

Lund University
Department of Political Science

STVA22
Tutor: Daniel Møller Ølgaard

Sino-American Interests over Taiwan

An idea analysis of Chinese and American interests over Taiwan

Lucas Leverström

Abstract

The situation regarding Taiwan has been a long-standing and complex issue. Independence for Taiwan has long been a dream. However, China does not share the Taiwanese dream. China sees Taiwan as a province that has temporally broken away from the mainland; and frames the assimilation of Taiwan back into China as a matter of historical inevitability. America, on the other hand, is committed to maintaining the status quo in the region.

This thesis explains and analyzes America's and China's interests over Taiwan and the underlying reasons for those interests. The hegemonic theory and the theory of neorealism are used to explain the state's actions in the anarchic system. The result shows that both China and America have legitimate security interests over the island.

Keywords: America; China; Taiwan; Hegemonic theory; Neorealism

Word count: 7 690

Abbreviation

KMT - Kuomintang

PRC - People's Republic of China

ROC - Republic of China

UN - United Nations

Table of Contents

1. Introductory Chapter.....	4
1.1 Aim.....	5
1.2 Research Question.....	5
1.3 Previous studies.....	5
1.4 Disposition.....	6
2. Background Chapter.....	7
2.1 Taiwan's History.....	7
2.2 Taiwan's Position.....	9
3. Theoretical Framework Chapter.....	11
3.1 Theoretical Framework Motivation.....	11
3.2 Neorealism.....	12
3.3 Hegemonic Theory.....	13
4. Methodology Chapter.....	14
4.1 Analytical approach.....	14
4.2 Material.....	14
4.3 Limitation.....	15
4.4 Validity and Reliability.....	16
5. Result - and Analytical Chapter.....	17
5.1 China.....	17
5.1.1 Chinese stance.....	17
5.1.2 Chinese Analysis.....	18
5.1.3 Summary.....	19
5.2 America.....	20
5.2.1 American Stance.....	20
5.2.2 American Analysis.....	21
5.2.3 Summary.....	22
6. Concluding Chapter.....	23
6.1 Conclusion.....	23
6.2 Future Research.....	24
7. Bibliography.....	25

1. Introductory Chapter

Taiwan is a keystone in the East Asian security architecture. Whomever Taiwan is allying with has an enormous strategic advantage in projecting power in East Asia. The Taiwan Strait has been a source of geopolitical tension and instability between powerful nations throughout history, from the early European powers and the Qing dynasty to modern-day China and the United States.

Independence for Taiwan has long been a goal. However, the question of independence is not limited to internal actors but also interests several other states. The move for Taiwan's independence could escalate into a catastrophic conflict between China and the United States. Both sides have legitimate interests over the island, but their approaches and priorities differ. China views Taiwan as a breakaway province of its own and has long vowed to reunify with the island. China, for its part, has pursued a policy of "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan, but China has not ruled out the use of force to achieve this reunification. As Xi Jinping has addressed, "We insist on striving for the prospect of peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and best efforts, but we will never promise to give up the use of force and reserve the option to take all necessary measures." (Reuters, 2022).

The United States, on the other hand, is committed to maintaining the status quo and has provided diplomatic and military support to Taiwan for over half a century. The Biden administration has signaled that it will continue to support Taiwan, maintain a strong presence in the region, and condemn China's attempts to undermine Taiwan's democracy. In an interview with 60 Minutes CBS, Biden stated that American men and women would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion (CBS News, 2022).

What consequences an independent Taiwan allying with the United States or a Taiwan being incorporated into China would have nationally and internationally is difficult to predict. What can be seen is that influential countries such as the United States and China, despite the different interests, factors, and perceptions that govern the two countries, all have something to gain both in terms of security policy and power politics as well as economically from their own increased influence over Taiwan. The choice to analyze the United States and China's stances over Taiwan precisely is based on the fact that those states dominate the world politically, militarily, and economically.

1.1 Aim

The objective of this thesis is to analyze China's and America's interests over Taiwan based on the theory of Neorealism and the hegemonic theory. The theories are tested, and the aim is to determine if they succeed in explaining what is intended and, if so, to what degree. If one or both theories turns out to be lacking, that will also be a result of value.

This thesis will be relevant both intra-scientific and extra-scientific. In terms of intra-scientific, this thesis may inspire future research surrounding Taiwan. Further, this thesis and its results could also be helpful in the study of other regional issues. On an extra-scientific level, I hope to contribute to an increased understanding of the Taiwan situation. The thesis does not intend to cover the whole picture of the Taiwan situation. But to describe a limited number of interests that can be linked to the theory of Neorealism and the Hegemonic theory.

1.2 Research Question

My questions:

- What interests do America and China have over Taiwan?
- What are the underlying reasons for American and Chinese interests over Taiwan?

1.3 Previous studies

Previous research has been done on a similar subject; an example is Charles Glaser's article "Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism". The article analysis how China's rise will affect the status quo in East Asia and how The United States views China's rise. Glaser uses structural realism or (neorealism) to analyze China's rise. He manages to conclude that the rise of China does not have to lead to war, even if that is what, from a structural realism perspective, would argue, but only if the United States understands China's position, being China's military build-up reflects China's legitimate desire for security (Glaser, 2011).

