



LUND UNIVERSITY

Neoclassical Realism and Role Theory Revisited

The Comparative Case of U.S. and Chinese Foreign Policies

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Abstract

This thesis explores how structure and national role conceptions (NRC) shape foreign policy behavior. U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors are studied from a system-level and state-level of analysis to investigate how U.S.-Chinese relations are affected by a shifting international structure and roles in the context of rising nationalism under President Xi and Trump. Neoclassical realism and the concept of role theory are applied as the theoretical framework, both are combined into the concept of 'balance of roles'. Order defender, order challenger, defender of faith, and contributor to peace and security were identified as NRCs. A comparative study is conducted, using Most-Similar-Systems-Design to identify similarities and differences between the selected cases. Followed by a qualitative content analysis of key foreign policy documents from the U.S. and China from 2011 to 2019. The thesis concludes that structure shapes foreign policy behavior by providing the limits of how states can act. Conflictual NRCs of order defender and order challenger make the U.S. and China follow a foreign policy of balancing. China pursuing a more offensive realist foreign policy, and the U.S. a defensive foreign policy. The NRC remained stable, thus multipolarity effects foreign policy to the largest extent.

Keywords: United States, China, Foreign Policy, Role Theory, Neoclassical Realism

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
MSSD	Most-Similar-Systems-Design
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRC	National Role Conception
NSS	National Security Strategy
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Shifting International Structures, Role Conceptions, and Foreign Policy

A shift in international system, the rise of China, and the election of Trump as President of the United States (U.S.) are good reasons to believe that the world as we know it might be coming to an end. Stemming from this pessimism regarding U.S.-Chinese relations and the consequences for the world as a whole, the way in which a changing international and national environment shapes U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors has to be further investigated. U.S.-Chinese relations have to be studied using both system and state-level factors, in order to understand why states behave as they do. The complexity of foreign policy behavior cannot be explained by state and system-level factors only, as they fail to address how the two levels interact.

Foreign policy is defined as “both the broad trend of behavior and the particular actions taken by a state or other collective actor as directed toward other collective actors within the international system” (Beach, 2012:3). Ultimately, foreign policy is the execution of national interests, in which states response to other actors and the structure of the system. Hence, the shift in international system structure towards multipolarity, changes in leadership, as well as rising nationalism are assumed to have an effect on U.S. and Chinese foreign policies. How U.S. and Chinese foreign policies are shaped by structure and domestic factors, thus is highly relevant to research.

In recent years, China has been challenging the hegemony of the U.S. both at a regional and global level. U.S.-Chinese relations have been a key focus of International Relations research (Friedberg, 2005:8). U.S. foreign policy of the Obama administration shifted its focus onto the Asia-Pacific region in 2011 to accommodate the reality of a rising superpower (He, 2018:100). Since 2011, U.S. and Chinese foreign policies have focused on testing the limits of their power and influence. President Xi Jinping took office in 2012, promoting an ‘Asia for Asians’ foreign policy, marking a shift from the previous ‘peaceful rise strategy’ to the more

nationalistic and assertive ‘major country diplomacy’ strategy (Schweller, 2018). Similarly, in 2017, President Trump was elected as the 45th President of the U.S. and defined U.S. foreign policy as ‘America First’ and principled realism (NSS, 2017). Trump’s unorthodox approach to politics leads to uncertainty whether the foreign policy will differ from the traditional U.S. foreign policy characterized by values, multilateralism, leadership and pragmatism (Mauil, 2011:174-175).

The empirical case motivates the theoretical discussion of how structure and domestic factors interact and shape foreign policy behavior. Ultimately, the structure of the international system provides the limits of how states can act. As the structure of the system shifts, states seek to adapt to the new realities. Both international and state-level factors have to be investigated in order to study U.S. and Chinese relations in the context of a changing environment. Particularly in the light of changes at the national level due to the election of Trump and Xi.

1.1 The Research Puzzle

The research puzzle focuses on the theoretical problem of how the structure of the international system and state-level factors shapes foreign policy behavior. Consequently, theories that focus on structure and domestic factors will be used in order to tackle the theoretical problem. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is a tool to investigate both the system and domestic factors that shape foreign policy behavior. Under the umbrella of FPA, foreign policy behavior will be analyzed from the state and-international level. FPA provides a toolbox, therefore specific theories have to be used for the different levels of analysis in order to create one coherent theoretical framework. The state-level will be informed by role theory, whilst the system-level will be discussed using neoclassical realism. The interaction of state and system-level will be discussed by combining neoclassical realism and role theory into one theoretical framework: balance of roles.

The comparative case of China and the U.S. motivates this theoretical problem. China and the U.S. being the most powerful actors in the international system, have to navigate and pursue their foreign policies within the multipolar international system. It is interesting to see what influence the structural reality has

on the foreign policies of these major powers, as it has a large effect on the international system as a whole. The appointment of strong leaders such as Trump and Xi and increasing nationalism in the U.S. and China raises the question of how these circumstances at a state-level influence foreign policy behavior, especially in regard to continuation or change of foreign policy.

1.2 Aim and Purpose

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the effects of structure and domestic factors on foreign policy behavior both theoretically and empirically. The theoretical ambition of this thesis is to analyze how the state and system-level interact and how this results in specific foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, the thesis aims to contribute to the existing debate within International Relations and FPA scholarship by investigating U.S. and Chinese foreign policies through a multilevel theoretical framework, that takes both international and state-level factors into account. The thesis contributed to International Relations and Global Studies by investigates the contemporary U.S. and Chinese foreign policies. Moreover, it investigates how the structure of the international system and domestic factors shape foreign policy behavior, by incorporating neoclassical realism and role theory into one coherent theoretical framework. The balance of role concept offers a coherent theoretical framework that can be used to study U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behavior from multilevel and multivariant analytical approach.

Neoclassical realism combines structural realist assumptions of anarchy and power, whilst adding domestic factors in order to explain political phenomena. The concept of role theory likewise bridges agent and structure, by assuming that foreign policy behavior is influenced by the national role conceptions (NRC) of policymakers. The U.S. and Chinese foreign policies of the Obama, Trump and Xi Administrations will be analyzed in the context of a multipolar international system. The change in leadership makes it interesting to see how U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behavior is shaped by a shifting international structure and domestic factors.

Principally, I argue that FPA provides tools to investigate both the international system and state-level factors. Neoclassical realism providing the

theoretical framework for investigating the effects of structure on foreign policy behavior and role theory focusing on the domestic factors. The combination of both results in the concept of ‘balance of roles’.

The theoretical problem is illustrated by the comparative case of Chinese and U.S. foreign policies. The two nation-states share several similarities but differentiate in a few crucial factors, thereby function as a relevant empirical example to investigate what factors shape foreign policy behavior. Systemic and domestic factors are present in each case which allows empirical testing of the theoretical problem. Using the Most-Similar-Systems-Design (MSSD) method the following factors are identified as similarities between the U.S. and China: strong leadership, nationalistic policies, great power, military strength, economic power. The shared factors lead to the assumption that foreign policy behavior is shaped by the factor which is different: the crucial difference. The crucial differences between the U.S. and China is the national role conception (NRC), which can be found at the state level. NRCs are defined as being the perception that foreign policy-makers have on the way in which a state should act within the international system. Following, a qualitative content analysis of key foreign policy documents was conducted.

The theoretical and empirical ambitions of this is to investigate how state and system-level factors shape the foreign policy behavior of China and the U.S., the most powerful actors within the international system. In order to engage with the research puzzle regarding systemic and domestic effects on foreign policy behavior, the following research question has been formulated: *how are the foreign policy behaviors of the U.S. and China in the Asia-Pacific shaped by roles and a shifting international structure in the context of rising nationalism?*

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters: the introduction is followed by chapter 2 which provides the theoretical framework of the thesis. The chapter consists of a discussion of FPA and International Relations, structural realism, neoclassical realism, and role theory. Following with the presentation of the way in which role

theory and neoclassical realism are combined into concept of ‘balance of roles’, and its operationalization. The chapter 3 with the discussion of the literature regarding U.S. and Chinese foreign policies. The methodology is outlined in chapter 4, starting with the presentation of the research design. Secondly, strengths and weakness of comparative foreign policy will be discussed, and the MSSD is illustrated. Lastly, the practical application of the role conceptions and the empirical material used in the thesis are shown.

Following, the analysis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter of the analysis, the variables of the MSSD are presented individually, establishing that the U.S. and China are similar to a large extent, however the crucial difference is different NRCs. The second chapter of the analysis focuses on structure and the way in which it influences foreign policy behavior. The last chapter of the analysis presents the results of the qualitative content analysis of U.S. and Chinese key foreign policy documents in from 2011 to 2019. Identifying the different NRCs expressed by the foreign policy decision-makers of the U.S. and China. The chapter ends with the application of the balance of roles concept. Conclusively, the main findings of the thesis are summarized, strengths and weakness of the research design are reflected upon, and suggestions for further research is made in the final chapter of the thesis.

2. Foreign Policy Analysis, Neoclassical Realism and Role Theory: A Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this thesis. Firstly, FPA and its relation to International Relations theory will be outlined. Secondly, structural realism and its relevance to explaining structural factors and foreign policy is discussed. As structural realism fails to incorporate domestic factors, neoclassical realism is identified to be a more relevant theory to use as part of the theoretical framework since it focuses on systemic and domestic factors, and the relation between the two. Thirdly, the concept of role theory will be outlined as it similarly to neoclassical realism combines the system level and state level. Ultimately, I conclude that incorporating assumptions from neoclassical realism and role theory under the umbrella of FPA into one theoretical framework is the most relevant theoretical approach to analyze both the system and state-level. Finally, the operationalization of the new theoretical framework will be discussed.

2.1 Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox

In this section, FPA is presented as a toolbox to study foreign policy behavior. Quintessentially, FPA functions as the overarching theoretical umbrella of this thesis. The state and system-level will be analyzed by using specific theories for each level of analysis. Whereas FPA is a toolbox and not a parsimonious theory, one has to rely on more specific theories in order to be able to study different levels of analysis and the interaction between the two.

FPA, a subfield of International Relations theory provides a toolbox for explaining state behavior and political phenomena. Foreign policy is defined to be “both the broad trend of behavior and the particular actions taken by a state or other collective actor as directed toward other collective actors within the international system” (Beach, 2012:3). The key in this broad definition being, that it is not state-

centric, both agent and structure is considered. Likewise, FPA seeks to identify the factors “that influence foreign policy decision making and foreign policy decision makers” (Hudson, 2005:2). Unlike International Relations theory, FPA aims to contribute through multilevel and multifactorial approach, which allows cognitive factors of decision-makers themselves to be considered (Ibid.).

The agent-structure problem, one of the most debated topics amongst International Relations scholars essentially focuses on the relationship between social actors/agents and societal structures (Hollis and Smith, 1994). The level of analysis being the main concern for scholars, as the theoretical and analytical approach determines the way in which we study state behavior and foreign policy behavior. Overall, the first wave of the agent-structure debate mainly focused of the social constructivist critique of structural realism. Structural realism as conceptualized by Waltz (1979), essentially only focuses on systemic factors and considers domestic factors or the agency of actors’ inferior to the systemic factors. This assumption was and is heavily criticized by social constructivists such as Wendt arguing that “only human action instantiates, reproduces and transforms those structures” (Wendt, 1987: 345), thereby the agency of human beings has to be considered when seeking to explain and understand political phenomenon. The social constructivist critique was followed by a second wave of the agent-structure problem debate in the 1990s, headed by Hollis and Smith (1991,1994), Carlsnaes (1992), Doty (1997). All criticizing the previous debate and calling for a deeper theoretical discussion, especially when it comes to agency as most scholars have focused on structure.

Without involving in a lengthily debate about the agent-structure problem, which is outside the scope of this thesis, it is significant to recognize that the level of analysis and what factors we perceive to contribute to state behavior affect both theoretical and methodological choices. The agent-structure problem is addressed by scholars of FPA through their multilevel and multifactorial approach. Thereby allowing scholars to draw from a broad range of concepts and being more receptive to combining different assumptions, which in International Relations theory would not be possible. Countering International Relations theory’s focus on structure and

its lack of insights on agency, FPA includes thorough conceptualization of agency in order to overcome possible theoretical blind spots (Hudson, 2005:4). To some extent FPA offers a solution to how to deal with the agent-structure problem within International Relations. Quintessentially, FPA allows a narrower focus on foreign policy behavior, whilst International Relations theories focus on investigating broad trends and a large scope of political phenomena (Beach, 2012:4).

At the heart of FPA lies the incorporation of insights from various different disciplines, this being both the strength and weakness of the subdiscipline itself. Hudson (2005:13) claims that FPA is particularly strong at explain variation in behavior as it regards state-level factors. The strength of FPA lies in the fact that change can be explained even though there is no system change, as empirically foreign policy change can occur despite a stable systemic structure. Additionally, FPA does not deny the influence of structure, however it allows the researcher to investigate other factors aside from systemic factors, which according to the hardcore assumptions of structural realism would not be possible, as the structure of the international system the factor that determines state behavior to the largest extent (Waltz, 1989).

The weakness of FPA is its disregard of hardcore theoretical assumptions, as it incorporates assumptions from various disciplines. Ripley (1993) argues that the incorporate assumptions from structural realism into FPA, as the hardcore theoretical assumptions are incompatible to a large extent. Most significantly, Ripley argues that foreign policy analysts have to “be judicious in drawing from other disciplines-not from a petty concern for pre-serving traditional academic boundaries, but in order to insist on maintaining a practical focus in our study of foreign policy” (Ripley, 1993:404). The main insight being that FPA has to be internally consistent and meticulously conceptualized in order to prevent oversimplification, thus having to draw from different specific theories in order to create one coherent theoretical framework.

