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Revising the Status Quo of Revisionism, Grand Strategy, and International Order

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

REVISING THE STATUS QUO OF REVISIONISM,
GRAND STRATEGY, AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

Onur Erpul

2019

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Stephen J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Onur Erpul, and entitled Revising the Status Quo of Revisionism, Grand Strategy, and International Order, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Ronald W. Cox

John Oates

Rebecca Friedman

Félix E. Martín, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 19, 2019

The dissertation of Onur Erpul is approved.

Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Stephen J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development and
Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2019

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DEDICATION

To my grandfather, Seyfi Tařhan

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I found that at times dissertation writing can be herculean task that isolates the researcher, alienating him from friends and loved ones. Yet, no scholarly endeavor can be accomplished alone. In my case, I had the good fortune of having a loving and supportive family, and friends. My family probably bore the brunt of this dissertation because it has constantly delayed my return home. Additionally, I enjoyed the generous circumstances offered to me by the Fulbright Program and FIU. I was also fortunate enough to work with people who were supremely patient with me and generous with what I discovered to be the most important resource one could ever commit: time. The following nomenclatura hardly does justice to all the people who helped me during my graduate studies and while I wrote the present dissertation.

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My friend Nicolas Beckmann is sometimes a foil to my half-baked ideas, but always a source of constructive criticism and encouragement. In the precious time spared from research and other responsibilities, he encouraged me pursue the things that contributed to my psychological wellbeing, which ultimately helped me to muster the motivation to keep working. I am grateful, also, to another towering pillar of intellect: Nicolás Terradas. He is not only a great friend, but he showed me the ropes of surviving graduate school, inspiring many research ideas along the way. This very project owes its existence to one of our lengthy conversations many months ago.

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From the amalgamation of these relationships, influences, experiences, and conditions is this research thus rendered. All faults with this dissertation are my own.

Onur Erpul

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February 1, 2019

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
REVISING THE STATUS QUO OF REVISIONISM,
GRAND STRATEGY, AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

by

Onur Erpul

Florida International University, 2019

Miami, Florida

Professor Félix E. Martín, Major Professor

This dissertation examines a type of variance in state behavior pertaining to international conflict and cooperation. Rather than confining this discussion to a binary understanding of state behavior, between revisionism and status-quo seeking, it endeavors to provide a nuanced discussion of the type of grand-strategic orientations states undertake in pursuit of their interests. It poses the question, “under what circumstances do states aspire to uphold, seek to reform, or challenge international order?” In doing so, the study helps to understanding the gamut of behaviors that purportedly satisfied or revisionist states display.

System-level material opportunities that are filtered by elite-preferences and beliefs about international order at the unit-level account for the type of grand strategies states will adopt. Through congruency testing, the dissertation identifies and explains order-conforming, order-reforming, order-retrenching, and order-challenging grand strategies. In this context, the dissertation addresses debates within Structural Realism on status-quo and revisionist states as well as grand strategy formation to produce an eclectic mid-range

theory of state behavior. The hypotheses generated by this theoretical undertaking are tested through longitudinal, comparative case study examinations of U.S. and Chinese grand strategies in the post-Cold War period.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDZ.....	AIR DEFENSE IDENTIFICATION ZONE
AIIB.....	ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK
BRI.....	BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE
CIS.....	COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES
EEZ	EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE
FPE.....	FOREIGN POLICY EXECUTIVES
HST	HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY
MNF	MOST FAVORED NATION STATUS
NATO.....	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
PTT	POWER TRANSITION THEORY
UK	UNITED KINGDOM
UN	UNITED NATIONS
UNGA	UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNSC	UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
UNSG	UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL
UNSCR	UNITED NATIONS SECURITYYY COUNCIL
USSR	SOVIET UNION
WTO	WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, the United States stood on the precipice of global power. Under its nurturing aegis, the liberal world order formalized its triumph over communist totalitarianism, ushering in the emergence of a truly unipolar international system.¹ Some hailed it as the end of history.² Others looked forward to a productive and peaceful time in human history as the forces of democratization, humanitarianism, globalization, and liberalism, with the aid of American power, could now be projected onto distant parts of the globe without interference from a superpower rival. Three decades and several costly wars have spanned since America's unipolar moment, and the prospects of the liberal world order appear as bleak as that of an eternal and unbound American hegemony.³ The post-victory status quo is further challenged by the relentless rise of China and the hostility of dissatisfied states. No state, however, seems to be particularly interested in challenging the present international order.

Despite some aggressive posturing, China's foreign policy is remarkably restrained, contrary to the expectations of the literature. So-called rogue states, meanwhile, appear to challenge international order, yet possess insufficient capacity to effectuate

¹ See Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/91), pp. 23-33.

² See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, No. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3-18.

³ The current "international order" referred to as the liberal international order. While the liberal order has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, to the point that many challenge its factual existence. While it is beyond the scope of this project to evaluate whether or not the liberal international order is an *ex post facto* myth, or simply an innocuous epithet for U.S. hegemony, it is argued that the international order, in general, has a deeper operational logic that transcends the institutions of a single state or ideology; these points are discussed in the conceptualizations section below.

change. It is difficult to understand why, then, a proponent of the status quo such as the U.S. would execute one costly war after another to the detriment of international order. In an effort to address these counterintuitive state behaviors, this study concerns international order, inquiring into the way states comport themselves in a broader social world.⁴ To this end, this research endeavors to investigate interrelated questions, such as I) When and under what circumstances are states likely to uphold or challenge international order? II) When are states more likely to refrain from self-aggrandizing behavior? And most importantly, III) How do statespeople place their own interests, if at all, within the framework of global international society?

In what follows, this chapter reflects on the importance of international order and problematizes a series of questionable and self-serving narratives on state behavior that are endemic to foreign policy debates in the American academe (which concomitantly inform IR debates). Thereafter, the reader is presented with this dissertation's main argument, which underscores the necessity of recognizing nuances in state practices and appreciating the role of statespeople in binding international society. Next, it examines notable shortages in existing theories on status quo and revisionism as well as research on grand strategy. In the penultimate section, the reader is exposed to important theoretical considerations and conceptualizations, while the final section provides a roadmap of chapter content for the rest of this volume.

⁴ Like most concepts in social science, "order" can take on many meanings. In this research, however, international order is unambiguously associated with the English School of International Relations. It relates to patterns of war and peace, as well as cooperation and conflict in international politics. International order is predicated on the preservation of values thought to be commonly desired by all members of societies. These include, among other things, the preservation of life, honoring of contracts, and stable property rights. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002 [1977]), pp. 6-10.

This study seeks to transcend the binary approach to revisionist and status-quo states that has become so ingrained in the IR literature. By adopting ideas and concepts from the English School approach to IR, the dissertation offers a *via media* approach to understanding state behavior within the normal operation of international relations. It is posited that state behavior cannot be reduced to its constitutive elements. Abstract notions of revisionism and status-quo-seeking have been treated in the extant literature in a binary way that essentializes the behaviors of states based on their material capabilities, political structures, ideologies, and identities. This dissertation, on the other hand, addresses the theoretical lacunae on state behavior and contextualizes important puzzles by examining trends in the behaviors of states, tracing them to the discourses of foreign policy executives. It does not purport to invalidate existing theories of state behavior *per se*. Rather, it contextualizes them in a way that addresses concerns regarding international order by underscoring the existence of an abstract notion of international society in the minds of decision-maker, which in turn influence the short-term behavior of states: whether or not they challenge, uphold, or merely seek to reform international order.

Consistent with the assumption of most traditional IR understandings of grand strategy, it is argued in this volume that states generally have long-term designs that lead them to accept international order. While there are several different mechanisms that can explain this tendency, from system-level material factors to the domestic ideational, a state's grand strategy reflects an awareness of its international social context. Rather than studying this phenomenon through the lens of prestige or status concerns, as much of the literature has done, this project deliberates on the notion of common interests upheld in an international society of states. Specifically, it contrasts the traditional idea of *raison d'état*,

or national interest, with the idea of *raison de système*, or the interest of the system.⁵ The former is itself a nebulous concept because it is notoriously difficult to define.⁶ It is, however, associated with traditional notions of statecraft and Machiavellianism; that there is a core of principles that governments must recognize and is morally obligated to pursue them at all costs on behalf of its subjects. The latter perspective, however, contends that states sometimes need to restrain themselves or forego attainable gains, to preserve the legitimacy and functioning of international order. Consider the following definition:

⁵ The most comprehensive classical definition of *raison d'état* is probably that of Meinecke, who defines it as “[that] between behaviour prompted by the power-impulse and behaviour prompted by moral responsibility, there exists at the summit of the State a bridge, namely *raison d'état*: the consideration of what is expedient, useful and beneficial, of what the State must do in order to reach occasionally the highest point of its existence.” See Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellianism: The Doctrine of Raison d'état and its Place in Modern History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 4. For more information on *raison de système*, see Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue Between States* (Routledge, 1983), pp. 201; Watson, “Systems of States,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April, 1990), p. 104; Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 1992), p. 14. See also David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 244–251, 273–280.

⁶ There is a long-standing tradition of healthy skepticism towards the concept of national interest in the IR literature and whether it is an objective fact or a politically-determined expedient. See, e.g., Raymond Aron, *Peace and War* (Doubleday, 1966), p. 89; Joseph Frankel, *National Interest* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1970); Rosenau, p. 34. Alexander L. George and Robert O. Keohane, “The Concept of National Interests: Uses and Limitations,” in *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, by Alexander L. George (Westview Press, 1980), pp. 217-237. This has also not prevented the emergence of national interest as a valid subject of inquiry. See Scott Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 29. Meanwhile, the concept of a national interest has been central to understanding what animates states, in much of the classical realist tradition. See Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Primacy of the National Interest,” *The American Scholar*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring, 1949), pp. 207-212; John H. Herz, “Political Realism Revisited,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (June, 1981), pp. 182-197, esp. 203. After the Behavioralist Revolution in American Social Sciences the Rational Actor Model, the assumption of the state as being a rational, unitary, and interest/utility-maximizing actor, has become commonplace. See Lawrence Freedman, who argues that in the long-run the “national interest” is negotiated and privileged by domestic actors, which defines the rational. This is also evidenced by the fact that the system is ultimately hierarchical, which “disciplines” bureaucratic actors. See, e.g., Lawrence Freedman, “Logic, Politics and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Politics Model,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (1976), 434-449 and Stephen Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” in J. Ikenberry ed., *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (Pearson, 2005), 447-460. Finally, *raison d'état* can be affected by the very composition of the state and the modes of production it seeks to protect and the social classes it seeks to serve. See, Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press), p. 105.

Order is further promoted by general agreements and rules that restrain and benefit all members of the system, and make it into a society. That is an aspect of *raison de système*, the belief that it pays to make the system work.⁷

A legitimate and functioning international society can more easily restrain would-be aggressors, more effectively prevent armed conflict, and, ultimately, better serve the interests of all its constituent members. If the subtext is that it pays to make the system work, then, barring revolutionary state and wars initiated in times of hegemonic transitions, restraint, and acquiescence to international order is the normal state of affairs.

Secondly, international order cannot be reduced to the operation power politics *per se*. State practices extend to numerous policy domains that constitute international politics and, like balance of power for example, invariably reach an equilibrium that become ingrained in international politics. As argued here, the fundamental institutions of international society include international legal and diplomatic practices, as well as special responsibilities for great power politics that, in conjunction with practices about the use of force, constitute the rules of the game. It is from this consideration that the dissertation derives its assumptions about possible state behavior (see figure I. 1).

Thirdly, the relationship between the members of international society and international order is far more complex than revisionism and preservation. States have available to them a broader array of strategies with which to interact and shape international order. While the literature offers material gains, aggrandizement, and intangible benefits like prestige and status as possible reasons for revisionism, it is not clear why any power,

⁷ Watson, "Systems of States," p. 104.

especially a rising power, would want to challenge international order. This question is especially puzzling because rising powers are the greatest beneficiaries of international order.⁸ They need not be “revisionist,” nor adopt the role of a “spoiler.”

Conversely, they may not be “supporters” of existing arrangements.⁹ Moreover, in the shorter-term, states may have specific ways to interact with international order. Some may conform to international order, while others may challenge it. Beyond this binary, however, states may also be interested in modifying international order. Rising states can *reform*, rather than outright challenge, order. That is, they can introduce alternative norms, practices, and institutions to the existing international order. Amendments to the political, legal, and normative framework of international society that is achieved without actively undermining, in word or deed, international order are “order-reforming.”¹⁰ Conversely, it should be possible for a state to *retrench* from certain policies and practices when circumstances require so.

Fourthly, it is important to recognize that foreign policy executives have the final say in determining foreign policy. Their strategic context and relative freedom of action determine what is achievable in foreign policy. They are the transmission belt by which systemic and domestic variables are translated into policy outcomes.¹¹ As the final arbiters of policy, their interpretation of both the material and social fabrics of international politics,

⁸ See Schweller, “Rising Powers and Revisionism,” pp. 3-7.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ For instance, neither China’s diplomatic activism nor its attempts to restructure the entirety of Eurasian economic order could be instances of aggressive intent towards America and the liberal world order.

¹¹ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (October, 1998), pp. 144–72; Lobell, *Neoclassical Realism*, pp. 4.

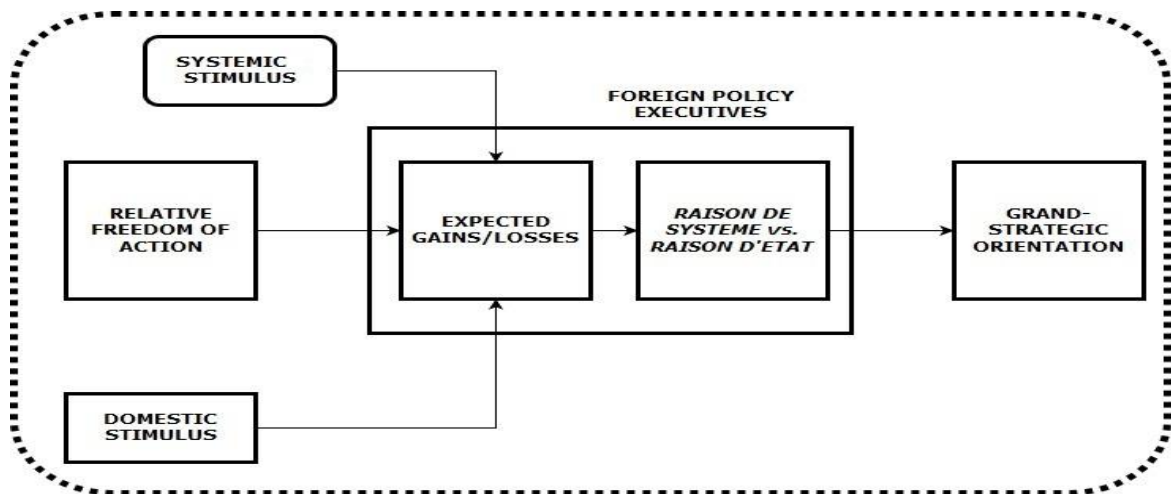
as well as their domestic interests, affect their decisions. What is absent in extant discussions, however, is clarity on the extent to which a *raison de système* logic informs statecraft. So long as foreign policy executives are willing, for whatever reason, to acquiesce to the common interests of international society, states are more likely to conform to international order. Conversely, even the most seemingly innocuous states may at times assert themselves, whether due to the permissiveness of their environment or to a willingness to prioritize self-aggrandizement over the common interests of international society.

The problem, however, is that *raison de système* necessitates a long-term commitment to upholding certain patterns of behavior, often longer than the vocational timelines of elected and other officials. By what reason could we expect decision-makers to work for longer-term goals? Thus, fifthly, in the long-term, we may witness a transformation of world order, but it is counterproductive to speculate on such long-term changes; we should focus instead on the day-to-day operations of state behavior. In the long-term, states and their behavior fall into a type of equilibrium, either due to systemic forces or the workings of international society.

The present inquiry traces the discourses of major global and regional powers on international order in relation to major order-defining events in international politics. While each case presents unique circumstances, the views of decision-makers on international society and international order, in addition to material strategic factors, shape the short-term behavior, or grand-strategic orientations, of states (see figure I. 1. below). “Grand-strategic orientations” are brief cycles within a country’s overall framework of grand

strategy.¹² The countries examined in the ensuing case studies, puzzling due to their material and ideational circumstances, help to show that neither the distribution of material capabilities nor the “malevolent” designs of elite groups ossify into intractable grand strategies. Once we liberate discussions of international order and the intentions of rising states from the dogmas of Realist and Liberal IR Theories, state behavior becomes less puzzling.¹³

Figure I. 1. Overview of the Argument



In sum, this project offers a theoretical and normative refinement of existing discussions concerning state behavior by advancing a typological theory based on how state elites conceive of the broader interests of international society within their immediate strategic environment. The goal of this research is simply to illuminate the circumstances

¹² By “orientation” this dissertation underscores not only the temporal dimension of grand strategy but also its (comprehensive) scope, which is discussed extensively below. Stephen Ward, who also examines “orientations,” does not provide a sufficient conceptual clarification of the concept. See Stephen M. Ward, “Status Immobility and Systemic Revisionism in Rising Great Powers,” Ph.D. Dissertation (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, May 29, 2012).

¹³ Even Ikenberry has admitted, in his defense of the liberal World order, that the deeper historical and institutional qualities of international order will compel rising states to act towards its preservation, albeit with greater influence. See Ikenberry, “The Future of the Liberal World Order,” pp. 58-61.

in which states are more likely to be inclined towards one another, as well as when they are more likely to use force or more innocuous tools of statecraft. Ultimately, this theory-building exercise aims to contribute to the IR discipline by revising the simplistic abuse of concepts like “revisionist” and “status quo.” The next section discusses important concepts for this dissertation.

Table I. Fundamental Institutions and State Strategies

Fundamental Institutions	War	Diplomacy	Balance of Power	Great Power Management	International Law
Observable Categories and Costs	Use of Force/Alliances		Relations Towards Other Powers		Attitude towards Norms and Rules
Less Costly	Withdrawal		Appeasement		Conservatism
-	Multilateralism		Restraint		Enmeshment
+	Leadership		Expansionism		Reformism
More Costly	Unilateralism		Imperialism		Radicalism

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

Refining our conceptual understanding of state behavior in the ways proposed above has further theoretical and normative significance beyond the empirical discussion above. The puzzling behaviors of great power states such as the United States and China notwithstanding, there exists multiple lacunae in the literature on revisionist and status-quo states that stand to benefit from this project. Firstly, it affords the chance to reexamine the different strands of ideas permeating the Realist paradigm and the International Society approach.¹⁴ Of importance is to challenge the conceptual deficiencies of the literature

¹⁴ The International Society approach, also known as the “English School,” is a major theoretical tradition, but one that has received comparatively less attention in the United States. Its main insight is that through proximity and volume of interactions states develop ingrained practices and form a rudimentary “society” with its own logic, institutions, and mores.

responding to Kenneth Waltz. Similarly, it calls into question the need to attribute the behavior of rising and/or revisionist states to either power, identity, or status-related concerns *per se*. Second, it provides the context for mid-level theorizing based on Gilpin's contributions. Gilpin's framework captures the broader tendencies and life cycles of international systems. This study's most obvious contribution would be to develop more concrete propositions about the interactions of a declining hegemon and a rising great power in a power transition period from the "redistribution of power" to the "disequilibrium" phases of the cycle.¹⁵ Gilpin elaborates at length on hegemonic wars and also elaborates on some of the non-military means by which other states can affect change on the international order.

The way the literature is aligned suggests that all rising states are destined to "revise" international order, but the nature of transitions differs across cases. Basing future projections on the basis of historical experience could lead to counterproductive recourse. This is an important discussion to have at a time when scholars and policymakers are losing confidence in the liberal world order and its custodians.¹⁶ Can we have a plural international order that can accommodate such diversity or accept normative syncretism? If the answer is "no" and all rising states truly are destined to be illiberal and revisionist with reconciliatory policies to bide their time in preparation for a challenge to the global

¹⁵ Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 12.

¹⁶ See Richard N. Haas, "Liberal World Order, R.I.P." *Council on Foreign Relations* (March 21, 2018). URL: <https://www.cfr.org/article/liberal-world-order-rip>. Last Accessed: March 23, 2018.

leadership, then it may not be worthwhile to pursue diplomatic options, which would increase the likelihood of major war.¹⁷

Third, it enriches the dialogue between Realism and English School, with contemporary Neorealism by helping to refine notions of strategic restraint.¹⁸ This is achieved by developing greater syncretism between Neoclassical Realist framework for foreign policy and relevant concepts from the English School. The former, by definition, does not consider the importance of social forces at the system-level (that are in abstract terms considered as an international society of states). The latter, meanwhile, has no formal theory of foreign policy that incorporates domestic political variables, such as those at the level of foreign policy executives, despite their expressed interest in doing so. The theoretical implications are also important because they suggest that the main opposition to international order and international society in many ways originate from domestic politics, as others, notably Armstrong, have argued. This research also has further normative dimensions beyond the theoretical puzzles and contributions discussed above. This is a reasonable goal in view of the founding principles of the IR discipline as well as the moral debates at the heart of the seminal works of IR.¹⁹

Revising the concept of status quo and revisionist behavior can disentangle

¹⁷ See A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kuegler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1988), pp. 591-613.

¹⁸ Realism is one of the major theoretical traditions in International Relations and highlights, among many other things, the problem of international anarchy, the importance of material power, the prominence of the state, and the inevitability and efficacy of violence in all human affairs.

¹⁹ For an overview of the discussion, see Nicholas Guilot [ed.], *The Invention of International Relations Theory* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011).

political rhetoric from theory and lend greater impartiality to the study of international order in three specific ways. Firstly, it may help recognize that, despite the significance of U.S. preponderance, international order transcends the perceived national interest of one or a small coalition of states. It helps to recognize that “revisionist” behavior is a special and rare type of orientation, rather than any type of resistance to dominant states or the fabric of international order. The fact that many so-called great or regional powers, stagnant or emerging, challenge aspects of the international system does not necessarily qualify them as revisionists. The study of order and grand strategy should not be conducted with the view of promoting, or making palatable, the policies of any state through the evocation of politically-charged *tu quoque* fallacies. This is most visible in debates concerning U.S. foreign policy and its “discontents.”

Secondly, it seeks to dispel theoretical myths about the efficacy of adherence to a specific regime type (such as a Liberal democracy) correlating with “amicable” behavior. Specifically, the Inter-Democratic Peace hypothesis (an idea echoed by policy-making elites) need further revision on the grounds of its theoretical insignificance. The discussion will attempt to show that elites’ commitment, the congruity, and compatibility of their interests with an international order, has greater significance on the permutations of war and peace. While the core thesis arguing that the absence of war between Liberal democracies remains an important empirical finding, its theoretical significance diminishes when one develops a more nuanced typology of behavioral orientation. There have been critiques over the frequency of conflict between Liberal democracies (generally considered as necessarily “status quo” states) and non-democracies. Kydd, for example, asserts that Liberal democratic states can communicate their policy preferences and intents due to

democratic transparency resulting from freedom of expression, free press, and government accountability.²⁰ However, one cannot disregard the impact of elite interests in propagating jingoist discourse and fomenting revisionist foreign policies.²¹

When, moreover, the argument is recast using the “software” of the English School approach, it is possible to see that liberal democracies not only can but do, engage in wars against non-democracies, but often violate the tenets of the world order they purport to uphold: by undermining sovereignty, aiding non-state actors and other violent entrepreneurs, effectuating regime change in the developing world through *coups d'état*, and even defying international law.²² Far from achieving a perpetual peace among democracies, an international order saturated with liberal and cosmopolitan values may not even be conducive to peace or, simply, viable in the future.²³ For these reasons, we need a more nuanced understanding of state behavior that not only considers the temporality of their behavior but also assesses the role of international society in restraining states, independent of liberal or other values. In his way, the dissertation revisits many of the debates over regime type and behavioral disposition of states and takes us back to the essence of the ethical debates of the IR discipline at its infancy: the problem of *justifying lupine behavior with sheep's brays*.²⁴

²⁰ See Kydd, “Sheep in Sheep’s Clothing,” pp. 119-120.

²¹ See, Joe Parent, *Uniting States: Voluntary Union in World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²² This applies to virtually all global interventions by the US’ Western and non-Western allies, the War on Terror, and ancillary wars in the periphery since the end of the Cold War.

²³ Cf. See G. John Ikenberry, “Why the Liberal Order Will Survive,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2018), pp. 17-29.

²⁴ See E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, pp. 216-217.

CASE SELECTION

The nature of the phenomena and the research question inevitably limits one's universe of cases. While the research scrutinizes under what circumstances do states choose certain policies over others with regards to international order, much of the existing literature privileges established and rising powers. This is understandable also because states with superior capabilities have greater freedom of action in international politics. Similarly, why weak states restrain themselves is not a puzzle as we already possess the theoretical tools to illuminate instances of imprudence by weak states.²⁵ Being a great power, established or rising, also bestows unique privileges and responsibilities that necessitate the contextualization of great powers' behavior.²⁶ Even acting in defense of the status quo necessitates a nuanced understanding of restraint. The United States and China fulfill the power criteria.

As the hegemon, the foreign policy of the United States significantly affects international politics. Its foreign policy, resembling those of rising and revisionist states, presents conceptual and theoretical challenges to most existing accounts. The United States appears to display qualities consistent with the grand strategies formally-articulated by academic and policy-making circles as the United States have displayed enlightened self-restraint on the side of the spectrum, various "reformist" policies that can be associated with "defensive accommodation," "offshore balancing" and even "selective engagement," as well as maximalist orientations akin to "primacy." In recent years, especially, U.S.

²⁵ Why some of these states do not "fall by the wayside" is a far more interesting question.

²⁶ Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 194-199; Buzan, *U.S. and Great Powers*.

foreign policy can be described as order-challenging. It is argued in this dissertation that the permissive environment of the post-Cold War (i.e., the unipolar moment) does not sufficiently explain the roguish turn in U.S. foreign policy. While there is a plethora of alternative system and unit-level explanations, it is argued that there has been a considerable decline in American foreign policy executives' considerations for the *raison de système*, or the broader interests of the international community, in this period. While this may be symptomatic of a broader phenomenon, it is sufficient, for the purposes of this research, to establish if there is a detectable change in the way U.S. foreign policy executives consider something that approximates to the abstract notion of international society.

China is the second puzzling case and provides an explanation through a non-event.²⁷ Despite so many incentives, why does China not behave like a typical rising, revisionist-great power? Rather than challenging international order, Chinese restraint can be best described as order-reforming. That is, China has significantly increased its entrenchment in the institutions of the liberal world order. China is loath to illegitimate and unilateral use of force. Its impact on international order is primarily positive and manifested in diplomatic, international legal, and economic statecraft. China's diplomatic activism is worthy of note. Aside from expanding diplomatic links and increasing its presence in global governance, China has concluded a series of territorial border re-negotiations with all its neighbors since the 1990s, terminating a series of border clashes. It has, moreover,

²⁷ For an example of a similar type of study, but concerning American restraint, see *Power and Restraint*, p. xi.

sought to re-engineer the entire economic order of Eurasia through legal and institutional arrangements. In a sense, China may not be “liberal,” especially in its domestic politics, but its declared geopolitical goals and means seem to correspond to the idea of a plural international society.

Table I. 2. Prescriptive Grand Strategies and Grand-Strategic Orientations.²⁸

G.S. Orientations	The U.S.A.	China
Order-Retrenching (Least Ambitious)	“Neo-Isolationism”	“Hide the light, bide the time.”
Order-Conforming	“Restraint”/Offshore Balancing	“Peaceful Rise/Development.”
Order-Reforming	“Selective Engagement”	“Striving for More”
Order-Challenging (Most-Ambitious)	“Primacy”	N/A

The phenomena under consideration severely limit opportunities for a Large-N study and further necessitate a bias in case selection towards established and rising great powers. There are many instances, however, within these country cases that can help illuminate grounds for inference.

²⁸ See, Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Grand Strategy for the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; and Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter, 1996/97), pp. 4, 30-33, esp. cit. 42, 44; Aaron L. Friedberg, “Globalization and Chinese Grand Strategy,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (February-March, 2018), pp. 16; Holslag, “Smart Revisionist.”

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The succeeding chapters help to illuminate the numerous theoretical, empirical, and normative problems in the study of international order, and its Discontents. Chapter 1 discusses problems with extant definitions of order, revisionism, and status-quo, as well as missing components to the study of grand strategy. Chapter 2 develops the main arguments of the dissertation by reviewing the literature more thoroughly to lay out the major causal processes that serve as alternative explanations for the proposed theory herein. A state's grand strategy can alternate between fully conforming to, or abnegating, international order along different dimensions and these variations are a product of different permutations of system-level opportunities (restrictiveness and permissiveness) and elite interests at the unit level. The succeeding Chapter 3 further develops the methodology employed in this research, specifically pertaining to the content analysis of elite discourses on the international use of force. It expounds the congruency procedures used to demonstrate the viability of the hypotheses on grand-strategic orientation. Alternative hypotheses from competing theories, developed in Chapter 2, are used to evaluate the validity of the explanations developed in this research.

Next, Chapter 5 concerns the United States foreign policy in the Post-Cold War period. Specifically, this chapter identifies key moments in the post-Cold War period in which the U.S. used force externally. A major test for the validity of any hypothesis is to ensure *ceteris paribus* conditions, except for the crucial variable we are studying. In the case of the grand-strategic orientations framework and U.S. foreign policy, the Gulf Wars is a suitable place to begin. The First Gulf War in which a U.S.-led UN coalition rebuked in Saddam Hussain's invasion of Kuwait, was undertaken with support from the

international community and managed to restore the *status quo ante bellum*. The U.S. undertook a similar operation in 2003 against the Saddam regime, this time without the enthusiastic support of the international community and setting into motion a destabilizing conflict in Iraq that paved the way for further regional conflicts. Interestingly, the U.S. acted with greater multilateralism, at a time when its power was at its apex. This is a challenge to Realism. The permissiveness of the strategic environment naturally engendered greater U.S. interventionism. Yet, the American-led interventions in many parts of the world, ostensibly undertaken for humanitarian ends, have served to undermine international orders. What is surprising is that the U.S. conformed to international order and principles of multilateralism at the apex of its power in the so-called unipolar moment, yet other interventions, especially in the third world, were accomplished unilaterally, resulting in great harm. The Second Gulf War and America's overbalancing of states like Iran further evidence a disregard for the common interests of the international society of states. Finally, U.S. foreign policy in the seminal period of the Donald Trump presidency further reinforces this unilateral tendency.

Chapter 6 details order-reforming behavior in which permissive international environments, combined with foreign policy executives that are sensitive to the common interests of international society, engage in the order-reforming behavior. This chapter examines China's order-reforming grand-strategic orientation through an analysis of its territorial agreements, its diplomatic activism and efforts to establish a China-centered regional economic order in Eurasia, and its efforts within major international fora to press for new values and agendas for global governance. It highlights the confluence of a favorable international environment and the surprising restraint in China's foreign relations

as well as diplomatic activism as a viable alternative explanation to rising great power restraint. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the study with a comparative discussion of the case studies.

In what follows, this chapter reflects on the importance of international order and problematizes a series of questionable and self-serving narratives on state behavior that are endemic to foreign policy debates in the American academe (which concomitantly inform IR debates). Thereafter, the reader is presented with this dissertation's main argument, which underscores the necessity of recognizing nuances in state practices and appreciating the role of statespeople in binding international society. Next, it examines notable shortages in existing theories on status quo and revisionism as well as research on grand strategy. In the penultimate section, the reader is exposed to important theoretical considerations and conceptualizations, while the final section provides a roadmap of chapter content for the rest of this volume.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Order is characterized by stable configurations of power, clear demarcations of political rights and privileges, and property rights among social actors. While domestic orders are hierarchical, international order concerns the life and death of nations. Unlike domestic orders, moreover, international order is not necessarily enforced by a "Leviathan," but rather reflects a conscious and unified design by self-interested states.²⁹ We can infer, therefore, that the cooperative decisions of disparate political units, each with varying levels of power, resources, and influence at their command, determine international outcomes.

²⁹ Anarchy is thought to be the defining feature of international relations. Some scholars posit that the totality of practices and interactions between states, with common interest in preserving order, amounts to an international "society of states." See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 13-19.

The collective wisdom of the IR discipline shows that international orders emerge and collapse in tandem with rising or declining great powers, hegemonic wars, and the diplomatic efforts of international society. Through war and agreements, international orders generally incline towards equilibrium.³⁰ States that are content with a given configuration of power will seek to preserve it; those that are not will seek to change it.³¹ The latter is inevitable given that the metrics of state power are perpetually in flux. As an example of this phenomenon, the Westphalian international system has hosted devastating, system-wide hegemonic wars roughly every century since the 1600s. Each of these wars has been punctuated by prolonged periods of relative calm conceived by the diplomatic efforts of major powers in the *postbellum*.³² The American-led liberal world order, a product of World War II, and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union have together produced one of the most peaceful and prosperous global arrangements in history. It is clear, however, that the present equilibrium will not last indefinitely. For this reason, understanding the way states comport themselves, particularly rising states and great powers, is crucial.³³

³⁰ See Robert W. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. x, xii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

³² A chronological listing of major wars, and peace settlements, in the Westphalian international system are as follows: The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and The Peace of Westphalia (1648); the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713); the Wars of the French Revolution (1792-1815) and the Congress of Vienna (1815); World War I (1914-1918) and the Peace of Versailles (1919); and World War II (1939-1945) and the Wartime Agreements between the Allied Powers (1942-1946).

³³ Great-power states are those that possess a special status in international society and accorded special privileges and duties because of their superior military and economic capabilities. See Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp. 194-199. For other capability-based explanations, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 5. See also Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495- 1975* (University Press of Kentucky, 1983), pp. 10-19, and for a good overview see Barry Buzan, *United States and the Great Powers: World Politics in the Twenty-First*

The theoretical and empirical significance of preserving the present international order is underscored today by the emergence of new great powers and the perceived relative decline of extant ones. Three major narratives on this issue stand out. Firstly, there is a palpable concern over the emergence of China as a potential rival to the United States.³⁴ The rise of China is tantamount to a *fin-de-siècle* for the apex of global power.³⁵ With American power diminishing in the face of China's growing power and confidence, history is coming full circle. Notable scholars, such as John Mearsheimer, have speculated that this power transition will not be peaceful, as an emboldened China will have the wherewithal to provoke a war with the United States.³⁶ Even if China appears at present, as some argue, to be an integral part of the liberal world order, it is doing so to preserve the façade of pacifism—that China is simply biding its time.³⁷ It is entirely possible that China's rise may indirectly destabilize international order in other ways. Chinese elites may, for example, choose needlessly aggressive strategies due to their hubris.³⁸ This, in

Century (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), pp. 58-76.

³⁴ See John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise." *Current History*, Vol. 105, No. 690 (2006), pp. 160-162; Jonathan Holslag, *China's Coming War with Asia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

³⁵ For an overview of the popular views on China's rise see Yongjin Zhang, 'China Anxiety': Discourse and Intellectual Challenges," *Development and Change*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (2013), pp. 1407-1425.

³⁶ See Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 401-402. For an overview of Mearsheimer's argument, see Jonathan Kirshner, "The Tragedy of Offensive Realism: Classical Realism and the Rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2010), pp. 53-75.

³⁷ Status-quo states are "nations that either desire to preserve the established order or that, while actually desiring change have renounced the use of force as a method of bringing it about." Revisionist states are simply ones that seek to overturn the status quo, through force if necessary. See Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), pp. 125-126.

³⁸ Edward N. Luttwak, *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 9-10.

turn, may further vex China's already agitated neighbors into embracing an anti-China alliance.

