

CONCEPTUALIZING IN THE MINEFIELD:
ROLE THEORY AND FOREIGN POLICY LEARNING

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Harnisch

Institute for Political Science
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
69115 Heidelberg
Phone: +49-6221-54-2859
E-Mail: sebastian.harnisch@uni-heidelberg.de
Web: <http://harnisch.uni-hd.de>

Contribution to the ISA-Workshop “Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International
Relations through Role Theory”
at the Annual ISA-Conference February, 15-20 2010, New Orleans

Abstract The paper suggests a dialogue between role theory and foreign policy learning literature. I argue that role theory, when conceptualized in the interactionist tradition of George Herbert Mead, can contribute analytical clarity to the literature on policy learning. By specifying role theory to account for various modes of “role taking”, the constitutive social effects of individual or organizational learning for a given community become apparent. Furthermore, an interactionist reading of role theory advances the concept of “role taking” by complementing it with “role making”. While the former connects societal expectations and individual or collective self-expectations and behavior, the latter conceives learning as the interaction between individual creativity and societal expectation in the process of “as-if role taking”. The illustrative cases of role making and taking reveal the creative effects of role making while accounting for the constraining impact of institutions and communal expectations. I conclude that role theory and (foreign policy) learning are powerful explanatory tools, but only if they are integrated to bridge the gap between agent and structure.

1. Introduction

Despite a growing body of literature on role theory and learning in Foreign Policy Analysis, a remarkable lacuna still persists between the two. Role theoreticians have made surprisingly few systematic arguments as to how and when learning occurs. The learning literature, in turn, has struggled with definitions and important methodological debates, but it did not delve into the question of how the “roles nation play” can help us understand processes of foreign policy learning.

As a consequence, fifteen years after Jack Levy’s seminal article “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield” (1994), FP learning still focuses on the individual level of analysis and how changed ideas disseminate through the state or organizational apparatus (among others Breslauer/Tetlock 1991; Stein 1994, Risse-Kappen 1994; Reiter 1996; Farkas 1998; Bennett 1999; Leng 2000; Legro 2000; Harnisch 2000; Marfleet/Simpson 2006). Two recent volumes (Brown/Kenney 2006; Zito/Schout 2009) tackling various public policies and European integration respectively do make important contributions on agents (leadership, epistemic communities; illicit learners, dogmatists) and processes (orders of learning, framing, competitive and “wrong” learning). And yet, they hardly touch upon interaction between agent and structure.¹

Recently, Jeffrey Knopf introduced the concept of “international learning”. He argued that individual/corporate learning is still crucial, but learning by a single state is often insufficient to improve international outcomes (Knopf 2003: 186). Knopf’s plea for a research program on “international learning” is certainly welcome, as it redirects our attention towards the increasingly dense patterns of state-to-state and government-to-government interactions. But his own focus on “progress in international relations” privileges pro-social behavior in which state actors reify “inter-national relations”, thereby cutting out revolutionary states and non-state actors, such as Islamist terrorist groups which challenge the current territorial order (Kenney 2006). In addition, it does not systematically address the question how “international learning” changes the (social) structure of international relations as he reduces international learning to a “change in cognitive structures” (historical analogies, policy paradigms). In nuce, Knopf’s much appreciated call still leaves us with the question when and how “inter-national learning” affects the relational

¹ A study by Adebahr (2009) has, however, addressed organizational learning and role change within the context of the CFSP and ESDP.

structure of international politics. I argue that this is where role theory as a social theory of international politics comes into play.

The argument

My central claim is that a dialogue between foreign policy role theory and learning can help to overcome their respective deficiencies and complement Knopf's notion of "international learning". Specifically, I introduce a Meadian reconceptualization of foreign policy roles that helps clarify the scope and content of FP roles without compromising analytical grid. Role theoreticians have thus far implicitly assumed that roles are either ego/agent or alter/structure-driven entities: a first, primarily US-based generation has focused on the agent-specific components of a role, personal traits, historical experience or identities as "self-representations" or "self-images" (e.g. Holsti 1970; Hermann 1987, Le Prestre 1997: 6; Krotz 2001). A second, European based generation has stressed role cues and demands, e.g. alter expectations embedded in institutions (Harnisch/Maull 2001; Elgström/Smith 2006).

FPA scholarship on roles has, however, spent little time on identifying and theorizing the various causal pathways between these two levels of analysis.² Theoretically speaking, role research has focused on "proving that roles do matter" (Gaupp 1983; Le Prestre 1997; Kirste 1998, Krotz 2001) or that role complexity, i.e. the enactment of two or more roles at the same time, can lead to incoherent behavior (cf. Walker 1979: 179-181).³ As a consequence, methodological individualism and structuralism in role theory have been prone to miss change that does not emanate from agent or structure, but rather from the interaction of the two.

The various modes of agent-structure interaction are therefore the focus of the following. Many FPA role scholars agree that role players are not dupes that merely "take on roles" as defined by society. And yet, few have systematically accounted for different modes of "role making" (Turner 1962), which refers to the attitudes and actions a role beholder takes on when performing one role or reconciling several conflicting roles.⁴ Embedded in

² One of the few exceptions is Malici 2006. He fuses operational code analysis with role theory to explain learning as belief change emanating from processes of altercasting between Gorbachev and Reagan, see below.

³ Recent research by David Lake on authority in international relations suggests, there is plausible doubt that even the most powerful (state) actor may impose roles upon others over time (Lake 2009; 2008).

⁴ This dearth of literature on role conflicts in foreign policy analysis has often been noted: Gaupp 1983: 148-157; Goetschel 1999: 350.

social interaction, role making implies that an agent sets out to reconstruct a role and thus potentially setting in motion a reconstruction of counter-roles or commensurate roles. By neglecting role making, FPA role analysts have downplayed the creative and disruptive force of role making, such as the ally-foe distinction or a particular role in an international organization.

Role making as FP learning and its societal effects

The theoretical gist of this paper is that strategies of role making are likely to impact upon various institutional and communal contexts, because formal and informal institutionalization of inter- and transnational politics is on the rise. Role beholders, both state and non-state actors, thus face an increasing number of external expectations by peer groups. In addition, there is a growing number of democratic states as role beholders in the international community which suggests that various domestic actors may hold different, either diverging or converging role concepts towards different peer groups (Cantir/Kaarbo 2010). The peer groups can be specific states (or non-state actors), so called significant others, “organized others” (a regional organization) or the “international community” as such, i.e. a generalized other. The proliferation of significant, organized and generalized others fosters the density of social expectations – the thickness of social relations on the globe. At the same time it constitutes and shapes an increasing number of inter-, trans-, and supranational roles that may not be compatible with each other.

Inter-, trans-, or supranational roles delineate social positions, e.g. the hegemon in a social stratum, the respective functions in the community, e.g. providing security for lesser powers, ego and alter expectations directed towards them, e.g. solidarity in an alliance, and interaction patterns, e.g. bilateral summitry reconstituting them.

So far, much of the institutionalist literature has not taken seriously the question how and when role expectations in institutions lead to intra- or inter-role conflicts, e.g. over the Presidency of the European Union. This is a serious shortcoming. Various international institutions work with different levels of delegation, thereby creating a broad spectrum of expectations about appropriate behavior which may even be incompatible among themselves. I do not claim that these intra-role conflicts always initiate learning. But any

mix of increased intra-role complexity or complex inter-role conflicts may heighten the potential for more creative role interpretations by role beholders.⁵

Following the sociological literature on role conflict and role making behavior (Dreitzel 1968/1980; Backman 1970), I suggest four distinct patterns of intra- and inter-role conflicts that can induce learning. A first source of “problematic situations” for the role beholder may arise if role expectations are vague or inconsistent. For example, if a new role is created to tackle specific policy problems in a geographical or functional domain and if there are few predecessors and fewer administrative rules, there is likely to be a considerable potential for “role making” (Fullilove 2005). Of course, creating a new role, a position with tasks and competences attached, will require adjustment by commensurate roles that may or may not have performed some or all of the tasks of the new role (Muttschler 2008).

A second source of intra-role conflicts involves deficient role expertise by the role beholder. The context can be conceptualized theoretically in two distinct ways: the first approach stresses information and the accumulative aspects of role taking in a rationalist design of Bayesian foreign policy learning. Here the informational continuum ranges from strong societal expectations and weak individual knowledge (novice) to vague societal norms and even weaker individual understanding of them. Learning then consists of Bayesian updating, in which an actor estimates and revises the probability of his assertions and beliefs while new data comes in (Dobbin et al. 2007: 460). The second modus of deficient expertise, a lack of resources to fulfill the role, is less easy to tackle in a Bayesian learning concept, because of the question why the role beholder and the peer group assigned the role in the first place. In these cases, where the premium is on taking up a role (and not yet performing it effectively) or a mix of diverse role functions, interpretive designs that focus on the constitutive and to a lesser degree on their regulative impact, may be better prepared to explain “role assignments with uncertain consequences”.

