Rethinking Realism in International Relations

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Rethinking Realism in International Relations

Between Tradition and Innovation

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Neoclassical Realism and Foreign Policy Crises

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This chapter presents a theory of foreign policy decision making during crisis which draws on core neoclassical realist insights regarding the centrality of individual agency and domestic constraints on leaders' foreign policy choices. We argue that leaders' beliefs about the international system and their concern with political survival and the maintenance of large-group identity are determining factors in shaping states' foreign policies during international crises. We illustrate this theory by explaining the decision making of Slobodan Milosevic during the 1999 Kosovo crisis. The aim is to show how realist theorizing can systematically incorporate variables representing characteristics of decision makers as well as contextual constraints on their behavior to help develop better understandings, explanations, and predictions of foreign policy behavior.

The chapter is divided into four sections. First, we identify the theoretical foundations of our framework by discussing operational code analysis as well as the concepts of large-group identity and political survival. Second, we construct a neoclassical realist model of foreign policy crisis behavior to analyze such behavior using those three conceptual and methodological pillars. In the third section, we employ the Kosovo crisis of 1999 between NATO and Serbia to illustrate the workings of our model. A final section explains why we think neoclassical realism is the best way forward for realist theorizing.

Neoclassical realism provides a fertile ground for developing theories of foreign policy behavior by moving beyond structuralist theories that focus only on recurring patterns and by incorporating domestic and individual level factors into the analysis. Furthermore, neoclassical realism is more suitable for developing microfoundations for realist theorizing (see James, chap. 2), because it explicitly focuses on the individual political leader in analyzing foreign policy choices of states. Lastly,

we suggest that neoclassical realism provides opportunities for engaging with various other theoretical approaches and diverse methodologies, as exemplified by our own use of rational choice and operational code analysis, in the field of international relations.

Theoretical Foundations of a Neoclassical Realist Model of Crisis Behavior

The framework we develop in this chapter rests on three theoretical and methodological pillars: operational code analysis as the main methodological tool to analyze the beliefs of leaders, on the one hand, and large-group identity concerns and the logic of political survival as the key reference points in analyzing the domestic constraints on leaders, on the other. Together, they weave a neoclassical realist theory of foreign policy behavior during international crises.[1] We first discuss why we believe our model is consistent with neoclassical realist premises and then explain each pillar separately in this section.

Gideon Rose, who coined the term *neoclassical realism* in a *World Politics* article in 1998, pinpoints its meaning as follows: Neoclassical realism

> explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables, updating and systematizing certain insights drawn from classical realist thought. Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical. (Rose 1998, 152)

Neoclassical realists thus aim to analyze the workings of systemic pressures and unit level variables such as domestic political structures and decision makers' perceptions as influences on a nation's foreign policy.

Works by Randall Schweller (1998, 2004), Fareed Zakaria (1998), Thomas Christensen (1996), Jack Snyder (1991), William Wohlforth (1993), and Aaron Friedberg (1988) all posit that "systemic pressures are filtered through intervening domestic variables to produce foreign policy behavior" (Schweller 2004, 164). Thus, neoclassical realism provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the foreign policy behavior of states. However, as a general theoretical framework it is underspecified for purposes of applied analysis, particularly as to (1) how the beliefs of leaders affect their behavior, (2) how we can measure them, and (3) which domestic factors affect

leaders' assessments of foreign policy challenges. In addition, although in the long run relative power capabilities may determine foreign policy *outcomes,* foreign policy *behavior* may not reflect those underlying structural constraints in the short term. As a result, relative power may not be a good predictor of foreign policy behavior during international crises, which are usually characterized by the need to focus on and react within a relatively short time frame. To address this problem we turn to operational code analysis as a systematic way of analyzing the relevant beliefs of political leaders. Furthermore, we identify large-group identity concerns and political survival considerations as the main variables functioning as domestic constrains on foreign policy behavior during international crises.[2]

Our model is based on neoclassical realist foundations in the following three ways. First, as a theory of foreign policy behavior during international crisis, our model clearly falls without the purview of structuralist theorizing (e.g., Waltzian neorealism, offensive realism), which concerns itself with "pattern[s] of outcomes of state interactions" (Rose 1998, 145). Waltz (1979, 1986) clearly posits that his theory is not (and indeed cannot be) a theory of foreign policy. By contrast, much neoclassical realist theorizing explicitly concerns itself with how states respond to changes in their relative power positions (Rose 1998, 154). Thus, it explicitly theorizes about foreign policy behavior. Second, as pointed out by Rose (1998) and Schweller (2003), neoclassical realism brings the statesman back in.[3] The neoclassical realist focus on the perceptions of political elites regarding the international system places agency squarely in the center of analysis, in contrast to structuralist theories in which such a focus on agency is consciously omitted. Our model centers on the political leader and his or her beliefs about the international system and domestic political calculations. In this sense, it makes the neoclassical realist choice of bringing the statesman back in more explicit and roots it in firmer micro-foundations. Lastly, neoclassical realism, in contrast with structuralist versions of realism including the elaborated structural realist versions presented in this volume, takes the impact of domestic structures seriously in explaining foreign policy choices. We specifically argue in our model that political leaders are constrained by domestic concerns with political survival and large-group identity considerations while choosing among policy options during crises.

Operational Code Analysis and the Role of Beliefs

Operational code analysis focuses on the beliefs of political leaders as causal mechanisms in explaining foreign policy decisions (Leites 1951, 1953; A. George 1969, 1979; S. Walker 1983, 1990; Walker and Schafer 2005; Schafer and Walker 2006).[4] It

was originally developed by Leites (1951, 1953) to analyze the decision-making style of the Soviet *Politburo* members and later was developed and refined by Alexander George (1969, 1979), Ole Holsti (1977), and Stephen Walker (1983, 1990). According to the concept of operational codes, a leader's cognitive schema or belief system has two components. The first component contains five sets of philosophical beliefs about the political universe in which the leader finds himself or herself and the nature of the "other" faced in this environment. Second, there are five sets of instrumental beliefs that represent the image of "self" in this political universe and the best strategies and tactics one could employ to achieve one's ends (A. George 1979; S. Walker 1990). Taken together, these beliefs "explain diagnostic and choice propensities of the agents who make foreign policy decisions" (Walker and Schafer 2005, 1). They represent the answers to the following questions developed by Alexander George (1969, 1979). Walker and Schafer enumerate the beliefs thus:

Philosophical Beliefs:

P-1.   What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?

P-2.   What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?

P-3.   Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?

P-4.   How much "control" or "mastery" do self and other have over historical development? What is self and other's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?

P-5.   What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

Instrumental Beliefs:

I-1.   What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?

I-2.   How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?

I-3.   How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?

I-4.   What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?

I-5.   What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests? (2006, 8)

P-1, I-1, and P-4 are considered "master beliefs," as they are key in determining the remaining answers. The central assumption of operational code analysis is that

individual leaders matter in shaping the foreign policies of states and that the beliefs they hold might act as causal mechanisms in making foreign policy decisions.

Let us now elaborate on the mechanics of the operational code construct. Ole Holsti (1977) developed an operational code typology by formulating likely answers to George's (1969) questions regarding philosophical and instrumental beliefs. He developed six types of operational codes (A, B, C, D, E, F), which were later reduced to four (A, B, C, DEF) by Stephen Walker (1983, 1990). This typology is based on the perceived nature (temporary vs. permanent) and source (individual/society/international system) of conflict in the political world, deduced from the answers to P-1, I-1, and P-4 (Walker and Schafer 2005). In the revised typology, pessimists (DEF types), who see conflict as permanent, are defined as a single group regardless of what they see as the source of conflict. Walker (1983) argues that such a move is justified because there are no discernable differences in the remaining philosophical and instrumental beliefs of D, E, and F types, so they could be seen as forming a single ideal type. Optimists, however, not only differ in what they see as the source of conflict: misperceptions by individuals (A), societal institutions (B), or the anarchic nature of the international system (C). Those differences also have an impact on the remainder of their philosophical and instrumental beliefs (Walker et al. 1998). The following table presents this typology:

> ED: reword end of paragraph?

