CHAPTER 1

# What Is Foreign Policy Analysis?

Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is very appealing to students, irrespective of age or caliber. Some people expect to find a field of study that is more concrete and practical than international relations theories. Others are fascinated by great historical figures, from Otto von Bismarck to Winston Churchill, or are drawn, without always wanting to admit it, by the apparent romanticism of diplomacy.

These are, of course, only lures. The novice soon realizes that the theoretical models in FPA are just as complex as those in other fields of international relations. They also realize that most foreign policy decisions, far from being clinched in padded embassy drawing rooms, between a cigar and a martini, are the result of bureaucratic processes similar to those in other areas of public policy.

As the complexity unfolds and diplomacy loses its aura, other attractions come into play. First and foremost, FPA provides a unique opportunity to integrate analysis at different levels. At the crossroads between the theories of international relations and public policy analysis, FPA is not limited to the study of the international system that fails to take account of its component parts, or to the study of one-off decision-making processes in the international context.

Instead, FPA focuses on the continuous interaction between actors and their environment. To understand and explain foreign policy, the international context must be taken into account. The distribution of power


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between countries and the influence of transnational stakeholders and intergovernmental organizations partially determine foreign policy. Governments that adopt foreign policies perceive the international system through their own filters, which may be cultural, organizational or cognitive. Therefore, to understand and explain a foreign policy, it is also essential to study the state's domestic dynamics and decision-making processes (Sprout and Sprout 1965).

Although FPA does not have its own specific level of analysis, it can be defined by its dependent variable, namely, foreign policy itself. Most research in FPA seeks to explain how one or more public authorities adopt a given policy in certain conditions. Why do great powers actively try to forge alliances with small countries despite their limited military resources (Fordham 2011)? Why did Jordan drop its territorial claims on Palestine (Legrand 2009)? Why did members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sign the Kyoto agreement, even though it aims to reduce the consumption of their main export (Depledge 2008)? Why does France concentrate more of its official development assistance in its former colonies than does the United Kingdom (Alesina and Dollar 2000)? Why did Norway join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but refuse to join the European Union (EU), whereas Sweden chose to do the opposite (Reiter 1996)? The questions are endless, but the starting point is always the same: identify a foreign policy, which is often puzzling or counter-intuitive, and then try to explain it.

## What Is a Policy?

Despite the fact that foreign policy is the focal point of FPA, or perhaps for that very reason, there is no consensual definition of what a foreign policy actually is. The truth is that the question is hardly ever discussed in the literature. Most analysts quite simply avoid tackling the concept directly, even though it is central to their work. Other fields of international relations are organized around definitions, which act as reference points for theoretical debates, as well as for operationalizing variables. But FPA has no equivalent.

After all, the concept of foreign policy adopted by analysts is in constant mutation, as a function of the changes in practices and theories. It would be illusory to freeze foreign policy within a specific empirical reality that is timeless and universal. Indeed, what is considered to be a foreign policy

today may not have been so yesterday and may not be tomorrow. As a result, every definition remains more or less dependent on its context.

This book, which seeks to reflect the field of study overall and its evolution over the past few decades, adopts a broad definition of foreign policy: *a set of actions or rules governing the actions of an independent political authority deployed in the international environment.*

Our definition emphasizes that foreign policy is the "actions of an *independent* political authority" because it is reserved to sovereign states. The Canadian, the German or the Spanish governments, for example, are the legal custodian of their states' sovereignty and the representatives of the international personality of their respective states. Hence, subnational states such as Quebec, Bavaria or Catalonia are not conducting foreign policy. They can conduct international relations according to their constitutional jurisdictions, but they cannot deploy a foreign policy on the international scene because they are not sovereign and independent entities (Vengroff and Jason Rich 2006). Of course, there are exceptions—in Belgium, for instance, federalism is quite decentralized and gives several exclusive constitutional jurisdictions to Wallonia and Flanders as well as the right to sign international legal agreements (treaties) in their jurisdictions (Criekemans 2010).

Our definition of foreign policy also refers to "actions or rules governing the actions" because the notion of policy is polysemic. Some scholars consider that a foreign policy comprises actions, reactions or inaction, which may be *ad hoc* or repeated (Frankel 1963). From this perspective, France's decision to withdraw from the negotiations for the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1998, or the repeated practice of providing emergency assistance to a neighboring country in the event of a major natural disaster, would be considered examples of foreign policy.

Other scholars view foreign policy not as the action itself but as the underlying vision—in other words, the specific conception that a state has regarding its place in the world, its national interests and the key principles that allow it to defend them. According to this view, the American policy to contain communism during the Cold War or Beijing's "one China" policy concerning Taiwan would be examples of foreign policy.

A third option places foreign policy between these two extremes. This is the middle path, favored, notably, by James Rosenau, who considers that doctrines are too country-specific, which rules out the study of their variation, and that the decisions are too irregular and idiosyncratic to allow for generalizations (1980: 53).

The definition of foreign policy proposed in this book does not settle this debate. Some research, which clearly comes within the FPA framework, focuses on well-defined decisions, while other research focuses on practices that are repeated so often that they are taken for granted. Some researchers concentrate on what states do materially, while others consider what states declare verbally. Given this diversity, there is *a priori* no need to limit the field of FPA to a narrow definition of policy, whatever it may be (Snyder et al. 2002 [1962]: 74).

## When a Policy Becomes Foreign

Are foreign policy and public policy different? Research show that there is a substantial amount of overlap between these two fields of research. However, scholars differentiate foreign policy because it is located at the junction between international politics and domestic public policy (Rosenau 1971). On the one hand, as Lentner explains, "(t)here are foreign policy writers who concentrate on exactly the type of analysis that most public policy analysts do" (2006: 172). Authors like Richard Neustadt (1960), Graham Allison (1969) and Alexander George (1980) are good examples. On the other hand, several FPA experts belong to the discipline of international relations and are directly influenced by research paradigms such as realism or liberalism, which try to explain states' behavior in the international system. What differentiates these two traditions of FPA from the study of domestic public policy, however, is that they must somehow take into account the international system as they deal with problems arising outside state borders. This is the reason why this book defines foreign policy as being "deployed in the international environment".

Nonetheless, we cannot hide the fact that the boundary between foreign and domestic policies is increasingly porous in today's world. Several issues that were previously considered strictly international now include domestic policy. Homegrown terrorism in Western democracies where citizens perpetrate terrorist acts on behalf of international terrorist organizations such as the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or al-Qaeda is a case in point. It led governments to adopt public policies to prevent and to tackle citizens' radicalization. Conversely, other issues traditionally perceived as domestic public policy now have obvious international ramifications, Chinese environmental policies on greenhouse gas emission being an obvious example.

During the Cold War, some observers assimilated the distinction between external and internal policies to that between high politics and low politics. From this perspective, foreign policy was perceived as an instrument to serve vital state interests, geared specifically to guaranteeing security or maximizing power (Morgenthau 1948). The prospect of a nuclear war heightened the impression that all public policy objectives, from public health to transport, including education, should be subordinated to the security priorities of foreign policy. As John F. Kennedy expressed in 1951, when he was a House representative in the US Congress:

> Foreign policy today, irrespective of what we might wish, in its impact on our daily lives, overshadows everything else. Expenditures, taxation, domestic prosperity, the extent of social services – all hinge on the basic issue of war or peace. (Dallek 2003: 158)

In reality, despite Kennedy's comments, economic and social policies have never been systematically subjected to foreign policy security concerns. Likewise, state security has never been viewed exclusively through the prism of foreign policy. The artificial distinction between high politics and low politics, combined with that of domestic and external policy, is an idea that has been encouraged by introductory textbooks on foreign policy for years. However, it has never really corresponded to the realities of exercising power (Fordham 1998).

The interconnection between domestic and foreign policy is well illustrated by the crosscutting operations of the armed forces and the police forces. Traditional discourse suggests that the armed forces deal with external or interstate threats and the police forces deal with internal and civil threats. Yet, the armed forces have always played a specific role in domestic order, particularly in colonies or peacekeeping operations, while police forces have been involved in international relations for years, for example, in their fight against organized crime or terrorist organizations (Sheptycki 2000; Balzacq 2008; Friesendorf 2016).

The fictitious assimilation of high politics to foreign policy and low politics to domestic policy remained relatively intact in political discourses until the first oil crisis in 1973. When the repercussions of the Middle East conflict were felt directly at fuel stations around the world, the strict and rigid distinction between security and the economy, like that between internal and external policies, became obsolete (Keohane and Nye 1977).

The binary distinction between high and low politics disappeared definitively from FPA lexicon at the end of the Cold War. In the contemporary world, nuclear conflict no longer appears to pose as great a threat as financial crises, new epidemics, migratory movements, biotechnology or climate change. In order to affirm that the single objective of foreign policy is still to guarantee state security, the notion has to be extended to cover economic, health, energy, human, nutritional, societal and environmental securities, until all areas of state action are included and the notion loses all meaning (Buzan et al. 1998). It is undoubtedly simpler to acknowledge that foreign policy is multisectoral. Indeed, it focuses equally on promoting cultural diversity, respecting human rights, prohibiting chemical weapons, restricting agricultural subsidies, conserving fish stocks in the oceans and so forth.

The field of foreign policy, unlike other areas of public policy, cannot be defined by a single question, objective, target or function. Rather, it can be defined by a geographic criterion: every action (or inaction) undertaken by a sovereign political authority in a context beyond the state's borders can be considered as a component of foreign policy, regardless of whether it is the responsibility of the ministry of foreign affairs or any other public authority.

It is actually this transition from internal to external that gives foreign policy its specificity: the political authority that adopts and implements a foreign policy has very limited control over its outcome because the outcome depends on variables that elude its sovereignty. The Brazilian government cannot reform the UN Security Council in the way it reforms its own institutions; the French government cannot govern Greenpeace boats navigating in international waters the way it regulates NGO activities in France; and the Chinese government cannot protect its investments in Africa as it does in its own territory.

Of course, the notion that the modes of governance of the international system are fundamentally different from those of national systems can be challenged. After all, the categories of actors, their capacity for action and the factors that determine their influence are relatively similar. As a result, the traditional distinction is fading between the national context, where the state alone has the monopoly over legitimate violence, and the anarchic international context, which has no hierarchical authority. However, the fact remains that, from a government's perspective, there are two distinct contexts, which always present radically different constraints and opportunities (Walker 1993).

## An Array of Explanations

A vast array of independent and intermediate variables can explain a given foreign policy. These explanations range from social structure to leader's personality. They include interest groups, institutional architecture, the influence of the media and bureaucratic politics.

To identify the most suitable variables, FPA draws on multiple disciplines. In fact, few fields of study have embraced disciplines as varied as sociology, economics, public administration, psychology and history with the same enthusiasm. Although there are now calls for interdisciplinarity in all the social sciences, FPA can, undeniably, claim to be a leader when it comes to integrating different disciplines.

