Role Theory and Foreign Policy*

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Introduction

Role theory first attracted attention in the foreign policy literature after the publication of K. J. Holsti's (1970) study of national role conceptions. Role theory had been in development for nearly four decades in Sociology, Social Psychology and Anthropology by this time. Holsti did not import much of the conceptual or theoretical language associated with role theory. Instead, he chose to focus on the simple idea that the Self, in this case the leaders of the state, may hold a variety of beliefs or images about the identity of the state. Furthermore, these "national role conceptions" were posited to shape the way that a state acted in the international system. Looking back, this appears to be an auspicious start to a literature that began in much the same way as many others: the introduction of a new concept from a cognate discipline and some explanation of how it may be analytically useful in our own discipline. Carl Backman, a social psychologist of the sociological variety, (1970: 319) suggested that Holsti's article "may well be an instance where borrowing a theory has paid off." Initially, there was a flurry of activity that imported the conceptual and theoretical language of role theory, incorporated these concepts into our own disciplinary approaches and theories, as well as empirically tested the resulting propositions. A pivotal point in this literature was reached by the 1987 publication of Stephen G. Walker's edited volume, *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, which set the stage for further advances in both the foreign policy and international relations use of role theory. In this essay, I examine the accomplishments, failures, and future potential for role theory in the study of foreign policy.

Walker (1987a: 2) argued that role theory has descriptive, organizational, and explanatory value for the study of foreign policy. Descriptively, role theory provides a rich vocabulary for categorizing the beliefs, images and identities that individuals and groups develop for themselves

and others, as well as the types of processes and structures that govern their deployment in particular situations. Organizationally, role theory allows the analyst to focus on any level of analysis commonly used in the study of foreign policy in addition to bridging those levels through a process-orientation that joins agents and structures. The explanatory value of role theory may derive from its own middle range theories as well as harnessing its concepts to other theoretical approaches. The remainder of this essay traces the development of the descriptive, organizational, and explanatory aspects of role theory in the foreign policy literature. The essay argues that role theory approaches to foreign policy analysis continue to have great potential, despite their sparse use in the literature thus far. The essay concludes by examining some of the reasons why role theory contributions appear to have declined and ways in which this research program may be invigorated.

The Descriptive Conceptual Language of Role Theory

The term "role" is a metaphor borrowed from the theater. Yet, this seemingly simple metaphor has been applied in different ways to create different theoretical traditions of role theory (Biddle, 1986:68-76). Structural, functional and organizational versions of role theory refer to roles as conduct that "adheres to certain 'parts' (or positions) rather than to the players who read or recite them (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:489)." Symbolic interactionist and cognitive approaches to role theory refer to roles as "repertoires of behavior, inferred from others' expectations and one's own conceptions, selected at least partly in response to cues and demands (Walker, 1992:23)." This proliferation of meanings and understandings of the role concept can be problematic. Le Prestre (1997:3-4) argues it has hindered role theory's use in foreign policy analysis. In order to alleviate this problem Biddle (1986) and Stryker and Statham (1985) argue for an integrated version of role theory, in which the term "role" would refer to both "positions"

in an organized group *and* to any socially recognized category of actors, i.e., the kinds of people it is possible to be in a society (Stryker and Statham, 1985:323). This inclusive concept of role captures the range of its use in foreign policy analysis, and will be adopted for the remainder of the essay. It should be clear from the outset that role theory does not refer to a single theory, but rather a family of theories, an approach, or perspective that begins with the concept of role as central to social life.

The conceptual language of role theory is elaborate and extensive. Although few contributions in the foreign policy literature make use of the entire range of this language, I sketch out the major concepts that recur most frequently (Sarbin and Allen, 1968; Stryker and Statham, 1985; Biddle, 1979, 1986). I also include illustrations of these concepts from the foreign policy literature when appropriate. While the dependent variable of any particular foreign policy study using role theory may vary, the one typically used in most studies across the disciplines is the *role enactment* of individuals in a social setting, or how well an individual performs a role once it is selected. Sarbin and Allen (1968: 491-497) identify three key dimensions of the individual's role enactment: the number of roles, the effort expended upon a particular role, and the time spent in one role in comparison to other possible roles. First, they argue that the more roles an individual has in her repertoire the better prepared she is to meet the demands of social life. The enactment of a large number of roles is advantageous because it means that an individual is linked with many other complementary roles in various areas of society, and is therefore more closely integrated into society's norms. In particular, a "skilled" role-taker with multiple roles in her role-set has a better chance than the "novice" role-taker with few roles in his *role-set* in enduring the effects of novel and critical situations (Thies, 1999, 2001).

The number of roles identified by foreign policy scholars varies greatly from study to study. Holsti (1970: 277) was the first to admonish scholars to go beyond the traditional view that states only play a single role in the international system. Walker (1987: 2) also highlights the value of roles for expanding the number of dimensions for potential analysis away from a simplistic continuum of conflict to cooperation, but this clearly can't be accomplished unless multiple roles are identified for each actor. Holsti's own study (1970: 260-270) identified 17 major roles expressed by states between 1965 and 1967, including: bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional-subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, and protectee. The average number of roles expressed per state during this time period was 4.6, with a range of 0 (Ivory Coast) to 8 (U.S.A) expressed roles.

Some contributions to the literature have followed Holsti and Walker in analyzing the full range of roles expressed by states during particular time periods. Jonsson and Westerlund (1982) analyze superpower role conceptions from U.N. General Assembly debates (1946-1975). They find a substantial amount of overlap in the superpower role-set. Both the U.S. and the USSR expressed promoter of universal values, regional protector, liberation supporter, developer, and promoter of own values as the top six of their respective self-identified role conceptions. The U.S. also expressed the mediator role and the Soviets expressed the protector of own state role. They also found significant overlap in the roles that each superpower ascribed to the other, including violator of universal values, intervener/infiltrator, exploiter, war instigator, developer, and promoter of universal values. These roles vary in their degrees of assertiveness and specificity, as well as their frequency in various regional contexts.

The contributors to the LePrestre (1997a) edited volume have done an exceptional job in identifying the range of roles expressed by the Soviet Union/Russia (Thibault and Levesque, 1997), U.S. (Chotard, 1997; Le Prestre, 1997c), Japan (MacLeod, 1997a), Germany (Letourneau and Rakel, 1997), France (Thumerelle and Le Prestre, 1997), the United Kingdom (MacLeod, 1997b), China (Beylerian and Canivet, 1997), and Canada (Donneur and Alain, 1997) during 20th Century. The contributors to the Elgstrom and Smith (2006) edited volume, taken as a whole, identify a range of roles expressed by the European Union as well.