1.4 Disposition

The thesis is divided into seven chapters; Introductory, Background, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Result - and Analytical, Concluding, and Bibliography. The introductory chapter introduces the thesis's objective and previous studies. Following the introduction, the background chapter provides a brief history of Taiwan and the current stance on independence held by the Taiwanese. In the Theory chapter, the theory of neorealism and the hegemonic theory is presented. The methodology chapter introduces and discusses the thesis's methodological approach and the material choice. Further, the Result and Analytical chapter presents the thesis's research and the results are analyzed. The Concluding chapter presents the conclusions based on the analysis and provides suggestions for further research. Finally, the references for the thesis are presented under Bibliography.

2. Background Chapter

In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of Sino-American interests over Taiwan, it is necessary to include a background chapter that provides a thorough understanding of Taiwan's historical, political, and cultural context. This background chapter is the foundation for examining the complex dynamics between China, the United States, and Taiwan. This chapter will present the history of Taiwan, how foreign powers have played a role in its history, and further how the Taiwanese stance towards independence and what prompts the desire for freedom in Taiwan is also presented.

2.1 Taiwan's History

Taiwan got its first European name in 1544, as Portuguese sailors passed by it on their way to Japan. The Portuguese named the island of Taiwan *Formosa*, meaning beautiful in Portuguese (Life of Taiwan). Later the Dutch arrived in Taiwan, they were eager to build their colonial empire at this time. After being defeated by the Portuguese in Macau, the Dutch needed a trade and military base in East Asia. The Dutch founded a small colony on the southwest coast of Taiwan in 1624, what is now known as Tainan. The Dutch called this spot Taijowan, a name that later evolved into the Mandarin term for the whole island, *Taiwan* (Life of Taiwan). The Spanish also recognized the strategic importance of Taiwan and set up a colony on the island; as part of the ongoing competition among European powers for increased trade and power in the world. After several years, the Dutch emerged victorious over the Spanish, and without any competition, the Dutch set out to turn Taiwan into a full colony (ThoughtCO).

Koxinga was a Chinese general loyal to China's Ming Dynasty. After the last Ming emperor was overthrown by the Manchu warriors in 1644, Koxinga gathered fellow Ming loyalists and launched a campaign to oust the newly-founded Qing Dynasty. However, Koxinga suffered a series of defeats and was pushed south. By 1660, Koxinga was eyeing Taiwan as a place where he could regroup. The following year he took the Dutch by surprise. Koxinga dismantled the Dutch colony and expelled them from the island, and established authority over the island (Governmental Portal of the Republic of China & Life of Taiwan). Koxinga created the Kingdom of Dongning on the island. However, the kingdom only managed to survive for 21 years. When Qing forces attacked in 1683, Koxinga's teenage grandson quickly threw in the towel, and the island became part of the Chinese empire (Life

of Taiwan). The Qing Empire had possession of Taiwan, but the empire did not see much value over the island since Ming loyalists like Koxinga no longer posed a threat (Life of Taiwan). The Qing Emperor even stated that Taiwan was “the size of a pellet; taking it is no gain; not taking it is no loss.” (E- International Relations). However, in the end, Taiwan was incorporated into the Qing Empire. Migration from the Chinese mainland to the island was prohibited. Nevertheless, grinding poverty and food shortages meant thousands of people in nearby Fujian ignored this rule and sought better lives in Taiwan, and migrated to Taiwan (Life of Taiwan). After European intervention in Taiwan came the threat from another foreign power, Japan. Japans sought to expand their rule outside of their native land. In 1894 the first Sino-Japanese war broke out, and Japan came out victorious. Following defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, the Qing Empire signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which transferred the sovereignty over Taiwan to Japan, which ruled the island until 1945 (Governmental Portal of the Republic of China).

At the end of World War II, the leader of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, American President Franklin Roosevelt, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Cairo. The conclusion of the meeting was that Taiwan and the Penghu Islands shall be restored to the Republic of China; the declaration came to be called the Cairo Declaration. After Japan surrendered the Republic of China, the United Kindom and the United States called out the carrying-out of the Cairo Declaration. Japan accepted, and both Taiwan and the Penghu Islands were restored to the Republic of China (Governmental Portal of the Republic of China). In 1949 the People’s Republic of China defeated the Republic of China in the Chinese civil war (Britannica). This led to the Republic of China’s government relocating to Taiwan, followed by around 1.2 million people from China. In 1971 the United Nations General Assembly passed the U.N. Resolution 2758, and the Republic of China lost its recognition as the sole legitimate representative of China to the People’s Republic of China (Governmental Portal of the Republic of China).

To summarize, Taiwan's history includes colonization by both the Dutch and the Spanish, followed by the establishment of the Kingdom of Dongning under Koxinga. Taiwan was later incorporated into the Qing Empire. After the Japanese colonization of Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, Taiwan was restored to the Republic of China based on the Cairo Declaration. However, in 1949, the Republic of China relocated to Taiwan following its defeat in the Chinese civil war. Taiwan's international recognition shifted in 1971 when the United Nations recognized the People's Republic of China as the sole representative of China instead of the Republic of China.