To reiterate, state and system-level theories are used under the umbrella of FPA in this thesis in order to study foreign policy behavior from a multifactorial and multivariant approach. In the following sections theories that inform the system

and state-level of analysis will be presented in order to show how the different theories explain foreign policy behavior. Structural realism, neoclassical realism and role theory are identified as relevant theories to discuss when focusing on how systemic and state level factors shape foreign policy. Comprehensively, structural realism provides useful insights on how the system shapes foreign policy. However, I argue that neoclassical realism is more relevant to use, as provides insights on how the system and state-level interact. Role theory is discussed as the concept shows how domestic factors shape foreign policy, as well the interaction of systemic and domestic factors.

2.2 Systemic Factors: Structural Realism

In this section the way in which systemic factors shape foreign policy behavior will be outlined.

Structural realism provides insights on how structure shapes foreign policy behavior. Therefore, the theoretical assumptions of structural realism are frequently used by scholars of FPA in order to analyze the effects of systemic factors on foreign policy behavior. Structural realists argue that state behavior is to a largest extent influenced by their position within the international system (Beach, 2012: 34). Ontologically and methodology structural realism is intentionally reductionist, in order to emphasize the relevance of certain processes (King, 2019:9). Offensive and defensive structural realism differentiate to some degree but overall follow the same theoretical assumptions. Defensive structural realism as argued by Waltz (1979) assumes the balance of power logic, in which states aim on maintain their position within the international system. Power according to Waltz (1993:50) can be measured according to territory and population size, resources, economic capabilities, military strength, political stability and competence. Walt (1988) follows a similar assumption however argues that states follow a balance of threat logic. Foreign policy decision-making is predicted by the following factors: relative power, geographic proximity of powers, offensive capabilities and historical perspectives (Ibid.). Overall, the major difference between balance of power and

balance of threat is that the later incorporates state-level factors such as the perception of elites, hence not only referring to the system level.

Offensive structural realism assumes that the incentives for expansion are provided by the international system and states actively seek to protect themselves (Mearsheimer, 2009; Zakaria, 1999; Schweller, 2004). Mearsheimer expands this logic by arguing that states seek to gain regional hegemony and aim to maximize their power (Mearsheimer, 2009). The foreign policy goals of a state are determined by the distribution of power at the global and regional level, power ultimately being military capabilities of states and geographic factors (Mearsheimer, 2001). Moreover, Mearsheimer denies that global hegemony can ever be reached, thus states seek to become regional hegemons (Beach, 2012:44). As argued by Beach (2012), defensive structural realism is both an explanatory theory and analytical tool in order to understand state behavior, whilst Walt's offensive structural realism is an explanatory theory and Mearsheimer's offensive structural realism an analytical tool for understanding great power politics.

Overall, structural realism and its emphasis on the system-level factors provides insights on how the structure of the international system effects state behavior. The division amongst structural realist theory centers around the different assumptions about anarchy. Defensive structural realists assume that anarchy under certain conditions provides incentives for expansion and offensive realist assume that incentives for expansion are provided by the international system (Taliaferro, 2000/01:135). Whilst structural realism is relevant to analyze the structural effects on state behavior, it does not consider domestic factors, that could possible act as an intervening variable in shaping foreign policy. Thus, structural realism fails to address the state-level and international-level analytical ambition of this thesis in order to examine U.S. and Chinese foreign policies.

2.3 Combing Systemic and Domestic Factors: Neoclassical Realism

In this section the insights of neoclassical realism on how systemic and domestic factors shape foreign policy behavior is presented and its theoretical relevance is argued for.

The theory that combines state and system-level factors is neoclassical realism. Neoclassical realism developed as a response to scholars being dissatisfied by the fact that structural realism does not take state-level factors into account to study state behavior and foreign policy (Beach, 2012: 63). Ultimately, structural realism and neoclassical realism complement one another by aiming to explain phenomena that the other cannot (Taliaferro, 2000/01:132). Neoclassical realism allows a combination of both systemic and state-level factors, by treating systemic factors as the independent variable and domestic factors as the intervening variable (Beach, 2012:65). Thus, neoclassical realism offers a solution to the agent-structure problem by treating structure and units as mutually constitutive (King,2019:8).

According to Glenn (2009:529), neoclassical realism is relevant for FPA for two reasons. Firstly, it can explain why states do not follow the foreign policy that they were expected to follow in the case of obvious threats. Secondly, when the structure of the international system fails to provide a sufficient explanation of preferred foreign policy behavior despite the threats and opportunities being clear. Moreover, the goal of foreign policy decision-makers according to neoclassical realism is “(1) to preserve the state’s physical survival and political autonomy; (2) to maintain its power position; and (3) safeguards all other ideological, religious, political, social and economic goals that they may possess” (Taliaferro, Lobell and Rispman, 2018:198).

Quintessentially, the difference between structural realism and neoclassical realism is “the reality of the incentive structure which Waltz advocates, and the extent to which this structure binds states” (Foulon, 2015:636). Especially, in a Post-Cold war system it has become more evident that the strategic tools available

for states are less restrictive (Kitchen, 2010: 120), thus structural realism often fails to address these changed circumstances which neoclassical realism aims to overcome.

Furthermore, neoclassical realism, as argued by King (2019:9), assumes that units respond to the structure however do not modify it, thus having limited agency and the system structure framing the limits of how the units can act. It is important to note that neoclassical realism is more a theoretical framework than a parsimonious theory, which makes it particularly applicable for examining foreign policy (He, 2017:137). Thus, neoclassical realism can be applied in various different ways such as, the balance of interest concept by Schweller (2004); the balance of risk theory by Taliaferro (2004); the model of grand strategy formation by Kitchen (2010). Whilst the frameworks differ in their conceptualization and operationalization, they all are rooted within the same neoclassical realist tradition. Moreover, the different assumptions of anarchy that divides structural realism into offensive and defensive is also present within neoclassical realism. Zakaria's state-centered realism following the offensive realist assumption of anarchy and Walt's balance of threat concept stemming from the defensive realist understanding of anarchy (Taliaferro, 2000/01:134-135).

The strength of neoclassical realism is that it combines realist assumptions with state-level factors in order to sufficiently explain foreign policy behavior. Therefore, it is more relevant to apply as a theoretical framework compared to structural realism. Nevertheless, to prevent theoretical vagueness particularly when focusing on the national level it is important to incorporate another concept under the general umbrella of FPA: role theory.

2.4 Role Theory Conceptualized

After having discussed structural realism and neoclassical realism, the concept of role theory is presented and the relevance of the concept for the theoretical framework is argued for. The concept of role theory allows an incorporation of both system and state-level of analysis in order to explain foreign policy behavior. Hence, I argue that it is relevant to be used under the umbrella of FPA in order to

inform the state-level of analysis and provide insights of how system and state-level interact.

Role theory in political science draws from assumptions from behavioral psychology, the main scholar being George Herbert Mead (Holsti, 1970; Harnisch, 2011). Mead's "I"- "me" concept centers around the social process of the dialogue between the self and society, the "I" represent the impulsive and creative part of the self, whilst the "me" is the self-reflective part of the self (Harnisch, 2011:39). In a nutshell, individuals cannot be considered as being autonomous, as they act according to societal norms and structures. Hence, all individuals play a role, which they perform according to the situation that they are in. This assumption is key to role theory, as roles originate from various different sources.

Holsti (1970) firstly applied role theory to study foreign policy and regular behavioral patterns, since then the concept has been used by various scholars. Roles are defined as being broad behaviors and attitudes perceived by foreign policy decision-makers (Holsti, 1970: 233). More specifically, roles function as a way to show the motives and intentions of foreign policy-actors (Aggestam, 2004: 77). To exemplify, if a foreign policy decision-maker perceives the role of a state to be that of a great power, the foreign policy conducted will to some extent reflect this conception. Holsti identifies four different concepts as part of role theory:

"(1) *Role performance*, which encompasses the attitudes, decisions, and actions governments take to implement (2) their self-defined *national role conceptions* or (3) *the role prescriptions* emanating, under varying circumstances, from the alter or external environment. Action always takes place within (4) a *position*. That is, a system of role prescription" (Holsti, 1970:240).

After conducting an extensive study of 973 foreign policy documents, Holsti (1970) identifies 17 different role conception: bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional-subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, protectee (Holsti, 1970). By showing how role conceptions affect foreign policy behavior, Holsti made a significant contribution to studying

foreign policy. Building upon his work role, scholars of International Relations and FPA use the theoretical framework to analyze foreign policy behavior.

2.4.1 Social Constructivist Approach to Role Theory

The way in which social constructivism uses the concept of role theory to study foreign policy behavior will be discussed in this section.

Scholars of social constructivism incorporate role theory as part of their theoretical framework to explain foreign policy behavior. Role theory as argued by Breuning (2011:16) links identity and behavior, as well as allowing a systemic investigation of how agents and structure effect foreign policy behavior. Situated within social constructivist International Relation theory, Harnisch, Frank and Maull (2011) argue that role theory is key to analyzing the relationship between actors and the system in International Relations. They perceive role theory to be a “social construct and as a rationalist cognitive concept” (Harnisch, Frank and Maull, 2011:2). U.S. hegemony is investigated by drawing from different examples such as terrorism, Franco-American relations and the role of China. They provide a convincing case for using role theory in International Relations and FPA. They primarily focus on role change, identifying a typology of role change: role adaption, role learning and role transformation. Role adaption being “change of instruments and strategies with stable foreign policy goals”, role learning being “change of foreign policy goals” and role transformation meaning the “change of identity thus interests” (Harnisch, Frank and Maull, 2011:253). The mechanisms of this role change being social learning through socialization (social influence and normative persuasion) and identity reformation (socialization via internalization). The authors conclude that different factors influence role change: democratization of foreign policy, persuasion through communicative action, socialization, divergence between role conceptions, willingness to assert oneself, crisis (Harnisch, Frank and Maull, 2011).

2.4.2 Neoliberal Institutional Approach

The contribution of role theory to the way in which neoliberal institutionalist scholars' study foreign policy behavior will be summarized below.

Neoliberal institutionalism incorporates insights from role theory to investigate how ideational factors explain political outcomes, in particular foreign policy outcomes. Goldstein and Keohane (1993) base their theoretical framework on assumptions from cognitive psychology. Whilst not rooted within role theory the edited book contributes to studying foreign policy behavior as it investigates cognitive factors. The scholars argue that "ideas influence policy when the principled or causal belief they embed provide road maps that increase actors' clarity about goals or ends means relationships" (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993:3). The pathways constitute the road map: world views, principled ideas and causal beliefs. Their hypothesis is empirically tested as they claim that only the testing of the null hypothesis and the presentation of the comparative evidence can contribute to understanding how ideas affect foreign policy (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993:27). The findings show that changes in the condition effect the influence of ideas on foreign policy change to the largest extent and that changes in ideas does not immediately result a foreign policy change (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993:25-26). The edited book makes a strong case for empirically testing hypotheses and for considering ideas as a factor for studying foreign policy and have informed other scholars such as Lisbeth Aggestam in the way in which role theory is operationalized.

2.4.3 Identity, Roles and Foreign Policy

In this section the way that identity and role conceptions are used in order to explain foreign policy behavior is outlined.

Combining role theory and ideational factors, Aggestam (2004) explores the impacts of identity on the stability and change in foreign policy perceptions, specifically role conceptions. Her theoretical framework incorporates rationalist and constructivist elements, in order to overcome the limitations of each theory. Aggestam distinguishing between (1) role expectation, (2) role conception, (3) role performance and (4) role-set. The first three concepts are defined similarly to the

previously defined concept by Holsti (1972). However, Aggestam contributes by adding the concept of role-set, which is defined as “multitude of roles that foreign policy-makers conceive” (Aggestam, 2004: 67). Thus, the role is constituted by a multitude of different role conceptions that interact and form one overall role. Therefore, it is important to identify the different roles within a role-set and in what way the different roles are prioritized and how they interact.

Aggestam applies the three dimensions: ideas of European order, approaches to foreign policy cooperation and integration in the European Union and bilateral relations to British, French and German foreign policy from 1990 to 1999 (Aggestam, 2004). Whilst Aggestam’s empirical case focuses on the unique context of the European Union, her study still provides relevant theoretical and empirical insights regarding the influence of NRCs on foreign policy behavior. Ultimately, showing how role theory can be used to compare foreign policies. Importantly, the identity part of her theoretical framework will not be considered as this thesis does not aim to include an ideational dimension.

2.4.4 Role Conceptions and Stability of Foreign Policy

Role theory can also be used in order to investigate foreign policy stability, the insights will be presented in this section.

Nilsson (2015) focuses on investigating foreign policy stability by combining role theory and crisis management theory. The empirical case the addresses is Georgian foreign policy from 2004 to 2012, particularly in relation to the U.S. The newly developed theoretical framework, the concept of role location and role conflict management are applied. Role location is “a long-term process of interaction between the actor and significant others, resulting in a gradual harmonization of role expectations and intentions” (Nilsson, 2015: Abstract). Roles are divided into alter and ego, where the alter part of the role is the norms and rules of the social structure that influences the actors’ perception and thus the national role conception (Nilsson, 2015:42). The ego part of the role is the actor’s own interpretation and perception of the role; thus, the actor can actively construct its role but still faces constraints due to the social structure (Nilsson, 2015:44). Role conflict management “is the renegotiation of roles in response to a role crisis”

(Nilsson, 2015:42). The roles that he identifies are modernizer, European, beacon of liberty, security-consumer, net-security contributor, sovereign and regional hub.

Overall, Nilsson's research is empirically base, aiming to further develop FPA and role theory. The finding show that the stability of Georgian foreign policy can be explained by the presence of two NRCs that became embedded in the relations to the U.S over time and the Georgian ability to adapt the NRC in response to crisis (Nilsson, 2015). Nilsson's study shows how role theory can be used in order to explain foreign policy behavior, more specifically foreign policy stability rather than foreign policy change. The model is relevant as it shows the interaction of actor and structure, taking both domestic and systemic factors into account, especially when focusing on the economic crisis. Furthermore, his research shows role theory can not only be used to explain change but also stability of foreign policy.