Several scholars simply use Holsti's (1970) typology of roles (Walker, 1979; Chafetz et al., 1996; Adigbuo, 2007) or a combination of Holsti's typology and others (e.g., Grossman, 2005). Other analysts focus on a smaller number of specific roles to explore in depth (e.g., Breuning, 2005; Bukovansky, 1997; Chafetz, 1996/97; Tewes, 1998; Cronin, 2001; Harnisch, 2001; Barnett, 1993; Trondl, 2001; Aggestam, 2004; Ghose and James, 2005; Catalinac, 2007). The focus on one or just a few roles is usually aimed at providing an explanation of a specific foreign policy choice, such as whether a state will intervene in an ethno-religious conflict (Ghose and James, 2005) or choose to join the coalition in the U.S.-led wars against Iraq (Catalinac, 2007), among others. In only a few of these studies could one examine hypotheses derived from Sarbin and Allen's arguments that more roles makes a state better prepared for international life, or whether novice states have fewer roles and fair poorly in crisis situations.

One problem that may occur when an individual finds himself concurrently in two or more positions requiring contradictory role enactments is *interrole conflict*. Barnett (1993) illustrates that conflict in the Middle Eastern subsystem prior to 1967 was often due to the incompatibility of the two dominant roles (sovereign state, pan-Arabism) foisted upon those states. Cronin (2001) focuses on the U.S.'s role conflict between the hegemony and great power

roles. Tewes (1998) examines Germany's interrole conflict between serving as a catalyst for deeper integration among the existing members and widening the membership of the EU. Mechanisms must be found to prevent the dysfunction that would result from the incompatibility among the roles. For example, Barnett (1993: 289) argues that over time states like Egypt were able to reinterpret the meaning of the role derived from pan-Arabism from interstate cooperation (Faisal) to political unification (Nassar) to *raison d'etat* (Sadat). Tewes (1998) found that Germany moved from attempting to deny the role conflict, to keeping the roles separate, to attempting to merge the roles of deepener and widener. As a result of having multiple role demands which exceed available resources, a person enters a cognitive state that Goode (1960) calls "role strain," or the felt difficulty of fulfilling role obligations. Cronin (2001) explicitly uses the language of role strain in his analysis of the U.S.'s choice between the hegemon and great power roles. Rosenau (1987) highlights that individuals who make foreign policy decisions experience a great deal of strain as a result of conflicting role expectations placed upon them by their location in private social systems, governmental institutions, the larger domestic society, and their interaction within the decision unit that makes policy choices. Rosenau suggests that actors develop *role scenarios* or action scripts that help them to determine which role to enact among many. These scenarios adapt and change over time and can become quite elaborate, making it difficult to predict how actors will resolve role conflicts.

The second dimension of role enactment refers to the amount of effort expended upon, or involvement, in a role. This can range from complete noninvolvement in which the role doesn't implicate identity at all and no effort is expended, to complete involvement or engrossment where the role *is* the identity and a great deal of effort is expended upon the role. Complete noninvolvement would probably correspond to Holsti's (1970: 270) national role conception of

the isolate. The isolate focuses exclusively on the internal dimensions of the state and eschews

interaction with other states. At the time of Holsti's study, states like Cambodia and Burma fell

into this category. The picture painted by Bukovansky (1997) of the construction of early U.S.

identity is one of engrossment in the neutral role. Interaction with other states was also

unimportant to a U.S. neutral identity because no matter how other states acted the U.S.

maintained the attachment to the role.

The third dimension of role enactment is the amount of time that the individual spends in

one role relative to other roles, which is often a function of whether the role is ascribed or

achieved (Sarbin and Allen, 1968: 496-7; Le Prestre, 1997b: 7). The amount of time spent in an

ascribed role is not subject to a tradeoff. Ascribed roles are enacted all of the time—the only

variability in enactment is how salient the role is at any one point in time. Roles with an

achieved aspect are subject to variability in the time spent in them compared to other roles.

Thies (1999) argues that emerging or new states in the international system are likely to have

more ascribed roles than achieved roles in their initial stages of development. Existing members

of the international system are likely to have multiple achieved roles in addition to their ascribed

roles. Since member states largely define social reality, they are able to choose roles for

themselves and engage in *altercasting* to impose roles on novice states. Altercasting refers to

situations in which the relevant others cast a social actor into a role and provide cues to elicit the

corresponding appropriate behavior. Altercasting is described by Thies (1999) and others (e.g.,

Stryker and Statham, 1985: 325; Biddle, 1986: 80) as a method of socialization, in which novices

are brought into an existing social system. Most foreign policy studies focus on achieved roles,

as they are often the subject of foreign policy choices. Some analyze types of ascribed roles,

such as the civilian power role for Germany (Harnisch, 2001) or the pacifist role for Japan (Catalinac, 2007).

The major independent variables in the study of roles include role expectations, role demands, role location, and audience effects (including cues). *Role expectations* consist of norms, beliefs and preferences concerning the performance of any individual in a social position relative to individuals occupying other positions (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:497; Stryker and Statham, 1985:330-331; Biddle, 1986:69). An individual's role behavior must take into account the role behaviors of the occupants of other positions, thus the concept of a role is essentially interbehavioral (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:498). According to Stryker and Statham (1985:323), it is nonsensical to talk about a role without reference to an implicit or explicit counterrole involved in ongoing interaction. Role expectations thus provide the conceptual bridge between the individual and social structure. For some positions, role expectations may be uniform across occupants, but for others role expectations may vary across occupants. Role expectations may also vary depending upon whether they are held by the role occupant, in which case they may be called *role conceptions* (as in Holsti's original study), or by occupants of complementary positions, or by the audience. Most foreign policy studies focus on identifying national role conceptions, such as Wish (1980), Shih (1988), Chafetz et al. (1996), and the contributors to Le Prestre (1997).

Role expectations vary on several other dimensions: their degree of generality or specificity, their scope or extensiveness, their clarity or uncertainty, the degree of consensus among other individuals, and whether the positions are formal or informal (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:499-500). If role expectations are unclear or ambiguous, then behavior is less predictable and the possibility of conflict is introduced. The clarity of role expectations can be defined as the

difference between operating under a condition of perfect knowledge about role expectations and imperfect knowledge, which is the amount of information usually available to a performer. Ghose and James (2005) describe the variety of sometimes contradictory sources of expectations for Pakistan's role in Kashmir. Tewes's (1998) analysis could also be seen as a focusing on a kind of intrarole, rather than interrole conflict, if one considers Germany in a larger role as an integrator of Europe. The expectations for how that role would be fulfilled would either come from the inside (other members of EU) or the outside (Central and Eastern European states seeking entrance to the EU). Most foreign policy studies focus on interrole conflict at the expense of a wide array of testable hypotheses concerning intrarole conflict (e.g., Barnett, 1993; Cronin, 2001; Tewes, 1998).