Contemporary operational code analysis uses an automated content analysis system called the Verbs in Context System (VICS), introduced by Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998). VICS focuses on the verbs in leaders' public statements and their attributions regarding exercise of power to the self and others to construct quantitative indices that correspond to the philosophical and instrumental beliefs in Table 6.1 (Walker and Schafer 2005). The VICS indices for the master beliefs, P-1 (nature of the political universe), I-1 (strategic approach to goals), and P-4 (ability to control historical development), are mapped on the vertical (P-1/I-1) and horizontal (P-4) axes in Table 6.1 to locate leaders' images of self and other in one of the four quadrants. The locations for self (I-1, P-4a) and other (P-1, P-4b) lead to predictions regarding strategic preference orderings among the general goals of settle, submit, dominate, and deadlock (Walker and Schafer 2005; Schafer and Walker 2006). In other words, these four general goals are regarded as the basic possible outcomes that can be reached as a result of strategic interaction with others in the international arena. Briefly, settling means reaching an agreement with the adversary, while submitting is surrendering to the counterpart's demands. Dominating means getting all or most of what one wants, and deadlock means that avoiding any of the other outcomes is considered the least costly option for the decision maker, even if this means

TABLE 6.1
*Contents of the Revised Holsti Operational Code Typology as Presented in
Walker and Schafer (2005, 31)*

Type A	Type C
Conflict is temporary, caused by human misunderstanding and miscommunication. A "conflict spiral," based upon misperception and impulsive responses, is the major source of risk of war. Opponents are often influenced to respond in kind to conciliation and firmness. Optimism is warranted, based upon a leader's ability and willingness to shape historical development. The future is relatively predictable, and control over it is possible. **Establish goals within a framework that emphasizes shared interests. Pursue broadly international goals incrementally with flexible strategies that control risks by avoiding escalation and acting quickly when conciliation opportunities arise. Emphasize resources that establish a climate for negotiation and compromise and avoid the early use of force.**	Conflict is temporary; it is possible to restructure the state system to reflect the latent harmony of interests. The source of conflict is the anarchical state system, which permits a variety of causes to produce war. Opponents vary in nature, goals, and responses to conciliation and firmness. One should be pessimistic about goals unless the state system is changed, because predictability and control over historical development is low under anarchy. **Establish optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Pursue shared goals, but control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Act quickly when conciliation opportunities arise and delay escalatory actions whenever possible. Other resources than military capabilities are useful.**
Settle > Deadlock > Dominate > Submit	**Settle > Dominate > Deadlock > Submit**
Dominate > Settle > Deadlock > Submit	**Dominate > Deadlock > Settle > Submit**
Conflict is permanent, caused by human nature (D), nationalism (E), or international anarchy (F). Power disequilibria are the major source of risk of war. Opponents may vary, and responses to conciliation or firmness are uncertain. Optimism declines over the long run and in the short run depends upon the quality of leadership and a power equilibrium. Predictability is limited, as is control over historical development. **Seek limited goals flexibly with moderate means. Use military force if the opponent and circumstances require it, but only as a final recourse.**	Conflict is temporary, caused by warlike states; miscalculation and appeasement are the major causes of war. Opponents are rational and deterrable. Optimism is warranted regarding realization of goals. The political future is relatively predictable, and control over historical development is possible. **One should seek optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Any tactic and resource may be appropriate, including the use of force when it offers prospects for large gains with limited risks.**
Type DEF	Type B

Note: Instrumental beliefs are in bold; philosophical beliefs are not.

military conflict. We can use the key operational code indices of a given leader to make inferences about his or her preference ordering among these general goals.[5]

While the relevant beliefs of political leaders can in this way be taken into account in a parsimonious and systematic manner in developing explanations and predictions of foreign policy behavior during crisis, those leaders are, of course, not free to act upon their beliefs alone. In the following section, we discuss two concepts that are crucial in identifying the domestic constraints that further affect the foreign policy behavior of leaders.

Domestic Constraints I: Ideational Factors

The first set of domestic constraints modeled here can be summarized under the heading of the concept of large-group identity developed by Vamik Volkan (1997, 2004). Volkan (2004, 24) suggests that "the experience of oneself as a member of an ethnic, racial, national, or religious group" constitutes what can be termed a large-group identity. Volkan likens the large-group identity to a tent-canvas held up by a pole: "The people surrounding the pole is are determined to keep the pole upright so that the canvas remains taut, a protective cover for the individuals beneath. That is to say, large-group activities center on maintaining the integrity of the group's identity" (2004, 36). He further notes that "all of the people under the tent—men and women, rich and poor—wear that collective large-group identity as if it were a shared skin. At times of collective stress—such as economic crises, social upheaval, war, terrorist attack, or drastic political change—the tent's covering can take on a greater importance than the various garments worn by the individual members" (Volkan 2004, 37).

Volkan identifies seven threads that together form the large-group identity.[6] Of those, the two threads of "chosen glories" and "chosen traumas" are crucial for our theory, as they are especially likely to be activated by the leader during crises (Volkan 2004, 37). They refer to historical events (real or constructed) that are crucial in defining who the group is. Defeats, occupations, war, famine, or revolutions are examples of chosen traumas, while military victories, times of wealth, prosperity, and prestige (in other words, "golden times") are examples of chosen glories. When a current crisis is linked with either chosen traumas or chosen glories, and the adversary with the historical enemy, the domestic environment tends to be highly emotionally charged, which in turn might affect what is politically rational for the leader to do in the international realm, given the possible consequences at home. For our purposes it is here sufficient to point out that issues related to the maintenance of large-group identity during crisis might preclude certain policies for the political

leaders. Maintenance of large-group identity is particularly important, as it is one of the pillars of the regime's legitimacy. Furthermore, political leaders are also themselves part of that large group; its consideration is not purely instrumental but most of the time also reflects a genuine concern for protecting and maintaining large-group identity.[7]

Domestic Constraints II: Political Survival

Concerns with political survival form the second core component of domestic constraints on a leader making foreign policy decisions during crisis. Let us dwell upon the main arguments of this literature briefly.

In *The Logic of Political Survival* Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) suggest that the primary motivation for every political leader is to retain power. Thus, domestic and foreign policies that might lead to the removal of the leader from office will probably not be implemented. The (presumed) characteristics of the so-called selectorate and the winning coalition will determine which policies are good politics and which are bad for the political survival of a leader. The authors define the *selectorate* as "the set of people whose endowments include the qualities or characteristics institutionally required to choose the government's leadership and necessary for gaining access to private benefits doled out by the government" (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, 42). The winning coalition is defined as "a subset of the selectorate of sufficient size such that the subset's support endows the leadership with political power over the remainder of the selectorate as well as over the disenfranchised members of the society" (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, 51).