The ascendancy of a non-democratic power like China may also undermine international order by reducing the efficacy of non-military tools that have traditionally enabled status quo powers to keep minor states in check. The U.S. and its Western allies have, through bilateral agreements and formal international organizations, leveraged economic and political conditionalities upon states that sought developmental aid. Many developing countries find these conditionalities to be repellent for authoritarian states since they seem to lack the lofty moral standards of the West. Instead, an emerging power like China can woo the developing world with promises of no-strings-attached developmental aid, thereby further enervating the present international order.³⁹ Whatever the specific consequences then, China's rise will challenge the existing America-centered political, economic, and normative pillars of the liberal world order.⁴⁰

A second inter-related narrative is equally ambivalent about lesser powers in other regions. In this narrative, it is believed that two types of states, rising revisionist powers and "rogue states", seek to fundamentally transform international relations.⁴¹ From Venezuela in South America to Iran in the Middle East, and to North Korea in East Asia, some regional powers continue to undermine the liberal world order and frustrate

³⁹ See Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (New York City, NY: Vintage, 2009).

⁴⁰ Christopher Layne, "The US-Chinese Power Shift and the End of the Pax Americana," *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2018), pp. 89-111.

⁴¹ See Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 39-49. Cf. G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism After America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 56 (May/June, 2011), pp. 56-59.

America's global designs. These states are not necessarily rising powers, but their dissatisfaction with international order has manifested as an aversion to the United States and the very premise of a liberal world order. However, these states are comparatively weak and cannot pose a vital threat to the United States. Generally, these countries tend to be authoritarian states with abysmal relations with the United States, often displaying non-compliance with international law and norms, or endangering countries allied to the United States. Notable examples include such countries as Iran, which is perceived by Israel as an existential threat but is ultimately considered a rogue state due to its support for Shi'ite terrorist groups. Iran's potential threat to the global energy supply is exacerbated by its location, dangerously close to major energy routes like the Persian Gulf. Iran's ambition to achieve civilian nuclear power continues to spark controversy as it is perceived to be an aggressive move by the Iranian regime to acquire nuclear weapons. North Korea is similarly disposed. In the backdrop of the unsettled Korean conflict, the North Korean regime has withstood the United States' economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure, all the while continuing its drive to attain nuclear weapons, thereby posing a direct challenge to key United States allies such as South Korea and Japan.

The third set of narratives concern the role of status quo states that have a vested interest in preserving order. Some have attained great-power status, so seeking to preserve international order is natural. Others are too weak to effectuate any meaningful change in international relations and therefore assent, either willingly or due to external coercion, to international order. Additionally, adherence to a plethora of liberal and democratic norms,

institutions, and regimes restrains many of these states.⁴² Status-quo states either accept international order or have incentives to uphold international order. Their efforts to uphold international order are often frustrated by revisionist and rogue states. The difficulty for status-quo states in resisting revisionist states lies in the difficulty of assessing the aims of states, especially non-democratic ones.⁴³ This is further exacerbated by the consequences of compelling revisionist states to change their behavior. When undertaken, efforts like military intervention, for example, appear to reinforce hypocritical imperial practices that not only strengthen illiberal states but also lead to a domestic blowback that subverts the domestic liberalism of status quo states.⁴⁴ For these reasons, it is not uncommon to see variations of narratives asserting that the United States must be directly involved in regional conflicts while its allies should be perpetually vigilant against rogue states to protect global world order.⁴⁵ If such narratives are to be believed, the appropriate policy response, then, is for the United States to implement a variety of measures to defend the liberal world order through a change in its grand strategy to balancing emerging threats.⁴⁶

⁴² See discussion in Andrew H. Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies* Vol. 7, No. 1 (October, 1997), pp. 129-147.

⁴³ See Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 186-214.

⁴⁴ See David Rampton and Suthaharan Nadarajah, "A Long View of Liberal Peace and its Crisis," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2014), pp. 441-465, especially, 443-444.

⁴⁵ Theoretically too, scholars and analysts have indicated the necessity of the United States to rebuke threats around the world. See Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1994), pp. 45-55. Meanwhile, Mearsheimer notes that the United States should endeavor to balance offshore against threats and would-be rising powers in other regions of the world by working in tandem with key allies. See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 157-158, 237.

⁴⁶ For an overview of various perspectives, see Gideon Rose, "Out of Order," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (Jan./Feb., 2017), pp. 1-5.

From such a declinist perspective, one can infer several policy prescriptions: that the U.S. may need to reinforce its alliances in the region, invest in greater military capabilities, pursue further diplomatic and economic measures, and ultimately adopt a grand strategy that affirms American primacy.⁴⁷ It appears that status-quo powers, especially the United States, have their work cut out for them!

These narratives are fundamentally problematic given that labels like revisionism and status quo are *a posteriori* labels. States have available to them a variety of strategies that can preserve or challenge international order in several ways, and it is generally through outcomes we can even begin to infer whether a state is revisionist (also disregarding the disjuncture in a state's intent and international outcomes). We can, however, think more clearly about the behavior and capabilities of the aforementioned states and identify the disjuncture in these narratives in turn. Regarding rising powers, scholars rightfully point out that China is not outright challenging the United States. Not only does China refrain from confronting the United States with military threats, but it is also its largest trading partner. China unambiguously appears to be a major pillar of the liberal world order due to its diplomatic networks, sheer demography, massive manufacturing output, and voracious appetite for raw materials. Others further note the asymmetry of China's relationship with the United States at present, arguing that the former cannot challenge the hegemon without destroying its own fragile, export-dependent

⁴⁷ See, among many others, Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York City, NY: Basic Books, 1997); Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July-August, 2002), pp. 20-33; Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The Present Danger," *National Interest*, No. 59 (Spring, 2000), pp. 57-69.

economy. The fact that the U.S. is indebted to China means that China cannot risk damaging the U.S. economy.⁴⁸ That said, being the focal point of global capital, the U.S. enjoys an unassailable advantage as transnational capitalist classes build support for U.S. foreign policy at home.⁴⁹ In fact, displacing a hegemon may be an undesirable goal as China may be more interested in fulfilling other intangible status goals than in pursuing the costly goal of establishing itself as a new hegemon.⁵⁰

For lesser rogue or “revisionist” powers, the material logic presents even less-surmountable obstacles. As it is a rising great power, it is prohibitively expensive for any status-quo power, even the United States, to preemptively strike China. Most other so-called revisionist states hardly possess the capabilities to resist determined status-quo powers, let alone topple international order. Revisionist states may not necessarily be rising or powerful, then. They may still be revisionists, however, because they possess revolutionary governments or espouse authoritarian ideologies that run counter to the prevailing progressive values of international society. Not content with transforming one’s society only, revolutionary movements often spill across borders and threaten international order not only in terms of property rights but also the internal stability of states that constitute international society –without stable states with sufficiently legitimate governments, the international order could not operate for long. Since these regimes are

⁴⁸ See Daniel Drezner, “Bad Debts: Assessing China’s Influence in Great Power Politics,” *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Fall, 2009), pp. 7-45.

⁴⁹ Although the internal contradictions of neoliberal globalization and the emergence of leaders like Donald Trump are likely to undermine U.S. leadership. Doug Stokes “Trump, American Hegemony and the Future of the Liberal International Order,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2018), pp. 133-150.

⁵⁰ Schweller, “Rising Powers and Revisionism,” pp. 3-7.

generally cemented with political ideology, cults of personality, or religion, their foreign policies run counter to the broader interests of the international community. For these considerations, revolutionary states are therefore thought to pose threats to international order, as their domestic and foreign policy agendas impel them towards authoritarianism at home and violence abroad.

Such a rendering of revisionist states runs into problems because these behaviors do not seem to correspond with the behavior of past revisionist states. An examination of diplomatic history is revealing. In the past, states that have fundamentally challenged an established international order and its proponents have invariably failed. Many have failed to follow-up on their domestic transformation, overextending and reaching their culminating point of victory before consolidating their gains, as in the cases of Revolutionary France or the Axis Powers.⁵¹ Others have failed not necessarily because of military downfall, but because of the processes of socialization.⁵² Revisionist states are

⁵¹ For a discussion of the concept of the culminating point of victory, see Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 528, 566-73; Edvard N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace Revised Edition* (Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 20-21.

⁵² States cannot be perpetually revolutionary and working actively to upend international order. By the logic of prominent IR Theories such as Realism and the English School, there are considerable restrictions on the ambitions of states. Neorealists argue that rising powers, especially threatening states, will invite balancing coalitions that will check their power. See, respectively, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 116-123; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 5-6. Bids by revolutionary states to radically upend international order have historically always failed for this reason. Simply, externally-aggressive revolutionary states will be eliminated in a hegemonic war. See Gilpin, *War and Change*. Finally, according to the English School, the members of international society will invariably invoke common values and implement various instruments of statecraft to stigmatize and punish non-conformist states until the latter reach a “Thermidor” moment and abandon their radical goals to fulfill more basic dictates such as those pertaining to ensuring their survival. See David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993), pp. 7-8, 251-272, especially pp. 251-253. See, also, Christian Cantir, “The Allied Punishment and Attempted Socialization of the Bolsheviks (1917–1924): An English School Approach,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37 (2011), pp. 1967-1994.

subject to the same strategic dilemmas as other states in international politics and grapple with similar trade-offs. Trade-offs such as to starve for permanent revolution or to compromise revolutionary principles; to become a member of the diplomatic community or to risk becoming a pariah. For better or worse, “revisionist” states tend to respect the general rules of the game, rather than risk falling by the wayside.⁵³ Revolutionary states from the 20th century, most notably the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Iran, eventually normalized their diplomatic relations with most of the international community. Even today, most of these revisionist states’ ostensibly-rogue-like activities are confined to the discursive (i.e., denouncement of great powers) or to asymmetric violence, such as supporting armed non-state actors (i.e., terrorist groups). These non-state actors are indubitably harmful to international order because they undermine the qualities on which it is predicated.⁵⁴ Worse, they generally cannot be traced to a specific address, and their sponsors can rarely be punished.

The claims about status quo states are also dubious. It may also be pertinent to ask how established great powers, those that are ostensibly content with the current state of the international order, comport themselves in international politics. As the most powerful state in the international system, the United States has since the end of the Second World War overseen the creation of the liberal world order, as well as a series of international organizations and liberal institutions aimed at generating wealth and economic growth, fostering liberal values, and, ultimately, projecting American power. It is only natural for

⁵³ The choice is clear: emulate the best practices of your competitors, which may require you to become pacific in foreign policy, or “fall by the wayside.” Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 77.

⁵⁴ See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 7, 16-17.

the United States and its allies to act on behalf of the international community and rebuke revisionist states, thereby upholding international order. To this end, the United States and its allies have been involved in many regions and conflicts from the 20th century to the present.

These interventions have featured innocuous acts as well as destructive policies that are hardly indistinguishable from the tools allegedly employed by revisionist states. In other words, as a status-quo power, the United States has engaged in policies that undermine international order. Many can rightly point out that there is no puzzle here. The United States is, after all, a hegemon in a unipolar system. This means that there are no other sufficiently great powers that can deter the United States from using force. Unipolarity is so overbearing on world politics that any form of balancing behavior that would otherwise be considered as automatic and prudent response to a systemic threat would logically be considered revisionist behavior!⁵⁵ The puzzle, then, is not that a state in the position of the United States uses force, but that it does so to the detriment of the world order it has forged in the past half-century.⁵⁶ Once again, the current terminology fails to capture the full spectrum of state behaviors. In fact, this failure calls into question the very premise of the United States and allies as being beneficial for international order. Without exonerating the foreign policies of revisionist or status-quo states, there are, however, some nuances to “revisionist” behaviors that need to be addressed.

⁵⁵ Randall L. Schweller, “The Future is Always Uncertain and the End is Always Near,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (June 2011), p. 180.

⁵⁶ See Robert Jervis, “The Remaking of a Unipolar World Order,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2006), p. 7; Haass, “Liberal World Order, R.I.P.”

It is here that the dissertation seeks to leave its imprint on the literature. Much of the extant discussion on international order seems to juxtapose the efforts of established great powers to pursue their enlightened self-interest while providing desirable services to the global community, such as peace and functioning international institutions, with the activities of the malcontents that frustrate international peace due to their parochial interests or radical ideologies. States are seemingly-unproblematically classified as either “status quo” or “revisionist,” depending on the fluctuations of their material capabilities and their allegiance to the liberal world order.

The problem with this taxonomical imprecision cannot be overstated. In simplest terms, such an approach essentializes the subject material. It precludes the possibility of thinking about international order and its evolution beyond a binary view in which states are either for or against preserving international order due to qualities intrinsic to them. States seeking to preserve the status quo may misprognose the international security environment and choose towards maladaptive foreign policies.⁵⁷ This may, among other things, lead them to inflate non-threats and overbalance them.⁵⁸ Other times, states may underestimate, even at a domestic-discursive level, the aggressive intent of a state.

Most importantly, it may preclude states from recognizing opportunities that can help them peacefully accommodate regional and system-level challengers. Applying these concerns to contemporary discussions on U.S. foreign policy, for example, demonstrates the risks. There is a very particular discourse that undercuts discussions concerning the

⁵⁷ Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Use of Force* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

liberal world order: that of the necessity of American leadership for the preservation of order. This discourse presupposes that if the U.S. fails to uphold these values, the liberal world order will decay.⁵⁹ The paradox is that when the U.S. acts in the name of preserving order, this manifests as overbalancing significantly weaker states, often with grave consequences for the domestic viability of these states, as well as for the stability of the regional orders they inhabit. The tendency of leadership to manifest as unilateralism further reduces American credibility.⁶⁰

Whatever the specifics of a given international order may be, however, international society is irreducible to a specific vision of “order.” International order is neither immutable nor reducible to one’s allegiances or adherence to the dictates of a single ideology. The only sufficient condition for international order is that states agree upon some standard practices and interests within international society, for which homogeneity of the constitutive units is not a necessary condition. Even the U.S.-backed liberal world, for example, is a manifestation of an abstract notion of international society that merely happens to have been shaped primarily by the fiat of a superpower and its allies, but which still accommodates illiberal states. International order has, in the past, accommodated far greater diversity and heterogeneity than we often appreciate. The extent to which international society ought to support a diversity of state types and practices, or interfere in their autonomy in service to broader humanitarian principles, is a major debate in

⁵⁹ See Rampton and Nadaraja, “A Long view of the Liberal Peace,” p. 444.

⁶⁰ See David Skidmore, *The Unilateralist Temptation in American Foreign Policy* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2011), p. 100.

International Relations theory.⁶¹ For an international order to be stable, nevertheless, it needs to distribute a modicum of justice to its constituents.⁶² States may be interested in rectifying some of these injustices, real or perceived, but it is difficult to equate this with revisionism unless states pursue these ends at the cost of order. In sum, there are many reasons why states may want to challenge international order. What the present discussion and qualifications reveal, however, is the fact that the way states pursue these ends matters. It is possible to pursue self-interest without abnegating the idea of international society or international order. States need not entirely acquiesce to hegemonic power, nor seek confrontation. They can instead *reform* international order without unraveling it.⁶³

1.2. PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING DEFINITIONS

Given the scope and theoretically syncretic nature of the project, some conceptual clarifications are needed to identify extant problems and demarcate the dissertation's intended contribution. The following sections rely on existing definitions in the literature to contextualize what is meant by "international order," "status quo," and "revisionism" (all of which are summarized in table 1. 1. below).

⁶¹ This refers to the so-called Pluralist-Solidarist Debate in the English School. Earlier scholars noted that order is best pursued in a pluralist international society that accommodates diversity of practices and domestic politics, thereby coveting state sovereignty as a *sine qua non* of international order. See, Bull, *Anarchical Society*, p. 157 and Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) Cf. Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (New York City, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998) who argue that interventions and violation of state sovereignty are justified if undertaken for legitimate humanitarian ends. See also Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Justice, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁶² See Hedley Bull, "The Revolt against the West" in *The Expansion of International Society*, edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 217-28.

⁶³ One can even make the case that U.S.' preeminent position in the post-Second World War environment resulted from its inheritance of Britain's imperial mantle and a revamping of its institutions to accommodate American power.

1.2.1. Defining Order

Since international (and regional) orders display notably different qualities over time, it may be a worthwhile scientific endeavor to produce taxonomical studies of international order.⁶⁴ The problem, however, is that international order also refers to something static, perhaps as an acceptable *modus vivendi* as to how power is exercised productively in international politics. International order nevertheless is also inexorably in a state of flux, with some agents advancing agendas that may serve to strengthen international conventions, and others undermining it by seeking their own aggrandizement. One is therefore left to ponder the interplay of these dynamics to deduce something useful, meaningful, and generalizable about the whole of international order. Understanding the purposive behaviors that serve international order, as well as those that enervate it, is, therefore, a worthwhile endeavor. What follows is a brief description of notable approaches to international order inferred from different schools of IR thought.

From its inception, the International Relations (IR) discipline has concerned itself with understanding patterns of war and peace in international politics. Chief among its objectives is to clarify the conditions under which wars break out and, by extension, to generate useful insights for practitioners of statecraft to effectuate the desired normative goals of the field: principally, the abolishment of international war and the promotion of other humanitarian goals. The salience of building a peaceful international order is a recurring theme in IR. It is hard to think otherwise considering the circumstances

⁶⁴ See Andrew Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds? The Place of Regions in the Study of International Society," *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (2007), pp. 127-146.

chronicled in one of the seminal texts of the field.⁶⁵ Whatever the entry point of any general inquiry into the operation of world order, one fact is incontrovertible: that orders arise and unravel. Their fortunes, linked as they are to the everyday operations of their constituent members, fluctuate with structural-material circumstances, prevailing ideational forces, and the imposition of other historical exigencies. In this respect, the history of international order is coterminous with that of the rise and fall of various great powers, how they comport themselves *inter se*, and their efforts to preserve arrangements favorable to their common interests.⁶⁶

When describing international order, Hedley Bull's definition is often invoked as the golden standard: order is "a pattern of activity between and among states that sustains the basic goals of the society of states."⁶⁷ What makes this conceptualization so powerful is that it paves the way to thinking about the possibility of achieving peace, cooperation, and other desirable international outcomes despite the much-maligned presence of anarchy. There are, nevertheless, limitations to this conceptualization as order is conflated with

⁶⁵ E. H. Carr's volume on the breakdown of international order in the interbellum period in Europe and the culmination of the Second World War is a prime example. IR scholars have incorporated lessons from earlier cases as well. For example, one illustration is the affairs of Greek city-states, especially the writings of the 'proto-IR scholar' Thucydides who reported on the dynamics between a satisfied power and a rising one. Crafted in the backdrop of the *interbellum* leading up to the Second World War, E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* divides the world into 'satisfied powers' and 'dissatisfied states.' The former denied the latter their place in the sun, and their dissatisfaction with the existing international order ultimately resulted in a devastating war. See, Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich, and the Problems of Peace 1812-1822* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1957); Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York City, NY: Random House, 1987).

⁶⁷ See Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp. 6-10. International order is predicated on the preservation of values thought to be commonly desired by all members of societies. These include, among other things, the preservation of life, honoring of contracts, and stable property rights.

consistent behaviors.⁶⁸ Instead, as Tang argues, it is more appropriate to think of international order as the “degree of predictability of what is going on within a social system, presumably because agents’ behavior, social interactions, and social outcomes within the social system have all come under some regulation.”⁶⁹ This research, therefore, defines international order as simply that which consistently promotes certain outcomes and compels states to behave in relatively-predictable ways.

There exists various school of thought in IR as to the general operation of international politics and how to achieve order. For security and interest-based theories, such as Realism, international order is tantamount to the general absence of war due to the effective functioning of the balance of power.⁷⁰ The pursuit of “stability,” then, is the supreme virtue because it is a situation in which established power relationships remain static, preventing the rise of powerful aggressors, reducing the likelihood of hegemonic wars and, ultimately, ensuring the survival of most states.⁷¹ Interstate war is the first place to look when tracing the components of status quo and revisionism. Structural theories of international politics, especially Neorealist approaches, causally link their understanding of order, which is an equilibrium of power, to states’ efforts to secure themselves under

⁶⁸ See Shipping Tang, “China and the Future of International Orders,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2018), p. 31. See, also, *Ibid.*, cit. 1, p. 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. This conceptualization further allows for more concrete measurement of order along important dimensions (viz. Scope, concentration/distribution of power, the degree of institutionalization, and the degree to which agents internalize order).

⁷⁰ See, for example, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 132, 136, 161-165. See also Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer, “Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability,” *World Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1964), pp. 390-406. Most importantly, see Randall L. Schweller, “The Problem of International Order Revisited: A Review Essay,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer, 2001), p. 165.

⁷¹ Deutsch and Singer, “Multipolar Power Systems,” p. 390.

conditions of anarchy and uncertainty. States have a few policy options.⁷² Internally, states can improve their military and economic capabilities to increase their likelihood of defeating threatening powers.⁷³ Externally, they can forge alliances to counter threats.⁷⁴ For these reasons, international politics has a recurring tendency towards an automatic balance of power—an approximation of a stable order.⁷⁵

Polarity, or the number of great powers comprising the international structure, can affect the war-proneness and, thus, the stability of the international system.⁷⁶ This power equilibrium differs greatly depending on the number and composition *inter se* of great-power states.⁷⁷ In descending number of great powers, multipolar, bipolar, and unipolar systems constrain or enable states in diverse ways. Polarity also has consequences on the perceptions of decision-makers and their levels of uncertainty about the intentions and capabilities of other states.⁷⁸ In multipolar systems, states may commit themselves to counterproductive unions in which an ally might blunder into a war, thereby needlessly

⁷² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 89-93.

⁷⁶ See Waltz, "Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy."

⁷⁷ See, respectively, Thomas Christen and Jack L. Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), pp. 137-168; Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, Vol. 93, No. 3 Population, Prediction, Conflict, Existentialism (Summer 1994), pp. 889-909; William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5-41. See also, Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No.1 (Summer 2000), p. 1.

⁷⁸ See Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," p. 212. See also Jack S. Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1984), pp. 219-238; Ted Hopf, "Polarity, the Offence-Defense Balance, and War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (1991), pp. 475-493.

dragging along its allies into the conflict.⁷⁹ Conversely, the failure of an ally to honor alliance commitments could have adverse effects on international order as well.⁸⁰ The importance of buck-passing is particularly relevant in the case of great-power states that shirk responsibilities. Apart from undermining the balance-of-power logic, buck-passing can strengthen the resolve of aggressive states and culminate in major wars.⁸¹

In bipolar systems, states generally gravitate to an alliance with one of the two superpowers, resulting in increased certainty about the sources of threats.⁸² Combined with the looming possibility of nuclear Armageddon, bipolarity ensured a delicate equilibrium between the superpowers that prevented direct war. The polarity-based argument founders, however, when one considers that the alleged “Long Peace” failed to secure order and justice in the global periphery, leading to what is known as the stability-instability paradox.⁸³ The historical boundedness of the argument, however, diminishes the contemporary utility of any argument about state behavior, or international outcomes for that matter, based on system-level variables such as bipolarity.⁸⁴

Unipolar systems are thought to be less stable since a sole superpower is an unbounded one. A “unipole” is so overwhelmingly superior that other states cannot hope

⁷⁹ See Christensen and Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks,” p .138.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ The World Wars, for example. This is apropos to the discussion on order-conforming behavior. It shows that a willingness to use force enhances deterrence and reinforces “stability” in a material sense. These are the types of practices that can promote order in international society.

⁸² See Waltz, “Stability of a Bipolar World,” pp. 886-887.

⁸³ Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 31.

⁸⁴ Though this is a possible-future configuration of power in international politics.

to balance its ambitions. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the unipole is free to act with relative impunity, which would explain why the most powerful state in the international system might act unilaterally and persist in behaviors that the traditional literature associates with preserving the status quo. Unipolarity is a mixed blessing. Achieving unipolarity can essentially guarantee a state's security, and therefore its survival. The downside is that a unipole's lack of a credible rival reduces other states' willingness to tolerate unilateralism and other forms of self-aggrandizement. This reduces the overall efficacy of the unipole's foreign policy as it provokes resentment and soft-balancing.⁸⁵ The absence of foes, or the resentment by allied and neutral states still would not explain why a unipole would engage risky and unilateral foreign policies —apart from some form of miscalculation. Overall, however, the promise of credible punishment by the unipole would logically increase the likelihood that states, especially would-be revisionists, acquiesce and pursue pacific foreign policies.

Another strand in Realist thinking on international order emphasizes the role of hegemony and economic structures in shaping world politics. In a sense, amassing overwhelming power could be conducive to order. Attempting to become more powerful than the opposing coalition is sensible because this can either prevent war or help secure

⁸⁵ For a discussion on various perspectives pertaining to “soft balancing,” see Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to US Primacy* (New York, NY: W. W. & Norton, 2005); Robert A. Pape, “Soft balancing Against the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 7-45; Taizha V. Paul, “Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 46-71; Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Hard Times For Soft Balancing,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 72-108; Keir A. Lieber and Gerard Alexander, “Waiting for Balancing: Why the World is Not Pushing Back,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 109-137.

territorial gains, thereby increasing wealth and power.⁸⁶ This view is somewhat corroborated by the emergence and fall of world orders. Within an order, one can expect a system change, a systemic change, or interaction change.⁸⁷ The first embodies a change of the units. The second, the primary focus of Gilpin's as well as most other hegemonic transition research refers to the changes in the governing coalition (i.e., the hegemonic state). The last, meanwhile, concerns to changes in the way states interact with one another.⁸⁸ As to the principal means by which changes can occur, these can be achieved in an incremental or revolutionary way.⁸⁹ The differential rates of growth between one state, or a coalition of states, can lead to system-wide wars as the costs of either maintaining or preserving order can incentivize established powers and rising states to either obey or challenge the order. While states may be dissatisfied with a given order for myriad reasons, the analytical focus is always about how dissatisfied states challenge the hegemonic coalition that governs a world order in the long-run.

This tendency to highlight hegemonic war is somewhat surprising (and of limited utility in contemporary world politics) given that there have been instances of hegemonic transitions in which the rising power did not directly confront the hegemon. America's rise to world power is a perfect example. While its rise was not entirely peaceful, the U.S. rarely

⁸⁶ For a detailed discussion on conventional theories of security-based alliances, see Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances*; Thomas Christen and Jack L. Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), pp. 137-168.

⁸⁷ See, Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 40.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 70.

confronted major European powers.⁹⁰ Most importantly, the U.S. did not confront the long-declining hegemon, Great Britain, and opted instead to ally with them in the both World Wars. U.S. “hegemony” consolidated after successful wars against what the traditional literature would call revisionist states. Why is this exposition important? Simply, it is possible to have hegemonic transitions in which a rising state becomes a hegemon while not necessarily exhibiting revisionist qualities in the traditional sense, like unbounded expansionism and pursuing a hegemonic war against major status-quo powers.

There is also an IR liberal version of this “hegemonic stability theory.” Liberals highlight the social and institutional aspects of order, arguing that international orders are formed as the body of rules that constitute world politics and manifest via international organizations, regimes, and norms.⁹¹ While these rules can theoretically operate under any international power structure, the modern liberal world order emerged in the aftermath of a hegemonic war and propagated by a benevolent hegemon.⁹² Victorious states have an incentive to establish various international institutional mechanisms to achieve order so that they may preserve the *status quo postbellum*. Hegemony is one strategy to achieve this. Liberal scholars, most prominently John Ikenberry, have argued that victors of

⁹⁰ The “major” qualifier being key because the U.S. did fight a colonial war against the moribund Spanish Empire in 1898.

⁹¹ The liberal notion of world/international order is rarely defined. Constance Duncombe and Tim Dunne, “After Liberal World Order,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (January, 2018), p. 26. A good place to start, however, is John G. Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (1982), p. 380.

⁹² See G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 52-61.

hegemonic wars establish international institutions that promote the economic interdependence between states and the economic well-being of allies.

A hegemonic state, especially a benign one like the United States was in the aftermath of World War II, can attain special political privileges and act on behalf of the international community to promote order. These functions can be both economic or political. Economically, these may include such privileges as having seigniorage rights (over the global reserve currency), being the lender of last resort, and running, at times, deficits to promote the economic wellbeing of lesser allies. Politically, the hegemon has the capacity and legitimacy to act on behalf of the international community. The formal institutionalization of political, military, and economic norms, backed up by the power of the hegemon, result in institutional “lock-in.”⁹³

There are problems with this liberal interpretation of international order as well. Institutions can become shackles. Abuses of power through unilateralism reduce the hegemon’s freedom of action.⁹⁴ Despite this paradox, there is no credible explanation of why states, especially a hegemon, would exercise restraint, especially long after the previous hegemonic war when the international conjuncture has changed to the detriment of the hegemon. It is unclear to what extent liberal and democratic values constitute a sufficient condition for restraint since the hegemonic state and other democracies do undermine international order. More importantly, this also begs the question of what happens to states that fall outside of these institutional arrangements? This perspective, in

⁹³ Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 5. Cf. Schweller, “The Problem of International Order,” pp. 163-165.

⁹⁴ See the debate on soft balancing. See also Skidmore, *The Unilateralist Temptation*.

sum, does not seem to accept the possibility that non-liberal states can participate in the making and preservation of international order indefinitely because they are non-liberal and prone to rogue behavior.

China, for example, has so far been an enthusiastic participant of the liberal world order. Its further rise and eventual eclipsing of the United States, combined with its fundamentally illiberal values, however, could transform or destabilize international order.⁹⁵ In a sense, the liberal institutional argument is unconvincing. It suffers from the same problem as the traditional Realist perspectives that purport to theorize about world order. It fails to provide mid-level theorizing about shorter-term state behavior. Why would a benign hegemon, for example, undermine its international order by acting in illiberal ways? Why, if participating in the liberal world order is so beneficial, should any rising power, liberal or not, seek to undermine it in the name of domestic values? Examinations about the general contours of world orders, their rise, and fall, are vitally important. It is also imperative to understand the conflict between rising and declining states, to meaningfully engage with questions over order.

As in the case of Realism, material capabilities and the balance of power play a crucial role in managing international order, but without reducing international security to the raw function of material capabilities. International politics remains “social” as states delineate a scope of acceptable practices, or institutions, towards one another that reduce uncertainty and help promote their common interests. This, however, should not be

⁹⁵ For an overview of prominent perspectives on the rise of China and its impact on the liberal international order, see G. John Ikenberry, Inderjeet Parmar, and Doug Stokes, “Introduction: Ordering the World? Liberal Internationalism in Theory and Practice,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2018), pp. 1-5.

misidentified with the core principles of IR liberalism, for the institutions of international society are Janus-faced. Just as international institutions create a basis for states to form common expectations and standard for cooperation, they also embody principles aimed at preserving the autonomy of its units.⁹⁶

For Critical and Marxist approaches, social classes constitute world politics and, as such, world order materializes when a favorable permutation of ideas, institutions, and material power establishes a hegemonic bloc in one state that subsequently becomes global in scope.⁹⁷ International order, therefore, is simply an extension of the mutual interests of a transnational capitalist class that influences international outcomes, although this group is hardly monolithic as different industrial sectors and fractions compete with one another.⁹⁸ Ruling classes seek to protect a particularly favorable mode of production and relationship with other classes. These concerns shape the “form” that a state will take, and the strategies elites will employ to increase domestic cohesion, *i.e.*, the willing consent of society. This is further enhanced by the use of mechanisms of international order to spread favorable modes of production abroad.⁹⁹ The modern international order, characterized by

⁹⁶ International cooperation cannot always come at the cost of reduced state autonomy and the violation of sovereign prerogatives. For a discussion on the Pluralism-Solidarism debate, see William Bain, “The Pluralist-Solidarist Debate in the English School,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.

⁹⁷ See Robert W. Cox, “Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1981), pp. 126-155. See also, Ronald W. Cox, *Corporate Power, Class Conflict, and the Crisis of the New Globalization* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019).

⁹⁸ Robert W. Cox, (1983), p. 171.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 1971, p. 243.

globalization, is simply an extension of the institution founded in the era of *Pax Americana* but with an added internationalization of production chains.

While none of the previous approaches are necessarily mutually-exclusive, the English School approach provides the most syncretic approach as it posits a *via media* between Realism and Liberalism. It does by highlighting the importance of an international society of states from which order can arise through its constituent states' mutual recognition of their common interest in sustaining it.¹⁰⁰ That is to say that order arises neither from a balance of power, uniform values, nor even hegemony *per se*, but through a combination of these within the framework of an international society of states.¹⁰¹ The English School also recognizes that “order” is not intrinsically desirable because it can stifle states, and other actors, and consign them to unfavorable circumstances.¹⁰² Consequently, order and justice are “at loggerheads with one another.” Orders that fail to provide justice is also contradictory to the preservation of the goals of international life. So, for the English School, international order is defined by international outcomes that in addition to establishing regularities in behavior and stability in relationships, but also an understanding that states deem something to be legitimate or not. The way order can be sustained or challenged, moreover, occurs through a multitude of practices and norms that pervade among the members of an international society. The fundamental institutions of

¹⁰⁰ See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 6-10.

¹⁰¹ *C.f.* Ian Clark, who teases the possibility of *hegemony* as a potential institution of international society. See, *Hegemony and International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁰² Roland Bleiker, “Order and Disorder in World Politics,” in Alexander Bellamy, ed., *International Society and Its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 179-203.

international society, commonly observed in all international societies throughout history, thus shape the quality of an order through statecraft.

International order, therefore, has material, ideational, and normative components, as embodied in the fundamental institutions of international society. In regards to how order can be challenged or preserved along these dimensions, the following section considers how revisionism and status-quo seeking is defined in the IR literature. It is argued that there is a glaring omission of “reforming” international order through existing legal and normative mechanisms.

Table 1.1. A Typology of Order¹⁰³

School of IR	Type of Order	Main "Variables"	Unit(s) of Analysis	Order defined by	Expectations	Main Author
<i>Realism</i>	Anarchical	Distribution of Material Capabilities	International System/ Political Outcomes	Stability/ Equilibrium of Power	The Balance of power preserves stability, engenders peace	Waltz (1979)
<i>Gilpinian Realism</i>	Hegemonic	Distribution of Material Capabilities, Hierarchy of Prestige	World Order	Stability of a governing coalition	Hegemon's preferences remains stable until challenger emerges, resulting in hegemonic war	Gilpin (1981)
<i>Liberalism</i>	Constitutional	Capabilities, Institutions, Regimes, Norms	Liberal International Order, States, International Organizations	Nature of transactions and adherence to liberal principles	Benign hegemonic leadership and liberal values ensure order	Ikenberry (2001; 2011)
<i>English School</i>	Anarchical	Primary Institutions of International Society	(Global) International Society & World Society	Order is obtained by practices of states; justice helps preserve order	Mutual recognition of common interests restrains states	Bull (1977); Hurrell (2007)
<i>English School (II)</i>	Hegemonic	Primary Institutions of International Society, especially great power management	Primary Institutions of International Society	Order is obtained by practices of states; justice helps preserve order	Hegemony is exercised collectively by great powers or a unipole.	Clark (2011)
<i>Neo-Gramscianism</i>	Hegemonic	Material force, ideas, institutions	States, Social Classes/ Transnational Capitalist Class	The emergence of a historic bloc	The confluence of capabilities, ideas, and institutions constitute world order	Cox (1981)

¹⁰³ See Bull, *Anarchical Society*; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Order"; Gilpin, *War and Change*; Ikenberry, *After Victory*; Hurrell, *On Global Order*; Ian Clark, *Hegemony and International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

1.2.2. Limitations Of Status Quo And Revisionism

The conceptual logic of revisionism and status quo is not controversial, but every school of IR underscores distinct aspects of world politics, including prestige, balance of power dynamics, power transitions, unit-level interests, as well as other immaterial considerations. This section briefly considers extant definitions in the literature as well as inferring assumptions about these concepts, thereby highlighting their limitations. As the International Relations discipline has generally focused on war as the major global blight, revisionism has appeared in the literature about dissatisfaction felt by states and a desire to achieve satisfaction in the form of self-determined distributional justice, as either enhanced access to global resources or advancement in the global hierarchy of prestige.

In the Westphalian international system, wars have been fought primarily for self-aggrandizement, or in the name of preserving a balance of power, which would ensure that no state would become too powerful such that they pose a threat to other states. So pervasive is this theme is that one of the earliest works of IR, for example, concerned this very issue. Writing on the eve of the Second World War, E. H. Carr argued that the victors of the Great War established themselves at the apex of global power and influence, consigning in the process the defeated powers to second-class status. The only way to maintain peace was for the “Haves” to recognize the legitimate grievances of the “Have-Nots” so that the latter would not attempt to undermine international order in their quest to seek justice.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ See E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York City, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001 [1939]) p. 77.