Role demands place constraints on the choice of role in a particular situation (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:510-514). Role demands call for a specific role enactment in a specific situation. For example, Trondl (2001) implicitly examines role demands in the context of the European Union. Trondl finds that national officials attending Commission expert committees self-identify their roles as "independent expert" more strongly that their counterparts attending Council working parties. National officials attending Council working parties identify themselves as "government representative" more often than their counterparts on Commission expert committees. Both findings are expected given the functions of individuals in the Commission and the Council. The "supranational agent" role is evoked much less often than the other two roles regardless of context, though national officials with more extensive participation in the aforementioned committees are more likely to evoke this role. Chafetz et al.'s (1996) explanation of Ukraine's choice to give up nuclear weapons relies in part on role demands

associated with the great power role, which Ukraine did not believe it could enact at the end of the Cold War.

The *audience* is a crucial, yet often neglected aspect of role theory. The important actors in any role enactment consist of the role performer, the individual in the complementary role, and a third member who observes the process of interaction between the first two—the audience (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:527-534). Sarbin and Allen (1968:534) mention several functions of the audience. First, they establish the consensual reality for the role. If the audience accepts the role enactment as appropriate then they serve as confirmation of the reality of the role. Second, the audience provides *cues* to guide the performer's role enactment (Walker, 1979: 177). Third, the audience engages in social reinforcement through the positive and negative sanctions associated with the role enactment. Fourth, the audience contributes to the maintenance of the role behavior over time. The enactment of a role without major deviation through time is likely due to the fact that the audience continually observes the enactment. There are no explicit analyses of the audience in foreign policy analysis, though cues from the audience are often considered as additional information. For example, in the aforementioned Chafetz et al. (1996) explanation for Ukraine's choice to give up nuclear weapons, cues from the international community to return nuclear weapons to Russia weighed heavily in the minds of Ukrainian decision makers.

Role location is the final independent variable that affects role enactment. Role location refers to the interactional process whereby an individual locates himself within the social structure. The individual must select a role that is appropriate to the situation. This is accomplished by locating both the position of the self and other. If the individual makes a mistake in assigning positions to itself and the other then the role enactment will be inappropriate. Locating oneself in the *role system* is therefore a cognitive process (Sarbin and

Allen, 1968:507). Walker (1979: 177) argues that the conduct of foreign policy is a direct result of the role location process. Thies (1999) equates role location with socialization, as new members of the international system learn their appropriate roles in response to cues and demands from the audience of member states. Most foreign policy studies implicitly examine some aspect of the role location process, especially the initial stages when a leader selects a national role conception and attempts to enact it through foreign policy behavior.

Role theory also contains its own model of *social identity* based on three crucial dimensions: status, value and involvement (Sarbin and Allen, 1968: 550-57; Stryker and Statham, 1985: 345-48; Vertzberger, 1990: 282-295). The status dimension refers to a position in a social structure and its associated duties, rights and legitimated power or authority. That position, or status, implicates a number of normative expectations concerning the proper role, and enactment of that role, by the occupant. The value dimension refers to how relevant others evaluate an actor's role enactment. There are two aspects to the involvement dimension for states: the concept of belonging to a larger group, and the amount of effort or participation. If social identity can be determined from the three dimensions of status, value and involvement, then where should we look to analyze them? According to Sarbin and Allen (1968:514), role location is the first, and role enactment is the last stage of the social act. Social identity is naturally implicated in this process. Unfortunately, most of the contributions to foreign policy analysis that investigate the role location process do not explore social identity (Walker, 1979; Hermann, 1987; Le Prestre, 1997a). Walker (1992; 2004) is the notable exception.

Role theory thus provides an elaborate set of concepts that could potentially be deployed in the study of foreign policy analysis. Unfortunately, most studies do not take advantage of the entire range of concepts, nor the kinds of mechanisms built into them that could serve as

hypotheses to test. Instead, studies may focus on identifying the national role conceptions expressed by policymakers within a specific country, or the role expectations of other states that influenced a foreign policy decision. Rather than selecting out an individual concept for what amounts to largely a descriptive exercise, future research should take advantage of the explanatory power of role theory's many rich concepts. For example, Elgstrom and Smith (2006: 245-251) note the difficulty in prompting the contributors to their edited volume to move beyond the identification of role conceptions to consider other dimensions of role theory. Researchers should more explicitly examine role enactment (and its key dimensions), role expectations (and its key dimensions), role demands, the audience (and its functions), and the role location process that may help unify foreign policy analysis and international relations theory, including its implications for social identity. Role theory could be reinvigorated in the study of foreign policy simply by drawing upon the hypotheses already embedded in its existing conceptual structure.

The Organizational Value of Role Theory for Foreign Policy Analysis

Role theory's impact on the study of foreign policy may have been diminished as a result of confusion about the appropriate level of analysis for the role concept (Kowert and Legro, 1996:477). Role theory might be viewed as solely appropriate for the study of individuals, such as the leaders of states. This view would be mistaken, since role theory developed in the interdisciplinary field of social psychology and can be appropriately applied to both individuals and corporate entities (Walker, 1979:173; Stryker and Statham, 1985:330; Barnett, 1993:274). Indeed, one of the purported advantages of role theory is precisely its ability to cross levels of analysis (e.g., Holsti, 1970; Walker, 1979; Breuning, 1995). I discuss how role theory has been used in foreign policy analysis at the individual, state, and system level analyses, as well as how it has begun to be used in the larger international relations literature to link agents and structures.

Levels of Analysis

In many applications in the foreign policy literature, the individual and state level analyses are united through a focus on the leaders of the state. Given that national role conceptions are thought to be relatively stable despite changes in individual leaders, equating the individual leader with the state may not be especially problematic. Michael Barnett (1993: 274) offers three approaches to justifying the application of language and theories developed for the individual to the state. First, the state could be equated with its top officials. Second, the state could be treated as an institutional actor, in which top officials express the continuity of its institutions. Finally, the state could be portrayed as a corporate entity with a stable identity. Wendt's (1999: 215-24) articulation of the states systemic project clearly prefers the final justification by arguing that the state is a corporate actor with a "self," identity, interests, and intentionality, and ultimately suggests that "states are people too." Most contributions to the foreign policy role theory literature rely implicitly on the first or second justification, while recent constructivist contributions to the literature have moved toward uniting foreign policy analysis and international relations theory through the third justification.