Authoritarian leaders generally rely on a smaller winning coalition, meaning that the constituency they have to satisfy to stay in power is smaller than that of democratic leaders. They are less likely to be limited by other branches of the government and more likely to act on their beliefs, as long as those beliefs do not lead to policies that will undermine their power base. Put differently, according to selectorate theory, which holds that goods are only provided to the members of the winning coalition, authoritarian leaders, relying on small winning coalitions, can rely on providing private goods to ensure the survival of their regime. In a democracy, on the other hand, the size of the winning coalition is so large that leaders prefer or are forced to distribute public rather than private goods to retain power. However, even the most authoritarian rulers have to rely on a group of people to preserve their regimes. Thus, that critical constituency has to be protected and the leader should be wary of possible challengers to his rule.

Crises provide opportunities for increased rent for the supporters of the regime

as well as risk of lost profits, property, or even life if the crisis ends in conflict. According to selectorate theory, a political leader can be expected to conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding the expected outcome of the crisis with regards to the welfare of his supporters and the extension of his rule. The policies adopted by the political leader will be based on an assessment of (1) the expected costs of conflict for the power base of the leader along with (2) large-group identity salience at the time of the crisis.[8] The relations between these two factors in domestic politics will be discussed below.

The Model: A Neoclassical Realist Model of Crisis Behavior

In this section we provide an intuitive explanation of how the factors inventoried in the previous pages interact with each other. The threads discussed above come together in our neoclassical realist theory of crisis behavior, as shown in figure 6.1.

In line with neoclassical realist theorizing (Rose 1998, 147), we suggest that the position of the state in the international system defines the boundaries of the possible range of policies it can adopt in the long term. States' relative power constrain what they can do. Their placement within the distribution of power also, in the long run, shapes the interests and aspirations of states. Ascending states have different aspirations than declining states, for example. During system transition times, when polarity changes, states try to adjust themselves to the newly emerging structure. Revisionist states might try to exploit the uncertain nature of the distribution of power or the distraction of the great powers during such times. For smaller powers in the post–Cold War era, the availability of a superpower or great-power patron and/or a regional ally or the belief in its existence during a crisis with another superpower affects how the leader calculates the likely cost of a possible conflict.
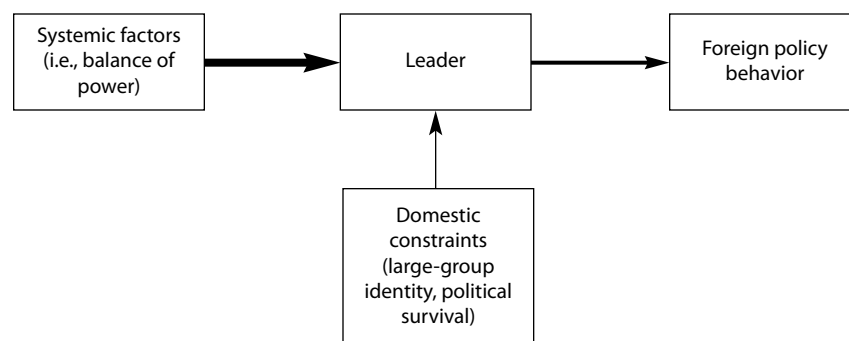

Figure 6.1. Neoclassical Realist Model of Crisis Behavior

While systemwide changes, such as a change in system polarity, are occurring, it becomes more difficult to gauge "objective" systemic constraints. Therefore, leaders in such situations are more likely to rely on their beliefs about systemic effects, which may or may not reflect the actual distribution of power within the international system and the availability of a great-power patron or regional ally. Our model diverges from structuralist approaches through incorporating unit and individual level intervening variables. The leader's perceptions of the international system and the nature of the adversary can distort the picture presented by the objective distribution of power.[9] This is particularly true during crises, as the information available to the decision maker in such times will be limited at best, deceptive at worst. As Vertzberger (1990) points out, research in cognitive psychology, information processing, and learning theory suggests that under conditions of high stress, limited time for decision making, and unreliable information, human beings tend to rely on their prior beliefs and other mental constructs to make decisions and to resist updating their beliefs about appropriate interpretations and responses even when they face contradictory information.

The second and third pillars of decision making, the above-discussed domestic factors, both affect the leader's perceptions and constrain the leader's ability to act on his beliefs about the best way to deal with the adversary. Concerns related to large-group identity might render certain policies infeasible. The psychological need to maintain, repair, or defend large-group identity can be a powerful force in shaping the perceptions of the leader. Chosen traumas and chosen glories are especially important in this respect, as they are more likely to be activated during crisis (Volkan 2004). On the other hand, possible outcomes of the crisis will be evaluated through the lens of domestic politics and with regards to the expected impact on the leader's political survival (Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Specifically, policies that increase the likelihood of removal from the office are less likely to be implemented even if the leader believes such policies are the best way to deal with the problem. Therefore, the desires to retain power and to satisfy large-group identity needs can determine what is politically rational to do in a given crisis by making some policy options more attractive than others. For instance, the leader's power base is more likely to prefer policies that it sees as positive, for whatever reasons (political, psychological, economic). It can create selective incentives that factor in the calculus of the decision maker.

To summarize, according to our model, a leader's foreign policy behavior in an international crisis depends on (1) his or her perception of the international system, which is captured by his or her operational code, (2) whether and how the crisis is related to large-group identity concerns, (3) the expected cost (political and eco-

nomic) of militarized conflict for the leader and support base compared to the other possible outcomes of the crisis.

In other words, systemic factors filter through the belief system of the political leader and through domestic political calculations aimed at staying in office. The political leader has certain beliefs regarding the nature of the political universe and the best ways to deal with adversaries. The operational code identifies expectations regarding the likelihood of certain policies and strategies the adversary can use, and it prescribes certain policies and strategies the self could use in order to deal with that adversary. For instance, a leader with DEF type philosophical beliefs expects that conflict in the international system is permanent and that one always has to be careful in one's dealings with adversaries, as they are ready to exploit any weaknesses. If the same leader also has type A instrumental beliefs, he is more likely to use negotiation to achieve his policy goals and emphasize shared interests rather than competing claims during crisis.

Political leaders, however, are not completely free to act as they wish but are also constrained by domestic considerations that are inherently complex and interrelated. The fundamental concern for every political leader is to survive in office, or at least in a comparable position of power and status. In order to ensure political survival, the leader has to satisfy a group of people, referred to as the winning coalition. Leaders have to provide certain material and ideational goods to supporters. During times of international crisis, political leaders have to mind the costs of crisis and of their actions in dealing with it for their support bases and also be wary of any potential challengers emerging within or outside the political elite. The leader also has to take into account the large-group identity concerns of the public, even if it is not part of the winning coalition.[10] Considering these concerns is important for two main reasons. First, the issues that can clearly be considered related to large-group identity are not many, but they are deeply rooted in the psyche of the people and are central to the regime's legitimacy. The people hold them sacred, and violating or ignoring them through the policies adopted during crisis impairs the regime's legitimacy. Second, members of the winning coalition usually share that same large-group identity; thus it is likely that they will also care about it. By ignoring large-group identity concerns during crisis, political leaders put themselves in a position to be challenged within the ruling elite and outside of it.

What precisely is the relationship between these different domestic factors? How do they interact to produce crisis behavior? What are their relative weights? These are difficult questions to answer without reference to specific cases, and precise answers depend on the specifics of the case under scrutiny. We suggest a set of midlevel propositions about the expected relations between different domestic factors and

crisis behavior. We illustrate the logic of these propositions by referring to the case of the Kosovo crisis; testing across cases remains an important task for future research.

For three main reasons, large-group identity concerns are expected to dominate even when other concerns regarding political survival are salient. First, if the crisis is closely entwined with large-group identity, like the issue of Kosovo for the Serbs, it is more likely that the public and the elite will care deeply about the issue. That bond between the public and the political elite may even be the last bond of legitimacy for the regime. By not addressing the issues that are important to the public (whether nationalism, religion, or ideology), the regime risks losing legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry.