This interdisciplinarity has generated a remarkable diversity in theoretical models and methodological approaches. A single issue of a journal devoted to FPA can quite easily include the psychological profile of a head of state, a study on national identity based on iconography, a cybernetic model of the rationale of a ministry of foreign affairs and a statistical analysis of the relationships between inflation rates and declarations of war over the last two centuries. A 2010 issue of the journal *Foreign Policy Analysis*, for example, purposely published a collection of articles that relied on very different theoretical approaches, methodologies and substantive issues to show the extent to which FPA could contribute to knowledge production in international relations. As the editors of the issue pointed out:

> The theoretical and methodological approaches used in foreign policy analysis are as varied as the substantive questions asked. Thus, the strength of foreign policy analysis is its integrative approach that emphasizes individuals, groups, and institutions at or within the level of the state as driving forces in foreign policy behaviour and outcomes. (Drury et al. 2010)

At first glance, this theoretical and methodological eclecticism is vertiginous. The sheer diversity can seem discordant, particularly for a reader who is used to the structured theoretical debates of international relations, which have generally recognizable dividing lines. The internationalist who opens the state's black box will find a jumble of different approaches that are neither catalogued nor ordered. This may seem confusing and incoherent.

This impression is exacerbated if one considers, wrongly, that the different approaches are competing to dominate this field of study. In reality, FPA has long since given up on developing a highly generalizable theory

that would explain the most important foreign policies. Instead, middle-range theories are being developed to explain only a limited number of decisions or even just one aspect of the decision-making process in well-defined circumstances. This lies halfway between general theories, which cannot explain specific features, on the one hand, and the complexity of the real world, which cannot be reported intelligibly, on the other hand (Sil and Katzenstein 2010; Lake 2011).

This epistemological modesty, referred to as a leitmotif in the literature on FPA, is a way of avoiding sectarian and sterile clashes. In FPA, there is no trench warfare between different paradigms. No one pledges allegiance to a specific school of thought. On the contrary, the availability of a huge spectrum of medium-range theories invites the researcher to combine these theories in order to build new constructions. FPA is not only multi-level and multidisciplinary; it is resolutely multicausal. By freeing ourselves from the pursuit of a single explanatory variable, a confusing first impression can be transformed into a creative impulse (Schafer 2003).

## Levels of Analysis and the Evolution in FPA

The behavioral revolution that marked the discipline of political science in the United States in the mid-twentieth century led to a split between the field of FPA and international relations. One of the main dividing lines between the different theories is the level of analysis (Singer 1961). In his book *Man, the State and War* published in 1959, Kenneth Waltz distinguishes three levels of analysis: the individual level (first image), the national level (second image) and the international system (third image).

FPA mainly relies on Waltz' first and second images as it is an agent-centered field of research. It focuses on actor-specific decisions and places the decision-making process at the center of its attention. FPA, therefore, concentrates on subnational factors, such as the personality of government leaders, social groups or the bureaucracy.

The field of international relations, by contrast, mainly focuses on Waltz' third image as it is structure-oriented. It is through the macroscopic scale of analysis that this field of research tries to explain interstate or transnational phenomena, and this without looking inside the state. This field of research is outcome-oriented as oppose to process-oriented. Considerations such as the distribution of power in the international system or the impact of international norms on states' interactions are key.

This said, even if the individual, the state and the international levels of analysis focus on different actors, processes and outcomes, they can all be relevant, depending on the research puzzle that is driving the research (Singer 1961: 90).

Focusing on the individual and national levels of analysis, James Rosenau and Harold and Margaret Sprout called for a scientific analysis of foreign policy, which led to the behaviorist turn in FPA in the 1960s (Rosenau 1966; Sprout and Sprout 1965). Rosenau argued that FPA should strive for a greater degree of generalization by going beyond simple case studies and the descriptive and interpretative approaches traditionally used in diplomatic history (1968).

Responding to this call, databases were put together by a generation of scholars in order to systematically study foreign policy, and experts produced a burgeoning literature that defined the modern field of FPA. The research agenda on comparative foreign policy analysis (CFPA) contributed to this development (Rosenau 1968). Vast databases, such as the World Event Interaction Survey or the Conflict and Peace Data Bank, were created to systematically observe the behavior of states with respect to international events. The main objective of CFPA was to identify empirical patterns from which it would be possible to isolate independent variables and develop generalizable theoretical models to explain states' behavior.

But after years of intensive research supported by governments and private foundations, FPA experts had to face reality: attempts to identify the main behavioral patterns in foreign policy had proved unsuccessful. Experts failed to achieve a degree of abstraction and parsimony sufficiently high to develop large-range theories of FPA. This is because states' behavior is conditioned by peculiar characteristics, such as cultural and political values, economic development and leaders' perceptions. This makes impossible the production of theories with universal and timeless significance.

This reality begot a certain lack of interest for the analysis of foreign policy to the point where FPA appeared to be a neglected field of study in the 1980s. To add to this disappointment, the 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of new theories of international relations favoring an exclusively macroscopic scale of analysis. Neorealism, world-system theory and regime theory, for instance, caught the attention of researchers studying international structures and institutions, but failed to take

account of the domestic processes involved in formulating foreign policy. These theories sought to explain the outcome of international interactions rather than the specific action of particular actors.

The field of FPA was then virtually left to think tanks such as the *Council on Foreign Relations*, the *Royal Institute of International Affairs* or to journals geared more to practitioners than to academics, such as *Foreign Policy* and *Foreign Affairs*. To James Rosenau's great dismay (1980), FPA turned to solving policy problems rather than constructing theories.

Nonetheless, since the end of the Cold War, macroscopic approaches that fail to take account of domestic dynamics have shown their limitations. The collapse of the Soviet Union has shown that international structures are unstable and that national politics and specific individuals can have a profound impact on international relations. Neorealists, for instance, were compelled to recognize that foreign policy agents are the engines of change in international politics. For instance, Mikhail Gorbachev, Lech Walesa and Pope John Paul II all played a role in the fall of the Soviet Union. As a result, it became obvious at the turn of the 1990s that the structure of the system helps to explain continuity in international relations, but that the agents are more suitable for the study of its change.

Fortunately, FPA has come back since the years 2000s and its theoretical and disciplinary openness has no doubt contributed to its recent resurgence. Internationalists are increasingly striving to integrate several levels of analysis, cut across different disciplines and develop medium-range theories. FPA, whose spearhead is multicausality, multidisciplinary and analysis at multiple levels, seems to be a promising field once more (Smith 1986; Gerner 1991 and 1995; Light 1994; Hudson and Vore 1995; Neack et al. 1995; White 1999; Hagan 2001; Kaarbo 2003; Stern 2004; Hudson 2005; Houghton 2007).

There are numerous indicators of the resurgence of FPA. In terms of teaching, a survey conducted among professors of international relations in ten countries revealed that there are now more courses in foreign policy than in international security, international political economy or international development (Jordan et al. 2009). In terms of research, a journal exclusively devoted to FPA, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, was created in 2005, and its distribution shows that it is well received by internationalists. Therefore, in this context of a revival, this book proposes an introduction to FPA, with a forward-looking approach and a classic base.

## A Toolbox for Studying FPA

This book is designed like a toolbox from which students and researchers can draw ideas, concepts and references in order to conduct their own research. It does not set out to retrace the evolution of diplomatic practices, present classic decision-making processes or describe the main foreign policy trends of any particular country. Instead, it proposes a panorama of different approaches, which represent just as many keys for analysis.

As these different keys are more complementary than contrasting, we are reluctant to draw conclusions, in absolute terms, as to which is the most equitable or relevant. In any case, such arbitration would be counter to FPA's epistemological modesty and to its commitment to multicausality, multidisciplinary and multisectorality. The subject of specific analysis and its context, as well as the researcher's objectives, should obviously guide the choice of theoretical and methodological approaches.

We as researchers also navigate continuously between constructivism, institutionalism and realism. We rely on discourse and content analysis, process tracing and regression tables for our own research projects. We would definitely feel deprived if we had to limit our research projects to a single theoretical or methodological approach.

With this toolbox, we invite readers to adopt different theoretical and methodological approaches, not in order to reproduce them blindly, but to develop, adapt or, better still, combine them. Conducting FPA research often means putting together an *ad hoc* construction, by borrowing ideas from different approaches. The main interest that FPA holds for us, and others, lies in the intellectual creativity that it encourages.

In this context, this book focuses particularly on works that have become classics, namely, those by Graham Allison, Ole Holsti, Jack Levy, Margaret Hermann, Irving Janis, Robert Jervis, Alexander George, Helen Milner, Jack Snyder, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Robert Putnam. Going back to these classics is essential because they continue to be a source of inspiration and provide the basis for debate decades after their publication.

In addition, this book is influenced by recent research published in North America, Europe and elsewhere. It refers extensively to recent foreign policy articles published in peer-reviewed journals such as—but not exclusively—*Foreign Policy Analysis*, *International Studies Quarterly*,

*International Organization*, *Review of International Studies*, *Security Studies*, *International Security*, the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research* and *Political Psychology*. On the basis of this research, the book illustrates the implementation and the strengths, but also the weaknesses of the different theoretical models presented. The numerous bibliographic references also help guide the reader to more specialized reading.

The book starts with a presentation of FPA's dependent variable, that is, foreign policy itself (Chap. 1). The subsequent chapters look at different explanatory models. It presents the multiple levels of analysis going from the microscopic scale of analysis, inspired by psychology, to the macroscopic scale of analysis of structural theories of international relations. The book also deals with more abstract material and ideational considerations by focusing on the impact of rationality and culture on foreign policy. Hence, the book focuses successively on the definition of a foreign policy (Chap. 2), the decision-maker (Chap. 3), bureaucratic mechanisms (Chap. 4), political institutions (Chap. 5), social actors (Chap. 6), rationality (Chap. 7), culture (Chap. 8) and the international structure (Chap. 9). Finally, it identities the main challenges that are facing FPA today (Chap. 10).

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CHAPTER 2

# How to Identify and Assess a Foreign Policy?

This chapter focuses on an essential prerequisite for every FPA, namely, identifying a foreign policy so that it can be grasped and explained. This stage is often neglected and constitutes the Achilles' heel of several studies, which are so preoccupied with the decision-making process that they overlook the foreign policy itself. Yet, it is crucial for analysts to carefully define the policy that they aim to explain. To define is to interpret. In other words, by defining, the researcher attributes a meaning that will, in turn, influence the type of explanation sought.

For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, Switzerland refused to allow members of the coalition to fly over its airspace to transport troops and weapons to Kuwait. Some researchers may see this decision as a manifestation of the Swiss doctrine of neutrality. They would then try to explain why this neutrality persists: does Swiss national identity use this historical heritage as a federating principle? Or do the institutional characteristics of the Swiss political system dissuade the Federal Council from reviewing its constitutional obligations? Other researchers, however, might observe that the Swiss government imposed economic sanctions on Iraq, as outlined in the Security Council resolution 661, and, therefore, conclude that the policy of neutrality was being relaxed. Explaining the change rather than the continuity may then encourage them to study the geopolitical upheavals that occurred in the wake of the Cold War or the shifting balance


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of power between members of the Swiss government. This example clearly illustrates that the foreign policy related to the same question during the same period can be interpreted in different ways. From the outset, the interpretation chosen will steer the research in a particular direction.

In order to interpret a foreign policy correctly, researchers must carefully compare it with previous policies, other states' policies or domestic policies. A comparative exercise is essential to provide an overview, even in the framework of a study focusing on a single case. That is why James Rosenau has argued passionately for a resolutely comparative approach to FPA:

> Comprehension of the external activities undertaken by one national system is not sufficient to answer the questions of systemic adaptation and political process that are inherent in foreign policy phenomena. The repeated experiences of two or more systems must be carefully contrasted for an answer to such questions to begin to emerge. Only in this way can the theoretically oriented analyst begins to satisfy his curiosity and the policy-oriented analyst begins to accumulate the reliable knowledge on which sound recommendations and choices are made. Only in this way will it be possible to move beyond historical circumstances and comprehend the continuities of national life in a world of other nations (1968: 329).