2.2 Taiwan's Position

For hundreds of years, Taiwan has experienced a rotating cast of authorities that wanted Taiwan and had their will to impose their will on the place. For all that history, the people living in Taiwan could be meaningfully understood as powerless players in a larger geopolitical game. With that, as one may expect, came a history of resistance in Taiwan, specifically resistance against unwanted authority.

Things were especially turbulent when the Qing ruled Taiwan. The Ching annexed Taiwan in 1684 and made Taiwan part of the Fujian province. However, ultimately the Qing saw little value in Taiwan. They sent low-quality officials there who practiced initialized corruption, which led to a turbulent 200 years (Manthorpe, 2009, pp. 112-113). The Republic of China claiming Taiwan in 1945 did not change that historical pattern. Cultural and historical ties to mainland China led the Taiwanese to be initially hopeful that the Chinese governess would be a political improvement. Thus the Taiwanese initially warmly welcomed their mainland brethren, but disillusionment quickly set in as the Taiwanese began to realize that new foreign rulers had merely replaced old ones. The new governor Chen Yi refused to speak Taiwanese, and about 36 000 Taiwanese officials lost their jobs. Further, the new administration refused to appoint any qualified Taiwanese to top-level positions. Combined with mountain economic problems. The Taiwanese quickly turned against the KMT (Kuomintang), the government of the ROC (Chao & Myers, 1998, pp. 21).

By 1947 many Taiwanese were frustrated with the new regime, and a riot in Taipei was triggered when officials of the Taipei City Monopoly Burea arrested a forty-year-old widow for selling untaxed cigarettes; this turned into a full-scale uprising, and widespread protests broke out. The Nationalist government effectively lost control over Taiwan, and the army was called in. When they arrived, thousands of people, some of whom were actively opposed to the KMT, but many were innocent, were massacred in what has since been called the 228 incident or the 228 massacres. It is disputed how many were killed in the incident, but what is not disputed is that it led to a mental shift in Taiwan. This spawned a movement for democratizing on the island (Life of Taiwan, & Chao & Myers, 1998, pp. 22).

There has been an emerging consensus that Taiwan is its own country, with its own culture, its own history, and now its own government. The amount of people that identify as Taiwanese has been on a linear increase since its first election. In 2021 more than 60% of Taiwanese people recognized themselves as exclusively Taiwanese; almost no one recognizes themselves as exclusively Chinese (Election Study Center National Chengchi Univerity).

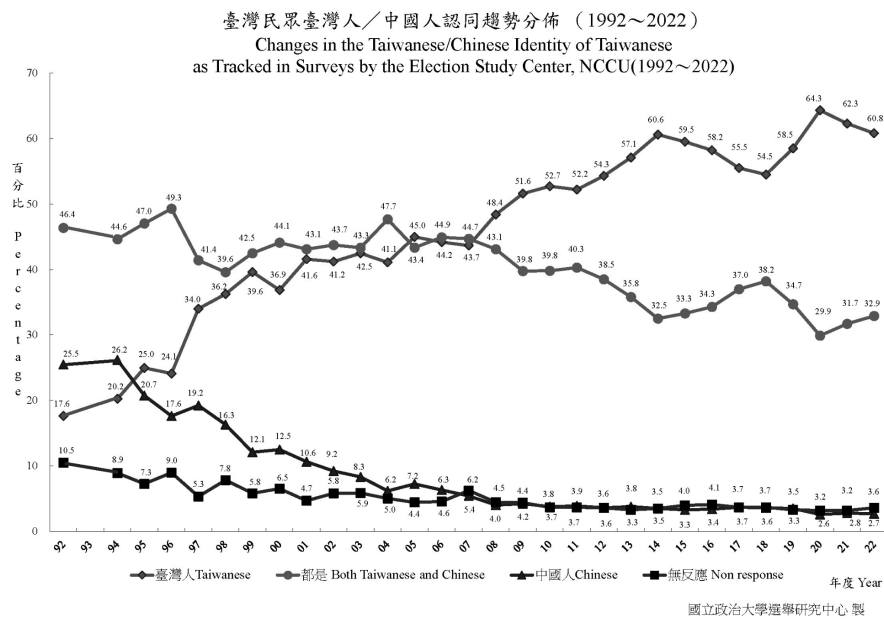


Figure 1: Changes in the Taiwanese / Chinese Identity from 1992 - 2022 (Election Study Center National Chengchi University).

Therefore when the PRC (People’s Republic of China) claims property over Taiwan and makes statements of unifying China and Taiwan, as Jonathan Manthorpe puts it, “Taiwanese do not find this attractive at all” They just got themselves out from one single party state and see no reason why they shall jump into the arms of another state (Manthorpe, 2009, pp. 18). To the Taiwanese, the PRC has always been a foreign government; it has never been a governing authority in Taiwan. And even an aggressive foreign government. Since the KMT moved to Taiwan, Taiwan has almost always been under threat from the PRC. The PRC regularly threatens Taiwanese air space. And stage military drills around the island. To the Taiwanese, this comes across as intimidation; The show of force would not be necessary if the PRC has legitimate claims over the island (China Power). When the government of Taiwan does gesture that it wants to move closer to China, there is often a popular backlash. For example, The sunflower movement in 2014 which protested a trade pact that was thought to give China economic power over Taiwan (Carnegie endowment).