Status-quo seeking and revisionism became inexorably linked to the pursuit of power in international politics and, especially, the latter appears to have taken on the same qualities as the pursuit of power for its own sake.¹⁰⁵ Much of the earlier writings on revisionism and status quo also followed this logic as revisionism was essentially the label for states that wanted to overturn a particular power relationship or sought aggrandizement. With the advent of Structural Realism, states were essentially assumed to be security-seekers, and that conflict was reduced to an unintentional outcome of security dilemmas rather than dictates of human nature.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, according to Offensive Realists, the anarchical system incentivizes expansionist behavior, and so revisionism can manifest as sensible security-seeking behavior.¹⁰⁷ This is because rationality dictates that challenging the status quo in pursuit of hegemony is the ultimate guarantee of one's security.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ For an explanation of the idea that power is pursued as an end *per se*, see Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* [6th Edition] (New York City, NY: McGraw Hill, 1985), p. 36.

¹⁰⁶ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (McGraw Hill, 2005 [1948]), pp. 51-52.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* For further clarification, however, Mearsheimer's ahistorical theory asserts that states, particularly the United States, ought to pursue a –British inspired– grand strategy of offshore balancing. This point is further explored in chapter 2. This is because the stopping power of water prevents states from projecting power across the oceans. America should therefore seek hegemony in its region where it is the strongest and rely on allies elsewhere to prevent the rise of regional hegemony in other regions. Mearsheimer's thinly-veiled attempt at peddling American primacy fails even at the most fundamental level given the historical and contemporary importance of the oceans as natural barriers for defense (which enables more trade and can allow greater investment in offensive systems and platforms) as well as a force multiplier that enhances power projection by engendering amphibious operations. For a discussion on Mearsheimer's theory, see Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 213-248. For other excellent critiques, see Christopher Layne, "The 'Poster Child for Offensive Realism': America as a Global Hegemon," *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Winter, 2002/2003), pp. 120-164; Jonathan Haslam, "John Mearsheimer's 'elementary geometry of power': Euclidean moment or an intellectual blind alley?" in Ernest R. May, Richard Rosecrance, and Zara Steiner, eds., *History of Neorealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 322-340. This point is further developed in chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

In addition to system-level security considerations, revisionism and status-quo seeking are increasingly attributed to unit-level variables —either as stand-alone explanations or as additions to structural theories. Neoclassical Realism, for example, combines systemic and unit-level variables to study status quo and revisionism. This perspective discussed above argues that states balance rising and threatening states, which explains why balances of power are recurring features of international politics, and hegemony is rare. Deductively, one must either assume that sometimes order challenging behavior is beneficial, but decision-makers often miscalculate their strategic environment, or that their domestic systems and decision-makers are flawed in ways that impel them towards war.¹⁰⁹ Otherwise, war would logically be inconceivable in international politics.¹¹⁰

The second component of status quo and revisionism then is as a quality of domestic politics that affect states' strategic calculi. It fills in an important gap between structural theory and unit-level agency: the idea, *ceteris paribus*, that when facing the same threats and opportunities, the internal qualities of some states will lead them to adopt drastically different policies. Neoclassical Realists, do not explicitly theorize on why states challenge international order, but their framework is highly suited to examine a related concept of “maladaptive” behavior. That is, why do states sometimes fail to identify and

¹⁰⁹ See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). See also prominent Neoclassical Realist works, such as Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In.” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer, 1994), pp. 72-107; “Neorealism’s Status Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?” *Security Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1995-1996), pp. 90-121; Jason W. Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status Quo States* (New York City, NY: Palgrave, 2006).

¹¹⁰ Schweller, “Neorealism’s Status Quo Bias,” pp. 91-92.

counter rising threats, or why do they engage in self-destructive, expansionist behavior? From revolutionary regimes and leadership pathologies to the composition of the selectorate, and from authoritarianism to the inscrutable agendas of interest groups, there is no shortage of relevant variables that lead states on the path of external aggression.¹¹¹ While the framework offers a convenient way to examine a vast array of variables, existing studies have not been mobilized to answer the order-related behavioral puzzles driving this research.¹¹²

By the same token, it is possible to associate status-quo behavior with domestic variables as well. In this, the Liberal IR tradition has examined the role of domestic regime type, institutions, and, most importantly, the role of ideas. One of the major facets of the literature on the democratic peace is premised on the pacifying effects of liberal democracies *inter se*.¹¹³ Democratic regimes purportedly increase a rational and democratic society's scrutiny over foreign policy, while shared common values reduce the likelihood

¹¹¹ For an overview of some such arguments, among many others, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959); Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975*. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983); Geoffrey Blainey, *Causes of War* (New York City, NY: The Free Press, 1988); Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pp. 1-10; Davidson, *Origins of Revisionist and Status Quo States*, pp. 1-18; Jason M. K. Lyall, *Paths of Ruin: Why Revisionist States Arise and Die in World Politics*, Ph.D. Diss. (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2005); Schweller, "Neorealism's Status Quo Bias," pp. 91-92; Schweller, *Unanswered Threats*, pp. 29-33; Bradley A. Thayer, *Darwin and International Relations: On Evolutionary Origins of War and Ethnic Conflict* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

¹¹² A notable exception being Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and the Study of Regional Order," in Paul, *International Relations Theory and Regional Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 74-106, which examines the relationship between an extra-regional hegemon and a regional pivot, and how they can transform the patterns of war and peace in regions over time.

¹¹³ See Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing,"; Douglas Lemke and William Reed, "Regime Types And Status Quo Evaluations: Power Transition Theory and the Democratic Peace," *International Interactions*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (May 1996), pp. 143-164.; Arie M. Kacowicz, "Explaining Zones of Peace: Democracies as Satisfied Powers?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Winter 2018), pp. 227-24.

of war.¹¹⁴ This suggests that democracies are less likely to be revisionist states in general, and especially towards one another, although in practice this has not prevented democracies from initiating wars against less-powerful and less-threatening states in the periphery.¹¹⁵ The process, moreover, of becoming a democracy unleashes the destructive energies of societies leading, at least in the short-term, to more aggressive and expansionist foreign policies and behaviors that are commonly associated with revisionist states.¹¹⁶ Jeffrey Meiser has most recently argued that American grand strategy in the late 19th and early 20th was restrained due to the pacifying effects of a liberal domestic political structure.¹¹⁷ This explanation, nevertheless, is too specific to generate any useful insight for contemporary policy puzzles. In its essence, Meiser's analysis concerns the liberalism-induced peacefulness of a rising democratic state at the turn of the previous century. The liberal restraint argument founders when applied against an authoritarian state like China and a highly belligerent U.S.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ The gist of the argument is that democracy brings transparency to public debate and national bureaucracies, thereby engendering a better signaling of peaceful intent. See Bruce Russett and John R. O'Neal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001). Cf. Sebastian Rosato, "On Democratic Peace," in Christopher J. Coyne and Rachel L. Mathers (eds.), *Handbook on the Political Economy of War* (Cheltenham: Elgar, 2011), pp. 281-314; and Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Autumn 1994), pp. 5-49.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, "Correspondence: Fair Fights or Pointless Wars," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2003/04), p. 181.

¹¹⁶ See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*; Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 5-34. See also Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), who extensively utilizes the concept of revisionism without appropriately contextualizing it.

¹¹⁷ Which he mistakenly labels as "strategic culture." See Jeffrey Meiser, *Power and Restraint: The Rise of the United States, 1898-1941* (Georgetown University Press, 2015), pp. 17-20.

¹¹⁸ It is, in other words, doubly wrong. Meiser's analysis also notably suffers from a conceptual imprecision as his approach differs from the standard inter-democratic peace hypothesis through the addition of strategic

Another important facet of IR Liberalism concerns the role of ideas.¹¹⁹ Unlike identity and even political institutions, ideas are much more amenable to change and, therefore, to measurement. Jeffrey Legro's study of grand strategy formation and international order provides a reasonable explanation not only for order preserving and challenging behavior but for why these can change over time.¹²⁰ Legro convincingly argues that decision-makers' beliefs about international order and their attitudes on how to engage with world politics are subjected to change under special circumstances, such as when the weaknesses of preexisting paradigms are revealed, and when new ideas are articulated and consolidated.¹²¹ It is difficult to understand, however, why states would prefer one set of ideas over others; why a state would go from isolationism to integration with international society. One could not obviously infer sources for revisionism without some form of exogenous shock. Legro also does not sufficiently address the role of material power in shaping the decision-making circumstances of leaders and, importantly, also does not distinguish between ideas and behavior. That is to say; it is entirely possible for leaders to hold certain ideas yet to implement policies that contradict them. Legro also misses an important opportunity to engage with the composition of decision-makers themselves.

Revisionism and status-quo seeking may also be related to the social aspects of international politics. Various Constructivist and English School scholars have

culture, which is insufficiently defined. *Ibid.* p. 20.

¹¹⁹ See Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 513-533.

¹²⁰ Jeffrey W. Legro, *Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 5, 10.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p 14.

underscored that the international system is a social system in which states assume certain roles and statuses just as individuals do in social settings.¹²² Similar to classical Realists' emphasis on the international hierarchy of prestige, revisionism according to status-based perspectives is the function of states' desire to achieve a higher status in international politics.¹²³ It is nevertheless unclear what tangible pay-off prestige confers upon states. The disjuncture between capabilities and relative influence, in terms of shaping the normative aspects of world politics or, simply, control over outcomes is thought to be important. Others, like Ayşe Zarakol, suggest that defeated great powers, particularly non-Western ones like Japan, Russia, and Turkey, are particularly sensitive to their stigmatization and loss of status, which has encouraged them to pursue various revisionist grand strategies.¹²⁴ Some scholars have even suggested that rising in the international hierarchy of prestige confers overall psychological satisfaction in the form of ontological security.¹²⁵

¹²² For recent comprehensive treatments, see T. V. Paul, Deborah W. Larson, and William C. Wohlforth, eds., *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Stephen Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); R. Wolf, "Rising Powers, Status Ambitions and the Need to Reassure: What China Could Learn from Imperial Germany's Failures," *The Chinese Journal of World Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2014), pp. 185-219 J. Renshon, "Status Deficits and War," *International Organization*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (2016), pp. 513-550.

¹²³ Established states will often attempt to block the rise of new states Gilpin observes that in such cases, either emerging powers are accommodated, and world order evolves into a new equilibrium, or the crisis is resolved through a pursuant system-wide war. See especially Gilpin, *War and Change*, Ch. 5. "Status" is also a popular concept as it refers to the collectively perceived rank of a state along different dimensions of hierarchy. Here, rising states often seek to translate their successes into status position in recognition of their prowess. Established powers are generally reluctant, due to military-, economic- and prestige-induced anxiety, to recognize the status demands of rising states, as argued in Tudor A. Onea, "Between Dominance and Decline: Status Anxiety and Great Power Rivalry," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2014), pp. 125-152.

¹²⁴ See Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹²⁵ See Onea, "Between Dominance and Decline," pp. 130-131.

These recent approaches constitute the state-of-the-art in revisionist and status-quo foreign policies. Their major strength is in their ability to connect material power with its non-material aspects as they recognize that states can have different motivations for revisionism, and these need not always lead to war-mongering or expansionism.¹²⁶ This also corroborates somewhat the need for rising states to validate themselves in international politics, not only to keep in awe their citizens but also to signal strength and resolve to the outside world. China's foreign policy, for example, approximates to such rationale.¹²⁷

While they bring to bear plausible and valuable explanations to state behavior, there are several problems with identity and status-based approaches to state motivations. Firstly, it is difficult to measure status-inconsistency arguments –ideational variables also present challenges to research. If one supposed, without prejudice, that status concerns simply adds another layer of complexity informing decision-making then it would still be difficult to account for contradictory behavior. For example, if the foreign policy executives of a great-power state were to believe that their state should be accorded more recognition and influence in world politics, but do not follow up this assessment with some type of measurable policy, one would not be establishing any causality between status and behavior.

Secondly, this type of analysis risks over-anthropomorphizing the state. Foreign policy executives that oversee their state, moreover, possess tangible domestic, material,

¹²⁶ Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*, p. 18.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-203. See also G. John Ikenberry and Darren J. Lim “China’s Emerging Institutional Statecraft: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Prospects for Counter-Hegemony,” *Brookings Institute Project on International Order and Strategy* (April, 2017).

and personal interests that outweigh less-tangible considerations as their country's status – unless status can be translated into some form of power. Since this is also about the way other states or audiences think about your state, it is rather difficult to say anything concrete about status-based motivations. At the end of the day, however, the state is not a monolithic entity and the myriad of decision-makers, interest groups, and even their domestic audiences have different preferences about their country's status. A higher status is logically desired by all members of a nation but the process of getting there, or what constituents expect from their leaders, can take on different forms. Stephen Ward's status immobility theory, for example, takes this logic into consideration and explains how a state's beliefs about the attainability of their goals in international order and the reactions of other states can empower specific groups of decision-makers (i.e., hardliners) that lead to aggressive, revisionist foreign policies.¹²⁸

Thirdly, and most important of all, while status-inconsistencies credibly explain some forms of revisionism, it simply does not explain the specific way states approach order. Dissatisfaction need not necessarily result in revisionist behavior that harms international order. Similarly, a satisfied state like the United States might be affected by the anxiety of being eclipsed by China, for example, but it cannot be used to explain its behavior towards other members of the international community. It is for all of these reasons that we can make the following declaration: the literature is predicated on a false dichotomy of revisionism and status quo. A more comprehensive analytical referent, grand strategy, is explored in the next section. A grand strategy can accommodate a broad range

¹²⁸ See Ward, *Status and Challenge*, p. 34.

of variables and behaviors over a longer period, thereby affording a nuanced explanation of state behaviors, such as reforming order.

1.2.3. Reforming Grand Strategy

Attempting to explain any type of behavioral disposition is an ambitious project, one that concerns how states relate to international order. Firstly, because status-quo and revisionist behaviors manifest themselves at diverse levels and echelons of policy, the task of transcending these categories and forging an eclectic typology of state behavior requires a *comprehensive* referent. Secondly, this referent needs to have a broader *time horizon* and consider lingering tendencies, rather than examining individual policies. Finally, such referent also needs to be relatable to *decision-makers* and *environmental stimuli*. To these ends, *grand strategy* will serve as the main analytical driver of this research because it is a distinct realm of thought and action in terms of its purpose, scope, and time horizon.¹²⁹

Grand strategy is defined in this study as the process of how statesmen select or reject national ends and means within the material and ideational parameters of their environment. The justification for this conceptualization, based on the commonly held assumptions of the theorists of strategy, is as follows. Firstly, grand strategy is a process; not a set of *a priori* policies determined by decision-makers. As Williamson Murray explains, it is not an “enunciated set of goals and principles to which statesman and military

¹²⁹ An important caveat is that the types of research on grand strategy differ vastly in their methodological commitments. For a discussion on the types of grand strategy research, William C. Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for and Effective American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 7-19. Some studies may take a “French peasant’s soup” approach by incorporating an exhaustive list of factors, domestic and external, in the making of this milieu. See Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich, and James Lacey, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 9.

leaders adhere in a consistent fashion.”¹³⁰ Strategy—grand or not— concerns a clash of wills in which strategists constantly have to adjust and readjust their moves.¹³¹ This applies to statesmen who have to react to shifts in the international and domestic environment constantly. This is the crux of the argument being developed in this research. Statesmen calculate and react to opportunities, threats, and ideas around them, whether these emanate from international anarchy, domestic society, or the social superstructure of world politics.¹³²

Secondly, the prefix “grand” is telling. Grand strategy is the highest abstraction of strategy. In some ways, it is “the most crucial task of statecraft.”¹³³ This is because it encompasses the totality of policy tools and national resources available to the statesman.¹³⁴ Thus, grand strategy is not tantamount to foreign policy or military strategy. Rather it encompasses these tools and levels of abstraction and combines them to fulfill the ends of national policy. For example, specific diplomatic strategies, a disposition towards international arbitration, pursuit of trade agreements, and force posturing are simply components formulated with the view of achieving the national goals informing grand

¹³⁰ See Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy*, p. 8.

¹³¹ See Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 15-17.

¹³² The discussion on omnibalancing is relevant. See David, “Explaining Third World Alignment.”

¹³³ See Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press; 1987 [2001]); Edward Mead Earl, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1943), p. viii.

¹³⁴ See Michael Howard, “Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century,” *Defense Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 2001).

strategy.¹³⁵ As such, grand strategy is not only conducted in times of war and peace. Its scale, variety of tools, and purpose (of managing the survival and secondary goals of a state under conditions of uncertainty) is more comprehensive.

Third, grand strategy can also be conceptualized in ideational terms. According to Barry Posen's classical definition, grand strategy "is a state's theory of how best to provide security for itself."¹³⁶ Hal Brands similarly defines grand strategy as an intellectual process; a "theory, or logic, that guides leaders seeking security in an insecure world."¹³⁷ What this suggests is that grand strategy may be based on material realities, but its tenets rely ultimately on the identity and interests of policymakers. In short, how they view order and locate themselves and their state within that order should logically shape the contours of national policy and, more important for this intellectual endeavor, that it can be divined through various modes of observation.

Finally, regarding this study's caveats about grand strategy, the following are neglected aspects in the literature. Firstly, grand strategy has a domestic component. If one is to accept the premise that grand strategy is for the benefit of a political community, two more assumptions naturally follow. First, grand strategy must logically serve the interests of those that speak on behalf of the national interest (i.e., policy executive). As a result, the time-horizon and toolkit of grand strategy can be altered for the sake of elite interests as

¹³⁵ Indeed, Grand Strategy cannot be reduced to military strategy alone. See Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 1-2.

¹³⁶ See Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 1.

¹³⁷ See Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 3-4.

long as such opportunities present themselves. Two, grand strategy must serve to cultivate and coordinate national instruments in addition to external ones.¹³⁸ In fact, the accommodation of international order can manifest itself in domestic politics.¹³⁹ Secondly, grand strategy can be used to study the incongruence in the values embodied by international society and the respective national foreign policy establishments in charge of maintaining it. “Order,” in this sense, reflects a relationship between a state and the broader international society in terms of hierarchy, privileges, obligations, and the way to harmonize national interests with international goals.

Grand strategy refers to the policy process of selecting and combining instruments of statecraft for the fulfillment of a nation’s goals. While it is in the long-term interest of states to carve out a favorable position for themselves in the international order, prospects of immediate or short-term gains, possibly resulting from a domestic agenda, may induce states to change their tool-kit in part or full. In the long term, however, states seek a stable order that guarantees their security, sovereign independence, and autonomy. Ultimately, it may sometimes be beneficial to partake in the existing international order by bandwagoning with the hegemon; other times it is not, as decision-makers may be motivated to pursue short-term interests.

In this context, then, the true hallmark of revisionist behavior is not balancing against the hegemon or refusing to participate in its order. Revisionism is rejecting the tenets of the deeper international life. A state is not revisionist if it obeys the normative

¹³⁸ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 167-168; Charles Tilly, *Coercion and Capital: European States 990-1990* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 1, 5, 20, 35-36.

¹³⁹ See Zarakol, *After Defeat*.

framework of international society, accommodates some semblance of legitimacy and justice with order by upholding legal and diplomatic practices, and avoid policies that could upset the cohesion and sovereignty of other states.

Nothing in the literature fully captures the complex issues facing international order at present. There is a considerable disjuncture in the literature on rising states, revisionist states, and the actual behavior of states like China. There is also little insight into why a hegemonic state, like the United States, would act like a revisionist power since doing so clearly undermines its international political capital. Only recently has the literature even begun to consider notions that approximate to “reforming” behavior. Finally, of the few approaches that take into thoughtful consideration the relevance of international society as a relevant explanation, virtually none have sought to craft testable hypotheses of state behavior that can enable practical ends such as foreign policy analysis.

The previous chapter documented important puzzles in the apparent grand strategies of the United States and China, highlighting in the process the conceptual dearth and theoretical limitations of existing conceptualizations of international order as well as status quo and revisionism in world politics. This chapter picks up the earlier discussion to examine the specific manifestations of revisionism and status-quo behavior in prominent IR theories, focusing on their causal mechanisms so as to lay the foundations for an alternative theory. The formal inquiry of this chapter is to take stock of the IR literature on behaviors that approximate to *order-challenging*, *order-reforming*, *order-conforming*, and *order-retrenching*. Although articulations of status quo and revisionism form the core of this chapter, the comprehensive nature of the order-based typology of state behavior necessitates the evaluation of a broader array of other relevant approaches to state behavior. In what follows, therefore, the chapter 1) explores relevant approaches to our subject, 2) examines their assumptions with a special emphasis on their ability to explain order conforming, reforming, and challenging behavior, 3) identifies weaknesses in said approaches, 4) unpacks the theoretical underpinnings of grand-strategic orientations, and 5) unveils the intended theoretical argument of this study in detail.

The grand traditions of IR are often subject to unfair criticism for failing to predict or explain *post-facto* international political outcomes, which understandably has led to a helpful reminder on the differences between theories of international politics and theories of foreign policy.¹⁴⁰ While mindful of this nuance, there are nevertheless important

¹⁴⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 54-57.

implications for state behavior that require scrutiny and appraisal. Secondly, the intended contribution of this volume is not mutually exclusive with many of the prominent approaches to grand strategy. There are, unavoidably, numerous approaches to international order that address some facet of state-preference formation and its relation to international order. It differs primarily in terms of its temporal scope and the causal significance of elites.

On the topic of state preferences, this study contends that while grand strategy opts towards regularity and conformity to international society, foreign policy executives' preferences (and anxieties) about staying in power determine their disposition about whether or not they prioritize domestic or international issues. In the continuation of their decision-making process, expectations about future gains or losses, determine elites' propensity to take risks. Based on available resources, elites choose in the shorter-term policies that we can approximate to grand-strategic orientations.

To better describe how this researcher arrived at this theory, the following sections examine relevant arguments and processes concerning state behavior from the purview of Realist, Pluralist, *Innenpolitik*, and Cognitive approaches. Overall, only a handful of approaches offer any improvement on the status-quo and revisionism binary as the arguments are deterministic in that revisionism and status-quo are permanent qualities of states. Equally frustrating is the propensity of some theories to equate behaviors or state strategies as being inherently revisionist or status quo since it is possible that even force or a modicum of unilateralism can be used to reprimand threats to international order and

other important values. Finally, most of the accounts present an overall simplistic view of international order and state dissatisfaction that capture some aspects of the counterintuitive state behaviors under consideration in this dissertation.

2.1. REALIST APPROACHES

Understanding international order, and “ordered” behavior for that matter, at the system-level hinges on the problem of international anarchy. As the IR discipline has generally focused on war as the major global blight, much of the literature has concerned itself with the study of anarchy, its deleterious consequences, and the looming question of what states can do to tame it.¹⁴¹ The reason, simply, is that survival is the primary goal of states.¹⁴² In that in the absence of an overarching authority, states have no way to ensure this except by their own machinations. The survival logic coerces states into self-regarding behavior that, by design, prioritizes self-aggrandizement over sustained international cooperation.¹⁴³ Although there is now greater scholarly agreement that international anarchy is inescapably “hierarchical” and rule-based, the anarchy assumption remains the basic starting point, and problem, for major schools of IR thought.¹⁴⁴ International order

¹⁴¹ For a critique, see Helen Milner, “The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations Theory: A Critique,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January, 1991), pp. 67-85.

¹⁴² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 91, 126; Tanisha M. Fazal, “State Death in the International System,” *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring, 2004), pp. 311-312; “See, also, Martin Wight, “Why is There No International Theory,” in Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).

¹⁴³ State survival has multiple meanings in the structural realist lexicon and can engender varied policy responses. For an overview, see Burak Kadercan, “Making Sense of State Survival: Refining the Treatment of State Preferences in Neorealist Theory,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 39 (2013), pp. 1017-1037.

¹⁴⁴ See, e.g., David Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 10-11, 17, 175; Janice Bially Matern and Ayşe Zarakol, “Hierarchies in World Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Summer, 2016), pp. 623-654.

and, consequently, any notions of “ordered” behavior, then seem to figure into IR theories to the extent that they mollify anarchy.¹⁴⁵ This juxtaposition of international anarchy and order is further complicated by each IR school’s analytical predilections, emphasizing either the preponderance of material forces or ascribing analytical weight to non-material and sociological forces.¹⁴⁶

2.1.1. Structural Realism

Starting at the materialist end of the scale, we find that Realism problematizes anarchy and offers solutions grounded in material factors. Any configuration of a balance of power approximating to “order” is simply coincidental; a temporary byproduct of states’ pursuit of self-preservation.¹⁴⁷ While it is not immediately evident that states should pursue self-regarding and aggressive policies, for Kenneth Waltz the social and competitive nature of the international system teaches states to act so through processes of competition (and, therefore, elimination) and socialization.¹⁴⁸ While states have a relatively-limitless number of policy options available to them, only those who play the game a certain way seem to thrive.¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, states learn that more-powerful states are potentially threatening because of their latent capacity to subjugate others; the very existence of more-powerful

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Bull, *Anarchical Society*.

¹⁴⁶ See Gilpin, *War and Change*, esp. Preface.

¹⁴⁷ The balance of power guides international politics somewhat like the Invisible Hand of the Market that constitutes a kind of order. However, the purposeful production of order is understudied in Waltzian Realism. See, Marc Trachtenberg, “The Question of Realism: A Historian’s View,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 156-194, esp. pp. 161-163.

¹⁴⁸ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 74-77, 127-128.

¹⁴⁹ See Randall L. Schweller, “Realism and the Present Great Power System,” p. 34.

states aggravate insecurity. Thus, weaker states will over-time automatically balance against more powerful ones by building up their military and economic capacity (internal balancing) or engage in the less-costly policy of forging alliances (external balancing), resulting in the recurrence of balance-of-power politics.¹⁵⁰ From this assumption, it follows that states learn to avoid provoking counter-balancing coalitions that undermine their quest for security. One can therefore reasonably expect that decision-makers of powerful states ought to pursue moderate and non-expansionist foreign policies lest they provoke a war and fall by the wayside.¹⁵¹ Indeed, if the international system was solely comprised of states driven purely by security-seeking motives, it is not obvious why any state would want to expand by conquest or develop overwhelming military capabilities.¹⁵² Such expansionism could trigger fruitless arms races that increase insecurity and the stakes of crisis situations.¹⁵³ Assuming that the axioms of Structural Realism and the security dilemma hold, if the accumulation of more power encourages other states to offset this dynamic, then the quest to develop more capabilities is indeed self-defeating.¹⁵⁴ Conquest does not

¹⁵⁰ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 69.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 118.

¹⁵² See Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing," p. 125; Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias."

¹⁵³ See John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* Vol. 2, No. 2 (1950), p. 157. Of course, various systemic multipliers, such as the ability to perceive whether offensive or defensive weapons systems and doctrines had the advantage. See, also, Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* Vol. 30, No.2 (January 1978), pp. 186-187, 211-214.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Stuart Kaufmann, Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth (eds.), *The Balance of Power in World History* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2007). While emerging hegemonies have been repeatedly kept in check in the European experience (e.g. Habsburg Spain, Napoleonic France, Nazi Germany), suzerain systems have emerged in other regions of the world in which hegemony was not only common, but in some sense the norm (e.g., multiple iterations of Chinese polities).

pay.¹⁵⁵ We infer, therefore, from Structural Realism that the twin logics of competition and socialization compels states towards status-quo behaviors as this is the prudent orientation in world politics.¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the reality of world politics presaged the opposite as evidenced by numerous and varying successful attempts at world conquest. The vast discrepancies of power in world politics and the unevenness of existing alliances belies the notion of an automatic balance-of-power.

One reason could be that threat perception, rather than raw material capabilities, governs the balance of power.¹⁵⁷ States are more likely to balance against states they presume to be more threatening, and may even opt to bandwagon with the threatening state.¹⁵⁸ A state's perceptions of what constitutes threats, such as what engenders the security-dilemma, are in turn affected by systemic multipliers such as geographic proximity and the balance between offensive and defensive weapons systems.¹⁵⁹ While their consequences have been examined, it remains unclear why states cannot overcome

¹⁵⁵ See Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma."

¹⁵⁶ See Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1992), p. 192.

¹⁵⁷ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

¹⁵⁸ In his study of alliance patterns among Middle Eastern states in the course of the 20th century, Walt observes that traditional balancing (against threatening states) is more common than the standard Waltzian view of balancing against superior power *per se*. Walt also finds that states that are too weak, that are unable to find allies, or simply want benefit from featuring on the winning side of conflict, may opt instead to bandwagon with the threat, thereby elevating the power of the threatening coalition. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ See Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,"; Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally Against the Leading Global Power?" *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Summer, 2010), pp. 7-43; Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, "What Is the Offense Defense Balance and Can We Measure It? Offense, Defense, and International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring, 1998), pp. 44-82.

uncertainty since a state's means alone cannot determine intentions.¹⁶⁰ To follow the internal logic of the theory, if states want security, then status-quo orientations should prevail because security is not a zero-sum good.¹⁶¹

Revisionism, on the other hand, does not fit into the standard Structural Realist argument beyond the assumption that some states have *revisionist goals* and that sometimes their presence may induce other states to join them to pursue revisionist goals collectively.¹⁶² These goals elude explicit theoretical scrutiny since this version of Realism is explicitly concerned with material constraints. Being fundamentally a theory of great powers, Structural Realism nevertheless has detailed insight into the ways states evaluate their strategic position in response great-power states, which may explain revisionism in terms of conflict-proneness. For Structural Realists, international outcomes, the “quality” of any international system is defined by its poles; the number of great powers and their relations *inter se*.

Waltz, for example, posited that international systems with two super-power states, a bipolar system, is more peaceful than other polar configurations as lesser states will converge around these superpowers. As most states in the system are allied to one of the superpowers, bipolarity dispels uncertainties about states' allegiances and intentions, and promote stability and peace by deferring to the two poles the power to arbitrate

¹⁶⁰ See Schweller, “Neorealism’s Status-Quo Bias.”

¹⁶¹ See Randall L. Schweller, “Realism and the Present Great Power System” in *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War*, edited by Ethan Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 28-57.

¹⁶² See Stephen Walt, “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse” *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), p. 158.

international politics.¹⁶³ Historically, with the additional consideration of nuclear deterrence, it is clear that bipolarity promoted an aberrant collaboration between the only pair of states that had a substantial-enough impact on world order to cooperatively manage doomsday. Deductively, bipolarity is likely to lead to status-quo sentiments due to the rigidity of alliances and the prohibitive costs of expansion.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the Cold War led to peace and stability among “great” powers, even though the historical record also reminds us of the deleterious effects of the “Long Peace” on third parties.¹⁶⁵ Simply, bipolarity, especially combined with nuclear weapons, seems to have a pacifying effect on superpower ambitions.¹⁶⁶

Other polar configurations, however, are not as likely to promote the status-quo.¹⁶⁷ Historically, most common configuration, multipolarity is a system featuring several great powers. Multipolarity intensifies uncertainty and provides states the freedom of action to pursue revisionist strategies.¹⁶⁸ In fact, states with revisionist intentions are far more likely

¹⁶³ Cf. See Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, *Rising Titans, Falling Giants: How Great Powers Exploit Power Shifts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 24-26. The process of transitioning from a bipolar system may incentivize both the declining and rising states to pursue predatory policies, especially if there is no other major power that could threaten their security.

¹⁶⁴ See Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Stability of a Bipolar World,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 93, No. 3 Population, Prediction, Conflict, Existentialism (Summer, 1964), pp. 881-909.

¹⁶⁵ See, John Lewis Gaddis, “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System,” *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Spring, 1986), pp. 99-142; John J. Mearsheimer, “Back to The Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer, 1990), pp. 5-56.

¹⁶⁶ See Waltz, “The Stability of a Bipolar World.”

¹⁶⁷ It is also prescient to add that the promotion of the status-quo (order-conforming) is considered in this study as a purposeful endeavor. With so many material/structural shackles, states are naturally forced to accept certain rules, but it is unclear why any state would want to actively promote order.

¹⁶⁸ See Thomas Christensen and Jack L. Snyder; “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, Issue 2 (Spring, 1990). pp. 137-68.,

to succeed in their agendas simply because the availability of allies and the flexibility of coalitions are likely to garner support. Significantly weaker states may opt to bandwagon with threatening ones for security.¹⁶⁹ Multipolarity is more liberating for great powers and rising states alike. This distribution of power allows great powers to hedge their bets on existing coalitions and may help them to avail themselves of strategic opportunities to more easily pursue self-aggrandizement. For example, minor powers in Eastern Europe, as well as, Italy and Japan sought to ride the wave of success from Germany's victories during the Second World War.¹⁷⁰ Multipolarity nevertheless allows the formation of roughly equal alliances that can reduce the utility of expansion.

Finally, unipolarity is an international system comprised of a single superpower. This is an exceptional situation in international politics and very puzzling for our purposes. From the perspective of the unipole, the most powerful state in international politics, must by definition be satisfied and be least willing to expend resources additional resources, apart from the bare-minimum need to reinforce the status quo.¹⁷¹ From the perspective of other states, a unipolar structure naturally favors the preponderant state because it is virtually impossible to form a coalition that could possibly hope to resist the unipole. Yet, a unipole is virtually unbounded in the absence of viable balancing coalitions that can keep it in check. Conversely, there can be no incentive or opportunity for weaker powers to

¹⁶⁹ See Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Tsuyoshi Kawasaki, "The Empire of the Rising Sun Was No Jackal," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance Between the World Wars*, edited by Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Steven E. Lobell Eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 224-245.

¹⁷¹ See G. John Ikenberry, Joseph M. Grieco, and Michael Mastanduno, "Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences," *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January, 2009), p. 1-27.

pursue revisionist strategies lest a state is punished by the unipole. In fact, any act of meaningful balancing against the unipole, which has the power to wherewithal to lead the international order, is tantamount to revisionism. For these reasons, in a unipolar structure revisionism by other states would logically be least plausible because of the threat of credible punishment by the unipole and its allies. A cursory examination of U.S. foreign policy, however, reveals that the unipole itself may find itself with the opportunity to abuse its preponderance.¹⁷²

Despite this, the U.S. encounters relatively little pushback. There are two important explanations for this in the Realist camp. First, U.S. allies “soft-balance” the U.S. by simply withdrawing support for U.S.-led multilateral enterprises. The diplomatic cost of non-cooperation indirectly balances the power of the unipole by raising the costs of diplomatic and political action, as well as the cost of projecting military power.¹⁷³ Overall, U.S. allies appear to be compliant on most other matters.¹⁷⁴ Second, it is also conceivable that while U.S. power may be threatening, the fact that its absolute advantage lies in its naval and economic capabilities means that the U.S. should be considered maritime power. That is,

¹⁷² See Jervis, “The Remaking of a Unipolar World Order.”

¹⁷³ The “Command of the Commons,” according to Barry R. Posen is what gives states like U.S. the ability to project power in distant regions and relies on the compliance of allies. See Barry Posen, “Command of the Commons: The Military Foundations of U.S. Hegemony,” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer, 2003), pp. 5–46. The resistance of US allies to the Second Gulf War, including key members like Turkey, which could have provided significant logistic support to the Coalition as it did in 1991, made U.S. power projection more difficult in the region.

