravda, 22 April, retreived August 15, 2017, from <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2010/04/22/4956018/22.04.2010>.

United Nations General Assembly 2014, 'Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March 2014: 68/262. Territorial integrity of Ukraine', United Nations A/RES/68/262, Sixty-eighth session, New York, 1 April, agenda item 33 (b).

Volgy, TJ, Corbetta, R, Grant, KA & Baird, RG 2011, Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Wilson, JL 2017, 'The Russian Pursuit of Regional Hegemony' Rising Powers Quarterly, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 7-25.

Wohlforth, WC 2009, 'Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War', World Politics, vol. 61, no. 1, pp. 28-57.

Zadra, R 2014, 'NATO, Russia and Missile Defence' Survival, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 51-61.

While Doha Was Asleep

Francisco Figueiredo de Souza

Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Brazil, Philippines

frasouza@gmail.com

Abstract

Vinicius Rodrigues Vieira asserts that the definition of a country's national interest is influenced by the institutional design of this country's diplomatic and negotiating authority. In this review, I find his conclusion worth of supporting new research agendas. Yet, I also present what I believe to be limitations of the particular case chosen by Vieira to prove his point. Even if we accept the two ideal types used by the author (e.g., economic-centred *versus* "blended" trade negotiating authorities), it seems over-simplifying to say that between 2003 and 2008 Brazilian negotiators favoured WTO *in lieu* of regional or bilateral agreements for reasons linked to international prestige.

Keywords

Diplomacy, WTO, Doha Round, Bureaucracy, National Interest

Introduction

In Volume 2, Issue 2 of this 'Rising Powers Quarterly', Vinicius Rodrigues Vieira published "Blended Diplomacy: Institutional Design and Brazil's National Interest in Trade" (2017, pp. 31-35). In this critical review, I intend to firstly present a summary of the points in which we both agree and the reasons why I find his article worth paying attention to. In the second and main session, I attempt to show the shortcomings of the particular case-study chosen by Vieira to prove his point, which, at least in my opinion, suffer from over-simplification. The third, final session brings suggestions for the future research agenda on the topic.

I start with one important caveat. In his article, Vieira recalls the Miles law (1978) according to which 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. Thus, I should disclose where I am sitting. Vieira seeks to concentrate his analysis in the time span between 2003 and 2008 (p. 32). In 2005, I found myself at the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as a civil society representative advocating for the Brazilian Institute for Consumers Defence (IDEC). In 2007, I joined the Brazilian Foreign Service. I worked at the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Forum Division and at the Permanent Mission

of Brazil to the UN Offices in Geneva. I was never an official trade negotiator myself, having dealt more with the International Labour Organization (ILO). I could hardly be one of the interviewees in Rodrigues Vieira notable list – a position which I find to be positive in order to write this article. Trade talks, however, were never far from my desk.

I should also clarify I am not writing this review on my official capacity. The views expressed here are my personal opinion and should not be taken neither as the position of Brazil nor of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) on the matter. In other words, I must recognize that my observation is certainly influenced by the institution that employs me, but this does not fully explain this article nor my opinions, which are offered in an individual capacity.

One more comment is important at this point: this is a review mainly based on lived observations. This is not the conclusion of a standalone research. Vieira's arguments are built on the top an ample study conducted throughout the years. This text engages critically with his ideas but cannot pretend to scientifically challenge every and each of his affirmations.

Where We Agree: Institutional Design Does Matter

Vieira judiciously articulates the contemporary literature on institutional studies, being innovative while acknowledging contributions from a vast array of authors. He shows that the executive power is hardly never a unitary actor; that not all bureaucracies that function as access points for lobbying groups are equal in terms of power; and that the control of information plays a key role in power distribution.

Vieira also presents, and in my view correctly, two other important and related lessons: on the one hand, that institutional designs are usually inherited from past decisions; on the other, that institutional changes may open room for unintended consequences. I correspondingly hold to his remark that what is usually called 'national interest' can be in practice dissected, since 'national interest' is in itself a product of multiple interactions, shaped by pre-existing factors.