To summarize, The people of Taiwan have experienced authorities seeking to control the island throughout its history; from The Dutch to modern-day China. The 228 incident and the subsequent democratization movement marked a turning point. Today, an emerging consensus views Taiwan as a separate country with its own identity. The Taiwanese resist unification with the People's Republic of China and efforts to align with China face widespread backlash, as seen in the Sunflower Movement in 2014.

3. Theoretical Framework Chapter

This chapter will present the theory of neorealism and the hegemonic theory, as well as the purpose and motivation for using those theories.

3.1 Theoretical Framework Motivation

In this thesis, China's and America's interests over Taiwan will be analyzed through the lens of the theory of neorealism and the hegemonic theory. Both theories are extensions of the broader school of realism; thus, both theories complement each other. The purpose and motivation for including neorealism and hegemonic theory in the thesis stem from the desire to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the complex dynamics in international relations. By combining neorealism and the hegemonic theory, a more thorough analysis emerges, encompassing not only power dynamics and security concerns but also broader systemic and hegemonic considerations. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of both of the country's complex motivations, interests, and actions regarding Taiwan.

3.2 Neorealism

Neorealism, also known as structural realism, is an extension of traditional realism. Kenneth N. Waltz crafted neorealism in his famous book, *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is widely regarded as the book that laid the theoretical foundation for the tradition of neorealism (Weber, 2021, pp. 15-22).

Realists and neorealists agree that states' overriding goal in this international anarchy environment is to survive. The only way that states can reasonably ensure their own survival is to increase their power (Weber, 2021, pp. 15-22). In the world of international anarchy, every state recognizes that it is in their best interest to maximize their own power. Acting based on motives other than self-interest would only make the state more vulnerable. This leads to self-interest being the highest priority for a state. This is what Waltz calls the "security dilemma." He argues that when one state sees another state trying to increase its power to increase its security, it gets scared, feels threatened, and recognizes that it, too, must increase its power. This creates a mad spiral in which all states are competing to have more power than all other states. According to Waltz, this competition for power among states can be very dangerous. However, it does not necessarily have to lead to war as long as no state has significantly more power than another state or coalition of states.

Waltz was very critical of the classical realist idea of attributing causality to "human nature" since a constant human nature cannot explain the apparent variations in war and peace over time (Levy & Thompson, 2010, pp. 31-32). Waltz argued that even good men could misbehave in bad social situations and bad men can behave well if they are in good social situations. States go to war because they are in bad social situations. Waltz calls bad social situations international anarchy. (Weber, 2021, pp. 15-22). The sidetrack of neorealism is thus that it leaves human nature outside the theory.

To summarize, neorealism focuses on the distribution of power among states in the international system. States are responsible for their security and survival and must rely on their capabilities to achieve these goals. This means that states are always looking for ways to increase their power and security, which often leads to competition and conflict with other states.

3.3 Hegemonic Theory

The Hegemonic Theory in international relations is a theory that focuses on the role of dominant powers, also known as *hegemons*, in shaping the world order. The hegemon is the most crucial state in the international system. Hegemonic theorists argue that strong concentrations of power in the hands of a single dominant hegemon in the international system are historically typical and are stabilizing (Levy & Thompson, 2010, pp. 43-45).

Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organski was the first modern scholar to advance the hegemonic theory. He argued that international systems are frequently dominated by a single powerful state that uses its strength to create a set of political and economic structures and norms of behavior. The hegemon is defined as a state that possesses overwhelming economic, military, and political power and can use that power to shape the behavior of other states to follow its will. The hegemon can set the rules of the international system and enforce those rules through its dominant position. Some states are satisfied with the existing hegemonic order and are allying with the leading state; those states receive economic and security benefits from doing so (Levy & Thompson, 2010, pp. 45).

States that are not allied with the hegemon are dissatisfied but are usually too weak to challenge the dominant state. According to the hegemonic theory, the most dangerous and war-prone situation is when one state is rising and dissatisfied with the status quo, begins to approach the strength of the leading state in the system, and threatens to surpass it in power. The rising challenger is motivated to overturn the existing order, which was set up by the dominant state when it was at the peak of its power and serves the interests of the dominant state and its allies (Levy & Thompson, 2010, pp. 45).

Not only is there a possibility that the rising power engages in war but also the hegemon; such a war is often referred to as a preventive war. A preventive war is motivated by the perception of a rising adversary, a shift in power, and the fear that once the adversary is powerful, it will attempt to exploit its advantage through coercion or war. It is driven by “better-now-than-later” logic. A state may be tempted to fight when it is more powerful, rather than later when conditions are less favorable (Levy & Thompson, 2010, pp. 46).

To summarize, The Hegemony theory attempts to explain the world order as a hierarchical order, where a state can force other weaker states to follow its will. Moreover, when a hegemon’s power declines, other states will challenge its dominance and compete for power, leading to instability and conflict. That could lead to a power transition, in which a new state or group of states emerges as the dominant power.

4. Methodology Chapter

This Chapter will present the analytical approach of this thesis, the material, the limitations that had to be made, and the validity and reliability of this thesis will be discussed.