For reasons similar to those mentioned by James Rosenau 50 years ago, comparison remains a central component of FPA. Regardless of whether the method is quantitative or qualitative, the enterprise positivist or post-positivist, the comparison between different states, different periods or different fields remains essential when it comes to identifying specific characteristics and generalizations, as well as continuity and change (Kaarbo 2003).

Comparison requires points of reference, which can help to determine what is real and identify variations. Every foreign policy analyst has their own favorite benchmarks. Charles Hermann, for example, uses four: the orientation, the problem, the program and the level of commitment of the foreign policy (1990). Peter Katzenstein, on the other hand, compares policies by contrasting their instruments and goals (1976, 1977).

This chapter focuses on five benchmarks that provide the basis for a comparative approach, including the goals, mobilized resources, instruments, process and outcomes. As this chapter makes clear, identifying benchmarks is not generally difficult; it is access to comparable data for research that poses problems.

## The Goals of Foreign Policy

Some analysts of international relations ascribe a general predefined goal to foreign policy. This goal is then considered as timeless, universal and valid for every country under all circumstances. Depending on their theoretical preferences, analysts consider that foreign policy aims at the stability of the international system, the accumulation of wealth, the increase in relative power, the maintenance of leaders in power or the reproduction of national identity. Stephen Krasner, for example, suggests that foreign policy aims to protect national sovereignty and presumes that "all groups in the society would support the preservation of territorial and political integrity" (1978: 329).

The assumption that states pursue a single predefined goal in this way has an undeniable methodological advantage. The researcher is then exempt from explaining the goal and can freely interpret or model behavior. As Hans Morgenthau observed, attributing a goal to foreign policy "imposes intellectual discipline upon the observer, infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible" (1948 [2005]: 5).

However, this is an unrealistic methodological fiction. Political leaders pursue different, sometimes contradictory goals. The concept of national interest, more generally, depends on periods of time, countries and individuals. As a result, there is no general theory of FPA that is valid for all issue-areas and in all circumstances.

Several foreign policy analysts refuse to define a foreign policy goal arbitrarily. Instead, they endeavor to chart and compare the specific goals of the actors they are studying. There are two possible methods to achieve this: to consider that the goals announced by the leaders are actually the ones that they pursue or to deduce the goals that are pursued as a function of the leaders' behavior.

### *The Goals Communicated*

In some cases, foreign policy analysts can identify the foreign policy goals in the government's public declarations. Policy statements, official speeches, government reports to parliament and white papers can be used as sources of information (Paquin and Beauregard 2015).

A foreign policy goal stated clearly in a public declaration should indicate four elements: the target, the direction, the expected outcome and a

timescale. For example, a specific foreign policy objective could be to improve (the direction) the conditions of access to medicines in sub-Saharan Africa (the target) to combat the spread of HIV (the outcome) in the next decade (the timescale) (Snyder et al. 2002 [1962]: 72).

If every state expressed their goals as clearly and precisely as this last example, it would be easy for the analyst to identify variations in any of the elements included in the foreign policy goals. It would be easy to research the dependent variable, and the analyst could, thus, focus on the independent variables. Why do some states, for example, have a more limited timescale than others for controlling the spread of HIV? However, foreign policy goals are rarely stated clearly and explicitly.

Furthermore, when a specific goal is communicated, it is legitimate for the analyst to question whether there is a discrepancy between the stated goal and the goal actually pursued (Onuf 2001). There are at least three reasons for this kind of discrepancy. First, in order to preserve their international reputation and legitimacy, it may be in states' interest to mask their pursuit of relative gains by mentioning the pursuit of absolute gain or, to use Arnold Wolfers' terms, to conceal their possession goals behind milieu goals (1962: 73–77). Trade restrictions that aim to protect a national industry may be applied in the name of environmental protection; a military intervention that seeks to guarantee access to natural resources may be launched in the name of international stability; and inaction in the face of an ally's reprehensible acts may be justified in the name of international law.

Second, it is tempting for political leaders to reduce the scope of a stated foreign policy goal in order to increase the likelihood of success and, thus, boost their status on the national political stage. For example, the Clinton administration claimed that the aim of the 1998 bombings in Iraq was merely to weaken the capacity of Saddam Hussein's regime to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. Many observers, however, suspected that the United States' real goals were more ambitious, ranging from the total elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction manufacturing capability to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. As these objectives were harder to achieve, the Clinton administration opted for a communication strategy that guaranteed success in the eyes of the American public (Zelikow 1994; Baldwin 1999; Baum 2004b).

Third, decision-makers tend to evade the question of communication goals rather than acknowledge them openly. Military intervention abroad, for example, can be officially justified by the need to overthrow a hostile government or preempt an imminent attack. However, these instrumental

goals can conceal equally important communication goals. Military intervention can also serve to demonstrate strength to third-party states or to fuel patriotism on the national political stage. Nonetheless, openly acknowledging communication goals is counterproductive and can undermine a government's national and international credibility. Paradoxically, declaring communication goals undermines their achievement (Lindsay 1986; Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988).

Consequently, discourse analysis does not usually suffice when it comes to identifying the specific goals actually pursued by foreign policy. More generally, all sources that explicitly state the objectives should be treated with caution. Political statements and press releases are often geared to the electorate and are sometimes at odds with the foreign policy they refer to. Decision-makers' autobiographies are mere narratives compiled *a posteriori* in the light of the events resulting from foreign policies. Minutes and recordings of meetings, when available, are partial and incomplete. Even apparent leaks of secret documents should be carefully examined for their authenticity and representativeness.

### *Doctrine*

Another way foreign policy analysts can identify a government's foreign policy objectives is by searching for a doctrine. A doctrine is a set of beliefs, rules and principles guiding foreign policy. It is a self-imposed coherent framework that helps a government carry out its mission and objectives in the world. A doctrine is often but not always summed up in a statement or in an official document to communicate a government's priorities and goals to its domestic audience as well as to foreign actors.

Doctrines are often assimilated to the notion of grand strategy, yet they are not limited to great power politics. Canada, for example, had its "Axworthy doctrine" in the 1990s, named after its Minister of Foreign Affairs, which emphasized the need to protect human security through several initiatives such as the campaign to ban anti-personal landmines (Hampson and Oliver 1998). Finland had its Paasikivi–Kekkonen doctrine during the Cold War named after two of its presidents. This doctrine was established to preserve Finnish independence and foreign policy neutrality in the context where it evolved next to the Soviet empire.

As doctrines are not always explicitly presented as such, the search for doctrines is like a national sport for some foreign policy experts. For analysts, doctrines usefully provide macro-political frameworks through

which we can understand states' interests and try to predict their behavior. Doctrines also provide a benchmark for assessing the success and failure of a government's foreign policy strategy over time.

Throughout his tenure as the president of the United States, Barack Obama has confused observers on whether or not his administration had a foreign policy doctrine. A quick search online under "Obama doctrine" shows that this issue has been and still is a major source of debate among experts. Some claim that there was no Obama doctrine (Danforth 2016; Hirsh 2011), whereas others argue there was a doctrine, but they could not agree on its components (Goldberg 2016; Drezner 2011). At times, mere declarations acquire the status of doctrines *ex post* and subsequently serve as a guide for action for the bureaucratic apparatus and the successors of those who initially made the declarations.

Doctrines, however, have the tendency to create distortion between the belief system of a government (the macro-political trend) and the actual foreign policy decisions made by that government. By relying too heavily on the rules and principles contained in a doctrine, FPA experts can miss certain explanatory factors that account for a particular outcome because they don't fit the official doctrine. Take, for example, President Trump's 'America First' doctrine as formulated during his inaugural address on January 20, 2017. Emma Ashford from the Cato Institute writes that "while the implications for trade and immigration are relatively clear, his speech brought us little closer to understanding what this will mean for foreign policy" (Ashford 2017). Indeed, if Trump wants to protect American jobs from the forces of globalization and to increase homeland security through restrictive executive orders on immigration, his doctrine does not shed light on the core principles that will guide his actions toward the Middle East or Russia.

Moreover, a doctrine is like a picture taken at a particular moment that shows the interests, beliefs and principles of a government. It often has a hard time to adapt to domestic and international changes. For instance, Canada's late 1990s' Axworthy doctrine on human security failed to explain Canada's foreign policy behavior in the post-9/11 era, which essentially brings back national security issues to the forefront. Hence, doctrines may be more useful to foreign policy historians as they help to identify different eras and trends in the evolution of a state's foreign policy than to political scientists trying to make sense of current issues.

### *National Interest*

Political leaders often hide behind the notion of national interest the moment they are asked to specify their foreign policy goals. This behavior allows them to depoliticize foreign policy and generate some legitimacy. In fact, it is often the political objectives that define the concept of national interest and not the other way around. As Henry Kissinger commented, "When you're asking Americans to die, you have to be able to explain it in terms of the national interest" (quoted in Weldes 1999: 1).

The concept of national interest is omnipresent in leaders' rhetoric around the world and transcends political parties and political regimes. Rwandan President Paul Kagame once declared, "The history and national interest of Rwanda and the Rwandan people dictate our national orientation" (IGIHE 2012). Thousands of kilometers from there, English Prime Minister David Cameron stated, "I believe something very deeply. That Britain's national interest is best served in a flexible, adaptable and open European Union and that such a European Union is best with Britain in it" (BBC News 2013). Clearly, the majority of British citizens who voted for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in June 2016 did not share Prime Minister Cameron's view of the national interest.

The first question we should ask ourselves when reading such statements is what do leaders mean by the "national interest" and what kind of foreign policy objectives are they trying to communicate? Did Kagame and Cameron's definition of the national interest refer to the same irreducible needs? It is not easy to give a clear meaning to such a fussy concept. The national interest is a catch-all concept that is often used without definition and which has no pre-social significance. It is a social construct that evolves with its context (Rosenau 1968, 1980; Frankel 1970; Finnemore 1996; Weldes 1996).

National interest draws from intuitive thinking rather than from sound theoretical justification and explanation (Paquin 2010). Alexander George and Robert Keohane argue that the national interest is "so elastic and ambiguous a concept that its role as a guide to foreign policy is problematical and controversial" (George and Keohane 1980: 217). The problem with using this concept without defining precisely what one means by it is that it remains vague, underspecified and non-operational. The challenge to foreign policy experts is therefore to "unpack" this fussy concept in order to make it intelligible and meaningful.

David Callahan (1998) offers an interesting framework to understand the different national interests that democratic states pursue. His framework considers the "needs" and the "wants" of governments. The "needs" are connected to the so-called states' vital interests that ensure their protection and survival in the international system such as the protection of their citizens and national territory, access to energy resources, the health of the economy and the security of its allies. As for the "wants", they refer to states' desires that do not have a direct impact on their security, such as the promotion of human rights and democracy abroad as well as conflict and crime prevention.

This typology is interesting but does not inform the researcher on the kinds of interests that are pursued by decision-makers at a particular time and in a particular place. We can all agree that the Rwandan and the British governments have "needs" and "wants", but this is not specific enough to attribute a foreign policy behavior to a particular type of national interest.

