

President Trump's Operational Code

A Political Psychological Approach to Foreign Policy
Decision-Making

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Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate if there is a correlation between Donald Trump's political beliefs and his foreign policy behaviour towards North Korea during 2016-2019. By applying the theoretical framework Operational Code redesigned by Alexander George, Trump's political beliefs are visible through ten questions. These political beliefs which are divided into philosophical and instrumental beliefs, composes a leader's operational code. The operationalization of Trump's political beliefs is done through a content analysis of various public speeches. The data has been quantified through the coding program of Profiler Plus 7.3.17 which is available upon request at Social Science Automation, Inc. To interpret the quantified data, the Verbs In Context System coding scheme developed by Mark Schafer, Michael D. Young and Stephen G. Walker has been used. The results proved no change in Trump's philosophical beliefs but a few were detected regarding his instrumental beliefs. The changes found did not necessarily correlate with his foreign policy behaviour, making the overall correlation between Trump's operational code and his behaviour towards North Korea poor. However, the study opens up for further research regarding decision-making at the individual level and the importance of leaders in foreign policy.

Key words: Operational code analysis, beliefs, philosophical beliefs, instrumental beliefs, Donald Trump, VICS, political psychology, foreign policy decision-making
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1 Introduction

America shares a lengthy history with North Korea regarding its nuclear activity. Spying satellites have since the 1960s provided Washington with an overview of the nuclear development in North Korea. The pictures from 1960 discovered a few constructions, and in 1965, the satellites proved increasing activity in Yongbyon (Wit, Poneman & Gallucci 2004: 1). In the 1970s, Russia positioned a research reactor in Yongbyon which was put under the surveillance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), thereby reassuring its non-violent usage. When North Korea began talks with Russia for another research reactor, North Korea took it upon themselves to build one of their own. Since then, although they entered into the Non Proliferation Treaty in 1985, North Korea kept transforming into a plutonium manufacturer, thereby being able to build warheads (Wit, Poneman & Gallucci 2004: 1,3-4).

Several American Presidents have dealt with North Korea in one way or another. Ronald Reagan hoped to be able to talk North Korea out of developing nuclear weapons by opening up travel restrictions and having diplomats communicating (Wit 2001: 78, Wit & Poneman & Gallucci 2004: 7). Bill Clinton had to deal with the crisis of North Korea withdrawing from working with the IAEA (Moore 2008: 11-12). Under the second Bush Administration, The US had to deal with deteriorating relations with Pyongyang where China stepped up and took the initiative of creating the Six Party Talks, which in 2008 managed to get North Korea to dismantle nuclear facilities in Yongbyon (Moore 2008: 13-14).

However, the settlement was not prolonged. In 2009, when Barack Obama took office, North Korea suddenly decided to revive their nuclear activity and terminate their membership of the Six Party Talk (Reuter Staff 2012). Obama applied “Strategic Patience” which meant that the US would pressurize North Korea through sanctions, request a denuclearization and use China as leverage, since they are an important North Korean ally (Kim 2017: 50). Under the Obama Administration, The US foreign policy was coherent and they did not deviate from their strategy or surprised the international community with any radical moves (Arms control association 2020). This stands in contrast to Donald Trump who is no exception when it comes to dealing with the longstanding North Korean threat (Kim 2017: 69). Trump has used violent threatening rhetoric, taken military options into consideration, and surprised his own advisors by accepting invitations from the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (Kim) to pursue a diplomatic path shortly thereafter (Haass 2020:30, Kim 2017: 69, Wright 2018). Trump’s seemingly different and unpredictable behaviour towards North Korea in contrast to the

previous Presidents sparked interest to research what role the individual leader plays in foreign policy decision-making. By mixing interdisciplinary research of political psychology combined with foreign policy analysis, this thesis will investigate Trump's foreign policy behaviour and decision-making in the continuation of settling the North Korean nuclear threat which today remains unsolved (Oguzlu 2017).

1.1 Purpose and research question

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate if Donald Trump's foreign policy behaviour towards North Korea can be understood using political psychology. Therefore, the thesis aims to investigate a potential correlation between Trump's foreign policy decision-making and his operational code regarding the foreign policy Trump has been applying in the American pursuit of a nuclear free North Korea. The research project has a significant relevance to the real world due to the fact that policymakers have been studying the President's foreign policy hoping to discover a regular pattern or a predictability in behaviour, but it has proven to be difficult in Trump's case (Swinkels 2017). The research question below is therefore defined as:

- *What foreign policy behaviour has Trump pursued towards North Korea regarding their denuclearization, and does it correlate with a change in his operational code during 2016–2019?*

1.2 Previous research

Previous researchers have tried to understand and explain Trump's foreign policy which has been characterized as erratic (Cohen 2019: 139) and unpredictable (Swinkels 2017). Researchers have furthermore tried to make sense of Trump's incoherent behaviour in regards to North Korea where various explanations have been offered. McManus (2019: 976–977, 979) writes that Trump's aggressive behaviour towards North Korea can be explained as Trump taking on the Madman-theory, a notion created by Nixon during the Vietnamese war. If your opponent believes you are crazy and capable of doing anything, the enemy will be open for negotiating. Trump claims to have used crazy behaviour in getting Kim to negotiate, thereby embracing the Madman-theory. McManus (2019: 977) further raises an important question, which many political researchers are trying to make sense of, which is if Trump's foreign policy consists of a strategy or if it is simply spontaneous? Some research conducted investigates the strategic accountability, a

notion and an explicit strategy coined by the Trump Administration to shape the foreign policy towards North Korea, which argues that Trump's foreign policy mainly derives from realism and liberal internationalism (Kim 2017: 67). There is also research indicating the mixed signals Trump's foreign policy has sent towards North Korea, which refers to policy inconsistency (Dian 2018: 112, 115).

However, Malici (2017) argues that the impact the individual leader has when it comes to foreign policy has not been researched enough. Instead, structural approaches such as national policy and international organizations have been prominent areas in the study of international relations (Malici 2017). Mintz & DeRouen (2010: 4, 98, 102) writes that leader's decisions contribute to forming foreign policy, and that foreign policy decisions are composed of four factors. One of these factors influencing foreign policy decision making is the psychological factor which includes a leader's beliefs. The unpredictability of a leader's foreign policy can be explained by his or her beliefs. Moreover, by increasing the understanding of how decisions are being made, possibilities in forecasting foreign policy behaviour becomes possible.

