

In the Name of Self-Preservation. Foreign Policy and the Theory of Double Survival

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Abstract:

In the recent years, many interesting theories and concepts have emerged in the field of foreign policy analysis. Yet international relations scholars continue to highlight the insufficient development of theories focusing on the interaction between unit and system levels. This paper outlines the ‘theory of double survival’, which connects the constraints of inter-state competition with those of internal electoral contests, and offers a promising theoretical and analytical basis for delving into the question of why states choose to implement particular foreign policy strategies and tactics. The theory brings together the economic theory of democracy and the ‘balance of threat’ theory, and assumes that politicians, in order to maintain themselves in office (internal survival), try to make foreign policy decisions that will advance state security (external survival). This behavior results from their expectations of voter maximization in exchange for efficient foreign and security policy.

The theory of double survival: An Introduction

Although the growing relevance of foreign policy analysis as a major sub-field of International Relations seems indisputable given current trends in political science, theoretically grounded studies of foreign policy are still a marginal part of the research on international relations (Carlsnaes 2002: 331 f.). Particularly remarkable is the lack of the theory development focusing on the interplay between the system level and the unit level. According to Peter Gourevitch, “the interaction of domestic and international, is the least well developed, and the place that particularly requires further analysis” (Gourevitch 2002: 310). Foreign policy analysis tends too frequently to pay attention either to the domestic or to the system level, engaging interactions between those levels at most through *ad hoc* assumptions (for this critique, see for instance Legro/Moravcsik 1999).

The most notable recent attempt to combine systemic variables with those at the domestic level within foreign policy analysis was provided by a number of studies in neoclassical realism. While both neoclassical and classical realists aim to explain the behavior of individual states - i.e. their foreign policy outcomes - the former distance themselves from the classical assumption concerning the source of the state behavior seen in human nature (Morgenthau 1948: 49). In

contrast, they share a neorealist understanding of the crucial function of anarchic political structure of the international system and the relative power capabilities for explaining state actions (see Rose 1998: 146; Taliaferro 2006: 469; Zakaria 1995: 482). The external environment, however, cannot solely explain states' choices among foreign policy alternatives. For this reason, as neoclassical realists have pointed out, systemic factors have to be filtered by intervening variables at the unit-level (Schweller 2006: 6; Rose 1998: 147), which are in turn conceived as a bridge between systemic structures and foreign policy actions.

Close inspection reveals, however, that attempts to link system and unit-level should be viewed with some skepticism; primarily due to a lack of elaboration on what role the systemic level plays in explaining foreign policy choices. On the one hand, many neoclassical realists assume the causal impact of the states' relative power position on their foreign policy behavior (see Rose 1998: 151; Taliaferro 2006: 467; Rynning/Ringsmose 2008: 34). On the other hand, in empirical studies they assume *de facto* the second-image, and in the recent research also the first-image factors, as independent variables for explanation of foreign policy decisions (see Elman 2003: 7; Feng/Ruizhuang 2006: 122). In this sense, Randall Schweller, one of the main adherents of neoclassical realism, argues in Waltz's sense, that "[s]tructural imperatives rarely, if ever, compel leaders to adopt one policy over another" (Schweller 2006: 5).

The consequence of employing such different perspectives is that theories developed by this most recent generation of realist thinkers, frequently contain several independent variables but the relationship between those variables remains underspecified. Given this ambiguity, the essential question of foreign policy analysis remains unclear, namely whether a foreign policy decision should be traced to the structure of the international system or to domestic factors. To approach the question from a slightly different angle, which alternative will be chosen by decision-makers, when it comes to a tension between international pressures and domestic demands? This missing link between the system structure and actor behavior produces sometimes only a vague explanatory framework for theories of neoclassical realism and complicates their falsification (Rose 1998: 168).

The theory of double survival attempts to grasp the interaction between the international system and the internal dynamics of states within a logical, coherent theoretical concept. It is based on the economic theory of democracy as well as the balance of threat theory, and aims to explain foreign policy decisions in democratic states. I conceive of foreign policy decisions as resulting from politicians acting according to the principle of double survival, that is, to the territorial or political survival of the state (the principal of the external survival), and to their own survival in office (the principal of the internal survival). I regard external survival-seeking behavior as a function of internal survival-seeking behavior, which is in turn assured through the re-election.

The theory of double survival utilizes only one cause, defined here as the necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of a certain case, for choosing foreign policy alternatives. It therefore offers a clear analytical link between domestic and international factors and provides a weighting of the different explanatory variables on both analytic levels. Ultimately, this concept should at least make clear that even if foreign policy analysis is usually more complex than neorealist perspectives might allow, the former need not to suffer from the chaos of myriad independent variables or the *ad hoc* adaptation of explanatory factors (for this accusation, see Walt 2002: 211). The theory of double-survival draws firstly on neorealist assumptions; second, it refers to the balance of threat theory; third, it focuses on the foreign policy decision-making; and fourth, it stresses the relevance of domestic factors in these decisions. It might, at the first glance, be seen as another theory of neoclassical realism¹, however, there are fundamental distinctions between the theory of double survival and theories associated with neoclassical realism. While neoclassical realism is not a coherent research program, but rather a family of theories with partially divergent

¹ There are not only overlaps between the theory of double survival, and theories of neoclassical realism, but also between the former and the selectorate theory, developed by Bueno de Mesquita et al (2003). Both have the same point of departure lying in the Downs' assumption that "[t]he desire to survival [in office] motivates the selection of policies and the allocation of benefits; it shapes the selection of political institutions and the objectives of foreign policy" (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003: 8f.). However, both theoretical concepts differ heavily in many respects, most of all regarding the central research questions.

assumptions, it is difficult to compare this conglomerate of theories with the theory of double survival.