4.1 Analytical approach

This thesis's choice of analytical approach will be based on a qualitative descriptive idea analysis. The task of descriptive idea analysis is to review materials and texts and analyze hidden messages that can be found in the material. This means not only to reproduce the message of political messages but to achieve scientific value, the researcher must also draw conclusions, describe, explain, and take a stand on their chosen material (Beckman, 2005, pp. 50-51). With this analytical method, the material in the white paper and the Taiwan Relations - and Taiwan travel act can be examined, and connections and conclusions can be drawn. Beckman also writes that when someone describes a material, one has to make a statement about its character and content and create a comparison. A comparison can be made between different ideas at different times as well as a comparison between how other systems of ideas have changed from a certain time to another. Finding similarities in a material where one expects differences is interesting and vice versa. A comparison gives us more information by adding additional observations (Beckman 2005, p. 55). By comparing China's and America's interests in Taiwan, one can see similarities and differences in their interests, which is intended for this thesis.

4.2 Material

Since sources from other individual's work have been used in this thesis, great demands are placed on studying the sources critically. In order to ensure that the materials used in this thesis are credible, The Material gathering for the thesis follows the source-critical rules, which include: authenticity, independence, simultaneity, and tendency (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 290). Authenticity means who the sender of the source is and whether the source is what it claims to be (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 291). Independence means where the source comes from and whether it is a primary - or secondary source. A primary source is considered more credible when it comes directly from the sender and has not been rewritten or mentioned in a different way, which can be a problem with secondary sources (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 292–293). Simultaneity refers to how long ago the source was written and whether the

information in the source is still relevant today or whether there have been newer and more appropriate sources (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 294). Tendency means that the source is generally reliable and that it is not directed, for example, negatively toward what is to be written about (Esaiasson et al., 2017, pp. 295).

Specific considerations have been carried out To follow the four source-critical rules before choosing the appropriate sources. One of these is, for example, that all sources have clear authors, and it is easy to find who is behind this information which increases credibility. The Material regarding Chinese and American positions and policies regarding Taiwan comes mostly from primary sources such as official documents and public laws, which increases the credibility of the material. However, secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, have been used to find or confirm information about specific events, such as speeches and interviews. In the cases where news articles have been used, large established media companies have been chosen over smaller media companies to strengthen the information's credibility. Another example of following the four source-critical rules is that the newspaper articles used were published close to the time, contributing to the source's authenticity and credibility; some of the newspaper sources used are Reuters, The Guardian, CGTN, and CBS. All of which are well-established news agencies. The inclusion of both American (CBS) and Chinese (CGTN) Media companies has been used to avoid getting a biased view of the speeches of Xi Jinping. Other secondary sources have been used, such as books and information from the Internet. The use of secondary sources brings specific problems as the analysis is based on previous research from other people rather than from own interviews or research. The reason for this is the difficulties in observing oneself, conducting relevant surveys, and interviewing affected people.

4.3 Limitation

Since Chinese and American interests in Taiwan is very broad, presenting all their interests is impossible in such a short thesis; it has become necessary to make a number of delimitations. I have chosen to focus on understanding Chinese and American stands over Taiwan through the theory of neorealism and the hegemonic theory. This is valuable to keep the work within its given framework and publish a good-quality thesis. This thesis only covers part of the picture of the Taiwan situation, likewise does not the theories cover the whole picture. The main disadvantages of the theories include, to begin with, the most obvious, that only states

are counted as actors in the international arena. Other actors, such as transnational corporations and NGOs, are gaining more and more importance, which leads to aspects that neorealism and the hegemony school leave no room for. The anarchic system also does not, in reality, give room for anything because organizations such as the UN have some international authority. Globalization and the increasing dependence on other states also play a significant role in international relations and alliances today. The limitation regarding choosing sources for China's and America's stances has been official government-published documents, laws, and interviews. This strengthens the analysis because these sources are primary sources.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

Since the thesis is based on the author's ability to interpret the material, this can result in problems for the study's replicability. If the study were to be replicated, the study risks getting a different result based on who is performing it. This means that external reliability risks suffering. However, the study is supported by good internal reliability, as the author has been very cautious when choosing sources. When sources have been used other independent sources have been used to confirm that the information is reliable. This is to avoid tendentious material (Esaiasson et al. 2017, p. 295). I have familiarized myself with the material and theories and thereby created a good understanding of the subject, which also aims to strengthen the thesis's internal validity.

5. Result - and Analytical Chapter

This chapter presents China's and America's interests over Taiwan, and then the results are analyzed.

5.1 China

5.1.1 Chinese stance

Since the founding of the PRC, a vital component of the PRC's historical narrative has been China's so-called Century of Humiliation. As the world industrialized, China fell behind, and as a result, China was dominated over and over by foreign countries, militarily and economically. Capitalizing on China's weakness, foreign powers carved away pieces of it, Claiming them for their own. Given the loss of territories ceded to foreign powers during the Century of Humiliation, the PRC is moving forward with efforts to reclaim territories that have been Chinese territory; this includes Taiwan (Association for Asian Studies, 2020). There has been a corresponding dream to recapture that former greatness and thus definitely end this period of humiliation. According to Xuetong Yan, the rise of China is granted by nature. The Chinese are very proud of their early achievements in the human history of civilization. China has enjoyed superpower status multiple times over the last 2,000 years, which makes the Chinese people proud of their country's past. On the other hand very sad about China's current international status. They believe China's decline is a historical mistake that must be corrected (Xuetong Yan, 2001).