2.5 The Theoretical Framework

To summarize, FPA is a toolbox that can be used to explain foreign policy behavior. Unlike International Relations theory, FPA has a multifactorial and multilevel approach. The key tenants of FPA thereby overcome the agent-structure problem of International Relations, as both agency and the structural can be taken into account. It is important to incorporate a multilevel analysis in order to avoid blind spots when explaining foreign policy behavior, as both system and state-level determine foreign policy outcomes. Whilst structural realism offers a parsimonious theoretical explanation of how structure effects state behavior, it fails to address actual foreign policy behavior (Beach, 2012: 69-70). Neoclassical realism offers a way to involve in a multi-level analysis, whilst still situating oneself within realist theory. Similarly, role theory offers a theoretical framework that is particularly strong at explaining how state-level factors shape foreign policy and the relation to structure.

Neoclassical realism and role theory will be uses as the theoretical framework to assure a multilevel analysis and limit blind spots. FPA is the general umbrella under which the foreign policy behaviors of China and the U.S. can be

analyzed. As FPA is a toolbox, different theories have to be used to analyze the system and state-level. The state-level is being informed by role theory; the system-level is being informed by neoclassical realism. The combination of both allows to analyze how system and state-level interact. Significantly, the individual-level of analysis will not be discussed as I argue that foreign policy behavior is shaped by the structure and NRCs, and not the individual.

Scholars have recently applied neoclassical realism to the case of U.S.-Chinese relations, thus legitimizes the choice of theoretical framework. He and Walker (2015) apply rational bargaining theory and role theory in order to examine how China, as a rising power, can peacefully bargain for its new role. Similarly, He (2017:133) applies a neoclassical realist framework in order to explain U.S.-Chinese relations, arguing that the perception of threat and interests of the leaders of the two states shape the relations.

Significantly, He (2018) applies a new theoretical framework ‘balance of roles’, which incorporates institutional balancing theory and role theory in order to explain the rising multilateral initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region after the Financial Crisis. Arguing that the institutional balancing strategy in an order transition period is shaped by role conceptions. The definition of order being based on Kissinger “a set of commonly accepted rules that define the limits of permissible action a balance of power that enforces restraints where rules break down, preventing one political unit from subjugating” (He, 2018:93). Institutional balancing is defined as “a new type of balancing behavior for states to pursue their realist agendas, such as power and influence, through multilateral institutions in an anarchical international system” (He, 2018:95). Incorporating role theory into institutional balancing theory is argued to be relevant for two reasons: a single theoretical perspective cannot explain the complexity of a shift in the international system; role theory allows the incorporation of another theory do to its flexible theoretical framework (He, 2018:97).

The roles identified are: order defender, order challenger and kingmaker. Order defender being: a state that aims to maintain their position, the order challenger aiming to change the order, and kingmaker being a middle-power states

that becomes important during the transition (He, 2018:99). Whilst He's theoretical framework (see appendix 1) focuses on multilateral institutions and their influence on state behavior, in his case U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and Australia it is a perfect example of how neoclassical realist assumptions and role theory can be incorporated into one coherent theoretical framework. Consequently, the theoretical framework of this thesis aims to follow a similar research strategy to He's 'balance of role' concept.

In a nutshell: I argue that a combination of neoclassical realism and the concept of role theory is the most relevant to be used in the case of comparing U.S. and Chinese foreign policies, as both incorporate the state and system-level of analysis. Furthermore, realism from all International Relations theories allows the most coherent explanation regarding the interaction of system, state and power. The way in which role theory and neoclassical realism will be operationalized will be shown in the following section.

2.5.1 Role Theory and Neoclassical Realism Operationalized

In this section the way in which role theory and neoclassical realism will be operationalized into one theoretical framework will be presented.

Role theory and neoclassical realism will be operationalized similarly to the theoretical of He's (2018) balance of roles concept. Importantly the theoretical framework has been altered to fit the theoretical and empirical ambitions of this thesis, since the balance of roles concept focuses on state behavior within multilateral institutions, and this thesis does not. Nevertheless, it provides a coherent theoretical framework that incorporates neoclassical realist assumptions and role theory. Thus, balance of roles will be operationalized by including some of Holsti's and Aggestam's role conceptions as well as defensive and offensive neoclassical realist assumptions in order to answer research question.

The balance of role concept will be operationalized the following way. Importantly, the NRCs are *ideal role types*, therefore no exact empirical example exist for each of them. He's role conception of order defender and order challenger will be used. Furthermore, new role conceptions will be added, as states can have more than one role and it is interesting to see whether the roles of China and the

U.S. overlap. The additional roles of defender of faith, and contributor to peace and security are based on Aggestam (2004) and Holsti (1970) operationalization of the role conceptions. The way in which role theory and neoclassical realism will be operationalized is outlined in the table below (Table 1). The table shows how the different NRCs are defined and what foreign policy preferences are assigned to each role. Moreover, predictions are made about expected foreign policy outcomes associated with the specific NRCs.

Table 1. Role Conceptions and Foreign Policy Preferences

National Role Conception	Definition/Motives of Role Conception	Foreign Policy Preference	Predictions of Foreign policy outcomes
Order Defender	Maintain position. Prevent any state from challenging their position. Responding towards challenges. Motivated to prevent any change in the current order and de-legitimizing the rising power.	Balancing against challenger Defensive: Balancing of threats: relative power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and historical perceptions Offensive: power maximization, distribution of power and geographic proximity Maintaining regional hegemony	U.S. Defensive foreign policy (Offensive: Trade War?)
Order Challenger	Challenge existing order. Motivated to establish own legitimacy, challenge/reform existing order, maximize interests and minimize costs.	Defensive realism: Balancing against order: to prevent threats, regional and global level OR Offensive realism: power maximization distribution of power, geographic proximity. Predicted outcome: China seeking For regional hegemony.	China Offensive foreign policy
Defender of Faith	Foreign policy is viewed in a normative term; the defending of value systems is prioritized. Responsibility to maintaining a certain ideology.	Normative understanding of foreign policy based on defending these values and promoting them. Ideology and norms are key.	China: Socialism, survival of CCP U.S.: Liberal democracy, liberal values
Contributor to Peace and Security	Commitment to working against threats. Stability, conflict prevention and peaceful conflict management are promoted. Multilateralism. Alliances are motivated by self-interest, not by shared ideology of norms.	Active role in region, military alliances. Emphasis on multilateralism in order to maintain security. International law and diplomacy are used as tools.	U.S. guarantees security for its allies. China: Alternative to U.S.

3. Insights on U.S. and Chinese Foreign Policies

After having outlined the theoretical framework and its operationalization, relevant literature focusing on U.S. and Chinese foreign policies will be discussed in this chapter. Firstly, U.S. foreign policy will be outlined, followed by Chinese foreign policy. The section functions as a way to contextualize the comparative case and outline the foreign policies of the U.S. and China in the Asia-Pacific region. The focus being the foreign policies of the Obama Administration, Trump Administration and Xi Administration. Moreover, the section has the purpose to pinpoint the gap in the literature regarding the selected case and reiterates the relevance of the theoretical framework and the chosen comparative case.

3.1 U.S. Foreign Policy

The U.S. foreign policy is characterized by: its leadership role, the belief that the core values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and free market economy have to be promoted, a tendency to act unilaterally when deemed necessary, strategic use of multilateralism, and pragmatism (Mauil, 2011:174-175). The Asia-Pacific region has been a strategic region for U.S. foreign policy since the Cold War, especially the relationship to Japan (Zhao, 2016). More recently, scholars focus on analyzing foreign policy continuation and change foreign policy in a post-Cold War setting. Specifically, since China is challenging the supremacy of the U.S. globally and in the Asia-Pacific region various studies by neoclassical realist scholars have been conducted in order to analyze and predict U.S.-Chinese competition in the region (Mearsheimer, 2001; Friedberg, 2005; Goldstein, 2007; He, 2017).

3.1.1 U.S. Foreign Policy under President Obama

The literature on U.S. foreign policy of the Obama Administration focuses on how the decline of the U.S. and the rise of China has shaped the foreign policy. Quinn (2011) argues that the power of the U.S. is declining, and Obama consequently

followed a foreign policy characterized by restraint and precaution regards the use of power. Especially, President Obama's 2011 'Pivot to Asia' rebalancing strategy in marked a foreign policy change towards East Asia, particularly in regard to security alliances (Kawashima, 2017:26). With the U.S. shifting its focus onto the Asia-Pacific region, the US-Chinese relations entered into a new phase and the shifting power relations in the region became more evident. Clarke and Ricketts (2017a) apply a neoclassical realist framework in order to assess whether U.S. primacy would be maintained under Obama. Arguing that the changes in the structure of the international system since then end of the Cold War does not influence decision-making to a large extent but the way in which decision-makers interpret these changes (Clarke and Ricketts, 2017a:479). Furthermore, claiming that the Obama Administration followed a 'decline management' policy, in order to accommodate the challenges posed by a rising China.

3.1.2 Change or Continuation? U.S. Foreign Policy under President Trump

Most of the literature regarding the Trump administration's foreign policy focus on outlining the possible consequences of the change in leadership on U.S. foreign policy. Lohmann (2018) argues that Trump's foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific is a continuation of strong leadership, security being the main priority. Similarly, Clarke and Ricketts (2017b) argue that Trump's foreign policy follows the Jacksonian tradition of American foreign policy as conceptualized by Walter Russell Mead. Mead (2001) identifies four traditions within American politics: Hamilton, Wilsonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian. The Jacksonian tradition being characterized by suspicion of federal power, skepticism about domestic and foreign policy, preferring loose federal structures and following folk ideology that primarily focuses on honor (Mead, 2001). Their findings show that the Jacksonian tradition is visible in President Trump's foreign policy in the cases of NATO, Afghanistan, the Syrian War and the Paris Climate Agreement, where the focus is on unilateralism and reestablishing the reputation of the U.S. (Clarke and Ricketts, 2017b: 373). Quintessentially, pointing out how populism and nationalistic tendencies influence foreign policy behavior.

MacDonald (2018) assesses the evolution of Trump's foreign policy in the first year of his presidency, focusing on 19 different issues such as terrorism, NATO, and North Korea relations. The analysis shows that the foreign policy has been consistent. A similar foreign policy strategy to Trump's predecessors in at least 9 cases was followed, especially the foreign policy strategy towards China and Japan (MacDonald, 2018:403). Controversial to some foreign policy commentators that state that President Trump is unpredictable and following an ambiguous foreign policy, MacDonald (2018:409) argues that holistically Trump's foreign policy is consistent and clear. Similarly, Da Vinha (2019) assesses Trump's managing style and foreign policy outcomes in his first year of office by investigating the influence of the advisory system on the decisions to the withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the desertification of the Joint Comprehension of Action Plan, and the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Concluding that President Trump lacks a clear management strategy, however stayed true to his campaign promises in regard to the three selected cases (Da Vinha, 2019:21).

Wolf (2017:100) argues that Trump follows a status-driven foreign policy, and that 'America First' is quintessentially focused on maintaining the U.S. position within the international system. Symbolism being of particular importance to Trump's foreign policy decision-making (Wolf, 2017:99). Interestingly, Trump's obsession with winning and restoring the respect for the U.S. is argued to shape the foreign policy to the largest extent (Wolf, 2017:103). Whilst this thesis does not focus on Trump as the individual, Wolf's argument highlights how perception and structure matter in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Thus, justifying the theoretical of combining role theory and neoclassical realism, since the former focuses on the decision-makers perception of what role the state has and the latter focusing on both systemic and domestic factors.

Similarly, Hur (2018) discusses the 'trade war' between U.S. and China arguing that the conflict over trade shows how the two powers are struggling for regional and global hegemony and that a reworking of the normative framework of the WTO has to be formulated in order to accommodate the new reality. The trade war ultimately started by the Trump administration imposing tariffs on Chinese

imports, in order to protect the U.S. market and counter perceived unfair practices by China (Hur, 2018:406).

3.2 Chinese Foreign Policy

Chinese foreign policy is motivated by one overarching principle: the survival of the CCP (Gottwald and Duggan, 2011). The main foreign policy challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, is to ensure that the regional actors accept China's dominance of the region without estranging the U.S. and destabilizing the region (Saunders, 2014:150). Friedberg (2005: 43) argues that competition with the U.S. will become more intense as China continues to grow. Whilst there is consensus amongst scholars that the rise of China is reshaping regional and global order, the implications of this rise and possible consequences is contested (Goldstein, 2007: 639). Neoclassical realist scholars such as Sorensen (2015) argue that China is pursuing a reactive foreign policy, however is not ready to replace the U.S. as the regional hegemon.

Gottwald and Duggan (2011:239) apply role theory to China, concluding that the Chinese NRC is shaped by domestic expectations, foreign expectation and its self-expectation regarding its role in Africa. The scholars argue that divergent role expectations make foreign policy decision-making extremely difficult, especially in the context of China being viewed as a developing country (Gottwald and Duggan, 2011:234). More recent research as illustrated in the next section, shows that under President Xi, Chinese foreign policy has undergone a shift. Nevertheless, their research shows that role theory is relevant to apply in order to explain Chinese foreign policy behavior.

3.2.1 Chinese Foreign Policy under President Xi

Since Xi Jinping took office in 2012, Chinese foreign policy has become more aggressive by establishing the air defense identification zone in the East Asian Sea and controlling the islands in the South China Sea (Kawashima, 2017: 25). Wang (2019) explores the changes and continuity of Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping, identifying a shift from the previous 'low profile' foreign policy followed of Deng Xiaoping. Arguing that Xi's 'major country diplomacy with distinctive

Chinese features' is a shift away from the previous foreign policy of a developing country and that China might be a non-western model that does not fall into the security trap as predicted by realists (Wang, 2019:28). Moreover, Jakobson (2016:219) argues that Chinese foreign policy had a major shift in 2014, when Xi Jinping delivered his 'Asia for Asians' speech at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Measures in Asia (CICA), resulting in a more assertive foreign policy and implicitly warning the U.S. about Chinese ambitions. Concluding that "a combination of Chinese aspiration for shaping a new regional security architecture tempered by realities and constraints of what China can actually do as this point in time must be acknowledged by both Chinese policymakers and their foreign counterparts" (Ibid.). Essentially, arguing that rhetoric and actual foreign policy outcomes are not the same, and that Chinese foreign policy will be determined by military and civilian leaders, other states, and by people within his own foreign policy elite (Jakobson, 2016:222).