From this departure point, Vieira's article calls attention to the influence of institutional design, a factor he believes has not been looked at with the desirable care in international political analysis. I respect his choice for trade negotiations as the initial case study for his examination. I note he construe domestic institutions as a standalone, independent variable (a definition he avoids, however, for reasons beyond my knowledge of contemporary epistemology).

Moving to the outcomes of Vieira's study, I agree with the author, moreover, that the inclusion of the Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development (known as MDA) in the Council of Ministers of the Chamber of Foreign Trade is a reflec-

tion of the country's political left's close relationship with, in his words, "peasant organisations and landless movements" (p.42). Neither have I any criticism, *ab initio*, with Vieira's proposition of two ideal-type categories for his study: the diplomatic bureaucracy that sees market-related concerns as part of international politics (which he calls 'blended diplomacy'); and the economic-focused negotiating model, which he exemplifies with a reference to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and, to some extent, to India.

Furthermore, I do not pretend to deny that, in Brazil, following a pre-existing practice already in place when the WTO Doha Round began, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) has been the final voice delivering Brazilian positions in most of the official international microphones. This has thus allowed MRE to revendicate, at least officially, a sort of 'coordinating role' between the technical areas growingly affected by and involved with international agreements. As Vieira explains, this alleged prominence of MRE was at least partially affected by the particular dynamics taken by Brazilian domestic politics during the ruling of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), which sits after his main period of analysis.

Once my standing point has been disclosed, and having taken care of my considerable level of agreement with the author, let me now turn to my dissent with Vieira's article in the next session.

Did MRE Defend Liberalizing Agriculture for Prestige?

According to Vieira's main line of argument, had Brazilian negotiators not blended so much of their political consideration into the national trade positions, the country would have ended up being more attentive to defensive interests of its domestic industry in the WTO Doha Round. Brazil would have also balanced better between WTO negotiations and regional and bilateral alternatives. This comes under the assumption that MDIC is more open than MRE for listening domestic actors interested in trade negotiations (p. 32).

Consequently, the author sees the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as having espoused an excessive agriculture-led liberalism. In page 46, Vieira suggests that this may have been a choice made for the benefit of the country's international prestige. This particular word 'prestige', borrowed from an interview (p. 44), epitomizes what would seem to reveal a misguided way of conducting business within trade negotiations.

Even though Vieira carefully avoids blatant side-taking (we should respect and praise the author for trying at most to distance himself from pre-conceived preferences), this understanding leads him to conclude that a better balance between opposing domestic interests could have been stroke had MDIC been at the driver

seat of negotiations (p. 46).

Vieira's article suggests that there were concrete reasons for Brazil to be more defensive in Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) at the Doha Round, and that the deal almost stroke in the WTO would have damaged the national industry, against the wish of MDIC. I tend to believe that the exchange rate and the monetary policy have been much more decisive for the direction taken by Brazilian partial des-industrialization, but this matter is beyond the scope of our direct exam here.

Vieira also proposes that, differently from the WTO, regional or bilateral solutions could have helped to better balance the defensive interests of the national industry. One should consider, however, that negotiations based on consolidated NAMA tariffs (such as WTO's) by definition have less direct impact than negotiation that start from applied tariffs (such as the one that were on the table, for example, in the context of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, FTAA).

Vieira's main argument, nevertheless, is precisely that diplomats consider too much the international scene and overlook their own domestic state-of-play. I am concious that if I delve too much on considerations about the structure of the negotiations, I may end up confirming the very point I am trying to oppose. I should also note that Vieira interviewed an impressive number of important people. If the author did not pursue on this consideration, I can believe he had reasons not to do so.

So, let me turn this critical review into another direction. I hold as hypothesis that Vieira's study ends up attributing more weight to the business organized lobby (partially averse to the risk of opening the economy, partially interested in better accessing other markets) than this (legitimate, albeit limited) interest group concretely holds in the formation of the national preferences. When assuming that an economic-centred institutional design would have balanced better between domestic interest groups, it seems that the author slightly overlapped the concept of "domestic interest group" with the concept of "market actor" (p. 32).