Role beholders face a third challenge as formal and informal institutions proliferate. If different institutions incorporate diverging norms and expectations, then inter-role conflicts may be a regular outcome. A recent example highlights the potential of inter-role conflicts: For Germany, taking up the role as a “friend of Israel” may collide with its role as a member of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the UN. These institutions provide for clear and unequivocal legal measures to counter clandestine nuclear activities, such as those

⁵ From a PA-perspective, each role, theoretically speaking, involves a delegation of competences between one or more principals and an agent. The higher the corporate domain, individual, group, state, international organization, the more likely an increase of agency slack for the role beholder, cf. Hawkins et al. 2006.

in Al-Khibar, Syria. But when the Israeli Air Force preemptively bombed installations in Syria - a NPT member - not only the German but also Arab governments fell silent. The latent inter-role conflict for Germany (and the US) - as members of the NPT they are expected to follow the rules and procedures of the NPT and IAEA- in this case never became prevalent because social interaction – acquiescence – of various peer groups, most notably the UN Security Council, did not necessitate specified role behavior (Williamson 2009: 260-264). But in other cases, e.g. Iran, role expectations may well be more specific and thus regulative, both for Israel and its various and very diverse peer groups.

A fourth source of learning lies in so-called person-role conflicts. In these specific intra-role conflicts, character traits, personal leanings and interests or goals are incompatible with both individual and external expectations of a nation's role in international relations.

On the aggregate level of national roles, the stimulus for change from domestic politics can be conceptualized in a various rationalist and social-constructivist modes:

- a) in a *liberal approach*, societal expectations as to what the national role should be can diverge from elite expectations or those of decision-makers. As Moravcsik has pointed out, majorities in societies upload their policy preferences, including ideational role expectations, regularly onto the policy agenda. But minorities, as in the case of US Human rights policy (Moravcsik 2005) may be able to “capture the state” and enforce their minority view.
- b) In another rationalist design of intra-role conflicts, role expectations may vary among *bureaucracies* designated to implement decisions. As the literature on bureaucratic politics as well as several analyses on civil-military conflicts over the use of force suggest the role of military force, the modus of its application (small vs. large; unilateral – plurilateral – multilateral) as well as the assignment of specific tasks can be a very contentious issue that may hamper or even derail national role concepts and performance.
- c) In a *social constructivist* design, a decision-makers own role expectation may create or aggravate intra- or inter- role conflicts and this may block learning (Kowert 2002). If, for example, a President defines himself as a “mediator” or “referee” with incoherent goals and preferences, but his cabinet holds contradictory policy aims, and if his National Security Advisor defines herself, first and foremost, as loyal to the President, personal role conceptions may lead to incoherent, even inconsistent role behavior.

The personal-role conflict addresses the question of who defines a “national role” domestically. While autocratic governments may or may not define their role conceptions through the “will of one or a few individuals”, democracies regularly disagree domestically as to what the role of their polity in world affairs should be. This is not trivial because most role theorists tend to anthropomorphize the state. In short, they analyse the role conceptions of key decision-makers and take these conceptions as the starting point of their “causal chain”, thereby cutting out the democratic and bureaucratic process that may or may not influence role behavior. At least two arguments can be made that justify taking this analytical short-cut. On the one hand, decision-makers in democracies are regularly up for re-election so that voters may punish the government for not representing the respective interests. The saliency of foreign policy decisions in election would thus indicate the degree to which national roles are contested domestically. On the other hand, democracies feature various institutional mechanisms to deal with (foreign policy) role contestations, i.e. treaty ratification requirements, constitutional review etc., that indicate when role contestations spill back into domestic sphere, because they tip the domestic balance of power.

This paper proceeds as follows: First, I specify role theory in an interactionist tradition based on George Herbert Mead in order to identify the nexus between agent and structure in identity and role formation. In the second section, I analyze different ways in which role making may effectuate learning, both on the national and inter-national level. To illustrate the value of a dialogue between role theory and learning, I offer brief case studies. I show that role theory, sufficiently specified, may solve some, but not all, of the problems which have hampered the foreign policy learning research program. Finally, I draw some tentative conclusions on the added value of the dialogue between role theory and learning.

2. George H. Mead and the Emergence of Roles in Inter-national Relations: An Interactionist Agent-Structure Framework

The interactionist role conception proposed here rests on the premise that agents as role beholders, and their preferences are co-constituted in the process of role taking. Traditional foreign policy role theory in the 1970s started from the assumption that role conceptions are ontologically prior to interaction as they are “cognitive structures” within an agent. In contrast to the interactionist framework suggested here, these studies shared the basic assumption of both (neo)realism and neo-institutionalism that international politics is

distinct from the domestic realm because it lacked the respective density of social relations/expectations. As a consequence of these assumptions, early role theoreticians envisioned role concepts as ego-dominated, and alter parts as negligible (Holsti 1970; Walker 1979/1987; Singer/Hudson 1987, Wish 1987).⁶

In contrast, interactionist role theory purports a co-constitutive ontology of foreign policy roles. It assumes that the social structure is thick (enough) in world politics for role expectations to grow. The starting assumption of interactionism, of course, is that without external expectations social roles, as ascriptions of position and function within a social setting, would not come into being in the first place. In this sense, states could play no roles in international if there were no regular expectations and practices that would regularly reconstitute them as (sovereign) states. A further supposition, however, is that if institutionalization and democratization in world politics persist, then structured expectations towards various actors will converge in an increasing number of inter-, trans- and supranational roles.

Ontological Assumption: Social roles cannot be reduced to cognitive structures in individuals or structural domains, such as material economic conditions or immaterial discourses. Ego and alter expectation co-constitute roles as ascriptions of social position and function and thus constitute and regulate actors – structures and their interaction through practice.

George Herbert Mead, as one of the founding fathers the interactionist tradition, argued that roles are emergent social objects that emanate from a dialogue between opposing but conceptually co-constitutive elements (Aboulaflia 2001: 15). Mead conceived the process of individuation as a social process in which the “self” becomes an object only when an actor learns “to take the role of other” and examines one’s self from this other’s perspective. More specifically, Mead interpreted the self as consisting of two aspects: the “I” and the “me”. Following William James’ conceptualization of the “I” and “Me” as a stream of consciousness (James 1890), those two domains of the self are in constant dialogue. In this stream, the “I” represents the impulsive, biologically irreducible and creative part of the self (cf. Mead 1934: 352f.) whereas the “Me” pertains to the actor’s self image when he/she looks at him/herself through the eyes of the other. In short, philosophically speaking the

⁶ An important first exception to this rule was Christer Jönsson’s study on the US and SU (1984) as superpowers.

“Me” represents responsibility, i.e. importing the “perceived” attitudes of others to the self, whereas the “I” represents “freedom”, exporting the creative, hencetoforth unknown part of an agent into the self.

Scope Assumption: Role taking is part of the process of individuation. Self-consciousness rests upon the (growing) ability to take the role of the other.

Mead’s second assumption holds that the self grows more “self-conscious” as it increases the number of dialogue partners on which it bases its self-reflection. On the individual level, role taking thus correlates positively with self-reflection and self-esteem. On the societal level, an increase in role taking experience and corresponding role partners fosters the competence to interact in society. Normatively, a virtuous circle may arise in which increasing self-reflection – due to advanced role taking experiences – correlates positively with the potential in society for complexity and division of labor. Consequently, Mead portends that a modern individual or actor must - under conditions of a highly differentiated society - incorporate a multitude of “generalized others”.⁷ Individuality, a sense of uniqueness, in this reading arises from the inimitable mix of shared values in various social contexts, which are represented through the “Me” in the self.⁸

Conceptually, this scope assumption establishes a clear pattern of correspondence between the structure of the self and the structure of society when analyzing politics by individual or corporate actors. Mead stresses the evolutionary, dialogical nature of the self, and thus rejects the Cartesian model of the self as a passive recipient of social rules. Instead, the self becomes an active interpreter of social attitudes in Mead’s interactionist modus, e.g. when taking up the role of the “generalized other” (da Silva 2007a: 52).

Learning assumption: The higher the capacity of an actor to “take on the role of the other”, the better prepared the actor is to mediate between opposing groups by reconstructing political problems intelligently so that these groups can enter into dialogue.

To conceptualize role change as learning in a Median tradition, one has thus to delineate the scope conditions for self-reflection on the individual level and the

⁷ Robert K. Merton defined the sum of all reference groups of a role as the „role set“, Merton 1957.