Literature on the domestic factors that shape Chinese foreign policy in particular focus on the rise of nationalism. Johnston (2016/17), Zhao (2016), and Koo (2018) analyze the rising Chinese nationalism and the effects on foreign policy. The findings of Johnston (2016/17:9) show that the foreign policy regarding the territorial dispute in the South China Sea is to a large extent not driven by nationalism, but rising nationalism among society is predictably motivating Chinese foreign policy decision-makers to conduct in diversionary conflict in case the economy stops to develop at the same rate. Controversially, Zhao (2016: 83) outlines how Xi Jinping aims to revive communism as the official ideology in order to increase legitimacy and that nationalism is used in order to guarantee the support of the people. The national security of China is being perceived by Xi as being synonymous to regime security (Zhao, 2016, 94), ultimately meaning that foreign policy is a tool to maintain the power of the CCP. Koo (2018) claims that the territorial dispute in the South-China Sea is an example of rising Chinese territorial nationalism and hegemonic power projection. Underlining that realism and a normative approach cannot fully explain Chinese behavior.

3.3 Concluding Thoughts: U.S. and Chinese Foreign Policies

In this section the literature on U.S. and Chinese foreign policies from both a system and state-level of analysis has been presented.

The literature shows that studying Chinese and U.S. foreign policies is relevant as they are the main actors within the Asia-Pacific region and their interaction has increasingly become more confrontational. Furthermore, it is evident that not only structural effects have to be studied, as domestic factors also shape foreign policy behavior. The gap in the literature is that Chinese and U.S. foreign policies under Trump and Xi have not been studied using a neoclassical realist and role theory theoretical framework, thereby this thesis contributes to the debate by its comparative approach and selected theoretical framework.

4. Comparing Foreign Policies: A Methodology

In this chapter the research strategy of this thesis will be outlined.

4.1 Research Design

Comparative research and qualitative content analysis compose the research strategy of this thesis. The thesis draws on existing theoretical assumptions in order to investigate U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors, thus is theory-driven and deductive. Deductive reasoning starts with theory or a logical argument that these are used to explain a particular case or phenomenon (Halperin and Heath, 2012:209). The U.S. and China have been selected as cases for the small-N comparative study to test the theoretical assumptions about what shapes foreign policy behavior.

The research was conducted the following way. Firstly, a MSSD was conducted as a sampling method for selecting China and the U.S. as cases for the Small-N study, and to identify the factors that explain their foreign policy behavior. The foreign policy behaviors of the U.S. and China is the dependent variable; NRC is the independent variable. The structure of the international system is treated as an intervening variable, as it is forming the limits of what state can do. Secondly, a qualitative content analysis of key foreign policy documents was conducted.

The scope of the thesis is from 2011 to 2019. The year 2011 was selected as the starting point, as President Obama announced his 'Pivot to Asia' strategy in 2011, marking a clear shift by the U.S. towards focusing their foreign policy on the Asia-Pacific and ultimately China. President Xi took office in 2012 and President Trump in 2017, thus the end of the scope will be the beginning of 2019. The scope allows to investigate how and if NRCs change over the course of 8 years. Consequently, the scope includes the very end of the Hu Administration, the Xi Administration from November 2012 onwards, and the Administration of Obama until January 2017, followed by the Trump Administration until present day. The

scope not only focuses on the Trump and Xi Presidencies, as a scope of 2 years would be too short to produce reliable results, and China has been following a more aggressive foreign policy since 2009 (Saunders and Bowie, 2016: 668).

This thesis situates itself within a neoclassic realist perspective, thus only the system and states are considered. Additionally, it is state centric, as only states are defined as being actors of foreign policy. The thesis aims to investigate how structure and state level factors affect foreign policy behavior at a theoretical level, using China and the U.S. as an empirical case in order to test the theoretical assumptions. Importantly, foreign policy change can occur from administration to administration, or within an administration, thus showing that foreign policy decision-making is not limited to the decisions of the President as an individual, but of the government or state as a whole: the administration. The President of the U.S. and China respectively symbolize the state.

4.2 Comparative Foreign Policy

The strength of a comparative method is that it allows theory-building and theory testing (Przeworski and Teune, 1970:30), therefore it was used as part of the research strategy. As argued by Lijphart (1971: 682) comparative methods in political science “indicates the *how* but does not specify the *what* of the analysis”, in sum comparative politics is a method to select cases and not an analytical framework. Small-N comparative studies is the comparison of two or more cases (Lijphart, 1971). Sartori (1970) criticizes this approach to be to be methodologically vague and illogical, as Small-N studies aim to discuss several variables within a small number of cases (Sartori, 1970). Controversially, Lijphart (1971) makes a strong case for how the limitations of comparative small-N studies can be overcome by suggesting four key principles that the researcher should follow: (1) increase the number of cases as much as possible, (2) reduce the ‘property-space’ of the analysis, (3) focus on the comparative analysis of the comparable cases, (4) focus analysis on key variables. Moreover, comparative methods allow the evaluation of different foreign policies and detailed empirical testing in order to produce a comprehensive understanding of specific political phenomena (Aggestam, 2004: 15). Within FPA

the comparative method is a widely accepted method, as it allows to identify general trends, similarities, and differences (Ibid.).

The U.S. and China have been selected as cases in order to empirically test the theoretical puzzle of what shapes foreign policy behavior. Comparing the U.S. and China is relevant and interesting as they are the most powerful actors in the international system and in the Asia-Pacific region, and frequent friction between the two can be witnesses. Furthermore, empirically U.S. and China are interesting to study as both states have leaders that emphasize a nationalistic foreign policy, thus domestic factors evidently are assumed to have some effect on their respective foreign policy. Importantly, nationalism is used to operationalize roles, however, is not treated as an independent variable. Moreover, with a new unexperienced President taking office in the U.S., it is interesting to see whether the NRC is consistent.

MSSD was used as a sampling method for the case selection in order to justify the cases and the comparative approach. It is a frequently used method for case selection in small N-studies and aims to avoid selection bias (Halperin and Heath, 2012:208-209). Comparative small-N studies are based on either the 'method of differences' or the 'method of concomitant variations' by John Stuart Mill (Lijphart, 1971:687). The MSSD (Table 2) is based on the logic that the researcher selects the cases that theoretically share important characteristics but differ in one crucial aspect, this crucial aspect is based on the hypothesis of interest; the similarities function as a control in order to test if the crucial difference results in a variation in the dependent variable (Halperin and Heath, 2012:210). In order to avoid being overwhelmed with variables, the researcher must identify key variables and avoid marginal variables (Lijphart, 1991: 690), intentionally limit oneself to certain variables.

Table 2: Conducting a Most-Similar-Systems-Design

Case A	Case B	
A	A	Overall Similarity
B	B	Overall Similarity
C	C	Overall Similarity
D	Not D	Crucial Difference

As illustrated in the table above, MSSD is a sampling method that allows the researcher to select cases that are comparable, as they share several similarities, but differentiate in one crucial aspect. The crucial difference is thus treated as the independent variable.

4.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis focuses on the text itself and aims to uncover meanings, motives and purposes within a text, unlike quantitative content analysis which focuses on the frequency of how often certain words are used (Halperin and Heath, 2011:310). The strength of content analysis is that it allows subjects to be accessed that otherwise would be difficult or impossible to contact directly and its ability to increase the sample size beyond the sample size that could be obtained by conducting interviews or direct observations (Halperin and Heath, 2012:177). Moreover, it one of the most frequent used research methods to study state behavior (Lamont, 2015: 80), thus it is the most relevant method to apply to studying U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behavior.

Using qualitative content analysis, documents were selected, the categories were defined, the document was studied in its entirety, and a code for each variable was created. Coding is the identification of a certain part of the text and applying labels (Halperin and Heath, 2011:323). The previously identified NRCs were used, therefore the coding relied on priori codes, which are codes created from previous research or theory (Ibid.). The different codes are order defender, order challenger, defender of faith, and contributor to peace and security, and will be described in the next section.

4.3.1 Practical Application of Role Conceptions

The way in which the NRCs were operationalized and used as codes in the qualitative content analysis will be presented below. Fictional examples of phrases are used to illustrate what is meant by each NRC. These phrases function as an example in order to illustrate practical use of the NRC as codes. However, are not what I will look for specifically in the texts.

1. **Order defender:** The order defender is the hegemon and the main foreign policy objective is to maintain this position from any state that challenges it. State A will take in order to secure the position from State B, the order challenger. There is a frequent referral to the responsibility of to protect itself and other states from the order challenger. The foreign policy is motivated by self-interest and State A relies on unilateral action if necessary. State A actively aims to de-legitimize State B by criticizing its actions. State A justifies foreign policy as a response so State B's action, thereby State A and State B are dependent on one another, as they react to each other's behavior.

Examples of phrases: "We have the responsibility", "unilateral action", "protecting the region", "State B is threatening and aggressive", "our special role in the region", and "leadership".

2. **Order challenger:** The order challenger is a rising power that challenges the hegemon, aiming to maximize its own interests. State B seeks to increase its power both hard and soft power, aiming to shape the regional system, based on its own material ambitions. In order to achieve its foreign policy goals an ambitious foreign policy is followed, and various strategies are used to increase influence in terms of military, economy and diplomatic action. State B functions within the system created by State A, playing along the rules to some extent however also creates new institutions in order to challenge State A. State B claims to have a legitimate right to a better position within the regional system, and openly challenges State A. The legitimacy of State B based on the claim that there is a historic right of development and power. If it is a non-western state,

referral to anti-colonial action is made. Emphasis is put on how the reform will be beneficial to everyone, and how State A has failed to deliver mutual benefits.

Examples of phrases: “It is our historic right”, “peacefully developing”, “taking what is rightfully ours”, “security and stability for everyone”, and “struggle”.

- 3. Defender of Faith:** The defender of faith seeks to defend the norms and values. The role conception focuses on the normative dimension. State C perceives itself as being the defender of the value systems. Both liberal and illiberal value system are taken into account, not just liberal democracy. The policy-makers view that the objective of their foreign policy is to defend certain values. Values are used as a way to legitimize action. If values of other states differentiate, they are used against them. Highly normative claims are made, in a ‘good vs. bad’ kind of fashion. Emphasis is put on differences not similarities. Moreover, State C claims that their values are universal and legitimate.

Examples of phrases: “Protecting our values”, “values of XYZ”, “western values”, “non-western values”, “unlike to us, State XYZ does not share these values”, “common interest of...”, and “we have done so in the past, and continue to do so”.

- 4. Contributor to Peace and Security:** The contributor of peace and security is promoting stability, taking action to prevent conflict and focuses on peaceful conflict management. The state D is heavily involved within multilateral organizations and emphasizes diplomacy. Peace and security are not defined in a normative sense but in materialistic terms. The rule of law is also frequently mentioned. State D highlights its role in guaranteeing peace and security, showing how vital it is and highlighting that if they do not take action insecurity is the result. Multilateralism is favored over unilateralism.

Examples of phrases: “promoter of peace and stability”, “multilateral cooperation”, “we are open to talks”, “peaceful conflict resolution”,

“international law has to be followed”, and “only we can guarantee security through diplomatic action”.

4.4 Empirical Material

The empirical material selected for conducting the qualitative content analysis is outlined in this section.

Key foreign policy documents from U.S. and Chinese foreign policy decision-makers constituted the empirical material for conducting the qualitative content analysis. Foreign policy documents were selected as they provide useful insights in the way in which foreign policy decision-makers perceive the role of their state to be. As I could not interview U.S. and Chinese foreign policy decision-makers due to the problem of accessibility and various other reasons, using foreign policy documents as the empirical data was identified as being the best option in order to study U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behavior. Whilst not all material is available to the researcher, foreign policy documents reflect foreign policy behavior and the perception of foreign policy decision-makers, thus can be used in order to study foreign policy behavior.

The empirical material selected for this thesis consists primarily of primary and secondary sources. Academic research has been used primarily as background reading and in order to analyze the effects of the system on foreign policy. Key foreign policy documents of the U.S. and China have been used as primary sources, including speeches by President Xi and the Minister of the Foreign Affairs, President Obama and Trump, 2015 and 2017 National Security Strategy. More specifically, key foreign policy documents were identified to be documents that identify strategies and outlines of the foreign policy in general and specifically referring to the Asia-Pacific region.

All primary sources were selected directly from the White House and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China website. As a criteria the key foreign policy documents had to either be from the President or in the case of China from the President or the Minister of Foreign Affairs (including Vice and Assistant Minister). In the U.S. the main foreign policy decision-maker is the

President, therefore only speeches by the President were selected. In China the Minister of Foreign Affairs is mainly in charge of delivering foreign policy to the public. Foreign policy decision-making is made by the CCP and the President, both offices are currently headed by Xi Jinping. Speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs had to be considered, as the President unlike his U.S. counterpart seldomly delivers speeches on foreign policy.

A minimum of two key foreign policy documents have been selected for each year and per state. The scope ranging from 2011 to 2019, thus 34 sources have been selected for qualitative textual analysis. Exceptionally, for the year 2019 one foreign policy document for the U.S. and China was included, due to limited available speeches. However, 2019 is included within the scope, in order to include the 2019 State of the Union Address of President Trump. Resulting in including one speech from Chinese foreign policy decision-makers for balance.

5. Similar but Different: Comparing the U.S. and China

The first chapter of the analysis focuses on presenting the MSSD. The overall similarities and differences between the U.S. and China will be discussed.

5.1 Overall Similarities between the U.S. and China

In this section the overall similarities of the U.S. and China will be presented using the MSSD (Table 3). Each overall similarity will be discussed individually and argued for. The overall similarities of strong leadership, nationalistic policies, great power, military power and economic power will be connected to different concepts and secondary data will be used to illustrate the similarity.