¹⁷⁴ Consider the contemporary developments in U.S. relations with its allies. The first significant indications of distrust between U.S. and its primary allies in Europe occurred between U.S. and Germany; first with the espionage and Wikileaks scandals during Obama’s tenure and far more seriously, after the election of Donald Trump (February 2018 NATO meeting and U.S.’s non-affirmation of Article 5 of NATO Treaty).

as Levy and Thompson convincingly argue, despite its overwhelming power, U.S. is less threatening to other great powers due to its relative geographic isolation.¹⁷⁵

In theory, it is risky for emerging great powers to want to challenge the unipole; it is inconceivable for smaller, regional powers to defy the unipole either.¹⁷⁶ The unipole has the power to revise the system since it is overall unopposed by allies. Thus it gets what it wants most of the time. It is for these reasons that the question of restraint is so controversial for U.S. grand strategy.¹⁷⁷

On a broader theoretical note, the balance of power theory and, its many antecedent hypotheses on the effects of polarity, threats, and types of balancing, cannot meaningfully illuminate status quo and revisionism in IR Theory. This is because Realists implicitly invoke revisionism to theorize about international outcomes, all the while prescribing ideal-type “prudent” policy options, but often lack a compelling way to account for aberrant policy choices. Why, for example, would a state choose to be revisionist in the first place if it is such a costly endeavor. Structural Realism’s built-in “status-quo bias” fails to explain state behavior meaningfully.¹⁷⁸ Suffice it to say, for some states the security

¹⁷⁵ See Levy and Thompson, “Balancing on Land and Sea,” p. 37. If anything, U.S. is an attractive ally for other great powers that are more threatened by other proximate great powers.

¹⁷⁶ Podliska finds that the discrepancy of power between U.S. and its targets influences its use of force: the weaker the target, relative to the U.S., the more likely that a POTUS will pursue the unilateral use of force. See Bradley F. Podliska, *Acting Alone: The Scientific Study of American Hegemony and Unilateral Use-of-Force Decision Making* (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 10, 39, 46-47.

¹⁷⁷ Stephen Walt, “Keeping the world ‘Off-Balance’: Self-Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy,” in G. John Ikenberry (ed.), *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *America Abroad: The United States’ Global Role in the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ See Waltz, “International Politics is not Foreign Policy.” Waltz insists that his theory is one of international outcomes, and not merely a theory of international politics. Be that as it may, anarchy is ultimately constituted by, and filtered through, the specific choices that states make, which is why virtually all Realist works following Waltz have sought to supplement, improve, or, in some ways, transcend Waltz’s

dilemma assumption may be predicated on the false premise. Sometimes, survival is not enough; sometimes states do desire to harm others.

Fortunately, later Realist theories have developed three distinct ways to address the general limitations of Defensive Realism by introducing assumptions that explain why states would want to challenge international order. These approaches are enumerated in what follows.

2.1.2. Offensive Realism

If security is not zero-sum, then whence cometh evil? The seminal works of the discipline viewed the pursuit of power for its own sake as a manifestation of the “evil” inherent to Man. Expanding one’s power was a moral imperative and the cornerstone of prudent foreign policy. Offensive Realists harken back to the seminal period of Realist IR to provide a structural-rationale for the pursuit of power for security’s sake. For John Mearsheimer, a stable balance of power is not an absolute guarantee of security.¹⁷⁹ By consenting to a structural equilibrium, states essentially surrender their fortunes to the expectation that other states will continue to honor their agreements and that an equilibrium will effectively cause peace. Instead, Offensive Realists posit that states are rational actors that seek to maximize their interests, which in this case is survival.¹⁸⁰ By assuming that

formulation by attempting to link systemic and domestic processes. See, Rose, “Neoclassical Realist Theories.” In fact, recent additions to the literature have pointed to the possibility of connecting state action with systemic outcomes by specifying the scope and time-frame of state action. See, Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, *Neoclassical Realist Theory*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

¹⁸⁰ This Notion has found some support in evolutionary behavior as well. See, for example, Bradley Thayer, *Darwin and International Relations* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2007), especially chapters 1-3.

superior military and economic power ensures security and engenders survival, maximizing power is the best guarantee of security.¹⁸¹ In simplest terms, expansionism is necessary and profitable for states because it allows absolute security.¹⁸² Revisionism, as it so happens, is built into the theory because until a state becomes a veritable hegemon, its survival is not assured. “Great powers,” Mearsheimer declares, “have revisionist intentions at their core.”¹⁸³

The question is why then we would have status quo states in an Offensive Realist world? Two reasons. Firstly, domination is expensive. International politics is not in a perpetual state of war against all is because there are natural geographic limits to expansion, which reduces the efficacy and utility of subjugating distant regions.¹⁸⁴ The stopping power of water, and other multipliers raise the cost of projecting power to distant regions.¹⁸⁵ Geography, therefore, shackles states and checks their revisionist ambitions. Second, attaining regional hegemony is an enviable situation and a sufficient condition for

¹⁸¹ See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ This is because the stopping power of water prevents states from projecting power across the oceans. America, Mearsheimer argues, should therefore seek hegemony in its region (Western Hemisphere) where it is the strongest and rely on allies elsewhere to prevent the rise of regional hegemons in other regions. Mearsheimer’s thinly-veiled attempt at peddling American primacy fails even at the most fundamental level given the historical and contemporary importance of the oceans as natural barriers for defense (which enables more trade and can allow greater investment in offensive systems and platforms) as well as a force multiplier that enhances power projection by engendering amphibious operations. For a discussion on Mearsheimer’s theory, see Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 213-248. For solid critiques, see Christopher Layne, “The ‘Poster Child for Offensive Realism’: America as a Global Hegemon,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Winter, 2002/2003), pp. 120-164; Jonathan Haslam, “John Mearsheimer’s ‘Elementary Geometry of Power’: Euclidean Moment or an Intellectual Blind Alley?” in Ernest R. May, Richard Rosecrance, and Zara Steiner, eds., *History of Neorealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 322-340.

¹⁸⁵ This is why Mearsheimer recommends a grand strategy of off-shore balancing. See *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 114-117. See also, Christopher Layne, “From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America’s Future Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Summer, 1997), pp. 86-124.

security provided that no challengers can emerge.¹⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the stopping power of water argument holds no water. Oceans not only provide protection from distant shores, thereby reducing investments into defensive systems that may be invested elsewhere but also provide outlets for commercial activity. Add to this intersection of relative invulnerability and economic potential the role of the oceans in enhancing power projection, and one is left with an unconstrained dominant state.

This brings us to the third point, that powers may be satisfied because they have attained some form of dominance that keeps all other states in awe, such that they feel secure. The problem, however, is that while such states, especially a hegemon, are likely to be satisfied, they are also least likely to be constrained. If these shackles were somehow transcended, possibly through the accumulation of sufficient power, would states not then logically seek global hegemony also?

Here is the final problem with Mearsheimer's Offensive Realist world: the only threat to an established hegemon is the emergence of other regional hegemons to rival its overall global influence. Mearsheimer proposes the minimalist grand strategy of offshore balancing as a panacea for America's global quandary, arguing that the U.S. ought to assume hegemony in the Western hemisphere but work with allies abroad to prevent the rise of other regional hegemons in other parts of the world. States that seek their ultimate guarantee of security, by attaining regional hegemony, are then directly in confrontation with U.S. Moreover, those who covet regional hegemony are automatically considered revisionist, and perceived as being destined to confront the U.S. The absence of direct

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

conflict is because rising challengers may be restraining themselves to bide their time.¹⁸⁷ It is as if the state, as a rational actor, has no other choices or means to achieve security apart from expanding or biding for time. Offensive Realism does not correct the status-quo bias of security-seeking under anarchy; it merely aggravates its dysfunctions with the addition of a revisionism bias.

2.1.3. Power Transition and Realist Hegemonic Stability Theories

Another alternative to Waltz's "pacific" theory of international politics is readily provided by Power Transition Theory (PTT, hereafter). As a distinct research program within Realism, PTT has a theoretical pedigree bar none, but neither it nor its variants have enjoyed the same level of recognition.¹⁸⁸ Conversely, Waltz's observation that balances of power have been a recurring feature of the Westphalian international system has proven to have staying power. PTT seeks to uncover the sources of war and thereby predict when and under what conditions major wars are likely to occur.¹⁸⁹ One of its main contentions is that preponderance of power (i.e., hegemony), rather than the balance of power, preserves peace.¹⁹⁰ That is, changes in the distribution of material capabilities, especially the projected trends in power capabilities, engender war. By weighing robust empirical

¹⁸⁷ See John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise.," "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Volume 3, No. 4 (December 2010) pp., 381–396. Even if China acts with restraint, for Mearsheimer the fundamental change in power dynamics, and the responses to China's growing power, is likely to exacerbate security dynamics. Kirshner concurs from a classical realist perspective but finds Mearsheimer's approach to be incorrect. See Kirshner, "The Tragedy of Offensive Realism," pp. 57-61.

¹⁸⁸ Wohlforth, "Gilpinian Realism."

¹⁸⁹ For an overview, see R Tammen, "The Organski Legacy: A Fifty-Year Research Program." *International Interactions*, Vol. 34, No. (2008), pp. 314–332.

¹⁹⁰ See A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York, NY: Alfred Knopf), 1958, p. 272.

research against historical trends, PTT shows that periods of power transition make for the most volatile and war-prone periods.¹⁹¹ As one great power rises, it is expected that it will seek to challenge the dominant power and thereby establish itself as a hegemon.¹⁹² Why changes in capabilities would automatically lead to war is difficult to divine without the

¹⁹¹ There is no consensus on the precise timing of these wars apart from a general agreement that they take place during transition periods. See Jonathan M. DiCicco, "Power Transition Theory and the Essence of Revisionism," in William R. Thompson eds., *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (September, 2017), p. 21.

¹⁹² This notion has assumed a trope-like quality in the IR lexicon owing not only to success of the PTT research program, but also to the legacy of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War(s) (461-404 BCE), which as one of best-recorded wars in ancient history inspired IR Theorizing. Consider the Greek City-State System in the 5th century BCE: In the aftermath of the Persian invasion, there existed two prominent alliance blocs in the ancient Hellenic international society. On the one hand, Sparta had formed an "hegemonic alliance" and was the dominant power; while Athens was an arriviste power rising to prominence in the aftermath of the Persian Invasion. As Athens expanded its Empire, it called into question Lacedemonian preponderance and thereby precipitated the eponymous Peloponnesian War. As Thucydides explains "what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear this caused in Sparta." Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, in Robert B. Strassler (ed.), *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 1.23.6. See also Donald Kagan, *Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 1 cit.1.

In short, the rise in Athenian power forced Sparta to take preemptive action, although this material explanation has been overshadowed by social and context-specific arguments such as honor and status considerations. While it is a questionable endeavor to identify pre-modern (i.e. pre-IR) with theoretical schools of IR it is undeniable that many of these, most prominently Realism, treat Thucydides' *opus* as a wellspring of inspiration. See, for example, Robert W. Gilpin, "Theory of Hegemonic War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring, 1988), pp., 29-30. Other "Classical Realists" have followed suite. See, e.g., Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics Tragedy of Realism: Ethics, Interests, and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Tudor Onea, "Immoderate Greatness: Is Great Power Restraint a Practical Grand Strategy?" *European Journal of International Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2017), pp. 111-132, esp. pp. 127-128. See the discussion further below on status-driven revisionism, which purport to improve on PTT and HST with notions of status-related dissatisfaction.

Respectfully, this research would also draw attention to the contrasting agendas and beliefs of Athenian and Lacedemonian decision-makers in regards to their relative concern for domestic versus external issues and how they frame expected gains and losses. It is not surprising that the insecure Spartans, often facing the grim prospect of slave (*Helot*) uprisings generally avoided external conflict since they also lacked the freedom of action to pursue further expansion. They formally declared war only after their ally fell victim to Delian aggression (which started out as a trade dispute but one they judged would worsen). The Spartans acted in the name of *raison de système* and out of fear for losing their privileged position in the status quo. Sparta sought to preserve/reform the system by way of multilateral use of force. Athenian aggression, meanwhile, escalated because they did not want to lose the empire their ancestors had fought to attain. If Thucydides' rendering is reliable, Perikles' "Funerary Oration" is *raison d'état* manifest. One need not even mention the psychological impact of performing rites on soldiers who died from the initial clashes of the war and the invocation by Perikles of the looming possibility that Athens might lose its Empire. Combined with its relative freedom of action to project power all over Greece (and beyond), Athenian war-making falls into the rubric of order-challenging. See Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.34-2.46.

consideration of unit-level and social elements.¹⁹³ The hegemon, for its part, may recognize the rising state as a threat and take preemptive measures, thus culminating in war. So pervasive is this idea that prominent scholars draw parallels between Greek city-states and modern geopolitics as they invoke the “Thucydides Trap” to raise awareness of the impending American-Chinese confrontation.¹⁹⁴ For PTT, in sum, the history of international politics is one of recurring wars due to global material, technological, and political changes. Major wars, however, are not as common and tend to have epoch-defining qualities that create international orders, with its specific set of power hierarchies and international sociopolitical relationships that tend to make orders more robust.

Writing in 1981, Robert Gilpin argued that in the aftermath of these major wars, the victorious power establishes a new, or assumes control over the previous, world order.¹⁹⁵ The governing coalition is founded on the basis of the distribution of material power, the hierarchy of prestige, and the rules of the system. Gilpin argues that the dominant state(s) establish world order thanks to their superior material capabilities and reserve the right to make rules and decisions owing to their superior prestige.¹⁹⁶ The confluence of military-economic power and prestige are contingent upon processes and trends that occur within states. For example, differential rates of economic growth and technological diffusion in international politics lead to disequilibria in the power and

¹⁹³ See DiCicco, “Power Transition Theory,” pp. 24-26.

¹⁹⁴ See Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can American and China Escape the Thucydides Trap?* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2017).

¹⁹⁵ See Gilpin, *War and Change*.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

corresponding hierarchies of prestige.¹⁹⁷ Unlike Waltz's approach, which is a very mechanical explanation and rooted in the assumptions of microeconomics, Gilpin draws attention to the social aspects of international relations. International anarchy is not a transhistorical void wherein world politics is simply a reoccurrence of balances of power. Rather, there is a significant element of hierarchy as dominant states establish mechanisms of control, such as international institutions, that help to produce order that maintains hegemony. While "order" in this sense is more deliberative than what is implicitly espoused by Structural Realism, the institutional architecture of world order, as enshrined in international organizations, regimes, and treaties are ultimately for the benefit of the hegemon.¹⁹⁸

A hegemon's goal is to maintain the favorable status quo it has struggled to forge. Once attained, however, sustaining hegemony, is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, in so far as a hegemon is successful in imposing its vision onto other states, thereby attracting followers, it needs to be its final arbiter. A hegemon, in other words, needs to distribute international public goods like security to lesser states, sometimes at costs and risks to itself, to preserve a stable order. For example, the hegemon would naturally be one of the first states to oppose any kind of revisionist state that threatens lesser powers because an unchecked expansionist power can grow from strength to strength thereby to rival the hegemon. This is a questionable assumption. Too often, the hegemon/unipole is considered to be a status quo power because it is difficult to imagine that the most powerful state, the

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

one that preempts challengers and malcontents to keep them in awe, would want to change its own system. For example,

[...] the question of whether, as a new unipole, the United States might adopt a more revisionist stance has not figured centrally in international relations research. The reason was a key assumption built into almost all research on hegemonic stability and power transition theory: that the leading state in any international system is bound to be satisfied. Hence, research on the origins of satisfaction and revisionism is overwhelmingly about subordinate states, not the dominant state.¹⁹⁹

A hegemon will change international order if it can afford to do so, but there is no real endpoint, short of creating a world state, to what a hegemon could want. The primary issue is that at a certain equilibrium, the hegemon will find it too hard to change international order simply because of the rules and relationships it has created earlier. Efforts to preserve order places onerous burdens on the hegemon by often constricts its freedom of action, which may prompt the hegemon to become dissatisfied with its own order. A hegemon is simultaneously unbound but also restricted by its own rules and institutions.²⁰⁰ This is the crux of the problem. Why would a hegemon undermine its own order, which raises the cost to enforce order, for the pursuit of other gains? This tautology has no clear answer, but a purely abstract, cost-benefit analysis, cannot answer it alone. One can speculate that a hegemon might conceivably wish to expand further its political, economic and military *apparati* if it believes that its security interests would be served.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Ikenberry, Grieco, and Mastanduno, "Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences," p. 12.

²⁰⁰ See Martha Finnemore, "Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity: Why being a Unipole isn't all it's cracked up to be," *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No.1 (January, 2009), pp. 58-85. In particular, Finnemore identifies legitimacy (which requires sharing power and authority), social structure (institutions by necessity establish rules and inhibit exercise of power), and hypocrisy, borne of the consequences of upholding principles or challenging principles.

²⁰¹ Gilpin argues that a declining power may consider *retrenchment*, a reduction of its politico-military commitments, as a possible strategy. This, however, could also be perceived as a signal of weakness inviting

While this could account for the puzzling tendencies in US grand strategy with respect to international order in the post-Cold War period, Gilpin's modest goal of providing an economic-sociological framework on the rise and fall of world order is less applicable to the puzzling behavior of rising and secondary states, due in part to an absence of mid-level and unit-level hypotheses.

This brings us to the second point: that the fruits of world order often benefit lesser states. The transience of the balance of power is a natural phenomenon not only because of the variance in distributive costs in preserving world order but because of changes in fortunes of states. By fostering open trading systems, hegemons increase not only economic penetration but the diffusion of technologies. This in turn, and in conjunction with natural unit-level processes, results in differential rates of economic growth among states, which explains dynamics of decline, fall, and the recreation of world order. For example, the U.S.' decision to maintain an open economic system was helpful in preserving the post-World War II status quo, but as it propped up its allies, trade and the diffusion of technologies had the unintended consequences of creating a list of competitive economic rivals, of which China is the most recent and critical member. As Schweller and Pu note:

Why would an increasingly powerful state that is growing faster than its established competitors want to overthrow the very system under which it is benefiting (given its unmatched growth rate) more than any other state?

further challenges from other states, thus resulting in a positive feedback. See Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 194-195.

There is nevertheless a method to this madness as one could speculate the efficacy of the reverse-strategy of expansion. The Roman Empire's shift from the Julio-Claudian "forward defense" to "defense-in-depth" under Diocletian during the crisis of the 3rd century, for example, is relevant for the perennial debate about which sides of the Oceans begins the defense of the United States. Order-challenging behavior from the hegemon could be interpreted as a series of preemptive wars in *solo barbarico*. See also Edward N. Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire, From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 13-19, 127-144 and Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 89.

This core question can be leveled at all hegemonic theories that posit revisionist powers as the primary agents of change.²⁰²

If the distributional effects of hegemony favor lesser-great powers, why then would rising powers ever want to be revisionist? Within Gilpin's theory, there exists the notion of social forms of power, in some ways akin to Classical Realism, in which a hierarchy of prestige affects the extent to which a state has influence over international outcomes. No matter how powerful a rising challenger may be, the hegemon often declines to relinquish entirely, or in part, its control over international order. At some point, therefore, a dissatisfied state will invariably challenge the hegemon to unseat it from the reins of power. Much of the power transition literature has dedicated its research agenda to explaining the specific (material) conditions that are conducive to hegemonic wars.

In view of the rise of China debate, China appears to be reaping the benefits of the U.S.-led world order and will persist so long as it is satisfied with prestige and authority accorded by the international community.²⁰³ Suffice it to say that many speculate that Chinese foreign policy is attributable to its status-related drive. PTT and its offshoots nevertheless believe that China will continue to bide its time until its power and dissatisfaction reach a critical point.

²⁰² Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer, 2011), p. 51.

²⁰³ Power Cycle Theory has elaborated on these concepts. The overall relative position of states within the material-power hierarchy lends powerful states special status. As a state's actual and latent power increases, it is expected to exercise greater authority commensurate to such power. Nevertheless, such hegemonic states are invariably assimilated by the rest of the system and inevitably decline. Much like the argument herein, power influences ambitions. See, for instance, Charles F. Doran, *The Politics of Assimilation: Hegemony and Its Aftermath* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971). Moreover, concerns for has sparked an entire literature on the eminence of *status* in International Relations; the subject of a later subsection below.

PTT and HST advance important assumptions about state behavior that relate to material power, and yet it seems that absent an extra-theoretical component, it is difficult to make sense of individual states' motivations. What really causes states to become dissatisfied with a given international order? This problem is more acute when decision-makers have to weigh against each other the incompatible costs of preserving and changing an order. Traditional approaches to PTT and HST fail, moreover, to provide a satisfactory way to study not only great-power but also minor, states' grand strategies without reference to power dynamics. For these reasons, PTT research has begun to examine transition dynamics through inclusion of social factors such as status (discussed below). This is a sensible development given the relative neglect of social factors as well as the limited engagement with unit-level theories as well as micro-processes; all of which are venues for further exploration in this dissertation.

2. 1. 4. Neoclassical Realism

²⁰⁴Since the 1990s, the Realist research program has expanded to include unit-level variables.²⁰⁵ Prominent Realists understood and articulated the need for nuance, indicating that states can be differentiated not only by their material capabilities but also by their motivations.²⁰⁶ Having been deemed a logical extension of the Realist paradigm,

²⁰⁴ *I.e.*, combining an analysis of the international system with the unique characteristics of states. See Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp. 233-256; Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (1998), pp. 144-172; Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (eds.), *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁰⁵ See Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy."

²⁰⁶ See Christensen and Snyder, "Chaingangs and Passed Bucks," pp. 143-150; Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," p. 7.

Neoclassical Realists research programs begin with the assumption that foreign policy executives of every state act as interlocutors between system-level pressures and domestic parameters.²⁰⁷

Since its publication, *Neoclassical Realist Theories of International Relations* has retroactively reclassified the research program along three distinct types of research.²⁰⁸ Type I research demystifies foreign policies deemed by Structural Realism to be counterintuitive and counterproductive. Whereas the Waltzian state disregards international structure at its own peril for unknown reasons, the state under the analytical scrutiny of Neoclassical Realism is thought to suffer from domestic dysfunctions that reduce its foreign policy efficacy. In this vein, Neoclassical Realism can be considered as simply the most recent, and sophisticated, entry within a broader research program on the limits of rational and structural theories and the relative significance of agents vs. structure. Earlier studies that have been identified *ex post facto* as Neoclassical Realist often framed their puzzles in terms of counterintuitive or maladaptive state behavior such as over expansionism and underachieving foreign policies as caused by domestic coalitions, elite fragmentation, elite perceptions, social cohesion, ideology, and state capacity.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ See Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Fall, 2008), pp. 294–321, esp. pp. 296–7, 306–9.

²⁰⁸ See Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory*, pp. 12-15.

²⁰⁹ See, most prominently, Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially pp. 135–208; Snyder, *Myths of Empire*; Fared F. Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Randall, L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Cornell University Press, 2006); Layne, *Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future

It would be a mistake, however, to pigeonhole Neoclassical Realism as a merely a supplement to other theories since its emphasis on the unit-level leaves it uniquely qualified to craft and test hypotheses of state behavior and international political outcomes via historical case studies. Accordingly, Type II analyses seek to produce new insights into foreign policy. Specific policy outcomes, such as assessing internal balancing outcomes to great power intervention in the periphery, to broad examinations of grand strategies overtime that shapes international political outcomes, the research program is exceedingly rich.²¹⁰ Most recently, Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell argue that it is possible to extend the scope and time-horizon of Neoclassical Realism so as to explain international political outcomes (Type III).²¹¹

So, what causes revisionism and status-quo behavior according to Neoclassical Realists? To the consternation of Liberal IR scholars, the answer lies in the choices of foreign policy executives due to domestic expediency or ideologies.²¹² Imperial foreign

Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (August, 2006), pp. 464-495.

²¹⁰ See, Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks: Great Power Intervention in the Periphery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusader: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Victor Cha, “Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (June, 2000), pp. 261-239; Jason Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status Quo States*.

²¹¹ Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, “Neoclassical Realist Theories.”

²¹² See Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall, 1999), pp. 5-55 Cf. Brian C. Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008), pp. 294-321; *Idem*. “Is Anybody Not an (International Relations) Liberal?” *Security Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2010), pp. 2-25; Ripsman, Taliferro, Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory*. Cf. Kevin Narizny, “On Systemic Paradigm and Domestic Politics: A Critique of the Newest Realism,” *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Fall, 2017), pp. 155-190.

policies, elite indecision and lack of consensus can also lead to fractured foreign policies that are unable to identify, or respond to, emerging threats, thereby leading to underbalancing, as a form of status-quo behavior. The definitive, as of yet, statement in this camp is that of Jason Davidson, who provides an excellent discussion on the origins of status-quo and revisionist states by combining international opportunity (in terms of the balance of allied resolve and shifts in capabilities) and the disposition of domestic coalitions (whether they favor nationalist or welfare policies).²¹³ The temporal and contextual specificity of this account reduces its generalizability. This is a problem for Neoclassical Realist studies because often-times, especially the “Type II” theories purport advance theories that can potentially have broader applicability since the analyses often proceed from theory-building and theory-testing comparative case-study analyses.

Where the Neoclassical Realist frameworks fall short is in their underspecified relationship between the independent variable, system-level material factors, and the unit-level intervening variable. The former, by the necessity of the paradigm, commands analytical priority but this leaves the intervening variable in an ambiguous place, which makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the former influence the latter and the specific nature of the interaction is left ambiguous.²¹⁴ The emphasis of the system-level independent variable as a material one prevents an honest assessment of the type of pressures that decision-makers are subjected. Neoclassical Realists have therefore adopted a subtle view of system-level variables by elaborating on the traditional polarity and

²¹³ See Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status Quo States*.

²¹⁴ See Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, “Neoclassical Realist Theory,” p. 40.

capability argument with concepts like clarity or the permissiveness of the system that synthesize aspects of earlier Realist multipliers on the system-level such as threat perceptions, availability of allies, geography *viz.*²¹⁵ One could even call this a type of freedom of action or, for example as Trubowitz calls is, geopolitical slack.²¹⁶ In view of the diminishing utility of military force, as opposed to economic statecraft and social pressures at the system-level, this dissertation argues that permissiveness and restrictiveness has a social component based on the perceived legitimacy of a hypothetical action.

Neoclassical Realist studies have also underappreciated international order and its social components that necessarily animate international politics. Where such studies exist, the dependent variable under scrutiny relates to state's balancing choices, especially regarding the composition of regional order and the extent to which states follow or reject the leadership of the hegemon.²¹⁷ A state's attitude towards the hegemon, whether it chooses to balance or bandwagon, hardly constitutes a satisfactory measure of revisionism. To illustrate, consider the following dilemma: bandwagoning with the hegemon is order-conforming behavior *par excellence* because it affirms the status quo. Yet, such acquiescence can further unbind the hegemon, thereby undermining international order. It

²¹⁵ See Taliaferro, Ripsman, and Lobell, *The Challenge of Grand Strategy*, pp. 23-25.

²¹⁶ See Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition & American Statecraft* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 5. That said, Trubowitz is adamant that his approach is not Neoclassical Realist. See p. 4, cit. 7.

²¹⁷ See, for instance, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and the Study of Regional Order," in Tazha V. Paul (eds.), *International Relations Theory and Regional Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 74-103. See also Kristen P. Williams, Steven E. Lobell, Neal G. Jesse (eds.), *Beyond Great Powers and Hegemons: Why Secondary States Support, Follow, or Challenge* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012). Note, however, that the scope of this research concerns the policy choices of secondary states on a regional basis and its findings are not applicable to the present inquiry.

is important therefore to better understand the social context in which a state’s decision-makers frame international order and their policy options. Thus, while Neoclassical Realism (as well as PTT research) performs reasonably well compared to other approaches (see Table 2.1.), it nevertheless falls short in holistically the importance of international normative and ideational factors. To this end, the following examines the plurality of alternative approaches to the Realist Paradigm.

Table 2. 1. Summary of Realist Approaches

Approach	Structural Realism	Offensive Realism	PTT/HST	Neoclassical Realism
<u>Major Variable</u>	Material Power	Material Power	Changes in Material Power, Technology; Prestige	Material Power; Unit-Level and Perceptual Variables
<u>Revisionism</u>	Polarity (?)	Regional Hegemony is the goal	Power shifts; Costs of upkeep vs. changing order	Ideology, Regime, Coalitions, Overbalancing
<u>Status Quo</u>	Balance of Power	(Prescriptive notion of Offshore Balancing)	Hegemon establishes World order after Hegemonic War	Ideology, Regime, Coalitions, underbalancing
<u>Reform</u>	N/A	N/A	Types of dissatisfaction; states can contest and change aspects of order	N/A
<u>Explains Cases?</u>	NO	NO	Partially	Partially
<u>Problem</u>	Binary approach; SQ bias	Binary approach; Offense bias	No unit-level theorizing; insufficient engagement with social factors	Binary approach; Methodological issues; insufficient engagement with social factors

2.2. PLURALISM

The theoretical lacunae in Realism point to the need for a more comprehensive framework of grand strategy that incorporates power and ideational elements with the view of divining international order. This section contemplates the efficacy of Institutionalism, English School, Ideas and Identity-based approaches, and Status as suitable repositories of theoretical insights for international order and state preferences.

2. 2. 1. International Institutions and Liberal Hegemony

Whereas Realists lament the uncertainties and difficulties associated with achieving cooperation, Institutionalists profess qualified optimism. They expound an alternative to the Realists' security-centric approach to international politics by asserting the significance of state interests beyond security concerns. Institutionalism is a variant within Liberal IR.²¹⁸ It is distinct because of its emphasis on the role of voluntary agreements, regimes, and norms at the level of the international system (such as liberal trading agreements and other institutional oversight mechanisms), as opposed to domestic liberal-democratic values.²¹⁹ This section argues that overall the Institutional argument asserts a status-quo bias, akin to Defensive Realism and that revisionism originates from unit-level factors such as elites' choices, which, again reinforces the need to think about international order as being inexorably linked to elites.

To briefly explain the approach; Institutionalists argue that since the international system engenders interactions, it is possible to think of it as an arena of iterated games. By interacting with one another, IR Liberals reason, states may develop "shadows of the

²¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Institutional argument has crafted its ideas on the experiences of European integration and projects a structural-functionalist logic in which cooperation in one issue area will likely have spill-over effects in other domains. See, for instance, Karl Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957); Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-1957* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958).

²¹⁹ Stephen Krasner defines as "principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue-area." See, *Idem*. "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (1982), pp. 185-205. See, also, John G. Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," In Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

future” and bargaining reputations that affect their future interactions.²²⁰ States learn, therefore, to accommodate one another on a range of issues and aspire to goals beyond military competition. Evolving technologies and deepening economic linkages between states intensify states’ dependence on each other in the quest to satisfy their economic, welfare, and other political goals.²²¹ This is especially desirable for Liberals who reject the notion of international politics as a zero-sum game in which states only seek to gain relative to others; a point that has placed Neorealists and IR Neoliberals at odds.²²² As interdependence increases, states are expected to become ever more pacific towards one another.²²³

To understand why states would conform to or challenge international order per the institutionalist argument, we need to take note of the role of hegemony in facilitating these institutions. The Institutional approach became a hallmark of theoretical debates during the latter half of the Cold War, with the relative-rise of powerful economies within the U.S.-led camp, and the intensification of Soviet penetration in the global periphery, all of which challenged the notion of American preponderance.²²⁴ Some sought to explain the

²²⁰ See Kenneth Oye, *Cooperation Under Anarchy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). See also James D. Fearon, “Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Spring, 1998), pp. 269-305.

²²¹ See Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence* [4th Edition] (Boston, MA: Longman, 2012).

²²² For an overview, see David Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993).

²²³ Cf. Dale C. Copeland, *Economic Interdependence and War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

²²⁴ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005 [1984]).

possibility of cooperation despite the persistence of anarchy (in the face of America's – allegedly declining– hegemonic presence).²²⁵ Before U.S. hegemony provided a lynchpin for the global economy, and members of the Liberal World Order could expect the U.S. to step-in to correct systemic problems whenever the situation arose. That is, states could be compelled to adhere to “rules” despite the absence of superior power to coerce them as states may further enhance their relations by fostering bargaining reputations, mutual economic interdependence, and other international institutional mechanisms to honor, or enforce, agreements.²²⁶

Thus, while a hegemon may be necessary to enforce some rules, the historical emergence and decline of institutions, such as free-trade regimes, rely significantly on the consent of elites in both the hegemon and lesser states.²²⁷ Reforming or challenging aspects of international order then seem to originate either from these states' failure to integrate into global institutions. This is because elites in these states have not sufficiently socialized to adopt liberal values and regimes, or, possibly because of the way international liberalism becomes a power projection tool for elites.²²⁸ It is nevertheless difficult to disaggregate the political and security dimensions of international politics entirely from institutional cooperation. If the institutional logic prevails in international politics, why do states deviate

²²⁵ Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

²²⁶ See Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1980); Oye, “Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy,” pp. 20-21; Robert O. Keohane, “International Institutions: Two Approaches,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (December, 1988), pp. 379-396.

²²⁷ See Arthur A. Stein, “The Hegemon's Dilemma: Great Britain, the United States, and the International Economic Order,” *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring, 1984), pp. 355-386.

²²⁸ G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer, 1990), pp. 283-315.

from regimes or fail to coordinate so often? Given the plurality of states' interests, how could any state avoid free-rider problems and coordinate indefinitely on such a broad spectrum of issues in the absence of a preponderant power?

Enter, Ikenberry, who examines the rise of these international institutional mechanisms and thereby elaborated a Liberal theory of hegemonic stability.²²⁹ Ikenberry concludes that international orders are established in the aftermath of major wars as the dominant state imposes its values on the vanquished. In the process, the dominant power also forges military, diplomatic, and economic institutions that, if managed well, have the potential to maintain a particular international order *ad perpetuum*.²³⁰ Such systems are attractive for lesser states because they are not able to reject such an imposition from a superior power. Far more importantly, however, states have incentives to participate in an international order because doing so provides its constituents a way out of the multitude of collective action and free-rider problems between lesser powers that would otherwise bedevil interstate relations.

As Ikenberry explains, liberal orders, as opposed to balance of power or hegemonic orders, are constitutive: they are “rules-based” and function multilaterally. A liberal hegemon provides public goods to its constituents in the form of security guarantees as well as a commitment to maintaining an open trading system.²³¹ While the hegemon benefits the most from this arrangement, elites of lesser powers usually obtain mutual

²²⁹ See G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²³¹ See *Ibid.*, p. 30-32.

benefits too. By consenting to honor its commitments to other members and restraining its appetite, the hegemon enmeshes its interests into the tapestry of international institutions. Invoking a type of domestic analogy, it is argued that in constitutional order, the density of institutions, alliances, and rules diminish the returns on power (what he calls “implications of victory”), thereby lowering the incentives for states to renege on commitments and raise the costs for defection.²³² These institutions shape state practices and behavior and set states on path dependent trajectories, thereby “binding” the order.²³³ In addition to the power discrepancies, prospects of material gains and other public goods, and multilateralism as exercised via other institutions, an element of normativity pervades the liberal argument:

Elites in these states “buy into” the order in some fundamental normative way. That is, participation in the order is seen by these elites as something that is desirable, given the array of choices that they confront. Indeed, elites in key subordinate states actively seek and participate in the creation of the liberal hegemonic order. To be sure, this may be constrained consent—and there will surely be different degrees of consent or approval that may be manifest, ranging from grudging acquiescence to outright normative embrace.²³⁴

Now to unpack this account. From the purview of Liberal HST, it is not self-evident why states would ever want to challenge international order. If rules come to constrict the behavior of states, including that of the hegemon (because it is a constitutive order, which is why other states buy into it), then states can at best hope to alter minor aspects of the

²³² See *Ibid.* p. xi, 4, 18-20. See also the discussion in pp. 32-41, especially p. 38.

²³³ See *Ibid.* p. 9, 38, 40-43.

²³⁴ Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origin, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 74.

system with relative impunity. If Institutions empower the hegemon in numerous ways, but significantly restrict its freedom of action in other ways, it could explain why a hegemon would seek to “revise” its own order in the sense that its own rules undermine more coveted goals, such as perpetuating preponderance. None of these considerations can be discussed satisfactorily using Ikenberry’s framework.

Ikenberry, therefore, expands on *After Victory* with *Liberal Leviathan*, wherein he argues that there are not necessarily different types of order, but that every order has elements of three logics: balance of power, command, and consent, and that the present Liberal order, and U.S. foreign policy, evinces elements of each.²³⁵ The liberal hegemony of U.S. is distinct from past (liberal) orders and, in the post-Cold War, exercises arbitrary power and displays command logics as well. In recognition of America’s “order-challenging” foreign policy, he also notes the numerous tensions within the liberal international order and its constituent states.²³⁶ As a standalone explanation of the emergence of the present “liberal” international order, therefore, Ikenberry’s account of post-war U.S. grand strategy is superlative. Unfortunately, it is difficult to divine from this approach why the U.S. would challenge its own liberal world order.