The first sign what seems to be an over-sensitiveness of the study to the industry federations is the affirmative that MRE had a liberalizing impetus at the Doha Round. The second sign is a tendency to assume that 21st Century international trade negotiations to be in essence a trade-off between opportunities of market access (a reality that may have existed, but before, in the 20th Century, under the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, through tariff reductions in non-agricultural sectors). The third sign is the limited consideration given to inputs received from domestic interest groups that are not necessary market actors, such as trade unions, environmentalist groups, representatives of federative units (states

and cities) and, not to be taken lightly, other bureaucracies within the state.

Starting with point number three, business federations could not be seen as a summary of industry positions, let alone of the actors in domestic politics with legitimate motivation to follow trade negotiations. In the interviews quoted in the article, Vieira enlists the National Industry Confederation (CNI) and the Federation of Industries of Sao Paulo (FIESP). I believe the author himself would accept that these two also do not always share the same views and, therefore, even if we limit the analysis to their inputs, room would be left for any state bureaucracy (be it MRE or MDIC) to ponder their demands in light of other inputs and considerations.

Running the risk, myself, of oversimplification, I would also like to recall that a relevant number of business associations outside Sao Paulo, while being members of CNI (but not of FIESP), are known to be very much linked to food manufacture. As Vieira himself suggests, there is a grey zone in which it becomes hard to differentiate agribusiness from industry, and this can be where this grey zone is to be of concern. In terms of access point for the food transformation lobby in the government, Vieira sees both the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA) and MDIC relating to representatives of this sector. Therefore, inasmuch as not all state bureaucracies are the same, not all interest groups are designed in the same manner; not all have the same core views; neither can a perfect line be drawn between Brazilian industry and Brazilian agriculture.

I believe the article shows that the author would agree with my comments until here, even if considering that a certain level of ideal-type approach becomes indispensable for apprehending the matter under study. Vieira does not ignore that agroindustry sectors in Brazil have been trying to lobby not only on behalf of "defensive", but also of some "liberalizing" positions, although with limited impact, since the Uruguay Round (for this, it is also worth looking at Veiga and Iglesias, 2002, p. 56; Zancan Bonomo, 2006, p. 74). A black-and-white separation between "agro" and "industry", Vieira recognizes, involves a certain level of simplification, for the sake of the study.

In any case, the interviewees cited show that Vieira's study have been particularly attentive to "non-agro" industry inputs, where he finds legitimate defensive considerations. Secondarily, the author also devotes space to considerations emanating from the big agribusiness sector and from small farmers.

I believe that additional account at least for the position of industrial labour unions could be worth considering. In the chosen time span (2003 to 2008), a closer look at the positions held by the Brazilian Network for People's Integration (REBRIP), in which a variety of civil society organizations, including unions,

participate, could be of particular help to inject some fresh hypothesis into the discussion. Given the high capacity of articulation showed by Vieira in his article, I am convinced that the author would have no issues with the additional complexity this would entail.

REBRIP proposals can be framed as yet much less liberal than the ones of FIESP or CNI. REBRIP has been a relevant and legitimate coalition that also dedicated part of its work to advocacy (or lobbying, as Vieira perhaps would prefer to define this), and part of its domestic concerns seem to have been heard by Brazilian negotiators on specific occasions. REBRIP and others in the civil society also showed a high capacity of finding common ground with institutions in other countries, thereby working with the so-called "variable geometry" in favour of the consideration of their inputs in the negotiation table.

Having suggested some of the non-state actors with positions at stake, I still have to show why other bureaucracies within the state also had interests in the Doha Round. Before examining to that, however, let me turn to the second sign I identified above of over-sensitiveness of Vieira's study to market actors: the difference between 20th century and 21st century trade negotiations.

We should see that Vieira himself dedicates an attentive look for inheritance from past decisions. WTO, as we can agree, was not created in the vacuum. "Unfinished businesses" were recognized at the end of the Uruguay Round. A simple look at tariffs can show that trade distortions were (and still are) much more prevalent in agriculture than in Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA).

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, at every succeeding GATT round, with less to be traded-off in terms of tariffs in NAMA, and while still being cautious about their domestic agricultural practices and sensitiveness, developed countries growingly turned their negotiation appetite to topics once seen as mere accessories to GATT: services, intellectual propriety, public procurement, investments and (the least controversial of them) trade facilitation.