Foreign policy analysis combined with political psychology have been done before by mapping out politicians beliefs and potential changes in their worldviews through their operational code (Schafer & Walker: 2006; He & Feng 2013; Marfleet 2000). Swinkels (2017) tried to explain and contribute to the understanding of Trump's violative foreign policy by mapping out his beliefs using content text analysis and drawing comparisons between it and hypotheses made by political analysts. However, research regarding potential changes in Trump's beliefs and operational code for a longer period of time in relation to his foreign policy towards North Korea does not exist. By conducting this research, it aims to contribute to the knowledge of making sense of unpredictable foreign policy, and contribute to how political analyses might benefit from interdisciplinary research.

2 Analytical framework

There are many determinant factors that need to be taken into account when trying to understand foreign policy decision-making. These determinant factors can be environmental factors, such as stress and risk taking, domestic factors such as domestic politics or economics, international factors such as other regime types as well as psychological factors such as understanding the cognitive procedure that in turn affects the decision making (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 25, 121, 97, 129). Moreover, when analysing foreign policy decision-making, there are different levels to consider such as groups, coalitions, and the individual leader (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 3). This thesis has been limited to solely focus on the individual leader and the psychological determinant factor of foreign policy decision making. The psychological determinant factor is composed of several psychological approaches such as personality, a leader's style or beliefs (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 97–98). The chosen psychological concept that can shape and influence foreign policy decisions are beliefs and leaders operational code (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 98, 101–102), which composes the analytical framework for this thesis

2.1 Beliefs and operational code

The world is complex, contradictory, and filled with considerable incoming information that needs to be processed (Renshon 2008: 822). Beliefs are a psychological construct (Schafer 2000: 517), and are something we believe to be true. They work like tools since they help filter the enormous amount of incoming information. The beliefs assist us to analyse and understand a situation, and without them, the information would be overwhelming, difficult to understand and would not make sense to us (Renshon 2008: 822–823). Our beliefs can also hinder new information and contribute to what shape it takes. Basically, they create a framework for how we interpret information and situations (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 101), and they assist us in understanding our realities (Schafer 2000: 517). In regards to leaders, beliefs are very important because the beliefs affect how the leader perceives other states and if conflicts are avoidable. It also assists the leader in predicting possible outcomes. Thereby, beliefs contribute to the decisions being taken (Malici 2017). The challenge the researcher faces when wanting to analyse

or find out what the beliefs of a particular leader is, is that they can not get close enough to the leader (Kim 2017a: 5). Beliefs are not something physical (Kim 2017a: 3), and the person it concerns might not be aware of them (Schafer 2000: 517). Therefore, the researcher has to study the political actor from afar, which is a procedure also known as the operational code (Kim 2017a: 5). The phrase Operational code was first introduced through Nathan Leites studies (Renshon 2008: 824). About 70 years ago, Leites published “The Operational Code of the Politburo” (1951) and “A study of Bolshevism” (1953) where he tried explaining the behaviour of Sovjet decision making. After a while, it was picked up by Alexander George who in 1969, after studying and criticizing Leites studies, decided to focus solely on the operational code of Leites work (Walker 1990: 403–404). When Leites investigated the operational code, he included many areas such as cognition, personality and culture. However, George claimed that a political actor’s operational code consists of a leader’s political beliefs (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 216), and that Leites study was not sufficient in defining the questions and answers making up the operational code. Therefore, George redesigned Leites concept of operational code in his two sets of beliefs, which were composed of five philosophical beliefs and five instrumental beliefs (George 1969: 199). The philosophical beliefs are concerned with for instance how a political actor perceives the political nature and the possibility of predicting the political future (George 1969: 201, 203), and helps to define the current situation the political leader finds her/himself in (Walker 1990: 406). The instrumental beliefs focus on actions or responses, thereby the strategic aspect in achieving a desired goal (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 217–218). The operational code concerns one fundamental factor, power in the international platform (Renshon 2009: 650). Power regarding others and the individual's tendency to use power (Walker et al 1998: 177), which is reflected in the philosophical and instrumental beliefs (George 1969: 201, 205). To be able to research the two sets of political beliefs, Georges developed ten questions, one question for each belief. The answers to these ten questions make up the decision maker's philosophical and instrumental beliefs, thereby his or her operational code (Renshon 2009: 651, George: 1969: 199). The questions, representing a leader’s beliefs will be presented below.

2.2 Operational code construct

The developed questions from George are, and have been since they were presented, the general foundation when carrying out an operational code analysis (Kim 2017a: 6). However, George's work from 1969 did not contain any in depth explanations about the questions guiding the researcher in its pursuit of a leader’s operational code. Instead, he applied the questions on Leite’s study about Bolshevik (George 1969: 201–216), which does not contribute to the general understanding of

what the questions are and what the meaning is behind the political beliefs they represent. That is why the explanation from the Verbs in Context System (Schafer & Walker 2006: 30), also the method used in this thesis, will be added to the passage below to provide a better understanding of what the questions represent in terms of a leader's perception of politics.

2.2.1 Philosophical beliefs

The first philosophical question P-1, reflecting the first philosophical belief of a leader (Renshon 2009: 651) is: "What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?" (Renshon 2009: 651). Thus, this question, (or these questions), concerns how the leader views the political nature. Is the political nature around him or her seen as peaceful or conflictual? George explains that much of the answer derives from the political figures around him/her because the most important factor to shape the political leader's belief about the nature of politics, is how he/she views his/hers opponents (George 1969: 202). VICS surmise how the political actor in question perceives others behaviour and politics, will be mirrored in the leaders own perception about the nature of politics (Schafer & Walker 2006: 33). This belief is claimed by George to be a master belief, meaning it affects other beliefs (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 217).

The second philosophical question, P-2 (Renshon 2009: 651) is: "What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic or must one be pessimistic on this score; and in what respects the one and/or the other?" (George 1969: 203). The question concerns the perception possessed by the political figure regarding the possibilities of reaching his/her political values. With P-1 being a master belief, P-2 is affected. Meaning, if the leader views the nature of politics as hostile, the individual will be pessimistic about reaching one's fundamental goals. However, if the individual perceives the nature of politics as one of harmony, he/she will be optimistic about reaching his/her fundamental goals (Schafer & Walker 2006: 33). The third philosophical belief P-3 (Renshon 2009: 651) is: "Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?" (George 1969: 203). The indice aims to assess if the political actor tends to see the political universe as predictable or non predictable. The answer is based on actions from what others do, if they engage in a different set of actions or engage only in a few. If the other actors engage in a few sets of actions, they will be perceived by the political figure as predictable. If the leader views others as engaging in various and diversified sets of actions, they will be perceived as unpredictable. Thereby making the overall perception of the political universe unpredictable (Schafer & Walker 2006: 34).