Ikenberry’s explanation is that in the absence of an effective way for states to decide on and intervene in order-threatening crises like humanitarian disasters, and in lieu of any natural restraint on liberal internationalism, benign intentions can manifest as a distorted

²³⁵ See *Ibid.* p. 24.

²³⁶ Both from the perspective of other states (especially the non-Western periphery) as well as within the U.S. in relation to the problems of democratic foreign policy, the tensions between liberalism and local cultures, and the desire of other states to attain greater authority but speculates that the liberal order is sufficiently robust.

imperial project at the hands of powerful elite groups.²³⁷ From Wilson to Bush, the confluence of ideas and specific elite choices drive order-challenging behavior. This is not necessarily a problem for Ikenberry's account, but it demonstrates that the liberal logic of order, far from representing a kind of status quo, challenges the "deeper logic of international life." Ikenberry concedes this when he says, "these various "waves" and "layers" of international order coexist within the contemporary global system."²³⁸

As for the challengers, it is not clear why a rising state would want to overthrow a liberal international order since, as we observe with China, it would benefit enormously from the open economic system of the order without assuming the onerous political responsibility of maintaining the structure. Ikenberry also notes this.²³⁹ In fact, China is likely to uphold the order, and possibly become more liberal in the future because of the benefits conferred by the system. Underlying this guarded optimism is, again, the notion that China may have a propensity for order challenging due to its regime type and illiberalism. The problem, fundamentally, is that China is actually less likely to be affected by the "tensions" within liberalism that bedevil the liberal world order. In an undemocratic China where the state fears its population and is overall satisfied externally, why would any Chinese FPE take the risk of pushing for a dangerous, revisionist foreign policy?

Clearly, Institutional/Liberal HST approach supplies us with profound insight into why states would want to establish and preserve international order and explain with the logic of game theory why cooperation is possible and desirable. Unfortunately, they

²³⁷ See Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, pp. 292-293.

²³⁸ See *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²³⁹ See Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order," p. 61.

too fall short in satisfactorily explaining the roots of order-challenging and order-conforming, simply because it is difficult to conceive of why a non-liberal state would want to preserve institutions and why a liberal hegemon would want to challenge its own order, beyond domestic and elite-based interjections. So, what affects elites views about international order? We now turn to the social and cultural aspects of international politics.

2. 2. 2. Ideas and Identity

While it is difficult to challenge the imminence of material factors in international politics, ideas and identity can profoundly shape actors' interests and therefore affect international politics. Broadly speaking, these concepts are in the domain of Liberalism and Constructivism. Why states should choose to uphold or challenge international order must by necessity reflect a consideration of the specific interests and preferences that are rooted in how states the broader international order and their position therein. If any of the base Structural or Offensive Realist arguments hold, we would logically expect either perpetual peace or war, barring any other unit-level or social factor. Institutions, in the meantime, change states' expectations and encourage them to internalize new norms of behavior and adopt strategies (like tit-for-tat, for example) they otherwise would not have absent an iterative relationship with their peers.

Unlike the previous approaches, Constructivism is not a theory *per se*, but an approach to world politics that emphasizes the role of ideas in shaping interests and material outcomes.²⁴⁰ Constructivists argue that international order is not only material but

²⁴⁰ See Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1998), p. 325.

contains social components; that anarchy is not a materialist vacuum.²⁴¹ One variant suggests world politics is ideas all the way down and that we could not conceive of any social reality or relationships independent of ideas.²⁴² A more-mainstream approach accepts the immanence of material forces and foresees the possibility of crafting testable theories, arguing that it is ultimately the relationships between actors that affect the nature of interactions and thereby constitute the structure of world politics.²⁴³ This is because ideas, identities, and preferences are not simply reducible to individuals, but rather pervade across groups and organizations as collective beliefs.²⁴⁴ For this reason, even in the absence of a hegemonic state to enforce rules and compliance, it does not naturally follow that states must act in self-regarding and aggressive ways as Realists predict.²⁴⁵ Instead, units (i.e., states) co-constitute the social structure of international politics through their interactions with one another. States' interactions help to forge a particular image of self and others, and these identities, in turn, shape their interests, ranked preferences, and foreign policy dispositions. World politics, therefore, is the product of identities, the extent to which a

²⁴¹ See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 24.

²⁴² See Vendulka Kubalkova, Nicholas G. Onuf, and Paul Kowert, *International Relations in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 1998). Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁴³ See, e.g., Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*. New York: Routledge, 1998).

²⁴⁴ Jeffrey W. Legro, *Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 4-5.

²⁴⁵ This is not to suggest that constructivists reject instrumental and strategic behavior; just that their conception of rationality is bounded in the way that actors think and prioritize some outcome over another.

certain cultural understanding of order is “internalized” by states, and, ultimately, how statesmen help replicate these cultures by performing their constructed roles.²⁴⁶ Having delineated the general qualities of one, albeit authoritative, interpretation of Constructivism, the next step is to examine propositions concerning status quo and revisionism.

It is unclear from the base Structural Realist argument whether or not states seek to maximize security, or power, but for Wendt making such an argument requires *a priori* assumptions about states’ behaviors.²⁴⁷ For example, an anarchy among security-maximizing states would be different from one in which the system is populated by aggressive power-maximizers. In the latter, there would be no limit to the revisionist aims of states as they would naturally seek to destroy another state.²⁴⁸ Other states would soon learn that this behavior is common and necessary to ensure their own survival, and thus revisionism would become a widespread practice. In other words, they would internalize what can be approximated to a “Hobbesian” culture of anarchy, as reflected in the intersubjectively constructed identities, discourses, and practices of states. For example, notions of the state as an organism and ideas about Social Darwinism was a common feature of international thinking in the 19th century and, save a few exceptions, manifested in unrestrained imperialism. Conversely, it is possible that other types of “identities” that Wendt approximates to “Lockean” and “Kantian” cultures of anarchy can take root over

²⁴⁶ See Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp. 98, 172.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.104-105.

²⁴⁸ See J. Samuel Barkin, “Realist Constructivism,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September, 2003), pp. 325-342, esp. p. 330. On “predator states” see Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp. 407-408.

time. Through their interactions states reinterpret their identities and interests and therefore adopt new policies to fulfill their self-prescribed roles as, say, “honest-brokers” or “peace-makers” among many other things.

Two important dynamics that of socialization and internalization are crucial. These reflect the extent to which states learn from each other or come to accept certain ideas and interests as being essential and intrinsically worthy of legitimating.²⁴⁹ This could be simply because once internalized, ideas become part of an actor’s identity and that informs, as far as a collective like a state is concerned, the national interest.²⁵⁰ Alternatively, the quest to acquire social goods may drive states to pursue foreign policies aimed at satiating these needs. The Social Identity Theory and Status-based approaches, which are discussed below, build exactly on this logic and underscore the importance of state identities and positionality of “social” power *vis-à-vis* one another.

While culture and identities are amenable to change, they are unlikely to do so quickly enough to explain shorter-term trends and variations.²⁵¹ It is often difficult to determine, given the dynamism of world politics, to assess the extent to which identity and culture to play into policy choices consistently.²⁵² Liberal IR theories also underscore the

²⁴⁹ See Ian Hurd, “Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 53 (1999), pp. 379–408; *Idem.*, “Breaking and Making Norms: American Revisionism and Crises of Legitimacy,” *International Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2-3. (2007), pp. 194-213.

²⁵⁰ See, e.g. Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); *Idem.*, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

²⁵¹ Jeffrey W. Legro, *Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

importance of ideas and how they shape preferences.²⁵³ This notion is naturally a challenge to theories that axiomatically privilege material factors and political actors' imperative for self-preservation. If Realists and Institutionalists conceive of revisionism in terms of behaviors, strategies or outcomes, approaches that underscore ideas and preferences approach the issue as one of societal values.²⁵⁴ There is always a fundamental disjuncture in what states –and, therefore, statespeople– want in international politics and what policies and outcomes reach fruition. Jeffrey Legro's study of grand strategy formation and international order, for example, is a reasonable explanation not only for order preserving and challenging behavior but for why these can change over time.²⁵⁵ Legro convincingly argues that decision-makers' beliefs about international order and their attitudes on how to engage with world politics are subjected to change under special circumstances, such as when the weaknesses of preexisting paradigms are revealed, and when new ideas are articulated and consolidated.²⁵⁶

It is difficult to understand, however, why states would prefer one set of ideas over others; why a state would prefer to go from isolationism to integration with international society. One could not obviously infer sources for revisionism without some form of exogenous shock. Legro also does not sufficiently address the role of material power, apart from “shocks” that may call into question existing approaches to a policy if the said idea

²⁵³ See Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 513–53.

²⁵⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 521.

²⁵⁵ See Legro, *Great Power Strategies*, pp. 5, 10.

²⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, p 14.

has not become entrenched or failing spectacularly. One of the inherent difficulties with such an approach is distinguishing between ideas and agency. It is entirely possible for leaders to hold certain ideas yet to implement policies that contradict them. Legro also misses an important opportunity to engage with the composition of decision-makers themselves. In this respect, an ideas-only approach like this fails to capture the nuances in elite preferences originating from sectoral and institutional sources, and even international society more broadly, absent liberal values.

In sum, ideas and identity offer alternative motivations for decision materialist and institutionalist approaches. It is not possible to infer how states understand themselves and their peers in relation to international order independent of how they think about and construct through discourse and action, international politics. Agency, nevertheless, also requires a capacity to act. Decision-makers base their priorities based on material expectations and their capabilities. Their most pressing concerns at times may be banal and relate only to the preservation of their rule rather than that of the state. Where both approaches are helpful, though, is in suggesting ways with which identity, interests, and discourses can interact to produce an understanding of what strategies are beneficial for decision-makers, their state, or the international community more broadly, and how these are legitimated.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ In this respect, some studies have considered the role that discourse and power play in defining and change international order. See, e.g. Janice Bially Mattern, *Ordering International Politics: Identity, Crisis, and Representational Force* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), pp. 9-10; Erik Ringmar, *Identity, Interest, and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 66-92.

2. 2. 3. International Society

The English School presents a curious case. Rather than dominant powers creating a hierarchical system and bestowing relevance to social processes, as in the case of Gilpinian Realism, the English School envisages the possibility of order within anarchical systems.²⁵⁸ So long as two or more states within an international system are able to divine a common interest in preserving order, and affect each other's' calculations beyond merely the security dilemma, it is possible to conceive of an international society of states.²⁵⁹ Within international society, regularized state behaviors/practices concerning the relations of states *inter se* determine the relations between states, designate appropriate legal and diplomatic practices, and circumscribe the legitimate use of force.²⁶⁰ In addition to coercion and self-interest, therefore, states may feel compelled to act a certain way because they deem it legitimate to do so.²⁶¹

Geographical, political, and cultural proximities can facilitate international societies, as has been the case historically, as these tend to foster more shared understandings and a basis for norms. For the English School theorists, traditional diplomatic practices of the European great powers, the Balance of Power System, and the post-Vienna Concert system have been wellsprings of inspiration. The last of these, for example, united all European powers in their quest to resist liberal revolutions at home and

²⁵⁸ See Bull, *Anarchical Society*.

²⁵⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁶⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 13-15, 64, 232.

²⁶¹ See Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 76-79.

proved to be a durable system of peace until it unfolded in WWI. While these states had “similar” regimes and values, homogeneity is not a *sine qua non* for international society as its core purpose is to facilitate coexistence among a plurality of diverse states. It is common for very dissimilar states to achieve the bare minimum of practices needed to coexist.

Propositions on revisionism and status quo in international society are more problematic to assess. International order, by its very nature, is a status-quo oriented project and the theory in some ways examines the remarkable durability of international order. It is at once the natural product of evolving interactions between geographically and culturally proximate states, and a purposive endeavor.²⁶² The defining feature of order is, therefore, the operation of an international society of states in which states have a shared “common interest” in making the system work. It is unclear from the classical texts when and why certain states would want to challenge international order. There is an equally troubling tendency to read into the English School approach as a too-peaceful endeavor wherein states are naturally inclined to cooperate, and that the operation of fundamental institutions will, over time, lead to further integration.²⁶³ Bull adamantly opposed any notion of structural-functionalism and path-dependency.²⁶⁴

Within the standard day-to-day functioning of international society, its constituents always have the option of adhering or acting contrary, to international order. The order

²⁶² See Watson, “Systems of States,” p. 104.

²⁶³ See Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 154-157, 253.

²⁶⁴ See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 181-183.

can be purposive and yet not always a desirable goal for states. It is difficult, moreover, to distinguish within an English School framework what constitutes as “revisionist” behavior. The questions of “when” and “who” has received less attention as contributors to the English School have avoided because they recognize the duality of institutions of international society. To wit:

In terms of the contemporary analysis of emerging powers, it becomes very important to resist binary distinctions and lazy dichotomies. The impact of globalization on emerging states and societies has all too often been conceived in polar terms — incorporation vs. exclusion; fusion vs. fragmentation; modernizing, liberalizing coalitions vs. confessional, nationalist or third-worldist counter-forces.²⁶⁵

Nevertheless, scholars broadly fall under the English School designation nevertheless have entertained ideas about what constitutes revisionism and status quo, as well as several types of strategies. Within the specific discussion on pluralism and solidarism in international society, states content with international order can be unproblematically considered status quo; although this status quo orientation would necessitate activism and willingness to use legitimate, multilateral, force to protect the subjects of international society.²⁶⁶ As for revisionism, one could arguably make the case that Barry Buzan, who inserted himself into the English School, provides a useful tripartite understanding of revisionism, which he breaks down into orthodox revisionist, reformist

²⁶⁵ Andrew Hurrell, “Narratives of Emergence: Rising Powers and the End of the Third World,” *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (April-June, 2013), pp. 203-221, esp., p. 219.

²⁶⁶ As discussed in Chapter 1, a “Solidarist” English School understanding underscores the need for states to uphold principles of international order and avoid atrocities detrimental to the quality of international life, necessitating at times principled stances on international aggression as well as interventionism in the name of humanity.

revisionist, and revolutionary revisionist.²⁶⁷ An orthodox revisionist is essentially content with international order, but may desire specific alterations to some of its aspects, possibly by acquiring more influence or power.²⁶⁸ A reformist revisionist accepts some aspects of international order, but rejects others, while a revolutionary revisionist seeks to overthrow international order entirely and establish its own rules. While the typology is valuable and highly consistent with the main purposes of this project, these concepts serve at best as useful labels to think about state behavior.

On the origins of revisionist behavior in international society, there appear to be three prominent sources. Firstly, one can take the cue from the traditional practices of European statecraft and posit the importance of the balance of power as a fundamental institution. Though nebulous in its meaning, the balance of power is understood to have contributed to the very possibility of an international society of states predicated on the notion that no single power ought ever to dominate the system at the expense of the rest.²⁶⁹ The implication is that force can well be used by great powers *inter se*, or used to form coalitions against an emerging hegemonic order, and thereby preventing shifts in the balance of power that could upset the status-quo. In such a situation, identifying which actors and behaviors constitute revisionism would be a political matter. Moreover, the

²⁶⁷ This notion originates from Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (Hemel Hempstead: Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 237–46. See also *Idem.* “China in International Society: ‘Is Peaceful Rise’ Possible?” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3 (2010), pp. 5–36.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ See Herbert Butterfield, “The Balance of Power,” in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966). See also, Kissinger, *A World Restored*. Edward V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power: A Case History of the Theory and Practice of one of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1967).

historical prevalence of suzerain-state systems and the present reality of U.S. cast doubts on this interpretation.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, it is even possible for a single hegemonic state to integrate into international society so long as its right to authority is legitimated by other states (i.e., lesser-great powers) and can, therefore, act to preserve it.

Secondly, the International Society Approach also places a premium on norms and values, and it is possible to envisage revisionist attitudes originating from outsiders' dissatisfaction. The present international order was created by the expansion of the European-based Westphalian international society, which inculcated by reason of force, and law, its values upon non-Western peoples.²⁷¹ Consequently, many of these polities had to adapt to the mores of European international society not only as "outsiders" but also as having formal legal inferiority.²⁷² To elaborate, international societies develop both explicit and implicit rules concerning the conduct of interstate relations. This so-called standard of

²⁷⁰ See William C. Wohlforth et al., "Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2007), pp. 155-185.

²⁷¹ See Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*; Hedley Bull, "Justice in International Relations," *Haguey Lecture* (University of Waterloo, 1982); Paul Keele, "'Just Backward Children': International Law and the Conquest of Non-European Peoples," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1995), pp. 192-196; Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3; Brett Bowden, "In the Name of Progress and Peace: The 'Standard of Civilisation' and the Universalizing Project," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2004) pp. 51-54; Brett Bowden, "The Ideal of Civilization. Its Origins and Socio-Political Character," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 25-50; Edward Keene, "A Case Study of the Construction of International Hierarchy: British Treaty-Making Against the Slave Trade in Early Nineteenth Century," *International Organization*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2007), pp. 317-319; Turan Kayaoğlu, *Legal Imperialism: Sovereignty and Extraterritoriality in Japan, the Ottoman Empire, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁷² *Ibid.*; Gerrit Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Dimitrios Strokos, "Introduction: Rethinking the Standard(s) of Civilisation(s) in International Relations," *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2014), pp. 546-556; Barry Buzan, "The 'Standard of Civilisation' as an English School Concept," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 42, No. 3 (2014), p. 577.

civilization ascribes legal and moral inferiority to the outsider/newcomer to an international society.²⁷³ members of international society by conforming to international society, even at the proverbial cost of self-harm.²⁷⁴ Established members can then deny to an outsider the advantages of membership to international society and justify discriminatory, coercive, and outright imperialist policies against the outsider. While this stigmatization can lead to dissatisfaction, it is likely to goad these states to redouble their efforts to become respected. The standard of civilisation effectively frames the conflict between established Western and rising non-Western powers and is possibly a useful point of entry into discussions about the rise of China as well.²⁷⁵ It is possible that states on the “receiving end” of civilization are likely to socialize into international society through extended interactions and adoption of norms, albeit not fully.²⁷⁶ Some units, however, are so fundamentally different than those of an international society that they nevertheless challenge its fundamental constellation of power and values, especially in times of uncertainty and the declining power of an international order.²⁷⁷

Having examined outsider states’ discontent towards international society, we can now turn to order-challenging from within the core members of an international society, in

²⁷³ See Zarakol, *After Defeat*, p. 6.

²⁷⁴ See Ayşe Zarakol, “After Defeat: Turkey, Japan, Russia and the Grand Strategy of Assimilation,” Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Wisconsin-Madison, June 2007), especially p. 88.

²⁷⁵ See Buzan, “China in International Society,” p. 9; Xiaoming Zhang, “China In The Conception Of International Society: The English School’s Engagements With China,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April, 2011), pp. 763-786.

²⁷⁶ See, Alastair I. Johnson, *China and Social States*. See also Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, p. 7.

²⁷⁷ See, for instance, William J. Brenner, *Confounding Power: Anarchy and International Society from the Assassins to Al-Qaeda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), especially pp. 218-219, 234-235.

the form of revolutionary movements. Revolutionary movements, such as the American, French, and Russian revolutions led to the creation of “revolutionary states.” Revolutionary states, Armstrong argues, abide by an alternative discourse and seek to overturn an established order, but nevertheless are compelled to socialize into international society once a revolution develops aspirations of statehood.²⁷⁸ That is, even if revolutionary states change the moral, normative, and material landscape, they nevertheless eventually align their domestic and international conduct to conform to international society.²⁷⁹ The revolutionary state approach is very useful to understand the emergence of revisionist states in the traditional sense, but not so much revisionist behavior common in world politics. These points are worthy of consideration, but while our subjects of inquiry have undergone revolutions, the specific mechanisms that affect decision-making require a unit-level analysis operationalizing the secondary effects of such upheavals given their temporal remoteness.

Finally, and as a response to the oft-cited Liberal arguments concerning the normative fabric of international society, the nature of international society simply incentivizes rising states to pursue greater influence. While Liberal IR scholars lament the possibility that revisionists may undermine liberal values, the International Society Approach takes seriously the justice demands and the unique values of non-Western states.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 16, 32, 75.

²⁷⁹ Halliday sees that Revolutionary States are not inherently bellicose nor a problem for international order *per se* because they represent dissatisfied groups within society or have revisionist or bellicose agendas. Rather, the process of revolution foments violence at home and proximate societies often become embroiled into the political conflict of the revolutionary state, which then leads to war. Halliday argues therefore that “war is a means by which both groups of states, the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary, respond to changes in domestic and international politics.” Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Power* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1999), p. 259.

It might be a mistake, however, to suggest that the normative content of principles outweigh the immanence of power politics as Newman and Zala argue that rising states are concerned primarily with issues of authority. Rising powers are concerned with representational issues, or *who* gets to make the rules and set the global agenda, rather than the normative problem concerning the content of the rules in circulation.²⁸⁰ Revisionism does not occur necessarily in the form of aggressive military action but more at the discursive level as well as political cooperation among rising states in other ways.²⁸¹

Newman and Zala also touch on some very important points about the way the English School approaches the study of revisionism, which serves as the point of discussion for this critique. Notably, the English School's limited engagement with the unit-level and the specific mechanisms that animate foreign policy and concerning the evidence by scholars come to understand state behavior. There is, as of yet, no formal English School theory of foreign policy, nor has the statesman, commonly invoked for English School theorizing, ever received due attention.²⁸² Furthermore, scholars are loath to study the discourses of rising states due to their –allegedly– misleading nature; a point discussed earlier. While Newman and Zala seek to amend this glaring omission, they nevertheless lament the absence of country-specific frameworks and studies with which to understand the revisionist tendencies of states.²⁸³ There is, however, one final line of inquiry into

²⁸⁰ Edward Newman and Benjamin Zala, "Rising Powers and Order Contestation: Disaggregating the Normative from the Representational," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 5 (2018), pp. 871-888.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 875.

²⁸² See Dale C. Copeland, "A Realist Critique of the English School," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 29 (2003), pp. 427-441, esp. 430-432; Navari, "English School Methodology," pp. 215-219, esp. 215, 217.

²⁸³ See Newman and Zala, "Rising Powers and Order Contestation," p. 883.

revisionism that has received scant attention, until recently, and complements many of the material and social approaches elucidated above: The next section explores states' desire to pursue positional and non-material goods in international society, which can be linked to their *status* concerns.

2. 2. 4. Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Status-Based Approaches

The previous subsections enumerate material and social factors as well as processes that explain revisionism and status-quo seeking. As an *ad-hoc* approach that is consistent with PTT, HST, English School, and other Constructivist approaches, “status” transcends any clear distinctions based on the traditional schools of IR, and thus merits the status of having its own section. Most of the prominent IR theories developed in the past decade have developed propositions about hierarchy and the value of positionality in the social system to delve deeper into the status-aspirations of states as a major driving force in state behavior.²⁸⁴ Rather than thinking about international politics as purely a materially-driven habitus, therefore, there is an evolving track in the literature that traces the motivations of states to their positional aspirations. In doing so, status-based approaches mend important gaps found in conventional materialist explanations as well as under-developed aspects of theories with explicitly social components.

²⁸⁴ See Jonathan Mercer, "Anarchy and Identity," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 229-252. See, also among many others, Richard Ned Lebow, *Cultural Theory of International Relations* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," pp. 29-30; Richard Ned Lebow, *Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives for War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 171-2; Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition," *International Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (February, 2011), pp. 105-42; Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Spring, 2010), pp. 63-95; Zarakol, *After Defeat*; Jonathan Renshon, "Status Deficits and War," *International Organization*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (2016), pp. 513-550; Stephen Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*.

As noted earlier, Gilpin's understanding of concepts such as the hierarchy of prestige and status are essentially linked to the relative-preponderance of states and their demonstrated prowess on the battlefield in the previous war. Since status affects a state's relative command of the system, it is deemed as important.²⁸⁵ Gilpin, however, did not append his approach to accommodate the multifarious aspects of status as a potential driving force of state behavior, independent of states' compulsion to pursue survival and material power.²⁸⁶ That is to say, that while Gilpin and PTT generally ascribe a purely cost-based logic to the maintenance and challenges of international order, the historical track record of counterintuitive state behavior suggests the operation of other forces.²⁸⁷ Within PTT and Gilpin's framework, status may conceivably explain why states sometimes pursue expansionist, seemingly uncooperative, unilateral, or, simply, self-regarding foreign policies that may potentially undermine international order. Simply, states that are not satisfied with their status in world politics may seek to enhance their position through self-aggrandizing policies, but divorced of concerns over material benefits, it becomes impossible to accommodate dissatisfaction. Much of the claims of status-oriented research seem to grapple with obvious contradictions.

To rectify the incompatibilities of combining material and status-based approaches, it has become a necessity to devise theories of state-motivation; ones that intrinsically link

²⁸⁵ Bull, for example, views great-powerdom as a "club good." See *Anarchical Society*, pp. 194, 202.

²⁸⁶ See Gilpin, *War and Change* (1981), pp. 33-34, 42, 132, 215-216.

²⁸⁷ Once again, we are linked back to the main puzzle. Popular assertions notwithstanding, the rising state is not necessarily revisionist. At the same time, however, the status-quo power is willing to spend an inordinate amount of resources on secondary-at-best geopolitical issues.

to ideational and identity-based understandings of international relations. Essentially, status concerns how states perceive their capacities in one domain as compared to others.²⁸⁸ This emphasis on the “self-esteem” of the unit can be rationalized within a broader anthropomorphic-turn in IR.²⁸⁹ As if harkening back to Morgenthau’s concept of *animus dominandi*, status is based on research into human evolutionary behavior. It is argued that status is an important motivation for human-beings, not simply as a means but as an end in itself.²⁹⁰ Unlike prestige or great-power status, which rely on the absolute obtainment of material capabilities and adaption of social practices, status is wholly positional and requires the unambiguous understanding by the entire status community of this fact.²⁹¹ Positionality is a *sine qua non* for status because, to paraphrase Schweller, where “everyone has [high] status then no one does.”²⁹² From these basic observations of Social Identity Theory (referred to as SIT, hereafter) it is possible to make a number of inferences about the circumstances in which states are willing to challenge, or not, international order; by which mechanisms they seek to affect change; and which states are willing to do so in the first place.

²⁸⁸ See Taizha V. Paul, Deborah W. Larson, William C. Wohlforth eds., *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 7.

²⁸⁹ See Alexander Wendt, ‘The State as a Personal in International Theory’, *Review of International Studies*, 30:2 (2004), pp. 289–316; Lebow, *Cultural Theory*, pp. 116–7. See also Carlos Escudé, “Anthropomorphic Fallacy in International Relations Discourse,” *WCFIA Working Paper 94-06* (1994).

²⁹⁰ Wohlforth, “Unipolarity, Status, & Great Power Competition,” (2008), p. 35, Cit. 5.

²⁹¹ Jonathan Renshon, *Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp 3-4.

²⁹² Randall L. Schweller, “Realism and the Present Great-Power System: Growth and Positional Conflict over Scarce Resources,” in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 1999), p. 29.

If status is the end goal of international politics, revisionism can arise from three general sources. Firstly, uncertainty. Wohlforth, for example, has argued that status and polarity arguments together can explain the durability of unipolar systems.²⁹³ By dispelling uncertainties about status and material power preponderance, unipolar systems have reduced the risk of challengers seeking to overthrow the unipole. By this logic, therefore, as the gap in material and technological between the unipole and rising great power diminishes, the latter may more likely seek to challenge the unipole. Recalling, then, the aforementioned discussion on unipolarity we can observe a decline in America's relative power since the 1970s, yet the world is not pushing back; not even China. Instead, we see that the U.S. grand strategy appears to contravene the tenets of its own rules-based order. If status concerns being at the apex of authority that controls over the system, the U.S. seems to have a counterintuitive way of preserving the status quo.

Secondly, revisionism can manifest when absolute goods like power fail to translate, for whatever reason, into enhanced status.²⁹⁴ When a state is denied what it "feels" it deserves, it will lash out. This type of research focuses especially on the dissatisfaction arising from the combination of frustrated status ambitions and the domestic political struggles of ruling elites. Much of their revisionist behavior and their intractable challenges to the hegemon, therefore, originate from the dissatisfaction of not having the same level of respect. Rising powers are particularly prone to this affliction because they

²⁹³ See Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," pp. 30.

²⁹⁴ See James A. Geschwander, "Continuities in Theories of Status Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance," *Social Forces*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (December, 1967), pp. 160-171 especially p. 161.

are arrivistes and established great powers are unlikely to relinquish any control.²⁹⁵ This problem is compounded by the inclusion of “ontological security” in which the denial of a coveted good can be perceived as being an existential threat to the state.²⁹⁶

For example, Russian foreign policy and Iran’s “revisionist” ambitions of seeking regional leadership, and procuring nuclear weapons, can, therefore, be attributed to the fundamental feeling of insecurity that can only be conferred by the attainment of material goods that would force other states to recognize their power.²⁹⁷ Rising states are at a further disadvantage because there may be notable cultural disparities between the rising state and the established powers. One need only consider rising states’ relative material deficiencies, as compared to established powers, and they’re distinct historical and cultural contexts. Zarakol, for example, argues that having lost their empires, elites of vanquished non-Western powers, have sought status-enhancing policies by aggressively adapting to the standard of civilisation. To this end, countries like Japan, Russia, and Turkey have internalized grand strategies geared towards domestic revisionism, manifesting as aggressive modernization, a rejection of stigmatizing labels, and consequently a tendency to be selective about upholding international norms.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ See Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition," *International Theory*, Vol 3, No.1 (February, 2011), pp. 105-142, especially p. 127; Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy', *International Security*, 34 (Spring 2010), pp. 63–95.

²⁹⁶ See Jennifer Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and The Security Dilemma,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2006), pp. 341–370.

²⁹⁷ Maysam Behraves, “State Revisionism and Ontological (In)security in International Politics: The Complicated Case of Iran and Its Nuclear Behavior,” *Journal of International Relations Development*, Volume 21, No. 4, (September, 2018), pp 836–857.

²⁹⁸ See Zarakol, *After Defeat*.

Similarly, Stephen Ward eloquently argues that rising states are likely to adopt radical forms of revisionism if their moderate status ambitions are not accorded. Rising powers naturally covet the status quo since conformity is not only economically beneficial but also helps rising states to socialize into international society and earn a rank among their peers. Nevertheless, they may seek to redress territorial, and other material-based, grievances. These grievances are comparatively minor since it is possible to accommodate them. The problems become more acute when rising powers attempt to translate material power into social influence of the system.²⁹⁹ Normally, and as also espoused by this research, states tend to benefit from conformity since acquiesce to international rules and norms is beneficial. Since challenging these rules would provoke a more dangerous response from status-quo powers, rising states would logically avoid such antagonisms.³⁰⁰ Whenever status become immobile, that is when elites adopt a pessimistic attitude that the status-quo order cannot accommodate them, elites are less likely to support that order.³⁰¹ As these attitudes become ingrained within a society, political actors are likely to benefit from discourses that challenge the normative order of international politics, all of which are likely to galvanize radical revisionist policies.

Finally, we can conceive of revisionism as originating from the anxiety of dominant power. In what is, in essence, a sophisticated rendering of the Thucydides Trap, asserts that

²⁹⁹ See Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*, p. 35. See, also, Esmaeil Mazloomi, Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh, and Mohd Aminul Karim, "From Status Inconsistency to Revisionism: Russian Foreign Policy After the Color Revolutions," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* (2018), pp. 1-18.

³⁰⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁰¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.

states aspire towards achieving the top rankings in military and economic capabilities, as well as prestige (defined in the Gilpinian sense). Once at the top, the preeminent power obtains psychological satisfaction from preserving its spot.³⁰² As with the rest of the PTT literature, the argument goes that a dominant power's perceived decline will militate action so that it can stave off an impending loss of rank. In other words, the type of order-challenging behavior predicted by the present research could be explained away by the dominant state's status anxiety. While the inclusion of psychological factors is clearly a sensible improvement to the PTT argument, it is nevertheless of limited utility for the present inquiry. In Onega's study, the dominant state will accept its decline or will seek to resuscitate its prestige via war; the crucial factor depends on whether or not the dominant power perceives a rising state as being dominant in necessary categories. Britain, for example, acquiesced to America's rise and declined to view it as a rival because it saw, based on trade-metrics, that Germany was a bigger threat to its status.³⁰³ Conversely, France initiated multiple wars against Britain in the late 18th century as Britain was the clear challenger to its declining preponderance.³⁰⁴ The question then is, how does the dominant power in the present conjuncture act towards other states? By any metric of military and economic power, the U.S. is peerless; save for China's growing GDP. Given the incommensurability of the cases with modern geopolitics (nuclear weapons, low-fungibility of force, economic interdependence), it is unsurprising that we have not yet

³⁰² See Onega, "Between Dominance," p. 130-132.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

witnessed anything akin to a preemptive war. It is also inconceivable that U.S.' wars in the periphery or flaunting of (its) international order cannot be ascribed to status anxiety.

Status-based approaches suffer from other issues too. Status fails to deliver a substantial improvement over traditional status-quo and revisionist arguments, or improve upon the classical PTT arguments in any meaningful way. Status is often treated as yet another of the myriad of dynamics that produces dissatisfaction and, concomitantly, can militate a state against international order. States may be acting to the detriment of international order because they are dissatisfied by their relative rank and therefore may be seeking to enhance their status by way of revisionist and expansionist foreign policies. How would status explain the tendency of states with higher status to abrogate international law and abnegate the principles of a normative order that places them at the top of a hierarchy? For the purposes of this research, such a claim would be eminently sensible. Through conformity and upholding of the international order, and given enough material capabilities, a state could, over time, achieve a higher rank without having to expend unnecessary resources.³⁰⁵ Dissatisfaction with one's status, moreover, may drive behavior but conflict, especially aggressive war against the hegemon, is unlikely to confer a higher status unless the bid for hegemony is successful and awes other potential contenders. It is, therefore, somewhat of a contradiction to say that status is important because it helps states accumulate material power when in fact significant material power needs to be spent to enhance one's status. Since states have no way of controlling how they are perceived by their peers, the quest for status would seem to be self-defeating.

³⁰⁵ Ward, for example, makes this point. See *Idem.*, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*, p. 16.

Taken together the material and psychological arguments point to the need to more-effectively incorporate domestic variables since status arguments implicitly rely upon them.³⁰⁶ Far more importantly, and not sufficiently elaborated, is the role of the decision-makers.³⁰⁷ Once decision-makers and domestic politics become involved, however, the task of connecting system-level variables to unit-level ones become infinitely more complex, and it is difficult to assign any analytical preeminence to status concerns *per se* due to the often-inscrutable motives of decision-makers and the constituents of political coalitions. It is conceivable *ceteris paribus* that decision-makers would covet status-enhancing foreign policies because they seek to enhance their own power and prestige, but what would happen if the two dynamics were to clash?

Consider this dilemma: Setting rules, undertaking responsibilities for global governance, and ordering regularities in international politics are all hallmarks of states ranking at the top of the status hierarchy. Maintaining order would necessitate enforcement of existing rules. Yet, bearing the costs of doing so would contradict the interests and beliefs of decision-makers or the preferences of domestic political actors. The former may have no intrinsic commitment to international order, while the latter may prefer to endorse a government prioritizing short-term policies that deliver domestic dividends over principled commitment to order.³⁰⁸ Status matters for decision-making elites, but does it

³⁰⁶ This is something Renshon, for example, deliberately eschews so as to highlight the psychological and biological imperatives. See Renshon, *Fighting for Status*, p. 21.

³⁰⁷ Ward is perhaps the only exception as he argues that the inability of states to overcome the status malus leads to nationalism. Specifically, the problem of “immobility” acquires causal significance at the unit-level since “immobility” creates a type of domestic political movement that empowers expansionists at the expense of those that caution restraint. This study is discussed below as it is a “second-image reversed” explanation.