Second, most of the time the regime claims legitimacy based on upholding precisely the values that the public feels are threatened by the crisis. By not protecting, defending, and maintaining large-group identity, the leader might become vulnerable to the rise of a potential challenger within the ruling elite or among the opposition. For instance, Slobodan Milosevic rose to power by riding on Serbian nationalism. Kosovo is considered the cradle of the Serbian nation by the majority of Serbs, and in 1987 Milosevic made an important statement in Kosovo, declaring, "No one shall dare beat you [Serbs in Kosovo] again!" (BBC News 2006). Milosevic could not hope to survive in office if he did not defend Serbian rights in Kosovo.

Third, the political leader is usually a product of the particular cultural milieu that dominates in the public; therefore he or she also shares the same large-group identity. The need to repair, maintain, or protect large-group identity is not only a political necessity but also a psychological need for the leader himself. Milosevic was a Serb, after all, and thus likely to perceive Kosovo as an important ethnic symbol.

We can also make predictions regarding the more specific effects of the operation of large-group identity concerns. According to Volkan (1997, 2004), if large-group identity concerns are salient during an international crisis, the political leader is more likely to adopt conflictual policies and will be less willing to grant concessions or negotiate over the issue, compared to what he would do in the absence of such concerns.

Moving on to the question of how the political survival concerns of a leader interact with the other pillars of our model, we start from the observation that the expected costs of the conflict for the leader and his followers depend on the subjective assessment of the political leader. What kinds of coercive policies are being considered by the adversary? Limited air strikes? Show of force? Quarantine? Limited war? Full-scale invasion? What are the goals of the other party in the crisis? Rollback? Regime change? Compellence? Deterrence? Policy change? Limited concessions?

Can the political leader hope to stay in power even if the crisis ends in conflict? What would be the benefits of defying the adversary compared to the costs of conflict for the regime's support base? These are some of the questions the political leader is likely to consider while calculating the cost of conflict.

The presence of a viable domestic opposition means that the leader is more vulnerable domestically, which creates more pressure to avoid failure in his foreign policies. If there is a lively and viable domestic challenge to the leader, he is likely to act more cautiously. This does not mean that he would always seek conflict instead of cooperation in the absence of domestic opposition. It only suggests that, ceteris paribus, a domestically vulnerable leader will tend to avoid conflict because the costs of bad policy for the leader will probably include removal from the office. Democratic leaders, whose constituencies are less loyal and more likely to oust them if war is deemed unsuccessful, tend to be highly selective when initiating wars, while for autocrats gambling on a war is relatively easier because of their smaller and more loyal winning coalitions (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 236–43).

Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) and Sherman (1998) show that failure in foreign policy crises does not automatically increase the likelihood of removal from office for authoritarian rulers.[11] They are more risk acceptant and their tolerance threshold with regards to costs of conflict is higher, compared to democratic leaders. They do not necessarily have to win the conflict. All an authoritarian leader has to do is to ride it out without being overthrown, either by the enemy as a result of a full-scale war or by a coup or revolution. On the one hand, an autocrat whose domestic power base is unstable might be less willing to risk the regime's survival by engaging in a militarized conflict. On the other hand, engaging in conflict might enable the political leader to further strengthen his hold on power. Therefore, when the expected costs of conflict for the power base of the leader is low, we can expect more aggressive policies from the authoritarian leadership. When those costs are expected to be high, the political leadership is likely to adopt more conciliatory policies in order to avoid military conflict.

To conclude, in order to analyze and explain a political leader's behavior during an international crisis, we suggest asking the following three sets of questions:

1. How does the political leader perceive the international system? Does he or she have a conflictual or cooperative outlook; that is, what is his or her operational code?
2. Is the crisis related to large-group identity concerns? If yes, how important are these for the legitimacy of the regime in the eyes of the ruling elite and the

public? How will large-group identity concerns influence the leader's handling of the crisis?

3. What is the expected cost of conflict for the winning coalition compared to conceding to the adversaries' demands or other options to deal with the crisis?

Answers to these questions provide a framework to understand, explain, and predict the foreign policy behavior of states during international crises. It is possible to develop expectations regarding the behavior of a certain leader or government by answering these questions, using data available *prior* to the crisis, and later on look at the actual unfolding of events to determine to what extent the predictions of the model were successful. It is important to mention, however, that we do not aim to accomplish such a test in this chapter, since we are here focused on presenting the theoretical rationale for our model.[12] This model can also be used to explain and understand policy changes during a crisis, as it explicitly identifies the crucial pillars (operational codes, cost of conflict for the winning coalition, and large-group identity) that shape the crisis policies of the state. Changes in these factors may therefore be expected to result in policy changes. In the following section, we use the Kosovo Crisis of 1999 to illustrate the explanatory logic of the framework.

The Kosovo Crisis of 1999

The origins of the conflict between the Serbs and Albanians over Kosovo go back centuries, and their details should not detain us for the time being.[13] Beginning in the early 1980s, after the death of Tito, Albanians in Kosovo demanded more autonomy and the status of a republic within the Yugoslav federation (Malcolm 1999). The Albanian demands created tensions between the Serbs and Albanians in the province and led to the abolition of the autonomy of the province in 1989 by Slobodan Milosevic. Throughout the 1990s, Milosevic increased his oppression of Albanians in Kosovo. The Kosovar Albanians first resorted to nonviolent resistance under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, but towards the mid-1990s more radical elements within the Kosovar Albanian leadership, frustrated with the lack of progress towards independence, formed the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Serbian authorities. By 1998 the situation in Kosovo was one of civil war. The KLA attacked Serbian security forces, and Serbian authorities responded by increasing oppression and intimidation of the civilian population with an intensity bordering on ethnic cleansing.

Throughout the year 1998 the so-called Contact Group (composed of the United States, the European Union, and Russia) tried to mediate in the conflict between the Serbian government and Albanian rebels with no lasting success. In the meantime the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that imposed an arms embargo on Serbia to further pressure both parties to reach a peaceful settlement. When over sixty Albanian civilians were killed in a Serbian operation against the KLA in Donji Prekaz, the international community increased its pressure on Milosevic to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Under the threat of air strikes, Milosevic agreed to a ceasefire on October 1998 and accepted the deployment of an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) verification mission in Kosovo. The ceasefire collapsed in December 1998, however, as Serbian security forces launched a new offensive against the KLA. On January 15, 1999, Serbian security forces killed forty-five Albanians, including women, children, and elderly, causing a great uproar in the Western world and bringing back the memories of the Srebrenica massacre and ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian conflict. The Contact Group issued an ultimatum to both parties to engage in negotiations. The Rambouillet conference started on February 6, 1999, in Rambouillet, France. But when on February 23, 1999, the Albanians agreed in principle to the settlement, and the Serbs asked for a two-week moratorium, the crisis transformed from a principally internal conflict between Albanian rebels and Serbian state forces to an international crisis between Serbia and NATO, led by the United States.

In our analysis of this crisis we focus on Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic as the primary decision maker on the Serbian side. Considering the empirical evidence that suggests that many democracies as well as, unsurprisingly, autocracies supported strong leaders in times of war or crisis, focusing on Milosevic and the constraints he experienced during the crisis is a convenient basis for analysis (Bueno de Mesquita 1981, 27–29). We do not deny the possibility that other institutions or individuals may matter during crisis or war, but in our case, like in many others, the head of the executive was the prime decision maker during the crisis.