This is where FPA theories come into play. Theoretical models are built on assumptions about what constitutes states' interests. These models provide theoretical mechanisms that establish a connection between the national interest (i.e. policy imperatives) and the foreign behavior of a government. FPA models can operationalize the concept of the national interest, without always directly referring to it, and shed lights on the kinds of interests that were at play in a particular decision-making process. Hence, theories can clarify the fussiness of this concept by testing empirically the theoretical assumptions they make about the national interest.

In sum, unlike political leaders who hide behind the fussy concept of the national interest to bolster the legitimacy of their communicated political goals, foreign policy analysts cannot allow themselves to be as intuitive and vague as political leaders when they refer to this concept because it is meaningless when not properly defined and operationalized in research.

### *Deducing the Goals Pursued*

Several techniques can be used to deduce foreign policy goals from the state's behavior instead of relying on its publicly stated goals. One technique is to analyze the outcomes. If a policy is maintained for a long period and decision-makers have had numerous occasions to assess and modify it, we can deduce that the outcomes correspond to the goals pursued. For example, many studies on public development aid have observed that bilateral aid has little impact on the economic development in

beneficiary countries. Since this practice has been repeated over several decades, it is legitimate to call into question the primary goal, namely, to promote economic development of stated beneficiaries (Easterly 2006; Jensen and Paldam 2006; Rajan and Subramanian 2008).

In fact, several studies have revealed that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between development aid and the concordance of votes within international bodies. In general, the more aid a country receives, the more likely its stance will resemble that of its donors at the UN General Assembly. On the basis of this observation, analysts may be tempted to draw the conclusion that public development aid's primary goal is to increase the donor's political influence (Rai 1980; Lundborg 1998; Wang 1999; Lai and Morey 2006; Dreher et al. 2008).

However, such a conclusion is premature. First, some surprising studies have observed the opposite statistical relationship. These studies claim that aid reduces rather than increases the beneficiary country's cooperation with the donor country (Sullivan et al. 2011). Second, even if the apparent correlation between aid and the concordance of UN votes proved to be causal, the effects do not always correspond to the intentions. The reaction of beneficiary countries could result from processes of socialization that go hand in hand with aid, without necessarily being the primary goal.

Another, more convincing, approach involves deducing the foreign policy goals from the variables that influence it. Take the example of development aid. Several studies have shown that political considerations seem to have more influence than economic requirements when deciding on the choice of beneficiary countries and the amounts allocated. In other words, the countries in most need of humanitarian aid do not necessarily receive the most aid. The geographic location, the threat of a hostile opposition overthrowing the government, the government's ideological alignment, regional influence and a clique of leaders small enough to be corrupted, all have a positive impact on development aid. When a developing country is elected onto the UN Security Council, for example, American aid leaps by 59% on average before returning to a normal level once the country loses its strategic position. This phenomenon is apparently not unique to the United States. Japan, for instance, provides more development assistance to member states of the International Whaling Commission that vote with Tokyo (Strand and Tuman 2012).

Although contested by some (Kevlihan et al. 2014), we could draw from these findings that donor countries are motivated by the pursuit of political gains rather than humanitarian considerations (Maizels and

Nissanke 1984; Trumball and Wall 1994; Poe and Meernik 1995; Meernik et al. 1998; Schraeder et al. 1998; Alesina and Dollar 2000; Palmer et al. 2002; Lai 2003; Kuziemko and Weker 2006; Roper and Barria 2007; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2007, 2009).

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that identifying one objective does not automatically rule out other possibilities. The same foreign policy can have several simultaneous objectives, for example: possession and milieu goals, instrumental and communication goals, intermediary and end goals, short-term and long-term goals or domestic and external goals. If development aid is actually designed to strengthen political alliances, there is no reason why it cannot also be driven by moral, trade or electoral considerations (Lindsay 1986; Morgan and Palmer 1997; Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller 2000).

In fact, combining a long series of goals seems to be the rule rather than the exception in pluralist societies. Foreign policies are often the result of a trade-off between the different actors involved in the domestic decision-making process. The actors are encouraged to find a way to combine their respective goals so that a common policy can be reached. Elected politicians prefer to announce a foreign policy that encompasses a wide range of goals simultaneously. Conversely, they avoid situations in which they are forced to choose between different goals to avoid disappointing some sections of the electorate. The issue of trade sanctions against the People's Republic of China, for example, put several Western leaders in a difficult position by setting the pursuit of trade interests against the defense of human rights (Drury and Li 2006).

Furthermore, there is controversy over the very concept of preset goals, identified prior to the implementation of a foreign policy. In some cases, foreign policy goals actually seem to depend on the instruments previously used. Do investments in weapons serve military purposes or do military objectives justify investments in weapons? Does the political stabilization of the Balkans aim to facilitate the expansion of the European Union or does the expansion aim at political stabilization? It is sometimes hard to differentiate the goals from the mobilization, the instruments and the outcome. For this reason, some analysts choose to ignore foreign policy goals in their comparative exercises, focusing instead on the resources mobilized, which can be quantified and observed.

## Mobilized Resources

As Joseph Nye puts it, "Power in international politics is like the weather. Everyone talks about it, but few understand it" (Nye 1990: 177). Indeed, power is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental concepts of international relations, but also one of the most difficult to define and implement (Guzzini 2004; Barnett and Duvall 2005; Nye 2011; Lieber 2012).

Raymond Aron is one of the few analysts to propose a clear and subtle vision of power. In his view, power is the implementation of any resources in specific circumstances. It is not a question of possessing a resource or controlling a specific structure, but of mobilizing resources, taking a particular structure into account. For example, in a game of poker, power is not the possession of a royal flush or the capacity to grasp the rules of the game, but playing the royal flush at a strategic moment in the game. Resources and context are essential aspects of power, but do not suffice on their own to constitute it (Aron 1962).

From this perspective, power is not simply a determinant of foreign policy or a fact that governments have to contend with. It is an aspect of foreign policy that can be assessed, compared and explained: there are power politics just as there are inward-looking politics.

### *Resources*

Aron's definition of power breaks with the traditional reflex of assessing power exclusively on the basis of potential force—in other words, the available resources. Here, resources are taken to mean the capital that states can mobilize but rarely increase on their own, such as territory, population and raw materials. This indicator of power has the twofold advantage of being relatively stable and quantifiable. It can be measured in square kilometers, thousands of inhabitants or tonnes, respectively. Although state-controlled resources are only an indirect indicator of power, they do significantly facilitate comparisons.

The comparative exercise can, nonetheless, be made more complex by taking into account the whole range of resources relevant to foreign policy. In the 1940s, several analysts were still focusing solely on material or demographic resources. However, since the studies conducted by Morgenthau (1948), most analysts also take into account ideational resources. Prestige and patriotism can be just as significant for foreign

policy as the number of cubic meters of oil, the number of citizens in the diaspora or the area of arable land (Posen 1993; Hall 1997; Nye 2004; Fordham and Asal 2007).

The Pontifical Swiss Guard, for example, is certainly not the most imposing army corps. Nevertheless, the Vatican exerts considerable influence in several regions of the world because of its moral authority. Likewise, some observers wonder whether the European Union's true source of power lies more in its capacity to define what is "ethical" or "moral" on the international stage than in its economic or military resources (Duchêne 1972; Hill 1990; White 1999; Manners 2002; Nicolaïdis and Howse 2003; Diez 2005; Sjursen 2006; Telo 2007).

On the other hand, some actors seem to be truly handicapped by their lack of symbolic capital. During apartheid, South Africa was unable to exert political influence across the African continent despite its considerable economic weight. To a lesser extent, China's interest in Africa's natural resources is limited by the cultural divide that separates these two regions. Despite their colonial past, several European countries have maintained privileged relationships with African societies: migratory flows, NGO network, sharing a common language and religious communities are all assets that indirectly encourage Western investments in Africa (Alden and Hughes 2009).

In addition to considering multiple resources and revealing their social dimension, most analysts now recognize that resources are necessarily specific to a given field. No single resource is relevant to all theaters of action. During the Cold War, some analysts were still striving to develop an index of absolute power that would be valid under any circumstances. However, this idea is illusory. Power is always specific to a particular context (Ferris 1973; Taber 1989).

Geopolitics and strategic studies were the first to highlight this feature of power: the type of resources required for military victory inevitably depends on the battlefield. The borders of Australia, Switzerland and Russia are so different in number, scale and nature that the resources mobilized to defend them must be adapted to their respective context. Several recent studies continue to underline the fundamental role played by geography in the statistical probabilities of conflict and military victory (Bremer 1993; Vasquez 1995; Senese 1996, 2005; Mitchell and Prins 1999; Reiter 1999; Braithwaite 2005).

The specificity of power is equally valid in diplomatic arenas and different political fields. The number of NGOs working in Africa, for example, cannot be used to establish power balances at the World Trade Organization,

any more than the distribution of oil reserves can explain the failure of UN Security Council reforms. Foreign policy always lies within a particular context, which determines the pertinence of the resources that can be mobilized in power politics (Baldwin 1989).

It is true that some resources, particularly financial resources, appear relatively fungible and can easily be transferred from one domain to another (Art 1996). The Eisenhower administration used its pound sterling reserves to its advantage during the 1956 Suez crisis in order to threaten the United Kingdom with a financial crisis if the British army did not withdraw from Egypt. However, transferring resources in this way, between two very distinct domains in cognitive and institutional terms, is exceptional. Resources cannot be aggregated for mobilization indifferently in all areas of foreign policy.

### *The Power Paradox*

Exerting influence does not depend solely on possessing more resources than other countries in a particular domain. Resources must be mobilized effectively in a context of power politics. States do not always succeed in converting their resources into influence. Several foreign policy analysts call this the "power paradox" (Ray and Vural 1986; Maoz 1989; Baldwin 1989).

For example, just after the First World War, the United States already had all the economic resources it needed to impose an international economic order to suit its interests. Despite this opportunity, it withdrew and opted for an isolationist foreign policy. When the stock market crashed in 1929, the US Congress reacted in a defensive and protectionist way, drastically increasing import tariffs instead of trying to maintain a stable and open international regime. It was only when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in office that the United States converted its formidable economic resources into influence (Kindleberger 1981; Frieden 1988; Zakaria 1998).

In a way, like the United States in the 1920s, contemporary China is also showing restraint. Given its capabilities, Beijing remains relatively discreet in financial and trade negotiations. There is an undeniable gap between China's available resources and the influence it exercises. It is because of examples like this that Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye insist on defining economic *hegemony* in terms of an actor that not only has sufficient resources to maintain an economic order but also the will to mobilize them for that purpose (Keohane and Nye 1977: 44).

Conversely, some actors with relatively few resources manage to assert themselves. In Asia, some small economies exert a significant influence on regional economic integration in the face of major economic powers, such as Japan and the People's Republic of China. In Europe, small states like Denmark or Belgium sometimes succeed in exerting a significant influence on the European Union's policies and function (König and Slapin 2004; Slapin 2006; Nasra 2011; Schneider 2011).

The only countries whose behavior appears, at first glance, to systematically correspond to their resources are those that are sometimes qualified as "middle powers". However, this is just an illusion, or rather a tautology. The notion of middle power actually refers less to the moderate amount of resources that are available to a state than to the type of behavior it exerts in foreign policy. A middle power is one that seeks compromise, encourages multilateralism, calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes and complies with international laws and standards. It is a socially constructed role rather than a resource-dependent status. Hence, countries as different as France and Ireland can sometimes be qualified as "middle powers" (DeWitt 2000; Chapnick 2000; Ungerer 2007; Gecelovsky 2009; Cooper 2011).