Most contributions to the foreign policy role theory literature start by coding speeches of key policymaking individuals for their national role conceptions, which are then assumed to represent the state's role conceptions. Technically, one might argue that the level of analysis is the individual, since individual beliefs are often the purported cause of some foreign policy behavior in these analyses. Yet, if we can equate the individual with the state in some fashion, then the level of analysis is the state. In cases where speeches of individuals are not coded, but rather the analyst adduces the national role conceptions of the state from a variety of historical source materials, then clearly the state is the level of analysis. In some cases, the system is the

level of analysis as the cause is located at the systemic level. In a few cases, analysts span all three primary levels of analysis. This is one of the distinct advantages of role theory that should make it a leading theoretical contender in the study of foreign policy and international relations.

There are only a handful of contributions to the literature focused purely on the individual level of analysis. The individual level of analysis means that a study locates variation in the role conceptions of individuals to explain changes in the state's foreign policy behavior. For example, Breuning (1995; 1997; 1998) conducted content analysis of parliamentary debates on foreign assistance in the Netherlands, Belgium and the U.K. between 1971 and 1995 to analyze the rhetoric of legislators and its connection to the foreign policy behavior of the state. Breuning finds that her national role concepts differentiate the rhetoric of legislators in the three countries, with the Dutch as "activists," the British as "power brokers," and no clear national role conception for the Belgians. These role conceptions also drive behavior, with the Dutch providing more foreign assistance, the British the least, and the Belgians in the middle. Catalinac (2007) similarly analyzed the statements of members of the upper and lower houses of the Japanese Diet for indications of role conceptions. Catalinac's analysis of 536 role statements for the two periods under consideration found that the peace state role identity dominated during the first Gulf War and not the second, helping to explain Japan's decision not to assist in the former intervention. Trondl's (2001) aforementioned study of national officials attending European Union committees was carried out by examining survey data from 160 respondents and interview data from 47 respondents on national role perceptions evoked during committee meetings. These national role conceptions are argued to provide possible cognitive and integrative mechanisms for further European integration. Wish (1987) examined the impact of state-level attributes on individual-level national role conceptions in a kind of "first image reversed" fashion. She finds

that size (power), level of economic development, and political orientation (level of democracy) affect a variety of 10 different national role conceptions identified in content analyses of the speeches of 29 political elites from 17 states between 1959 and 1968.

The majority of studies either code speeches of individual leaders to represent the state's national role conception, or the analyst adduces the national role conception from a variety of historical sources to explain foreign policy choices. These analyses are confined largely to the state level of analysis. They "span" the individual and state level of analysis only inasmuch as they rely on policymaker's role conceptions serving as a surrogate for national role conceptions. Holti's (1970) original study is the exemplar of the former, as he coded statements by leaders of 71 states found in speeches, press conferences, radio broadcasts, and the like between 1965 and 1967. Holsti then attempted to explain the level of involvement and type of participation by states in the international system with reference to the number and types of role conceptions enunciated by leaders. Chafetz et al. (1996) build on Holsti's (1970) typology of national role conceptions in the attempt to explain which states may pursue nuclear weapons despite international legal prohibitions against such acquisition. The authors conduct a comparative case study of the Ukraine and Belarus, both of whom inherited nuclear weapons with the break-up of the Soviet Union. They analyze the statements of key decision makers for their national role conceptions. The use of descriptive statistics in the analysis of national role conceptions finds that it was easy for Belarus to give up its nuclear weapons since its national role conceptions were not consistent with their possession. Ukraine's initial national role conception of itself as a great power akin to France was consistent with nuclear weapons possession, but faced with international cues and demands inconsistent with a great power national role conception, Ukraine easily abandoned both its role conception and nuclear weapons.

Wish (1980) gathered data on national role conceptions by content analyzing the speeches of 29 decision makers from 17 states over a 10 year period using the CREON data set. These individual perceptions of the national role conception were coded based on status, motivation and issue area. These three dimensions of national role conceptions are then argued to affect the state's level of international participation, level of hostility, independence of action, and level of resource commitment, which is demonstrated through several statistical techniques. Singer and Hudson (1987: 202) is one of the few studies to intellectually grapple with the problem of transferring the concept of role from the individual to the state level. They argue that the African nations in their sample can be "reduced" to individuals since their leaders are all autocratic with a highly personal form of rule. They proceed in a similar fashion as Wish (1980) to test their external disposition model with the CREON data.

A number of studies represent the latter approach to adducing national role conceptions from historical sources to explain foreign policy choices. Grossman (2005) identifies 11 national role conceptions expressed by Russian leaders in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. These roles were then coded as either pro-Western/pro-U.S. or cooperative, and anti-Western/anti-U.S. or non-cooperative. The expression of cooperative roles peaked in 1995, when non-cooperative roles began to dominate. This change in role conceptions was also reflected in the way Russia voted in the United Nations. Grossman concludes that the change in the expression of national role conceptions by Russian leaders produced consequent changes in their international behavior through voting in an intergovernmental organization like the U.N.

Shih (1988) explores the sources of China's national role conceptions and associated behaviors. Knowing which role conception is in play helps to understand how Chinese leaders will act, what kind of reaction they expect from others, and how they will act if they do not get

the expected response. In a similar vein, Chafetz (1996/97) conducts a qualitative analysis of changes in Russian identity in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Chafetz argues that Russian leaders' theories of international relations rest largely on their own conceptions of Russia's national role. Liberals, authoritarians, and statists thus view Russia's identity in different terms thereby causing them to propose different ways of interacting with the rest of the world.

Tewes (1998) focuses on the role conflict in Germany over the pursuit of deeper integration within the European Union versus widening the EU to include more members in Central and Eastern Europe. During the Cold War, West Germany's role conception as a promoter of deeper European integration was matched very closely by the role expectations held for it by others. West Germany's role performance was convincing as it moved to complete the single European market and preparing for monetary union. This situation of positive reinforcement between role conception, role expectations, and role performance held through end of the Cold War. Role expectations changed with the end of the Cold War, as Central and Eastern European states placed role demands on a unified Germany that pressed for widening of the EU. German policymakers attempted to resolve that role conflict by first denying there was conflict between deepening and widening, then attempting to keep the two roles separate (role segregation), and finally by trying to merge the two roles (role merger).

Harnisch (2001) attempts to explain German foreign policy in the aftermath of unification. While prevailing theories argue that shifts in the international distribution of power or the degree of institutional embeddedness are responsible for German foreign policy, Harnisch argues that it is really the stability of foreign policy culture that is responsible as a result of German identity and national role conceptions. He outlines the civilian power role conception,

including its corresponding primary behavioral objectives. While some modifications were made to this role conception after unification in 1989, Harnisch argues that the impact of the changing distribution of power and increased institutional embeddedness were perceived through the lens of the largely stable civilian power role conception. The result is remarkable continuity of German foreign policy while adapting to a changed international environment.