China's dream is to extend its border to its former glory; this includes Taiwan. However, this only works if China can prove that it rightfully owns those territories. China's answer to that stand comes in an official white paper called *The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era* published by the PRC in 2019. In the white paper, the Chinese position on Taiwan is clear; there is only one China, and Taiwan belongs to China. China sees Taiwan as a territory that is rightfully theirs, a territory that was taken from them in a moment of weakness. China frames the assimilation of Taiwan back into China as a matter of historical inevitability; they say that it's something that will happen, but there is no discussion about where it will happen. China argues that it inherited the history of earlier China. They believed they inherited the sovereignty rights of the previous government, the Republic of China, and the territory that the Republic of China held, including Taiwan. The Chinese

see the separation from Taiwan as a scar left by history on the Chinese nation, and both sides of China shall work together to achieve reunification and heal that wound. The Chinese also point out that national reunification is the only way to avoid the risk of Taiwan being invaded and occupied again by foreign countries, to foil the attempts of external forces to contain China. National reunification by peaceful means is the preferred choice of the PRC, as it best serves the interests of the Chinese nation as a whole. However, they do not renounce the use of force, and China reserves the option of taking all necessary measures for unification (The State Council The People's Republic of China). This message of peaceful reunification has also been echoed through speeches by Xi Jinping, with him saying we are striving for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity. However, he does not give up the use of force and reserves the option to take all necessary measures for reunification (CGTN, 2019).

5.1.2 Chinese Analysis

The hegemonic theory suggests that the international system is characterized by the presence of a dominant state (hegemon), that exercises its power to shape the rules and norms of the system in a way that benefits its own interests. The United States has traditionally been seen as the dominant power in East Asia and the rest of the world. From this perspective, China's stance towards Taiwan can be seen as part of its broader effort to assert its dominance in the East Asian region and challenge America's hegemonic position. By asserting its control over Taiwan and challenging America's traditional role as the dominant power in the region, China is seeking to reshape the rules and norms of the international system in a way that benefits its own interests. The 2019 white paper *The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era*, states that Taiwan is a core interest of China and that China will use all necessary means to prevent Taiwan from seeking independence (The State Council The People's Republic of China). This suggests that China sees Taiwan as a key part of its efforts to assert its regional influence and challenge America's hegemonic position. Xi Jinping's speeches regarding Taiwan could also be seen in this context. He has emphasized the importance of reunification with Taiwan as a key part of his vision for China's future and has called for the use of "peaceful means" to achieve this goal. However, he has also stated that China reserves the right to use force if necessary to prevent Taiwan from seeking independence (CGTN, 2019). This also suggests that China sees the resolution of the Taiwan issue as a key part of its efforts to assert its dominance in the region and challenge America's hegemonic positions in the East Asian region.

From a neorealist perspective, could China's stance towards Taiwan be considered a part of a broader effort to enhance its national security and assert its influence in the region instead of challenging America's hegemonic positions in East Asia. Neorealism argues that the behavior of states is largely determined by the distribution of power in the international system. States are seen as rational actors seeking to maximize their security and survival in an environment where there is no central authority to enforce rules and norms. In this context, China's stance towards Taiwan could be seen as a desire to prevent potential threats to its security and territorial integrity. China's stance can be seen as part of a larger struggle for power and influence in the region, with Taiwan serving as one of many flashpoints in this ongoing competition. This stance towards Taiwan is also reflected in the 2019 white paper, which stated that reunification is the only way to foil the attempts of external forces to contain China. This suggests that China sees Taiwan as a key part of its security policy. Reunification from a Chinese perspective would mean enhanced national security. Further, this reflects China's desire to assert its influence in the region and maintain a balance of power that is favorable to its own interests.

5.1.3 Summary

The findings regarding China's interests over Taiwan can be summarized as China's interests over Taiwan can be viewed as part of its broader effort to assert its dominance in the East Asian region and challenge America's hegemonic position. By seeking control over Taiwan and challenging the traditional role of the United States as the dominant power in the region, China aims to reshape the rules and norms of the international system to serve its interests. Further, From a neorealist perspective, China's interests over Taiwan is driven by its desire to prevent potential threats to its security and territorial integrity. The 2019 white paper emphasizes reunification as a means to counter external containment and enhance national security. China's stance towards Taiwan encompasses elements of both challenging America's hegemonic position (hegemonic perspective) and enhancing national security and regional influence (neorealist perspective). Understanding these dual motivations provides a more comprehensive understanding of China's actions and policies regarding Taiwan.

5.2 America

The next piece of this puzzle is America's stance over Taiwan.

5.2.1 American Stance

Following Mao Zedong's revolution in China in 1949, the United States refused to recognize the new communist regime. Instead, the United States continued to recognize and supply the Nationalist Chinese government that had been established by Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan. However, in the 1970s, a new set of circumstances existed. From an American point of view, closer relations with the PRC would bring economic and political benefits. Economically, American businessmen were eager to try and exploit the enormous Chinese market. Politically, American policymakers believed they could play the *China card*, using closer diplomatic relations with the PRC to pressure the Soviets into becoming more malleable on various issues, including arms agreements. The PRC had also come to desire better relations with its old enemy. It sought the significant increase in trade with the United States that would result from normalized relations and mainly looked forward to the technology it might obtain from America (History, 2009).