The fourth philosophical question P-4 (Renshon 2009: 651) is: "How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's

role in “moving” and “shaping” history in the desired direction? (George 1969: 204). The belief represents how and what power the political actor in question has regarding shaping history in his/her wanted course (George 1969: 204). P-4 investigates how much control the political actor perceives him/herself to be in and depends on who is the most active in the political arena. If a leader views him/herself as the one primarily engaging and making moves in the political arena, the leader will perceive him/herself as being in control. If the leader perceives him/herself as having low control, the leader views the other political actors as the ones normally acting and taking initiatives in the political world (Schafer & Walker 2006: 34). The last philosophical belief P-5 (Renshon 2009: 651) is: “What is the role of “chance” in human affairs and in historical development?” (George 1969: 204). The question concerns how high the role of chance is to explain certain happenings. The belief is interconnected with the beliefs of P-3 and P-4, meaning if the leader views him/herself as being in control (P-4), and perceives the political future as predictable (P-3), the leader will ascribe the role of chance as low. If the leader views him/herself as not being in control (P-4) and does not perceive the political future as predictable (P-3), then the leader will assign the role of chance as high (Schafer & Walker 2006: 35).

2.2.2 Instrumental beliefs

The first instrumental question I-1 (Renshon 2009: 651), is: “What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action? (George 1969: 205). The question aims to figure out what strategy the leader perceives as being the foremost one to deploy in the world of politics. Is it a cooperative or a conflictual strategy? (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 227). The second instrumental question I-2 (Renshon 2009: 651), is: “How are the goals of action pursued most effectively? (George 1969: 211). The answer provided will tell us what kind of tactic the leaders prescribes the most utility in. Is it in a conflictual or cooperative one? It does not answer the direction of strategy as in I-1, but the intensity of the chosen strategy (Schafer & Walker 2006: 35–36). The third question I-3 (Renshon 2009: 651), is: “How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?” (George 1969: 212). This question works as a leader's risk orientation guide. Is the leader unwilling or accepting when it comes to taking risks? (Schafer & Walker 2006: 36). The fourth instrumental question I-4 (Renshon 2009: 651), is: “What is the best “timing” of action to advance one’s interest? (George 1969: 215). The VICS dictionary divides the question in two parts, I-4a and I-4b. The former investigates the variation of conflictual and cooperative actions and I-4b investigates the variation of his/hers actions found in his/hers words and deeds, and if they tend to be more conflictual or cooperative (Schafer & Walker 2006: 36). The last instrumental question I-5 (Renshon 2009: 651), is: What is the utility and

role of different means for advancing one's interests? (George 1969: 216). The VICS indice divides the question into six subcategories and concerns where the leader finds the most useful means. Is it in the conflictual manner such as punishing deeds or threatening and opposing words or is it in the cooperative manner such as in appealing or promising words or a rewarding behaviour? (Schafer & Walker 2006: 37–38). The categories used are the same categories VICS uses in its content analysis. Further explanations will be provided in passage: 3.4.1.

2.2.3 Operational code and foreign policy decision making

Why is it important to investigate a leader's operational code? George, through the inquiries presented above, proved that depending on a leader's operational code and beliefs, leaders will act differently. In other words, George proved that leader's operational code affects foreign policy decision making (Kim 2017: 6). However, George also emphasized that the beliefs are to represent a leader's beliefs regarding politics, and should not be drawn automatically to the leader's overall action. This is because there are other factors interplaying when linking beliefs to the actions of a political actor and the beliefs can not by themselves explain the decisions a leader makes (Walker 1990: 406). Thereby, the operational code does not constitute all the beliefs within a person that affects his/her decisions. The operational code constitutes important beliefs regarding politics and thereby decisions regarding politics (Renshon 2008: 824). Important to note is that beliefs are prone to change and the beliefs constituting the operational code of political actors are not always distinct (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 219, 221). This thesis will, through the chosen analytical framework, explore Trump's operational code and his political beliefs and if there have been any changes from 2016–2019. The ten questions representing the five philosophical beliefs and the five instrumental beliefs will be applied to and "answered by Trump" through public speeches using VICS and Profiler Plus, thereby mapping out his operational code and the political beliefs composing it. Through VICS, it will also be possible to later correlate any potential changes in his operational code with his foreign policy behaviour towards North Korea. This is because VICS allows the researcher to draw inferences between a leader's beliefs and a leader's behaviour (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 224).

3 Method

3.1 Research design

The thesis consists of a single unit analysis (Donald Trump), who's operational code is compared over time. By conducting a case study, the study might not be able to test theories, because it is only based on a single case, and the results might not be generalizable to other leaders (Halperin & Heath 2016: 215, 217). However, it does open up for further research about the theoretical framework and its applicability. Moreover, a case study enables in-depth knowledge (Halperin & Heath 2016: 214), which is in line with the aim of this thesis, being able to investigate one leader in time. Being a case study, the thesis hopes to say something of importance about the case, thereby adding validity to the study (Halperin & Heath 2016: 214). The research is designed as a quantitative study where VICS and Profiler Plus 7.3.17 have been used to perform a text analysis of public speeches made by Trump during the two chosen time periods 2016/2017–2018/2019. The empirical study will consist partly of quantitative data (the operational code analysis) but also qualitative data. Without the qualitative data, it is not possible to investigate if Trump's operational code correlates with his behaviour in North Korea during the corresponding time periods.

3.2 Case selection

This thesis focuses on comparing Trump's operational code from two time periods with each other to investigate if there has been a change in his operational code, and if the change correlates with his foreign policy behaviour towards North Korea regarding the denuclearization. The time frame chosen is 2016–2019 but has been divided into two parts, where two years have been clustered together, creating one analytical time period. Therefore, the thesis consists of two time periods, 2016–2017 and 2018–2019. The original intended time period was 2017–2020, thereby Trump's entire presidency. However, due to the current pandemic and the lack of actions between Trump and Kim since July 2020 when they ended up in a deadlock (Arms Control 2020), the year 2020 was subtracted. Instead, the year 2016 was added due to the fact that Trump during this year delivered several speeches throughout his campaign, thereby expressing his political views and goals as a

future President. Moreover, adding 2016 equalized the time periods, now consisting of two years each. The reasons for choosing Trump and North Korea is threefold. Firstly, during Trump's presidency, and the chosen time periods, North Korea and the US have been a hot topic with challenging rhetoric and historic meetings (Killough 2018, Rampton & Lee 2019). Secondly, Trump and North Korea is an interesting case because several Presidents before Trump have tried dealing with North Korea, but failed (Abrams 2017: 16). Lastly, previously executed case studies have been done where researchers have applied operational code analysis to previous Presidents such as Jimmy Carter (Walker et al. 1998), Woodrow Wilson and Bill Clinton (Mintz & DeRouen 2010: 103). This thesis will contribute to the many case studies carried out using a psychological approach in understanding previous Presidents and their foreign policy decision making.