Nonetheless, I will present below a short overview of the main differences between both of these theoretical perspectives. This is useful for two reasons: first, to sketch the most conspicuous differences between the two theoretical positions, and second, to elucidate some key features of the theory of double survival. In the second part of this article, I briefly outline the economic theory of democracy by Anthony Downs, one of the most important rational choice theories, and explore its relevance to analyses of the international context in which politicians attempt to maximize their prospects for winning and retaining office domestically. The third section focuses on the balance of threat theory by Stephen Walt, as one of the central elements of the theory of double survival. Subsequently, I explain the three-step decision-making process taken by politicians in order to safeguard their own political survival as well as the state's survival.

The main purpose of this paper, therefore, is to work out a new model of foreign policy analysis. Security policy is here regarded to be a part of foreign policy. Consequently, decisions about security are also foreign policy decisions. Despite skepticism, particularly amongst political scientists in continental Europe, according to both political realism and the rational choice approach there are some reasons to believe that this combination offers a promising analytical model for foreign policy decisions. In so doing, I also develop theoretical debates regarding the extent to which political realism and the rational choice approach are suitable for foreign policy analysis, thereby challenging David Lake's assumption that "there is no necessary reason why the interests of self-seeking politicians should coincide with the national interest" (Lake 2001: 716).

The theory of double survival versus neoclassical realism

As emphasized, both neoclassical realism and the theory of double survival incorporate core aspects of neorealist thought and stress the importance of studying domestic factors in order to shed light on foreign policy behavior. But they also differ in many respects. First, they diverge in their evaluation of the meaning of system level analysis of the states' foreign policy actions. According to neoclassical realism, the anarchic structure of the international system and the state's relative power position constitute the analytical point of departure. Research on domestic politics, although considered relevant, presents only a means for explaining aberrations from the foreign policy predictions made by neorealists. In contrast, the theory of double survival switches the perspective and starts with an analysis of the domestic imperatives of foreign policy. To be sure, the theory views analysis of the structure of the international system as of great importance, but it is seen this an arena in which decision-makers attempt to safeguard their re-election.

This, in turn, marks a second clear distinction, namely the diverging levels of significance that rationality assumption is given in both theoretical concepts. Whereas it constitutes the core premise of the theory of double survival (see below), as in all rational choice-theories, most realists threaten the rationality assumption either implicitly or as an auxiliary assumption that constitutes nothing more than a footnote.

Third, different research questions as well as divergent analytic interests are raised by theories of neoclassical realism and the theory of double survival. The former raises questions about when and how domestic variables modify the impact of the systemic factors on the state's foreign actions or why the state reaction to the systemic incentives is sometimes inefficient (see Taliaferro 2006: 467). In contrast, the latter assumes the central role of domestic arguments, in particular the role of the competition for voters among leaders, and tries to work out how crucial politicians understanding of international power structures is for their chances of surviving in office. Rather than rendering realism fruitful for foreign policy analysis, the theory of double survival stresses the rational choice approach for explanation of international relations.

This implies, fourth, a different interpretation of the realist imperative of state security-seeking in both theoretical concepts: from the point of view of neoclassical realists, the primacy of security interests results from the anarchic structure of the international environment, while the

theory of double survival views striving for security only as a by-product of competition for political leadership.

Economic theory of democracy and the relevance of the external environment

The relevant question raised by almost all theories of foreign policy is that of how and why politicians choose certain foreign policy options. The answer depends certainly on the theoretical lens through which researchers observe reality. Accordingly, we can conceive of a political decision as resulting from the bureaucratic struggle for power, from organizational routines, from pressures of influential social groupings or from psychological characteristics of decision-makers. However, as a reason for making a particular political decision in democratic states, the fact that central decision-makers constitute a political alternative may also be seen as the best instrument for acquiring or maintaining themselves in office.

This assumption is based on the economic theory of democracy. As with all rational choice theories, the economic model of democracy rests upon two premises: methodological individualism and rationality assumption. Accordingly, each decision is seen as arising from individual goal-oriented behavior (Ordeshook 1968: 1, Lupia, McCubbins & Popkin 2000: 8). One of the main assumptions of the economic theory of democracy is that decision-makers aim primarily at maximizing voters in order to keep their position of power (see Downs 1957). The main objective of political actors results thus from the structure of the electoral competition, which emerges in turn from the institution of democratic elections. Regardless of his or her motives to win office, the individual politician has to follow the logic of political competition in order to survive. This internal survival depends, thus, on voter support.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the voter is prone to cast the ballot to the candidate or political party that he or she expects to be more effective than others in striving for the territorial security and political autonomy – for the external survival of the state. From this perspective, it should be presumed that the more effective political actors are in safeguarding state security, the more votes they will be awarded.

For sure, the public does not always and in fact (at least in societies with a low level of threat perception) maybe rarely focuses on foreign policy issues when casting a ballot. But given the large uncertainty about the basis on which people make their electoral choice, politicians have to take into account the foreign policy preferences of society. In other words, they have to consider public opinion consequences as they shape their foreign policies. Although prior research on voting behavior highlights economic policy outcomes as the crucial criterion for voting choice (for an overview S. Lewis-Beck/Paldam 2000), recent studies suggest that the basis for candidate or party evaluations depends on what issues were at the “front of people’s minds” at election time. That is to say, the issues that were considered to be salient to a particular person could be quickly recalled at the moment of the electoral choice (Zaller 1992; Aldrich et al. 2006: 485 ff.). Cognitively available in turn are issues that were able to gain one’s attention through their frequent attention in the mass media. Which issues get on the media agenda directly before the election, what electoral strategies will be chosen by the opposition party, and finally what the evaluation basis for voting choice will be, are questions that remain highly uncertain. Nonetheless, there are some reasons to believe that foreign policy decisions that could be framed as reducing the state’s security have a particular potential to become salient for the public and thus constitute an important theme for policy debates. If it happens directly before the election, a foreign policy decision that does not conform to public judgments about security may minimize the prospect of that decision-maker retaining office. In fact, foreign policy decisions can become as relevant a basis for candidate evaluation as economic issues.