Maull (1990) originally introduced the idea of Germany and Japan as civilian powers, and suggested that the U.S. would have to evolve into this role as well. Maull (1990: 93) notes that his civilian power role is a broader characterization of what Rosecrance (1986) called the trading state. Sjursen (2006) and Whitman (2006) have also written on the European Union conception of the civilian power role. Jorgensen (2006) and a variety of other contributors to the Elgstrom and Smith (2006) edited volume identify a multilateralist role for the E.U. in a variety of contexts. Others, like Hyde-Pierce (2004) find evidence for Germany's transition to the military power role.

Several studies attempt to span multiple levels of analysis using role theory. Stewart, Hermann and Hermann (1989) examine the factors affecting the Politburo decision to supply Sadat with offensive weapons in early 1973 to enable him to take Egypt into war with Israel. The roles played by Politburo members become quite important in their explanation, as the combination of their perceptions, attitudes, personal characteristics and organizational background produce *advocates*, *cute takers*, or *brokers* depending upon the salience of the issue and their level of commitment to a position. The roles played by Politburo members are then analyzed through a set of decision rules reflecting the nature of the regime to arrive at the actual collective decision. The resulting analysis spans three levels of analysis: individual, group and regime.

Ghose and James (2005) use role theory to explain Pakistan's intervention in Kashmir in 1965 as part of a larger attempt to explain third-party intervention in ethno-religious conflict. They focus on the domestic, regional, and international sources of role expectations in their analysis (but not the individual level). They found many sources that promoted intervention from all levels, but most importantly, religion helped to create the foreign policy role expectation and performance that Kashmir should be recovered on behalf of Islamic brethren. The authors' use of role theory in conjunction with systematism reflects their desire to incorporate all levels of analysis into their explanation.

Walker (1979) straddles three levels of analysis as well. He begins with the national role conceptions generated by Holsti (1970) from individual leader statements and scores them for their valence (overall orientation) toward the superpowers during the Cold War. The valence of the role conceptions are then compared with the valence of each state's behavior orientation toward the superpowers through the use of the World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS) data. Walker is interested in the congruity between the national role conception and role enactment. He generates and tests both national and systemic (dyadic) level hypotheses. Walker (1987b) also develops an exchange theory of foreign policy that could also span all three levels of analysis, which is discussed later in the essay.

There are a handful of studies framed in terms of the system level of analysis; where the system itself is seen as generating changes in national role conceptions that have consequent effects on foreign policy behavior. The system level of analysis is a point of contact with international relations theory. At this level, we find scholars who claim not to be using role theory, or at least not in the tradition of foreign policy analysis. For example, Cronin (2001) focuses on the concept of role strain by arguing that the role of hegemon (defined as leadership)

is in tension with the role of great power (defined by material capabilities). Other states in the international system expect that a hegemon will act in the common good, while domestic actors expect the pursuit of more parochial interests. In the current international system where the U.S. has helped to create a variety of international institutions, this often translates into the U.S.'s choice to pursue multilateral or unilateral approaches to problems. These contradictory expectations lead to role strain, or what Cronin calls "the paradox of hegemony." Cronin argues that hegemons who fail to resolve this role strain are doomed to failure. Cronin (2001: 109) explicitly states in Footnote 20 that his work is not within the tradition set forth by Holsti (1970) to analyze foreign policy since he is looking at the way that systemic pressures affect state leaders. This statement betrays a misunderstanding of the promise of role theory to move across the levels of analysis.

Charles Doran's (2003) work on Power Cycle Theory similarly makes use of foreign policy roles, but does not derive much explanatory power from role theory or its application in foreign policy analysis though he acknowledges his debt to Holsti (1970). In his work, role and power are equally important in international relations. Power provides the means to act, but role explains the goals of action. In Doran's analysis, both role and power are primarily systemic, though he acknowledges that roles are adopted by states in their interactions with each other. The strain created by large disequilibria in role and power contributes to the dynamics of conflict between major actors in the system. Most versions of realism and neorealism at least implicitly, if not explicitly, recognize perceived status discrepancy to be a source of change in the system (e.g., Gilpin, 1981; Schweller, 1996). Both Cronin and Doran demonstrate the potential for role theory to bridge the gap between foreign policy and international relations, despite their hesitancy to acknowledge this possibility.

Agents and Structures

The organizational advantage of role theory begins to overlap with its explanatory advantages when constructivist meta-theory is introduced. While the previous discussion was framed in terms of the levels of analysis, we can discuss the use of role theory at a deeper philosophical level: the analysis of agents and structure. Bruening (1995: 237) has suggested that "the promise of national role as a concept that can bridge the levels of analysis (Holstsi, 1970: 309) and provide an innovative approach to what Wendt (1987) has termed the agent-structure problem has remained unfulfilled." Bruening argues that roles have been interpreted mostly in structural terms, which leaves applications of the concept open to the same charges of a lack of dynamism that have plagued other structural theories. Cronin and Doran escape this charge by focusing on role conflict and disequilibrium between role conception and power, respectively. What we see in their work is a break between scholars doing traditional foreign policy analysis who ground their work in role theory and those who see themselves as doing International Relations who use the language, but do not seem themselves as part of the same tradition.

Alexander Wendt's (1999) work draws heavily on role theory, in particular identity theory, which is a merger of symbolic interactionism and structural role theory (Stryker and Serpe, 1982; Stryker and Statham, 1985). Wendt describes three roles (enemy, rival, friend), which are adopted through social interaction and can come to dominate the system to produce three different cultures of anarchy (Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian, respectively). While Wendt (1999: 227) briefly (some might say barely) acknowledges the work of Holsti (1970) and those who followed in the tradition of foreign policy role analysis, he clearly separates his work as a social theory of international relations. Extensions of Wendt's work that make use of role theory often focus on explaining the dynamics of the international system (Thies, 2004) or

regional subsystem (Thies, 2008; Thies, Forthcoming), but only indirectly examine foreign policy behavior. Other scholars, such as Catalinac (2007) and Walker (2007), use identity theory more in keeping with the foreign policy analysis tradition. Trondl (2001), Tewes (1998), and Aggestam (2004; 2006) similarly attempt to use role theory to flesh out their constructivist interests in identities.

For example, Brittingham (2007) argues that Chinese nationalism is a type of role that is activated only when China needs to defend its national identity from perceived threats from others. In his formulation, a role is an "identity mobilized in a specific situation" (p. 149) that provides guidance about behavior in a particular situation. Nationalism is a specific form of collective identity that identifies the nation as the highest object of political value. Brittingham outlines a model for analyzing nationalism as a role that stresses the reactive nature of this type of role formation. Drawing upon Wendt's (1999) constructivism and foreign policy role theory, he suggests Chinese nationalism is the product of a type of "ideational security dilemma" brought on by its interactions with the United States; China's most important "other."