⁸ Rose L. Coser held that the complexity of modern societies could embolden the individual, because it could use the diverging expectations between groups as a „seedbed of individual autonomy“; cf. Coser 1975.

reconstruction of social relations on the societal level. Mead himself introduced the conception of “problematic situations” (Mead 1938: 6-10). These critical junctures or formative events call into question instruments, strategies, or even goals used heretofore in role taking practices. In these situations, the “I” takes over and the (autonomous) individual is able to reconstruct the social order (Mead 1934: 214-229).⁹

For Mead, some statesmen were ideal-typical incarnations of this dialogical process in the political realm. On the one hand, these individuals were better prepared to take up the role of the other, that is they have a higher degree of “self-reflection” and thus are more able to enter “into the attitudes of the group and to mediate between them by making his own experience universal, so that others can enter into this form of communication through him” (Mead 1934: 257). On the other hand, these individuals may reconstruct political and moral problematic situations more intelligently than others so that these can be resolved through creative action.

Process assumption: Learning new roles involves the transformation of the constitutive elements of a role, the “I” and the “Me”. In routine situations, the “me” dominates, in “problematic situations”, the “I” becomes more important as doubt undermines the appropriateness of role taking behavior.

As Herborth (2004: 80-82) has pointed out, Mead conceives of learning as a “transformation” of the constitutive parts of the self. In routine situations, the “me-part” of the self as the “I-part” has been reconciled with the perceptions of social norms through practices (routines) (Mead 1934: 199). On the surface, the implication of this may be that actors are only driven by immaterial concerns of “appropriateness”, “legitimacy” or “responsibility”. But a closer reading suggests that roles, as long as they constitute the role beholder as such, also imply the pursuit of material benefits, no matter if these are legitimate or not. For example, the role ascription of a “rogue state”, a “trading state” not only constitute actors vis-à-vis others, i.e. civilized nations. They also indicate the material benefits which those actors routinely are thought to maximize. In problematic situations, the “I-part” becomes more prevalent, because old routines do not promise to achieve the anticipated effects, i.e. material pay-offs and/or immaterial stabilizing effects for the self. In these situations the “I-part” takes over and the self acts “as-if” it was performing a new role.

⁹ These pragmatist roots in Mead’s thinking on international politics cannot be traced here, cf. Harnisch 2010.

Thus, as-if role taking by definition excludes the routines of the old role and does not reify existing social structures (Mead 1934: 209-212; 214-218).¹⁰

Now, based on the pragmatist notion of the belief – doubt – belief scheme, as-if role making must solidify into “role taking” again before it can exert a structural effect on society. Only when the new as-if role has sunk into the social structure by changing corresponding social roles (counter-roles, commensurate roles), the self (and the role beholder’s new role) is stabilized again.¹¹ In contrast to (rational) institutionalist theories this interactionist nexus of role and social change focuses on social practices. As Blumer points out: „It is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life“ (Blumer 1969: 19).

At the level of international relations theory, therefore, the fundamental theoretical innovation is to treat the “role taking capacity of an actor“ as the “causal” mechanism for understanding and or explaining the stability of social international relations. The variation in role taking capacity is the interactionistic “variable” that helps to understand the ability of states (and non-state actors) to overcome collaboration problems. Roles, as social institutions, empower role beholders, because they enable them and corresponding role beholders to act foresighted, sometimes even trustfully. For example, in a military alliance with nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, the latter depend for their very survival upon the “trustworthiness” of the “nuclear custodians or protectors” (fears of abandonment may therefore vary) while the former depend, sometimes even for their own survival, on the reliability of their “clients” not to engage in provocative acts that may necessitate “solidarity” (fears of entrapment may therefore vary too). The stability of an alliance thus depends on the ability of alliance members to take the role of the other into account when acting upon its own role. In this reading, free-riding in alliances, a lack of role taking capacity, undermines trust (and solidarity) because it sends a strong signal about the limited, ego-centered, cost-benefit calculations of the role beholder.

¹⁰ Turner (1988: 43) has noted that Mead implies here to basic motivations for role taking: self-consistency and self-esteem. While this problematique cannot be elaborated here, it is important to understand that self-esteem in the sense of expecting respect/recognition for oneself by others may be an important driving motivation that should not be reduced to „prestige seeking“, cf. Wendt 1999: 237; Johnston 2008: 76.

¹¹ As Grathoff (1970: 141) has pointed out „society“, the other has „an enormous destructive power to disrupt social relevance“.

3. Roles, Learning and Interaction: Elements and cases

Knopf has argued that a recurring theme of the learning literature is that foreign policy learning is either viewed as a individual cognitive act (Levy 1994: 287; see also Simon 1991: 125; Hedberg/Wolf 2001: 537) or as an organizational process, in which organizations think and act as they “absorb individual learning experiences” (Malek et al. 2002: 7; Klimecki et al. 1999: 7-8). Accordingly, roles in these studies figure as either individual or structural properties imposing change on their respective counter concept.

In one of the most thoughtful recent advancements of role theory and learning, Malici (2006) has conceptualized learning as a process of altercasting, thus ameliorating this dichotomous conceptualization of role learning. In his perspective, altercasting can be defined as the conscious manipulation of one’s own role taking behavior to (re)shape the role of another actor, presumably a counter or commensurate role. Malici adds an important element to the cognitivist conceptualization of learning, because role learning is explicitly linked to societal change, that is the corresponding change of roles and counter-roles, through the conscious manipulation of role learning.

But processes of altercasting should be differentiated from “as-if” role taking ontologically, because the former imply that the individual already “knows” its own preferences for alter’s future role behavior and thus can shape its own “role making” accordingly (Malici 2006). From the Meadian perspective the as-if role taking cannot be thought of as a conscious act of manipulation, since the “I”, the creative element of the self, becomes only apparent to the role beholder through interaction. In the interaction, the role beholder can only become aware of the “I” and the self as a “conscious manipulator” if the “Me”, the act of “taking the role of the other”, leads to a reconceptualization of the self as such. Ontologically speaking, the role beholder conceptualized as a stream of consciousness between the “I” and “Me” cannot claim ontological priority in a positivistic causal analysis.¹²

This co-constitutive ontology of role taking in Mead’s œuvre is further strengthened by his theory of self-identification. It suggests that in the process of self-identification, the self intrinsically seeks to foster its autonomy vis-à-vis specific others. In micro-sociological identity theory, this dynamic can be described as a shift in the relative importance of role

¹² Cf. Mead 1934: 77: „The mechanism of meaning is this present in the social act before the emergence of consciousness or meaning occurs.“

saliencies.¹³ Thus, in the Meadian reading of the process of self-identification a self intrinsically seeks to reduce the saliency of those roles constituted by “significant others”, i.e. family members. Over time, the self shifts its focus of role taking and bolsters the saliency of those roles constituted through interaction with various “generalized others”. Given this intrinsic trend in self-identification towards the accumulation of social capital, the importance of the manipulation of specific others for the process of self-identification is reduced.¹⁴

How does role learning occur?

Role learning can be demonstrated in many ways. As conceptualized here, it consists of a specific set of changes along which role (re)making may occur. This conceptualization contains three criteria: a shift between the “I” and “Me” segments of the role, a shift between the primary addressees of the role taking behavior and the degree which these roles are institutionalized and thus obligatory. Accordingly, role learning may first involve a dramatic change from an ego-dominated role conceptualization in which the “I” rejects social obligations altogether and constructs itself as prior or above the obligations of society, to an alter-oriented orientation. Or role learning may consist of a change of an alter-dominated role set towards a more ego-dominated set which could be related to a shift from a more elite-based role towards a demos-based conceptualization (see above).

In the second dimension, role learning can be constructed as a variation of the scope of role taking experiences. Role taking may shift from a few “significant others” towards one or more “generalized others”. In academic and policy debates these changes in “outlook” are often depicted as an “end to parochialism”, i.e. the “normalization of German foreign policy” (Gordon 1994) or an “emerging power that take up new responsibilities”, i.e. China as a responsible stake-holder in world politics” (Christensen 2006).

Thirdly, the relative importance of those two dimensions may also vary along a commitment spectrum. Learning in this sense implies a shift from a highly internalized

¹³ The concept of role saliency assumes that roles are not of equal importance to their beholder, but that they are organized in an hierarchical self, with those roles at the top impacting most on role behavior, cf. Stryker 1980: 59-62.

¹⁴ Mead’s progressive conceptualization of self-identification with a group of ever more abstract others is, as Elias concept of the process civilization, not without problems. Self-esteem, as a driving motive for role taking, as a source for conflict is not elaborated further (see above FN 10). Mead hints that conflict is imminent when several generalized others have diverging expectations. He argues that between states this inter-role conflicts often induces a feeling of „superiority“ to „keep himself going“, i.e. nationalism. Yet, he does develop a clear-cut theory of inter-national conflict, cf. Harnisch 2010.