Consequently, given the objective of internal survival, individual decision-makers have to convince the public that they have chosen the option that is optimal for improving state survival. Anticipating the rewards for the security-seeking decisions, politicians aim in the decision-making process not only to safeguard internal but also external security. The point to emphasize here is,

that from the point of view of the economic theory of democracy as well as the theory of double survival, the second goal is always a function of the first one.

Whilst keeping the relevance of the efficiency of a foreign policy decision in mind, political actors also have to be conscious of its consequences regarding the state's position in the international system, particularly the reaction of other states to the acting state. In order to assess such consequences, decision-makers have to gain an understanding of the various interconnections in international politics, the challenges and main tendencies resulting from the anarchic structure of the international system, and the international distribution of power. But they also have to be aware of the necessary conditions for state survival, given certain threats, in a system defined by anarchy (s. the next section). At this point, the relevance of an analysis of the external environment from the perspective of the economic theory of democracy becomes evident. Specifically, its significance results from the fact that a comprehensive knowledge of the most efficient survival strategies cannot be acquired without an abstract assimilation of external circumstances at the system level. To be sure, there is no direct transfer of knowledge from the exploration of inducements and pressures of the international system to the choice of certain foreign policy decisions. However, it is undoubtedly rational for political actors to rank the most efficient alternatives on the basis of an analysis at the system level when looking to eschew those options that do not ensure state survival.

This explanatory power, arising from the exploration of consequences of foreign policy decisions at both domestic and system levels, is recognized in the theory of double survival. By incorporating realistic assumptions about the balance of threat theory in the economic theory of democracy, the theory of double survival offers a promising analytical framework for the analysis of the foreign policy choices of democratic states.

The Balance of Threat Theory

The structure of the international system is the point of departure for all theories based on assumptions of neorealism. The main characteristics of the system structure are, first and foremost, anarchy, defined as the absence of a legitimate governmental authority to enforce agreements between states or other actors, and second, the international distribution of capabilities. The relative power position of a state - i.e. its position in the international system, which in turn shapes significantly its behavior - is derived from this distribution of power and the polarity of the international system (see Elman 1996: 10).

Faced with the absence of a singular, authoritative power source in the international system, states must provide for their own survival and take care of their own. Because states attempt to develop strategies and tactics that assure their external survival (even at each other's expense), the intention of other states can never be stated for sure. As Mearsheimer posits, "[u]ncertainty about intentions is unavoidable, which means that states can never be sure that other states do not have offensive intentions to go along with their offensive capabilities" (Mearsheimer 2001: 31).

Since no state can foresee which state will, in the future, employ its capabilities aggressively, the fundamental objective of each state is, "to prevent others from achieving advance in their relative capabilities" (Grieco 1995: 161). This consideration for the division of possible profits between states and the pursuit of not absolute but relative gains, in turn complicates the inter-states cooperation, since each state seeks to avoid a distribution of profit that may favor others more than itself. Accordingly, states are "compelled to ask not 'Will both of us gain?', but 'Who will gain more?'" (Waltz 1979: 105)

Being unable to prevent states from cheating, from dependence and from losing their relative gains (Grieco 1996: 283), international institutions are not given much consideration in the realist thinking on international relations. That it is not, however, to say that international institutions are entirely neglected. Just the opposite. Many realists understand that institutionalizing collaborative behavior can increase their influence and reduce dependence, which improves their own chances for survival (I will refer to this point later).

From the point of view of realism, the fundamental purpose of each state is to guarantee its own survival. Survival means first preserving the territorial integrity of the state, and second, the autonomy of the domestic political order (see Grieco 1996: 282; Levy 2004: 32). Furthermore, it is stated that survival concerns dominate all others because “once a state is conquered, it is unlikely to be in a position to pursue other aims” (Mearsheimer 2001: 31; Waltz 1979: 91 f.).

Additionally, the chances of territorial preservation and political survival enhance with increased security levels and decrease with the reduction of a danger. The degrees of security or threat are therefore instruments for measuring the state’s survival ability. Consequently, security means the absence of a threat, i.e. a situation wherein the state is threatened neither by territorial conquest (there is no danger to its territorial integrity), nor by constraints to its freedom of action (there is no danger to its political self-determination).

According to this logic, the strategies and tactics that states’ choose in order to maximize their survival ability are primarily aimed at increasing security and reducing threats. However, each state can enhance its political autonomy and territorial integrity only to the extent that the means used are not seen by others as a threat to their own survival. Once the attempt to improve one’s state survival makes other states more insecure, they will be stimulated to intensify their efforts against the threatening state, which in turn reduces its security (see Herz 1950).