Bergman (2007) approaches his analysis of Sweden's role in the world through an English School and constructivist lens. Sweden, and Nordic states more generally, are argued to see themselves as "good international citizens" rooted in a strong sense of redistributive justice that dominates their domestic societies. The Swedish self-narrative is actually a collective selfhood that does not require excluding citizens of other states—it reflects solidarity, rather than exclusion. Swedish beliefs about economic and social justice at home are then transposed to its beliefs about its role as a state in securing such justice on the international level, as indicated by its participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions and extensive foreign aid programs. Ingebritsen (2002; 2006) produced a very similar account of Scandinavia's role in the world—that of the

"norm entrepreneur" that seeks to promote responsible environmental, security, and social welfare policies (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

Kaarbo (2003) reflects on the fact that foreign policy analysis has increasingly turned to issues of state identity and the importance of ideas, following broader currents in the IR literature. She also notes a division between those who employ constructivism to tackle these issues in the international system and those who study foreign policy at the state level. She believes that those who pursue the impact of identity and ideas on foreign policy will continue to separate themselves from constructivism. Identity will become "foreign policy-ized" by connecting it to theories that have long been part of foreign policy analysis. She thinks that one of the natural connections is with role theory. She notes that although initial contributions framed their discussions in terms of roles, starting with Walker's (1992) discussion of role identities, it is now more common for scholars to equate roles with identities (e.g., Chafetz 1996/1997; Chafetz et al., 1996). The danger in this regard is the reinvention of what was known in the past through an understanding of "roles" through a new focus on "identity" and vice versa. I agree with the spirit of Kaarbo's discussion, but I think the separation between those who study identity in international relations and foreign policy has proceeded from both sides. Overcoming this separation helps to show how identity links agents and structures through the role concept, thereby bridging the foreign policy and international relations subfields.

If role theory is to continue to thrive in foreign policy analysis, then it will likely be as a result of its greater integration with international relations theory. Constructivism opened the door to the discussion of identity in the larger international relations subfield. While constructivists may have failed to acknowledge their debt to role theorists in foreign policy analysis, that should not prevent role theorists from taking advantage of the theoretical opening

to find a larger audience for their work. Constructivism, since it is not a theory of international relations, but rather a meta-theory that is substantively open to the incorporation of additional middle-range theories (Fearon and Wendt, 1998), could benefit from greater integration of role concepts. Future research should explicitly and self-consciously explore the relationship between existing constructivist international relations work and role theory in the foreign policy tradition. The only caution I would offer in this endeavor is to attempt to preserve the individual level of analysis. Even foreign policy applications of role theory have moved steadily toward the state level of analysis over time. Merging foreign policy role theory and constructivist international relations theory could lead to the abandonment of the individual level of analysis without careful theoretical and empirical work to retain it.

The Explanatory Value of Role Theory for Foreign Policy Analysis

Walker (1979: 176-177; 1987a: 3) suggests that the explanatory value of role theory in foreign policy analysis may derive from two possible sources: self-contained propositions and methods, or an appropriate set of auxiliary limiting conditions and rules linked to role concepts imported from other theories. Walker himself has done the most to develop role theory's own internal propositions as well as merge it with other theories to enhance its explanatory power. I review his work closely here since it suggests the possibilities open to role theory's application in foreign policy analysis. Unfortunately, few subsequent applications of role theory make use of the theoretical structures Walker created, nor do they follow his example to devise their own "strong" versions of foreign policy role theory.

Very few foreign policy scholars have actually attempted to devise and test general propositions from role theory. One useful example is found in Walker (1979), who tests the proposition that role conceptions and role enactment should be congruent. Walker imports the

operational method of assessing congruity from the literature on cognitive balance (e.g., Zajonc, 1968). He uses Holsti's (1970) data on role conceptions expressed by leaders from 71 states between 1965 and 1967. He also uses the World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS) data to measure behavior between states. Walker constructs a number of quantitative indices representing role concepts and concepts associated with cognitive balance theory. He also deduces a number of hypotheses at both the state and dyadic levels of analysis to test, including: there should be a congruent relationship between role conception (rhetoric) and role enactment (behavior); third-party states should avoid role conflict by pursuing balanced and congruent behavior toward both superpowers; deviations from the first two hypotheses are the result of the target's role conceptions (rhetoric) or cues provided by the target's role enactment (behavior); states with balanced relationships between role conception and role enactment will show congruent relationships between these traits. The results indicate that we can observe a group of states with balanced, congruent foreign policies and a group of states with imbalanced, incongruent foreign policies during the Cold War period. Walker's highly developed theoretical propositions concerning role concepts are also matched by sound statistical analyses.

The possibility of exploring role theory propositions with the assistance of additional theories is also explored in many of Walker's contributions. Walker (1981; 1987c) incorporates elements of exchange theory into role theory to derive hypotheses about the relationships between foreign policy rhetoric and behavior. He also builds on the previous analysis that incorporated balance theory to explore balance and congruence in foreign policy rhetoric and behavior. Exchange theory is a collection of concepts originating in a variety of disciplines that comprises an explanation for the act of taking or giving one thing in return for another (e.g., Homans, 1974). Walker combines several general propositions from exchange theory with role

theory to deduce propositions about the role location process. In particular, Walker is interested in how role conceptions and role cues interact. When role conceptions and cues are consistent, the role location process is relatively unambiguous and there is a tendency toward balance and congruity between role conception and role enactment. Approval and reward behaviors should emanate from other states. When role conception and cues are not consistent, the role location process becomes ambiguous and subject to role competition and role conflict. Aggressive and punishment behaviors are likely as other states attempt to altercast a state into an appropriate role. The statistical tests of these propositions are mixed, which he attributes to data limitations.

The incorporation of additional theory is perhaps most creatively pursued when Walker (1987b) develops a theory of foreign policy with reference to Waltz's (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. Walker observes ten propositions that summarize Waltz's systemic theory of international politics, which he draws upon to construct his own theory of foreign policy. The central proposition of the latter draws upon the central proposition of the former—the self-help nature of the international system means that a state's foreign policy is the primary instrument for the pursuit of domestic policy goals. Waltz's strict separation of unit and structure also allows Walker to develop four more propositions at the domestic level: the exchange process, role location process, conflict process and institution building process. The exchange process, which allocates values among members of society, can take either distributive, regulatory, redistributive or collective forms. The role location process establishes a share set of expectations among members. The conflict process occurs when the terms of allocation have not been established or the shared expectations about the allocation process breaks down. The institution building process describes the formalization of the shared expectations regarding the allocation process. Exchange theory fleshes out the exchange process, while role theory elaborates on the role

location process. Walker also identifies a sixth proposition, the national security proposition, which states that leaders make policies to protect the physical security, wealth and social identity of their states.