President Carter's announcement that diplomatic ties would be cut with Taiwan, angered many in Congress. The Taiwan Relations Act was quickly passed in retaliation. It gave Taiwan nearly the same status as any other nation recognized by the United States and mandated that arms sales continue to the Nationalist government (Republic of China). In place of the former American embassy in Taiwan, an unofficial representative called the American Institute in Taiwan, would continue to serve American interests in Taiwan (History, 2009).

The Taiwan relations act was passed to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations between the American and Taiwan (Congress). The Taiwan relations act states that it is the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with defensive weapons and services to help maintain its self-defense capability and to resist any attempt to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait by non-peaceful means. The act also states that America will regard any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means as a threat to the peace and security of East Asia and of grave concern to the United States (Congress).

Nearly four decades later, a new act was enacted to govern the relationship between America and Taiwan. The Taiwan Travel Act, signed in 2018, aims to promote high-level visits and communication between the two countries. The act encourages officials from both sides to engage in various types of interactions, including diplomatic ones (Congress).

The Taiwan Travel Act has led Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of Congress, to visit the island. On her trip to Taiwan, she reaffirmed America's commitment to peace and security in East Asia. By stating, "We are supporters of the status quo and the rest, we do not want anything to happen to Taiwan by force"; "We want Taiwan to always have freedom with security and we are not backing away from that" (Reuters, 2022). President Biden has also echoed this support, going as far as stating that if an unprecedented attack by the Chinese occurred on Taiwan, America would send forces to defend the island. However, after the interview, a White House official said American policy on Taiwan has not changed. Officially, America maintains "strategic ambiguity" on whether American forces would defend Taiwan, but the Taiwan Relations Act obligates America to help equip Taiwan to defend itself (CBS News, 2022).

5.2.2 American Analysis

From a hegemonic perspective, America may view Taiwan as a key strategic partner in East Asia. Supporting Taiwan's security could be seen as a part of America's broader strategy of maintaining its hegemonic position in the region. One way America supports Taiwan is through the Taiwan Relations Act, which obligates the United States to help equip Taiwan to defend itself if an attack were to happen. Further, can Biden's statements regarding Taiwan can be seen as an effort to maintain the American influence in East Asia and counter any potential challenges to its hegemonic position. By maintaining the status quo, America can continue to project its power and influence in the region and prevent any potential shifts in the balance of power that could threaten its hegemonic position in East Asia.

Neorealism emphasizes the importance of the balance of power in the international system. According to neorealism, states are primarily concerned with their own security and seek to maintain a balance of power to prevent any one state from becoming too dominant. China's rise could be seen as a threat that China may seek to challenge America's hegemonic position in the region. The Taiwan Relations Act and the Taiwan Travel Act as well as Joe Biden's recent statement can be seen as part of America's broader strategy of balancing

against China's rise. This demonstrates America's willingness to support Taiwan and counterbalance China's growing influence in the region. By providing defensive weapons to Taiwan, the United States can help to strengthen Taiwan's position towards China and prevent China from exerting too much influence over Taiwan. Joe Biden's statements on Taiwan emphasizing the importance of maintaining the status quo could help to deter China from taking aggressive actions towards Taiwan and prevent any potential conflict that could disrupt the balance of power in the region.

5.2.3 Summary

The findings regarding America's interest over Taiwan can be summarized as, America views Taiwan as a key strategic partner in the East Asian region, and supporting Taiwan's security is aligned with America's broader strategy of maintaining its hegemonic position in East Asia. The Taiwan Relations Act and The Taiwan Travel Act demonstrate America's effort to preserve its influence in the region and counter any potential challenges to its position. Further, through the lens of neorealism, America is concerned that China's rise may threaten its security and challenge its hegemonic position in the region. Therefore, America's interest over Taiwan has elements of both fear of challenging its hegemonic position and enhancing national security and regional influence. Understanding these dual motivations is essential to comprehending America's actions and policies towards Taiwan.

6. Concluding Chapter

6.1 Conclusion

This thesis has examined the interests of America and China regarding Taiwan and explored the underlying reasons for their interests from the perspectives of neorealism and the hegemonic theory. Through an analysis of key documents such as the Taiwan Relations Act, Taiwan Travel Act, speeches, and interviews with American policymakers like President Biden and Nancy Pelosi, as well as speeches by Chinese President Xi Jinping and the white paper on Taiwan, a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics have emerged.

At the beginning of the thesis, the questions were: What interests do America and China have over Taiwan?; What are the underlying reasons for American and Chinese interests in Taiwan? To briefly answer the questions above, regarding America's stance, from a neorealist perspective, it has become evident that the United States is driven by security concerns from China's growing influence in East Asia. The Taiwan Relations Act and Taiwan Travel Act are testaments to America's commitment to supporting Taiwan's security and deterring any aggressive actions by China. These measures aim to prevent the consolidation of Chinese power in the region and maintain a balance that aligns with American interests.

From China's perspective, reunification with Taiwan aligns with China's broader goals of national security and territorial integrity, as reflected in Xi Jinping's speeches and the white paper on Taiwan. From a hegemonic perspective, China's interest over Taiwan can be seen as part of its broader effort to assert its dominance in East Asia and challenge America's hegemonic position. China views the resolution of the Taiwan issue as a critical part of its efforts to reshape the rules and norms of the international system in a way that benefits its interests.