Whereas the neorealism of Kenneth Waltz asserts that states focus their efforts against the most powerful states, Stephen Walt assumes that these efforts are taken primarily against those states that pose the most serious threat, which is why they are perceived as aggressive. Walt depicts the core assumption of his balance of threat theory as follow: “[S]tates balance against the states that pose the greatest threat, and the latter need not be the most powerful states in the system. (...) Whereas balance of power theory predicts that states will react to imbalances of power, balance of threat theory predicts that when there is an imbalance of threat (i.e., when one state or coalition appears especially dangerous), states will form alliances or increase their internal efforts in order to reduce their vulnerability” (Walt 1987: 263). From this perspective, it is of no importance whether a danger is possible. Rather, the question is whether it is perceived as likely. Drawing on the balance of threat theory, I will argue that the perception of threats has a crucial impact on a state’s foreign policy behavior. But unlike Walt, the theory of double survival does not assume any direct effects from a threat analysis on the choice of certain foreign policy options. Rather, the threat analysis offers decision-makers a basis on which to rank their preferences for available alternatives. In fact, the choice of a certain foreign policy option depends on the ability of politicians to persuade society that this option is an optimal answer from the perspective of a given threat. The imperative of voter maximization therefore plays a double role in the theory of double survival: it is the point of departure for political actor behavior as well as the very last filter for choosing certain foreign policy options.

Overall, the impact of systemic factors on the choice of foreign policy options can be summed up as follows: The structure of the international system offers foreign policy makers certain alternatives, which are then filtered through the perception of threats as well as the imperative of voter maximization. As a consequence, the foreign policy alternative finally chosen belongs to the set of available options and it is also a result of the threat perception of politicians, but above all else, it reflects an outcome of the cost-benefit calculation of political leaders regarding their best chance of preserving internal and external survival (see Figure 1). This view is entirely consistent with Waltz’s idea that the structure does not determine the choice of foreign policy alternatives, but once a state ignores inducements and pressures of the system conditions it has to anticipate costs. However, the costs concern not only external survival, as with Waltz, but also the prospects for internal self-preservation.

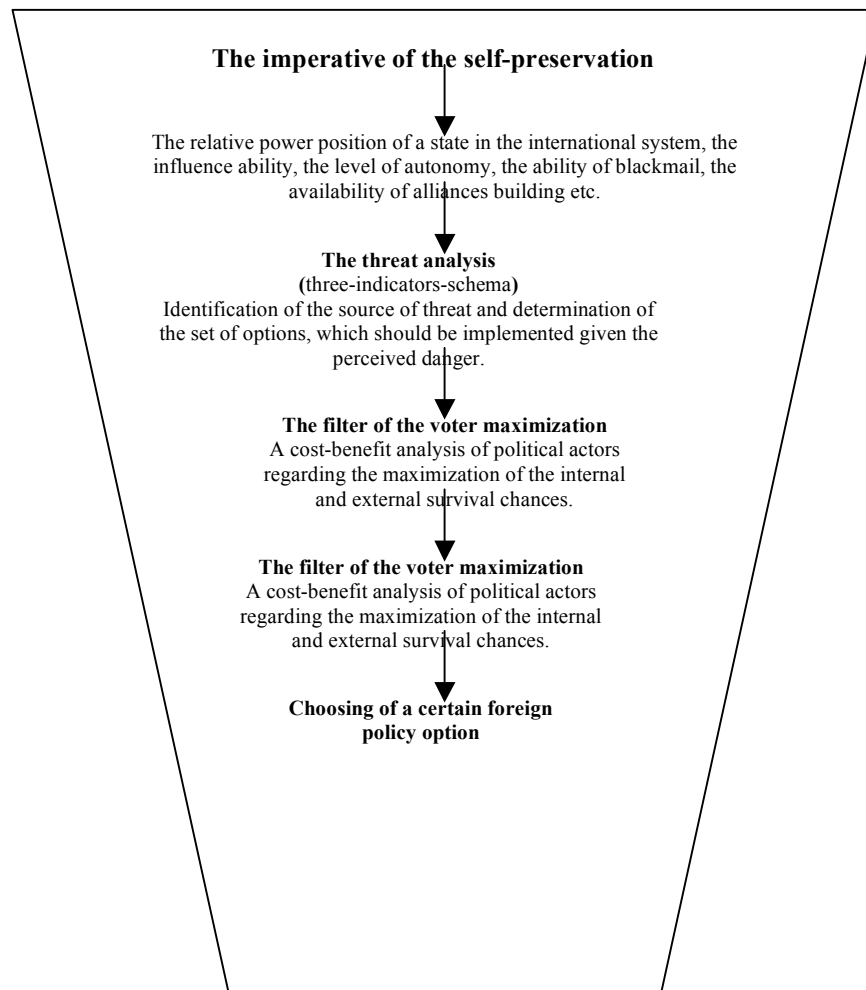


Figure 1: The process of foreign policy decision-making I

In pursuing the principle of double survival, a foreign policy maker is forced, on the one hand by the structure of the electoral political competition for voters, and on the other hand by the structure of the international state competition, to make foreign policy decisions that are efficient from the perspective of both the international environment and domestic pressures. Therefore, foreign policy makers act rationally, in the sense of the above-mentioned economic rationality, i.e. they weigh costs and benefits of foreign policy alternatives and choose the one that can safeguard both internal and external security. As a consequence, foreign policy decisions arise from a double cost-benefit calculation by individual decision-makers. Accordingly, during the process of foreign policy making, leaders have to answer the following questions: first, which alternatives are available given the states' relative power position in the international system, second, which of these available options should be employed, given the perceived danger, and finally third, which of these alternatives will gain the greatest acceptance in society. The rationality assumption and the quest for survival in office therefore combine the system effects with the state foreign policy behavior (see table 1).