Table 3: Most-Similar-Systems-Design

United States	China	
Strong leadership	Strong leadership	Overall Similarities
Nationalistic policies	Nationalistic policies	Overall Similarities
Great power	Great power	Overall Similarities
Military strength	Military strength	Overall Similarities
Economic power	Economic power	Overall Similarities
Regime Type	Regime Type	Difference
National Role Conception	National Role Conception	Crucial differences

5.1.1 Strong Leadership

Firstly, strong leadership is an overall similarity between the U.S. and China. More specifically, President Trump and President Xi have manifested themselves as strong leaders, through their action but mostly through their rhetoric. President Trump is very concerned with winning and restoring the global respect for the U.S. (Wolf, 2017:103). Ambitious policies such as wanting to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico, asking European states to increase their contribution to NATO and focus on guaranteeing their own security, and withdrawing from TPP and the Paris Agreement shows that Trump wants to establish himself as a strong leader

whose ambition is to make ‘America great again’ (MacDonald, 2018). Statements such as “I want to have the strongest military that we’ve ever had...nobody would be tougher on ISIS than Donald Trump” (MacDonald, 2018: 401), during Trump’s election campaign illustrates his tendency to boast of his strength and leadership skills.

Likewise, President Xi likes presenting himself as a strong leader. Nie (2016) argues that the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative is a prestige project of President Xi which is used to improve his political leadership performance. Moreover, Xi Jinping’s leadership style is frequently compared to those of Mao Zedong by the mass media, China observers and the general public (Lee, 2018: 473). To some extent, there is a cult of personality around President Xi, where people argue that he is a ‘great leader’ (Lee, 2018: 478). Whilst the comparison to Mao can be disputed, it is evident that President Xi has managed to accumulate more power than his predecessors, by gain full control over inter-party, political organs and agenda-setting (Lee, 2018:477). President Xi’s political ideas were added to the CCP’s constitution in 2017, thus his policies have a long-lasting effect of Chinese domestic and foreign policy, ultimately joining the ranks of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping (Lukin, 2019: 25).

5.1.2 Nationalistic Policies: Nationalism

Secondly, nationalistic policies are an overall similarity that the U.S. and China share; China’s ‘Asia for Asians’ and U.S. ‘America First’ policy. Both policies are characterized by nationalism. Nationalism is defined to be “a strong devotion that places one’s country above all others” (Smith and Kim, 2006: 127). Moreover, Schweller (2018) argues that nationalism and realism complement each other as it “fuels interstate rivalry and by its sharp delineation of in-and out-groups, abets status rivalry, accentuates stereotyping, and deepens and perpetuates perceived grievances”. In particular, rising states use nationalism in order to maintain public support as the public becomes either (1) frustrated that existing powers are not treating them with the respect they deserve; (2) demand for expansion which has been granted by the other states ;(3) dissatisfied with speed of economic development (Schweller, 2018:23).

Whilst nationalism is always present to a certain degree, it is particularly evident during the Trump and Xi administrations which build on nationalistic narrative. As argued by Zhao (2016:83), nationalism is used by Xi Jinping in order to guarantee the support of the people and essentially maintain the power of the CCP. In the U.S., President Trump is pursuing a similar strategy. ‘America First’ follows Walter Russel Mead’s Jacksonian tradition of honor and folk ideology (Clarke and Ricketts, 2017b), essentially being nationalistic in nature. Moreover, Trump’s election can be seen as sign that members of society were concerned with the effects of globalization, thus calling for a return to ‘traditional’ American values and protecting the national identity (Layne, 2018:90). Brice (2015:58) argues that U.S. foreign policy is shaped by promoting American liberal values in order to legitimize action and national pride, hence arguing that nationalism is key in shaping foreign policy decisions. Whilst his argument is convincing especially when set in a realist theoretical framework, it has to be noted that President Trump more so than his predecessor uses nationalism as a way to gain support (MacDonald, 2018).

5.1.3 Great Powers: Hegemony

Thirdly, China and the U.S are both great powers. ‘Great powers’ according to Waltz (1993:50) can be defined as states that score highly on the following criteria: size of population and territory, resources, economic capabilities, military strength, political stability and competence. As illustrated in the table below (Table 4), both the U.S. and China are great powers according to this definition. Both China and U.S. have a large territory, score high on economic capabilities, military strength, political stability and competence. Nevertheless, China’s population significantly outnumbers the U.S.’s population.

Moreover, the U.S. has been the hegemon of the international system since the end of the Cold War, as a result of the structural shift from bipolarity to unipolarity (Waltz, 2000: 38). As argued by Ikenberry (2011) U.S. hegemony is primarily built on military power and Bretton Woods institutions: World Bank and International Monetary Fund. At the regional level, China has established itself as the strategic hegemon in East Asia, due to the relative absence of U.S. involvement

after the Cold War and the decline of the former regional hegemon Japan (Waltz, 2000:35). As China continues to rise it challenges the hegemony of the U.S. at both the regional and global level (He, 2017).

Table 4: U.S. and China as Great Powers

Factors determining a 'Great power'	U.S.	China
Territory	9,833,517 (CIA Factbook, 2017)	9,596,960 (CIA Factbook, 2017)
Population Size	325,719,178 (World Bank, 2017)	1,386 Billion (World Bank, 2017)
Economic capabilities (GDP)	19,391 Trillion U.S. Dollars (World Bank, 2017) GDP growth rate: 2.2% (CIA Factbook, 2017)	12,238 Trillion U.S. Dollars (World Bank, 2017) GDP growth rate: 6,9 % (CIA Factbook, 2017)
Military Strength	Nuclear Weapons Military expenditures 3.29% of GDP (CIA Factbook, 2017)	Nuclear Weapons Military expenditures of GDP: 2% (CIA Factbook, 2017)
Political Stability and Competence	Stable and high competence (UNSC permanent member)	Stable and competent (UNSC permanent member)

5.1.4 Military Strength: Nuclear Weapons

Fourthly, the U.S. and China possess large military strength, primarily in terms of the possession of nuclear weapons. As argued by Waltz (1993:51), nuclear weapons make a state's economic and military capabilities loosened, due to the destructive nature of nuclear weapons themselves. Nevertheless, nuclear weapons themselves

do not make a state a great power, only the utilization of all the capabilities of a state determine its power.

Whilst there is a debate whether nuclear weapons make the international system more stable, and thus secure or not, it is evident that nuclear weapons are significant when looking at foreign policy. The debate is illustrated by Sagan and Waltz (2013). On one hand, Waltz argues that nuclear weapons favor the status-quo, hence making the international system more secure as states focus more on the economic capabilities rather than their military capabilities. On the other hand, Sagan argues that nuclear weapons make the international system less stable as nuclear proliferation is likely to fail due to biases and self-interest of professional military organizations and the lack of civilian control. Whilst no conclusion will be drawn on whether nuclear weapons makes the world more secure, it is evident that nuclear are fundamentally important to a state's military power.

5.1.5 Economic Power

Lastly, the U.S. and China possess the highest economic power in the international system. According to the latest World Bank statistics of 2017, the U.S. has a gross domestic product (GDP) of 19,391 Trillion U.S. Dollars and China a GDP of 12,238 Trillion U.S. Dollars (World Bank, 2017). Significantly, China has a higher GDP growth rate than the U.S., 6,9% compared to 2,2 % in 2017 (CIA Factbook, 2017), indicating that the U.S. economy is growing at a slower rate than that of China.

The U.S. has dominated the global economic and financial system since the Bretton Woods conference of 1944, when the U.S. dollar was the decided to be the main currency (Layne, 2018:92). Nowadays, the U.S. dominates the economic and financial institutions and reproduces its hegemony through the IMF and World Bank (Layne, 2018). China is challenging this economic hegemony by establishing its own institution the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), as a way to compete with the Asian Development Bank headed by Japan and the U.S. (Ferdinand, 2016:950). The competition between the U.S. and China in regard to dominating the global economy, is exemplified by the Trade War. Hur (2018) argues that the Trade War shows the rivalry between the two state over hegemony both at the regional and global level.

5.2 Differences between China and the U.S.

Whilst regime type is an obvious difference between the U.S. and China, I argue that it does not significantly influence foreign policy behavior, thus is not treated as the crucial difference. As illustrated in the literature review, regime type is identified as a factor that shapes foreign policy behavior. Based on democratic peace theory one could assume that the conflictual U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behavior can be explained by the fact that China is not a democracy. However, the democratic peace theory has been falsified several times (Rosato, 2003:585), therefore it is not a reliable predictor regarding regime type and foreign policy behavior. Importantly, despite China being a socialist state, China is fully incorporated into the international system by being a member of all-important international organizations such as the UN and WTO. Thus, regime type is not a crucial difference that explains the foreign policy behavior of the U.S. and China, therefore will not be treated as such.

Nevertheless, it was important to include it as a difference within the MSSD, as it is a key difference between the U.S. and China, and it would be factually wrong not to mention it within the discussion. Importantly, other differences exist between China and the U.S., however I argue that NRC is the most crucial factor from an analytical perspective based on the literature research and the theoretical framework. Thus, NRC has been identified as the crucial difference.

6. Structural Shifts Since the End of the Cold War

In this chapter the relation of the structure of the international system and state behavior will be analyzed. Firstly, the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity of the international system will be discussed. Secondly, structural realism is used to analyze the effects that a shifting international system structure has on U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors. Thirdly, neoclassical realism and its relevance for analyzing U.S. and Chinese foreign policies will be argued for.

6.1 Structure of the International System: From Unipolarity to Multipolarity

The shift from unipolarity to multipolarity will be the main focus of this section.

The rise of China and the possible consequences for the international system has resurfaced the debate of post-World War 2: systemic structure and systemic stability, as scholars aim to predict whether this will result in more stability or instability (Roth, 2010: 567). As noted by Friedberg (2005:8), making predictions on how U.S.-Chinese relations will develop and its effects on the international is difficult and mostly speculative. Within International Relations scholarship the form of the current structure of the international system is contested. Some argue that the U.S. is still the hegemon thus the system is unipolar, others argue that it is multipolar, whilst some claim that if China continues to rise the system is changing towards bipolarity (Roth, 2010:568). In sum, there is a disagreement on what stage the international system currently is in and how it will be in the future (Nye, 2015). Nye (2015:400) argues that the U.S. has been the hegemon since 1991, characterized by its economic resources, its role in the global balance of power, and the unlikelihood of the end of its hegemony. Vezirgiannidou (2013) argues that the structure of the current international system is multipolar, and the key question is how the U.S. will deal with this changing reality particular in regard to rising powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) that

challenge U.S. hegemony. I argue that the current international system is multipolar, as the rise of China and other BRICS countries increasingly challenge the hegemony of the U.S., therefore one can no longer speak of a unipolar system.

Furthermore, a bipolar world system has not been reached yet, as the current world order is not purely defined by China and the U.S., like it was during the Cold War where the world was divided according to ideology (Maher, 2018). The rise of China is possibly shifting the structure of the international system towards more of a bipolar system. However, this would only occur if China continues to establish international organizations and thus challenges global governance. For bipolarity to occur, it would have to resemble that of the Cold War which was shaped by global competition and ideological hostility which prevented the U.S. and USSR from cooperating in any way (Maher, 2018:498). When applying these factors are not present U.S. and Chinese relations, as China is still functioning within U.S. lead liberal international order, despite its attempts to reform it, indicators for a replacement however cannot be identified.

Multipolarity is argued to be less stable structure as bipolarity as the more actors there are the more conflict is created as each seeks to balance with one another (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2000). A multipolar international system makes states are structurally prone to joining reckless allies in order to maintain the balance of power or they rely on third parties to prevent a rising hegemon (Waltz, 1979). To summarize, multipolarity means that more states have the capability to shape the international system, thereby the relations between states is likely to shift due to more powerful actors present in the system.

6.2 Structural Realism and U.S.-Chinese Relations

In this section, U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors will be analyzed from a structural realist perspective, both offensive and defensive.

Making predictions about U.S. and Chinese relations is extremely difficult, as we are only now witnessing how the two states are responding to one another (Friedberg, 2005:8). Nevertheless, theory helps us to make sense of the complex political reality and allows us to comment and analyze U.S.-Chinese relations and

possibly make predictions of how the two states are likely to behave and what foreign policies they follow. Structural realist argues that the placement of states within the international system influences their behavior to a significant extent (Waltz, 1993: 45). Thus, the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the now increasing multipolar international system structure provides explanations on why the U.S. and China behave as they do.

Offensive structural realists such as Mearsheimer (2001), predict that a military conflict will occur between the U.S. and China, as they struggle to gain regional hegemony. Evidences for this can be found in the territorial dispute in the South China Sea, where China is behaving aggressively and the U.S. has to respond to it in order to protect its allies (He, 2017: 149), nevertheless it is not a full blow military conflict however could possibly become one. Likewise, the competition is evident by China establishing the AIIB, in order to counter the U.S. influence over international financial institutions, as a response the U.S. unsuccessfully tried to prevent its allies Japan, South Korea, Australia and European countries to join and rejected to join a Chinese lead institution (He, 2017: 148).

Defensive structural realists claim that in a state of anarchy, it is China's sole ambition to rise, expand territorially and in terms of power, and maintain security (Friedberg, 2005), however the outcome is not as pessimistic compared to offensive structural realists. Friedberg and Ross (2005), argue that China poses a threat however their military strength is not at the same level as that of the U.S. and nuclear weapons pose a weak threat due to nuclear deterrence. Whilst Friedberg is concerned that China cause a threat to the U.S., arguing that China's rise can be contained or limited if the U.S and its allies counter balance China which eventually results in China's rise being slowed down (Friedberg and Ross, 2005:25). Controversially, Ross argues that China does not pose a threat to the U.S. and never will as the U.S. possess strong power-projection capabilities and overall has a superior military capability (Friedberg and Ross, 2005: 26).