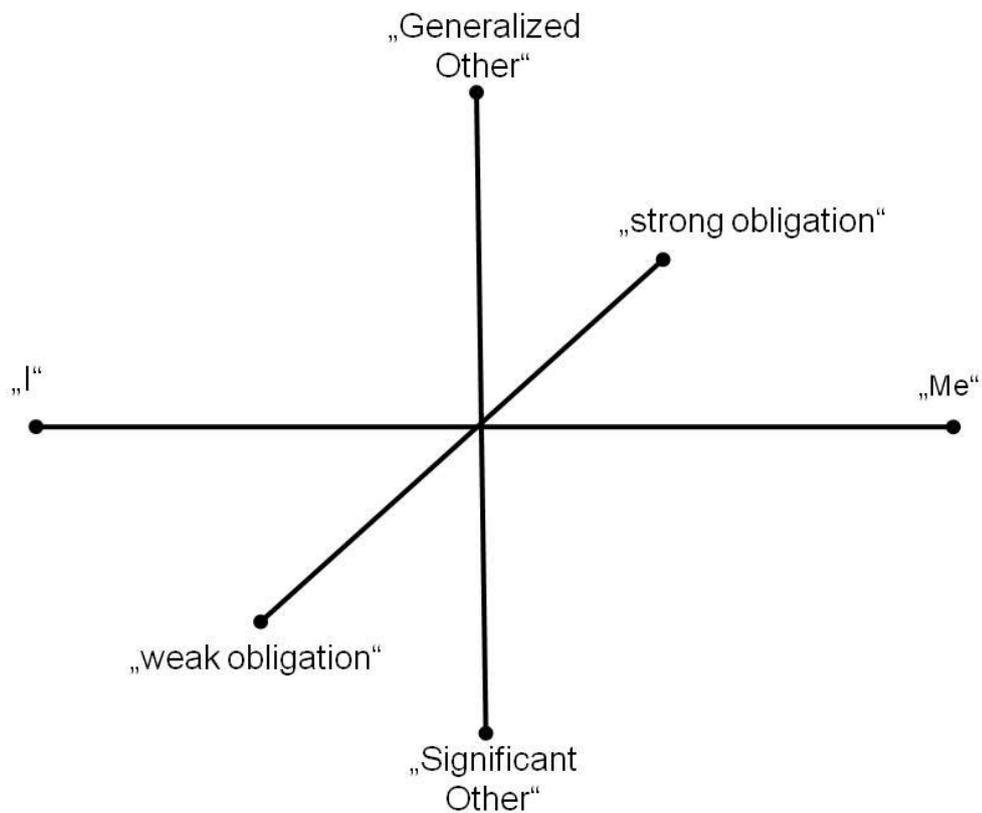
(institutionalized) role where the commitment is strong – membership in a supranational organization – towards a role set where commitment is low or vice versa. For example, hegemons may shirk their institutionalized responsibilities when they see it fit in order to “take up a new role” outside or above a formerly internalized role, i.e. permanent member of the UN Security Council (Cronin 2001).

Thus, for this paper, role learning refers to a substantial shift along the three role dimensions, ego-alter; significant-generalized other, strong weak internalization to enable an actor to take up new practices that constitute a new role. This does not assume that this as-if role taking will be successful, since role making necessitates the emergence of corresponding practices that re-constitute counter-roles. In short, role re-location must induce counter-role relocation in order to establish relatively stable societal patterns.

Also, note that role learning is defined by its structural commodities (ontological status, scope, intensity) and not in terms of the position in a given social system only. Role learning should thus be distinguished from other social interactions occurring in the inter-national social system, such as socialization, imitation etc.: Whereas socialization implies an asymmetric relationship – a novice and a socializer – and a (more or less) fixed set of norms and rules (Flockhart 2006), role learning may take the form of combining cues from several “significant, organized or even generalized others” or it may it may redefine society by enacting alternative roles. In short, while socialization definitions stress the role taking of an actor, the role learning definition here focuses on their respective role making behavior.¹⁵

¹⁵ In this sense, the early study by Volgy and Quistgaard (1975) about learning within the United Nations is about socialization as role taking rather than role making as learning.

Figure 1: Dimensions of role change and learning



3.1 Typologizing cases of role learning

Role learning has expanded in international relations because actors have multiplied, interactions proliferated and patterns of regular behavior increased dramatically. Accordingly, it is plausible to suggest that role learning should be unevenly distributed along the three criteria mentioned above.

In this section, I bring together the insights of role theory regarding facilitating conditions for role learning with the taxonomy of role learning as variation of the three dimensions of roles. Against this background, I review recent case studies that represent role changing behavior as defined here. The purpose is to demonstrate that the criteria sketched above can be used to build a typology of different role learning mechanisms. This typology, in turn, may help us to better understand the social dynamic in the international community.

First, it allows us to identify which type of role conflict occurs most often and which types of role learning may be related to it. Second, the level of role conflict and the direction

of role learning can shed more light on social dynamics in the international system than previous studies by Waltz (1979: imitation and competition) and Wendt (1999: coercion, self-interest and legitimacy). Third, based on Mead's concept of self-identification we may be able to find out when and how new states emerge from their infancy by taking the role of a "generalized other" rather than a few peers, their "significant others."

3.2 The US as a hegemon in arms control policies: role realignments of allies and foes

Tensions between the dominant state's role as a hegemon and its role as a great power are common place according to Bruce Cronin (2001). He describes this tension as the "paradox of hegemony" and argues that the paradox arises from role strains between the conflicting role expectations towards a systemic leader and a great power. He holds that hegemons, as systemic leaders, are expected to respect limits to their potential dominance: a) respect the legal sovereignty of lesser powers; b) respect established rules and refrain from unilateral action; c) respect extended responsibilities of the hegemon; d) accommodate secondary powers of major importance (Cronin 2001: 110-111).

Cronin goes on to argue that during the 1990/91 Gulf War, U.S. policy followed the path of hegemonic role. The Bush Sr. administration continuously invoked international law and clearly tried to amass as much international support for an intervention that stopped well short of Baghdad as possible. Role strains, however, set in when the United States continued to confront Iraq militarily – Washington claimed that UN Security Council Res. 687, if revived, provided a sufficient mandate to react militarily to any violations of the cease-fire-agreement – with other major power starting to question the legitimacy of the U.S. role as an enforcer (Haass 2009: 161). In 1998, the Clinton administration had to "accept Iraqi assurances" negotiated by UN Secretary General and to refrain from further unilateral action, despite mounting domestic pressure in the Republican Congress to effectuate regime change in Iraq (Cronin 2001: 121).

In this vein, the Bush Jr. administration's decision to invade Iraq can be interpreted as a role learning process in which the paradox of hegemony was "resolved" by shifting the U.S. role from an accepted hegemon within the UN towards a contested hegemon within the "Coalition of the Willing", a host of states acting as significant others. Robinson (2006) has convincingly argued that role expectations within the administration with regard to Iraq converged around a hawkish interpretation of the war on terror after the 9/11 attacks. In this

view, preemptive military action was needed to eliminate the one percent chance that terrorists or those who harbor them could America again (Khong 2008; Wolf forthcoming).

In public rhetoric, the administration addressed the inter-role conflict between the US as the custodian of national security, and the hegemon as a systemic leader (Martin 2004). On September 12, 2002 President Bush confronted the UN with a stark choice, arguing that the United States would act unilaterally or in cooperation with others to uphold UN Security Council resolutions if the Council itself was unwilling or unable to act.¹⁶ Subsequently, the legal justification of the intervention was based on historic manifestations of the U.S. role as a hegemon – UN SC Res. 687 – and not on current ones – UN SC Res. 1441 – that severely circumscribed the U.S. course of action without further approval by secondary powers.

The Bush Jr. administration's role making, as apparent in the intervention in Iraq, triggered a host of role realignments by lesser powers as we know.¹⁷ France, Russia and Germany openly opposed the U.S. role shift, in the case of Germany breaking with a long-held tradition of not openly criticizing its closest ally and nuclear protector of the country. Other governments, such as the Spanish, British and Polish supported the role shift, in the case of the Blair government setting in motion a controversial public debate about the British role in the decision-making on the intervention.

Some of the most interesting role realignments, however, occurred with regard to the other member states of the so-called "axis of evil". It is now clear that North Korea used the U.S. invasion to reprocess a first tranche of spent plutonium fuel rods and to weaponize them (Pritchard 2004). Pyongyang also started its 5-MW reactor producing a second batch of fuel rods for another reprocessing campaign, thus producing up to 30-50 kg of weapons grade plutonium in total. Alarmed by Pyongyang's new role as a potential nuclear weapons state, neighboring countries urged the Bush administration to re-engage with Pyongyang (Chinoy 2008: 154-157; Pritchard 2007: 567-65). In the ensuing Six-Party Talks, North Korea's "significant others" have cooperated closely thus far to manage the fall-out of that role change and to prevent a "nuclear domino effect" in Northeast Asia (Harnisch/Wagener 2010).