1. What is feasible?	The analyses of a relative power distribution and the availability of alliance or cooperation partners answer, i.e. the questions of what a state can do or what capabilities it has to maintain its survival.
2. What should be	The threat analysis (three-indicators-schema) answer, i.e. the question of what is the most efficient way of applying the states capabilities, which strategies

done? (Filter 1)	should be developed, against which state should an alliance be built, and from which states should it try to be independent.
From the analytical steps 1 and 2, a set of options result, which provide a basis for the choice of strategies and tactics (options A, B, C etc.).	
3. What can be implemented? (Filter 2)	Finally, the filter of the voter maximization answer, i.e. the questions of which of the options established through the analytical step 2 might be accepted by the voters, what impact might the option choice have on prospects for re-election, and is there a need for politicians to exert influence on voter preferences.

Table 1: The process of foreign policy decision-making II

Three analytical steps of choosing foreign policy alternatives

On the basis of the preceding discussion, in this section I will present a three-step analysis of foreign policy decision-making. The first step focuses on determining the cause of threats, or more precisely, the definition of international actors that are in a position to jeopardize the state's territorial security and political autonomy. For this purpose, I have developed a three-indicators schema. The second step depicts the identification of political options, which can ensure the state's survival, given the ascertained threats. Ultimately, the third step focuses on the process of filtering the available alternatives through the imperative of voter maximizing. Given the constraints of space in this article, I will discuss only the crucial points of these three analytical steps.

The first analytical step: Determinants of the threat perception via three-indicators schema

In order to specify the determinants of the identification of currently or potentially dangerous states, I developed a three-indicators schema that is partially based on Walt's balance of threat theory. The first determinant in the identification of a source of threat is the state's aggregate power. This refers to the relationship between a state's own resources and the capabilities of other states. Measurement this relationship determines the state's power position in the international system. Exemplary state power capabilities are depicted in the table 2.

Capabilities	Operationalisation	Presumptions
Military capabilities	Military expenditures, troops, weapons	The greater the asymmetry in favor of others, the more vulnerable is the state to military threats and the more dangerous other states are perceived.
Economic capabilities	National product (GNP), export volume	The greater the asymmetry in favor of others, the more vulnerable is the state to threats of blackmails and dependence, and the more dangerous other states are perceived.
Population	Mobilization of manpower and soldiers	The greater the asymmetry in favor of others, the more vulnerable is the state in the case of conventional warfare and the less competitive it is economically, and the more dangerous others states are perceived.

Political capabilities	Influence within international organizations or via dependences	<p>The larger the number of institutions and alliances not available for a state, the more vulnerable is the state and the more dangerous other states are perceived (Maoz 2003: 205 f.).</p> <p>The greater the asymmetry in the capability to advance own interests (for instance, via voting), the more vulnerable, since the state is more compelled to accept unwished decisions, and the more dangerous other states are perceived.</p> <p>The fewer coalitional or alliance partners are available, the more vulnerable is the state, since it is military and economic weaker than others, and the more dangerous others states are perceived.</p>
Cultural resources	Persuasiveness attractiveness (so-called <i>soft power</i> resources)	<p>The less convincing the state is on the international stage, or the less respectful it is perceived in the eyes of the world public, the less possibilities it has to influence the decisions of other states by affecting the preferences of its population, and the smaller is its room of maneuver. The more possibilities to affect the preferences of citizens of other states, the more dangerous that state is perceived.</p>

Table 2: The state power capabilities

The balance of threat theory conceives of the state's relative aggregate power as a relevant factor, but not as the only determinant of threat identification, as neorealist models do (see Walt 1987: 23). The second indicator of a possible source of threat is the geographic proximity of powerful states. The reason for this assumption is that the ability to project power and gains from an aggressive act diminish with distance (see Walt 1987: 23; Hensel 2000: 6). Despite technological developments, neighbors still fight each other more often than distant states (for empirical examples, see Vasquez 2000, 1995; Huth 1996, Hensel 2000: 12). As a consequence, states focus their strategies and tactics on their direct neighbors, as well as on states that exercise a significant impact on the regional political order, i.e. whose proximity appears de facto via their impact on the immediate environment.

Finally, the third parameter of the threat perception constitutes the assessment of other' intentions. The evaluation of intentions should provide information about whether another state, given its resource advantage and geographical proximity, is also intent on using its capabilities against one's own state. The perception of intent of other states is portrayed here as a result of three factors, which I outline below. Since Walt considers only the third aspect, it should be seen as an extension of his model.

The perception of other states' intentions is first of all affected by the analysis of the consequences for the threatened state, resulting from its attack against the individual state. These consequences can arise from the reaction of other international actors (for example, the allies of the threatened state) to the aggressor, but also from domestic factors in that state. Given this cost-benefit calculation one could determine if it is beneficial for the potentially aggressive state to use its capabilities against another state. Therefore, it stands to reason that the greater the benefit from the attack, the more likely this possibility will be perceived. In this context, it should be mentioned that the term "attack" is not only meant in the sense of a military conquest, but also in regard to state attempts to constrain the room for maneuver of another state (for example through energetic blackmails).

Second, perceptions of intent are also based on the rhetoric used by politicians of the potentially threatening state. In short, the more hostile the rhetoric, the more likely an attack will be anticipated.

Ultimately, the third element in determining the perception of aggressive intent by other states is historical experiences (see Walt 2005: 9; Mouritzen/Wivel 2005: 8). As Stephen Walt puts it: “[S]tates may use another country’s past behavior as a guide to its future conduct. As with a mutual fund, past performance is no guarantee of how a state will act in the future. Nonetheless, other states are likely to draw inferences from past behavior in order to forecast how others are going to behave in the future” (Walt 2005: 9). Therefore, if state A attacked the state B in the past, the former will be still regarded with suspicion by the latter. Overall, the greater the aggregate power of a state, the more nearby it is located, and the more aggressive its intentions are interpreted, the more threatening a state is perceived to be – in the territorial as well as in political sense.