6.3 Neoclassical Realism and Structure

After having discussed the structural realist perspective of the effects of the structure of the international system of U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors, the insights drawn from neoclassical realism will be discussed.

Structural realists assume that anarchy and the structure of the international system is the condition that makes states balance with one another, whilst neoclassical realists argue that variance in the expected balance of power logic can be explained by other variables, not just structure (Roth, 2010:569-570). Neoclassical realism assumes that the structure of the international system shapes foreign policy behavior; however, does not determine it and that other factors have to be taken into account (Foulon, 2015). Consequently, U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors cannot be explained simply by a multipolar international system and balance of power. I argue that structure is the stage on which states act within the international system, as a result structure shapes the foreign policy behaviors of the China and the U.S. however does not determine it. Therefore, role theory and its understanding of structure and role conceptions will be discussed in the next section.

6.4 Structure and National Role Conceptions

In this section the way that structure, states and NRCs interact will be discussed.

Roles can be divided into alter and ego, the alter being the norms and social structures that influence role conception, and the ego the policy maker's own role conception (Nilsson, 2015:42-44). Importantly, whilst policy-makers define their own role, the influence of the alter and the placement of a state matters. The way in which NRCs shape foreign policy behavior is visualized by Holsti's model (see Table 5) showing the complex relation of the sources of roles, the alter and ego, and foreign policy behavior. Unlike Holsti (1970), who argues that the system structure is a source of the alter's role conception, I argue that it also shapes the ego part of role. Moreover, I claim that the distinction between the alter and ego is an oversimplification. As China and the U.S. are the two most powerful actors within the international system, the structural realities effect their behavior to a much

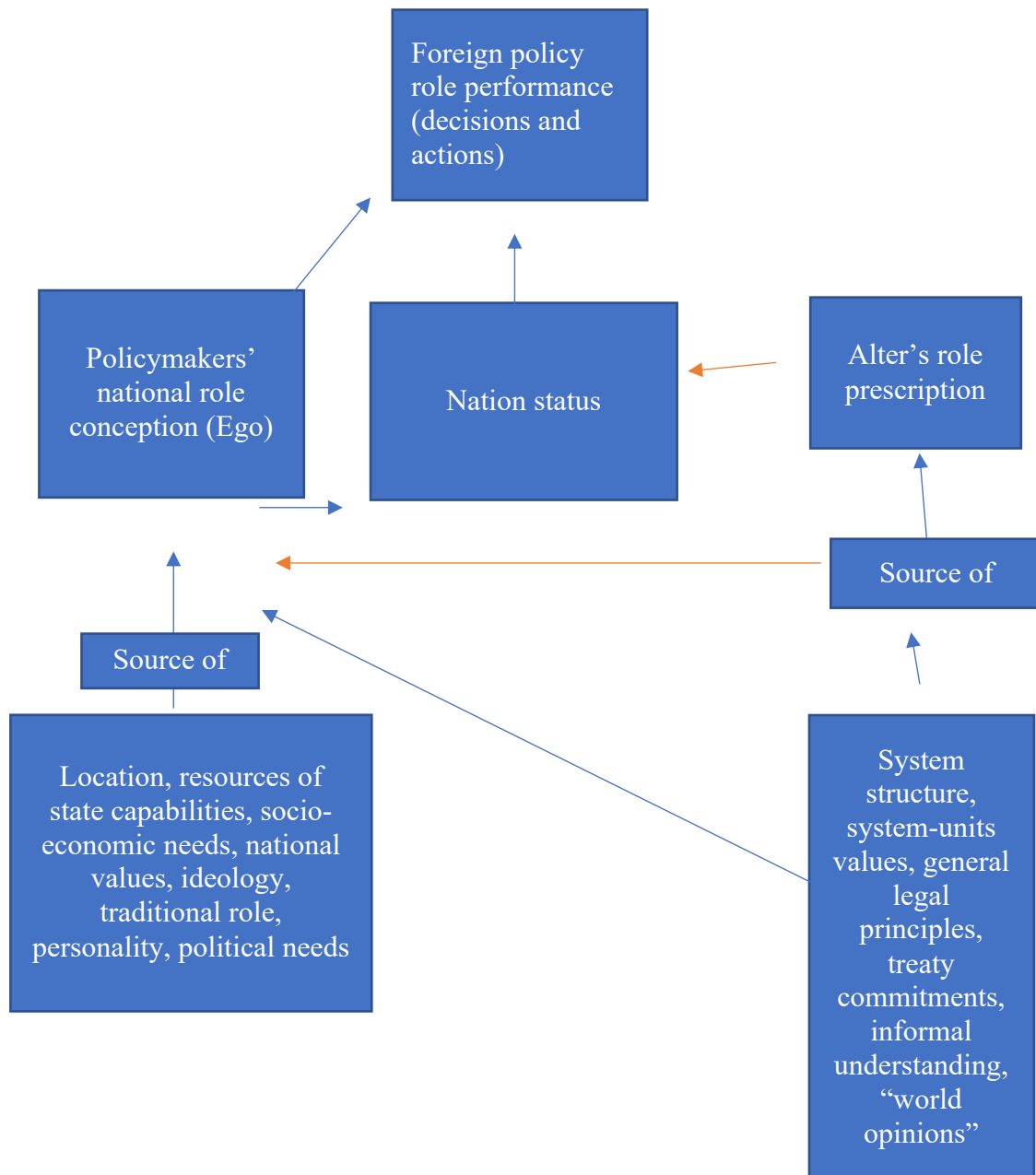
larger extent than that of a small state. Thus, separating alter and ego is an oversimplification which does not take into account how the two are interrelated. Nevertheless, for analytical reasons a distinction has to be made between the two.

The sources of the policymaker's (ego) NRCs are: location, resources of state capabilities, socio-economic needs, national values, ideology, traditional role, personality, and political needs (Holsti, 1970). Whilst the alter's role prescription is shaped by system structure, system-unit values, general legal principles, treaty commitments, informal understanding, and 'world opinions' (Ibid.). The first two sources can be connected to structural realism, whilst the latter to social constructivism, which emphasizes the role of rule, norms and identity in shaping foreign policy. Ultimately, the alter is influenced by social structures that influence their perception and make them behave in a certain way. In Holsti's model (1970:244), the main source of NRC is the ego, as the influence of the alter on the role is perceived to be limited. Controversially, I argue that the international context functions as an intervening variable or defines the limits of the international stage that states perform their roles on.

Role theory treats structure similar to neoclassical realism: it acknowledges its existence and influence. Neoclassical realism assumes that other factors at the domestic level act as intervening variables shaping foreign policy behavior (Nilsson, 2015:37), whilst the structural dimension of role theory focuses more on the way that actors understand and interpret the structural reality (Nilsson, 2015:38). Furthermore, as argued by Nilsson (2015:33) role theory offers a set of concepts that "describe how foreign policy flows from roles in the international system that actors envisage for themselves, and how these roles in turn emerge through social interaction and become embedded in social relationships over time". Moreover, role theory allows to systemic and domestic sources of roles and those foreign policy (Nilsson, 2015:34). Hence, one can argue that U.S. and Chinese foreign policies are shaped by multipolarity, values, international law and world opinions, as they are the sources of the alter's role prescription. Whilst the ego role conception U.S. and Chinese foreign policy is shaped by the policy-maker him or herself. In the NRCs of order defender, order challenger, defender of faith, and

contributor to peace and stability mostly focus on the ego's part of the role. However, as the theoretical framework 'balance of roles' incorporates role theory and neoclassical realism, conclusions can also be drawn on the alter's influence on these roles.

Table 5: Role Theory, Foreign Policy and National Role Conceptions as inspired by Holsti (1970: 245)¹



¹ The orange line indicates that the alter's role prescription has a limited effect.

7. National Role Conceptions of the U.S. and China

This chapter presents the NRCs expressed in the key foreign policy documents of the U.S. and China from the period of 2011 to 2019. The results of the qualitative content analysis of 34 key foreign policy documents² will be presented in order to identify to what extent the ideal NRCs of order defender, order challenger, defender of faith, and contributor of peace and security are present in U.S and Chinese foreign policy documents. The NRC is the perception that foreign policy-makers have on the way in which a state should act. Firstly, the identified NRC of the U.S. will be presented, followed by the NRC of China. Secondly, the concept of balance of roles is applied.

7.1 The U.S. National Role Conception

The NRCs of the U.S. identified in the foreign policy documents are order defender, defender of faith, and contributor to peace and security. Overall, the different NRCs can be found in both the Obama and Trump administration, thus showing that the NRC of the U.S. is stable, deducing from this a continuity of foreign policy can be detected. The findings verify the findings by previous research that was presented in the literature review. President Trump shares the same NRCs as his predecessor, therefore no major foreign policy change is expected in the near future .

7.1.1 U.S. as the Order Defender

The NRC of the U.S. can most dominantly be defined as order defender, since it was the most frequently expressed NRC in all foreign policy documents. Due to the hegemonic position of the U.S. in both terms of hard and soft power it is not surprising that the foreign policy documents show this NRC. Interestingly, both foreign policy documents under Obama's presidency and Trump's presidency show that the foreign policy decision-makers perceive the role of the U.S. to be that of

² For an example of how the qualitative content analysis was conducted see Appendix 2

the order defender of the international system. The main foreign policy objective of the U.S. is to maintain its position and China, the challenger of the U.S. lead order.

Both President Trump and President Obama, emphasis how U.S. leadership was to be renewed in order to adapt and respond to the new political realities, “the renewal of American leadership can be felt across the globe” (Obama, 2012) and “the whole world is lifted by America’s renewal and the reemergence of American leadership” (NSS, 2017). Moreover, U.S. power and hegemonic position is defended by Obama stating that “no rival superpower is aligned against us” (Obama, 2011). Controversially, in Trump’s inauguration speech Trump states that the U.S. has been losing out and that his main attempt is to “America will be winning again, winning like never before” (Trump, 2017). Whilst Obama states that the U.S. already is the leader, Trump claims that this leadership has to be reclaimed. Nevertheless, the belief is the same: the U.S. has to maintain and expand its power.

Reference to China is made in both the NSS 2015 and 2017, showing that there is a consistency of the order defender role among both President Obama and President Trump. “We will closely monitor China’s military modernization an expanding presence in Asia, while seeking ways to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation” (NSS, 2015) and “we will help South Asian nations maintain their sovereign as China increases its influence in the region” (NSS, 2017), show that China is a concern and the U.S. is thus pursuing a foreign policy that is aimed at the Asia-Pacific region specifically. The role of order defender is particularly evident when looking at trade, Obama stating that “since I took office, we’ve brought trade cases against China at nearly twice the rate as the last administration, and these actions are making a difference” (Obama, 2012). Likewise, Trump stating that “the United States will no longer be taken advantage of on trade by China and other countries in the world” (Trump, 2018).

7.1.2 U.S. as the Defender of Faith

The NRC of the U.S. as the defender of faith is expressed in the foreign policy document. Values of liberal democracy and ‘American values’ are expressed as important to the U.S.’s role. The analysis shows that President Obama in particular makes highly normative claims and that values are a key tool to legitimize foreign

policy behavior. The quote “defending democracy and human rights is related to every enduring national interest” (NSS, 2015) from the 2015 NSS illustrates this belief that the U.S. is the defender of liberal democracy. Moreover, President Obama argues that “America must remain a beacon to all who seek freedom during this period of historic change” (Obama, 2013), showing that the U.S. has a moral responsibility to defend their liberal values. In both Obama’s and Trump’s speeches references to God are made, as all speeches end in “God bless America”. Trump specifically defends the Christian values in one of his speeches by stating that faith is as the center of American life and that the motto of the U.S. is “in God we trust” (Trump, 2018).

During the Trump Administration direct references to socialism are made, which was not present in selected the foreign policy documents during the Obama Administration. President Trump directly compares the political systems of socialism and democracy by stating that:

“Here, in the United States, we are alarmed by new calls to adopt socialism in our country. America was founded on liberty and independence — not government coercion, domination, and control. We are born free, and we will stay free. Tonight, we renew our resolve that America will never be a socialist country” (Trump, 2019).

Whilst Trump explicitly talks about the fact that the U.S. will never be socialist, implicitly this is a critique towards China and other socialist states. The liberal democracy vs. socialism debate to some extent resembles the Cold War rhetoric, showing that differentiating ideology is used to legitimize the U.S. as being morally superior to China.

7.1.3 U.S. as the Contributor to Peace and Security

The NRC of contributor of peace and security is the weakest NRC of the U.S., whilst reference to multilateralism is made in both speeches by Obama and Trump, most statements focus on U.S. leadership and increasing power. This finding verifies previous research that stated that whilst the U.S. promoted multilateralism, they always maintain the right to act unilaterally (Maull, 2011:174-175). However, the U.S. sees itself as the only guarantor of peace and security both globally and

regionally, as illustrated by the quote: “we will strengthen U.S. and international capacity to prevent conflict among and within states” (NSS, 2015). President Trump shares this perception by stating that “as part of a bold new diplomacy, we continue our historic push for peace on the Korean Peninsula” (Trump, 2019). The analysis shows that the role of contributor of peace and security is not as heavily emphasized in the foreign policy documents and that there is a continuation of NRC from Obama to Trump. Compared to China who frequently refers to peace and security, the less frequent reference by U.S. foreign policy decision makers imply that the U.S. does not have to defend its role which it was been playing since World War 2, whilst China has to convince other states that it is not a threat.

7.1.4 The U.S. Role-Set

To conclude, the most dominant NRC of the U.S. expressed in the documents is the order defender role. Whilst President Trump’s rhetoric is varying greatly to the rhetoric of President Obama, the actual context is similar, despite the difference in delivery. This is highly interesting and should be investigated further. President Trump uses more nationalistic themes in his speeches, nevertheless the idea that the U.S. is taking more responsibility and leadership is the same, particularly when it comes to protecting the U.S. economy against China. Moreover, there is a foreign policy change under the Obama Administration, where China is first describes as a partner and later heavily criticized for the economic action and territorial dispute in the South China Sea. Whilst the rhetoric changes, the analysis shows that the NRC of the U.S. as the order defender remains stable throughout. The defender of faith NRC is present in both the foreign policy documents under the Obama and Trump administration, where Christian values and so called ‘American values’ are defended. Interestingly, President Obama’s speeches more frequently show the defender of faith NRC, than speeches by President Trump. Additionally, the contributor to peace and security is not as present in the foreign policy documents, showing U.S. hegemony and its emphasis on acting unilateralism, more than multilateral action. The U.S. is perceived as being the guarantor of security in the Asia-Pacific, however less reference to multilateralism is made as the legitimacy of the U.S. is not being challenged as in the case of China.