Before explaining Milosevic's crisis behavior, we have to look at the demands he faced from NATO, at how they were perceived in Serbia, and at his options for ways to react. The demands articulated by the international community boiled down to two key articles of the Rambouillet Accord.[14] The first was the provision that within three years of the accord an international meeting would be convened to determine the final status of Kosovo. This provision was perceived as laying the groundwork for the independence of Kosovo by the Serbs and the Kosovar Albanians as well (Bellamy 2002; Nikolic 2002; Colovic 2002). The second important provision stipulated that NATO personnel should have unrestricted access to *all* Yugoslav terri-

tory, meaning for instance, that NATO troops would, in principle, be able to march unhindered into Belgrade. Many Serbs perceived this provision as an unacceptable infringement on their sovereignty. It was a blank check for NATO to do as it wished, which might include toppling the Milosevic regime and even occupying the country.

What were the options available to Milosevic for reacting to those demands? Milosevic's policy options can be broadly categorized as follows.[15] The first option was conceding to the NATO demands and accepting the Rambouillet Accord as it was. The second was defying NATO by refusing to sign the accord and thus risking military conflict with NATO. The last policy option was trying to negotiate the terms of the accord in the hope that he would reach a settlement on more favorable terms. These policy options can be linked to the broad policy outcomes described above in the discussion of operational code analysis (Settle, Dominate, Submit, and Deadlock). Milosevic would choose the policy option that would lead to his most strongly preferred outcome. While conceding would lead to a Submit outcome, defying and negotiating might lead to Dominate, Deadlock, or Settle, depending on the actions of the adversary. Therefore, Milosevic's policy choice would be a function of his preference in ordering those outcomes and what he believed to be the preference ordering of NATO. For instance, if Milosevic believed that NATO preferred a militarized conflict— that is, the Deadlock outcome—over the outcome Submit, then defying NATO demands would not result in Dominate for Milosevic but in Deadlock, which would mean militarized conflict. However, if Milosevic believed that NATO preferred to avoid military conflict at any cost and thus would prefer the outcome Submit to Deadlock, then defying NATO demands would lead to Dominate for Milosevic.

In order to understand and explain Milosevic's behavior during the crisis in accordance with our theoretical framework, we have to look at his beliefs regarding his opponents in the crisis and the domestic constraints he faced. We start our analysis by asking the three questions that aim at capturing those beliefs and constraints.

1. How does the political leader perceive the international system? Does he or she have a conflictual or cooperative outlook; that is, what is his or her operational code?

What are the beliefs of Milosevic about his opponents in the run-up to the crisis? His operational code before the crisis suggests that he perceived the adversary like a type A leader with an average sense of historical control (P-1: 0.32, P-4b: 0.78).[16] This suggests that Milosevic had a more cooperative view of the international system than the average world leader. Leaders with type A philosophical beliefs perceive human misunderstanding and miscommunication as the primary causes of conflict. Furthermore, they generally follow tit-for-tat strategies, where the

aim is to deter aggressive behavior but reward cooperative moves by the adversary. This attitude suggests that Milosevic believed at the time that the United States was willing to negotiate and was not out to get him; however, he also knew that the United States was willing to engage in conflict if its cooperative behavior was not reciprocated. In other words, the analysis suggests that, as early as December 1998, Milosevic believed that if he refused to reach an agreement with the Kosovar Albanians, the United States would use force against him.

What about the domestic constraints Milosevic faced while formulating his foreign policy in this crisis? We have to answer the remaining two questions to determine them.

2. Is the crisis related to large-group identity concerns? If yes, how important are they for the legitimacy of the regime in the eyes of the ruling elite and the public? How will large-group identity concerns influence the leader's handling of the crisis?

The issue of Kosovo is a very emotional one for most Serbs. Since 1389 it has been considered the heartland of Serbian culture and nationhood (Colovic 2002; Nikolic 2002; Malcolm 1999). The Battle of Kosovo of 1389—in which Prince Lazar, the Serbian ruler of the time, fought against and lost to the Ottomans—is the main "chosen trauma" for the Serbs (Volkan 2004). His defeat was glorified by the myth that Prince Lazar was given the option of choosing between victory, and thus worldly kingdom, or defeat but Heavenly kingdom. He chose defeat and Heavenly kingdom (Colovic 2002; Volkan 1997, 2004). In Serbian folklore and mythology, the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 is seen as a turning point in the nation's history at which the Serbs stood up against a powerful enemy and defended their faith and honor. Furthermore, Milosevic's by now infamous speech in Kosovo in 1987, in which he promised the Serbs in the province that "no one will ever beat you again," was the beginning of his rise to power by garnering the forces of ethnic nationalism in Yugoslavia. By 1998, Yugoslavia was already divided, and Serbs went through territorial losses that made the issue even more sensitive. According to a survey conducted in Belgrade before the NATO bombardment, almost 70 percent of the respondents claimed that they were ready to fight, if necessary, to preserve Serbian control over Kosovo (Nincic 2005, 138). As Nincic points out, "By 1998 Kosovo was all that Milosevic had to show for his nationalist policies; retreat on that front would have left nothing" (138). Without a doubt, the Kosovo issue was, and still is, deeply entwined within the large-group identity of Serbs and had a special meaning for Milosevic's political career.[17] Concern for this issue ruled out any policy that suggested submitting to the U.S. demands articulated in Rambouillet (which could have led to Kosovar independence) to avoid a militarized conflict. Thus Milosevic had to choose be-

tween engaging in negotiations to avoid conflict or standing firm and risking military confrontation.

Let us now turn to the third question that captures the domestic constraints of leaders.

3. What is the expected cost of conflict for the winning coalition compared to conceding to the adversaries' demands or other options to deal with the crisis?

Regarding the political vulnerability of the winning coalition, most observers of Serbian politics in 1998 suggested that Milosevic was safe in his position. The opposition that challenged Milosevic in the 1996 elections unraveled after 1997, when coalition partners, particularly Zoran Dindic and Vuk Draskovic, turned against each other (Nikolic 2002; Goati 2001; Colovic 2002). There was no effective domestic opposition that could challenge Milosevic. Even had such a domestic group existed, it is unlikely that they would have challenged Milosevic about the Kosovo issue, as the majority of Serbs felt that they were the victims of aggression, not the perpetrators, and most of the political opposition groups were even more hawkish than Milosevic on Kosovo (Nikolic 2002).

Given (1) the public disagreement among NATO allies about how much force should be used against Milosevic, (2) President Clinton's public disavowal of the use of ground forces, (3) Russia and China's continued opposition to the use of force against Serbia, and (4) his previous experiences in the Bosnian conflict, Milosevic concluded that even if NATO launched air strikes, they would be limited in scope and could not be sustained in the face of Russian and Chinese protests and Western publics' criticisms (Bellamy 2002; Hosmer 2001; Cordesman 2001; Harvey 2006; W. Clark 2001; Nikolic 2002). In other words, he believed that he could ride through air strikes and emerge as a hero who defied the West, strengthening his grip on power. Nincic (2005, 138) argues that the "NATO threat provided an excuse to tighten the reins of domestic control, to convert what had previously been a 'soft' dictatorship into one more harshly repressive." Perhaps the following quote from Milosevic's meeting with Richard Holbrooke in October 1998 provides the most compelling evidence regarding his calculations. He said to Holbrooke that even if NATO decided to bomb, "I am sure the bombing will be very polite." When the American delegation disagreed, he repeated: "Yes, I understand, but I am sure the Americans will bomb with great politeness" (quoted in Sell 2002, 303).