In the case of Iran, the Bush administration first upheld its role as a hegemon after the September 11 attacks, cooperating with Teheran in the so called six-plus-two talks on

¹⁶ „We will work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced, the just demands of peace and security will be met or action will be unavoidable and a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.“ cf. Bush 2002.

¹⁷ Realists have even invented a new term for this: soft balancing – to describe political moves that frustrate the leading powers policy, cf. Pape 2005.

Afghanistan (Maloney 2008: 31f.). But parallel to the preparation for the invasion in Iraq, the administration settled for a “dual track policy” vis-à-vis the Iranian regime in the winter of 2002/03, pairing stronger diplomatic pressure with increased support for opposition groups. Consequently, in May 2003 the administration rejected the so-called roadmap in which the Iranian Foreign ministry, with the obvious backing of the Supreme Leader Khamenei, proposed a comprehensive settlement, including a resolution of the nuclear issue (Leverett 2006: 12-13).

Washington’s turn towards a transformational agenda in the Gulf region triggered an immediate response by Iran and America’s European allies. In April, the EU not only started drafting a “European Security Strategy”, outlining a new role for the Union based on “effective multilateralism”. In April, the foreign ministers of the “Big Three” (France, the United Kingdom and Germany) also initiated the so called EU3 process to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the conflict (Harnisch 2007). However, Iran’s and the EU-3 as-if role taking, technically based on a freeze of uranium enrichment and PU-reprocessing activities and a longer period of trust-building, never really gained support by the Bush administration. On the surface, Washington backed the EU3 rhetorically, but on the crucial question of “negative security assurances” for the Iranian regime, the US withheld its support. In addition, the administration, under pressure from Congress, launched an active containment and subversion policy, consisting of financial support for militant oppositional groups in Iran and a revitalization of US security cooperation with Gulf states under the banner of the “Gulf Security Dialogue” (Katzman 2010: 36-44).

Summing up the preceding analysis, the pattern of U.S. role making is consistent with a shift from an alter-based role that is oriented towards a “generalized other” (e.g. the UN) towards a more ego-based role oriented towards significant others. In discursive terms, this shift is well symbolized in the proposition: “either you are with us, or you are against us”, which strictly demarcates friends and enemies and leaves little room for foes. As noted above, this role re-location resulted in significant change in counter- and commensurate roles, i.e. North Korea turned into a nuclear weapon state, Iran switch from a “nuclear freeze” to an open pursuit of a “nuclear military option” and European allies (at least) started to realign their own role conceptions vis-à-vis the European Union as diplomatic mediator in high tension conflicts. While there is little indication that the Obama administration will pursue a “great power role conception” similar to his predecessor’s – the US has returned to the Security Council to discuss crises with both its “foes” Russia and China – the impact of the US role shift under George W. Bush on counter-roles appears

significant and lasting, because lesser powers have embarked on “hedging strategies” and as-if role taking just in case the United States returns to a policy of forced regime change and open military coercion. Hence, the shifting of role of the UN Security Council for the United States as a great power continues to shape the ambivalent role as the arbiter of the use of force in international relations (Krisch 2008).

3.3 China, humanitarian intervention and the shifting significant others

Over the course of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, the People’s Republic of China has substantially altered its role behavior, starting with an obstructionist role in the Security Council and ending in dispatching peacekeeping forces under a UN Security Council mandate (Huang 2008). Baumann (2010) argues that this shift in China’s Sudan policy rests on an as-if role taking which tries to reconcile external role expectations by the African Union (and the US) with its own role conception of a “peaceful rise” as a “soft great power” (Kurlantzick 2007; Johnston 2008; Hunter 2009).

Baumann posits that China’s leadership pursues a new role concept of a “soft great power” based on the so-called “Beijing Consensus” (Ramo 2004), which contains a security and economic doctrine converging around the principle of “non-intervention”. He holds that China in 2004 rejected and diluted Washington’s sanctions-driven policy in the UN Security Council, but started to reconsider its obstruction after the “Comprehensive Peace Agreement” in January 2005 under heavy criticism from non-governmental groups and the Bush administration. China’s abstention from voting against Res. 1593 – which allowed for investigations by the International Criminal Court in Darfur – signaled for the first time that Beijing would not always side with the Sudanese regime and the Arab League on Darfur, despite the establishment of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum” in the preceding year. Instead, after the “Darfur Peace Agreement” (May 5, 2006), China supported Res. 1679 which proposed further UN operations strengthening the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and justified its vote “on the basis of our political support for the AU” (UN-Doc. S/PV.5439, 16.5.06). While Beijing was still hesitant to embrace the AU position – Benin had suggested earlier in the UN debate on Darfur that the “responsibility to protect is the basis for the creation of the African Union (UN-Doc. S/PV.5319, 9.12.05) wholeheartedly, it ultimately changed course in early January 2007, when launching a „Darfur initiative“ on its own, appointing a Special Representative in May, pressuring the Bashir government and

finally offering 275 engineers in support of the hybrid AU/UN mission in Sudan (Evans/Steinberg 2007).

Therefore, it is also plausible to suggest that China's role making as a „soft great power“, which supports its friends in the African Union, triggered other actors to reconsider their conduct (Large 2008). To begin with, the personal intervention by the Chinese President Hu Jintao appears to have been instrumental in „persuading“ the Bashir government to take on a more constructive role towards the AU/UN mission. Also, the Chinese abandonment of its obstructionist policy in the Council may have added to the pressure mounting on Arab regimes, because their own narrative – based on anti-Western and Anti-Colonial rhetoric – suddenly appeared shallow. Thus, in late 2006 ten Arab states started funding the AMIS operation substantially and at the AL Summit meeting in March 2007, the League itself persuaded the Sudanese government to accept the AU/UN force. Subsequently, Qatar, as a key member of the Arab League, voted in favor of Rs. 1769 which mandated the AU/UN mission in Darfur.

In nuce, the analysis of China's Sudan policy shows that a host of factors may have made this „role learning“ possible and that, due to their variation, Chinese R2P-behavior may again shift in another direction. In particular, the Olympic summer games in China may have (temporarily) effectuated a deliberate strategy to „soften China's problematic humanitarian track record“. ¹⁸ But recent changes in Chinese behavior vis-à-vis other (client-) states, most notably North Korea, suggest otherwise. While Beijing still supports North Korea in maintaining domestic stability, it has consistently rejected North Korea's role taking as a nuclear weapon state and has thus actively cooperated with the United States, South Korea and Japan to contain security implications of North Korea's nuclear weapon state status (ICG 2009).

In sum, an interactionist reading of the Sudan case makes clear that China's role re-location rested on a shift from an ego- to an alter based role conception in which significant others, most notably the African Union, played a crucial role. But make no mistake! In an interactionist interpretation this does not mean that AU expectations „caused“ China to reconsider as the process of as-if role taking always implies the acceptance of the new role by the various parties involved. Rather, the quote supports a constitutive argument, establishing how it became possible that China could take up a new role: because the AU position gave China the opportunity to present itself as a supporter of third-world concerns

¹⁸ Even if this was the case, China's image and status, which is closely related to its social capacity to enact the „soft great power“ role, may or may not induce further changes.

without backing up the Sudanese govern. Moreover, China's increasing internalization of a pro-active role (rhetoric, veto suspension, appointment of SR, dispatching peacekeepers) also suggests that as-if role taking has become „firmer“ over time and will probably stabilize if counter-roles by significant others (the US, AU, AL) evolve accordingly.

3.4 Germany, the use of force and history as the significant other

Role change in German Foreign policy since unification has been discussed at length and will thus not be the focus here (Maull 2000; Harnisch/Maull 2001; Harnisch 2001, Harnisch/Schieder 2006). What is interesting about the German case is how two distinct processes of role conflict, personal – role conflict and intra-role conflict- have shaped the role relocation process. I argue that role making in the German case involved a substantial reinterpretation of Germany's historical experience to allow for robust military deployments abroad with the public's consent.

By now it is well established that the German constitution - as interpreted by various governments since 1949 – did ban military force for any other reason than territorial self defense (including alliance defense) in 1990, but that German Armed Forces were brought to bear on an increasing spectrum of conflicts in an increasing number of cases since then (Baumann/Hellmann 1991; Wagener 2006). Despite persistent calls by allied countries,¹⁹ most notably the United States, public and therefore political support for the “normalization” of Germany's military deployment was fragile until the mid-1990. Since there was no super-majority for changing the respective articles of the Grundgesetz, a new consensus could only emerge after the “creative interpretation” of the Constitution by the Federal Constitutional Court in mid-1994 (Nolte 2003).