3.3 Empirical Material

A mix of primary and secondary sources have been used in this thesis. Regarding the descriptive research about Trump's foreign policy behaviour, primarily secondary sources have been used such as news articles and reports from the Arms Control Association which is an unbiased organization whose goal is to contribute to the public understanding of political issues (Arms Control Association). They have carefully followed the US-DPRK relations for several years and organized their information chronologically, which makes it easier to understand the context of actions (Arms Control Association 2020). The various news articles that have been used are among others BBC, The New York Times and Reuters. Reuters is one example of a news agency that has staff and reporters working in hundreds of countries reporting on the ground, thereby getting first hand information (Höglund & Öberg 2011: 49). News organizations such as BBC, are later buying the news from these agencies. Although news organizations usually filter or add their own comments to the reports, BBC works as an international news agency which is known for providing news to the general public around the world and tends to make the information less biased because it makes better business (Höglund & Öberg 2011: 48–49).

Regarding the context analysis, the reason for collecting primary data is because VICS requires it. The main difference from previous content analysis arrangements and VICS is that VICS focuses on verbs ascribed by the subject, which means secondary sources are not of interest (Schafer & Walker 2006: 30–31). Therefore, primary sources such as public speeches have been collected. However, when collecting material for operational code analyses, certain problems arise. The first issue concerns the possibility of knowing that the material collected truly represents the political actor in question (He & Feng 2013:223), and that the operational code it provides belongs to the leader we aim to investigate (Schafer &

Walker 2006: 46). Since The White House has been vague and limited in sharing information about Trump's speechwriters (Nuzzi 2018), how can the researcher be certain the operational code provided in this thesis represents and belongs to Trump? To get past this issue, He & Feng (2013: 223) argues that the leader would not give a speech supposedly representing political views that the leader in question does not feel is representative of his/her politics. Moreover, Schafer & Walker argue that if the speech writer is not the leader, the writer will probably have an understanding of the politics that are supposed to be represented (2006: 47). Another issue concerns openness and honesty. How do we know the leader is not deceiving us in his/her speeches? (Schafer & Walker 2006: 47). This issue is resolved through Schafer and Walker (2006: 47) who argue that due to the fact that VICS collect a vast majority of utterances, a potential few devious phrases (if that is the case), will not deceive the entire coding scheme.

Regarding the chosen speeches, they all have been delivered by Trump at various political events, and they all contain information about the US foreign policy in one way or another. Local speeches, if they did not emphasize the US foreign policy, have been deselected as well as speeches regarding certain international or local conflicts/issues to get a broad "general" overview of Trump's political opinions. The public speeches were all chosen depending on the date when they were given. This, to avoid collecting speeches delivered the same month or during a single season to better reflect and represent the two time periods. The speeches have been collected primarily from the White House webpage WhiteHouse.gov. The only speeches not collected from the White House are the ones during 2016 when Trump was not yet in office. Instead, those speeches have been collected from his Presidential Campaign through various news sources. Finally, the reason for not collecting the equal amount of speeches for both time periods (thirteen speeches were collected for 2016–2017 and nine speeches were collected for 2018–2019), was to equalize the number of words so the data from the text analysis program Profiler Plus 7.3.17 and the data created after using VICS would derive from the similar amount of words.

3.4 Operationalization

3.4.1 Verbs in Context System and Profiler Plus

When studying political psychology, data needs to be collected to enable analysis of the psychological traits of an individual. Due to the difficulty in accessing leaders, other methods have to be developed. The "at a distance" method is based upon the assumption that data can be collected from verbal utterances. In other words, a leader's verbal actions can reveal a great deal about a person's mind

(Schafer & Walker 2006: 25–26). The Verbs In Content System, known as VICS (Marfleet 2000: 545) uses verbal data to find out about a person's beliefs and provide possibilities to draw inferences about the beliefs correlation to a leader's behaviour (Schafer, Walker & Young 2003: 224). The VICS content analysis was developed by Mark Schafer, Michael D. Young and Stephen G Walker to quantify a leader's operational code (Schafer & Walker 2006: 27). As mentioned earlier, the operational code is about political power regarding others and self (Walker, et al. 1998: 177), and it is reflected in VICS. The two belief sets mentioned in the theory chapter above, composing a leader's operational code, focuses on different things. The philosophical beliefs reveal how the leader perceives how others use power and the instrumental beliefs reveal how the individual exercises power (Schafer & Walker 2006: 32).

The VICS system, when analysing public statements, differentiate between the subject of the verb as self or others. Put differently, when using VICS to find out about a leader's philosophical beliefs, the index collected are based on the subject of the verbs categorised as other. When wanting to find out about the instrumental beliefs of a leader, the index collected are based on the subject of the verb categorised as self (Renshon 2009: 654–655). The verbs are also when collected, categorized into positive or negative ones. The verb identified as a negative or positive one combined with whom the verb concerns (self or other) composes the utterances (Mark & Schafer 2006: 32). These utterances are then categorized in six categories which represent different forms of exercising power. The categories are: Punish, threaten, oppose, appeal, promise or rewards (He & Feng 2013: 226). They are also categorized on a scale ranging from -3 to +3. The scale ranging from -3 to -1 is representing the negative conflictual utterances. The scale ranging from +1 to +3 is representing the positive cooperative utterances (Feng 2005: 650). The six categories are meant to represent the intensity which is mainly determined by if the verb in question falls into the category of a deed or a word (Schafer & Walker 2006: 32). One of the two categories concerning deeds is “punish” (-3) and belongs to the conflictual side and the other deed placed on the cooperative side is called “Reward” (+3). Deeds are referring to the use of power through actions, and coded if it tends to be negative (conflictual) or positive (cooperative). The rest of the four categories make up the verbs as words, and they represent the use of power through the remaining four categories such as “Threatened” (-2) and “Oppose” (-1) on the conflictual side, and as “Support” (+2) and “Promise” (+1) on the cooperative side. If the utterance is neither negative or positive, it is not being categorised (Schafer & Walker 2006: 31–32). Although VICS could be coded by hand, it is very time consuming and the data might be affected by errors. Therefore, the founders of VICS have worked with the company providing Profiler Plus to develop a VICS dictionary (Schafer & Walker 2006: 38). Profiler Plus is a digital analytical text program that has been continuously developed for ten years and provides text analysis in various areas (Social Science Automation 2019). The usage of Profiler Plus rules out human errors, it is time efficient and provides the researcher with perfect coding reliability (Schafer & Walker 2006: 38–39). Another advantage of

using Profiler Plus is also that the program uses pronouns such as us, me, I to find the self. If it does not, automatically the program is assuming the leader is talking about others (Schafer & Walker 2006: 42). The usage of Profiler Plus is available upon request by Social Science Automations and was used in this thesis (<http://socialscienceautomation.com/partners/AcademicUsers.aspx>). After the coding of the data using Profiler Plus, VICS is used to create indices through calculations, thereby being able to interpret the data and answer the ten questions representing a leader's operational code.