### *Mobilization and Exploitation*

If a foreign policy cannot be explained in terms of resource distribution, it is because there are numerous intermediary variables between resources and influence. Natural resources alone cannot increase external trade and the latter cannot impose economic sanctions any more than a large population can enlist in the army and the army decide to engage in international conflicts. It is the stakeholders operating within a specific social and institutional framework that convert resources into capabilities and capabilities into foreign policy instruments.

The capacity and will to exercise power politics vary from one state to another. A growing number of supporters of the realist school of international relations recognize this. While they consider that states, above all, seek to guarantee their security and maximize power, they are now more willing to acknowledge that the domestic dynamics specific to each country shape that country's ambitions (Krasner 1977, 1978; Mastanduno et al. 1989; Lamborn 1991; Rosecrance and Stein 1993; Christensen 1996; Rose 1998; Zakaria 1998; Schweller 2006; Lobell et al. 2009; Cladi and Webber 2011; Fordham 2011; Kirshner 2012; Ripsman et al. 2016).

The differences between states are particularly linked to the relative primacy of mobilization strategies over exploitation strategies. Mobilization can be defined as the transformation of available resources to generate additional capabilities. Exploitation is the transformation of capabilities into instruments of foreign policy. All states pursue mobilization and exploitation strategies simultaneously, but the balance between the two poles varies as a function of the preferences and constraints specific to each state (Mastanduno et al. 1989).

In some cases, mobilization and exploitation strategies can be contradictory. For example, liberalizing an economy through trade agreements can encourage the mobilization of resources, but restrict the capacity to impose trade sanctions. Conversely, increasing taxes to finance a military intervention abroad can reduce, rather than stimulate, economic growth.

The theory of imperial power cycles developed by Paul Kennedy is based precisely on the contradiction between mobilization and exploitation. Several countries that have successfully managed to dominate the international order have concentrated most of their efforts on exploitation strategies. In so doing, they have failed to mobilize new resources and have, paradoxically, undermined their very position, leading to their decline (Kennedy 1987; Snyder 1991).

Another variable that affects the use of resources involves the choices between control, autonomy and legitimacy. Depending on the social structure and the existing political system, leaders may give priority to any one of these three components of power. A policy that promotes one component may discriminate against the other two. For example, invading a neighboring state can increase the resources that the invading state controls, but harm its legitimacy in the eyes of its allies. Complying with the recommendations of intergovernmental organizations can increase legitimacy, but limit political autonomy. Refusing foreign aid can increase political autonomy, but reduce control over resources (Mastanduno et al. 1989; Blanchard and Ripsman 2008).

To sum up, while approaches based on the comparison of potential resources have the significant advantage of being based on observable and generally quantifiable data, they are of limited use when it comes to explaining foreign policy. Foreign policy does not depend on an aggregated portfolio of resources. In other words, power is not just a stock that determines foreign policy; it is the flow that constitutes foreign policy.

## Instruments of Foreign Policy

Instruments are often used as references for reporting variations in foreign policy over time, domains or space. To some extent, the emphasis on instruments reflects the actual decision-making process. Decision-makers are often under pressure to react swiftly to international crises. They rarely have the political opportunity to reassess their goals or consider the balance between resource exploitation and mobilization. When leaders are called on to make a decision, they generally have to choose from a list of possible interventions prepared by their administration.

Several analysts and practitioners perceive the options for intervention as a series of instruments similar to those shown in Fig. 2.1. They range from diplomacy to military force or, in the words of Joseph Nye (2004), from soft power to hard power. Between the two extremes, the instruments can be grouped into three categories: socialization, which targets the maintenance or modification of ideas; coercion, which targets the maintenance or modification of interests; and intervention, which targets the maintenance or modification of the domestic political structures of a foreign state. Each of these categories can, in turn, be broken down into sub-categories.

### *Socialization*

The first category of instruments, socialization, can be defined as the transfer of beliefs, values and ideas from one actor to another (Schimmelfennig 2000; Alderson 2001). As Thomas Risse stated "ideas do not float freely" (1994: 185). They are actively promoted by specific actors, at least in the preliminary stages of their dissemination.

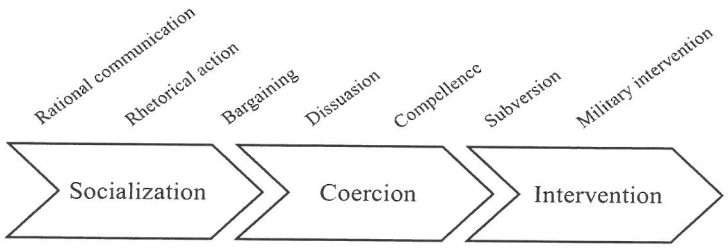


**Fig. 2.1** Foreign policy instruments

Ideas are spread in different ways. In the framework of a rational communication process, actors can sometimes be so convinced by the validity of another actor's arguments that they modify their own ideas. Nonetheless, most analysts consider that sincere communication, where all participants are open to being persuaded by the best arguments, is extremely rare in international relations (Gehring and Ruffing 2008).

Most actors communicate strategically. Rhetorical action consists of expressing a set of arguments in order to achieve specific goals. An actor who uses rhetoric dramatizes events, establishes new associations between previously disconnected ideas and thinks up evocative expressions or resorts to using metaphors to influence discussions in a specific direction (Kuusisto 1998; Risse 2000; Payne 2001; Schimmelfennig 2001; Müller 2004; Mitzen 2005; Krebs and Jackson 2007).

A rhetorical exchange is not the same as a dialogue of the deaf, which inevitably leads to a stalemate. It can lead some actors to modify their behavior. For example, African countries managed to convince members of the World Trade Organization to encourage the export of generic medicines, by strategically making the link between patent laws and the spread of HIV (Morin and Gold 2010). Similarly, United Nations representatives succeeded in convincing the American government to significantly increase its emergency aid to victims of the devastating tsunami in 2004, through their rhetorical action on the subject of greed (Steele 2007).

Rhetorical action is not just used by weak actors. Great powers use it constantly. The discourse surrounding the "war on terror" developed by the administration of George W. Bush in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, illustrates this. Presenting the attacks as an act of war against American freedom and the American way of life, rather than as a criminal act, was a rhetorical strategy. It legitimized recourse to military force overseas, silenced the opposition, authorized emergency measures curtailing freedom and strengthened national unity (Kuusisto 1998; Heng 2002; Jackson 2005).

Some discourses are not expressed in words, but are translated into actions. For instance, prestige can be consciously fueled by military parades, space exploration or Olympic performances. The study of military purchases, for example, indicates that weapons can have functions that are more symbolic than strategic (Eyre and Suchman 1996). Some countries acquire a new fleet of fighter jets or submarines that are not adapted to the threats they face. The impression of power generated by

this type of weapon, however, can have a real impact. A state that resorts to such demonstrations of power may actually hope to disseminate its ideas abroad more easily (Fordham and Asal 2007).

Public diplomacy, which aims to "conquer the hearts and minds" of foreign populations, is another socialization strategy used on a large scale. During the Cold War, it was the primary motivating factor behind American public funding for Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. Even today, several governments invest massively in public diplomacy. The French government uses several instruments to disseminate French opinion overseas, including the Alliance Française, TV5 Monde, France 24, Radio France International and the Eiffel excellence scholarships for students (Goldsmith et al. 2005; Cull 2008; Nye 2008; Snow and Taylor 2009).

The diffusion of democratic practices through socialization has been largely studied over the years. Some argue that authoritarian exposure to democratic standards and practices shapes their attitude and contributes to their democratization (Cederman and Gleditsch 2004; Simmons et al. 2006; Atkinson 2010). However, it appears that not all types of socialization have a real effect on democratic diffusion. Freyburg (2015), for instance, shows that international education programs and foreign democratic media broadcasting in non-democratic countries do not have a significant impact on democratization. Democratic socialization works only when it involves practical experience. "Officials who have participated in the activities of policy reform programs undertaken by established democracies show a higher agreement with democratic administrative governance than their non-participating colleagues" (Freyburg 2015: 69). Hence, interpersonal exchange has more socialization power than indirect types of democratic socialization.

In other cases, states define the goals of their socialization initiatives more clearly. They can, for example, encourage informal and repeated interactions between their own civil servants and those from another country (Schimmelfennig 1998; Checkel 2001, 2003; Pevehouse 2002; Bearce and Bondanella 2007; Cao 2009; Greenhill 2010; Morin and Gold 2014). Intergovernmental conferences organized by capital exporting countries could convince developing countries of the potential benefits of agreements on the liberalization of the investment (Morin and Gagné 2007). Similarly, training foreign officers in American military schools could encourage the spread of American standards and values (Atkinson 2010).

### *Coercion*

While the diverse mechanisms of socialization are still relatively unknown, the literature on coercion abounds (Baldwin 1985; Hirschman 1980; Carter 2015; Sechser and Fuhrmann 2016). Coercive measures are designed to influence how a target state behaves by modifying the way its interests are calculated, without directly intervening in foreign territory. The term conceals a vast array of instruments that are derived from different processes and have distinct impacts. These instruments can be organized into at least five axes that overlap to form a multidimensional matrix.

The first axis refers to the "carrot and stick" idiom as it differentiates between the coercive instruments that use positive sanctions (or reward-based strategy) and those that resort to negative sanctions to induce certain behaviors (punishment-based strategy) (Crumm 1995; Newnham 2000). The conditions for the expansion of the European Union are a form of coercion based on a positive sanction (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004). Likewise, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have been able to compel Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia and Romania to adopt legislation that reduced their social and ethnic tensions as a condition to their accession to these organizations (Kelley 2004). Despite their conflicting history, Romania and Hungary have maintained peaceful relations following the collapse of the Soviet Union in order to increase their chances of becoming members of NATO and the European Union (Linden 2000, 2002). Conversely, the American trade restrictions imposed on countries that fail to take the necessary action to prevent trafficking of endangered species are an example of a negative sanction (Reeve 2002). There is no consensus in the literature on which type of coercion works best (Crawford 2011; Izumikawa 2013). But carrot and stick are not always separate options in the sense that they often work in tandem. Jakobsen (2012) shows, for instance, that it is the combination of positive and negative coercion, as well as British confidence-building measures, that led Libya to give up its weapon of mass destruction program in 2003.

Another axis that differentiates between coercive instruments contrasts the threat of sanctions with the actual imposition of them (Bapat and Kwon 2015). According to some historians, military mobilization on the eve of the First World War was a demonstration of power designed to intimidate and target one final abdication before the outbreak of hostilities (Tuchman 1962). In contrast, the Swiss government's decisions to freeze

the assets that certain heads of state held in Swiss banks, including Robert Mugabe, Ben Ali and Jean-Claude Duvalier, were issued without prior warning (Dulin and Merckaert 2009).

Coercive instruments can also be distinguished according to their goals. Dissuasion is a form of coercion that aims to maintain the *status quo*, whereas compellence is a form of coercion that aims to change it. Nuclear weapons are generally seen as an instrument of dissuasion—in other words, an implicit threat to any shift in the balance of power (Kahn 1966; Freedman 1989). On the contrary, the American *Super 301* system, named after the section number of the US Trade Act of 1974, which identifies the countries with apparently unfair trade policies, is an example of a compellence because the targeted countries are requested to modify their practices or risk sanctions (Sell 2003).