In the Meadian sense, the new interpretation of the Constitution can be seen as a creative intervention by the “I” in a “problematic situation”. And yet, it is important to note that broad political and public support for the necessary mandates came about only after Joschka Fischer, the later foreign minister of the red-green coalition, send an open letter to his pacifistic party, arguing that out of the three principles – never again war, never again Auschwitz/Genocide and never again alone – the later two should take precedence over the former when facing genocidal conflicts such as the ongoing wars in the former Yugoslavia

¹⁹ E. g. British foreign minister Douglas Hurd argued in December 1995: "Germany has to be willing to function on the same basis as everybody else, as regards the use of its armed forces and security matters. We cannot have the most powerful member of the community claiming that it cannot operate like everybody else", cited in: Aggestam 1999: 12

(Mauß 2000). By changing the priorities between these historical tenets of Germany's military reticence, it became possible that Germany could slip into a new role and use military force for humanitarian goals. In nuce, only after the key norms of reflexive multilateralism and anti-genocide were linked to the discourse by Fischer did it become possible for many former pacifists to think of German soldiers as taking up the new role of a protector or even liberator (e.g. Schoppe 1995).

When viewed from a traditionalist realist perspective, Germany's learning of a new "security role" is still incomplete and its deployment policy features many characteristics of the old "civilian power" role ideal-type: force as a *ultima ratio*, constitutive mandating by the UN Security Council and Germany's National Parliament as well as many national caveats for military operations, including numbers, regional distribution and rules of engagement (Harnisch/Wolf 2010). This stickiness of Germany's previous role conception, embedded in various domestic institutions such as requirement of a constitutive mandate by the Bundestag, has in turned shaped German role expectations towards others, i.e. international institutions. Thus, in the process of role re-location Germany has uploaded several characteristics of its own role onto the emerging "European Security and Defense Policy", (re)shaping the Union in a manner compatible with its own role conception (Miskimmon 2007).

And yet, Germany's new, more robust security role continues to strain relations with key allies, most notably the United States, because German governments have continuously rejected U.S. expectations for a more robust military deployment in Afghanistan, akin to that of the United Kingdom. Therefore, it does come as no surprise that U.S. Secretaries of Defense have time and again scolded Germany publicly for doing too little. In February 2008, Robert Gates went so far as to suggest that some allies, through their traditional reticence towards the use of force, would undermine NATO as such: "We must not – we cannot – become a two-tiered Alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not. Such a development, with all its implications for collective security, would effectively destroy the Alliance" (Gates 2008).

Summing up the previous analysis, German role making can be plausibly understood as a role shift that developed in three stages, involving a creative intervention by the Federal Constitutional Court, alter expectations by allies against the background of ethnic wars in the former Yugoslavia and a reinterpretation of the lessons of the past. Germany's Nazi past played (and still plays) the role of a "significant other", severely limiting the role of the Federal Armed Forces could play in Germany's Security policy. A significant minority of

pacifists then switched their allegiance from past to present victims of ethnic cleansing and genocide, establishing a new role for Germany as a robust protector of humanitarian norms. Efforts to further broaden Germany's security role, e.g. towards a role of a liberator, are thus still circumscribed, because the ego-part of Germany's role conception still contains the ambivalent experience of Nazi Germany's military expansionism as well as the allied war to "liberate" Germans from the Nazi dictatorship.

4. Conclusion

It is easy to suggest that two recent strands of Foreign Policy Analysis, learning and role theory, should engage in dialogue. It is much harder to show the added value of the undertaking. To begin with, there are very few studies that explicitly use an interactionist role theoretical framework to analyze what Alexander Wendt has called "reflected appraisals" or "mirroring" (Wendt 1999: 327). Secondly, typologies of aggregate roles in international politics containing more than one characteristic (e.g. mediation, support of international institutions) are only slowly forthcoming, and often lack a systematic description of role segments that could be used to describe and explain role change. Therefore, conflicts within complex real world role sets are difficult to identify and processes of role learning, which may emanate from them even more so. Moreover, to trace the shift between role segments in discourse and practices is a very demanding task, because it requires the identification of subtle changes in the role re-location and legitimization behavior of various actors.

In this paper, I have tried to address these issues by starting a dialogue between role theory and the FPA learning literature. I argued that interactionistic role theory can help to bridge the gap between the two by specifying the scope conditions (role conflicts), the process (as-if-role taking) and direction of role taking. For this purpose, four patterns of role conflicts were identified (person-to role conflicts, different inter- and intra-role conflicts) that may or may not induce role relocation. I then developed a first-cut typology of role characteristics based on three structural properties (source, addressee, internalization) to detect and describe variance in role set ups. The brief case studies offered further support for my contention that role learning can be described as a practice in which actors respond to one or more role conflicts by taking up a new role.

The case studies further suggested that there is more than one practice that may lead to role learning. The case of U.S. arms control policies found that a shift from alter- to ego-

based and from “generalized other” to “significant other” is more probable when uncertainty is high and the “precautionary principle” exerts pressure to take unilateral action. When the effects on counter roles are considered, the Bush Jr. administration’s role relocation certainly triggered a mixed response, replete with unintended consequences, so that no full scope stabilization of the new role occurred. Instead, it may well be argued that the adjustment effect of the “others”, the Iraqi resistance that failed to hail U.S. troops as liberators, turned into the de-stabilization of the role learning process. As Wendt points out: “By choosing to cooperate in a social dilemma Ego implicitly takes a collective identity, acting “as if” he cares for Alter, even if this for selfish reasons (Wendt 1999: 346).” But if this as-if role taking is forcefully rejected and if the self conception of a “liberator turns into that of an occupier”, then the new role may not stabilize the social relations in a new role setting.

The case study on China’s Sudan policy demonstrated that a shift in “significant others”, which may be a common feature of role learning processes by great power novices, can induce as-if role taking behavior. The nature of this role making was (probably) a convergence between the role expectations by the African Union and the shaming exerted by NGOs in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Beijing. This led to a partial shift in practice, and the response by the United States and others has stabilized some cooperative features of China’s Sudan and peace-keeping policy. As Mead suggests: “It may be a slight effect, but in so far as he has adjusted himself, the adjustments have changed the type of environment to which he can respond and the world is accordingly a different world” (Mead 1934: 215). As for policy-making, the analysis suggests that it is far from certain that China’s as-if role taking in Sudan (and North Korea for that matter) will transform the competitive relationship with the United States into friendship, because Beijing’s motives appear to be mixed and the United States is not the significant other China is turning towards in this case.

The case study on Germany finds that internal role contestation can lead to stasis, which could only be unlocked by a decision of the Federal Constitutional Court regarding the admissibility of the use of force. The case study also revealed that historical memories can be the “significant other”. Respective role shifts must therefore transform the meaning of historical experience to allow for “consistent” self-identification. As Cialdini has suggested, an actor which practices a norm will much more frequently internalize that norm than a bystander, because public attention and the rising costs of practice exert the pressure for consistency (Cialdini 1984: 66-96). For policy making, this finding tells us that Germany’s role learning process is still far from complete in the sense that Germany may use force just as the United States, France or the United Kingdom do, because positive self

identification in the use of force is still linked to “humanitarian concerns” and not “well-being” or “self-esteem”. But as this study finds, this may change if role conflicts induce further as-if role taking behavior.

Outlook

The interactionistic argument presented here is not without limits, especially when causal analysis is sought. While Meadian interactionism in my reading does not per se preclude causal reasoning, the focus of this paper lay on constitutive arguments: How did it become possible (if not probable) that China asserted pressure on Sudan and even send peace-keeping support personnel? China’s new cooperative behavior in Sudan (and elsewhere) may indicate a role change, but continuing military cooperation with the Sudanese regime (and substantial support for the North Korean regime) also suggests that as-if role taking should not be taken as public conformity with a new role! As-if role taking in the Meadian sense does not require immediate internalization and therefore does not assume that the “logic of appropriateness” will immediately keep the actor on his or her new role trajectory. Rather, as-if role taking may be induced by various motives, including utility maximization. Thus, new roles emerge only when new social practices stabilize because they do change counter- or commensurate roles. If China continues to act cooperatively in the Security Council and with regard to the R2P, then the United States, as an important “significant other”, may respond accordingly and this in turn may induce a change of preferences in China that stabilize the role of a “responsible power” or “soft great power”.

In addition, it is plausible to question whether as-if role taking can be understood easily by other states in world politics, because various actors within one nation – or even one government – may send contrasting signals. Deep social asymmetries, lack of practice in effectively communicating or simply a cacophony of domestic voices that spread uncertainty about the reliability of commitments may thwart role adjustment (Krappmann 1985: 173). But as the case of Libya and its role change from “rogue state” to “economic partner” before and during the Bush administration suggests, sanctions and rewards may be applied deftly, so that even recalcitrant actors may take up new roles (Jentleson/Whytock 2005).

In nuce, the argument above is more a call for further research than a well formulated theory of role learning. To substantiate the argument, one would need to develop a plausible explanation of when and how the ego-part of a role is reconstituted in a polity. In addition, more time has to spend thinking about the nexus between specific types of role conflicts and

patterns of as-if role taking. Moreover, further contributions may enlighten us on the stabilization of role learning through adjustment of counter roles. While role theory has become a growing strand of FPA, this makeshift agenda certainly calls for joint research projects across research programs and disciplines.