3.4.2 Creating VICS Indices

The formula for calculating P-1 (The first philosophical belief) is: the positive other attributes in percentage, minus the negative other attributions (Walker et al. 1998: 180). The scale ranges from -1 which represents extremely hostile to +1 which represents extremely friendly (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 227). The answer will range between -1 to +1 and represent how the leader views the nature of politics (Walker 2011: 137). The scale for I-1 is the same as P-1, but -1 will represent the leader viewing extremely conflictual strategies as the best one to reach his/hers goals and +1 as extremely cooperative strategies as the best approach (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 227, Walker 2011: 137). The formula for calculating I-1 is the same as the one for P-1, but instead of using utterances concerning others, utterances regarding self are used (Walker et al. 1998: 178, 180). The interpretation of the results are done in the same way by placing each calculated value on/by the closest descriptor provided in the scales (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 226–227). The further meaning of what the calculated values represent in terms of the political beliefs have been accounted for in passage: 2.2.1 & 2.2.2.

Table 1. Scale for interpreting P-1, P-2, I-1, I-2

P-1 Hostile/ I-1 Conflictual					P-1 Friendly/ I-1 Cooperative				
<u>Extremely</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Definitely</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Definitely</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Extremely</u>	
-1	-0,75	-0,50	-0,25	0,0	+0,25	+0,50	+0,75	+1	

(Based on Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 227).

The formula for P-2 is: the mean of all the utterances with others as subject divided by three. A higher score indicates he/she is optimistic in reaching his/her goals, and a lower score means he/she is pessimistic about reaching his/her own goals (Walker 2011: 137). I-2 is calculated as P-2, but uses the utterances with self as subject

(Walker et al. 1998: 178, 180). The scale for interpreting P-2 and I-2 is the same as P-1, but for P-2, -1 represents extremely pessimistic and +1 represents extremely optimistic (Walker 2011: 137). I-2 has the same measurements as I-1 (Conflictual/Cooperative) but concerns the intensity in pursuing tactics. A higher score means the leader sees a stronger utility in cooperative tactics and a lower score indicates that the leader views a stronger utility in using conflictual tactics (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 227–228).

P-3 and I-3 have a different scale than the so far calculated indices. Both of the scales are measured in very low (0,0) to very high (1,0), which is also the range of the scale (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 230). P-3 calculates with others as attributes and the formula is: 1 minus IQV (Walker et al 1998: 179) and the formula for IQV is: $K(1002 - \Sigma Pct^2) / 1002(K - 1)$ (Crossman 2019). A high value indicates the political world as predictable and a lower score indicates the world as having low predictability (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 230). The formula is the same when calculating I-3, but the calculations will instead focus on attributes with self (Walker et al. 1998: 180). A lower value indicates unwillingness in risk taking and a higher value represents the leader as accepting of risks (Schafer & Walker 2006: 36).

Table 2. Scale for interpreting P-3, I-3

P-3 Predictability/ I-3 Risk averse		P-3 Predictability/ I-3 Acceptance		
Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
0,0	0,25	0,50	0,75	1,0

(Based on Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 230).

P-4 and I-4 also use the scale presented above, but for P-4, the value of 0,0 represents the leader believing he/she has a very low control in the political arena and 1,0 representing the leader believing to have a very high control (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 228, Schafer & Walker 2006: 34). The formula for calculating P-4 is: attributes with self, divided with attributions regarding others added with utterances regarding self (Walker 2011: 137). I-4, which is divided into two, also uses the same scale, but a value of 0,0 regarding the I-4a index, indicates a very low flexibility between actions that are either cooperative or conflictual and 1,0 indicates a very high flexibility. The value of 0,0 regarding the I-4b indexes indicates a very low flexibility regarding actions and words concerning tactics, and a 1,0 means a very high flexibility (Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 231). The formula for calculating the value of I-4a is: “one minus the absolute value of [the percentage of cooperative self utterances minus the percentage of conflictual self utterances]” (Schafer & Walker 2006: 36). The formula for calculating I-4b is: “one minus the absolute value of [the percentage of wordself utterances minus the percentage of deedself utterances]” (Schafer & Walker 2006: 36).

Table 3. Scale for interpreting P-4, I-4, P-5

P-4 Control/ I-4 (a/b) Flexibility			P-4 Control/ I-4 (a/b) Flexibility		
Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	
0,0	0,25	0,50	0,75	1	
(Based on Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 228, 231).					

To calculate the value for P-5, the values for P-4 and P-3 have to be taken into account. If the leader feels he/she has control in the political arena (P-4), and views his opponents as predictable (P-3) the role of chance will be considered lower (Schafer & Walker 2006: 35). If the leader feels he/she does not posit control over the happenings in the political arena and does not view the political world as predictable, the role of chance will be higher (Walker et al. 1998: 179). The scale ranges from 0,0–1,0 where 1,0 indicates a very high role assigned to chance and 0,0 a very low role assigned to chance (Schafer, Walker & Young 2003: 231). The descriptors on the scale are the same as for P-4. The formula for P-5 is: the value from P-3 multiplied with the value from P-4 minus 1 (Walker et al. 1998: 179). Regarding the calculations for I-5, VICS measured each of the six coding categories punish, threaten, oppose on the conflictual side and support, promise and reward on the cooperative side. The answers provide the researcher with an indication of what way of exercising political power the leader sees the most utility in applying. The formula calculates the results for each category one at a time. The general formula is: One of the six coding categories and its self utterances, divided with all the self utterances added together. For example: I-5a Punish: all self utterances as punish divided with all the self utterances combined. I-5b Threaten: all the self threaten utterances divided by all the self utterances combined. This process is repeated for the remaining four categories: oppose (I-5c) support (I-5d) promise (I-5e) and reward (I-5f). The results range from 0 to 0,32 and are interpreted using the scale below (Schafer & Walker 2006: 37–38).