³⁰⁸ From U.S.’ retrenchment under the Trump administration to Erdogan’s populism on Arab Street, there are numerous contemporary examples of such tradeoffs. See, for instance, Doug Stokes, “Trump, American

matter more than, for example, silencing dangerous domestic dissidents, and thereby violating norms that diminish the social standing of their state? There is thus a fine line between that which benefits the state, and its custodians. Unfortunately, status research does not yet seem to address this nuance sufficiently (nor do other pluralist approaches as summarized below in table 2. 2). Such a distinction would be unnecessary outside of the Westphalian context, in which the state and the personage of the sovereign were conflated, but this does not seem to be the case even in the age of populism. We would, therefore, have to ascribe to status at best a supplementary role in explaining states' disposition towards international society unless we also expand on relevant domestic parameters. The review avails itself of this opportune juncture to crossover into unit-level variables.

Table 2. 2. Summary of Pluralist Approaches

School	Institutionalism	Ideas and Identity	English School	Status
<i>Major "Variable"</i>	Institutions (Regimes, Norms)	Identity; Ideas; Culture	International society; institutions as historical practices; socialization	Positionality within status community
<i>Sources of Revisionism</i>	Nature of Liberal Values, Non-Liberal Regimes	Type of socialization; ideas about order; legitimization strategy	Standard of Civilisation; Revolution; Peripheral Actors	Desire for Status (expectation); or avoiding status loss (anxiety); ontological insecurity
<i>Sources of Status Quo</i>	Effective functioning of Institutions; Liberal Hegemony; Liberal Regimes	Type of socialization; ideas about order; legitimization strategy	<i>Raison de système</i> is beneficial, all polities aspire to statehood and membership to IS	Desire for Status; or avoiding loss of status
<i>Sources of Reformism (if applicable)</i>	N/A	Type of socialization; ideas about order; legitimization strategy	Nature of dissatisfaction is often representational	Esteem; Status-Enhancement
<i>Explains Cases</i>	Partially	Partially	Mostly	Mostly
<i>Problems with approach</i>	Binary approach; SQ bias	Binary approach; Offense bias	No unit-level theorizing, no foreign policy approaches or theories of state behavior; poor methodology	Anthropomorphizing state, overdetermination of status as opposed to other values

Hegemony and the Future of the Liberal International Order," *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2018), pp. 133–150, especially p. 135.

2.3. INNENPOLITIK

While some IR theories consider states to be undifferentiated, others argue that understanding foreign policy outcomes, as opposed to international political outcomes, sometimes requires an examination of unit-level variables. To this end, the following domestic sources of revisionism and status-quo orientations in the form of Domestic Structure, Regime Type and Processes, and Coalition Politics.

2. 3. 1. Domestic Structure

State capacity refers to the administrative and institutional ability of the state to perform governmental functions. The capacity to enact and implement policy goals would in part explain revisionist policies simply because revisionist and expansionist strategies tend to demand a greater investment of resources.³⁰⁹ There are many viable indices of state power, ranging from extractive capacities such as taxation to infrastructural-power projection as measured by road and railway densities, as well as other metrics such as the implementation and maintenance of public schools and other welfare functions.³¹⁰ Perhaps one of the most significant determinants of the structure of domestic power is the relationship between the state and its society. Since decision-makers must contend with domestic issues, their efficacy depends on the relative-acquiesce of their supporters. An interesting dilemma

³⁰⁹ By this definition, the ability of the state to insulate itself from various societal actors could, in part, help to exclude groups that wish for a revisionist agenda. This logic, however, falls under the domain of internal political processes, which are explored below.

³¹⁰ For various IR studies on, and approach to, state capacity and geopolitics see: Michael Desch, "War and Strong States, Peace and Weak States?" *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1996), pp. 237–68; Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000); Marcus J. Kurtz, *Latin American State Building in Comparative Perspective: Social Foundations of Institutional Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For an overview, see Lars Bo Kaspersen and Jeppe Strandsbjerg (eds.), *Does War Make States? Investigations of Charles Tilly's Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

emerges when one considers the impact of state capacity on the disposition of states to overturn international order. Along a continuum of most and least capable states, the least “aggressive” states tend to fall at the poles.³¹¹ This finding is consistent with other *Innenpolitik* approaches that examine the domestic-foreign policy nexus via scapegoating, diversionary war, and other policies aimed at balancing domestic threats.³¹² In general, decision-makers in strong states are less dependent on deceptive and other exclusionary tactics, while their counterparts in weaker states may favor them.

Benjamin Miller, for example, highlights how a state’s likelihood of upholding international order is contingent upon its state-to-nation congruence. That is the extent to which a state’s boundaries reflect the ethnic/nationalist affiliations of society orders its relationship to the state.³¹³ An asymmetric state-to-nation ratio, for example, is more likely to produce revisionist states, particularly if a nation is institutionally capable but possesses a heterogeneous population or borders countries with considerable numbers of fellow nationals. Dissatisfaction and propensity for external war are greater because politicians in fragmented societies deem it useful to engage in externalizing domestic problems via scapegoating tactics and invoking diversionary war.³¹⁴ Conversely, institutionally capable

³¹¹ See Benjamin Miller, “Between the Revisionist and the Frontier State: Regional Variations in State-War Propensity,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2009), pp. 85-119, esp. p. 87.

³¹² For an overview on the domestic security dilemma and its impact on foreign policy preferences see the classical works by Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73,” *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer, 1991), pp. 369-395; Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment,” *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January, 1991), pp. 233-256.

³¹³ Miller, “Between the Revisionist and the Frontier State,” p. 95.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

states with social cohesion tend not to suffer from these domestic dysfunctions and are thus inclined towards status-quo policies.

The inclusion of societal-level dynamics with state capacity helps to expand on Structural Realist arguments. Unfortunately, the “revisionist motive” is too mechanical and reduced only to nationalism-based expansionism motives or attempts by elites to secure their regimes. Nationalism is an important force, but it is important also to remember that national congruity, as an expression of in-groups versus out-groups, can be defined along bases other than ethnicity. As prominent Constructivist works demonstrate collective identities, loosely defined as bundles of beliefs about self in relation to others, for example, can shape the preferences of decision-makers and the relationship between the state and society.³¹⁵ Even if one were to concede the Societies with an “agreeable” state-to-nation ratio are more than capable, and willing, to challenging international order, not just for territorial or parochial reasons, but also normatively as well, which Miller does not address.

2. 3. 2 Regime Types and Regime Processes

Regime types are also associated with states’ propensity for revisionism. According to Jack Levy, the idea that democracies do not fight other democracies is the closest thing we have to an “empirical law in International Relations,”³¹⁶ The so-called Inter-Democratic-Peace-Hypothesis (or IDPH, for short) is premised on a reading of Kant’s 1797 pamphlet on the hypothesized pacifying effects of republicanism.³¹⁷ Democratic regimes purportedly

³¹⁵ Lyall, “Paths of Ruin,” pp. 65-66.

³¹⁶ Jack S. Levy, “Domestic Politics in War,” in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (eds.), *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 88.

³¹⁷ While Kant’s political works exude irony, perhaps one of the most notable ones in this case was that Perpetual Peace was published in the throes of the French Revolution.

increase a rational and democratic society's scrutiny over foreign policy, while shared liberal-common values reduce the likelihood of war.³¹⁸ This is not to suggest that democratic nations are more peaceful *per se*, but simply less likely to attack other democracies. Rather, liberal states tend to view each other as being more legitimate than other types of regimes.³¹⁹ Furthermore, widespread political participation engenders open debate, and thus the pluralism afforded by liberal democracy, as opposed to a more insulated regime actually allows states to communicate their intentions better.³²⁰ Finally, in conjunction with liberal economies and international institutions (as discussed above), liberal democratic regimes form the Kantian Triad: a triffecta of mutually reinforcing liberal institutions.³²¹

While these accounts showcase that democracies are less likely to be revisionist states in general, and especially towards their kind, in practice this has not prevented democracies from initiating wars against less-powerful and less-threatening states in the

³¹⁸ The gist of the argument is that democracy brings transparency to public debate and national bureaucracies, thereby engendering a better signaling of peaceful intent. See Bruce Russett and John R. O'Neal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001). Cf. Sebastian Rosato, "On Democratic Peace," in Christopher J. Coyne and Rachel L. Mathers (eds.), *Handbook on the Political Economy of War* (Cheltenham: Elgar, 2011), pp. 281-314; and Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Autumn 1994), pp. 5-49.

³¹⁹ See John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall, 1994), pp. 87-125.

³²⁰ This actually helps to mitigate the security dilemma. See Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing,"; Douglas Lemke and William Reed, "Regime Types And Status Quo Evaluations: Power Transition Theory and the Democratic Peace," *International Interactions*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (May 1996), pp. 143-164.; Arie M. Kacowicz, "Explaining Zones of Peace: Democracies as Satisfied Powers?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Winter 2018), pp. 227-24.

³²¹ See Russett and O'Neal, *Triangulating Peace*.

global periphery.³²² Since liberal rules and norms pervade the present international order, one must inevitably question why a liberal state would undermine aspects of international order. Liberalism-induced pacifism ironically extends only to other liberal states, which also calls into question the extent to which a liberal and rules-based order can accommodate pluralism. Jeffrey Meiser has most recently argued that this logic obtains by subjecting it to a litmus test: one in which rising great power exercises considerable restraint against much weaker rivals. Democracy and liberal values can promote restraint as evidenced by American grand strategy in the early 20th century, which exhibited remarkable restraint due to the pacifying effects of a liberal domestic-political structure.³²³ Meiser cites not only the liberal constitutional framework of the U.S. but also what he mistakenly calls “strategic culture.”³²⁴ Useful as this study is, it is too specialized an explanation and does not offer much in the way of advancing the liberal argument since the contemporary U.S., which is more liberal than in the past, has been willing to undermine international order. Moreover, why then is an authoritarian China, albeit economically liberal, similarly restrained as the U.S. was during its rise? This brings us to the flip-side of the argument: that authoritarian and illiberal regimes are more likely to produce aggressive foreign policies. Traditionally, the literature considers political authoritarianism to be more conducive to revisionist behavior because foreign policy can change according to the whims of powerful and

³²² Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, “Correspondence: Fair Fights or Pointless Wars.” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2003/04), p. 181.

³²³ Which he mistakenly conceptualizes as “strategic culture.” See Jeffrey Meiser, *Power and Restraint: The Rise of the United States, 1898-1941* (Georgetown University Press, 2015), pp. 1-2, 17-20.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 20.

insulated leaders, independent of the scrutiny of a rational public. Authoritarian systems, including nominal (but illiberal) democracies, are much more likely to externalize domestic problems by invoking external threats.³²⁵ The diversionary theory of war, for example, exemplifies such domestic mechanism as there are abundant examples of authoritarian regimes going to war, especially in times of domestic crises.³²⁶ While there are merits to authoritarian regimes as being conducive to revisionism, there is a wealth of literature that suggests otherwise. Authoritarian states often suffer from internal dysfunctions that because internal coercion become necessary to buttress incumbent governments. Consequently, authoritarian regimes will seek to redress relative internal (in)security rather than dissatisfaction towards distributional grievances at the system-level. A notable quality of third-world regimes is their proclivity for cooperating with external powers so as to earn leverage against domestic threats.³²⁷ Military regimes, in particular, suffer the most from this dysfunction as regime insecurity begets an internally-oriented military apparatus that, far from projecting power externally and seeking to challenge international order, is likely to be capable only of maintaining domestic order.³²⁸ While this would not preclude the possibility revisionism by military regimes, it certainly reduces their chances of credibly

³²⁵ See Brian Lai and Dan Slater, "Institutions of the Offensive: Domestic Sources of Dispute Initiation in Authoritarian Regimes, 1950-1992," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2006), pp. 113-126; Jessica L. Weeks, "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, (2012), pp. 326-347.

³²⁶ See, e.g., Amy Oakes, "Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands," *Security Studies*, Volume 15, No. 3 (2006), pp. 431-461.

³²⁷ See David, "Explaining Third World Alignment."

³²⁸ See Stanislav Andreski, "One the Peaceful Disposition of Military Dictatorships," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (December 1980), pp. 3-10.

rectifying whatever dissatisfaction they may have with international order. Where the quest for regime security trumps other considerations, it comes as no surprise that under certain conditions, military and authoritarian regimes can work together to produce regional peace.³²⁹ There is, in other words, no *a priori* reason to assume that military regimes are less sociable internationally and incapable of managing regional order given the historical coincidence of international orders, and cooperation, in spite of widespread autocracy. Liberal values and domestic structures do not inevitably produce status-quo orientations (a case can be made that they are capable of producing revisionist behavior) and, likewise, authoritarianism does not engender dissatisfaction with international order. Many of the pillars of the U.S.-led liberal world order, its allies outside of Europe, are decidedly authoritarian but compliant, overall, with U.S. hegemony and the bare-minimum requirements of co-existence within the framework of international society.

Changes to regimes also engender significant foreign policy changes. Studying processes, such as how closed systems transition to democracy reveals that democratization can unleash the destructive energies of societies leading, at least in the short-term, to more aggressive and expansionist foreign policies and behaviors that are associated with revisionist states.³³⁰ This is an important finding because fundamental changes in the ruling elite, be it through democratization, or through revolution brings to power a set of foreign policy elites that have different political incentives and, consequently, different levels of

³²⁹ Félix E. Martín, *The Militarist Peace in South America: Conditions for War and Peace* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), esp. pp. 150, 160-164.

³³⁰ See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 320; Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 5-34.

satisfaction with international order. For example, China's peaceful disposition could disappear with the introduction of democratization; the process of becoming a democracy is generally more conducive to belligerent behavior.³³¹ Similarly, revolutions and revolutionary actors constitute significant forces that can replace elites, empower new actors and possibly undermine the entire established property rights in an international system.³³² Nevertheless, these types of dramatic transformations are comparatively rare in international politics. Transformative shifts need not necessarily come about unless new elites, or newly empowered coalitions, find it expedient to challenge international order. Whatever the regime type and whatever the nature of the decision-makers, therefore, the crucial element remains: the need to understand elites, their decision-making environment, and priorities.

2. 3. 3. Coalitions

Political coalitions, the play of power between interest groups, typify *Innenpolitik* approaches thereby challenging conventional structural theories. Accordingly, there are two broad perspectives in the literature on the operation of these domestic forces.³³³ The

³³¹ Jack L. Snyder and Edward Mansfield, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), pp. 7-8; Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and National Conflict* (New York, NY: W. W. & Norton, 2000); and Fiona Adamson, "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 277-303.

³³² Stephen Walt, *Revolution and War* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*; Anthony F. Lang Jr., *Punishment, Justice, and International Relations: Ethics in the Post-Cold War System* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008); Barak Mendelsohn, "Sovereignty Under Attack: The International Society Meets the Al-Qaeda Network," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31 (2005), pp. 45-68; Cantir, "The Allied Punishment and Attempted Socialization of the Bolsheviks."

³³³ See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pp. 14-17; Kevin Narizny, "Both Guns and Better, or Neither: Class Interests in the Political Economy of Rearmament," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (2003), pp. 203-220, esp. cit. 2.

first assumes that decision-makers are arbiters of the national interest because they seek not only to maximize the security of the state but also their grip on power. As in the case of the Diversionary Theory of War, elites pursue policies that aim to unify society or break their domestic opposition.³³⁴ The other perspective conceptualizes political actors as “interest groups” articulating their own parochial interests at the expense of the broader interests of the state. These parochial interests manifest as “imperialism,” either in terms of organizational and bureaucratic interests of state agencies or as a specialized class and economic interests. In the former way, decision-makers and various government bureaucracies push for policies that expand their own power and prestige.³³⁵ In the second sense, powerful political and economic elites articulate expansionistic foreign policies because of their involvement in specific economic sectors. For instance, arms manufacturers may favor pro-war and interventionist foreign policies, as may exporters that rely on access to external markets. Domestically-oriented groups may, in contrast, prefer to dampen such expansionist ambitions, especially in dire times.

Suffice it to say, *Innenpolitik* is no stranger to the revisionism and status-quo debate, but concerns over international society, order, and norms operate to the extent that they intersect the political-economic interests of the political coalitions. Jack Snyder, for

³³⁴ Trubowitz, *Partisan Ambition*, p. 27.

³³⁵ These ideas were important clarifications on the rational actor which asserted the notion of an exogenous and ideal national interest. There can be no national interest apart from what is conceived by the political power play within the government. See the classical debate Graham Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (1969), pp. 689-713 Cf. Lawrence Freedman, “Logic, Politics, and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Model,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (1976), pp. 434-449 Cf. Stephen Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 7 (1972), pp. 159-179. The present study identifies with these observations and argues, also, the relevance of international society and order, as intellectual and discursive elements in the formation of national interests.

example, is interested in the origins of expansionist grand strategies and why great power states have chosen self-defeating foreign policies.³³⁶ Accordingly, interest groups propagate imperial myths about the benefits of expansionism because they stand to make economic gains. As different interest groups come into contact, they often engage in log-rolling (exchanging favors) which not only helps to coalesce powerful political coalitions but also inculcates strategic myths. Consequently, great power states, particularly those with cartelized political systems, are more likely to pursue expansionist foreign policy projects and become entrapped by the rhetoric of imperial myths.³³⁷ Wilhelmine and, later, Nazi Germany, as well as Japan in the 1930-40s displayed over expansionist foreign policies because their cartelized political structures led to the formation of powerful pro-expansionist coalitions. Meanwhile, the U.K. and U.S. were less susceptible to this affliction in part thanks to their pluralistic political structures and liberal economies, all of which prevented the triumph of expansionistic myths and the formation of political cartels.

Kevin Narizny, on the other hand, argues that a coalition of sectoral interest groups constitutes the government. At any given time, foreign policy is most likely to reflect the economic interests of the most influential sector, which affects a state's level of assertiveness, geographic locus, and willingness to use force. States can choose between isolationist, internationalist, Realpolitik/Interventionist, and Supremacist/Imperialist,

³³⁶ See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, esp. Chp. 1. Snyder identifies the types of myths that elites use to justify expansionism: 1) Domino Theory, which asserts that gains, or losses, in peripheral regions could have cumulative desirable, or undesirable, consequences; 2) Offensive Advantage, meaning that striking first could be advantageous; and 3) Paper Tigers and Bandwagons, or the myth that the opposition is weak and would likely capitulate if pressed.

grand strategies depending on which coalition prevails and, consequently, which strategic beliefs unite a partisan coalition.³³⁸ For example, in times of economic depression, the need for austerity may dampen the appeal of imperialist and interventionist policies and *vice versa*. On this basis, Narizny concludes that while the rising U.S. exercised restraint at a time when it could have afforded to be even more expansionistic, a declining U.K. pursued an imperialist foreign policy on the precipice of World War I. More recently, Peter Trubowitz has sought to explain American grand strategy in terms of “geopolitical slack” and the preferences of the incumbent parties over “guns” or “butter.”³³⁹ These determine the scope and level of commitment of a state’s grand strategy. As also argued in the present study, the permissiveness of the strategic environment determines the extent to which decision-makers can pursue their goals. For Trubowitz, the coincidence of a secure international environment and a pro-militarist partisan bloc will pursue expansionistic policies, while a dearth of security and prioritization of domestic spending will more likely result in status-quo or “underachieving” grand strategies.³⁴⁰

The domestic political approach provides solid foundations for examining grand strategy more generally, as well as status-quo versus revisionist tendencies more specifically. Superlative as these analyses are, the economic and class-based foci of this research program precludes any satisfactory consideration of important non-material factors (see Table 2. 3. for a summary). Granted, a confluence of international norms and

³³⁸ Narizny, *Political Economy*, pp. 14-17.

³³⁹ The difference, however, is that Trubowitz defines “slack” only in terms of security, while the present study considers domestic political and international normative constraints on decision-makers.

³⁴⁰ See Trubowitz, *Partisan Ambition*, pp. 10-13, 15, 23, 31.

domestic pressures may influence political coalitions, but these are underexplored.³⁴¹ All of these studies, particularly Snyder’s excellent opus emphasize a similar need to thoroughly examine the ideas that decision-makers employ in their quest to reinforce their power since ideas shape preferences. Ideational and discursive elements are significant because they serve as the basis with which leaders and partisan coalitions garner support, undermine their opposition, influence other states, and signal to the international community.

Table 2. 3. Summary of Innenpolitik Approaches

INNENPOLITIK	POWER STRUCTURE	REGIME TYPE	COALITIONAL POLITICS
<i>Major "Variable"</i>	State-capacity; Nation-state balance	Regime type; regime process	Domestic political/economic coalitions; elite strategies
<i>Sources of Revisionism</i>	Elite strategies; Insecurity; <i>Revanchism</i>	Autocracies, regime changes (revolution or democratization)	"Guns" over "Butter"; expansionist myths; imperial coalitions
<i>Sources of Status Quo</i>	Elite strategies	Stable, liberal democracy	"Butter" over "Guns"
<i>Sources of Reformism (if applicable)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Explains Cases</i>	Partially	No	Partially
<i>Problems with approach</i>	REV-SQ Binary approach; high capacity states also undermine order	REV-SQ Binary	Elite preferences are irreducible to guns and butter; frameworks often too U.S.-centric; no notion of international social forces

2. 4. COGNITIVE EXPLANATIONS

Much of the subject material of IR concerns the role of individual decision-makers and the consequences of their policies. Unsurprisingly, leaders like Napoleon and Hitler cannot be

³⁴¹ Government bureaucracies like Foreign Ministries, academics, and other epistemic communities, for example, may promote international solidarity and order-conforming behavior. Yet, from the order-based typology, it is difficult to glean any intrinsic reasons to uphold international order and to what extent socialization plays a role in shaping elite preferences. See Narizny, *Political Economy*, p. 26.

divorced from our broader discussion of international order since international order is the product of choices enacted by powerful decision-makers at pivotal moments in history. Studying individual psychology and the impact of specific leaders on major foreign policy decisions is an attractive option and an excellent way to contextualize broader theoretical inquiries.³⁴² Our final consideration, therefore, is the role of cognition at the decision-making level. The discipline has dealt with individual decision-makers and their aggregations in a multitude of ways. Various cognitive approaches to foreign policy originate from the need to specify and enrich standard decision-making models based on rationality and economic behavior.³⁴³ In fact, the notion of the state as a unitary and rational monolith is the starting point for some of the earliest and most prominent theories of decision-making. Accordingly, decision-makers are utility-maximizers that choose the most optimum policies based on available information. This process is not straightforward since a variety of cognitive and perceptual biases impinge on the process.

Two prominent cognitive biases are especially helpful in understanding revisionism and status-quo behavior, which are subsumed under the header of Prospect Theory.³⁴⁴ Prospect theory improves on the classical idea of expected utility, arguing that rational actors have different propensities for risk-taking based on whether decisions are being taken to maximize gains or minimize losses. Humans have a compulsion to over-value

³⁴² See, for instance, Ariel L. Roth, *Leadership in International Relations: The Balance of Power and the Origins of World War II* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

³⁴³ Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), especially Chp. 1.

³⁴⁴ Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (1979), pp. 263-291.

what they currently possess.³⁴⁵ Two propositions emerge. Rational decision-makers are more likely to be risk-averse with respect to gains and risk-acceptant regarding losses.³⁴⁶ The status-quo bias, therefore, is relevant decision-making dynamic.³⁴⁷ This also explains why established great powers might be more willing to gamble and engage in risky and order-conforming policies, especially if they have already invested (i.e., sunk-costs) in the course of action. Prominent PPT and Neoclassical Realist studies have examined the consequences of these biases as they relate to hegemonic transitions as well as risky great power interventions in the periphery. Taliaferro's balance-of-risk theory is *apropos* because it combines Prospect Theory and a Neoclassical Realist framework to elucidate how leaders' fears over perceived losses in relative power and prestige impel great-power states to intervene in peripheral regions, persist in failing strategies, and thereby accepting further risks to compensate for sunk costs.³⁴⁸

Prospect Theory, potentially, tells us that a hegemon is likely to choose risky strategies as compared to rising "challenger." The falling dominos analogy has animated U.S. foreign policy during and after the Cold War as it has undertaken costly military

³⁴⁵ Jack S. Levy, "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, *Special Issue: Prospect Theory and Political Psychology* (June, 1992), pp. 283-310, esp. p. 90.

³⁴⁶ As experiments show that when people face the option of either making modest gains with levels of certitude versus making a massive profit at a lower probability, most will prefer the former. In contrast, individuals are more risk-acceptant if they are attempting to stave-off losses. For example, between losing a small sum of money with high certitude versus losing a larger sum with a smaller probability, an individual will be more inclined towards the latter.

³⁴⁷ See, William Samuelson and Richard Zeckhauser, "Status Quo Bias in Decision Making," *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, Vol. 1 (1988), pp. 7-59; Levy, "Prospect Theory"; Kahneman and Tversky, "Prospect Theory."

³⁴⁸ Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks*, pp. 40-53.

interventions with expanding sunk-costs. The Vietnam and Gulf (II) Wars are quite telling. America's risk-acceptant behavior, for instance, may simply be a form of revising the international order with increasingly costly interventions and signaling to China so as to preserve primacy. Chinese restraint could be associated with the reverse logic. Pursuing expansionist foreign policies and seeking to establish greater influence may prove to be supremely beneficial, but also carries the risk of a global backlash that could hurt its rise.

Here is the crux of the matter: Actors' utility calculations and ranking of policy choices depend on heuristics such as framing and cognitive misers. By combining rational and cognitive approaches Poliheuristic Theory, for instance, argues that when confronted with a multitude of policy options, decision-makers will first eliminate politically unacceptable options before evaluating the remaining options.³⁴⁹ Even if a course of action could be advantageous for the state, the fact that it is not politically expedient would impel decision-makers to choose an otherwise suboptimal policy. This process is entirely context-dependent, save for the fact that decision-makers focus on domestic expediency.³⁵⁰ We can judge that if expected losses resonate more with decision-makers, then a domestically-oriented and insecure FPE will elect to follow riskier and order-challenging strategies.³⁵¹

Where does this leave our analysis? A brief survey of prominent cognitive approaches corroborates earlier concerns: The need to understand decision-makers and

³⁴⁹ See Alexander Mintz, "How do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (February, 2004), pp. 3-13.

³⁵⁰ See, e.g., Kai Oppermann, "Delineating the Scope Conditions for Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 25 (2014), pp. 23-41.

³⁵¹ This somewhat collaborates Diversionary War theories but can also explain rising power restraint.

their narratives, and thereby inferring their preferences with respect to the national interest. We can infer that decision-makers are more likely to maintain an existing course unless they are confronted with a stimulus that requires them to act. If a particular course of action will not provide tremendous gains either for the state or the decision-makers themselves, there is no reason to assume that they would change course in this instance either. Confronted with the potential of making major gains or suffering losses, the former will not elicit as dramatic a reaction. The latter scenario will very likely induce a risk-acceptant attitude that may encourage more ambitious grand strategies. The key is to determine which domain decision-makers harbor greater anxiety and what strategies they have chosen to address it. That is, elites in some states may feel greater domestic insecurity rather than fret over minor changes in the international system, focusing instead on domestic strategies. It is also possible that where domestic factors present a greater challenge to a state, the more likely it is that elites will pursue riskier strategies, to the extent of their capabilities allow it, to enhance their power and prestige enough to pacify perceived domestic rivals.

By recasting cognitive theories with the language of international order and society, something which is notably absent in the literature, conforming to the existing international order and working to preserve it appears as the “default” *modus operandi* for most states. Recalling that order-reforming means that a state changes international arrangements, a state would deign to spend greater resources to “reform” international order under two conditions. If a state’s elites expect to make even greater gains than before, or, secondly, if reforming confers legitimacy and prestige, domestically and internationally, that may assuage elite anxieties about losing power in the face of domestic challenges. In this respect, changing aspects of an international order while upholding the overall logic of its

rules is a bold signal to other states of one's power, benign intent, and potential for future cooperation.

Bearing all of this in mind, order-challenging would manifest itself in a situation where elites' insecurity cannot be resolved through reforming strategies since respecting international society's norms are unlikely to resolve their insecurity. Facing an expected fatal challenge to their domestic power and legitimacy, and to the extent that their power allows, elites may choose risky, costly, policies to stabilize their power. The crucial matter here is thus knowing why states prefer reinforcing or changing international order versus challenging it.

Grand strategy is a controversial research program because it has been mobilized towards explaining too many things on some occasions, or underexploited on others.³⁵² The former approach, comprised primarily of rich historically-informed research that illuminates the military aspects of strategy in combination with many other variables.³⁵³ Scholars working from an explicit social science perspective, in the meantime, are more concerned with developing and testing theories of long-term and broad-scope state behavior with generalizable findings.³⁵⁴ Respectively, these approaches endeavor to describe or explain state behavior. Another group of research also provides an additional prescriptive element.³⁵⁵ There is no consensus on what constitutes grand strategy since its meanings

³⁵² See, Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich, and James Lacey, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 9; See, also, Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski, and Simon Reich, "Is Grand Strategy a Research Program? A Review Essay," *Security Studies* (2018), esp., p. 17.

³⁵³ For some important examples, see Paul Kennedy (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); William C. Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for and Effective American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 7-19. Notable examples of historical type research include Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein Ed., *The Making of Grand Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich, and James Lacey, (*The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Phillip II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

³⁵⁴ Some notable examples include Luttwak, *Strategy*; Richard C. Rosecrance and Arthur Stein Eds., *Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Alastair I. Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Taliaferro, Lobell (eds.), *The Challenge of Grand Strategy*; Stephen E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (eds.), *Neoclassical Realism*; Narizny, *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*; Layne, *Peace of Illusions*; Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy"; Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*.

³⁵⁵ See, e.g., For example, most studies of U.S. foreign policy concern the extent of U.S.' overseas commitments. Brooks and Wohlforth, *America Abroad* Mearsheimer Cf. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Powers* Cf. Layne, *Peace of Illusions*; Art, *A Grand Strategy for*; Posen, *Restraint*.

vary across the literature. The literature is confused, overall, about what is the most appropriate conceptualization of grand strategy and has suggested, among other things, that grand strategy is tantamount to a plan, ideational framework, process, or totality of policy output.³⁵⁶ This dissertation also calls into question the alleged temporal and spatial uniqueness of grand strategy, arguing that grand strategy can be viewed along a broad range of actions and behaviors and may change over time. Grand strategy affords the conceptualization of the long-term structure that defines a state's overall tendencies in statecraft. It, moreover, reflects the purposeful designs of decision-makers. Yet, it is possible also to examine a broader set of output in statecraft as part of a brief episode or cycle in a broader continuum. That is, grand-strategic orientations capture a broader set of policy concerns and functions in a more temporary way since short-term fluctuations in the conjuncture may encourage top decision-makers to respond to both domestic and international developments.³⁵⁷ Finally, few scholars have grappled with the interdependent nature of grand strategy. Interdependent, in this sense, refers to the role of recognized mutual interests among top decision-makers to pursue restraint and cooperation with respect to international order.

Grand strategy, in general, is a long-term process and a state's capabilities, place in the international structure, and a host of other elements may influence this. Two important

³⁵⁶ See Nina Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of 'Grand Strategy'," *Security Studies* Vol. 27, No. 1 (2017), pp. 27–57; Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 4.

³⁵⁷ By "orientation" this dissertation underscores not only the temporal dimension of grand strategy but also its (comprehensive) scope, which is discussed extensively below. Stephen Ward, who also examines "orientations," does not provide a sufficient conceptual clarification of the concept. See Stephen M. Ward, "Status Immobility and Systemic Revisionism in Rising Great Powers," Ph.D. Dissertation (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, May 29, 2012).

dimensions receive treatment here: the costliness of individual strategies in terms of how ambitious they are and how much resources a state would need to commit, and the foreign policy executives' orientation. Are FPEs more inwardly-oriented and therefore interested in maximizing a national interest masking parochial interests? Or do they recognize that sometimes one's best interest is served by upholding the broader interests of the international community? Simply, do FPEs recognize the importance of solving international problems in cooperation with others? Perhaps we can understand this distinction as a juxtapositioning of a notion of "exceptionalism" versus "internationalism," but the major thrust of the argument is emphasizing the importance of international order as compared to more parochial domestic interests and sensitivity towards avoiding losses for the principles of international order. This vital notion, so embedded in the international society perspective has so far eluded examination; a point that receives scrutiny here through an examination of foreign policy elites and narratives about international order.³⁵⁸

Having delineated the IR literature on revisionism, status quo, and reformism in world politics, we can now revisit the main argument of this dissertation in full. On the basis of the theoretical lacunae, the dissertation advances six sets of assumptions on which to found a theory of grand-strategic orientations.

3.1. ASSEMBLING THE THEORY: ASSUMPTIONS

3. 1. 1. Grand Strategy

Grand strategy is the *long-term process* of how statespeople select, or reject, national ends

³⁵⁸ One notable exception is Etel Solingen. See *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influence on Grand Strategy* (Princeton University Press, 1998).

and means within the material and ideational parameters of their environment, as reflected in national policy. Grand Strategy has temporal, spatial, and issue-specific dimensions. Grand-strategic orientations, on the other hand, are brief cycles, specific policy equilibria that may obtain at some time, within a country's overall framework of statecraft. As ideal-types of behavioral orientation, states have a choice between seeking conforming, challenging, or reforming strategies, or isolation. International politics and domestic politics operate on a continuum of material and social constraints, which we distinguish as being permissive or not permissive for states.

3. 1. 2. Strategies

Based on empirical puzzles, theoretical appraisals, available literature, and the tenet of preserving parsimony, the dissertation borrows from the English School three sets of observable and measurable state behaviors: the use of force and alliance disposition, relations with great powers, and a state's attitude with respect to international law. Each strategy reflects a state's ability and willingness to exert effort to engage with international society (see Table 3.1. below). While none of these strategies are necessarily mutually exclusive, an ambitious state is likelier to pursue costlier strategies along multiple dimensions and vice versa. With these caveats concluded, the dimensions of the strategies are as follows.

First, to what extent does a state use force, and how does it interact with allies? The way great-power states build alliances and use force is very important because having allies distributes costs and may bestow legitimacy for the post-war settlement. To this end, arranged by descending level of costs are unilateralism, wherein a dominant state uses force illegitimately and without regard to allies or international rules, multilateralism, leadership,

and isolationism. “Leadership” is simply a reference to the type of behavior one can expect from an enterprising great power that generally observes multilateralism but prefers to use force, or not, primarily by assuming global responsibilities through its own alliance bloc rather than the official organs of the UN. It is a via media between unilateralism and multilateralism since the great power assumes the most responsibilities, but largely operates through the consent of allies and empowered through other international institutions. Multilateralism, meanwhile, is the attitude of the good global citizen. A multilateralist state would be unlikely to have aggressive posturing and will invariably prefer to use force only through formal authorization by the UN. Finally, some states may be so incapable, or the conjuncture may be so unsuitable that a state may choose to “withdraw” and shirk from responsibilities like using force consistent with maintaining international order.

Somewhat similar, and an important determinant for international order, is how states act towards (other) great powers. A militarily and economically incapable state is most likely to pick the path of least resistance and appease great powers, and other states, which threaten it. Soft-balancing, a popular concept discussed earlier, is the most sensible approximation of how the balance of power would operate in an asymmetric balance of power systems. Soft-balancing means that states may resist superpower states on some issues if it is not in their interest but nevertheless cannot actively take violent action to resist them. “Expansionism,” meanwhile refers to various policies that more-powerful states may choose to expand their power and influence. Expansionist strategies involve expanding one’s alliance network or sphere of influence, which may require displays of force and significant diplomatic activism. Thus, a state that is assertive towards other great

powers and undercuts their influence through non-violent means is applying expansionist policies. Finally, imperialist strategies signal all-out hostility and contempt towards other states and great powers, wars of conquest and other unsanctioned uses of force are extremely ambitious and costly. One would expect only capable and motivated order-challenging states to display such policies

A state's attitude towards legal practices is also of consequence. Is a state likely to adhere to the existing international legal/normative framework or change it, and in what ways? A state pursuing conservatism will not be likely to assert new international norms, nor would it be likely to accept them. Conservatism simply means that a state will prefer to interpret rules and norms in a traditional and parochial, without necessarily flaunting them. China's attitudes about human rights, for instance, is consistent with this strategy. This strategy is consistent with order-retrenching. Meanwhile, some states may accept prevailing norms but may not be so inclined to change them. Rather they may focus on their effective dissemination. This is a perfect example of "enmeshment," wherein a state's mission is to promote compliance. Meanwhile, some states, especially rising ones are likely to renounce or ignore some international legal institutions but display a disposition to work within these structures. The goal is often replacing an existing rule or norm with a more favorable one for one's self. This "reformist," approach best approximates to order-reforming. Finally, we can also observe some states engaging in a "radical" flaunting of international law. They challenge international order by calling into question the very legitimacy of legal practice or an aspect of international law, such as undermining sovereignty. Next, we discuss how some of these strategies become "more likely" than others.