To sum up, large-group identity concerns were highly salient in the crisis and excluded any policy that would mean conceding to U.S. demands without putting up a fight, even if this might ultimately mean open military conflict. The absence of an effective domestic challenger and the perceived modesty of the costs of conflict

compared to the domestic political risks of compliance with U.S. demands led Milosevic to conclude that he could gain more by choosing conflict over negotiation.

In other words, Milosevic would resist any demand from NATO and would escalate the crisis once it started. He would do so regardless of whether NATO continued with diplomatic pressure and nonmilitary means or decided to use force against Serbia, knowing well that if he escalated after NATO continued to use nonmilitary measures, the latter would reciprocate his escalation by counterescalation and the use of force. This analysis suggests that Milosevic was expecting the air strikes and actually preferred them to reaching an agreement with Kosovar Albanians.

The Crisis: February 23 to March 24, 1999

The events that unfolded between February 23 and March 24, 1999, illustrate the predictions of the neoclassical realist model regarding Milosevic's behavior. Specifically, they sustain the interpretation that Milosevic was not negotiating in good faith in Rambouillet and was willing to escalate the crisis to the point of conflict unless NATO decided to back down.

On February 23, 1999, Serbs refused to sign the agreement in Rambouillet, while the Albanians agreed in principle. The core of the Rambouillet agreement envisioned the disarming of the KLA and the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo under the supervision of NATO troops, which would be granted unhindered access throughout the entire Yugoslav territory, not only within Kosovo. The plan also called for the restoration of Kosovo's autonomy and left the final status of the province to be decided in future talks. Serbia chose to defy the international pressure by not accepting the resolutions on disarmament, troop withdrawal, peacekeeping by NATO, and weakening of sovereignty over Kosovo.

The Contact Group preferred to continue with diplomatic measures instead of using military force and declared a two-week moratorium, after which the parties would come back to Paris and sign the agreement. The moratorium was declared in order to put more pressure on Milosevic. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and EU Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Hans Van den Broek went to Belgrade on March 8 to try to convince Milosevic personally (Bellamy 2002; Daalder 2000; Nikolic 2002; W. Clark 2001). Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill followed them a few days later. Milosevic did not seem to be cooperative, and "he insisted that no state has a right to prevent Yugoslavia conducting an anti-terrorist campaign" (Bellamy 2002, 145). When the negotiations restarted in Paris on March 15, 1999, the Serbian counterproposals "were so at odds with the plans that had been

drawn up over the previous 18 months that even the Russian mediator, Boris May-orski, was appalled" (146). Bellamy argues that "rather than revealing a genuine de-sire for a negotiated solution, the proposals they [Serbs] presented at Paris revealed their intransigence and lack of interest in the diplomatic process" (148).

Despite the efforts of the Contact Group, Serbia officially refused to sign the Paris agreement on March 18, 1999. Serbian president Milutinovic warned NATO that Serbs were ready to fight to defend their country. Furthermore, Milosevic launched "Operation Horseshoe" in Kosovo, intensifying his policy of ethnic cleans-ing (Hosmer 2001; Bellamy 2002; W. Clark 2001; Harvey 2006; Quackenbush and Zagare 2005). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) es-timated that twenty thousand Kosovar Albanians had been forced out of their homes after the talks collapsed in Paris on March 18 (cited in Bellamy 2002, 151). The Yugoslav army also declared that in "the event of an attack it would launch counterattacks against NATO targets in Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, and in the Adriatic" (Bellamy 2002, 151). Milosevic furthermore ordered the Bosnian Serbs to engage in guerrilla warfare against Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia if NATO decided to attack Serbia, but Momir Talic, the commander of Bosnian Serb forces, refused (Brune 2005). It is clear that the Serbian response to the Contact Group's diplomatic efforts was noncooperation and a stance to defy the international com-munity. The intensification of ethnic cleansing after March 15, 1999, proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back. In the words of President Clinton, with the launching of Operation Horseshoe, "whatever threshold they need to cross has been crossed."[18] Confronted with the escalation of Serbian atrocities in Kosovo, NATO decided to launch "Operation Allied Force" on March 24 and started bombing Ser-bia, which lasted seventy-eight days and ended June 10, 1999. That is, the United States counterescalated the crisis at this point. Eventually, due to increased costs of the war for his winning coalition and the Serbian public, Milosevic agreed to with-draw from Kosovo, and NATO troops took over.

The preceding analysis suggests that the neoclassical realist model could explain the behavior of Slobodan Milosevic during the Kosovo crisis by using information publicly available *before* the crisis, and the model could provide an explanation of why Milosevic refused to reach a settlement with the Kosovar Albanians despite NATO's threat to use force. In essence he behaved the way he did because he be-lieved losing Kosovo without a fight or negotiating a settlement would carry unac-ceptable domestic costs and that he and his "winning coalition" could survive the NATO bombardment and perhaps even prosper as a result of it, like they did dur-ing the conflict in Bosnia. In the end, it turned out that Milosevic had miscalculated the cost of the conflict for his supporters and that his large-group identity concerns

had led him to miscalculate the public's willingness to back his nationalist policies when faced with several weeks of bombings.

This analysis of the crisis ends with the start of Operation Allied Force. The theoretical framework presented in this chapter, however, might also shed some light on why Milosevic gave in after seventy-eight days of bombing. Our model offers two ways to explain such change in behavior. Either the political leader's perception of the international system has changed, which can be observed from changes in his or her operational code, or the domestic constraints were altered because of the interactions during the crisis.[19] Operational code analysis of Milosevic's speeches between March 24 and June 10, 1999, suggests a much more conflictual worldview compared to his pre-crisis speeches. His perception of the international system as a relatively benign place (type A) in which conflict is temporary and caused by misperception and miscommunication changed into one of the international system as a harsh, Hobbesian place in which conflict is permanent (Type DEF).[20] Therefore, it seems that Milosevic became convinced during the war that the United States was out to get him and was not interested in reaching a settlement.

Domestic considerations also seemed to change as the war progressed. As the air strikes continued, it became apparent that this war would not be short. Milosevic seemed to understand that he had miscalculated NATO's resolve and underestimated the costs that air strikes would inflict upon his supporters. The bombardment intensified toward the end of May, and supporters of Milosevic's regime started to feel the heat, as much of Serbia's infrastructure was destroyed, including "fifty highways and railroad bridges, two oil refineries, and a substantial portion of Serbia's POL [petroleum] stock" (Nincic 2005, 148). Several major industrial facilities owned by Milosevic's supporters were also destroyed (Nincic 2005; Nikolic 2002). The estimated financial cost of the NATO bombings for Serbia was around thirty billion U.S. dollars. The initial resurgence of nationalist sentiments among the public, including regime critics and independent media, at the beginning of the NATO bombardment, was over by late May (Nincic 2005; Hosmer 2001). As Nincic observes, "by late May, attendance at anti-NATO demonstrations declined, significant troop desertions were reported, there were antiwar demonstrations in several Serbian cities, and both opposition leaders and regime insiders began calling for a diplomatic solution" (2005, 149). Thus, the domestic constraints on Milosevic not to grant concessions over Kosovo seemed to be weakened significantly because the increased costs daunted the public. As of late May 1999, it did not seem to be domestically suicidal anymore to negotiate over the status of Kosovo or even to accept defeat and withdraw. The bombings' costs were already high for the public in general and the regime's supporters in particular. A possible ground war if Serbia con-

tinued to resist NATO demands seemed too high a price to pay to Milosevic. Quackenbush and Zagare (2005) argue that, by early June, the U.S. threat to launch a ground offensive became credible, thus leaving Milosevic with two options: either back down or face a ground war that he could not hope to win.