Figure 4. Scale for interpreting P-5

Utility			Utility		
Very low	low	medium	high	very high	
0	0,8	0,16	0,24	0,32	
(Based on Walker, Schafer & Young 2003: 229)					

4 The US and North Korea

4.1 Trump's foreign policy towards North Korea 2016–2017

When Trump campaigned for presidency in 2016, he stated that he would not have a problem in talking to the North Korean leader (Delury 2017: 46). When Trump later won the election, Obama informed him about North Korea being the most urgent security threat (Pollack 2017: 17). When the year came to its end, Kim stated that thanks to their progress with their nuclear and missiles techniques during 2016, they would soon be able to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), which would be able to reach the US (Pollack 2017: 17–18). The ICBM can carry ammunition such as nuclear or even chemical ammunition (Britannica staff 2020). The US responded by initiating that America is ready to take down the launch if the test comes close to the US mainland or their allies (Reuters in Washington 2017). On the 20th of January 2017, Donald Trump was inaugurated, thereby becoming the official President of the United States (The White House 2017). In the following months of his first term, North Korea launched several ballistic missile tests and in the end of April, the Trump Administration reported to the congress that North Korea constituted a national threat as well as a threat to their allies. The chosen strategy to deal with the North Korean threat was to continue working with allies such as Japan and South Korea, pursuing diplomatic solutions and raising the economic sanctions on North Korea (Arms Control Association 2020, DOD News 2017). Only days after the report, Rex Tillerson, Trump's Secretary Of State, claimed that the US was open for talks with Kim and that the goal was denuclearization. However, the following day, he once again made a statement but this time said that the US is open for talks but steps need to be taken by North Korea before talks can begin (Arms Control Association 2020). Trump also stated the same day that a potential considerable conflict with North Korea is feasible, but that he would rather pursue a diplomatic path (Borger & Hass 2017).

During the summer of 2017, North Korea once again resorted to testing their missiles, but the US chose to stick with imposing sanctions. On the 8th of August, a report was leaked which revealed that North Korea had been making nuclear warheads for usage such as the ICBM (Arm Control Association 2020). Moreover, after North Korea had been criticising the US (Arms Control Association 2020), Trump responded by saying: "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen" (Baker & Sang-Hun 2017). Worth noting is that at the same time, Rex Tillerson,

Secretary of state, convinced Americans that they could sleep safely at night and emphasised that the US was seeking a diplomatic solution (Finnegan 2017). Although the mixed signals, North Korea replied by threatening to hit one of the US air force bases located in Guam (Baker & Sang-Hun 2017) and Trump feared his statement of fire and fury was not sufficient (Arms Control Association 2020).

While being accused by Kim of starting a nuclear war, Trump was not backing down and reminded Kim that the "Military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded, should North Korea act unwisely. Hopefully Kim Jong-un will find another path!" (BBC 2017). Again, this statement caused confusion because earlier the same day, Mattis, Trump's Defence Secretary, was advocating for a diplomatic solution and also claiming that their diplomatic behaviour was working (BBC 2017). In the middle of August, Tillerson and Mattis published an article in the Wall Street Journal explaining the US policy towards North Korea (The White House 2017a). The strategy was called strategic accountability, meaning that the US would for example put pressure on North Korea through sanctions, make China step up their game, use no military actions for a regime change and work with its allies for a diplomatic solution (Kim 2017: 59). During the end of August and until the middle of September, the North Korean regime launched a few more successful missile tests (Arms Control Association 2020), and during Trump's UN speech on September 19th, he violently threatened to destroy the entire North Korean country. He also emphasized that the North Korean regime is on a mission of suicide and gave Kim the nickname of being a Rocket Man (Vitali 2017). Kim responded to Trump's speech by claiming that Trump is crazy and that it only made him want to keep pursuing his path (Arms Control Association 2020). Trump then took to Twitter and wrote that North Korea "wouldn't be around much longer" if he echoes "Little Rocket Man" (Arms Control Association 2020). In the beginning of October, it was rumored that Tillerson was in contact with Pyongyang to de-escalate the tensions between the two countries where Trump then said that Tillerson should not waste his time because the US will do whatever it is that needs to be done (BBC 2017a). Trump then again made a statement, saying that only one thing will work when it comes to North Korea, but he did not elaborate on what that thing was. But military usage could be one of the options he was referring to in regards to the current tensions (Mason 2017). During the end of the year, when Trump and the South Korean President Moon Jae-In met, they agreed to turn to China for help to reach a solution using diplomatic means. At the end of the year, North Korea fired an ICBM that flew over Japan, but the US claimed to be open for talks (Arms Control Association 2020).

4.2 Trump's foreign policy towards North Korea 2018–2019

In the beginning of 2018, North Korea reached out to South Korea saying they wanted to participate in the Winter Olympics that was held in South Korea, and that they wanted to begin talks with the US (BBC 2018a). During spring, Trump surprised not only his own administration but his allies as well by accepting an invitation to meet with Kim the same year (BBC 2018). It has been said that the acceptance was not a strategic move but more of a spontaneous one (Bush et al. 2018). The meeting took place on June 12th in Singapore where Trump and Kim agreed to work on improving the relations between the two countries (The White House 2018), as well as providing security for the North in exchange for a denuclearization (Arms Control Association 2020). The meeting was historic because it was the first time a sitting president of the US had met with a North Korean leader (BBC 2018a). After the meeting, Trump announced that the US would cancel the joint military exercises with South Korea, although it was not part of the signed deal. It not only shocked South Korea, but he also shocked his own Department Of Defense. Again, his move was said to be spontaneous (Bush et al. 2018, Arms Control Association 2020). A few weeks after the meeting, North Korea did start to take apart a missile location, but after a few months, Trump was still not happy with North Korea's poor process and canceled his Secretary of States visit to North Korea through Twitter. By the end of September, Ri Yong, the foreign minister in North Korea said that they felt the US had still not done what was enough for North Korea to start denuclearizing and they needed to be able to trust each other (Arms Control Association 2020). At the same time, Trump announced at the end of September that he and Kim fell in love thanks to letters sent and written by Kim (Rampton 2018).