The underlying reasons for American and Chinese interests over Taiwan reveal a complex interplay of power dynamics, security concerns, and regional influence. By employing neorealism and hegemonic theory as analytical frameworks, this thesis has shed light on the complex motivations shaping the policies of China and America.

The findings of this thesis are useful in understanding the power dynamics in East Asia. This knowledge is crucial for policymakers, as it allows for a better understanding of the Taiwan situation. Furthermore, this thesis advances our understanding of the complexities surrounding Taiwan within the Sino-American relationship. Moreover, this thesis enriches the

broader study of realism by applying its theoretical principles to the specific case of Taiwan, thereby advancing our knowledge and providing a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse within the field of international relations.

6.2 Future Research

The analysis of America's and China's interests over Taiwan through the lens of neorealism and the hegemonic theory provides a foundation for further research. Some areas for future research could be in doing a comparative study, that could be conducted across different regions or cases. By comparing the China-Taiwan-American relationship with other disputed regions, researchers could identify common patterns and variations in the power dynamics, interests, and strategies. Further, expanding the analysis beyond the United States and China to include the involvement of other nations could enrich our understanding of the Taiwan issue. For example, analyzing the positions and actions of countries like Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other European powers over Taiwan. That could help uncover a broader picture of the Taiwan situation. Furthermore, exploring the influence of political leaders such as Joe Biden or Xi Jinping provides valuable insights. Moreover, could future research include other theoretical frameworks. All this could deepen our understanding of power dynamics and draw a more nuanced picture of the Taiwan situation.

7. Bibliography

Books

Beckman, Ludvig. 2005. Grundbok i idéanalys. Det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer. Stockholm: Santérus Förlag.

Chao, Linda – Myers, Ramon H.. 1998. The First Chinese Democracy - Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Esaiasson, Peter. Giljam, Mikael. Oscarsson, Henrik. Wängnerud, Lena. 2017. Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik.

Levy, Jack S. – Thompson, William, R. 2010. Causes of War. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Manthorpe, Jontahan. 2009. Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan. New York: ST. Martin's Griffin.

Weber, Cynthia. 2001. International relations theory: a critical introduction, London: Routledge.

Articles

Glaser, Charles. (2011). Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(2), pp. 80-91.

Yan, Xuetong. (2001). The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes. *Journal of Contemporary China* 10(26), pp. 33-39. DOI:10.1080/10670560123407

.

Electronic Sources

Britannica's website, Taiwan. [Electronic] Available:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan>. Downloaded: 2023-05-13.

Carnegie endowment's website. The Activist Legacy of Taiwan's Sunflower Movement.

[Electronic] Available:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/08/02/activist-legacy-of-taiwan-s-sunflower-movement-pub-76966>. Downloaded: 2023-05-15.

CBS News, 2022. "Biden tells 60 Minutes U.S. troops would defend Taiwan, but White House says this is not official U.S. policy". News Article. 2022-09-18. [Electronic]

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-joe-biden-taiwan-60-minutes-2022-09-18/>.

Downloaded: 2023-05-08.

CGTN news, 2019. "Opinion: Will the Chinese mainland take Taiwan by force?". News Article. 2019-01-02. [Electronic]

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d414d344d7a4e31457a6333566d54/index.html>.

Downloaded: 2023-05-21.

China Power's website, Tracking China's April 2023 Military Exercises around Taiwan.

[Electronic] Available:

<https://chinapower.csis.org/tracking-chinas-april-2023-military-exercises-around-taiwan/>.

Downloaded: 2023-05-15.

Congress's website, H.R.2479 - Taiwan Relations Act. [Electronic] Tillgänglig:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>. Downloaded: 2023-05-09.

Congress's website, H.R.535 - Taiwan Travel Act. [Electronic] Tillgänglig:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/535>. Downloaded: 2023-05-09.

Election Study Center National Chengchi University's website. Taiwanese / Chinese Identity(1992/06~2022/12). [Electronic] Available:

<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7800&id=6961>.

Downloaded: 2023-05-21.

Governmental Portal of the Republic of China's website, HISTORY. [Electronic] Tillgänglig:

https://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_3.php. Downloaded: 2023-05-13.

History's website, United States announces that it will recognize communist China.

[Electronic] Tillgänglig:

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/united-states-announces-that-it-will-recognize-communist-china>. Downloaded: 2023-05-09.

Life of Taiwan's website, History of Taiwan. [Electronic] Available:

<https://lifeoftaiwan.com/about-taiwan/history/>. Downloaded: 2023-05-13.

Reuters, 2022. "China will never renounce right to use force over Taiwan, Xi says". News Article. 2022-10-16. [Electronic]

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/xi-china-will-never-renounce-right-use-force-over-taiwan-2022-10-16/>. Downloaded: 2023-05-08.

The State Council The People's Republic of China's website, China releases white paper on Taiwan question, reunification in new era. [Electronic] Available:

https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202208/10/content_WS62f34f46c6d02e533532f0ac.html. Downloaded: 2023-05-21.

ThoughtCo's website, A Brief History of Taiwan. [Electronic] Available:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/brief-history-of-taiwan-688021>. Downloaded: 2023-05-13.