In the Uruguay Round, the last round before the creation of the WTO (the WTO being, in itself, a negotiated result of the Uruguay Round), all these topics were recognized as being on the table, one way or another. The TRIPS and the TRIMS agreements came to be part of the WTO scope, partially in exchange for the creation of a mechanism for settling controversies.

We jump to 2001 and a quick look at the Doha Ministerial Declaration that inaugurated the so-called "Development Round" can show that two things – the understanding that agriculture had fell behind other tariff reductions and that any new trade-offs might need to involve some of the "new" non-tariff and regulatory

sectors – were clearly transported into and accepted as the basis for the negotiation (WTO, 2001).

A higher concentration of liberalizing attention in agriculture, in this case, can be seen not necessarily as the result of the manner by which MRE shaped the definition of the national interest, but as an expected result of the mandate created for the Doha Round itself, lately reflected in the country's negotiating position, having regards to costs and opportunities. The mandate favoured an approach by which meaningful results in agriculture were expected.

But Vieira could certainly call a foul here, arguing that, once again, I am turning myself too much into systemic considerations, against a look at the Brazilian domestic actors. In order to avoid that, let us look at the examples, in the literature, about domestic impacts generated by economic agreements (I am calling them economic and not trade agreements, since trade and tariffs became just a part of them). In Ha-Joon Chang, we can find one among other examples of why investor-against-state clauses in investment chapters, international public procurement measures, intellectual propriety additional restrictions and service liberalization agendas could limit the space for national states to regulate economic activity. At the end of the day, to quote Chang, these new topics had even more potential to "kick away" the ladder of development than industry liberalization.

All of these "non-trade" issues – or, as we could perhaps call them, regulatory trade-offs – were (and still are) equally present in the negotiation of regional and bilateral preferential trade agreements and free trade areas. In most of them, if not all of those that involve developed countries, proposals for commitments in these areas were (and still are) much more stringent than what was at the table in WTO when the Doha Round mandate was still alive and kicking. I am not saying they are necessarily to be avoided; the point is that they are high in the consideration of any trade-off mix.

"The game" in the Doha Round was never just about balancing between liberalizing and protectionists segments in tariff trade reductions. The examination of options taken by participants cannot ignore how both NAMA and Agriculture topics were interacting, both in Doha and at the regional/bilateral level, with the so-called Singapore issues cited above.

In Brazil, for example, service liberalization positive lists under the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) would have an impact in the interests of the Health Ministry and of the movements in favour of the implementation of the health policy embedded in the Brazilian constitution. One can argue if a positive or negative impact, but it is hard to deny it would tilt the balances stroke in the regulation of private health plans. The same can be said of additional com-

mitments in services and the current regulation applied to the provision of water through consortiums at the metropolitan level. Or yet of agreements with 'TRIPS+' commitments and their impact to universities, local clusters of economy based on culture, as well as to the pharmaceutical industry. Changes to public procurement and investor-state clauses, in turn, would oppose interests of the Judiciary, of the Ministry of Budget and Planning (MPOG) and of federations representing city mayors.

Truth be told, the entry points of these other interest groups in trade talks was much more subtle are hard to capture – but not necessarily less important. In view of this, contrary to what the author affirms, when we go back to 2003 and try to wear the negotiator shoes, we can see that a preference for Doha as opposed to a preference for bilateral and regional PTAs can hardly be taken a preference for the most liberalized impetus. Just the contrary: a look at PTAs and FTAs will show that most, if not all of them, would go much beyond the WTO, in terms of liberalization agenda, in sensitive areas within Brazil.

Let us take a look, for example, at the bargain stroke by the participants of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), of which Brazil was not a part. On the one hand, it incorporated the "TRIPS plus" and investment commitments that were not possible in WTO. On the other hand, it excluded pork, beef and sugar, to quote only three products, of almost any liberalizing commitment.

All this considered, there are at least another important element to be taken into account: as a member of MERCOSUR, the opportunities for PTAs and FTAs for Brazil between 2003 and 2008 cannot be looked at without some reference to the spaces and constrains created by its regional partners. Furthermore, no regional or bilateral trade-off would include commitments in the so-called *systemic* trade distorting issues: export subsidies and excessive domestic support.