The rest of the analysis illustrates these propositions with examples from the Cold War that highlight how states with domestic problems attempted to gain assistance from abroad. Other states either responded with aid or refused. A positive response also required some benefit to the domestic situation of the aid provider. A negative response would cause the state to either turn to another source of aid or cause the state to continue to press for aid, which may lead to conflict. Out of this analysis, Walker develops five basic foreign policy roles: consumer, producer, belligerent, facilitator, and provocateur. The facilitator and provocateur roles are required when one moves beyond simple dyadic analysis to consider multiple states, leading to a seventh, linkage proposition. The linkage proposition suggests that a state may establish, maintain or disrupt the shared expectations or allocation of values among other states in the pursuit of its own domestic policy goals.   This typology of foreign policy roles is useful in its own right, and is later tested in the context of Southeast Asia (Walker and Simon, 1987). Walker (1987b: 78-79) also suggests that his theory of foreign policy better explains balances of power than Waltz's neorealism. Balancing occurs when existing exchange relationships or shared expectations break down and when attempts to establish exchange relationships and shared expectations fail.

The combination of role theory and exchange theory as a means of incorporating both environmental and dispositional explanations of foreign policy behavior is pursued even further by Walker (1987e). Walker's (1987e: 273) begins with a critique of Wish (1980), which results in a demand for a "strong" role theory to guide empirical analyses. Such a theory would

incorporate descriptive and theoretical statements, which Walker argues can be found in other work on the CREON project (e.g., Hermann et al., 1973; Hermann, 1987; Hermann, 1987a; Hermann, 1987b). These creative ideas can help to flesh out the processes Walker (1987b) previously identified as components of a general exchange theory of politics/theory of foreign policy. CREON's definitions of role, situation, prior affect, salience and relative capabilities can inform the role location process, along with the exchange process, conflict process and institution-building process. Walker concludes by combining the basic roles he previously identified (consumer, producer, belligerent, facilitator, provocateur) with CREON's role conceptions and situations (confrontation, intervention, assistance, collaboration). Walker (1987d: 256-259) refers to this combination of role theory and CREON as realist or rationalist role theory, which has the potential to be a first step in developing a "strong" version of role theory and related propositions and hypotheses.

While exchange theory provides one potential additional source of explanatory power, Walker (1992) later explores a symbolic interactionist approach to role theory in a theoretical contribution that would shape the rest of his contributions in this literature. He draws heavily on the work of Burr et al. (1979) to derive propositions from a number of middle range theories associated with symbolic interactionism. For example, he derives six propositions from the theory of role satisfaction and eight propositions from the theory of role enactment from Other-Oriented Role Theory. He derives four propositions concerning identity, identity salience, and commitment from Self-Oriented Role Theory, a.k.a., identity theory (Stryker and Serpe, 1982). He derives nine propositions from the theory of role transition as well. These propositions are illustrated with reference to the first Persian Gulf Conflict that began with the Iraqi invasion of

Kuwait. In this case, Walker qualitatively analyzes national role conceptions, role expectations, role enactment and related concepts.

Recent work (Walker 2004; 2007) continues to builds on symbolic interactionist role theory in combination with Wendt's (1999) constructivism to develop role identities for the Self and Other. Walker (2004) further expands the theoretical and methodological repertoire of role theory by connecting these role identities to operational code analysis, with philosophical beliefs helping a leader diagnose the identity of the Other and instrumental beliefs expressing the identity of the Self. If leader attributions of identity to Self and Other fail to match up, then the result is role conflict. These role conflicts can be resolved through the use of role-taking and altercasting. The resulting outcomes range from amity and collaboration through rivalry and enmity, as demonstrated in several episodes of Egyptian-Israel interactions. While the operational code tradition has always been attuned to the roles of Self and Other, this is the first attempt to merge agent-oriented and structure-oriented theorizing about these role identities.

Recent work in the operational code tradition has also sought to understand the link between strategic culture and leader belief systems. Although not specifically grounded in the role theory tradition, these works essentially identify role identities and are suggestive of future directions for role theory research. For example, Feng (2005) explores whether Mao Zedong was a "Confucian idealist" or a "Parabellum realist" in the context of Chinese strategic culture. Malici (2006) analyzes the belief systems of contemporary leaders in Britain, France and Germany through contending strategic cultures characterized by idealist "Venutians" and realist "Martians" (Kagan, 2003). Walker and Shafer (2007) similarly explore the belief systems of U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson through realist and idealist approaches to strategic culture.

As this work suggests, role theory might also profitably be connected to other existing theoretical traditions in International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis. As Thies (2003) points out, the work that has been done with role theory has always been attuned to the realist tradition. Holsti's (1970) seminal study noted the frequent use of roles such as "aggressor," "defender," and "balancer" in balance of power theory. Walker's aforementioned contributions to foreign policy informed by role theory have also been sensitive to realism and even employed in conjunction with Waltz's neorealism (e.g., Walker, 1987b). Neoclassical realists like Schweller (1998) have made use of roles such as "rogue," "revisionist," or "status quo" states, and even "wolves, foxes, ostriches, and jackals." Rynning and Ringsmose (2008: 32) recommend that classical realists engage in a dialogue with those who have followed in Holsti's (1970) footsteps in the analysis of national role conceptions.

Waltz (1990: 222) has also used the language of roles to suggest that in the post-Cold War era "the old and the new great powers will have to learn new roles and figure out how to enact them on the shifting stage. New roles are hard to learn, and actors easily trip when playing on unfamiliar sets." If neorealism could make room for some ideational aspect of structure, then role theory would be a natural fit since it also presents a highly structured view of reality (Thies, 1999). Role theory could offer a way to bridge the theoretical gap between structure and unit behavior in Waltz's neorealism; perhaps even providing for a neorealist theory of foreign policy (Elman, 1996; Fearon, 1998). The previous discussion of agents and structures also highlights how role theory might be connected to constructivist meta-theory (e.g., Catalinac, 2007; Trondl, 2001; Tewes, 1998). Moravcsik's (1997: 525-526) discussion of the ideational strand of liberalism suggests that roles could also be incorporated into a liberal version of systemic

international relations theory. Of course, realism, liberalism and constructivism do not exhaust the possible combinations role theory might make with existing theory.