A fourth dimension differentiates targeted coercive instruments from those with a general scope (Morgan 1977). The former is usually adopted in times of crisis and have a different logic from the latter, which are institutionalized. Thus, the Eisenhower administration's refusal to support the United Kingdom's request for IMF funding, as long as it did not end the Suez Crisis, cannot be explained by the same mechanisms that led Congress to adopt a law stipulating that no country supporting terrorism would benefit from the US support at the IMF (Kirshner 1995).

The last axis contrasts sanctions that specifically target the elite from those that target the entire population. In January 2011, the United States' decision to ban American citizens from establishing business dealings with the Belarusian petroleum company Belneftekhim primarily targeted President Alexander Lukashenko's inner circle. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the European Union, the United States and other nations issued similar bans against Russian companies including Rosneft, a Russian state oil company, in order to hurt Vladimir Putin's regime (Dreyer and Popescu 2014). In 1973, in protest against American military support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War, the Arab countries' reduction of oil exports targeted Western public opinion as a whole (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988; Dashti-Gibson et al. 1997; Pape 1997).

Another type of coercive instrument, which is slightly different in nature from the previous developed axes, is coercive diplomacy (Phillips 2012; Christensen 2011, Art and Cronin 2003). This instrument differs from economic sanctions and the conditionality argument because, although its objective is to influence the behavior of another state, its logic rests on the threat to use force or the actual use of limited violence. In a

sense, coercive diplomacy lies at the intersection between traditional coercive measures and full-scale military intervention abroad (Art and Jervis 2005; Levy 2008). As Alexander George explains, in coercive diplomacy, "one gives the opponent an opportunity to stop or back off before employing force against it" (1991: 6). Hence, military intervention is often the result of failed coercive diplomacy. Turkey relied on coercive diplomacy toward Syria and Northern Iraq in the 1990s and 2000s to force them to stop their support to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Ankara's strategy achieved mixed results: Syria decided to comply with Turkey's request since it was not willing to bear the cost of war to preserve its ties with the PKK, while Northern Iraq remained defiant toward Ankara because it shared similar aspirations with the PKK and ultimately suffered Turkey's retaliation (Aras 2011).

### *Interventions*

The third category of instruments covers interventions and can be broken down into a typology that is equally complex. All interventions are incursions in the domestic affairs of a foreign state to bring about internal structural change. However, it is important to distinguish political interventions from military interventions.

A political intervention targets subversion by supporting dissident groups, or stabilization by supporting a weak ruling power. In this way, the United States provides finance, material and training to diverse foreign political powers that are sympathetic to liberal democracy, including the media, political parties and NGOs. Sometimes political interventions are declared overtly, such as in the 1999 Iraq Liberation Act, which detailed the budgets allocated to Iraqi subversion. More often, interventions are clandestine, as in the case of the American support for the Italian Christian Democratic Party immediately after the Second World War (Miller 1983; Collins 2009).

Research has shown that from 1946 to 2000, the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States deployed overt and covert partisan electoral interventions in no fewer than 117 competitive elections abroad (that is one election out of nine) in order to influence the political outcome of these elections (Levin 2016). As Levin explains, "in a world in which military interventions are increasingly costly and democracies are more common, partisan electoral interventions are likely to become an ever more central tool of the great powers' foreign policy" (Levin 2016: 20).

The scope of military interventions should also be broken down. Contrary to common wisdom, most military interventions abroad do not lead to war. Border skirmishes and maneuvers on foreign territory can just be a strategy to test a state's determination to defend a disputed border. Maritime blockades can simply be used to force negotiations by avoiding direct confrontations. Gunboat diplomacy is merely a show of strength designed to intimidate. Some military interventions have specific targets that can be reached in a matter of hours, for example, assassinating a political leader or bombing a chemical factory. Resorting to war is an extreme decision, which remains relatively rare compared to all other foreign policy instruments (Blechman and Kaplan 1978; Russett and Oneal 2001).

Of course, this has not prevented experts from conducting research on military interventions. Some have focus, for instance, on regime change and democratization as factors making military interventions more likely (Meernik 1996; Downes and Monten 2013; Durward and Marsden 2016; Downes and O'Rourke 2016). Others have looked at intervention in ethnic and intrastate conflicts (Regan 2000; Carment et al. 2006; Schultz 2010). But this does not change the fact that political leaders have an aversion to overt war.

By moving away from the pole of soft power toward the pole of hard power, the instruments gradually become more intensive and, consequently, more dangerous. Each step heightens the degree of commitment, making it harder to back off. A government that beats a retreat after taking draconian measures implicitly acknowledges its mistake and leaves itself open to criticism on the national and international stages. President Obama's decision not to enforce his "red line" in Syria in August 2013, that is, to back down from intervening militarily against Bashar al-Assad's regime following its use of chemical weapons, was highly criticized by the foreign policy establishment for seriously damaging the administration's credibility in foreign policy (Chollet 2016).

In this context, instead of backing off when an instrument proves ineffective, leaders may be forced to sink deeper into a difficult situation. Military interventions are often reactions to failed coercive efforts, which can, in turn, be reactions to the failures of socialization. Yet, a headlong rush can lead to decision-makers demise (Staw 1981; Brockner and Rubin 1985; Bowen 1987; Downs and Rocke 1994; Fearon 1994; Billings and Hermann 1998; Taliaferro 2004; Baum 2004a, b, c; Tomz 2007). This is what President Johnson did in Vietnam. Faced with immense difficulties on the ground, the president chose to increase the number of troops even though some of his advisers, including Defense

Secretary Robert McNamara, sought to dissuade him. Johnson preferred to stay the course rather than carry the odium of a military defeat (Janis 1982). This led the president to retire from politics by declining to run in the 1968 presidential elections.

Political leaders generally prefer persuasion to intervention. As the American Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed, "it is better, whenever possible, to let the reputation of power rather than the use of power achieve policy goals" (2004: 62). Although the outcome of socialization may be uncertain and massive intervention at the start of a conflict may maximize the chances of success, when a new situation arises, leaders often prefer resorting to socialization, followed by coercion, before considering military intervention.

Many foreign policy analysts prefer studying military interventions rather than socialization. This preference is not due to a fascination with violence, nor due to the conviction that military conflicts have a greater impact than the exchange of ideas. It is simply a question of methodological constraints. Socialization is particularly difficult to research, whether through interviews or discourse analysis. Military interventions, on the other hand, can be observed directly and their intensity can be assessed quantitatively.

Thus, there are several databases on military interventions that are freely available to researchers. Four of them are frequently used in research on FPA: Militarized Interstate Disputes (www.correlatesofwar.org), International Crisis Behavior (sites.duke.edu/icbdata/), Armed Conflict Dataset (www.prio.no/cscw) and International Military Intervention (www.icpsr.umich.edu).

These databases differ in terms of their coding manual and their spatial and temporal scope. Some researchers define war as a military intervention in foreign territory, while others define it as a conflict that causes the death of at least 1000 combatants; some go back to the Napoleonic Wars, while others limit themselves to the Cold War; some focus on interstate conflicts, while others include civil wars as well. However, there is no equivalent database that focuses exclusively on states' socialization endeavors.

### *Event-Based Databases*

Obviously, socialization, coercion and intervention are not mutually exclusive. Negotiation, for example, is generally based on a combination of socialization and coercion. The European Union has convinced its East European neighbors to abolish the death penalty by resorting to a discourse on human rights and via policies of economic conditionality

(Manners 2002). In some cases, negotiation can even include some form of military intervention (Fearon 1995; Wagner 2000). Foreign policy tends to combine different instruments rather than choose between them. When several instruments are used simultaneously, it is not always easy to determine the level of commitment and the degree of cooperation between two protagonists.

Event-based databases are methodological tools capable of integrating different types of foreign policy instruments, which are implemented simultaneously. They aggregate a vast quantity of information and record it on a common numeric scale. In this way, they facilitate comparisons between countries, domains or periods (Rosenau and Ramsey 1975).

Technically, event-based databases are generated from several thousand one-off events reported in the newspapers. Each event is recorded on a scale of cooperation according to a detailed coding manual. Thus, a bilateral meeting between two heads of state can have a value of +1, a joint military intervention +5 and imposing trade sanction −3. Coding can be carried out manually, by a team of researchers, or automatically, using predefined key words (Schrodt 1995).

The best-known event-based databases are the Conflict and Peace Data Bank (COPDAB), the World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS), the Conflict and Mediation Event Observations (CAMEO), the Integrated Data for Events Analysis (IDEA), the Penn State Event Data Project (KEDS), the Minorities at Risk (MAR) based at the University of Maryland and the Comparative Research on the Events of Nations (CREON). Most of these databases are accessible via the website for the Inter-University Consortium of Political and Social Research (www.icpsr.umich.edu). Databases dedicated to a specific issue are also available, such as the International Water Event Database on water cooperation (www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu).

These event-based databases provide a common numeric base, which is extremely helpful for comparing policies. They can be used, for example, to determine whether small and large powers tend to be aggressive in the same circumstances (East 1973; Clark et al. 2008) or to assess whether the arrival of a new head of state alters the degree of cooperation (Hermann 1980).

Nonetheless, these databases are not a panacea. In the midst of the Cold War, the American government generously financed the development of event-based databases in the hope that they would serve as a barometer for international tension and even as an early warning system for imminent conflict. However, it was too much to expect of this

methodological tool: even with the use of powerful computer systems that make it possible to diversify sources, increase the volume of data and remove the influence of coders, inaccuracies inevitably still occur (Smith 1986; Laurance 1990; Kaarbo 2003). In fact, the data used are biased even before they are filtered through the analytical grid. As raw information is drawn from newspapers, the databases reflect the media interest generated by a bilateral relationship more than the actual cooperation between two states. Furthermore, they ignore non-events, which are as significant in diplomatic language as the events that have actually occurred. For this reason, several analysts pay greater attention to how decisions are made rather than what actions are undertaken.

## The Process of Foreign Policy

Analysts interested in the decision-making cycle often assume that a state's domestic context is more important than the external context, when it comes to explaining foreign policy decisions. However, the range of levels of analysis is still broad at the sub-national level. Some analysts focus on the government leader's cognitive mechanisms, while others take into account the structures that allow interaction between the social actors. In order to identify the relevant level of analysis, the analyst can divide the decision-making process into several stages, which range from identifying the problem to assessing the results.

Years ago, public policy experts understood that by segmenting the decision-making process, different levels of analysis could be identified. However, this segmentation must be slightly adapted for the study of foreign policy. In foreign policy, the highest executive authorities are often challenged, the legislative power is generally less directly involved, interest groups are less active and debates are often less transparent than in other public policy areas. This section proposes a segmentation of the decision-making process inspired by different studies of foreign policy. It then considers the theoretical implications and the limits of this kind of segmentation (Zelikow 1994; Hermann 1990; Billings and Hermann 1998; Hermann 2001; Knecht and Weatherford 2006; Ozkececi-Taner 2006).