Table 3. 1. Fundamental Institutions and State Strategies

Fundamental Institutions	War	Diplomacy	Balance of Power	Great Power Management	International Law
Observable Categories and Costs	Use of Force/Alliances		Relations Towards Other Powers		Attitude towards Norms and Rules
Less Costly	Withdrawal		Appeasement		Conservatism
-	Multilateralism		Restraint		Enmeshment
+	Leadership		Expansionism		Reformism
More Costly	Unilateralism		Imperialism		Radicalism

3. 1. 3. Foreign Policy Executives

Navigating the material and ideational continuum of grand strategy is the prerogative of the highest echelon of decision-makers that exercise the greatest influence in foreign policy (*i.e.* foreign policy executives, or FPE), and who therefore define the national interest and consequently pursue appropriate policies. FPEs include heads of state, government, and other powerful members of the executive branch, and their advisors, in charge of foreign policy, or prominent members of the foreign policy establishment, however defined according to a given case.³⁵⁹

Many instances of imperialist and unilateral foreign policy actions stem from foreign policy establishments' lack of interest in voluntary restraint but also due to internal dynamics. Considering domestic and international audience costs, and other parochial interests, it is hard to tell what matters most. It may be expedient for FPEs to favor discourses and policies aimed at consolidating and legitimating FPEs hold on domestic

³⁵⁹ For example, the Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, U.S. National Security Council Advisor Henry A. Kissinger, President George W. Bush, or the Senate Committee on the Council on Foreign Relations.

power or external security (if such an expediency exists). Perceived trends about one's political fortunes, in conjunction with FPEs attitude towards international order, influences the type of strategies, grand-strategic orientation, a state will more likely pursue in the short-term.

3. 1. 4. National Interest: Raison d'État vs. Raison de Système

While FPE's have a diverse portfolio of interests –the most important being to stay in power– they are also a repository of domestic and international values as acquired through iterated interactions with their counterparts at various institutional levels. Consistent with the assumption of most traditional IR understandings of grand strategy, therefore, it is argued states generally have long-term designs that lead them to accept international order. Elites' primary objective is to satisfice between domestic political expediency and the broader interests of international society. As with many arguments about revolutions, domestic coalitions, there is a strong reason to think that the extent to which FPEs are likely to uphold international order is contingent on how they view their circumstances and construct the national interest.

The national interest or *raison d'état* is a notoriously elusive concept in IR. For the purposes of this research, this concept refers to the domestically-informed national interest of a state. In the meantime, *raison de système*, a fundamentally important concept of the English School serves as an alternative locus of elite interests.³⁶⁰ According to this concept, states in an international society have a fundamental interest in restraining themselves and

³⁶⁰ See Watson, "Systems of States." Also see Barry Buzan, "The English School: A Neglected Approach to International Security Studies," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2015), pp. 126-143.

foregoing gains if needs be, so as to promote the general welfare of the system.³⁶¹ This recognition of mutual interests by states is a general tendency learned from a deep history of engagement with other states. States sometimes need to restrain themselves or forego attainable gains, to preserve the legitimacy and functioning of international order because a legitimate and functioning international society can more easily restrain would-be aggressors, more effectively prevent armed conflict, and, ultimately, better serve the interests of all its constituent members. If the subtext is that it pays to make the system work, operating within the framework of an existing international order is the normal state of affairs. As Watson explains,

Order is further promoted by general agreements and rules that restrain and benefit all members of the system, and make it into a society. That is an aspect of *raison de système*, the belief that it pays to make the system work.³⁶²

The two concepts help to frame the present discussion. The reasons why either of these orientations may prevail among the FPE varies from context because one is dealing with how decision-makers frame abstract communal notions. The overall security environment of a state, its historical relationship to international society, elite beliefs, issue salience, and elite expectations all play a part. The last of these, that of expectations is

³⁶¹ By analogy, this English School concept is akin to the Stag Hunt. In Game Theory the “Stag Hunt” is a scenario in which players need to satisfy their hunger by hunting either stags or rabbits. Hunting the former is difficult and requires cooperation (C) but the payoff is more substantial. Hunting the latter, or defecting (D), meanwhile is much easier and does not require cooperation since players can hunt them on their own. Of course, the logic of *raison de système* reminds us that sometimes the players may need to agree to avoid hunting altogether to preserve the stags and rabbits. See Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,”; Oye, *Cooperation Under Anarchy*, p. 6.

³⁶² Watson, “Systems of States,” p. 104.

particularly noteworthy because FPEs decision-making horizon, their willingness to cooperate and their international *modus operandi* depends on what they and the state can expect to gain within a limited time horizon. By choosing to uphold the values of international society, playing by the rules, one expects that upholding existing rules serves the best interest of the state. Not all states and not all FPEs operate under such long timeframes. Sometimes, decisive, risky, and self-serving action is needed to alleviate an unfolding situation.

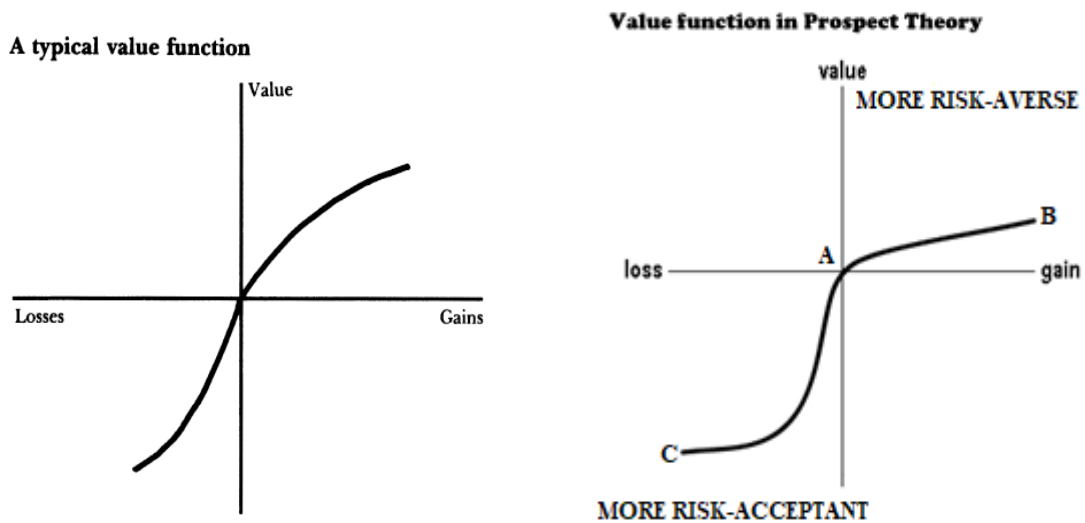
3. 1. 5. A Rational Foundation for Raison de System: Expected Gains vs. Losses

FPEs' external strategies depend on their attitude towards international order. Accordingly, FPEs are likely to adopt foreign policy strategies corresponding to 1) their preferences regarding the attainability of desired outcomes through orderly participation in international politics, 2) their orientation *vis-à-vis* international order, 3) their projected gains or losses arising from international developments, and 4) their freedom of action to implement policies aimed at exploiting said developments (see figure 3.1 below).³⁶³ International security imperatives notwithstanding, FPEs will always want to avoid situations they judge will deliver suboptimal outcomes with respect to their domestic power. Combining FPEs' order-related preferences with insights from prospect theory renders the following insights.

³⁶³ Derived from Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahnemann, "Loss-Aversion in Riskless Choice: A Reference Dependent Model," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (November, 1991), p. 1040. *N.B.* A= Analytical anchor (the starting position to which gains, and losses are compared). The closer the expected utility of a certain move is to this anchor point, the more likely that states will prefer order-conforming.
B= The overall area in which order-reforming is most likely.
C= The overall area in which order-challenging is most likely.

FPEs that have a *raison de système* orientation will be more sensitive to international developments and overall more likely to prioritize multilateral solutions. Conversely, FPEs that have a *raison d'état* orientation are more sensitive to domestic political concerns; moreover, they will be more willing to act unilaterally if needed. Based on the insights of Prospect Theory, FPEs' policy choices for preserving altering international order depends on whether they stand to benefit or expect to make losses (see Figure 3.1.). If upholding a certain international norm or arrangement does not alter the calculus, a state is not likely to act. States that stand to gain from appending an aspect of international order, be it flaunting or reforming an existing rule or changing an arrangement such that it brings greater benefits, a state is likely to expend resources conservatively to avoid risks.³⁶⁴

Figure 3. 1. A typical value function v. endowment effect



³⁶⁴ This researcher would argue that *initial* American restraint in pushing for NATO expansion after the Cold the expansion could be an example of this. Similarly, China's reformism, limited generally to seeking greater influence and overall prestige and authority-enhancing strategies evidences a desire not to upset favorable arrangements.

Expected losses, meanwhile, resonate the strongest with FPEs and induce them to adopt riskier strategies.³⁶⁵ FPEs that are more animated by concerns over their domestic power were presented with the opportunity of gaining or losing power; we may have a full picture of how and the extent to which they would be willing to exert national resources in reaction. To this end, one can hypothesize that expected gains, regardless of FPEs domain of locus, will engender less-risky, while expected losses will illicit greater propensity for risk-taking.³⁶⁶ Of course, strategic choices also depend on the state's capabilities. Figure

3. 1. 6 Permissive and Restrictive Environments: Freedom of Action

All foreign policy is limited by the resources available to states. The reason why the international system constrains states is that they do not possess power enough in relation to other states to get what they want. Beyond this simplistic and materialist notion, however, is also the notion that a considerable number of perceptual, ideational, and even institutional factors play into determining a state's freedom of action. In the latter sense, the Neoclassical Realist understanding of "permissive" versus "restrictive" conditions, as well as Trubowitz's concept of "geopolitical slack" are particularly useful because these are different ways of conceptualizing the essence of decision-makers' beliefs about the international security environment.³⁶⁷ Simply, based on a consideration of available

³⁶⁵ American involvement in costly peripheral wars like the Vietnam War, for instance, is text-book example of the "Domino Theory" heuristic which not only made U.S. FPEs overvalue the strategic value of a non-Communist Vietnam but the endowment effect prompted further U.S. investment into the conflict when it proved unsuccessful. See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pp. 9, 12, 28.

³⁶⁶ Note that the approach nevertheless remains distinct from diversionary war and scapegoat theories. Firstly, it considers the possibility that FPEs may distinguish between *raison de système* and *raison d'état* interest when calculating their own best interest. Moreover, the theory addresses a broader set of state behaviors.

³⁶⁷ See Taliaferro, Ripsman, Lobell, *The Challenge of Grand Strategy*, pp. 23-25; Trubowitz, *Partisan Ambition*, pp. 5-6. The former argue that clear threats are not manifest in permissive environments and states have the freedom to engage in adventurist foreign policies rather than balancing the real threat. The latter,

resources, potential threats (or lack thereof), external-balancing options, and relative impunity, do decision-makers possess freedom of action to incur the costs of pursuing some policies as opposed to others? Costs of various policies, in conjunction with decisionmakers' propensity to change order, result in strategic preferences (see table 3. 2.)

Table 3. 2. State strategies arranged by costs and elite's order orientations

		COST OF GRAND STRATEGY	
		LOW	HIGH
ORDER-ORIENTATION	<i>RAISON D'ÉTAT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolationism • Appeasement • Limited Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unilateralism • Imperialism • Radicalism
	<i>RAISON DE SYSTÈME</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilateralism • Restraint • Enmeshment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Expansionism • Reformism

3.2. CAUSAL MECHANISM

Upholding international order is most often profitable for FPEs. For the dominant state, it confers legitimacy and authority. This is true for lesser-great powers too, especially for ones that derive great benefit from simultaneously cooperating with the dominant state

meanwhile, similarly considers “slack” as a function of how secure a state is vis-a-vis potential threats in the international system.

without the burden of exercising the management responsibilities that great-power states must to preserve international order. Rising states also benefit from upholding international order because the conditions work in their favor all the while greater conformity to the normative framework of international society further enhances their status within that community. The only truly dissatisfied states/groups would have to be at the global periphery, as non-state actors (but we know that even these types of actors aspire to statehood and all that entails), and extreme isolationist states, which are just that: isolationist. There are a variety of reasons for more powerful states to be dissatisfied, such as irredentism or representational issues, but by in large these cannot be considered as being revisionist apart from the politically motivated binary of the status quo revisionism. These types of grievances do not aim to undermine international order or flaunt (self-imposed) rules. If anything, material and representational dissatisfaction can manifest as a reformist attitude and a positive engagement with the architecture of international order.³⁶⁸

The only viable source of state dissatisfaction that can lead to order-challenging behavior must originate from within the state, be interjected into the national agenda by FPEs, and have a finite scope lest it risk severe international backlash. The argument then is simply that FPEs have to balance the competing and often contradictory demands of upholding international order, their domestic constituents, and their own parochial interests (i.e. political survival). Between these three demands, the last one will invariably prevail; the other two are ranked so as to serve the prime directive. FPEs freedom of action is relative within and without the state. Thus, between political survival and serving the

³⁶⁸ Newman and Zala, "Rising Powers and Order Contestation." Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*, pp. 22-23.

“standard national interest” and political survival and the “enlightened national interest” FPEs tend to choose the most expedient ones at a given time to the extent that they have sufficient capabilities. FPEs often find themselves hindered even when an opportunity may present itself, to change aspects of international order due either to the nature of the expected gains/losses and the resources required.

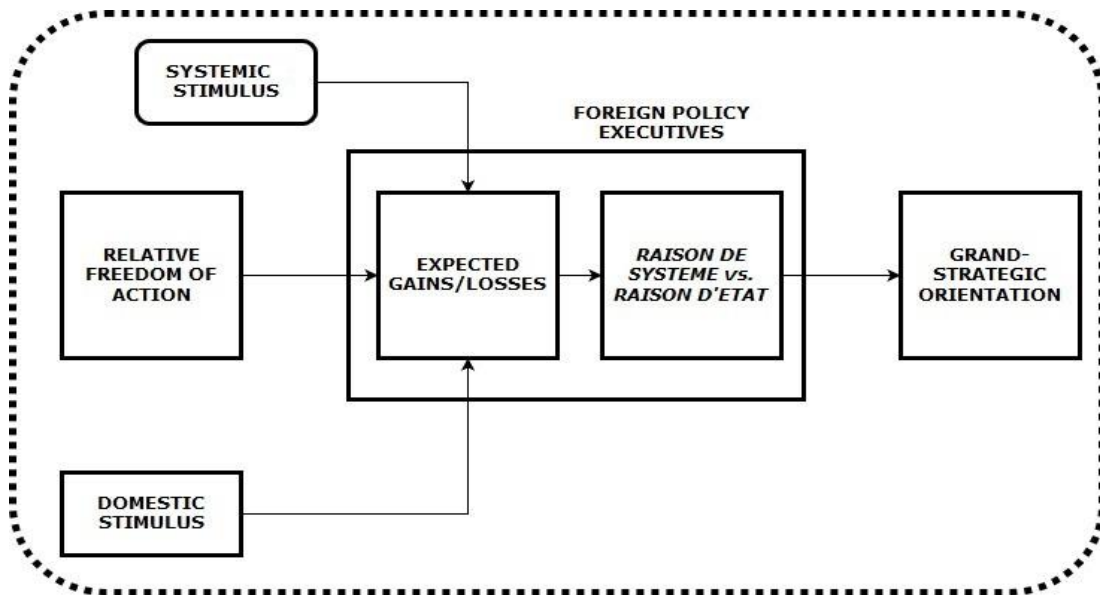
Thus, we are confronted with four scenarios (see Table 3. 3.):

- 1) Order-Reforming: FPEs expect to make gains and have freedom of action.
- 2) Order-Conforming: FPEs expect to make gains but have limited freedom of action.
- 3) Order-Challenging: FPEs expect to make losses and have freedom of action.
- 4) Order-Retrenching: FPEs expect to make losses and have limited freedom of action.

Table 3.3. Grand-Strategic Orientations, Expected Utility and Freedom of Action

		FREEDOM OF ACTION	
		RESTRICTIVE	PERMISSIVE
EXPECTED TRENDS	LOSSES	ORDER-RETRENCHING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolationism • Appeasement • Conservatism 	ORDER-CHALLENGING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unilateralism • Imperialism • Radicalism
	GAINS	ORDER-CONFORMING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilateralism • Restraint • Enmeshment 	ORDER-REFORMING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Expansionism • Reformism

Figure 3.2. Causal Argument



The following chapter define the operationalization of the theory and define the research strategy. Chapters 5 and 6 will respectively examine U.S. and Chinese foreign policy in the post-Cold War.

This chapter lays forth the methodological principles underpinning the dissertation. The formal theoretical argument, to reiterate here, is that when states are confronted with a strategic opportunity, their behavior will be shaped by their relative freedom of action in conjunction with their FPEs' orientation towards international order and risk-propensities. Each of these concepts receives formal operationalization below. Since the matters of case selection and conceptualization have received extensive treatment elsewhere, the present chapter focuses on the task of explicating the research design, justifying methodological choices and specific data selection, and discussing the limitations of the inquiry. The dissertation employs multiple methods consisting of content and, subsequently, discourse analyses of a selection of texts and speeches. Methodologically, the analysis uses qualitative methods, specifically congruence procedures, to infer the validity of the theoretical contribution.

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

While there is no formal methodological approach to status quo and revisionism in the discipline, most studies of foreign policy are conducted via qualitative case study analyses.³⁶⁹ The high specificity of each case and the unique circumstances of states often preclude the possibility of parsimonious research designs and generalizable findings. Nevertheless, exemplary studies of state behavior are amenable to rigorous analysis and to deductive-hypothesis testing procedures. The stated goal of this project is to add a nuance

³⁶⁹ See Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennet, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), esp. Chapter 9; Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, IL: The University of Michigan Press, 2013) p. 4.

to the debate on status-quo and revisionist behavior by incorporating a notion of “reformism” and examining under what circumstances we can observe such dispositions. As the literature suggests, there is not a clear-cut relationship between the intrinsic qualities of states or decision-makers and the policies they implement. There are some research strategies. However, that can help us to infer relevant causal processes.

4.1.1. Philosophical Assumptions

The first step to justifying one’s research preferences begins with fundamental issues about the philosophy of science; about the nature of reality and what we know about it. This dissertation proceeds from the ontological assumption that there is a “real” world, independent of the human mind.³⁷⁰ In the philosophy of science, this ontological position is broadly associated with Neopositivism and Critical Realism.³⁷¹ It is the issue of epistemology, or what we can come to know about this world, that presents real challenges to research. Here, the two approaches differ. Neopositivists argue that it is possible to accumulate objective knowledge about the world through the implementation of appropriate methods and instruments. Through our imperfect instruments, we can adduce quite a bit of knowledge about the world. For this reason, Neopositivism focuses on the accumulation of knowledge via scrutinizing established theories. If a new theory better explains the causal relationships between phenomena it consigns the incumbent theory into the dustbin. Since the new theory is more accurate or parsimonious, it results in the advancement of science.

³⁷⁰ See Patrick T. Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

³⁷¹ See *Ibid.*; Joseph A. Maxwell, *A Realist Approach for Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2011), p. 4.

This dissertation follows the latter, Critical Realist, stance. This means that as far as our present inquiry is concerned, the researcher is not convinced that it is possible for us to know truly objective facts about world politics. What we can know can only be mediated through abstract concepts and categories that yield highly subjective verdicts depending on the context of the research, such as one's assumptions and research design. In practical terms, a Critical Realist approach borrows from an interpretation of science that considers the accumulation of knowledge not as a gradual and incremental process, but within the framework of paradigms.³⁷² In this interpretation, scientific inquiries are problematized and addressed through established traditions and assumptions as "normal science."³⁷³ When "normal science" fails to address anomalies, or simply a better set of foundational assumptions and theories manifest themselves, it transforms the entire intellectual landscape. Accumulation until a major shift and the abandonment of traditional ideas, rather than falsification of existing theories, advances science.

Consider, for example, the debate on the termination of the Cold War. Using similar assumptions and data, scholars have been able to demonstrate the efficacy of not only materialist but also ideational variables.³⁷⁴ To wit, the collapse of the Soviet Union can be considered an instance of a declining power submitting to economic realities, or as a rejuvenating power (after *Perestroika*) unable to keep up with the unfolding ideational circumstances of liberalization. Conversely, it is possible for theories with significantly

³⁷² See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [Second Edition] (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

³⁷³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

³⁷⁴ This is the starting premise of, for example, William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter, 1994-1995), pp. 91-129.

different axioms to reach similar verdicts, building upon each other in creative ways, to explain the emergence of highly unique outcomes.³⁷⁵

In practical terms, the *caveat* is simply that this dissertation does not seek to, and cannot, invalidate existing theories of grand strategy. Doing so would not only run counter to the purposes of this project, it would also be ill-suited to address a broad analytical referent like grand strategy. The goal is to develop a typology of state behaviors and extrapolate thereupon a model to explain how it can usefully be operationalized. Grand strategy, being an all-encompassing analytical referent, is ill-suited for precise measurement of causation. Endogenous processes may impinge on decision-making at any level to produce specific policy outputs at odds with the wider process of grand strategy.

4.1.2. Methodology

Since this researcher seeks to develop a typology of strategies and a model to explain why states choose them, but cannot study every observation in detail, a sensible way to develop a forward-looking research agenda is by laying out the model first, then examining the congruence between the predictions of the hypotheses and observable outcomes thereafter. This research deliberately eschews the oft-invoked *process-tracing method* in favor of *congruence procedures*. The reason is simple: process tracing is ideally suited for cases in which the researcher seeks to uncover in detail the operation of causal mechanisms and attempts to explain outcomes, thereby tracing in exhaustive detail the various steps along the way that traces a specific outcome.

³⁷⁵ An emblematic example of this is Graham Allison's classical study of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Where the standard "Rational Actor Model" fails to deliver a comprehensive explanation of idiosyncrasies by Soviet forces, Organizational Theory and Governmental Politics are offered as syncretic and complementary additions. Even in foreign policy analysis, there is more than one way to skin a cat. See Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*.

Congruence, meanwhile, refers to the identification of correlations between causes and outcomes. This method is not as robust as process tracing since the coincidence of a hypothesized cause and outcome does not validate a theory or causal mechanism. With this seemingly minimalist ambition, congruence procedures seem to have a bad reputation as a weak tool for inference as compared to process tracing.³⁷⁶ Be that as it may, congruence approaches do in fact hypothesize causal mechanisms.³⁷⁷ In fact, the primary differences between the two methods concern the extent to which they explicitly trace causal mechanisms and the level of detail in terms of evidence provided. The differences were minimal, there is a discernable tendency among scholars to conflate the two methods, as process tracing becomes the standard methodological designation for even the most minimalist research designs.³⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, many scholars use process tracing when they mean congruence procedures.³⁷⁹

Is congruence then simply a fancy appellation used to justify an a-theoretical and flimsy research design? No. Congruence is an extremely useful method. It is an excellent first-step to thinking about causal relationships. Among other things, this enables the researcher to engage in theory-building with which to craft hypotheses. This is also a valid

³⁷⁶ See George and Bennet, *Designing Social Inquiry*, pp. 181-204; Derek Beach and Rasmus B. Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods: Foundations and Guidelines for Comparing, Matching and Tracing* (Ann Arbor, IL: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), esp. Chapter 8, pp. 270-271.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

³⁷⁹ Cf. Davidson, *Origins of Revisionism*, pp. 45-46. Davidson explicitly employs a congruence procedure augmented with selective process-tracing.

ambition for the Neoclassical Realist research program.³⁸⁰ Broadly defined, this research presents four hypotheses about grand strategy that explain some facets of American and Chinese behavior in the post-Cold War period. What is problematic, however, is that even the comparatively modest goal of expounding grand-strategic orientations for a brief span of time dictates the foregoing of complete mechanistic precision. A theory of grand strategy must simultaneously create and frame broad categories of behavior in service of a broader theoretical point while simultaneously making sense of longer-term trends in the behavior of states. Instead of uncovering a unique outcome such as the unfolding of the Cuban Missile Crisis or even a *longue durée* analysis of why the Anglo-Portuguese alliance endures, the approach to grand strategy as articulated in this volume contends that some types of policies become more likely within specific contexts.

Another drawback is that the framework under development cannot have valid rival theories or hypotheses. Chapter 3 lays out a comprehensive set of alternative explanations to derive as many implicit but testable hypotheses against which to sharpen the present theory. Only a handful of them, however, is comprehensive or helpful and many lack explicit unit-level theorizing against which to test the propositions of the framework. Supposing, however, that the analysis covered a very specific issue, such as explaining American multilateralism during U.S.-led interventions of the 1990s, one could naturally adduce alternative hypotheses; whether the present elite responsibility approach is instructive or whether rival theories like Defensive Realism or *Innenpolitik* prevail. Given the scope of this project, we would need to replicate the process tracing for every different

³⁸⁰ Rose, “Neoclassical Realism,”; Ratbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name; Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory*.

grand-strategic disposition under scrutiny in this research. Thus, a detailed analysis of this nature is untenable. Given the period under consideration, and depending on the level of detail, such a project would require an unfathomable amount of time and data to execute. Compounding the data quantity problem is the type of data. Empirical problems and theoretical deficiencies from contemporary cases inform the typology and model. To get to the heart of contemporary American and Chinese decision-making requires access to materials that are likely to remain classified for decades, although there are ways around this problem as discussed below.

Before we scrap the project entirely, however, it is also noteworthy that congruence approaches are not mutually exclusive with comparative studies and process tracing. Firstly, the theory and its hypotheses engender the examination of a broader set of limited-case studies that probe the validity of multiple hypotheses. In practice, we are helping the inference process by providing conditions for variations in the causes and outcomes, both longitudinally and comparatively. Observing and explaining, in other words, similar grand-strategic orientations under similar situations and causal processes improve inference. Secondly, there are observable implications of the hypothesized mechanisms. A circumscribed process tracing is therefore mandatory to provide evidence for decision-making processes. Thirdly, for the purposes of research beyond the present undertaking, a congruence approach is a “forward-thinking” approach for a sustained and comprehensive analysis of grand strategy and state behaviors because it sets the stage for future theorizing.³⁸¹ As the framework is applied to more cases, it can increase our confidence in

³⁸¹ Beach and Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods*, p. 272.

the model, justify in-depth process tracing studies for detailed analysis, and, ultimately improve its analytical leverage. In the meantime, the following section operationalizes the theory and specifies the kind of data that would evidence the proposed causal mechanism.

4. 1. 3. Method

The framework (see Table 4. 1. below) engenders the examination of four propositions via congruence procedure. Namely,

- P1: *Under permissive international environments, dissatisfied FPEs will prefer order-challenging strategies.*
- P2: *Under permissive international environments, satisfied FPEs will prefer order-reforming strategies.*
- P3: *Under restrictive international environments, satisfied FPEs will prefer order-conforming strategies.*
- P4: *Under restrictive international environments, dissatisfied FPEs will prefer order-retrenching strategies.*

Firstly, we need to establish whether the international environment is *restrictive* or *permissive* at a given conjuncture. Our primary cause, therefore, is a permutation of factors at the level of the international system. This we can measure on the bases of two considerations. The first is the capacity of a state to act. This refers to the state's relative material capabilities, or its capacity to act in international politics which is measured on the basis of relative capabilities, which is potentially comprised of military-economic capabilities and the availability of willing allies. The foundational idea of Structural Realism is that material capabilities has an independent effect on decision-making calculus. Beyond this, FPEs' subjective notions of threats, opportunities, and even ambiguity

however defined can serve as the catalyst of state behavior. This “underlying cause” forms the backdrop of the drama unfolding at the level of FPE decision-making.

The type of evidence we would need to produce is straightforward. Materially, any cursory glance at the military-economic capabilities of U.S. and China in the period of investigation should sufficiently reveal their relative-freedom of action so far as material capabilities are concerned. The Correlates of War (Version 5.0, 2012) project, among other sources, can readily illuminate capacity-related issues.³⁸² Ascertaining threats and available allies is trickier. It is difficult to avoid the “prescription trap” that plagues Realist and many rationalist analyses of IR. By any measure of material capabilities, the U.S. cannot have any credible rivals apart from other great powers, but most of them are in fact U.S. allies, or simply do not confront the U.S. For China, *vice versa* applies. One need not also forget the salience of domestic and non-state sources of threats for these states, which is always a concern for China in particular. It is therefore impossible to label an international system as being restrictive or permissive for a state independent of subjective and perceptual elements. While there is abundant evidence on the threat perceptions of our cases based on primary and secondary sources, we can nevertheless conclude that both U.S. and China enjoy a degree of detachment from other states and are not in immediate danger of existential threats. They have greater freedom to pursue foreign policies that may differ from the prescribed ideals of structural theory. For both states, uses of force in the period under investigation seems limited to wars in the periphery, conducted through the

³⁸² The Composite Index of National Capabilities (Version 5.0) is based on David J. Singer, Stuart Bremer, and John Stuckey, “Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-1965,” in Bruce Russett (ed.), *Peace, War, and Numbers* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1972), pp. 19-48.

official mandate of multilateral international organizations. Any evidence we find about relative power and threat perceptions is therefore useful.

Wherever we find permissive environments, we are similarly likelier to observe grand-strategic orientations that are more ambitious in scale. For example, order challenging (P1) and reforming (P2) are orientations of this kind. Both sufficient material preponderance or absence of credible external threats could account for the pursuit of ambitious strategies. Absent favorable distribution capabilities and allies, and in the presence of salient threats, decision-makers cannot enjoy such latitude and will prefer less-ambitious strategies such as order-conforming (P3) and retrenchment (P4).

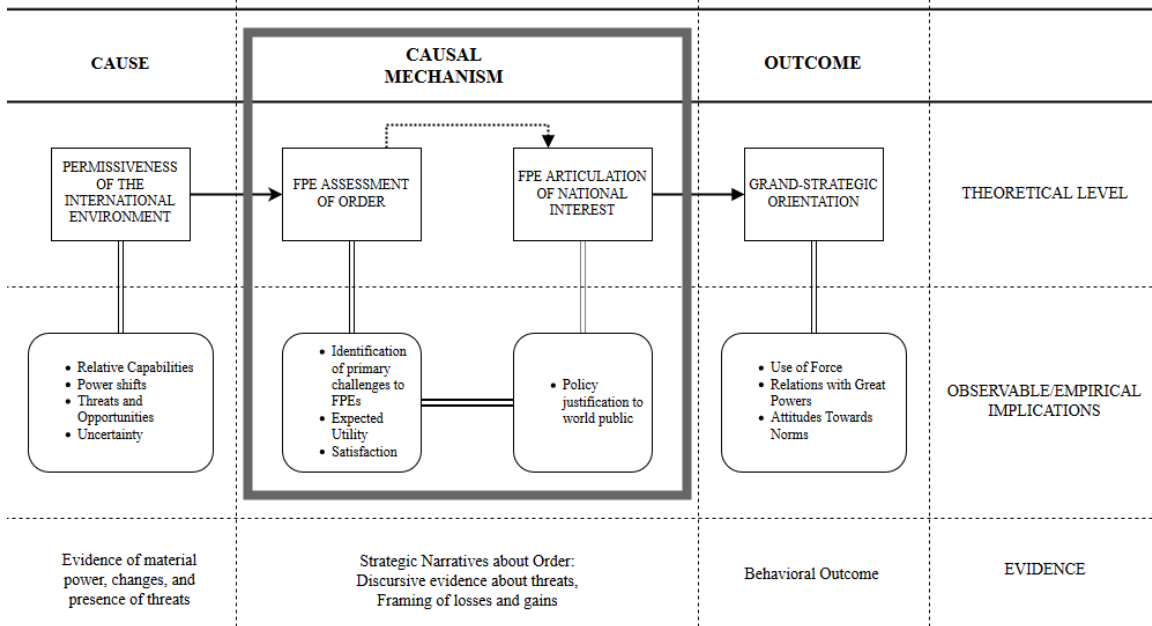
Obtaining data on the cause and outcome is an exercise in accumulating the best possible primary sources and secondary literature to evaluate the historical development of the cases. Data procurement for the proposed causal mechanism requires lengthier elaboration and is the subject of the following section. While there is likely to be a significant variation in the policy dispositions of states across these categories of behavior, the dissertation nevertheless advances the modest claim that in the short-term, foreign policy executives will exercise greater influence and policy is more likely to reflect their preferences.³⁸³ As far as state policy is concerned, it makes sense that the prevailing discourses reflect the political consensus at the apex of the political structure.³⁸⁴ By reflecting on these narratives and the strategies states employ across different categories of

³⁸³ Such an approach is consistent with the international society approach. See Cornelia Navari, “English School Methodology,” in Cornelia Navari and Daniel M. Green (eds.), *Guide to the English School in International Studies* (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 217.

³⁸⁴ See Stacie E. Goddard and Ronald R. Krebs, “Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March, 2015), pp. 5-36, esp. p. 10.

statecraft, we can reasonably conjecture about temporary tendencies, *i.e.*, grand-strategic orientations, and how these diverge from the longer-term tendency of pursuing *raison de système* or *raison d'état*.

Figure 4. 1. Causal Mechanism and Observable Implications



4.2. MEASURING “ELITE RESPONSIBILITY”

This section concerns the complications surrounding what decision-makers say, or believe, and what they consequently do. How do the ruling elites of a state give meaning to their state in world politics, and how can we begin to think about their preferences? Theories of foreign policy invoke elite beliefs or, minimally, preferences to explain state behavioral outcomes.³⁸⁵ For most materially-driven theories, the national interest is the byproduct of FPEs’ consequentialist and utility-maximizing *modus operandi*. Additionally, the inclusion of social factors like international society, which is unavoidable once iterative relations

³⁸⁵ This includes the Neoclassical Realist research program that has inspired the present analysis See Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory*, p. 65.

form between proximate states, also necessitates an examination of FPEs. In this latter interpretation, FPEs internalize deeper cultural and normative principles of reciprocity, coexistence, and pursuit of common interest much akin to the logic of appropriateness. Their notion of the national interest is, therefore, that which also serves the broader interests of the international society. Since international society is an abstract idea, we can only infer through the institutional manifestation of states' behaviors and the discourses of public officials.³⁸⁶ Since governments are comprised of people socialized within national and international institutional contexts, they are more likely to follow established rules and standard operating procedures. In the long-term, grand strategy impels states towards the preservation of international order. Attempting to measure the existence of this abstract notion, or the degree to which it is manifest is best achieved through an analysis of officials' discourses and their coincidence international outcomes.

The causal mechanism under scrutiny here treats discourses not as *prima facie* evidence of a functioning international society but as an imperfect mirror into the FPEs' thought processes with respect to why anyone would want these commodious arrangements in the first place. Expressed differently, what FPEs say is not automatically proof of a functioning international society, but that words may be evidence for preferences, collectively held by FPEs, that make qualities we associate with international society possible in the first place.

³⁸⁶ See Navari, "English School Methodology," pp. 215-216.