The second analytical step: Strategies of the external survival: hard and soft balancing

Having determined the sources of a threat via the three-indicators schema, the next analytical step focuses on the choice of external survival strategies. As mentioned above, all foreign policy decisions aim to maximize the political autonomy and territorial security of the state, as well as minimizing its own constraints and dangers. The instruments used to safeguard state survival can be ideal-typical, since they can serve both objectives divided in two groups: (1) instruments for protecting against an external conquest, and (2) instruments for prevention from constraints of the state’s autonomy of action (see table 3).

(1) Hard balancing and bandwagoning are the most mentioned strategies within realist thought. The former can be managed by increasing the state’s own military capabilities (so-called *internal balancing*) and/or through alliance building (so-called *external balancing*) (see Levy 2004: 35). The purpose of those activities is to provide protection against military conquest from other states or alliances that are perceived as dangerous. The latter aims at aligning with the main source of danger a state faces, in the hope of convincing the threatening power of its loyalty and thereby avoiding the conquest (Walt 2005: 183). The point to note here, however, is that according to the Walt’s balance of threat theory, bandwagoning does not occur automatically, when a state aligns with any stronger state. The precondition for successful bandwagoning is that it involves an alignment with the most threatening state. As already emphasized, the level of threat is in turn affected by the distribution of power, geographic proximity, and whether a state’s intentions are perceived as hostile. Consequently, Eastern European countries membership of the “coalition of the willing” during the Iraq conflict 2002/2003 should not be seen as bandwagoning with Washington, but rather as a way to balance regionally against Germany, France, and Russia.

(2) In the age of globalization, internationalization and transnationalization, there can never be complete autonomy for states. Nonetheless, each state strives to gain as much autonomy as possible, given the environmental constraints, in order to reduce its dependence on and vulnerability to other states. Accordingly, in their development of foreign policy strategies and tactics, states aim to increase their freedom of action. In doing so, they first try to reduce the influence and dependencies of states perceived as threatening, and second look to increase their own possibilities to influence the currently or potentially dangerous states in order to prevent decisions that could have a negative impact on their own survival (see Baumann et al. 2001). From this perspective, it is obvious that the factor of “influence” plays a crucial role in determining foreign policy behavior, since increasing your influence and decreasing the influence of others implies greater room of maneuver. The strategies to achieve both aims - reduction of dependence and enhancement of state’s influence - can be classified as *soft balancing* (see Paul 2004). In contrast to hard balancing pursued with military means, the “milder” variant of balancing is pursued with economic, political, cultural, and diplomatic instruments.² Moreover, soft balancing is preferred in situations in which a state fears a negative impact from the activities of others on its own political or economical position (see Art 2004: 181), i.e. in which its political or economical potential, that is, its freedom

² These forms are not mutually exclusive. A state can shape its foreign policy with military means and alliance building as well as with *soft balancing*.

of action, are threatened. Furthermore, the perceived source of danger will be treated with the less costly soft balancing strategy if military means are regarded to be inefficient, too expensive, or linked with undesirable consequences. The point to stress here is, however, that one can describe strategies or tactics as ‘soft balancing’ only if they aim to exert influence over a structural power distribution, i.e. when they have or should have structural consequences.

In this context, there are two aspects to point out. First, the role of international institutions according the effective voice opportunity assumption, and second, the putative contradiction between an autonomy-seeking policy and an influence-seeking policy.

First, contrary to neo-institutionalism, from the realist viewpoint international organizations are not regarded to be a means for the efficiency or stability of inter-states cooperation. But it is also not to say they are neglected. Rather, institutional arrangements are perceived as a chance for states to achieve some additional resources and capabilities. According to Joseph Grieco, weaker states in particular might enter into institutionalized agreements in order to avoid cheating and dependencies from powerful states, as well as to increase their own influence. Furthermore, a higher degree of institutionalized behavior can be expected when a cooperative engagement ensures an *effective voice opportunity* that promises a satisfactory level of influence on institutional decisions. Grieco defines *effective voice opportunities* as “institutional characteristics whereby the views of partners (including relatively weak partners) are not just expressed but reliably have a material impact on the operations of the collaborative arrangement” (Grieco 1996: 288). The effective voice opportunity can be enhanced by extending the state’s own share in intra-organizational resources (for example, voting rights, personnel etc., see Baumann at al. 2001: 9),

The foreign policy perspective of state behavior

The aim	External survival: Preservation of a state existence			
	Territorial integrity		Autonomy of the domestic political order	
Goals	Defense; Prevention of an aggression or prevention of conquest		Maximizing influence on other states, minimizing dependence on other states	
Strategies	hard balancing		soft balancing	
Tactics	Employment of military capabilities		1. Employment of political capabilities	
	Autonomous: military buildup	Collective: Alliance building	Autonomous: voice opportunity (includes veto rights)	Collective: voice opportunity through agreement with others before a voting procedure
			2. Employment of economic capabilities	
			Autonomous: acquiring of economic resources	Collective: bundling of economic resources
			3. Employment of cultural capabilities	
		Autonomous: <i>Public Diplomacy</i> efforts	Collective: <i>Public Diplomacy</i> efforts with other states	

which in turn creates the possibility for agenda setting and improving the interest assertion via voting. A powerful influence instrument is the veto right, with which decisions that might impair the relative power position of a state can be blocked. In fact, international institutions could serve as a platform for extending influence but also as an instrument to avoid becoming dominated by more powerful states.