### *Segmentation in Six Phases*

Figure 2.2 shows a classic segmentation of the decision-making process in six phases (Jones 1984). Obviously, it is a simple diagram, which does not reflect the complexity of the decision-making process. However, its simplicity

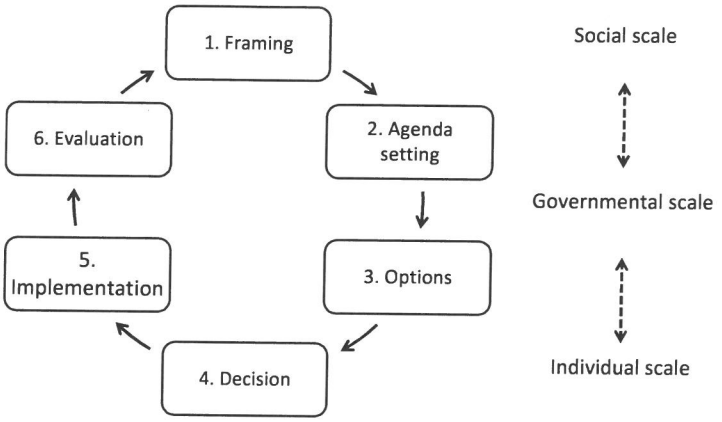


**Fig. 2.2** The cycle of formulating foreign policies

gives it heuristic value. Each stage corresponds to a level of analysis. By going through all the stages of the cycle, the analysis completes a circuit. The diagram goes from the social to the governmental level, then to the individual level and back to the governmental level, before returning to the social level.

According to this schematic cycle, framing is the first stage in formulating a foreign policy. It is important to keep in mind that most foreign policy problems remain in a state of limbo because they are not framed as problems. Environmental protection, for example, could have challenged foreign ministers as early as the nineteenth century because transnational pollution was already affecting citizens' quality of life. Yet, it was not actually considered as a foreign policy problem until the 1970s (Maoz 1990; Snow and Benford 1998; Mintz and Redd 2003).

For a problem to be framed as a political issue and shift from a world of objectivity to one of intersubjectivity, it must first be shaped by one or more "policy entrepreneurs". The latter make the problem intelligible by giving it a framework—in other words they name, interpret and simplify it. The problem of access to medicines in developing countries can be framed as a social justice, an economic development or a prevention of global epidemics issue. The way a problem is defined will orient the terms of the debate and determine which actors are called on. Consequently, the

actors that set the framework for the debate have a considerable influence, even when they have no direct access to public decision-makers (Nadelmann 1990; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Busby 2007).

The second stage in the cycle is agenda-setting. Political leaders are challenged on a series of questions and cannot reasonably examine each one of them. Here, the capacity of non-state actors to mobilize and convince key people, such as civil servants and political advisors, who control access to the leaders, plays a major role. Convincing them of the importance of an emerging issue is essential if it is to be included on the list of political priorities.

In several cases, an extraordinary event or a crisis is needed to create the political opportunity necessary to enable a new issue to be included on the agenda. The 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing gave policy entrepreneurs the chance to force Western leaders to publicly express their views on Tibet's political status and the freedom of the press (Tarrow 1989; Joachim 2003; Carpenter 2007).

The framework and the political opportunity largely determine the political authority called on to examine the different policy options, which is the third stage of the cycle. International negotiations on climate change can be presented as an issue relating to investment, international distributive justice or the protection of territorial integrity, which concerns the ministries of finance, international cooperation or defense, respectively. In all cases, when an administration takes on an issue, discussions become more technical and the positions more moderate. The experts, including civil servants, advisors, and scientists, gradually replace the activists, reporters or lobbyists who initially framed the issue (Morin 2011).

At the fourth stage, decision-makers are called on to give an opinion on a limited number of options. As a result, their decision is broadly structured by the previous stages. The decision-making unit varies considerably in different countries and for different issues. A dictator, a minister, a politburo and a parliament have very different procedures, which invariably affect decisions and how they are communicated. A significant part of FPA research specifically involves determining the decision-making unit and identifying its particular characteristics (Hermann and Hermann 1989; Hermann et al. 2001a, b; Hermann 2001).

The process of formulating a foreign policy does not stop at the decision-making stage. Public administration is largely responsible for how it is interpreted, implemented and continually adjusted to external circumstances. Yet, at this fifth stage of the cycle, the administration does

not always have the material capacity, the information, the legitimacy or even the will to ensure that the authorities' decision is perfectly translated into concrete results. These constraints are very real in domestic politics and seem to be exacerbated when a policy is implemented beyond state boundaries. Very little FPA research has been conducted on the implementation stage, and our knowledge is still fairly limited.

Policy evaluation is the sixth and last stage. In foreign policy, evaluation is open to interpretation because results are generally diffuse and multicausal. For example, the arms race during the Cold War can be interpreted simultaneously as a factor of stability between the two superpowers or as a factor of instability, generating local conflicts throughout the world. In this context, the same categories of actors, which initially framed the problem, will seize the opportunity to campaign in favor of maintaining, adjusting or entirely reformulating the policy. The problem can then go through the entire cycle again (Morin and Gold 2010; Morin 2011).

### *A Linear, Cyclical or Chaotic Process*

Figure 2.2 presents the decision-making process in a cyclical form because most issues central to foreign policy are never permanently settled. George Shultz, secretary of state under Ronald Reagan, commented that "policy-making does not involve confronting one damn thing after another, as most people imagine. It involves confronting the same damn thing over and over" (cited in Hoagland 1994: C1). The same issues come up periodically, whether it is the Israel–Palestine conflict, the price of raw materials, Africa's development, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the apparent decline of American power, the reform of the UN Security Council, the devaluation of the Chinese yuan or Turkey joining the European Union.

Nonetheless, an issue is modified slightly each time it goes through the cycle. New arguments are put forward, new institutions are created and lessons are drawn. For this reason, it is more appropriate to consider the cycle of formulating policies as an evolving spiral rather than as a closed circle (Billings and Hermann 1998; Dreyer 2010).

Even when the cycle for formulating policies is seen as a spiral, it is still no more than a simplified diagram. In reality, the different stages overlap more than they follow a linear sequence. Examining the options, for

example, is often anticipated at the framing stage, and, sometimes, going back to agenda-setting may be planned at the implementation stage.

Some theoretical models are clearly opposed to a sequential vision of the decision-making process. The garbage can theory, notably, rejects the idea that solutions are imagined as a function of the problems. According to this theory, decision-making is the result of the more or less random assembly of diverse elements, which are divided into four different garbage cans. The first can includes the problems seeking solutions. The second contains solutions seeking problems to solve. The third includes political opportunities seeking a decision, and the fourth includes public decision-makers searching for solutions to problems. The flows in and out of these cans are independent of each other. A minister of international trade may take advantage of the upcoming elections to present a law on intellectual property as a solution to the problem of access to medicines in developing countries. There are no links between the four elements, *a priori*. The only common denominator is the random content of the respective cans (Cohen et al. 1972; Kingdon 1984; Bendor et al. 2001).

Nonetheless, a schematic diagram in the form of a spiral is helpful for understanding that formulating a foreign policy is not about a single moment and a single actor. If a researcher conducts interviews to find out about the origin of a well-perceived policy, it would not be surprising if all those questioned identified themselves, in good faith, as being the true initiator: non-state actors whispered about it to civil servants, who recommended it to the minister, who defended it at the council of ministers where it was approved by the government leader. Inversely, in the case of a foreign policy judged unfavorably, everyone will blame a third party. In general, it is futile to conduct interviews with the objective of identifying the single author of a foreign policy.

A precise definition of the purpose of the study may be sufficient to direct the researcher toward a specific phase in the public policy cycle. A project that seeks to understand why a state intervened on a particular issue may focus on the first two stages in the cycle. A project that aims to explain why the state chose a specific option over another may limit its research to the next two stages. A third project that calls into question the maintenance of an apparently ineffective policy may only consider the last two stages. The stage chosen will then guide the researcher toward a societal, governmental or individual level of analysis.

## The Outcome of Foreign Policy

Studying the outcome of a country's foreign policy raises fundamental practical and theoretical questions. Assessing the relative effectiveness of a series of foreign policy measures can raise questions concerning the conditions that determine their success or failure. Can an apparently faultless decision-making process lead to a flawed policy? Conversely, can a foreign policy that successfully achieves its target emerge from chaos (Herek et al. 1987; Schafer and Crichlow 2002)?

### *Measuring Effectiveness*

Evaluating the impact of a foreign policy presents considerable methodological challenges. The difficulty of identifying the real goals pursued, the multicausality of the outcomes, the tensions between the short and long term and the problem of counter-factuality are just some of the methodological issues raised by foreign policy evaluation (Harvey 2012; Hansel and Oppermann 2016).

Public development aid and public diplomacy, for example, target such diffuse and long-term goals that it is virtually impossible to evaluate the full extent of their impacts (Goldsmith et al. 2005). Policies of dissuasion have the special feature of leaving no trace of their success. The number of surprise attacks and terrorist attacks that have been discouraged, thanks to politics of dissuasion, remains unknown (Lebow and Gross Stein 1989; Fearon 2002). Even when a war leads to unconditional surrender, it does not necessarily mean that the winner has achieved their goals (Mandel 2006). More fundamentally, if foreign policy only has domestic goals, like reproducing collective identity, it would be pointless to look for indicators of its effectiveness beyond state borders (Bickerton 2010).

These methodological constraints no doubt explain why the literature on the outcomes of foreign policy focuses on economic sanctions. Sanctions actually have three undeniable methodological advantages. First, they are used often enough to enable precise statistical analyses. Second, they are generally imposed for specific reasons, which can serve as benchmarks for assessing their outcomes. Lastly, their use is relatively transparent, which means the outside observer can locate them precisely in time and space and quantify their scale in dollars or euros.

The numerous studies on the effectiveness of economic sanctions conclude almost unanimously that sanctions rarely achieve their goals (Peksen and Drury 2010; Pape 1997). This observation was first established by

qualitative studies on specific cases. Multilateral sanctions against the regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, for example, did not lead them to review their racist policies. The Rhodesian government was overthrown in 1979 and apartheid was abolished in South Africa in 1991, but these revolutions are not directly linked to the sanctions imposed several years previously (Doxey 1972; Klotz 1995).

The American embargo imposed against Cuba is an even more striking failure. After over half a century of sanctions, the Cuban government has not yet paid compensation to the United States for nationalizing American investments during the Cuban revolution. The Castro regime even blamed American sanctions for the failings of its communist economy and used them to generate patriotic reactions and rally support (Kaplowitz 1998).

With the multiplication of economic sanctions since the 1970s, it is now possible to study their effectiveness from a quantitative point of view. One of the first quantitative studies, and one of the most frequently quoted, is that by Gary Hufbauer, Jeffrey Schott and Kimberly Elliott. Their study was first published in 1985. It presents a systematic analysis of over 100 sanctions imposed since 1914 and concludes that their success rate was approximately 35%. Later editions of the study conclude that the success rate, already relatively low, is decreasing markedly (Hufbauer et al. 1990; Elliott and Hufbauer 1999).

Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott's quantitative argument triggered an intense methodological debate. The first wave of criticisms concerns their choice of case studies. According to several analysts, their study is biased in favor of sanctions with the greatest probability of success. For example, it does not take into account cases where sanctions were envisaged by decision-makers before being dismissed because of the risk of failure. This bias induces an overrepresentation of favorable cases and rules out the possibility of establishing probabilities of success for a hypothetical sanction. The second wave of criticism focuses on the control of certain influential variables. Many examples of success could, in reality, be attributed to other variables, like resorting to military force in parallel, rather than to economic coercion. Reviews and reassessments have concluded that only 5% as opposed to 35% of sanctions achieve their goals (Lam 1990; Von Furstenberg 1991; Kirshner 1995; Drury 1998; Nooruddin 2002).