7.2 The Chinese National Role Conception

The NRCs of China identified in the foreign policy documents are order challenger, defender of faith, and contributor to peace and security. The order challenger role being the most dominant NRC of China. Interestingly, the NRC of contributor of peace and security was particularly often present in the foreign policy documents, this can be explained by the need for China to legitimize their action and goes hand-in-hand with the NRC of order challenger.

7.2.1 China as the Order Challenger

The most dominant NRC of China expressed by policy-makers is the order challenger role, since it was the most frequently identified NRC in all key foreign policy documents. Interestingly, China's role of order defender becomes more explicit over the course of the years. Under President Hu and the beginning of President Xi's Presidency it is emphasizing that China is a 'developing country' (Yang, 2011; Wang, 2013). Nevertheless, despite the foreign policy decision-makers stating that China is developing, the speeches clearly show that China is following an ambitious foreign policy, "we made continuous efforts to uphold world peace and promote common development, further consolidating China's sound international image" (Yang, 2012). From 2017 onwards, China is labelled as a 'major country' and not as a developing country as in previous years (Wang, 2017). This shows that Chinese foreign policy-makers have gained more confidence over the years, thus a shift from 'developing country' to 'major country' occurred, and the role of order defender has become more manifested. Controversially, a change of Chinese foreign policy was already present in 2011 when China was advocating for the importance of national interests by Foreign Minister Yang stating "the safeguard and pursuit of national interests is a country's legitimate duty and lawful rights" (Yang, 2011), hence the statesmen made by Chinese foreign policy-makers, especially when considering that it is a single-party state which frequently uses propaganda have to be critically assessed.

China's role of order defender is explicitly expressed in the foreign policy documents in regard to economy. President Hu states that "we should remain firm

in our resolve to advance reform and make continued progress towards the building of a more just and equitable system of global economic governance” (Hu, 2011). During President Xi the economic aspect of challenger U.S. order becomes even clearer, the best example being the Belt and Road Initiative. President Xi stated at the opening that “in pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we should focus on the fundamental issue of development, release the growth potential of various countries and achieve economic integration and interconnected development and deliver benefits to all!” (Xi, 2017). Nevertheless, China is very careful in their statements regarding the U.S., statements such as “China has no intention to change or displace the United States; the US cannot expect to dictate to China or impede its development” (Wang, 2017) exemplifies this. This position is also evident when it comes to international institutions such as the UN, where China aims for reforms however does not explicitly state that they intend to eradicate the U.S. lead order, “China will firmly promote reform of the global governance system with the United Nations at its core” (Wang, 2013). It is important to consider that this statement was made at the UN General Assembly, consequently it would have been a very risky statement by China to state that the UN was unimportant, however it shows that China seeks to reform the UN, and by doing this reducing the influence of the U.S. on global governance. Overall, China is actively challenging the order of the U.S., however is cautious in the statements that they make. The balance of power is evident as China is aware of the consequences of possibly pushing the U.S. too much.

7.2.2 China as the Defender of Faith

Defender of faith is another NRC expressed in the speeches. Controversial to the U.S., China sees itself as the defender of socialism: “The US needs to understand and accept a China that is following its own path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, one suited to its own conditions” (Wang, 2017). Moreover, the Chinese foreign policy decision-makers perceive that their form of government will benefit other states by saying that “China intends to stay on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, keep to peaceful development, and pursue winwin cooperation with all countries” (Wang, 2018). The defender of faith role is

specifically focused on China itself and on maintain the CCP, whilst no reference is made to China wanting to expand or impose socialism on other countries. Nevertheless, China's emphasis on helping developing countries, indicates a shift from the liberal democracy values of the western world and promotes China as the defender of an alternative faith, despite it not specifically aiming for the promotion of socialism per se.

7.2.3 China as the Contributor to Peace and Security

Unlike in the case of the U.S., the NRC of contributor of peace and security is very strong in China. This can be explained by China having to establish itself as a state that promoted peace and does not threaten other states, whilst the U.S. does not have to do this as it already has gained legitimacy. In most foreign policy documents the contributor of peace and security role is present, both during President Hu and President Xi, showing that it is a stable role. However, this NRC is often contradicted by the order challenger role particularly in speeches on the South China Sea. This emphasizes that China tries to establish itself as part of the international system by stating that "China stands ready to promote mutual assistance with other developing countries and will work with them to advance durable peace and common prosperity of the world"(Hu, 2012) and "we will make the Asian dream of enduring peace and common prosperity come true and open up a great future for Asia" (Xi,2016).

The analysis of the foreign policy documents shows a frequent reference to China's support of multilateralism, as exemplified by following the statement, "all along, China has upheld the international order and pursued multilateralism" (Wang, 2018). This is interesting as it shows how China is well established within the international system and says all the things that such a powerful state should say in order not to be perceived as a threat by other states. The statement by Foreign Minister Wang "as a major responsible country, China commits itself to the path of peaceful development, and China will work with other countries and contribute its share to global peace and security." (Wang, 2018), shows how China tries to establish trust and legitimacy. Whilst it is debatable whether China truly aims to

promote peace and security, it is clear that the Chinese leadership actively uses this role in order to legitimize its foreign policy.

7.2.4 The Chinese Role-Set

To conclude, the most dominant NRC of China expressed by foreign policy decision-makers is that of the order challenger. Interestingly, China showed to have the most contradictory foreign policy goals. Whilst China emphasized their aim to peacefully develop and the importance of multilateralism, it was stated clearly that China aimed to contribute to the world order and intends to do so with a Chinese characteristic. This can best be illustrated by President Xi's statement in 2016:

“Let me stress that China is committed to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea. We firmly stand by our sovereignty and rights and interests in the South China Sea and remain committed to resolving disputes peacefully through friendly consultation and negotiation with countries directly concerned. We will continue to work with ASEAN countries to make the South China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation” (Xi, 2016).

In this statement both the role of order defender and contributor of peace and security is evident. China states that they are key to stability and peace in the region, but at the same time focus on pursuing their national interest. Indirectly China is criticizing the U.S. by stating that only countries who are concerned directly have a say.

The order defender NRC is particularly visible when the Asia-Pacific region is discussed, showing that China has a clear interest. Whilst at a more global level China promotes peaceful development and a win-win for all the countries. Thus, the NRC of contributor of peace and security, and order challenger contradict each other, however being present in all speeches. This is particularly interesting, as it shows that Chinese foreign policy-makers perceive the rise of China as being beneficial for all, whilst still demanding that China will take whatever action they deem necessary. Moreover, as expected, China's NRC of defender of faith focuses on socialism and defending their political system.

7.3 Balance of Roles

After having presented the NRCs of the U.S. and China, the operationalized concept of ‘balance of roles’ will be applied in order to see how the NRCs shape foreign policy behavior. The way in which balancing occurs, the prioritization of roles and role conflict will be discussed.

7.3.1 Two Ends of a Seesaw: Balancing between China and the U.S.

Balancing between China and the U.S. occurs, as the most dominant NRCs, order challenger and order defender, conceived by the foreign policy decision-makers are conflictual. As Chinese foreign policy decision-makers perceive the NRC of China to be that of the order challenger, an offensive foreign policy is followed. Likewise, the U.S. NRC is expressed as being the order defender, thus resulting in a defensive foreign policy. Balancing between the two roles of order defender and order challenger occurs as the roles directly oppose each other. The order challenger and order defender role can be compared to a seesaw, as a movement of one causes a response on the other end. Following this logic, U.S. NRC is shaped by that of China, and vice-versa. The multilateral structure of the international system influencing and limiting the foreign policy options for each state. Nevertheless, this also means that as long as balancing occurs, each state aims for an equilibrium, therefore no major foreign policy change is expected, as an aggressive move from one state would immediately result in a response from the other state.

7.3.2 Prioritization of Roles

Within the national role-sets of China and the U.S., certain roles are prioritized depending on the context. Under President Hu and the early years of Xi’s presidency, the contributor of peace and security was prioritized, as China was still rising and openly challenging the U.S. would have had severe consequences, particularly as the Obama administration has just announced its shifting focus onto Asia. As China’s power increased, and it established itself within the international community, the order challenger NRC was prioritized more and more. Whilst the order challenger NRC was always present, it was not as explicitly stated. Concluding, that Chinese foreign policy decision-makers became more confident

in the rising power of China, as they saw how the structural reality of the international system was favoring them. Moreover, rising nationalism in China could be the reason why the foreign policy decision-makers perceive that China was ready to take over the role of the order challenger. The defender of faith role is mostly used to legitimize action, in the case of China to legitimize the existence of the Chinese socialist state. This role mostly occurs in combination with the other two roles, where Chinese foreign policy decision-makers have to justify their behavior and their alleged peaceful motivations.

The role of order defender was prioritized over the other roles if the role-set by U.S. foreign policy decision-makers under both the Obama and Trump Administration. Unlike China, the order defender role was always explicitly expressed over the selected scope, showing that U.S. foreign policy decision-makers are confident that the U.S. is the legitimate order defender. This can be explained by the U.S. being the hegemon of the international system since the collapse of the USSR, thus not having to justify their actions and hegemonic claims like a rising power. The defender of faith and contributor to peace and security role is used in order to highlight the difference between the U.S. and China, however all fuel into the belief that the U.S. is superior. Prioritizing the order defender role indicates that the U.S. foreign policy decision-makers have identified China as a threat, thus a strong image of the U.S. has to be portrayed to citizens and the allies. The rise of China challenges the U.S., and the shifting international structure to multipolarity, makes U.S. foreign policy focus explicitly on defending their position and balancing with China in the region and at a global level.

7.3.3 Order Challenger and Order Defender: A Role Conflict

NRC are inherently characterized by stability, as foreign policy-decision makers would otherwise find it increasingly difficult to make a coherent foreign policy (Aggestam, 2006:22). Nevertheless, role conflict can occur within a role-set as the dominate NRCs becomes incompatible or contradictory to the other roles of the role-set (Ibid.). Role conflict is argued to occur for various different reasons. Cantir and Kaarbo (2012:5) distinguish between vertical and horizontal role conflict, vertical being a conflict between the elites and the masses, and horizontally being

among the elites. Whilst Aggestam (2006:23-24) claims that ambiguity of roles within a role-set, inconsistent norms, and the contestation of roles lead to role conflict. Moreover, as states possess several roles which often are generated from different domestic and international institutions, conflicting roles is inevitable and conflict is likely to occur when the conditions and context changes (Aggestam, 2006: 23). Whether or not foreign policy change will occur due role conflict is dependent on the policy-makers interpretation (Aggestam, 2006:24).

In the case of U.S. and Chinese NRC no change occurred, thus no horizontal or vertical role conflict can be identified. Despite a drastic change in leadership in the case of the U.S., no change occurred, thus the hypothesis that role conflict is inevitable does not hold in this case. The role-set was stable for both the U.S. and China, despite a change in leadership and a shift in the international system. Based on the findings, no role conflict could be identified in the U.S.' NRC. When regarding China a role conflict between the role of order challenger and the contributor of peace and security can be identified, as the two seem incompatible. Nevertheless, from a Chinese perspective these roles might not be conflictual, as both aim to establish a Chinese lead order, multilateralism thus is interpreted as national interest, and so is the role of the order challenger. However, the conflict between the order challenger and the contributor of peace role explains why China's foreign policy becomes more aggressive and actively seeks to balance with the U.S. as time progresses. A role conflict is presented in the Chinese role-set, whilst no foreign-policy change can be identified, thus meaning that the conflict is not strong enough to cause a significant change in foreign policy. Moreover, showing that Xi Jinping is aware of the balance of power game and the limits of the way in which China can act, thus trying to find an equilibrium between the two roles.

Overall, a role conflict is most dominantly present between the NRC of the U.S. and China and not within the role-set of the respective state. The order defender and order challenger role are incompatible, leading to a role conflict and this resulting in balancing between the U.S. and China. As the U.S. performs the role of the order defender and China that of the order challenger, the role performance is limited by performance of the other. Moreover, role conflict also

occurs between the defender of faith role as the values and norms of China and the U.S. are incompatible, and each state claims normative superiority. The contributor to peace and security is the role that is the least conflictual, however the key being that this role can only be performed by one of the two. Thus, there is not a conflict of roles but more about who has the right to perform the roles, as the interpretation of what this role entails contradict one another.

The case of China and the U.S. shows that role conflict is a relevant concept to use when trying to explain foreign policy behavior, however the concept has to be expanded as the analysis shows that role conflict not only occurs within a role-set but between different role-sets. Consequently, the theoretical framework has to be further developed, in order to address how different role-sets interact, and how conflictual role-sets cause a certain outcome. Importantly, the analysis exemplifies that NRCs generally are stable, despite a change in leadership. Thus, concluding that role conflict only leads to foreign policy change if it is identified to be fundamentally important by the foreign policy decision-makers. As illustrated by the case of China and the U.S., multipolarity, the balance of power, and stable NRCs are the conditions that shape foreign policy, resulting in continuation and not change.

8. Conclusion: Multipolarity and Clashing Roles

In the final chapter of this thesis, the research puzzle will be revisited, the findings will be presented and reflections on the research process will be given.

8.1 Research Puzzle Revisited

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how system-level and state-level factors influence foreign policy behavior. The case of U.S. and Chinese foreign policy behaviors in the Asia-Pacific region was used in order to see how a shifting international structure and role conceptions influence foreign policy behavior.