Export subsidies, domestic support and other vexing trade-distorting practices, by definition, no actor would be willing to compromise in negotiations with only a part of its potential markets (Amorim, 2011, p. 126-131; 154-155; 164-167; 362-363; 510-511). Comparison between opportunities presented by multilateral versus regional trade negotiations during the last decade should consider that these systemic issues could only be tackled when all or most actors (EU, US, developing countries, "emerging economies" for those that like this definition) were on the table at the same time. The nature of the trade-off is therefore different in multilateral negotiations. A choice between Doha and regional/bilateral alternatives could not be seen as equivalently uniform.

Compared to regional and bilateral trade negotiations that were possible between 2003 and 2008, which is the period examined by Vieira, the WTO brought a

clear advantage for Brazil: it presented itself as the only place where these systemic issues, and export subsidies in particular, could be discussed. No country will negotiate systemic issues in a bilateral agreement with a partner. And if we look at what are the conditions of the economic situation of Brazil vis-a-vis the world, we can see Brazil is one of the countries that tends to gain the most from the resolution of systemic issues.

This could explain, albeit only partially, the choice for multilateralism as opposed to non-systemic negotiations. To quote someone keen and close to some of the positions exposed by Vieira, Bonomo (2006) sees the liberalization of agriculture as only the third reason for the Brazilian government bet on the WTO and on the Doha round. According to Bonomo, the very construction of a multilateral system was the first priority for Brazil.

Without forgetting, once again, that Vieira suggests that a politically-motivated institution tends to tilt the balance in the direction of international considerations, and that I am part an institution with such deficiency, it is important to note that the country chosen for his case-study – Brazil – is often considered a "middle-power" in global trade, with economic relations distributed across diverse regions and continents. A multilateral, consensus-based decision-taking arena was, according to Bonomo, a priority in itself for Brazil. It would allow for bargaining space acting under what has been described as a variable geometry.

Coming back to the domestic considerations, I shall note that Vieira sees the existence of a left-leaning lobby within the state and the then-ruling Workers' Party (PT). The MRE choice of betting in the WTO, in what it looked like to Vieira as a liberalizing agriculture impetus, is seemed in his article as a possible contradiction to PT. From here the author develops an explanation for this apparent contradiction, precisely recurring to the particular institutional design of our negotiating diplomacy.

However, as it stems from the other considerations proposed above (systemic versus non-systemic opportunities; the departure point in NAMA; the non-tariff nature of other topics under discussion, which affect other domestic actors; influence of non-market interest groups), the choice for prioritizing the WTO *in lieu* of regional and bilateral arrangements, in the period examined by Vieira, can be seen from a different angle: the WTO was perhaps the arena where the naturally occurring "liberalizing pressures" of part the Brazilian society could be discharged, with less harm to the more defensive standing of many.

The effort to create the G20 for WTO negotiations, seen from this perspective, cannot be considered a mere investment in prestige. It can be seen as a legitimate investment in bargaining power. In theory, as in any coalition-building, the need

to construct a common view may create limits to autonomous voicing of individual concerns. But, in this case, it is possible to argue, as interviews conducted by Vieira suggest, that the G20 coalition contradictions and diversities were also found and reproduced within Brazil. The limitations of G20 partially coincided with the domestic constrains for the country's positions.

If it seems correct to say that Brazil started to look again with more attention to bilateral alternatives to the systemic WTO negotiations since the early 2010's, the causal relationship between this fact and the growingly MDIC prominence under President Dilma Rousseff does not seem to be as direct as Vieira proposes. Even without the change in the relative positions of MRE and MDIC under Rousseff, which have been noted by the author, more attention to bilateral and bi-regional FTAs could have been inevitable. The reason being that the "systemic promise", in which Brazil concentrated its bet up to 2008, started to prove itself insufficient and disappointing. But this is known now – after –not before the events took place.