Table 3: An overview of strategic and some tactical instruments for maximizing external survival

The second issue to emphasize here is the question of what state behavior should be expected, when the autonomy-seeking policy stands in contrast with the influence-seeking behavior, i.e. when an autonomy-protecting policy implicates a decreasing influence and when, in contrast, an influence-seeking policy implicates a decreasing autonomy. The question therefore is, how will a state behave when it has to choose between more autonomy and more influence. Classical examples for this dilemma are a withdrawal from international organizations (gains in autonomy/losses in influence), and, analogously, joining an international organization (losses in autonomy/gains in influence).³ The German political researchers Rainer Baumann, Volker Rittberger and Wolfgang Wagner (2001) connect the weighing of autonomy and influence-gains/losses with perceived threat levels. Consequently, if the threat is perceived as large, an autonomy-seeking policy should be expected. Conversely, if the danger is perceived as small, the state will strive for more influence, also at the expenses of autonomy.

However, I reject the necessity of this less threat = more institutionalization and more threat = less institutional integration model, for the following reason: A relatively weak state, which is threatened or feels threatened by another state, will strive for a bundling of resources with others and is thereby also inclined to uphold commitments. Such behavior reduces its autonomy, but at the same time it improves its survival chances. The option includes not only military cooperation (through alliance-building), but also economic and political cooperation, when, for example, political or economic blackmail is expected. It means therefore, that the level of self-commitment or integration must not be proportional to the threat level. On the contrary, the relation is another one: the threat level is not the factor crucial but rather the source of the threat. According to this argument, compliance with the existing obligation or the refusal to accept new obligations will be preferred over autonomy, only if gains in influence over the threatening state and/or losses in dependence on the dangerous state are expected. This expectation can be realized through the collective strength of other member states against the threatening state, which is not a member of an institution, or through the effective voice opportunity within an institution, in which the threatening state is also a member.

It is obvious that the question about more autonomy or more influence – when both policies are mutually exclusive – depends on several factors, for instance on the relative state power, the character and the level of its dependencies (the intensity of vulnerability), and the availability to group the state's resources with those of other states (in an institution or alliance) in order defend the pressure of the threatening state. The crucial point therefore is not the degree of vulnerability, but rather its source. A state's behavior depends on the autonomy-losses and influence-gains calculation concerning its own survival. According to this calculation, states might enter into an institutionalized arrangement when their expected influence-benefit exceeds autonomy-losses. On the contrary, a large involvement in an international institution cannot be assumed if such an engagement yields even more dependencies from the threatening state. The autonomy gain is thus not automatically more strongly linked with state security than the influence gain.

The third analytical step: the strategy of the internal survival

The theory of double survival assumes, in order to survive, each decision-maker in a democratic state chooses foreign policy alternatives that are expected to maximize external as well as internal survival. However, before a decision regarding the optimal policy decision can be made, it must be considered in terms of how it is likely to be perceived by potential voters.

This step is crucial, since the level of the perceived threat can vary between the government and citizens. However, I do not argue that the government and citizens see different

³ For the autonomy and influence-seeking models of state behavior, see Baumann et al. 2001.

sources of threats, since in both groups there are the same criteria for danger assessment (see the three-indicators schema). Rather, the differences concern the *intensity* of the perceived threat resulting first of all from the divergent knowledge level of politicians and citizens. This implies, in turn, a different weighting of the three factors that influence the perception of intent of other states, discussed above: the consequences for the aggressive state, the rhetoric of leaders of other states, and past conflicts.

Having more information (for instance from intelligence agencies), political actors are not inclined towards stereotypical and historical thought as much as citizens, and they regard the first element for determining state intentions to be an assessment of the consequences of an attack for the potential aggressor. For the ordinary citizen, in contrast, most current events and foreign policy issues are too complex for them to be able to formulate an understanding of international reality on their own (see Iyengar/Simon 1997: 251; Sinnott 1997; Büthe, Copelovitch/Phelan 2002; Berinsky/Kinder 2006). However, as already noted, a correspondence between a state and its citizen's foreign policy preferences is inevitable to safeguard external and internal survival.

Taking preferences into account however, does not mean that the foreign policy adopted reflects the preferences of the majority. This is not the case, first, because the differences between a political elite and its citizenry concern, as mentioned above, not the source but rather the intensity of the perceived threat. Or more precisely, decision-makers and the citizenry agree on the fact that state A should be assumed as a danger but they diverge concerning the extent to which state A should be perceived as a danger. Those divergent beliefs impact the choice of a certain tactic or the time of a decision. Second, the information advantage of political elites on the one hand, and the dependency of citizens on the interpretation of international politics by politicians on the other hand, create the window of opportunity for political actors to influence the level of the citizens' threat perception. In order to provide an efficient foreign policy, avoid punishment at the ballot box, and gain voters and legitimacy, political actors use instruments to shape the political agenda and, accordingly, to set framework for public issues: *agenda-setting*, *framing* and *priming* (Druckman/Nelson 2003; Graber/Smith 2005). These instruments of influence help political actors increase the danger perception in the society (for instance, by diverting public attention from domestic problems and focusing it on foreign policy issues) or to reduce it (for instance, by making unpopular foreign policy decisions under the "shadow of disinterest"). Therefore, the societal impact on the shaping the foreign policy options is limited to the style of foreign policy, rather than the substance of policy choices. Although voters are dependent on a political interpretation of world politics, this is not to say that they have no impact on the shape of a foreign policy, since their preferences, toward which politicians orient their policy course, were already shaped by those politicians. The impact seems, however, to be quite limited, and possible only through feedback in opinion polls. But there are five criteria, under which voters can stop the government making a particular decision or compel it to choose another option. Given the constraint of space in this article, I will discuss this issue very briefly. First, the majority opinion must *realize* the impact of a planned decision on its own welfare (i.e. the outcome of the decision has to be salient or emotional enough). Second, it must assess the consequences of a planned decision as *negative*. Third, it must assess the consequences of a planned decision as *relevant*. Fourth, it must see the object of the decision as relatively straightforward, and ultimately, fifthly, the planned decision should not be made shortly before election. In other words, if a decision issue is perceived to be relevant (for instance, the shape of a regional security architecture) but at the same time too complex, so that an ordinary voter is not able to assess the consequences from each of the foreign policy choices, then the efficient management of information can affect the voter opinion. A negative assessment of the consequences of a decision, and the relevance of the decision problem do not, therefore, have a crucial impact on foreign policy decisions, but they can affect the timing of a decision. Only when an issue is perceived to be relevant and not very complex, i.e. when voters are able to identify other alternatives, and when they can evaluate the consequences of a planned decision on their own welfare as negative, will the decision not be made (see table 4).