8.2 Findings

After conducting the research, the research question will be answered: *how are the foreign policy behaviors of the U.S. and China in the Asia-Pacific shaped by roles and a shifting international structure in the context of rising nationalism?*

The discussion on structure and foreign policy behavior concluded that structure shapes foreign policy behavior by providing the limits of how states can act. The shift from unipolarity and the end of the Cold War to an increasingly multipolar structure, promoted China and the U.S. to involve in a balance of power in the Asia-Pacific. Moreover, the structure of the international system effects foreign policy-makers perception of national roles, as there is an awareness of the U.S. being challenges, and China having the opportunity to challenge the hegemonic position of the U.S. at the region and global level. The analysis showed that the NRCs of the U.S. and China were generally stable, despite a change in leadership and rising nationalism under President Xi and President Trump.

Overall, the NRC expressed in the Chinese foreign policy documents were order challenger, defender of the socialist faith, and contributing to peace and security through multilateralism and offering an alternative to the U.S. for developing countries. In the case of the U.S. the expressed NRCs were order defender, defender of liberal democracy, and the only actor able to maintain peace

and security in the Asia-Pacific. Chinese foreign policy generally follows the logic of offensive structural realism, whilst the U.S. is pursuing a more defensive structural realist foreign policy. However, as China continues to challenge U.S. hegemony, the NRC of order challenger and order defender are likely to be even stronger, thus U.S. foreign policy is likely to also become more offensive, as already indicated by the Trade War.

The NRCs of China and the U.S. overall showed to be stable, consequently resulting in a continuity of foreign policy. Importantly, no significant shift between the Obama and the Trump administration NRC was identified, which explains why the foreign policy overall is consistent. In the case of China, the order challenger role was present before President Xi took office, however it became more and more explicit over the course of his presidency. Which explains why Chinese foreign policy became increasingly more aggressive under President Xi. The two most prevalent NRCs of order defender and order challenger indicate why the U.S. follows a defensive foreign policy and China an offensive foreign policy. This also shows the influence of structure on foreign policy, due to the balance of power strategy. The combination of stable NRCs and multipolarity results in a continuation of Chinese and U.S. foreign policy over the scope of 2011 to 2019, despite a change in leadership and increased nationalism.

Role conflict was identified within the Chinese role-set and between role-set of the U.S. and China. In the case of China, order challenger and contributor to peace and security are contradictory, however this did not result in a role or foreign policy change. The role of order defender and order challenger directly contradict each other, consequently shaping the foreign policy behavior. Interestingly, despite a conflict of roles between the U.S. and Chinese role-set no foreign policy change was identified. The continuation of U.S. and Chinese foreign policies is explained by structure, stable NRCs and balance of power.

8.3 Reflections and Implications

The strengths of applying neoclassical realism and role theory in one coherent theoretical framework to explain foreign policy behavior is that it allows a multi-level analysis of the complexity of U.S.-Chinese relations. The operationalized balance of roles concept incorporated neoclassical realism and role theory, which allowed an evaluation of both structure and state-level factors, as well as the interplay of the two. Moreover, the methodological approach of using MSSD allowed to identify the independent variables and made a strong case for the comparison of the U.S. and China. Qualitative content analysis was the most relevant method to apply, as the key foreign policy documents allowed me to identify the different NRCs of the U.S. and China, as perceived by the foreign policy decision-makers of each respective state.

The weakness of relying on foreign policy documents, is that they serve a certain purpose and audience. Especially, in the case of China where I had to rely on translations of the original speeches, thus some meaning could have gotten lost in translation. However, as the speeches were selected directly from the foreign ministry's website, the discrepancy between original and English translation was reduced to a minimum. Moreover, as politicians frequently state one thing and do another, a lot of caution had to be taken when analyzing the foreign policy documents, particularly in the case of China. In order to produce as reliable results as possible, a large selection of primary sources was selected, and compared with the existing literature, in order to remain objective.

8.4 Further Research

This thesis makes a strong case for the relevance of combining neoclassical realism and role theory into one coherent theoretical framework to explain foreign policy behavior. Consequently, more empirical research should be conducted to test the validity of the theoretical framework. The content analysis showed that the rhetoric of Obama and Trump differentiated to a large extent, however that the content was the same. Thus, raising questions on how much rhetoric influences our perception of the foreign policy. Additionally, the concept of role conflict has to be expanded

in order to explain contradictory role-sets and the consequences on foreign policy behavior, since this analysis showed that role conflict can not only occur within a role-set but also between different role-sets. An expansion of the theoretical framework would allow a more detailed understanding of foreign policy behavior and NRCs.

8.5 Final Thoughts

The main contribution of this thesis is theoretical, as it shows how combining neoclassical realist and role theory into one coherent theoretical framework allows a multi-level analysis of foreign policy behavior. Quintessentially, the structure of the international system matters, thus cannot be ignored when studying foreign policy behavior. Empirically this thesis contributes by providing a topical analysis of current U.S. and Chinese foreign policies. The way in which the balance of power will play out in the Asia-Pacific, is the most interesting and relevant question of our time. Whilst only time will tell how U.S. and Chinese relations will develop, this thesis concludes on an optimistic note: Whilst the structure of the system is changing, NRC have remained stable. Thus, no major foreign policy change is expected, therefore it is unlikely that U.S. foreign policy will become offensive. At the end of the day we can all look into the future with pragmatic optimism, all thanks to structure and balancing.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1

Role Conceptions and Institutional Balancing Strategies

Below the operationalization of the ‘balancing of roles’ concept by He is presented.

The table is an adaption by the table in He’s article (2018:10) and has been included in order to show how I have developed the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Role Conception	Motives	Institutional Balance Preference	Examples
<i>Order Defender</i>	No change in the current order. De-legitimate rising power’s challenges	Exclusive institutional balancing against the rising power	TPP (exclude China) AIIB (exclude itself to delegitimize China’s leadership role)
<i>Order Challenger</i>	Establish its own legitimacy base; challenge/reform existing order; maximize its interests and minimize costs	Both inclusive institutional balancing and exclusive institutional balancing	AIIB, One Belt and One Road, Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area
<i>Kingmaker</i>	Maximize its future position and relevance: existing institutions are not good enough	Inter-institutional balancing	Rudd’s Asia Pacific Community(Australia), Hatoyama’s East Asian Community (Japan), Park’s Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (South Korea)

Appendix 2

Example of Qualitative Textual Analysis

Below examples of how the strategic reading and qualitative textual analysis was conducted will be given. All texts were edited using Adobe Acrobat Reader, the comment function was used to code the different role conceptions. Abbreviations were used for the different national role conceptions: Order defender (OD); Order challenger (OC); Defender of faith (DF); Contributor to peace and security (CPS). Two speeches from Chinese foreign policy decision-makers and one from U.S. foreign policy decision-makers have been selected to show how the different role conceptions were identified in the text. Note that not the whole speech is presented in order to make it easier to visually present the process.

An Example of the Order Challenger and Contributor of Faith and Security Role (Wang, 2013)

The screenshot displays the Adobe Acrobat Reader interface. The main document window shows a text document titled "China at a New St...". The text is highlighted in yellow, and several comments are visible in the right-hand sidebar. The comments are from a user named "lenah" and are dated "11. Apr.". The comments are labeled with abbreviations: "OC" (Order Challenger) and "CPS" (Contributor to peace and security). The text in the document includes phrases like "China's new central leadership has put forward the Chinese dream of realizing the great renewal of the Chinese nation", "China will stay firmly on the path of peaceful development", and "China pursues peaceful development and calls on all other countries to embark on the same path".

An Example of the Order Defender Role (Obama, 2012)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a video player. The video title is "President Obama Speaks to the Australian Parliament". The video content shows President Obama speaking, with several lines of his speech highlighted in yellow. The comment sidebar on the right shows a list of comments, with the first one from user 'lenah' at 11:35 A.M. EDT.

11:35 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody. Before I make an announcement about our efforts to stand up for U.S. businesses and U.S. workers, I'd like to say a few words about the situation in Afghanistan.

Over the weekend, as many of you know, there was a tragic incident in which a number of Afghan civilians were killed. What I've made to President Karzai when I spoke to him is that the United States takes this as seriously as if it was our own citizens and our own children who were murdered. We're heartbroken over the loss of innocent life. The killing of innocent civilians is outrageous and it's unacceptable. It's not who we are as a country, and it does not represent our military.

And for that reason, I've directed the Pentagon to make sure that we spare no effort in conducting a full investigation. I can assure the American people and the Afghan people that we will follow the facts wherever they lead us, and we will make sure that anybody who was involved is held fully accountable with the full force of the law.

Yesterday, I met with General Allen and Ambassador Crocker, who were here in Washington, and I've extraordinary confidence in them and in the many Americans who are serving in Afghanistan and who have made extraordinary sacrifices to be there. Today I'll be meeting with Prime Minister Cameron, who is part of our broad coalition serving in Afghanistan, and we'll have an opportunity to consult about the way forward as we prepare for the NATO summit in Chicago later this spring.

So make no mistake, we have a strategy that will allow us to responsibly wind down this war. We're steadily transitioning to the Afghans who are moving into the lead, and that's going to allow us to bring our troops home. Already we're scheduled to remove 23,000 troops by the end of this summer, followed by -- following the 10,000 that we withdrew last year. And meanwhile, we will continue the work of devastating al Qaeda's leadership and denying them a safe haven.

There's no question that we face a difficult challenge in Afghanistan, but I am confident that we can continue the work of meeting our objectives, protecting our country and responsibly bringing this war to a close.

Now, one of the things that I talked about during the State of the Union address was making America more competitive in the global economy. The good news is that we have the best workers and the best businesses in the world. They turn out the best products. And when the playing field is level, they'll always be able to compete and succeed against every other country on Earth.

But the key is to make sure that the playing field is level. And frankly, sometimes it's not. I will always try to work our differences through with other countries. We prefer dialogue. That's especially true when it comes to key trading partners like China. We've got a constructive economic relationship with China, and whenever possible, we are committed to working with them to addressing our concerns. But when it is necessary, I will take action if our workers and our businesses are being subjected to unfair practices.

Since I took office, we've brought trade cases against China at nearly twice the rate as the last administration, and these actions are making a difference. For example, we halted an unfair surge in Chinese tires, which has helped put over 1,000 American workers back on the job. But we haven't stopped there.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/03/13/president-obama-speaks-enforcing-trade-rights-china>

1/2

10 Kommentare

SEITE 1

- lenah 11. Apr. OD
- lenah 11. Apr. OD
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- lenah 11. Apr. OD
- lenah 25. Apr. OD

SEITE 2

- lenah 11. Apr. OD
- lenah 11. Apr. OD
- lenah 11. Apr. OD
- lenah 11. Apr. OD

An Example of the Defender of Faith Role (Obama, 2011)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a video player. The video title is "President Obama Speaks to the Australian Parliament". The video content shows President Obama speaking, with several lines of his speech highlighted in yellow. The comment sidebar on the right shows a list of comments, with the first one from user 'lenah' at 10:42 A.M. AEST.

10:42 A.M. AEST

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Prime Minister Gillard, Leader Abbott, thank you both for your very warm welcome. Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the House and Senate, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the honor of standing in this great chamber to reaffirm the bonds between the United States and the Commonwealth of Australia, two of the world's oldest democracies, two of the world's oldest friends.

To you and the people of Australia, thank you for your extraordinary hospitality. And here, in this city -- this ancient "meeting place" -- I want to acknowledge the original inhabitants of this land, and one of the world's oldest continuous cultures, the First Australians.

I first came to Australia as a child, traveling between my birthplace of Hawaii, and Indonesia, where I would live for four years. As an eight-year-old, I couldn't always understand your foreign language. (Laughter.) Last night I did try to talk some "Strine." (Laughter.) Today I don't want to subject you to any earbashing. I really do love that one and I will be introducing that into the vernacular in Washington. (Laughter.)

But to a young American boy, Australia and its people -- your optimism, your easy-going ways, your irreverent sense of humor -- all felt so familiar. It felt like home. I've always wanted to return. I tried last year -- twice. But this is a Lucky Country, and today I feel lucky to be here as we mark the 60th anniversary of our unbreakable alliance.

The bonds between us run deep. Each other's story we see so much of ourselves. Ancestors who crossed vast oceans -- some by choice, some in chains. Settlers who pushed west across sweeping plains. Dreamers who toiled with hearts and hands to lay railroads and to build cities. Generations of immigrants who, with each new arrival, add a new thread to the brilliant tapestry of our nations. And we are citizens who live by a common creed -- no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, everyone deserves a fair chance; everyone deserves a fair go.

Of course, progress in our society has not always come without tensions, or struggles to overcome a painful past. But we are countries with a willingness to face our imperfections, and to keep reaching for our ideals. It's the spirit we saw in this chamber three years ago, as this nation inspired the world with a historic gesture of reconciliation with Indigenous Australians. It's the spirit of progress, in America, which allows me to stand before you today, as President of the United States. And it's the spirit I'll see later today when I become the first U.S. President to visit the Northern Territory, where I'll meet the Traditional Owners of the Land.

Nor has our progress come without great sacrifice. This morning, I was humbled and deeply moved by a visit to your war memorial to pay my respects to Australia's fallen sons and daughters. Later today, in Darwin, I'll join the Prime Minister in saluting our brave men and women in uniform. And it will be a reminder that -- from the trenches of the First World War to the mountains of Afghanistan -- Aussies and Americans have stood together, we have fought together, we have given lives together in every single major conflict of the past hundred years. Every single one.

This solidarity has sustained us through a difficult decade. We will never forget the attacks of 9/11, that took the lives not only of Americans, but people from many nations, including Australia. In the United States, we will never forget how Australia invoked the ANZUS Treaty -- for the first time ever -- showing that our two nations stood as one. And none of us will ever forget those we've lost to al Qaeda's terror in the years since, including innocent Australians.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/11/17/president-obama-speaks-australian-parliamenttranscript>

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60 Kommentare

SEITE 1

- lenah 11. Apr. DF
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SEITE 2