My final comment, henceforth, has to do with the importance of a look into the development literature and the impact that the so-called Singapore issues could have had on Brazil. I am convinced this could help explain some of the choices made by Brazilian negotiators in the name of the national interest in the period of interest for Vieira. To defend myself from Vieira argument against excessive systemic considerations, I should signal that not all development studies are internationally-focused. Domestic considerations for policy choices are also available.

Suggestions for the Future Research Agenda

Having shown the reasons where I find the case-study oversimplified, I come back to be in agreement with Vieira that other cases looking at how institutional designs influence diplomatic decision-making would be most welcomed.

In any negotiation, it is not easy to combine technical knowledge and power considerations. In any given issue-area, a lot of inter-ministerial coordination is required for that to happen. It is not within the scope of this article to single out which model works best, and in which case it does. For the time being, I consider lacking data and knowledge to risk definitive answers in this regard.

Having said that, and without arriving at final conclusions, it can be suggested that the following often happens in such situations: firstly, technical bureaucracies that are equally present in different countries agree among themselves. Secondly, they see value in getting more attention at the national level to their internationally-reached consensus. Thirdly, for that, they seek to better bind their consensus through internationally assumed commitments or agreements. This leads to el-

evating the invited political heads of delegations to the international meetings in the particular issue-area ('*summitization*').

For the disappointment of the technical bureaucracies that were originally in agreement, however, *summitization* often leads to the blending of political considerations, and of considerations of other bureaucracies, into their issue-area.

Before *summitization* happens, when discussions are kept at the technical level, the correlation of forces prevailing on the particular issue-area are usually taken as a given. This often happens because, for technical people, technical information is a definitive asset. At the political level, however, there is a tendency for actors to show more agency to put to test the correlations of force, employing negotiating tactics that challenge the fact that uneven access to information is a constant constraint to decision-making.

In this sense, I suggest three possibilities as particularly worth for future study: the interaction between technical and political bureaucracies in negotiations under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; the complex interaction between the knowledge of accountants and of political diplomats in the UN Budgetary Process; and the negotiations of the concept of "green jobs" at the International Labour Organization, involving a unexpected melting of environmentalist, unionists and businessmen preoccupations.

Vieira himself presents, at the conclusion of his article, some other possibilities. I find at least one of them tricky and uncertain for the future study of the influence of institutional design: the relationship between Brazil, OECD and development aid.

Firstly, because the Brazilian official position in this matter seems to be evolving fast. Secondly, because according to Vieira, the "problem" of Brazil with the OECD used to be that the Organization demanded more transparency than what Brazil was willing to practice. The matter here, however, as I would like to suggest, was not one of transparency, but of forms of measurement.

Furthermore, keeping ourselves at the technical bay, traditionally the main reason given for Brazil not to accede to the OECD was understood to be the commitments on investments, not on aid. From the systemic point of view, the question has had to do with the effects of the OECD accession in the participation of Brazil at the global-south decision-making coalitions, such as the G-77. But, as said before, the context changed once the current government is favourable to accession, and this discussion should be conducted with more care than this conclusion would allow.

In order to comment yet another issue tackled by Vieira in his article, it is also worth noting that the US does not seem to be the best possible comparison on executive-legislative interaction on international negotiations. Washington seems to be more an exception than a rule in this field. I would suggest a rather broader look at the formation of interests in other countries, opening up the scope of the issue rather than limiting it to a dual approach Brazil-US. I find comfort in knowing that Vieira himself could bring to the discussions his experiences with Indian foreign trade policy.

In the case of trade, specifically, further comparative studies looking at a broad range of countries' participation in the WTO from the division between the two ideal-types of diplomacy proposed (the 'blended'/general and the economic-centred) would also be most welcomed. One should recognize that this discussion has already become a common cocktail soft-talk in Geneva circles ("are you from the Chancery or from the Trade Department?"). But studies as Vieira's, going way beyond the stereotype, could certainly help better understanding how this really affects decision-making.