5. Literature

- Aboulafia, Mitchell 2001: *The Cosmopolitan Self: George Herbert Mead and Continental Philosophy*, Urbana: Univ. Of Illinois Pr.
- Adebahr, Cornelius 2009: *Learning and Change in European Foreign Policy. The Case of the EU Special Representatives*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verl.
- Aggestam, Lisbeth (1999): *Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in Foreign Policy (ARENA Working Papers 99/8)*, http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/working-papers1999/papers/wp99_8.htm [12.01. 2010].
- Argyris, Chris/Schön, Donald 1978: *Organizational Learning. A Theory of Action Perspective*, Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Backman, Carl W. 1970: *Role Theory and International Relations: A Commentary and Extension*, in: *International Studies Quarterly* 14: 3, pp. 310-319
- Baumann, Max-Otto 2010: *Und R2P bewegt sich doch. Wie China und die Arabische Liga sich in Darfur sozialisieren*, unpubl. Manuscript, Heidelberg University
- Baumann, Rainer/ Hellmann, Gunther 2001: *Germany and the Use of Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality*, in: *German Politics* 10: 1, pp. 61-82.
- Bennett, Andrew 1999: *Condemned to repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973-1996*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Pr.
- Blumer, Herbert 1969: *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, Englewood Cliffs.
- Breslauer, George/Tetlock, Philip (ed.) 1991: *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press.
- Brown, M. Leann/Kenney, Michael (Eds.) 2006: *Organizational Learning in the Global Context*, New York: Ashgate.
- Bush, George 2002: *U.S President George W. Bush: Address to the United Nations* <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/09/12/bush.transcript/> [12.01. 2010].
- Cantir, Cristian/Kaarbo, Juliet 2010: *Contested Roles and Domestic Politics: reflections on Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis and IR Theory*, Paper presented ISA-Workshop "Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations through Role Theory" at the Annual ISA-Conference February, 15-20 2010, New Orleans.
- Chinoy, Mike 2008: *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, St. Martin's Press.
- Cialdini, Robert B. 1984: *Influence. How and Why people agree to things*, New York.
- Coser, Rose L. 1975: *The Complexity of Roles as Seedbed of Individual Autonomy*, in: Coser, Rose L. (ed.): *The Idea of Social Structure: Essays in Honor of Robert Merton*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, pp. 237-264.
- Christensen, Thomas 2006: *China's Role in the World: Is China a Responsible Stakeholder?* Statement by Thomas J. Christensen Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Before the U.S. – China Economic and Security Review Commission August 3, 2006, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2006hearings/written_testimonies/06_08_3_4wrts/06_08_3_4_christensen_thomas_statement.pdf [12.01. 2010].
- Cronin, Bruce 2001: *The paradox of hegemony: America's Ambiguous Relationship with the United Nations*, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 7: 1, pp. 103-130.
- Da Silva, Filipe Carreira 2008: *Mead And Modernity: Science, Selfhood, And Democratic Politics*, Lanham: Lexington Books.

- Dobbin, Frank/Simmons, Beth/Garrett, Geoffrey 2007: The Global Diffusion of Public Policies: Social Construction, Coercion, Competition, or Learning? in: *Annual Review of Sociology* 33, pp. 449-472.
- Dreitzel, Hans Peter 1968/1980: *Die gesellschaftlichen Leiden und die Leiden der Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart.
- Elgström, Ole/Smith, Michael (Eds.) 2006: *The European Union's roles in international politics: concepts and analysis*, New York: Routledge/ECPR.
- Evans, Gareth & Steinberg Donald 2007: Signs of Transition, in: *Guardian Unlimited* (7.11.) URL: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4891&l=1> [12.01. 2010].
- Farkas, Andrew 1998: *State Learning and International Change*, Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan Pr.
- Flockhart, Trine 2006: Complex Socialization: A Framework for the Study of State Socialization, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 12:1, pp. 89-118.
- Fullilove, Michael 2005: All the President's Men: The Role of Special Envoys in U.S. Foreign Policy in: *Foreign Affairs* 84: 2, pp. 13-18.
- Gaupp, Peter 1983: *Staaten als Rollenträger. Die Rollentheorie als Analyse-Instrument von Außenpolitik und internationalen Beziehungen*, Liebefeld/Bern.
- Gates, Robert 2008: Statement by US Secretary of Defense at the 44th Munich "Wehrkunde" Conference, 02/10/2008, http://www.securityconference.de/archive/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2008=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=216& [12.01.2010].
- Gordon, Philip H. 1994: The Normalization of German Foreign Policy, in: *Orbis* 38:2, pp. 225-243.
- Goetschel, Laurent 1999: Aussenpolitikanalyse in der Schweiz: Paradigma oder Sonderfall? Zum Einfluss von Entscheidungsprozessen auf nationale Rollenkonzepte, in: *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 6:2, pp. 349-370.
- Grathoff, Richard H. 1970: *The Structure of Social Inconsistencies. A contribution to a unified theory of play, game and social action*, Den Haag
- Haass, Richard 2009: *War of necessity, War of Choice. A Memoir of two Iraq Wars*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Harnisch, Sebastian forthcoming: George Herbert Mead, the pragmatist tradition and role theory, in: Harnisch et al. (Eds.) forthcoming: *On World Stage: Role Theory in International Relations*, London: Palgrave
- Harnisch, Sebastian 2001: Change and Continuity on Post-Unification German Foreign Policy, in: Webber, Douglas (Hg.): *New Europe, New Germany, Old Foreign Policy. German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, London: Frank Cass, pp. 35-60.
- Harnisch, Sebastian 2000: *Außenpolitisches Lernen. Die US-Außenpolitik auf der koreanischen Halbinsel*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
- Harnisch, Sebastian/Wolf, Raimund 2010: Germany's Changing Security Culture and Governance, in: Kirchner, Emil/Sperling, James (Hrsg.): *National Security Cultures and Global Security Governance*, New York: Routledge, pp.
- Harnisch, Sebastian/Wagener, Martin 2010: Die Sechsparteiengespräche auf der koreanischen Halbinsel. Hintergründe – Ergebnisse – Perspektiven, in: Dirk Nabers (Hrsg.), *Multilaterale Institutionen in Ostasien-Pazifik*, Wiesbaden, pp. 133-179.
- Harnisch, Sebastian/Schieder, Siegfried 2006: Germany's New European Policy: Weaker, Leaner, Meaner, in: Maull, Hanns W. (Hg.): *Germany's Uncertain Power. Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 95-108
- Harnisch, Sebastian/Maull, Hanns W. 2001: Conclusion: Learned its lesson well? Germany as a Civilian Power ten years after unification, in: Harnisch, Sebastian/Maull, Hanns

- W. (Hg.): *Germany as a Civilian Power. The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 128-156.
- Hawkins, Darren et al (Eds.) 2006: *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Hedberg, Bo/Wolff, Rolf 2001: *Organizing, Learning and Strategizing: From Construction to Discovery*, in: Dierkes, Meinolf et al. (Eds.): *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge*, Oxford, pp. 535-556.
- Herborth, Benjamin 2004: *Die via media als konstitutionslogische Einbahnstraße. Zur Entwicklung des Akteur-Struktur-Problems bei Alexander Wendt*, in: *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 11:1, pp. 61-87
- Hermann, Margret 1987: *Foreign Policy Role Orientations and the Quality of Foreign Policy Decisions*, in: Walker 1987: 123-141.
- Holsti, Kalevi J. 1970: *National Role Conceptions and the Study of Foreign Policy*, in: *International Studies Quarterly* 14:3, pp. 233-309.
- Huang, Chin-Hao 2008: *China's Evolving Perspective of Darfur: Significance and Policy Implications*, in: *PacNet* 40, pp. 1-2.
- Hunter, Alan 2009: *Soft Power: China on the Global Stage*, in: *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, pp. 373-398.
- International Crisis Group 2009: *Shades of Red. China's Debate over North Korea*, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6370&l=1> [12.01. 2010].
- James, William 1890: *The Principles of Psychology*, New York.
- Jentleson, Bruce/Whytock, Christopher 2006: *Who "Won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy*, in: *International Security* 30:3, pp. 47-86.
- Johnston, Alastair Ian 2008: *Social States. China in international institutions, 1980-2000*, Princeton.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain 2001: *Treating International Institutions as Social Environments*, in: *International Studies Quarterly* 45:4, pp.487-515.
- Jönsson, Christer 1984: *Superpower. Comparing US and Soviet Union Foreign Policy*, New York.
- Katzman, Kenneth 2010: *Iran: U.S Concerns and Policy Responses (CRS Report for Congress, 7-5700)*, Washington DC: CRS <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/135893.pdf> [12.01. 2010].
- Kenney, Michael 2006: *From Pablo to Osama Trafficking and Terrorist Networks, Government Bureaucracies, and Competitive Adaptation*, Philadelphia; Pennsylvania State Univ. Pr.
- Khong, Yuen Fengh 2008: *Neoconservatism and the Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: The Role of Ideas in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, in: Smith, Tony et al. (Eds.): *Foreign Policy*, Oxford, pp. 251-268.
- Khong, Yuen Fengh 1992: *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kirste, Knut 1998: *Rollentheorie und Außenpolitikanalyse. Die USA und Deutschland als Zivilmächte*, Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang.
- Klimecki, Rüdiger et al. 1999: *Organisationales Lernen. Ein Ansatz zur Integration von Theorie, Empirie und Gestaltung*, Konstanz.
- Knopf, Jeffrey 2003: *The Importance of International Learning*, in: *Review of International Studies* 29, pp. 185-207.
- Kowert, Paul A. 2002: *Groupthink or Deadlock: When do Leaders Learn from their Advisors?*, Albany.