In the beginning of 2019, Kim announced readiness to meet and talk with Trump. Additionally and although unspecified, Kim also said they would not make any nuclear weapons anymore (Arms Control Association 2020). The second meeting was held in Hanoi, Vietnam to discuss denuclearization, but no agreement was made. Afterwards, it was unclear what was really being asked of the two leaders. For example, the US claimed North Korea had wanted all sanctions removed before a denuclearization could take place. But the Foreign Minister in North Korea claimed that they only asked for some sanctions to be lifted (Arms Control Association 2020). However, Trump said to the South Korean President that the talks would continue and both Trump and Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State, thought they came closer to a deal. Trump meant that he got closer in knowing what Kim wanted and what he meant by a denuclearization (Schwartz 2019). Also worth mentioning is that Trump's administration wanted US officials to lead the talks, but Trump himself said he wanted to do it, thereby going against his administration once more (Kim 2018). In march, Trump tweeted that some new large sanction on

North Korea should be removed. However, it caused confusion because he did not clarify which sanctions he was talking about. Trump shortly thereafter said he was open to big as well as small deals with North Korea and in the beginning of May, although North Korea did test missiles and rockets, Trump responded by saying that it does not change the trust between him and Kim (Arms Control Association 2020). Instead, he said to have received a letter from Kim once more and Trump claimed that the relationship between the two were good and the letter opened up opportunities for a third summit (Atwood 2019). In June, Trump and Kim met for the third time in North Korea, which marked another historic setting since Trump became the first President to actually have visited North Korean ground. Trump had asked Kim to meet him at the demilitarized zone, and was not sure as he was heading there, that Kim would do so. The outcome of the meeting inclined that the stalled diplomatic relations should be resumed (Lederman & Nichols 2019).

In July and throughout August, North Korea again launched several ballistic missiles which they all said succeeded. Even after more missile tests in September, Trump still claimed he was open for talks with North Korea. The two leaders met in Sweden in October to resume the negotiations, but the talks ended without an agreement. Although Stockholm invited the two leaders back in a two weeks time, Trump was the only one interested in doing so because Kim thought the US needed to change their outlook on things (Arms Control Association 2020). For the remaining year, North Korea had given the US a deadline earlier this year saying that the US has until the end of the year to come up with a good offer Kim would agree on (Sigal 2020: 163). Even though the US did make an effort, North Korea kept on testing their missiles. The year ended with North Korea not being happy about the US meeting the Security Council to discuss North Korea's provocations, and they finished the year by conducting another rocket test (Arms Control Association 2020).

4.3 Trump's political world through his operational code

4.3.1 Verb Utterances

The compiled verb utterances from Profiler Plus using the VICS dictionary are presented in the tables below. The indexes were then calculated through VICS which was accounted for in passage: 3.4.2. The final results are presented and interpreted below in passage 4.3.2.

Table 5. Compiled Verb Utterances 2016–2017 Words: 46 591

2016–2017	Self	Other
-3 Punish	54	327
-2 Threaten	46	60
-3 Oppose	89	153
1 Appeal	278	539
2 Promise	65	57
3 Reward	80	268

Table 6. Compiled Verb Utterances 2018–2019 Words: 47 889

2018–2019	Self	Other
-3 Punish	91	285
-2 Threaten	14	25
-3 Oppose	75	141
1 Appeal	252	453
2 Promise	32	35
3 Reward	103	264

4.3.2 Trump's operational code

Table 7: Trumps operational code 2016–2017 and 2018–2019

Philosophical (P-x) & Instrumental (I-x) beliefs	2016-2017 n=13 words: 46 591	2018-2019 n= 9 Words: 47 889
P-1	0,26	0,23
P-2	0,06	0,07
P-3	0,14	0,13
P-4	0,30	0,32
P-5	0,9584	0,9565
I-1	0,3853	0,3551
I-2	0,1656	0,1346
I-3	0,17	0,15
I-4		
a)	a) 0,61	a) 0,64
b)	b) 0,43	b) 0,71
1-5 Utility means		
a) Punish	a) 0,0870	a) 0,1691
b) Threaten	b) 0,0786	b) 0,0344
c) Oppose	c) 0,1506	c) 0,1188
d) Appeal	d) 0,4654	d) 0,4418
e) Promise	e) 0,0990	e) 0,0499
f) Reward	f) 0,1281	f) 0,1858

(Comment: The raw data from Profiler Plus is available upon request).

4.3.3 Operational code 2016–2017

In 2016–2017 Trump viewed the nature of politics (P-1) as somewhat friendly, meaning he perceived the political environment around him, and his opponents and other political actors, as more friendly and peaceful than hostile and conflictual. Trump was mixed between being pessimistic and optimistic about reaching his fundamental goals (P-2) in the political universe. However, in regards to the first philosophical belief being a master belief, thereby influencing P-2, he was not as optimistic about reaching his fundamental goals as he should have been according to the VICS indice. Moving on, Trump viewed the political future (P-3) as having

a low predictability because he viewed the surrounding actors and opponents to engage in various actions, thereby making the political world unpredictable. Regarding his perception of control in the political universe (P-4), he perceived himself to be in low control. This indicated that he did not view himself as the one primarily engaging or taking initiatives in the political arena. Instead, he viewed the political actors and leaders around him to be the ones primarily engaging and making moves. The last philosophical belief (P-5) claimed that Trump perceived a very high role assigned to chance to explain happenings in the world. As mentioned, P-5 is surmised by VICS to be connected with P-3 and P-4, meaning that if the leader perceives him/her to not be in much control, which was true in Trump's case, combined with not perceiving the future as having a high predictability, which was also true in Trump's case, the role of chance will be seen as higher. Therefore, this suspected connection by VICS was accurate since Trump perceived the role of chance as having a big impact on the world.

Moving on to his instrumental beliefs which concerns tactics (I-1), Trump viewed the best strategy when acting in the political arena to be a strategy of cooperation, since the scale showed a definitely cooperative score. Regarding how much utility and intensity he assigned the chosen strategy (I-2) he believed the cooperative strategy to be somewhat good. Therefore, Trump did not assign an extremely high utility in believing in a cooperative strategy. Regarding risk orientation (I-3), Trump scored a low risk averse meaning he was reluctant in taking risks while exercising power. He scored a medium diversity, meaning a medium flexibility when it came to cooperative and conflictual politics (I-4a) and regarding his actions using conflictual or cooperative words and deeds (I-4b), he scored a medium flexibility there as well. When exercising power (I-5), he viewed most utility in having an appealing rhetoric (cooperative means) and lowest utility in making promises, exercising a threatening rhetoric and punishing actions. The remaining means, rewarding behaviour and having opposing rhetoric, Trump viewed as having a medium utility.