Acknowledgements

Bio

Francisco Figueiredo de Souza is Master in Diplomacy by the Rio Branco Institute (Dissertation: State, civil society and social services during peace operations). He currently works as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Brazil in the Philippines. He worked at the Brazilian Mission to the United Nations Office in Geneva, where he was in charge of the International Labour Organization (ILO) desk (2012-2016), and at the Embassy of Brazil in Dili, Timor-Leste (2010-2012), as Secretary in charge of peacekeeping and international cooperation. In Brasilia, he was assigned to the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Division, being responsible for the IBSA Facility Fund for Poverty Alleviation (the IBSA Fund) from 2007 to 2010. He graduated in International Relations (PUC-SP) and Journalism (USP). Before joining the diplomatic service, he was sent as a civil society representative to the 20005 WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong by

the Consumers' Defence Institute (IDEC). The views expressed in this article are offered by the author in an individual capacity.

References

Amorim, Celso. 'Conversas com jovens diplomatas'. São Paulo: Benvirá, 2011.

Chang, Ha-Joon. 'Kicking away the ladder: development strategy in historical perspective'. London: Anthem Press, 2002.

Figueiredo de Souza, F. 'Cenários para o Comércio de Serviços na OMC depois de Hong Kong'. Pontes entre o Comércio e o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Volume 2, Issue 1, January-February 2006. São Paulo: ICTSD, 2006.

Miles, RE 1978, 'The origin and meaning of Miles' law,' Public Administration Review, vol. 38, no. 5, pp. 399-403.

Veiga, P and Iglesias, R. 'A Institucionalidade da Política Brasileira de Comércio Exterior'. In: Pinheiro, A, Markwald, R and Valls Pereira, L (Orgs.), 'O Desafio das Exportações'. Rio de Janeiro: BNDES, 2002.

Vieira, V. Rodrigues. 'Blended Diplomacy: Institutional Design and Brazil's National Interest in Trade'. Rising Powers Quarterly, Volume 2, Issue 2, (Brazil: Geopolitical Challenges in a Multipolar World), May. 2017, pp. 31-53.

WTO. 'Ministerial 2001: Ministerial Declaration.". Doha, December 2001.

___. Market access: unfinished business. Post Uruguay Round Inventory and Issues. Geneva: WTO, 2001.

Zancan Bonomo, Diego. 'A Mobilização Empresarial para a Tríplice Negociação Comercial:

ALCA, MERCOSUL-União Européia e OMC (1994-2004)'. Master's Dissertation. São Paulo: PUC, 2006.

Rising Powers Quarterly is a peer-reviewed non-profit free-access journal dedicated to the study of the growing role of rising powers in global governance. It aims to explore the political, economic and social processes through which the states regarded as "rising powers" in world politics interact with other states as well as international and transnational organizations. This journal also aims to fill the academic lacunae in the literature on rising powers and global governance related themes since there is a growing need for a journal specialized on rising powers in parallel to their increasing importance in world politics.

Published four times a year, Rising Powers Quarterly is particularly interested in original scientific contributions that analyze the operations and policies of regional & international organizations, international groupings such as the BRICS, IBSA, MIKTA and G-20, as well as their member states around the main themes of international political economy, global governance, North-South relations, developing world, changing international order, development, rising/emerging/middle/regional powers, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, peace, peacekeeping, security, democracy and international terrorism. Country-specific case studies with regard to their interrelation at the global level are also of particular concern of *Rising Powers Quarterly*. One of the main objectives of the journal is to provide a new forum for scholarly discussion on these topics as well as other issues related with world politics and global governance.

Rising Powers Quarterly publishes theoretically informed and empirically rich papers that seek to explore a broad set of research questions regarding the role played by the rising powers in global governance. Interdisciplinary research as well as critical approaches are particularly welcomed by the editors. The editors also encourage the submission of papers which have strong policy relevance as *Rising Powers Quarterly* is also designed to inform and engage policymakers as well as private and public corporations.

All articles in the journal undergo rigorous peer review which includes an initial assessment by the editors and anonymized refereeing process. The journal also publishes special issues on a broad range of topics related with the study of rising powers in world politics. Special issue proposals can be sent to the editors at any time and should include full details of the authors as well as the abstracts of the articles.

Rising Powers Quarterly is based at Marmara University, Faculty of Political Science, Istanbul, Turkey.

RISING POWERS QUARTERLY

Volume 3, Issue 1
February 2018