Perception/and if applicable assessment of the consequences of a planned	No	Yes / Positive	Yes / Negative
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decision →					
	↓	↓	↓	↓	
The impact level of voter on a planned foreign policy decision →	Limited impact	Limited impact	Limited impact, if the decisive issue is perceived as not relevant	Large impact, if the decisive issue is perceived as relevant	
				A relevant and complex issue	A relevant and not very complex issue
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
The behavior of political leader →	The planned decision will be made	The planned decision will be made	The planned decision will be made	Deployment of information management; persuasion	The decision will not be made

Table 4: Voter impact on a planned foreign policy decision through opinion poll

Since a disregard of structural conditions and an uncritical coincidence with the public opinion could have negative implications for the states' relative power position, and consequently reduce voter acceptance of leaders, politicians do not try to conform the foreign policy to the public level of danger. Just the opposite. They try to adopt the public perception of the threat intensity to their analysis of foreign policy (Erikson/MacKuen/Stimson 2002, Manza/Cook 2002).

Applying the voter maximizing filter, implies among other things three consequences: First, the choices-menu of decision makers may be constrained; second, an optimal alternative may not always be chosen; third, the efficiency of a state's reaction to the external environment may be reduced. Nevertheless, foreign policy decisions still reflect the relative distribution of power, the geographic proximity, and the perception of other state intentions – that is to say, the state's perception of threat (see Table 5).

<i>The electoral perspective of state foreign policy behavior</i>	
Aim	Internal survival: Holding onto office
Goal	Voter Maximization
Strategies	Influence the voter preferences through media coverage
Tactics	1. <i>Agenda-setting and framing</i>
	Implementing the logic of the information selection An increase in emotional condition conflict inclination importance, consternation, salience
	Adapting to the logic of media presentation Visualization, abbreviation, entertainment, personalization
	2. Media policy (in states with public service broadcasters) Control of personal, finance and program decisions; safeguarding media access
	3. Cooperation between politicians and journalists Exchange for mutual gain: exclusive information against publicity

Table 5: An overview of strategic and some exemplary tactic instruments for maximizing internal survival

Taken together, it can be stated that the threat analysis (the three-indicators schema) is crucial to determining the source of the threat. The principle of internal survival decides in turn determines the strategies and concrete tactical options that are appropriate in responding to that threat. Accordingly, the alternative that is optimal from the perspective of foreign policy makers will be chosen only if it doesn't reduce their chance of retaining office. In any case, decision-makers have to realize the impact of the public's perception of the intensity of the threat to the state's territorial and political survival on their own internal survival.

To avoid misunderstandings, one of the central assumptions of the theory of double survival is worth repeating here: once external and internal survival conflict, politicians, because of their tendency to make short-term decisions, will risk the power and influence resources of a state rather than their own survival in office. In fact, the principle of internal survival stands at the beginning and the end of shaping of foreign policy.

Conclusion

To sum up, the theory of double survival suggests that in order to survive internally, political actors choose foreign policy options that promise to preserve state security. They do so on the basis of expectations that voters will reward the efficiency of their foreign policy outcomes. Knowing that the most valuable information about the efficiency of foreign policy alternatives are to be gained on the basis of analysis at the level of the international system, political leaders orient themselves towards external conditions when shaping the foreign policy course. The rational orientation toward the electoral goal, and the anticipated reward for an efficient foreign policy, provides the connecting link between the effects of the international environment and the state's foreign policy decisions.

The value of incorporating the balance of threat theory by Stephen Walt into the economic theory of democracy by Anthony Downs results from the fact that the former answers, on the basis of a threat analysis, the question of what options are available for politicians and which of these options should be chosen in order to preserve security. The latter explains, on the basis of the electoral situation, why a particular foreign policy alternative has finally been chosen.

Because in many foreign policy decision-making situations there are multiple alternatives to balance against a perceived danger, threat analysis is the necessary but not the sufficient determinant for the choosing a particular option. In order to answer the question of why states choose a particular foreign policy option, one has to include not only the filter of the threat perception but also the filter of voter maximization in empirical research. Taking into account the political cost-benefit-calculation regarding the maximizing of external as well as internal survival chances, it is possible to explain why states, in particular foreign policy decision-making situations, act in a certain way. Accordingly, the theory of double survival suggests that politicians choose foreign policy options on the basis firstly of the state's power capabilities and the availability of alliance or cooperation partners, and secondly on the anticipated means required to continue holding office. The theory of double survival therefore traces the foreign policy decision-making process in democratic states, primarily, to the political competition for voters. Picking up on the above-mentioned quote of David Lake, it can be stated that if one argues that external survival lies in "national interest", then the reason why the interests of self-seeking politicians should coincide with the national interest is the goal of self-preservation of political leaders.

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