



Vienna, 19 August 2021

Report of a Member of the Thesis Council on the Dissertation entitled 'Foreign policy decision-making process in the Federal Republic of Germany' by Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Krylova, submitted for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences in the scientific speciality 23.00.04 – Political problems of international relations, global and regional development.

I read the study with great interest. It is very well researched. Plenty of primary and secondary sources are consulted. The author provides an excellent overview of institutions – mostly formal – that shape Germany's foreign policy, including not only domestic but also European Union institutions. Yet the study could have been much stronger if it had focused on a causal question instead of remaining, for the most part, on a descriptive level. Overall, this is a satisfactory piece of work.

In what follows, I list my critical comments:

- Research question: The author writes that she aims to 'gain a new comprehensive knowledge of the country's foreign policy process'. This is a worthwhile endeavour but it would have been much better to choose a causal research question. Given the case-study at the end, the causal question could have been about why Germany embarked on the Nord Stream 2 Project or why it persists to do so amid harsh criticism from its allies. More generally, the study could have looked at the evolution of Russo-German relations over the last decade, explaining continuities and breaks. Again, Nord Stream 2 could have been an interesting case. Alternatively, other causal research questions would have been possible, too. Europeanisation is one of them.
- Added value: Given that the author only provides a descriptive overview – albeit a very comprehensive one – it is less clear what the study can contribute to existing debates. There is no question about it that this research gives such a comprehensive overview. But the findings of a causal analysis would have gone substantially deeper.

- Organization: The organization is somewhat unorthodox. There are only two chapters. It would have been more sound to break chapter two up into three chapters, elaborating on each of its parts much more, especially the empirical case.
- Theory: The author writes quite a bit about theoretical frameworks, discussing the works of many international relations theorists, foreign policy analysts and integration theorists. But she does not develop her own theoretical voice. For example, she provides overviews of functionalist and intergovernmentalist explanations of European integration but never puts her own spin on it. The discussion of Graham Alisson's three perspectives is at times misleading. Note that the rational actor model does not require looking into the state. It negates foreign policy analysis. As such, therefore, it is incompatible with opening up the 'black box'. The three models cannot be easily reconciled. Things become confusing when the author writes then about system analysis, institutional analysis and neoinstitutional analysis. Again, the reader is presented with more theoretical labels. But the theories are hardly fleshed out and it becomes even less clear how all these theories are supposed to be brought together.
- Putting theory to use: The theories the author discusses stand apart from the descriptions of German foreign policy making. The descriptions are very detailed. But they do not apply, say, a bureaucratic politics model. This would necessitate analysing contradicting motives of leaders of bureaucratic units and their consequences. The latter are, as Alisson emphasises, not good news for coherent foreign policy making of a state. Looking through this lens, the state appears as 'organizational mess', as Michael Mann once put it.
- Literature review: pp. 5-11 appear to be very unusual for me. The author lists a lot of literature but does not discuss it.
- Methodology: The study hardly discusses any methodology at all. Why, for example, choose the case of Nord Stream 2? Why not another case? Why not several cases? In my view, a comparative design would have been very promising. Nord Stream 2 is basically a success case of Russo-German relations. But there are also failures. What explains successes and failures?
- Formal and informal institutions: Throughout the study, the author puts more emphasis on formal than on informal institutions. For example, she writes a lot about the German Constitution (and does this very well). But she writes less about constitutional practices. How do different actors put these provisions to use? The same applies to the *acquis communautaire* on the European level.

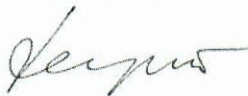
- Network analysis. The author never conducts a network analysis, although she writes about networks and network analyses quite a bit. This could have been a very rewarding angle. Note that, among other things, power relations look different in a network analysis. It's usually not the one on top of a hierarchy who has the most clout but the one with the most ties (linkages) in a network. Nodes matter. And they are usually not at the top of a formal hierarchy but somewhat more in the middle.
- Citations: Overall, citations are in very good order. Yet on p. 32, there are some missing ones. For example, there is something about 'Some even note....' but the reader does not know who these 'some' are. There are inverted commas for 'Germanization' but it is not clear who uses this term.
- Empirical evidence: The author is, overall, very good at giving strong evidence for her empirical claims. Yet some claims could have been supported with more evidence. The EU's eastern enlargement, for example, may have been due to 'profit maximisation and cost minimization' but the author needs to present evidence for this! Note in this regard that this was hardly just Germany's decision. When it comes to enlargement, the United Kingdom was a strong advocate at the time. The same goes for deepening integration. In terms of institutional design and pushing forward, France has played a very strong role.
- Chancellor: The author does a good job in describing the constitutional role of the chancellor. Yet some statements are misleading. Analogies with Bismarck really compare apples and oranges. In our days, there is democratic accountability. This makes for a major difference! 'Richtlinienkompetenz' is important. But note that a lot depends on constitutional practice. A chancellor who rallies his own party and the party of a coalition party firmly around him or her is a very strong chancellor. But a chancellor who fails in doing so is very weak. Erhard and Schröder, for example, were in this sense quite weak and Adenauer and Kohl rather strong.
- Chancellor and Foreign Minister: Again, a lot depends on constitutional practice. There were times when the Foreign Minister was rather weak and the Chancellor, so to say, called the shots, very much along the lines as the author suggests. But there were also times where the Foreign Minister was very strong. Kiesinger, for instance, had a very hard time reigning in Brandt. Genscher was quite a powerful Foreign Minister. Also note that during a grand coalition, the Foreign Minister tends to be a prominent politician of the coalition partner. This makes him or her quite strong vis-à-vis the chancellor.
- Civil society: The author omits anything about civil society. Yet civil society, broadly speaking, can make quite a difference. Public opinion matters.

Schröder, for instance, looked very carefully at public opinion. The same applies to published opinion. Newspapers, media channels and new social media make a difference. Finally, public intellectuals are quite strong in Germany (similar to France). They can put considerable pressure on governments, even in foreign policy.

- Lobbyists: They, too, can make a major difference in foreign policy. This is an issue that could have featured quite prominently in the discussion of Nord Stream 2.
- Supreme Court: The author is right that the Supreme Court (BVerfG) is a player to be reckoned with when it comes to defining the parameters of foreign policy. But it would have been helpful if the author had listed some important decisions of the Court. When it comes to deploying German troops abroad, for example, the Court made a number of important decisions.
- Conclusion: The author summarizes her findings well. Yet it would have been desirable for her also to tease out again the added value of her study, the implications of her findings (for example for Russo-German relations) and if she had outlined an agenda for further research.

I hope that these comments will help the candidate to improve further when she publishes her study – or pieces thereof – in peer-reviewed journals. There is no doubt on my mind at all that she has what it takes to succeed in embarking on an academic career.

The dissertation of Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Krylova on the theme 'Foreign policy decision-making process in the Federal Republic of Germany' conforms to the requirements established by the Order dated 01.09.2016 No 6821/1 'On the procedure for awarding academic degrees at St. Petersburg State University', the applicant Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Krylova deserves awarding the degree of a candidate of Political Sciences in the scientific speciality 23.00.04 – Political problems of international relations, global and regional development. Clause 11 of the said Order has not been violated by the candidate for the degree.



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