We should also consider methodological issues when discussing the potential explanatory advantages of role theory. Unfortunately, methodological rigor has generally not been judged to be an advantage of role theory. According to Walker (1979: 178), "The uncertain complexity of role theory appears to account for both its conceptual richness and its lack of methodological rigor in comparison to other theories with simpler and perhaps more parsimonious sets of concepts." The methodological rigor of role theory analyses in foreign policy seems at its highest when scholars engage in the content analysis of leaders' speeches to code national role conceptions (e.g., Holsti, 1970; Wish, 1980; Hermann, 1987a; Bruening, 1995; Le Prestre, 1997a, Trondl, 2001; Catalinac, 2007). Most of these studies follow standard procedures in content analysis, including demonstrating concern for the sample of materials to code and intercoder reliability. Many of these analyses also correlate these national role conceptions with dependent variables from a variety of events databases, such as WEIS (Walker, 1979) or CREON (Wish, 1980; Hermann, 1987a; Singer and Hudson, 1987). Many of these studies involved innovation in the operationalization of role theory concepts for statistical analysis. The high point of the use of statistical analysis in this literature was probably reached with Walker's (1987a) edited volume and his subsequent work. Subsequent studies by other scholars have moved either to simple descriptive statistics (e.g., Le Prestre, 1997a; Trondl, 2001; Chafetz et al., 1996; Catalinac, 2007) or to qualitative analysis (e.g., Shih, 1988; Tewes, 1998; Harnisch, 2001; Adigbuo, 2007; Chafetz, 1996/97; Chotard, 1997; Ghose and James, 2005). The qualitative methods used in the latter do not seem to have offered any particular methodological innovation to the analysis of role concepts. Recent advances in qualitative analysis suggest that they could

provide such innovations (e.g., Bennett and George, 2004; Gerring, 2007), yet they tend to rely on traditional case study methods to describe single concepts.

Walker's work continues to stand as the most theoretically developed in foreign policy role analysis. This is true whether one consider his work deriving propositions directly from role theory itself, or in combination with other theories. The explanatory potential of role theory for foreign policy reached its peak in his series of contributions to the literature. In fact, most contemporary studies now use a single role theory concept to "explain" a specific foreign policy decision. At best these are illustrations of the concepts themselves rather than explanations of foreign policy behavior. Future work could draw upon the conceptual language of role theory described in the first section of this essay, build on Walker's extensive development of role theory, or integrate role theory with other theoretical approaches currently in use in the discipline as suggested above. Future work should also consider methodological innovation in reviving statistical analyses of role concepts or more rigorously crafted methods of qualitative analysis following general trends in the discipline.

Conclusion

Kuzma's (1998) review of *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era* begins by describing it as a "noble attempt" to resurrect the national role concept, which had a "brief life" and "benign death." This statement portrays our dramaturgically inspired role theory approach to foreign policy as nothing more than a tragedy with an epilogue. Although various theorists like Holsti (1970), Jervis (1976), Walker (1987a) and Rosenau (1987; 1990) discuss the advantages of using role theory, relatively few have taken up the challenge. Given the rich language of descriptive concepts, the organizational potential to bridge levels of analyses, and its numerous explanatory advantages, why has role theory seemed to founder in recent times?

Le Prestre (1997: 3-5) seems to anticipate Kuzma's (1998) review by describing the factors he believes are responsible for the general neglect of role theory. First, the concept of the role itself may be poorly understood given the wide variety of uses within the foreign policy literature. Second, the popularity of other approaches within foreign policy analysis, including psychological theories, bureaucratic politics, and political economy may have supplanted role theory analysis. Third, scholars may desire theories that would produce a more immediate and direct link between beliefs and behavior than provided by role theory. Fourth, the general stability of the international system during the Cold War may have made the role theory approach seem redundant. Finally, the disappointing empirical results of this research prompted scholars to turn to other approaches.

We can add other factors to these plausible candidates that emerged within this review essay. First, the elaborate and extensive conceptual language of role theory may stand in the way of its use in foreign policy analysis. The review of this language with illustrations from the existing foreign policy literature provided at the beginning of this essay may serve to clarify some aspects of role theory. Second, there may be confusion about the appropriate level of analysis in which to use role theory. The second section of this essay demonstrated that role theory may be used across all typical levels of analysis. It is not just confined to the individual level; in fact, most work using role theory in foreign policy analysis is really state level analysis. Role theory offers the potential to bridge multiple levels of analysis and even negotiate the agent-structure divide that gained prominence in international relations theory in the late 1980s. Third, since role theory is largely an import from sociology (and other cognate disciplines) it is possible that it was imported *too soon* into the study of foreign policy analysis. Sociological theorizing did not make its reentry into the study of international relations until the late 1980s and early 1990s with

the arrival of constructivism. Fourth, and with great irony, foreign policy role theory may have fallen victim to the "discovery" of identity by sociologically inspired constructivists in international relations theory. Rather than draw upon role theory and its use in foreign policy analysis, constructivists have often "reinvented the wheel" of identity. In discussing the organizational and explanatory value of role theory, this essay has tried to demonstrate how role theory can bridge foreign policy and international relations through a focus on identity. Fifth, it is possible that some of the early statistical contributions to this literature were tied too closely to the CREON project and CFP. A negative association may have been attached to role theory once those large scale attempts to statistically test propositions about foreign policy in a comparative perspective failed (Hudson, 2005). Sixth, and again with great irony, the few contemporary contributions to role theory in foreign policy analysis may not be quantitative enough for mainstream scholarship as they have generally reverted to traditional case studies. Seventh, work on foreign policy role theory does not hang together well as a literature. Too many contributions to this literature simply fail to cite many of the original contributions in the foreign policy literature or the role theory literature more generally. As a result, many of these contributions to do not cumulate as we would expect as a literature matures. Finally, many of these contributions fail to take advantage of propositions derived from role theory itself or propositions that might be derived in combination with other theoretical perspectives as I have indicated in the final section of the essay.

Despite the many reasons why role theory analysis in foreign policy may have foundered since its inception in the 1970s, the essay concludes with optimism about its future. Role theory has a rich conceptual language complete with numerous built in propositions for foreign policy analysts to explore, if only they would take advantage of the range of these concepts. Role theory

has organizational advantages to bridge all of the traditional levels of analysis in the study of foreign policy, which also brings it into contact with international relations theory. Role theory is one way we could bring greater integration between foreign policy analysis and international relations, especially through constructivist meta-theory. Finally, the explanatory advantages of role theory have been demonstrated in a number of seminal contributions to the foreign policy literature. "Strong" role theories of foreign policy analysis can be developed either from within the existing concepts of role theory or in combination with other theories if only scholars would pursue theory development. The application of specific role concepts to specific foreign policy behaviors is interesting, but not enough to sustain and develop the cumulation of knowledge that we expect from a thriving research tradition in foreign policy analysis. This essay has reviewed the existing literature with the goal of making the descriptive, organizational and explanatory potential of role theory relevant and accessible to contemporary scholars in the hope that this literature will continue to inform foreign policy analysis.

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