4.3.4 Operational code 2018–2019

During 2018–2019, Trump still viewed the political nature as somewhat friendly (P-1), which was also seen during 2016–2017. Trump is also mixed between being optimistic and pessimistic about reaching his goals in the political arena (P-2) which did not make him as optimistic as he should be according to the VICS surmises. In regards to predictability (P-3), as seen during 2016–2017, Trump viewed the political actors engaging in various events making the political universe unpredictable. His perception of having control over what is happening (P-4) was seen as low, meaning he did not view himself as the one primarily engaging in activities. This was also seen in 2016–2017. The final philosophical belief is also

in line with P-5 from 2016–2017 because he addressed a very high role assigned to chance. This is due to the fact that he also scored low in regards to P-3 and P-4, which is connected to the answer of P-5 seen in 2016–2017. Moving on to the instrumental beliefs, the best strategy to apply in the political universe was a somewhat cooperative strategy. The result thereby indicated a change from 2016–2017. Concerning the intensity when pursuing his strategy (I-2), he scored a somewhat cooperative value meaning he saw a somewhat utility in choosing cooperative strategy, which was also seen in 2016–2017. Regarding his risk orientation, I-3 showed that, just as in 2016–2017, he was reluctant and unwilling to take risks, scoring a low risk averse. Regarding the variation of the flexibility between cooperative and conflictual actions, he scored a high flexibility (I-4a). He also scored a high flexibility regarding his variation of using conflictual and cooperative words and deeds (I-4b) which differed from 2016–2017. When exercising his political power (I-5), he perceived the most utility in using appealing rhetoric and the lowest utility in using threatening rethorics as well as making promises. Trump viewed punishing deeds and a rewarding behaviour as having a medium utility and using opposing rhetoric as having a low utility. How much utility Trump put in some of the various means of exercising his political power thereby differed from 2016–2017.

5 Conclusion

Through the above research, the following research question can be answered: *“What foreign policy behaviour has Trump pursued towards North Korea regarding their denuclearization, and does it correlate with a change in his operational code during 2016–2019?”* Trump’s foreign policy behaviour has been filled with a mixture of behaviour, all ranging from diplomatic measures to deteriorating hostile behaviour and violent rhetoric. Trump slowly progressed from wanting diplomatic solutions towards aggressive rhetoric and behaviour in the other half of 2017. The biggest change in behaviour lies in the acceptance of the invitation in meeting with Kim in the beginning of 2018, after he had threatened to destroy the entire North Korea. During 2018 to 2019, Trump’s diplomatic willingness and optimism only grew and at the end of 2019, Trump was not the one denying a second try after the failed negotiations in Stockholm. However, does his behavior correlate with his operational code from 2016–2019?

Trump's philosophical beliefs from the two chosen time periods showed no change in his operational code. However, regarding his instrumental beliefs, concerning the choice of strategies, there were some differences. I-1 showed that there was a change in what Trump perceived as the best strategy. In 2016–2017, Trump, according to his instrumental beliefs, perceived a definitely cooperative strategy as the best one, while during 2018–2019 it decreased to a somewhat cooperative strategy. There was also a change in Trump’s flexibility in using cooperative and conflictual strategies, as well as a flexibility between conflictual and cooperative words and deeds. In 2018–2019, they were both increased to a higher flexibility. Regarding the conflictual utility in means, utility in using punishing behaviour was seen as very low in 2016–2017, but increased to a medium utility during 2018–2019. The utility in opposing rhetoric decreased from a medium utility to a low utility from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019.

Put together, if his foreign policy behaviour did correlate with the changes found in his operational code, logically, the decrease regarding the choice concerning the best strategy (I-1) being a definitely cooperative one in 2016–2017, should have, if it were correlated, not have decreased but increased. This is because Trump only became more and more diplomatic and cooperative in his foreign policy behaviour after 2017. Moreover, during 2016–2017, his rhetoric was aggressive and threatening, and did not show a definitely cooperative strategy towards North Korea. However, that is understandable, since Kim was saying that North Korea will be able to launch ICBM:s reaching American territory. Regarding the increase of viewing utility in punishing actions from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019, Trump’s increase in his diplomatic willingness to meet with Kim

would speak for a decrease instead of an increase in perceiving utility in conflictual punishing behaviour, if it were correlated to his behaviour. The seemingly growing diplomatic pursuit would also speak for an increase in viewing utility in rewarding behaviour and making promises, instead of being the same throughout the two time periods. The same logic can be applied to the conflictual utility in means, regarding the threatening behaviour, which was seen as very low in 2016–2017. Judging by Trump's violent rhetoric during 2016–2017, one could assume that exercising his political power by making threats would be seen by Trump as having a high utility, and not very low. Thereby, if there was a correlation, the utility in threats would have indicated a decrease as Trump only became more cooperative towards North Korea during 2018–2019. However, the operational code and political beliefs presented in this thesis are based on public speeches from various events, and not single handed phrases about North Korea itself which would explain the poor connection. The one change that potentially correlates with Trump's more friendlier behaviour towards North Korea is the decrease in the perceived utility in opposing tactics (belonging to the conflictual side) from having a medium utility in 2016–2017 to be viewed as having a low utility in 2018–2019.

The answer to the question if Trump's operational code from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019 changed and if so, correlated with his behaviour towards North Korea during the corresponding time periods, is no. Firstly, there was no change in his philosophical beliefs. Secondly, the changes found in his instrumental beliefs were limited and did not correlate well with his foreign policy behaviour. The results thereby questions the utility of using a framework of operational code to understand foreign policy decision-making at the individual level. However, it is of importance to remember that the analytical framework does not intend to and can not explain the entire behaviour of a leader because there are various determinant factors involved in the foreign policy decision making process. This thesis can therefore not answer confidently how well the analytical framework works when explaining foreign policy behaviour. Still, the results from applying the theoretical framework on Trump do raise further questions about how well the correlation between the theoretical framework and his actions are affected by his unpredictability? Trump's lack of policy consistency and mixed signals towards North Korea indicates a very unpredictable foreign policy behaviour. Perhaps certain leader's behaviour can not be captured in a framework? Or due to Trump's lacking correlation between his actions and beliefs, and not acting according to a framework, is what makes him unpredictable? It is also important to assume that the results from applying the framework might be correct and reflect his political beliefs, but due to his unpredictability, the results from the operational code can not be used to draw inferences about his behaviour because his political beliefs does not necessarily have to be reflected in his actions. Clearly, all the raised questions from the results indicate that further research is needed regarding the psychological approach to foreign policy decision-making and the fact that studies emphasizing the importance of leaders have been neglected far too long.

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