Nonetheless, Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott's quantitative approach made it possible to reorient research on the scope of economic sanctions and, more generally, on the effectiveness of foreign policy. It is no longer a question of knowing whether sanctions are effective, but of identifying the factors that influence their effectiveness.

### *Feedback Effects*

Feedback is another way to measure foreign policy effectiveness. It can be defined as a message about an actor's action, which a system sends back to that actor; or a message about the state of a system, which an actor sends back to the system. The emphasis is not placed on a single foreign policy decision, but on constant flows of actions and reactions spread over time. The causes of foreign policy become its effects and vice versa (Snyder et al. 2002 [1962] p.110; Pierson 1993).

For clarification, it is important to differentiate between two types of feedback: negative and positive. In the case of negative feedback, the effects of a foreign policy undermine its very existence. During the war between the USSR and Afghanistan, the United States supported mujahidin resistance by imposing an embargo on grain exports to the Soviet Union. Although the Carter administration's initial goal was to limit the capacities of Soviet action, the embargo caused a slump in the price of cereal products, which primarily hit American farmers. As a result of this unexpected feedback, the American administration lifted its ban (Lindsay 1986).

Another example of negative feedback is how a fragile government's foreign enemies react. Some studies show that governments, which are tackling popular discontent or have recently established their power, are statistically at greater risk of being attacked by a foreign power (Prins 2001; Bak and Palmer 2010). Iraq's attempted invasion of Iran in 1980 took advantage of the weakness of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime, which had not yet fully established its power after the Islamist revolution. However, foreign attacks generally provoke a rallying effect on the population. The Iraqi attack did not so much undermine as strengthen Khomeini's control on the Iranian people.

Positive feedback helps explain the gradual strengthening of some foreign policies. For example, Franco-German cooperation required strong political impetus in the post-war period. Relationships of trust have gradually been established at all levels of the administration, which consolidates cooperation on a continual basis (Krotz 2010). This positive feedback mechanism is central to the neofunctional theory developed by Ernst Haas (1958) to explain the process of European integration.

The same phenomenon of positive feedback can also fuel relations of mistrust. A conflict between two countries can alter their mutual perception and lead them to interpret all subsequent actions with suspicion. The economic sanctions imposed on South Africa because of apartheid

left Pretoria feeling politically isolated. Consequently, it developed a nuclear weapons program, which further justified the maintenance of sanctions. This vicious circle, fueled by positive feedback loops, explains why a rise in military spending in one country generally leads to a similar rise in expenditure in rival countries (Lepgold and McKeown 1995). It also explains why an initial conflict increases the statistical probabilities of subsequent conflicts (Bremer 1993; Hensel 1994, 1999, 2002; Drezner 1999; Colaresi and Thompson 2002; Dreyer 2010).

A research project that aims to assess the relative value of a causal relationship could benefit from taking into account the continuous feedback between an actor and his environment. Ignoring feedback can distort the analysis. If feedback is positive, the direct relationship between cause and effect is likely to be overestimated because of the amplification effect. Inversely, if the feedback is negative, causality can be underestimated because the reaction partly offsets the effect of the action (Rosenau 1980).

### *Historical Institutionalism*

Historical institutionalism is one of many theories that uses the concept of feedback to explain foreign policy. Historical institutionalism focuses particularly on the phenomenon of path dependence—in other words on the constraints that past decisions impose on the present. If an actor takes a given path, backtracking or changing course can be difficult, even if he realizes that he has not chosen the best path. This difficulty is heightened over time, as he continues along the path, because the positive feedback loops constantly endorse the initial sub-optimal decision (Fioretos 2011).

A classic example of path dependence is the use of computer keyboards. Both QWERTY and AZERTY keyboards are sub-optimal—in other words the key layout is not ideal for speed typing. On the other hand, the more familiar a user becomes with a given arrangement, the faster they can type and the harder it is for them to change to a different kind of keyboard, even if, objectively speaking, it is optimal.

Similarly, political leaders can unwittingly commit their country to taking a sub-optimal path. This occurs because they take account of the considerations that relate to the specific initial context, without necessarily anticipating the feedback loops and their long-term consequences. These critical moments generally occur in times of crisis and they are crucial for the future. The economic crisis of the 1930s, the two world wars and the

collapse of the Soviet Union all constitute critical moments when foreign policy decisions were made concerning the attitude to adopt in a given domain or toward a particular country. These attitudes persisted for decades (Mabee 2011).

Positive feedback loops that maintain policies in path dependence are particularly evident in the field of economics. In fact, any trade policy that is adopted will benefit some economic actors and penalize others. Yet, the longer a policy is maintained, the stronger the beneficiaries become and the more they pressurize the government to preserve the policy. Thus, in the United States, granting trade preferences to China in the 1980s encouraged the emergence of large American importers of Chinese products and the development of American investments in China. This limited President Clinton's capacity to impose sanctions on China for its human rights violations, despite his commitment to do so. Instead, the trade concessions paved the way for China's admission to the World Trade Organization in 2001 (Goldstein 1988).

Similar feedback loops can also help explain why a military alliance or security tensions continue. From this point of view, the case of Israel is striking. By authorizing the establishment of colonies on Palestinian territory after the Six-Day War, the Israeli government created an interest group that has since campaigned to conserve and expand the colonies. Gradually, the interest group gained considerable political influence within conservative and nationalist parties. In parallel, the United States first demonstrated its unfailing support for Israel during the Cold War. This policy shaped the expectations of the American people and the Israeli government. The slightest variation would be interpreted as an unacceptable historic change, even though the United States has every interest in working more closely with Arab governments (Dannreuther 2011).

Historical institutionalism does not necessarily present a deterministic view of history. Changing trajectory is always possible. It just becomes harder over time. Radical changes generally occur in exceptional circumstances, such as the overthrow of the ruling elite or a military defeat. These occasions of rupture are critical moments for adopting new policies, which, over time, are also likely to become entrenched by positive feedback loops.

### *Explaining Effectiveness*

Asking the question of what determines the effectiveness of a foreign policy raises the issue of the level of analysis. In the case of economic sanctions, most analysts consider that the main explanatory variables,

which determine the sanctions' effectiveness, are at the national level and are inherent to the characteristics of the sanctioned state.

One of the main determinants of the success of sanctions is their economic impact on the targeted state, which is calculated as a percentage of its gross domestic product. A policy change is likely if these costs are greater than the interest represented by maintaining the incriminating policies. From this point of view, the most dependent economies are also the most vulnerable to sanctions (Daoudi and Dajani 1983; Dashti-Gibson et al. 1997; Hufbauer 2007).

Nonetheless, high economic cost is not a sufficient prerequisite to guarantee the success of a sanction. The ruling power's internal structure should also be taken into account. Several statistical analyses have concluded that autocracies and democracies react differently to sanctions. Democracies are more sensitive to sanctions that have a diffuse impact on society as a whole, whereas autocracies manage to resist them more easily. Trade sanctions imposed on Haiti and Iraq in the 1990s, for example, seriously affected civilian populations, but did not seriously affect regimes in power. In reality, they were more controversial in the countries that adopted them than in the target countries. In order to threaten autocracies, sanctions should directly target the resources of the ruling elite (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988; Dashti-Gibson et al. 1997; Bolks and Al-Sowayel 2000; Brooks 2002; Nooruddin 2002; McGillivray and Stam 2004; Allen 2005; Lai and Morey 2006; Allen 2008; Blanchard and Ripsman 2008; Sechser 2010).

Some analysts consider the national context in the state that instigated the sanction, as well as the national context in the targeted state. Indeed, a sanction that represents a high cost for the state that adopts it may be unsuccessful. This explains why sanctions that target complementary economies are generally less effective than those that target competing economies (Morgan and Schwebach 1995; Zeng 2002). The most striking example is when the American Congress threatened the People's Republic of China in the early 1990s because of its human rights violations. The threats, which were raised periodically, were so counterproductive that an intensification as opposed to a reduction in Chinese repression ensued. China was in a position to behave so defiantly because the primary victims of the potential trade sanctions would have been the American investors based in China and the American importers of Chinese products. In the case of sanctions, these two heavyweights of the American economy would not have hesitated to put pressure on Congress and plead their case. The American and Chinese economies are so closely intertwined that the

threats from Congress were not taken seriously. The Chinese government no doubt concluded that Congress was merely making threats to please a few activist groups and a few unions with no real intention of taking action (Drury and Li 2006).

However, the effectiveness of sanctions is not entirely determined by rational calculations. Games of perception, filtered through cognitive mechanisms, can also help explain the outcomes of economic sanctions. A long-standing relationship of cooperation between the state sanctioned and the sanctioning state makes it possible to establish a relationship of trust and encourages the former to think that the latter will actually lift the sanctions when their demands have been met. Conversely, the memory of past antagonisms can maintain relationships of suspicion and make the sanctioned state fear that a concession will be interpreted as a sign of weakness and lead to the multiplication of new sanctions (Drezner 1999; Drury and Li 2006; Giumelli 2011).

The international context is another pertinent level of analysis for explaining the effectiveness of sanctions. Third countries can actually neutralize the effects of sanctions by suggesting that they become alternative economic partners. Several United States' traditional allies, such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan, benefit from unilateral American sanctions to develop their own markets. Therefore, the success of sanctions varies as a function of the capacity to guarantee interstate cooperation and prevent the targeted state from turning to new partners (Martin 1992; Early 2011, 2012).

Guaranteeing this type of cooperation with third states can be difficult. Firm and targeted unilateral sanctions can be more effective than vague and porous multilateral sanctions. That is probably one of the reasons why unilateral sanctions are generally more effective than multilateral sanctions (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1999). On the other hand, taking the unilateral path when a multilateral option is available can be perceived as illegitimate and may generate opposition instead of concessions. According to a study, the perception of illegitimacy associated with unilateralism could reduce the efficacy of sanctions by 34% (Pelc 2010).

## From the Puzzle to the Theoretical Explanations

Debates on economic sanctions have focused less on their degree of effectiveness than on identifying the factors that explain their effectiveness. Thus, the problems are no longer purely methodological, but also theoretical.

Of course, identifying a dependent variable always raises methodological problems: the available information is fragmented and does not always allow to draw comparisons. However, an examination of the most relevant explanatory variables also requires delicate theoretical choices: which level of analysis is the most relevant for explaining a given foreign policy? If the answer is all of them, then how can these variables be included in a coherent theoretical explanation?

### *Theoretical Models*

Now that the identification of the dependent variable, that is, the foreign policy itself, is clarified, the remaining of the book focuses on the independent variables, that is, on the theoretical explanations of foreign policy, which are generated from the multiple levels of analysis.

Theories are abstract simplifications of complex empirical realities. It is because they simplify reality that they are useful to researchers. More specifically, a theory is a coherent and logical statement (or speculation) generated by a researcher. This statement is then operationalized using independent variables and tested to an empirical domain in order to validate or refute its explanatory power (Van Evera 1997; King et al. 1994). Theories guide researchers toward the fundamental explanatory factors and allow them to ignore secondary elements that are not essential for understanding or explaining a phenomenon.

If this definition is generally accepted to be the primary function of a theory, analysts disagree, however, on what the fundamental explanatory factors of FPA actually are. The following chapter focuses on the decision-maker and introduces a number of theories explaining foreign policies at the individual level of analysis.

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