Concluding Remarks

In the preceding pages we have argued that to understand, explain, and predict foreign policy behavior during international crises knowing just the power distribution between the crisis actors is not enough. If structural constraints were sufficient to explain behavior, a crisis between a superpower and a small power should not end in conflict. Starting from neoclassical realist insights about the importance of the beliefs and perceptions of the political leadership, as well as domestic constraints they face in formulating foreign policy, we developed a neoclassical realist model of crisis behavior. Our model aims at understanding, explaining, and predicting foreign policy behavior during international crisis.

In this model we use operational code analysis as a replicable methodology to determine the beliefs of political leaders. We also identify two crucial domestic factors—concerns about large-group identity and concerns about political survival—that are taken into account by the leadership in formulating their policies during crisis.

We have used Slobodan Milosevic's foreign policy behavior during the Kosovo crisis of 1999 to illustrate the workings of our model. While by now we have the benefit of hindsight, we have shown how our model could successfully explain and predict his policy during the crisis in principle by using information available *before* the crisis. In other words, by knowing about Milosevic's beliefs regarding the international system right before the crisis and evaluating the domestic constraints he faced in the run-up to the crisis, we could explain why he was likely to adopt conflictual policies and to be unwilling to reach a settlement. We could also explain why he decided to settle when he did by referring to changes in those same core variables.

This case has also illustrated why we think neoclassical realism, which emphasizes the importance of individual agency and domestic factors in foreign-policy decision making, is the way forward for realist theorizing. The *behavior* of Milosevic is explained by referring to his beliefs about the international system and to domestic considerations he had to take into account. However, it should be noted that the *outcome,* the eventual capitulation of Milosevic after seventy-eight days of bombings, is in line with expectations that can be derived from considering the distribution of power between NATO and Serbia. Borrowing from Thucydides' dictum, the

strong (i.e., NATO) got what they wanted eventually but not before the weak (i.e., Serbia) suffered for their disregard of structural imperatives. It might be claimed that all realist approaches can agree that in the long run the outcomes will likely reflect the distribution of power, but some realist theories, such as neoclassical realism, draw attention to the possibility that in the short run behavior might not reflect this. That foreign policy behavior might not follow the imperatives of power distribution renders international political outcomes less deterministic. In order to understand foreign policy *choices,* especially with regard to crisis behavior, an exclusively structuralist perspective is not enough.

In this chapter we have tried to offer a systematic way of analyzing political leaders' beliefs about the international system and to identify what might be the most important domestic considerations leaders take into account during international crisis. We hope that this reformulation opens new venues for realist theorizing, particularly regarding foreign policy analysis. Apart from successfully addressing the need to understand foreign policy choices, there are three other important theoretical reasons for why we believe neoclassical realism is the way forward for realist theorizing.

First, as Schweller (2003, 345) has pointed out, whatever useful thing can be said about structural versions of realism has already been said by their founders. This is particularly the case for Waltz's version of structural realism and Mearsheimer's offensive realism. It is difficult to improve on their theoretical work without violating its parsimonious and structuralist character because they claim to say few but important things. Once those are said, there is not much for others to do. Neoclassical realism, on the other hand, provides a more fruitful ground for theoretical innovation and improvement by virtue of accepting the need to go below the systemic level and engage with more "messy" variable sources, such as domestic political structures and perceptions of individual leaders. Accepting such complexity increases the range of issue and problem areas to which neoclassical realism can be applied and might also, to some extent, counteract the risk of "paradigm" thinking as exposed by Steve Rosow (chap. 10). For instance, structural variants of realism have almost exclusively focused upon great powers and on few recurrent themes, such as balancing and bandwagoning. They have little or nothing to say about other states in the international system or their interactions with great powers. So far neoclassical realist literature has also largely concerned itself with the foreign policies of great powers, but it is possible to provide neoclassical realist theories of foreign policy behavior that can meaningfully be applied to other states in the international system; this strength is exemplified by the discussion in this chapter as well as in chapter 7.

Second, we believe that neoclassical realism provides a fertile ground for theoriz-

ing about the micro-foundations of international politics, particularly with refer-
ence to rational choice assumptions. Patrick James argues in chapter 2 that, com-
pared to neoclassical realism, an elaborated version of structural realism provides a
more suitable ground for theorizing about micro-foundations, and that neoclassical
realists reject assumptions of rationality. We do not agree with either of these claims.
Instead, we maintain that, although most neoclassical realists might have chosen to
eschew (at least explicit) rationality assumptions in their work, there is nothing in-
herent in neoclassical realism that would forbid such theorizing, as is exemplified by
our own chapter. On the contrary, we believe that neoclassical realism is more suit-
able for explicitly incorporating rationality and rational choice assumptions, espe-
cially in the form of instrumental rationality.

Many structural realists, including Kenneth Waltz, reject the idea that their the-
ories require rationality assumptions. Although we agree with James that most of
them actually rely on rationality assumptions, whether they accept this observation
or not, it is certainly possible to develop structural realist theory that does not rely
on rationality. It is possible to propose an evolutionary argument, as Waltz does, to
explain the recurrent patterns in the international system; what is of concern here is
not the behavior of individual states but the patterns of outcomes that emerge as a
result of the (often unintended) consequences of state behavior. Rationality sug-
gests that patterns of outcomes emerge due to intentional behavior of states, while
evolutionary arguments do not presuppose intentionality on the part of states to ac-
count for the same patterns. A process of evolutionary selection that rewards poli-
cies that increase the chance of survival for the units would, in the long run, result
in a population mainly composed of units that behave similarly with regard to struc-
tural constraints. A structural theory of international politics does not necessitate
rationality assumptions any more than neoclassical realist accounts do. In fact, al-
lowing rationality assumptions to explicitly play a role might compromise its struc-
tural nature in the same way in which letting in revisionism, as Colin Elman argues
in this volume, has left little that is structural in defensive realism. After all, in a
structuralist theory the bulk of the explanatory burden should go to the system
structure. For instance, in neorealism the anarchic nature of the international sys-
tem and the distribution of power would explain international outcomes regardless
of whether individual political leaders are rational or not. Explaining state behavior
and international outcomes by using references to rational choice assumptions, by
contrast, would shift most of the explanatory burden to the unit or even individual
level, as structural constraints would now work through the expected utility calcu-
lations of individual political leaders. With such a move, structural factors are made
to matter insofar as they factor into the calculations of the leader. The absence of ra-

tionality on the part of decision makers should then change the recurring patterns in international politics. If it does not, then the rationality assumption is redundant, but if it does, such a theory is no longer structuralist, as outcomes in international politics then depend not primarily on the system structure but vitally on whether or not decision makers are rational. In this way the explanation is brought to lie at the unit or individual rather than the systemic level.

This brings us to the second reason why we believe neoclassical realism is more suitable for theorizing about the micro-foundations of international politics. In order to preserve their parsimonious and structuralist character, structural variants of realism have, as emphasized by Stephen Rosow (chapter 10), chosen to view states as unitary actors. Doing otherwise would entail dealing with domestic politics, and such a theory can no longer be structuralist in nature. Assuming rationality on the part of states, on the other hand, explicitly or implicitly accepts the role of individual statesmen; only human beings, not abstract entities such as states, can be rational. The first crack in the structuralist nature of explanation has thus been opened. The rationality of the leader furthermore creates a tension for the unitary actor assumption as it leads us to paint a picture in which "national leaders are ruthless for their states but selfless as individuals. The utilities they maximize are those of the country as a whole, not of themselves personally" (Jervis 1998, 988). This may indeed be the case for some leaders, but it would be extremely difficult to reconcile such behavior with traditional assumptions of individual rationality. Any attempt to provide a mechanism for aggregating and reconciling individual leaders' interests with those of states would move a theory further away from the systemic level, as we now also require assumptions about individual leaders' motivations and preferences along with assumptions about states' (or aggregate) preferences (i.e., security, power, etc.). In sum, by further elaborating micro-foundations and particularly by offering rationality as a basis for such micro-foundations, we suspect that attempts such as James's elaborated structural realism run the risk of getting away from the systemic level and looking more and more like neoclassical realism in the long run.