- Krisch, Nico 2008: The Security Council and the Great Powers in: Lowe, Vaughan et al. (Eds.): The Security Council and War, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 133-152.
- Krappmann, Lothar 1985: Mead und die Sozialisationsforschung, in Joas, Hans (Hrsg.): Das Problem der Intersubjektivität, Frankfurt a. M., pp. 156-178.
- Krotz, Ulrich 2001: Defining National Interest: Interests and Policies in France and Germany, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell Univ.
- Kurlantzick, Joshua 2007: Charm Offensive. How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World, New Haven.
- Lake, David 2009: Relational Authority and Legitimacy in International Relations, in: American Behavioral Scientist 53: 3, 331-353.
- Lake, David 2008: The New American Empire, in: International Studies Perspectives 9, pp. 281-289.
- Large, Daniel 2008: Sudan's foreign relations with Asia. China and the politics of 'looking east' (Institut for Security Studies, Paper 158), <http://www.cmi.no/sudan/doc/?id=1182> [12.01. 2010].
- Legro, Jeffrey 2000: The Transformation of Policy Ideas, in: American Journal of Political Science 44: 3, pp. 419-432.
- Leng, Russell J. 2000: Bargaining and Learning in Recurring Crisis: The Soviet-American, Egyptian-Israeli, and Indo-Pakistani Rivalries, Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan Pr.
- Le Prestre, Philippe G. (Ed.) 1997: Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era. Foreign Policies in Transition, Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP.
- Lerch, Marika 2001: The Important Role of Roles: a Theoretical Framework for Understanding the External Identity of the European Union", Paper presented at ECPR 4th Pan-European International Relations Conference, Canterbury, September 2001.
- Leverett, Flynt 2006: Dealing with Tehran: Assessing U.S. Diplomatic Options toward Iran, New York: Century Foundation, http://www.tcf.org/publications/internationalaffairs/leverett_diplomatic.pdf [12.01. 2010].
- Levy, Jack S. 1994: Learning and Foreign Policy. Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield, in: International Organization 48: 2, pp. 279-312.
- Malek, Tanja, et al. 2002: Organizational Responses to new environmental demands- Thinking about Organizational Learning, paper presented at the ISA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 24-27 March 2002.
- Malici, Akan 2006: Reagan and Gorbachev: Altercasting at the End of the Cold War, in: Schafer/Walker 2006, pp. 127-150.
- Maloney, Suzanne 2008: U.S. Policy Toward Iran: Missed Opportunities and Paths Forward, in: The Fletcher Forum for World Affairs 32: 2, pp. 25-44
- Marfleet, B. Gregory/Simpson, Hannah 2006: Learning from Foreign Policy Crisis: Belief Change in Response to Crisis Management Outcomes, Paper prepared for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 22-25, San Diego.
- Martin, Curtis 2004: Going to the United Nations: President Bush's 2002 Decision to Seek Security Council Backing against Iraq. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, March 17, 2004.
- Mauß, Hanns W. 2000: Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?, in: Survival 42:2, pp. 56-80.
- Mead, George Herbert 1938: The Philosophy of an Act, Chicago.
- Mead, George Herbert 1934: Mind, Self and Society: from the standpoint of a social behaviourist, ed. by. Charles W. Morris, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr.

- Merton, Robert K. 1957: The Role-Set: Problems in Sociological Theory, in: *British Journal of Sociology* 8, pp. 106 -120.
- Miskimmon, Alister 2007: *Germany and the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. Between Europeanisation and National Adaptation.* London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moravcsik, Andrew 2005: The Paradox of U.S. Human Rights Policy, in: Ignatieff, Michael (Ed.): *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, Princeton, pp. 147-197.
- Muttschler, Max M. 2008: *The Learning Principals – Delegation von Agenda-Setting in der Europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik (Tübinger Arbeitspapiere No.53)*, Tübingen.
- Nolte, Georg 2003: Germany: Ensuring Political Legitimacy for the Use of Military Forces by Requiring Constitutional Accountability, in: Ku, Charlotte/Jacobson, Harold Eds.): *Democratic Accountability and the Use of Force in International Law*, Cambridge, pp. 231-253.
- Pape, Robert 2005: "Soft Balancing Against the United States, in: *International Security* 30:1, pp.7-45.
- Pritchard, Charles 2007: *Failed Diplomacy. The Tragic Story of how North Korea got the Bomb*, Washington, D.C.
- Pritchard, Charles 2004: While US Looked for Iraqi WMD, North Korea Built Theirs, in: *Yale Global Online*, March 31st, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/while-us-looked-iraqi-wmd-north-korea-built-theirs> [12.01. 2010].
- Ramo, Joshua Cooper 2004: *The Beijing Consensus*, London.
- Reiter, Dan 1996: *Crucible of Beliefs. Learning, Alliances, and World Wars*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.
- Risse-Kappen, Thomas 1994: Ideas Do Not Float Freely. Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War, in: *International Organization* 48: 2, pp. 185-214.
- Robinson, Sam 2006: George W. Bush and the Vulcans: Leader-Advisor Relations and America's Response to the 9/11 Attacks, in: Schafer/Walker, pp. 101-126.
- Schafer, Mark/Walker, Stephen G. (eds.) 2006: *Beliefs and Leadership in World Politics. Methods and Applications of Operational Code Analysis*, New York: Palgrave.
- Schoppe, Waltraud 1995: Menschenrechte und Außenpolitik. Soll die Moral die Außenpolitik dominieren?, in: *Internationale Politik* 60: 8, pp. 27-30.
- Simon, Herbert 1991: Bounded rationality and organizational Learning, in: *Organization Science* 2: 1, pp. 124-135.
- Singer, Eric/Hudson, Valerie 1987: Role Sets and African Foreign Policy Behavior: Testing an External Predisposition Model, in: Walker 1987, pp. 199-218.
- Stein, Janice Gross 1994: Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as Uncommitted Thinker and Motivated Learner, in: *International Organization* 48: 2, pp. 155-183.
- Stryker, Sheldon 1980: *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version*, Menlo Park.
- Turner, Ralph H. 1962: Role taking: Process versus conformity, in: Rose, A. (Ed.): *Human Behavior and Social Processes*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin. pp. 20-39.
- Turner, Jonathan 1988: *A Theory of Social Interaction*, Stanford.
- Volgy, Thomas J./Quistgaard, Jon E. 1975: Learning about the Value of Global Cooperation, in: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 19: 2, pp. 349-376.
- Wagener, Martin 2006: Normalization in Security Policy? Deployments of Bundeswehr Forces Abroad in the Era Schröder, 1998 - 2004, in: Maull, Hanns W. (Ed.): *Germany's Uncertain Power. Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, New York, pp. 79-92.

- Walker, Stephen (Eds.) 1987: *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, Durham.
- Walker, Stephen 1979: *National Role Conceptions and Systemic Outcomes*, in: Falkowski, Lawrence (Ed.): *Psychological Models in International Politics*, Boulder, pp.169-210.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979: *Theory of International Politics*, New York: MacGraw-Hill.
- Williamson, Myra 2009: *Terrorism, War and International Law. The Legality of the Use of Force against Afghanistan*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- Wish, Naomi 1987: *National Attributes as Sources of National Role Conceptions: A Capability-Motivation Model*, in: Walker 1987, pp. 94-104.
- Wendt, Alexander 1999: *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Wolf, Raimund forthcoming: *Terrorized America? September 11 and its impact on US foreign policy*, in: Harnisch et al. (Eds.) forthcoming: *On World Stage: Role Theory in International Relations*, London: Palgrave
- Zito, Anthony R./ Schout, Adriaan 2009: 'Learning theory reconsidered: EU integration theories and learning', in: *Journal of European Public Policy* 16:8, pp. 1103-1123.