Neoclassical realism, by comparison, can more easily accommodate rationality assumptions, as it already accepts the central role of political leaders in formulating and implementing foreign policy. As Zakaria has pointed out, "Statesmen, not states, are the primary actors in international affairs" (1998, 42). The model presented in this chapter makes the centrality of the political leader even more explicit and adopts an openly rational choice perspective by suggesting that leaders choose foreign policies with regard to their political survival rather than some abstract "national interest." We do not assume that the state operates as a unitary actor and explicitly suggest that leaders care about their own interests in choosing foreign poli-

cies. In this way, the rationality assumption does not create a tension for our model, and we can show how it can be used in similar ways in other variants of neoclassical realist theorizing.

Lastly, we believe that neoclassical realism provides ample opportunities to engage with various other theories and methodologies in the field of international relations. One example is Richard Little's chapter on the English School and the concept of "balance of power" (chap. 1). We believe that there are several linkages between neoclassical realism and the English School that could be explored, such as both theory families' interest in the role of statesmen in shaping the foreign policies of states. Our model also provides an example of how different methodologies and theories, such as operational code analysis, large-group identity theory, and the logic of political survival (selectorate theory), can be used within a neoclassical realist framework. Such ability to productively engage with other research programs in international relations is another reason why we believe neoclassical realism is the most promising way forward for realist theorizing.

NOTES

1. Studies of foreign policy crises burgeoned beginning in the 1960s. Specifically, Brecher (1974, 1977); Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1982, 2000); Brecher, Wilkenfeld, and Moser (1988); and Wilkenfeld, Brecher, and Moser (1988) have made important contributions by expanding the scope of earlier single case studies, developing and refining definitions of foreign policy crisis, operationalizing key variables, building a dataset (International Crisis Behavior, or ICB), and generating and testing various hypotheses about crises. One of Brecher and Wilkenfeld's major contributions is the premise that values and belief systems of actors are important variables in understanding a foreign policy crisis—a premise that we share in this chapter. We also follow the ICB project definition of a crisis as a situation in which the following three conditions are met in the perceptions of decision makers: There is "a threat to one or more basic values, along with an awareness of finite time for response to value threat, and a heightened probability of involvement in military hostilities" (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 2000, 3). These conditions presume the existence or at least the perception of an adversary. The Kosovo crisis is regarded as a crisis between Serbia and NATO members (ICB Data Viewer 2007). The term *conflict* is used throughout this chapter to denote militarized conflict as one of the possible outcomes of a crisis.

2. Although political survival and large-group identity concerns do not cover all the possible considerations that might factor into the calculus of a political leader, we believe that they capture the most important political, economic, and sociopsychological aspects of foreign policy decision making during international crises. This claim should, of course, be tested empirically. If the model we develop below successfully explains and predicts behavior, then we can have some confidence that these concerns capture the essentials of foreign policy decision making during crises.

3. The centrality of statesmanship is part of the classical realist heritage, as also presented by Stephen Rosow in chapter 10.

4. The study of the effects of leaders' personal characteristics on foreign policy decisions is not limited to the operational code literature. A diverse literature about when, how, and under what conditions leaders' personalities influence foreign policy decisions has developed since the 1970s, including Margaret Hermann's illuminating work on cognitive complexity (M. Hermann 1974, 1980; M. Hermann and C. Hermann 1989). Newer studies have applied this literature's findings to more recent decisions, such as Tony Blair's decision to join the war in Iraq (Dyson 2006).

5. Walker and Schafer (2004) further refined these preference orderings based on the key operational code indices and developed a "theory of inferences about preferences." These inferences are made by comparing a leader's key operational code scores (P-1, I-1, and P-4) with a norming sample of world leaders.

6. Those threads are: (1) shared, tangible reservoirs of images associated with positive emotion, (2) shared "good" identifications, (3) absorption of others' "bad" qualities, (4) absorption of leaders' internal worlds, (5) chosen glories, (6) chosen traumas, and (7) formation of symbols that develop their own autonomy (Volkan 2004, 37).

7. The impact of large-group identity on crisis behavior can be seen as similar to Fearon's (1995) discussion of issue indivisibility as a rationalist explanation of war and Nincic's (2005) discussion of ideational factors as a source of renegade behavior. Common in all three concepts are deep-seated sociopsychological factors affecting the reading of the crisis at the elite and societal levels that influence the decision-making process and relevant preference orderings, particularly with regard to the acceptability of conflict compared to submission.

8. The importance of political survival and large-group identity in shaping the choices of the decision maker resembles Mintz's (2003) noncompensatory principle in his poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision making. According to Mintz , "the noncompensatory principle of political decision making states that politicians rarely will choose an alternative that will hurt them politically" (3). The main difference, however, is that Mintz only deals with the instrumental political dimension while ignoring the effect of large-group identity-related issues on the leader's psychology and behavior.

9. Incorporating assumptions from rationalist and cognitive approaches in our model is neither contradictory nor should it lead to confusion. Our model begins from the assumption of instrumental rationality of decision makers. However, it diverges from rational choice theories, in which preferences are modeled as exogenous, in that it acknowledges that psychological factors such as large-group identity concerns, along with calculations aimed at political survival, influence the preference orderings of the leader. Our model helps provide a theory of preferences for rational choice models.

10. In Volkan's (2004) theory, no distinction is made between responses of different regime types to large-group identity concerns. Therefore, regarding material concerns, we argue, following Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), that the winning coalition will receive the benefits, which has different implications for autocratic and democratic regimes; regarding immaterial concerns, such as identity, we make no distinction between regime types.

11. We focus here on authoritarian leaders' behavior in crisis because our case centrally includes such a decision maker, i.e., President Milosevic. For a detailed discussion of different

approaches of democratic and authoritarian leaders to foreign policy crisis, see Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, chap. 6).

12. To design such tests we would have to perform another preparatory step, in which more concrete propositions would be developed based on the general logic of the model presented here.

13. Accounts of the origins of the conflict(s) over Kosovo are provided in, e.g., Malcolm (1999), Glenny (1996), Harvey (2006), Bellamy (2002).

14. The full text of the accord is available at www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/ksvo_rambouillet_text.html (accessed October 10, 2007).

15. These categories are meant to capture the essential nature of the policy choices and therefore are constructed as broadly as possible. The purpose here is to explain the broad contours of Milosevic's foreign policy behavior rather than to account for each and every move.

16. Operational code data is provided by Michael Young of Social Science Automation, Inc. It is derived from a lengthy interview with Milosevic that was published in the *Washington Post* on December 8, 1998.

17. See Volkan (2004) for a detailed exposition of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo as the chosen trauma for the Serbs.

18. Clinton quoted in the *New York Times,* March 21, 1999.

19. On different types of learning, see Schafer and Walker (2006).

20. Data is drawn from Milosevic's speeches on March 24, April 19, April 20, and April 30, 1999, and was provided by Michael Young of Social Science Automation, Inc.