4.2.1. On Strategic Narratives

Strategic narratives may be an appropriate phenomenon to study. These are discursive constructions of “shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors.”³⁸⁷ In a sense, they are “stories with political purpose.”³⁸⁸ In this research, strategic narratives are employed as an analytical frame that potentially reveals what FPEs think about international order. Similar to institutions, Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle argue that strategic narratives about international actors “structure expectations about international relations.”³⁸⁹

Recalling that the general idea of “Elite Responsibility” is related to FPEs subjective assessment of projected trends in their gains or losses, the strategic narrative perspective can reveal much about FPEs satisfaction with international order and their overall willingness to uphold international order. Satisfaction, or not, with a given international arrangement may, in fact, originate from ideas or identity-based dissatisfaction that in no way relates to rational and utility-based explanations. This dissertation cannot solve the problem of whether abstractions of decision-makers ought to be studied as acting based on the logic of consequences or logic of appropriateness.³⁹⁰ The very notion of a *raison de système* suggests that what is appropriate in international

³⁸⁷ See Alister Miskimmon, Ben O’Loughlin, and Laura Roselle, *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p. 3.

³⁸⁸ See Mathew Levinger and Laura Roselle, “Narrating Global Order and Disorder,” *Politics and Governance*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2017), p. 94.

³⁸⁹ See Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle, *Strategic Narratives*, p. 6.

³⁹⁰ Whether decision-makers choose to optimize their gains, however defined, or choose to act a particular way due to habit and internalization of norms. In fact, the two approaches need not be mutually exclusive. On logic of appropriateness, see Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, esp. Chapter 4.

relations can sometimes be useful too; restrain, and self-negation can serve dual purposes. Without taking a definitive position, studying what actors say it is nevertheless helpful because there is an unavoidable relationship between speech, thought, and action, and it is possible to make inferences about this relationship at least in very circumscribed ways.

Much can be inferred by FPEs narratives and their likelihood of preferring restraint and international collaboration to the naked pursuit of self-interest even at the cost of undermining order. We would expect FPEs to disseminate discourses consistent with their material interests and values. So long a state has sufficient resources and does not face vital threats, elites are less constrained to engage in policies designed for short-term self-aggrandizement. Elites are likely to be more cooperative internationally if they identify their state within the international architecture; that their state belongs to the international order. FPEs attitudes are of paramount importance because their words carry weight even when uttered with hypocrisy and deceit. In the all too matter of preserving international order, it is inconceivable that even the most hawkish foreign policy actors would betray anything more than a dovish disposition. One can safely bet that even the most brazen acts of national self-aggrandizement will be couched in the innocuous language of international law, rights, and legitimacy. There will be a disjuncture in the stated goals elites and the behavioral outcomes of states. Does this mean that any scholarly enterprise that examines the speech-acts of leaders is fundamentally flawed?

Firstly, and contrary to the previous assertion, the fact that decision-makers employ sanitary language or attempt to justify their policies and agendas suggest that there is a normative component to international politics. By studying the coincidence of a given discourse in the run-up to, and duration of, a significant event helps to reveal how decision-

makers think about world politics. We can extrapolate from leaders' compulsive need to justify, both domestically and internationally, their behavior tangible evidence for the abstract notions of international society, international order, legitimacy, and common interest.

Secondly, and more significantly, speech-acts often create expediencies and sensitivities that can trap their wielders. The dissonance created from contradictions in what is preached and practiced cannot be maintained indefinitely unless a favorable strategic and material context can sustain it. Strategic narratives matter to the extent that they reveal how FPEs think about international order and legitimacy in international society. Most importantly, strategic narratives frame FPEs policy justifications and helps to infer their utility function with respect to preserving, reforming, or challenging international order. To underscore the importance of strategic narratives, one need also remember that narratives also serve an instrumental function. They may not necessarily reflect the real beliefs of FPEs. Narratives, however, serve a purpose because they are deliberative. Verbal and codified communication in international politics is the product of a collective effort by and represents the interests of, many agencies, actors, and powerful decision-makers. As alluring as it may be to attempt a detailed analysis of the multitude of organizations and bureaucracies that make up a state, it is impractical to penetrate the morass of decision-making.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ Although, there are novel approaches like Network Theory that examine the specific composition of foreign policy executives who feature in the revolving door of academia, think-tanks, and government. See, e.g., Bastiaan van Apeldoorn and Naná de Graaff, *American Grand Strategy and Corporate Elite Networks: The Open Door Since the End of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016). In lieu of a more appropriate way to study FPEs and the total governmental output of a state, this dissertation chooses to focus on the intersection of structural context, FPEs' narratives about international order, and the year-to-year activities of states along various measures of state behavior. Looking at the totality of governmental

Just because decisionmakers declare something does not mean that this will immediately and of necessity translate into policy action at every echelon of government. As Bureaucratic and Organizational Theory approaches have noted, politics within the state impedes the efficient translation of ever elastic national interest into coherent policy.³⁹² Standard operating procedures, organizational cultures, and intra/inter-departmental competition, among a host of factors, impede policy implementation. Attempting to link the policy discourses and interests (declared or not) of the highest echelons of foreign policy executives is, therefore, a fruitless task. Nevertheless, this does not mean that foreign policy executives are not decisive, particularly in the cases of the U.S. and China. Top decision-makers are hardly helpless bystanders. Most importantly, the scope of our analysis concerns the creation of ideal-type grand-strategic orientations, which itself is conceptualized as an overall tendency of a state's behavior albeit in a briefer time period as compared to grand strategy.

4.2.2. Content Analysis of Strategic Narratives

There is no formal way to study strategic narratives. Depending on the researcher's assumptions, textual analysis can be achieved in a circumscribed way that highlights instrumental rationality on the one hand, and a rich poststructural analysis on the other.³⁹³

While a discourse analysis is highly useful to ascertain the presence of certain invocations,

discharges, both discursively and behaviorally, helps to make sense of an otherwise impenetrable morass.

³⁹² See Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin (eds.), *Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1962), pp. 60-74; Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, esp. Chapter 4.

³⁹³ See Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle, *Strategic Narratives*, pp. 22-24.

it would be difficult to demonstrate variations overtime without ways to depict them. To this end, the study employs a simple content analysis.

Krippendorff describes content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use,” while, Nuendorf defines content analysis as “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics.”³⁹⁴ The purpose of content analysis is to analyze otherwise non-quantitative empirical data such as speeches, interviews, and social media posts, and other types of texts. When doing content analysis, the researcher applies a theoretical framework to create a codebook, code a textual data with a defined unit of analysis, reach empirical findings, and analyze their meanings. In this research, the goal of the content analysis will be to ascertain FPEs’ disposition towards international order in a given period, and its variation over time, which will then be compared with the coincidence of our main cause and effects in a given period. Using further primary evidence and secondary sources can help to trace the causal processes.

There are two categories of narratives that are of interest to this analysis. Narratives that relate to FPEs’ 1) expected utility with respect to gains and losses and 2) their satisfaction with international order. Overtime changes (1990-2016) in these two “variables” in the foreign policy speeches of U.S. and Chinese FPEs form the crux of the investigation. In addition to a simple word count of FPEs utterances relating to satisfaction (or lack thereof) and framing of expected utility, a more detailed analysis is conducted at the sentence level to identify dominant narratives.

³⁹⁴ See Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing Inc., 2004), p. 18; Kimberly A. Nuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. 2nd (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2017). p. 1.

The dictionary developed in this research fleshes out satisfaction-related as well as expected-utility related narratives. The first group of words conveys narratives about losses and gains; narratives about the positive or negative consequences of actions (or lack thereof). The second cluster of words was selected based on FPEs' sentiments and the use of words that may signify cooperative intent, satisfaction or, conversely, hostile intent or dissatisfaction. Through a simple analysis conducted by NVIVO 12, it was possible to obtain a year-by-year understanding of the frequency of usage of clusters of words relating to the two dimensions of elite narratives.

To better measure the possible link between grand-strategic orientations and the distillation of FPEs' preferences into narratives at the UN a degree of context and discursive interpretation is mandatory. This was possible through a sentence-level analysis. Based on the dictionary, the researcher developed a codebook (see Table 4.1.) and identified each sentence as relating to perceptions of (1) gains OR (2) losses, AND (3) dissatisfaction (*raison d'état*) OR (4) satisfaction (*raison de système*) or left (0) un-coded. Each of these discourses are therefore present each year. By noting the percentages of the text dedicated to certain discourses, *i.e.*, changes in the incidence of certain discourses, it was possible to examine discursive trends among FPEs at the UN. The coding ignored topics such as health, the environment, and economics (with the exception of narratives concerning the global economic *order*).

Intercoder reliability was achieved by the voluntary contributions of two graduate students with social science training. To complement this researcher's analysis, both were asked to code a total of seven speeches, chosen at random, making sure to examine at least three speeches from both U.S. and Chinese Speeches at the UNGA. It is often more

appropriate to report intercoder reliability to with a Cohen’s Kappa in order to control for randomness, *i.e.*, coders may reach an agreement by chance. In this case, however, there are enough possible narratives (nodes) to select from, rendering such randomness calculation unnecessary. Since NVIVO 12 offers the possibility of conducting an intercoder reliability analysis based on a percentage of agreement on the selected text, this was selected as the more appropriate one. The analysis yielded a respectable 71% similarity for seven U.S. speeches, while the seven Chinese speeches yielded an excellent 87% similarity.

Table 4.1. Coding Rule Book

“Discourse”	Description
<i>EXPECTED UTILITY</i>	
Gains	Code if FPE elicits positive framing, reveals expectations of gains, highlights projected positive consequences of actions, utters "hopeful" messages. E.g., "We hope that these purposes and objectives will be observed and carried out effectively in the interest of the security of all countries." Qichen 1992
Losses	Code if FPE engages in negative framing, references to dire consequences of actions (or lack thereof), highlighting of negative outcomes, negative forecasting/returns, uses language indicating ambivalence and uncertainty. E.g. "On the contrary, the world remains uneasy, with new problems added to the old ones and armed conflicts erupting one after another as a result of disrupted equilibrium." Qichen, 1992
<i>ORDER NARRATIVE</i>	
Dissatisfaction	
Criticize Previous Policy	Code if FPE expresses dissatisfaction towards previous or existing policy by UN, UN member, or about international order in general. E.g. "No one can deny that the old international economic order, being irrational and inequitable, is an important external cause

"Discourse"	Description
	of the poverty and backwardness of developing countries." Qichen 1992
Exceptionalism	Code if FPE refers to domestic politics, praises self or administration, or elicits populist rhetoric. E.g. "Since my election, we've added \$10 trillion in wealth." Trump, 2018
Justice Demand	Code if FPE uses language to indicate dissatisfaction over lack of representation or asymmetric power relations. Do not code if specifically referring to U.S., E.g. "A new international order should be based on the universal observance of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence." Qichen 1992
Justification-Pretext	Code if FPE is providing a reasoning/justification for a policy that might be considered as being controversial. E.g. "For this reason, we are systematically renegotiating broken and bad trade deals. Last month, we announced a ground-breaking U.S.-Mexico trade agreement." Trump, 2018
Negative Relations with Peer Competitors	Code if FPE utters negative comments about other great and superpower states. i.e., China, USSR/Russia, U.S.A. E.g., "China's market distortions and the way they deal cannot be tolerated." Trump, 2018
Sovereignty	Code if FPE highlights sovereignty (and other related themes of nationalism) and problematizes violations of its sovereignty. E.g., "Secondly, all countries, and especially the big Powers, must strictly abide by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries." Qichen 1990
Satisfaction	
Commend Existing Policy	Code if FPE praises a past or ongoing policy by the UN, or member of the UN. E.g. "The United States and the former Soviet Union or Russia have reached some new agreements on nuclear-arms reduction in recent years. These agreements have been well-received by the international community, which hopes that they will be earnestly implemented by the countries concerned." Qichen 1992

"Discourse"	Description
Common Interest	Code if FPE invokes common interests of all states, especially statements affirming that national and international interests are mutually inclusive. E.g., "Stability and development in China not only benefit the Chinese people but also contribute to peace in Asia and the world as a whole, China needs stability and the world needs a stable China." Qichen, 1990
Internationalism	Code if FPE utters anything positive about diplomacy, free trade, open borders, benefits of cooperation etc. Do not code if the reference is made to multilateralism or collective action. E.g. "It has always been a shared aspiration and objective of the people of all countries to work for world peace, national stability, social progress, economic growth, and a better life." Qichen, 1992
Legally grounded rebuke	Code if FPE: Rebukes/insults justified by UN resolutions and other international laws and treaty obligations. I.E., "Iraq has failed to comply with UNSC Resolution 763. and continues to illegally occupy Kuwait."
Positive Relations with Peer Competitors	Code if FPE makes positive/supportive comments about China, USSR/Russia, U.S.A. E.g. "So we will defend these principles while encouraging China and other claimants to resolve their differences peacefully." Obama, 2015
Reform	Code if FPE (probably Chinese) speaks of reforming international order or specific aspects like the UN. E.g. "The reform of the United Nations is now on the agenda, and its success depends on sound principles and on choosing the right direction. We should like to offer for consideration the following thoughts, which we think conform to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The reform should contribute to maintaining the sovereignty of the Member States" Qichen, 1992

4. 3. ON DATA SELECTION

The content analysis was conducted on a selection of UNGA speeches by American and Chinese FPEs in the 1990-2016 period.³⁹⁵ A selection of other context-related speeches and documents from similar international fora was also included to produce the year by year changes. Other primary and secondary sources provide evidence for the congruence procedures to narrate the linkages between strategic environment, FPEs, and strategies employed by both states throughout the stated period. This subsection briefly discusses the rationale for the selected data.

In what sense is the selected data appropriate for this dissertation's intended contribution? Limiting one's sources to UNGA speeches, samples of other publicly available official documents, and foreign policy speeches seem too simple. There is, however, a method to this seeming lapse of judgment. The first issue is a practical one about the nature of our interlocutors. This research defines FPEs as an aggregate albeit an exclusive group of decision-makers who exercise disproportionately-high influence over national security and foreign policy. Thus, heads of state, government, and chief cabinet officials from foreign and defense ministries, as well as their immediate advisors constitute this exclusive group. Limiting the inquiry in this way is certainly a disservice to other echelons of the relevant state bureaucracies whose functionaries plan and execute policy. The same applies to interest groups and other networks such as policy-making communities that influence FPEs.

³⁹⁵ Ian Hurd and Bruce Cronin (eds.), for example, have pursued a similar line of inquiry but through an interpretive discourse analysis of the UN Security Council and the concept of authority. See especially, Ian Hurd, "Theories and Tests of International Authority," in *Idem, The UN Security Council and the Politics of International Authority* (Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), pp. 34-38.

Secondly, what FPEs say at the UN or other important international fora often reflect deliberation and attention to detail on the part of FPEs, their advisors, and relevant officials from the foreign policy bureaucracy. Examining speeches and documents at the level of the UN, therefore, is an excellent way to assess what designs FPEs wish to advance with respect to international order; whether it is to draw support for rebuking certain countries, making palatable the use of force, or signaling willingness to cooperate. In contrast to traditional operational code as well as leader-specific content analyses where intimate and unstructured interviews or speeches may yield stronger inferences about the beliefs and thought processes of one's subject, the formality of UN speeches and other major foreign policy speeches are more useful to infer FPEs' preferences.³⁹⁶

Thirdly, since all states receive formal representation through speeches delivered either by heads of state, government, or other FPEs, we can construe speeches and debates from the UNGA Plenary Sessions as a common denominator across the cases serving as a referent conducive for comparisons. The target audience, the format, and length of speeches, their availability in English, and their general accessibility, make these speeches ideal for cross-country analysis. Speeches delivered by American and Chinese FPEs in the period from 1990-2016 can reveal much about foreign policy priorities, the issues that decision-makers seek to legitimate, as well as the type of policies states intend to pursue. This is a major discursive arena in which *raison d'état* and *raison de système* are formally articulated and justified.

³⁹⁶ See Goddard and Krebs, "Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy," p. 11.

Fourthly, examining speeches and documents, especially those with broad global audiences, is eminently sensible because FPEs deploy strategic narratives as tools of legitimation as well as framing devices for desired policy ends that can help to mobilize one's population, while also signaling intent to other countries. When American and Chinese FPEs communicate to the world, they signal their policy designs, cooperative intent, and convey threats. The broader the audience, therefore, the more powerful the intended the message.

Fifthly, using speeches from the UNGA rather than UNSC is critically important, especially in the case of China. As Ferdinand as well as Shambaugh note, China's voting patterns and policy dispositions vary between UNGA and UNSC.³⁹⁷ In the latter, China is infinitely more pragmatic as its voting behavior is virtually the same as most other permanent members, including the U.S. In contrast, China is more likely to follow an assertive path at the UNGA where its voting patterns differ significantly from that of the U.S. In this sense, subjecting UNGA speeches to a rigorous analysis is likelier to produce a more honest interpretation of Chinese strategic narratives.

Finally, the UN is the lynchpin of the Liberal International Order due to its role in global governance and conflict management. Moreover, in the "post-war" era, decisions concerning the major and sustained use of force often pass through the UNGA and UNSC. Critics may rightly point to the inefficacy of the UN, its failure to prevent or preempt conflict or even criticize its lack of independent capabilities, or that the UN is a shackle to

³⁹⁷ Peter Ferdinand, "China and the Developing World," in David Shambaugh, ed., *Charting China's Future: Domestic and International Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 91. See also David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), *esp.* chapter 5.

decisive action. This, however, misses a major point about the UN. It is a tool to legitimate state policy and to change or reinforce aspects of international order. In fact, more often than not, U.S. Presidents have sought UN (and NATO) approval to complement the Presidential War Powers Act to circumvent domestic restrictions on the use of force.³⁹⁸ With all due respect to Winston Churchill and Harold MacMillan, then, the UN System is where “jaw-jaw” is inexorably linked to “war-war.”³⁹⁹

4. 4. CASES

As discussed earlier, the empirical chapters respectively provide an overview of American and Chinese grand strategy in the post-Cold War period. Both chapters proceed chronologically, breaking down the period under review based on their incumbent heads of state. While grand-strategic orientations transcend top executives due to various sources of continuity, heads of state nevertheless serve as a convenient temporal referent that can be linked to the strategies of statecraft under scrutiny (see chapter 3). These “mini” or “within” case provide a historically-grounded analysis that addresses the following points of inquiry:

1. *What type of observable strategies did the state elicit in this period along the three dimensions under scrutiny (i.e., use of force and attitude towards allies, attitude towards other great powers, and attitude towards international law)?*
2. *Were there any foreign policy outcomes that the literature would consider as constituting a challenge to international order?*
3. *What was the material context of the international system in this period? Permissive or Restrictive?*
4. *How do FPE discourses at the UN, and other applicable fora, characterize their attitude towards international order?*

³⁹⁸ See, most prominently, Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Power* [Third Edition] (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

³⁹⁹ Winston Churchill quoted in Strobe Talbott, *The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for A Global Nation* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2008), p. 3.

Based on the available data, several outcomes are outlined tables 4. 2. And 4. 3., and elaborated upon in the empirical chapters (5 and 6) of this study.

Table 4. 2. U.S. Grand-Strategic Orientations in the Post-Cold War

	Years	Permissive Environment	Risk Propensity	Satisfaction	Predicted Order Orientation	Primary Observable Strategies
Bush I	1989-1993	RESTRICTIVE ⁴⁰⁰	LOW	HIGH	CONFORM/ REFORM	<i>Multilateralism Restraint Enmeshment</i>
Clinton	1993-2001	PERMISSIVE	MODERATE	HIGH	REFORM	<i>Leadership Expansionism Reformism</i>
Bush II	2001-2009	PERMISSIVE ⁴⁰¹	HIGH	LOW	CHALLENGE	<i>Unilateralism Imperialism Radicalism</i>
Obama	2009-2017	RESTRICTIVE	MODERATE	MODERATE	RETRENCH	<i>Withdrawal Appeasement Conservatism</i>

Table 4 .3. Chinese Grand-Strategic Orientations in the Post-Cold War

	Years	Permissive Environment	Prospect Framing	Satisfaction Framing	Predicted Order Orientation	Primary Observable Strategies
Shang-Kun & Zemin	1988-2001	RESTRICTIVE	MODERATE	LOW	RETRENCH	<i>Withdrawal Appeasement Conservatism</i>
Zemin & Jintao	2001-2010	RESTRICTIVE	HIGH	HIGH	CONFORM	<i>Multilateralism Restraint Enmeshment</i>
Jiping	2010-Present	PERMISSIVE	HIGH	HIGH	REFORM	<i>Leadership Expansionism Reformism</i>

⁴⁰⁰ The immediate aftermath of the Cold War is somewhat of an exception due to continuities inherent to the quick transition process. The restrictive environment of bipolarity quickly gave way. Nevertheless, attaining unipolarity midway into his presidency could not have translated into dramatic foreign change under George H. W. Bush.

⁴⁰¹ Note that under the period of study, the international environment for U.S. is always permissive as far as capabilities are concerned, but ambiguities over threats, opportunities, and the relative availability of allied support appears to matter the most.

4. 5. LIMITATIONS

As a purely-theory driven enterprise on the nature of grand strategy and order, this dissertation is culpable due to its obvious case-selection bias. It focuses on the present international system and the foreign policy of the “unipole” and the rising challenger. The theory, and research design could benefit from casting a wider net and subjecting the theory to further tests by exploring non-superpower cases (which would provide a greater variation in terms of “freedom of action”) as well as different historical periods. Due to considerable constraints, the researcher professes that these topics are best left for future projects.

Another obvious issue with this research is, on one hand, its desire to provide an alternative framing to a particularly interesting phenomenon of America’s predilection for “revisionism,” and, on the other, the non-event that is Chinese restraint. Bringing to bear the contextual and discursive evidence upon behavioral outcomes is easier to manage when there is a clear and dramatic shift in the national agenda, as in the case of America’s order-reforming and order-challenging. America’s peripheral wars in the 1990s and 2000s depict similar phenomena but differ in their build-up and outcome; or as argued in Chapter IV, the U.S. went from primarily order-reforming to order-challenging.

The use of strategic narratives and content analysis in such a way so as to reduce them to a secondary role in the research design is also questionable. This researcher is nevertheless adamant that this design affords a comparatively robust way to glean crucial elements about foreign policy executives based on a content analysis driven analysis. A simple provision of secondary sources or discourse analysis would not have sufficed to

reveal the aspirations and insecurities of FPEs and their carefully constructed narrative about international order.

As a standalone theory of grand strategy, the present approach evinces similarities to prominent foreign policy theories, such as those offered by coalitional theories and diversionary war theories as well as balance-of-risk theory. Different from these theories, the present approach nevertheless explains restraint as well. Moreover, the inclusion by way of elite preferences of international society is a unique contribution worth further consideration.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Our original puzzle was the unexpected “revisionist” tendencies of the one state that ought to be most satisfied (U.S.A.) with international order. The puzzling foreign policy of the U.S. has had a deleterious effect in recent decades on the international order it had worked so hard to create. As we are attempting to reform this vocabulary, it would be incorrect to label the U.S. as a revisionist state, though it acts comparable to one. It is not, moreover, inevitable that a great-power state of the U.S.’ caliber is preordained to undermine international order since it acted with utmost restraint when structural factors least constrained it.⁴⁰² Nor does the idea of an otherwise-consistent U.S. grand strategy, punctuated by occasional interjections of endogenous variables, do justice to the full gamut of behaviors. American efforts to construct, reinforce, and, at times, undermine international order is a variegated process that requires elaboration in this chapter.

To find the underlying cause of order-challenging behavior, we also need to examine the circumstances in which the U.S. employed other types of strategies. To this end, this chapter offers a stylized history of the post-Cold War U.S. grand strategy to illustrate the grand-strategic orientations of the U.S. over time-based on existing material and discursive forces, as well as the strategic dispositions of succeeding U.S. administrations. Each of the subsections follows the standard formula elaborated in

⁴⁰² For example, some argue that unilateralism is the standard *modus operandi* of America and multilateralism, especially during the unipolar moment, was nothing more than an aberration. See Skidmore, *The Unilateralist Temptation*; Bradley F. Podliska, *Acting Alone: The Scientific Study of U.S. Hegemony and the Unilateral Use-of-Force Decision Making* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).

Chapter 4, inquiring as to the type of strategies exhibited in U.S. grand strategy. Thus, each period under study addresses the matter of how and in what manner did U.S. use force in this period, how it comported its relations with other great powers, and to what extent its conduct conformed to norms and international law. The subsections also highlight legitimacy issues and consequences of U.S. conduct on international order at appropriate junctures. Before anything else, however, it is useful to revisit important debates on U.S. grand strategy.

5.2. U.S. GRAND STRATEGY IN THE POST-COLD WAR

While the literature review in Chapter 2 sought comprehensive answers to the problem of state behavior towards international order more broadly, understanding the controversy of American grand strategy requires an examination of false dichotomies surrounding the origins and ambitions of American foreign policy. This section, therefore, briefly considers the literature on American grand strategy in the post-Cold War. U.S. grand strategy is subject rife with much controversy and abounds in critiques dedicated to its many failures.⁴⁰³ The overarching question concerning U.S. grand strategy is, does the U.S. have a consistent grand strategy? A common argument is that since the early days of the Cold War, U.S. has not only reacted to the structural threat posed by the Soviet Union, but also consistently pursued a grand strategy based around several important security-based principles such as ensuring U.S. preponderance, but also promoting a liberal world order.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ For critiques of American grand strategy, see John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy.” See, also, Graham Slater, “Foreign Policy Evaluation and the Utility of Intervention,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida International University, 2017).

⁴⁰⁴ Partick Porter, “Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not Changed Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment,” *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Spring, 2018), pp. 9–46; Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*; Layne, *Peace of Illusions*; Paul D. Miller, “Five Pillars of American Grand Strategy,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2012), pp. 7-44.

Despite possessing overwhelming military capabilities, American FPEs viewed the Soviet Union as a credible and existential threat. The restrictive environment of bipolarity disciplined American and allied FPEs towards the common purpose of containing the Soviet Union. Even when changing material circumstances allowed for alternative approaches, such as when the restrictive conditions of the 1960s and 70s made *Détente* an attractive alternative, the overall intellectual framework remained the same. The U.S. continued to build up the institutional architecture of the Liberal International Order to further cement the Western alliance and showed a willingness to act as an anchor by providing free security and paying the costs of maintaining an open trading system as hegemons are apt to do.⁴⁰⁵

Some have also argued that the U.S. has consistently pursued a grand strategy aimed at global domination (aka primacy) due either to the dictates of the international system or, per Realist parlance, domestic maladaptations that fuel unnecessary expansionism or activism. If the latter, then by what mechanism? It is possible to trace exuberances to any number of unique qualities to the U.S., from materially grounded factors such as domestic economic and class interests (i.e., imperial coalitions) to ideational and cultural factors, or a combination of them.⁴⁰⁶ Some of these popular prescriptive grand

⁴⁰⁵ Arthur L. Stein, "The Hegemon's Dilemma: Great Britain, the United States, and the International Economic Order," *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring, 1984), p. 386.

⁴⁰⁶ Dueck, *Reluctant Crusader*; Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*; Benjamin Miller, "Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq," *Security Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2010), pp. 26–65, especially pp. 28–32; Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*; Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and American Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007); Walt, *Hell of Good Intentions*. For the effects of domestic politics more generally, see, Richard N. Rosecrance and Arthur A. Sein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Benjamin O. Fordham, "Domestic Politics, International Pressure, and the

strategies are explored in Table 5. 1. below and matched to their corresponding grand-strategic orientations.

Table 5.1. Prescriptive U.S. Grand Strategies⁴⁰⁷

Theory	Approximate Order-Orientation	Use of Force Style	Great Powers	International Law
<i>Neo-Isolationism</i>	Retrenching	Withdrawal/ Minimalism	Appeasement	Conservatism
<i>Off-Shore Balancing</i>	Retrenching/ Conforming	Minimalism/ Multilateral	Restraint	Conservatism/ Enmeshment
<i>Restraint</i>	Conforming	Multilateral	Restraint	Enmeshment
<i>Selective Engagement</i>	Conforming/ Reforming	Leadership	Restraint/ Expansionism	Enmeshment/ Reformism
<i>Cooperative Security</i>	Reforming	Leadership	Expansionism	Reformism
<i>Primacy</i>	Challenging	Unilateralism	Imperialism	Radicalism

The fundamental issue presently is an apparent absence of purpose as the geopolitical ennui of the Post-Cold War left the U.S. without a comprehensive vision for a grand strategy that proved to be an adequate replacement for Containment. The U.S., in other words, lacks a security referent around which to construct an intellectual framework for policy because only an existential threat on the same level as the Soviet Union could provide that kind of discipline.⁴⁰⁸ Despite this, many argue that the U.S. grand strategy has remained consistently expansionist even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The U.S.’

Allocation of American Cold War Military Spending," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (February, 2002), pp. 63-88.

⁴⁰⁷ See Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Posen and Ross, "Competing Visions"; Layne, *Peace of Illusions*; Walt and Mearsheimer, "The Case For Offshore Balancing."

⁴⁰⁸ Jean Davidson, "UCI Scientists Told Moscow's Aim Is to Deprive U.S. of Foe," *Los Angeles Times* (December 12, 1988).

sustained, ambitious and far-reaching policies have prompted a plethora of scholarly arguments in favor of moderating American grand strategy, promoting instead, restraint and multilateralism among other things.⁴⁰⁹

Regarding the empirical implications of this study, and on the matter of continuity of U.S. grand strategy, this chapter positions itself among works arguing in favor of continuity in U.S. behavior but that there were periods of limited deviation within something akin to a cycle. There were periods during the Cold War when the U.S. was more willing to antagonize the Soviet Union, and periods, like *Détente* when the U.S. reverted to a balance of power dynamic. The Post-Cold War also follows a similar logic, as explained below. This idea is also *apropos* today when it has become commonplace to talk about the “Blob,” the unflattering title referring to the American foreign policy elite. They reside in a sort of intellectual bubble where each member possesses a strong internationalist vocation and touts the virtues of “Liberal Hegemony,” which according to Walt has become the default grand strategy of the U.S. after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The main issue for such an argument would be that it is difficult to ascribe to the blob all of the problems and excesses of U.S. foreign policy since it was, technically, successful during the Cold War and demonstrated a credible commitment to a well-

⁴⁰⁹ See Table 5.1. below for an overview of how different prescriptive approaches to U.S. grand strategy fit into this dissertation overall framework. Art, *A New Grand Strategy for America*; Posen, *Restraint*; Mearsheimer, *Case for Offshore Balancing*; Layne, *Peace of Illusions*; Walt, *Hell of Good Intentions Cf. Dueck, Reluctant Crusader*, esp. chapter 5; Wohlforth and Brooks; Hal Brands and Peter D. Feaver, “Should America Retrench?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 95, No. 6 (November/December 2016), pp. 164–172, at pp. 168–169. Also implied by Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*, pp. 339; Tudor Onea, “Immoderate Greatness Is Great Power Restraint a Practical Grand Strategy?” *European Journal of International Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February, 2017), pp. 111-132.

functioning international order.⁴¹⁰ Even if the fundamental goal of the blob is to promote U.S. primacy, then why does U.S. grand strategy sometimes prefers multilateralism and international cooperation as a vehicle to promote primacy and other times jeopardizes not only international order but its preeminent position as well?

The solution lies in assessing how decision-makers think about international order (as measured by their words) because regardless of values or other interests, decision-makers have limited ways to think about their situation: are they satisfied, or not, and how much resources are they likely to commit?

5.3. MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

This section deliberates on the material circumstances of the U.S. in the post-Cold War and how succeeding U.S. Presidents (and other FPEs) have advanced certain narratives about international order. The previous inquiry, achieved through an examination of U.S. military spending and its latent capabilities measured according to the Composite Index of National Capabilities, will illustrate the overall potential freedom of action U.S. potentially enjoyed. The latter analysis, meanwhile, illustrates the analysis developed in Chapter 4 as it applies to the U.S. case.

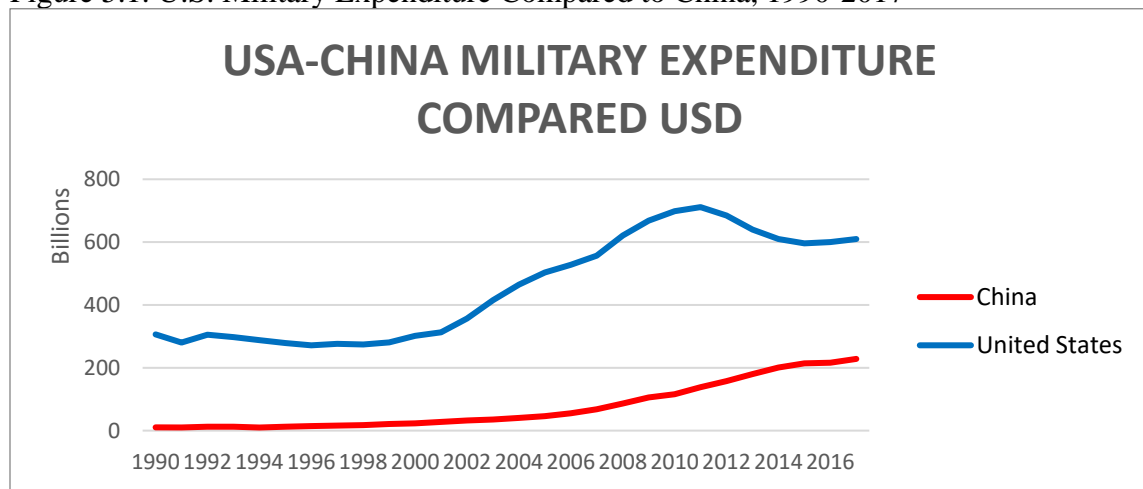
5.3.1. Material Capabilities

Military-Economic capabilities are a decisive factor in world politics and determine not only a state's ambitions but also the freedom of action to pursue them. In this research, the

⁴¹⁰ Stephen Wertheim raises this point in response to Stephen Walt. See *Idem*. "The Hell of Good Intentions," (Speech Washington DC: CATO Institute, October 17, 2018). See, also, Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, pp. 66-68.

primary cause for grand-strategic orientations is a variation in the international environment: whether it is restrictive or permissive. Thus, while material preponderance is worth exploring as it engenders ambitious grand strategies, contingent factors such as emergent threats (potentially, something that FPEs assess subjectively) and opportunities need an introduction at appropriate junctures in the analysis (below). The Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC), has consistently ranked the U.S. as either the top or second-ranked power in the past decades.⁴¹¹ CINC uses indicators such as military expenditure, military personnel, various economic indicators such as energy and steel production, and population to rank all nations over time between 1816 and, as of its most recent iteration, 2012.

Figure 5.1. U.S. Military Expenditure Compared to China, 1990-2017



⁴¹¹ All figures based on Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey, “Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-1965,” 19-48 and augmented by World Bank Open Data. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/>, Last Accessed: November 11, 2018.

Figure 5.2. U.S. Military Spending % of GDP, Compared to China, 1990-2017

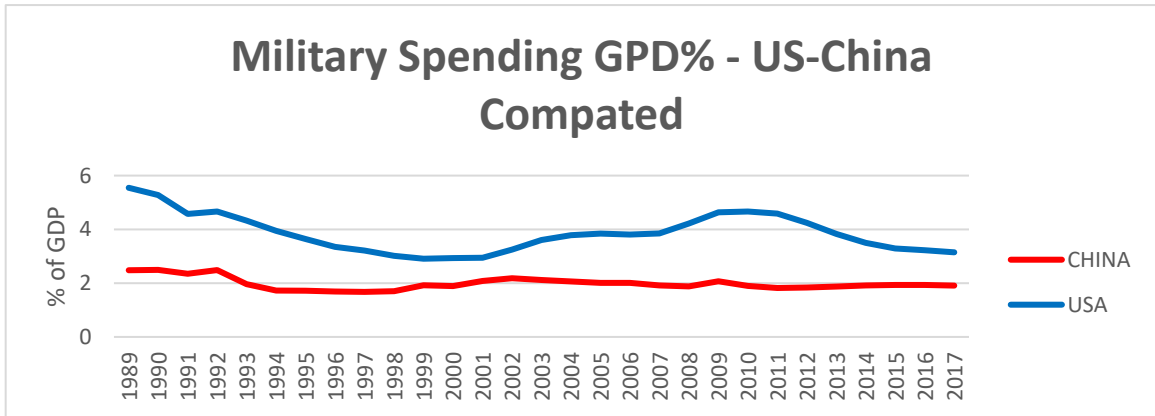
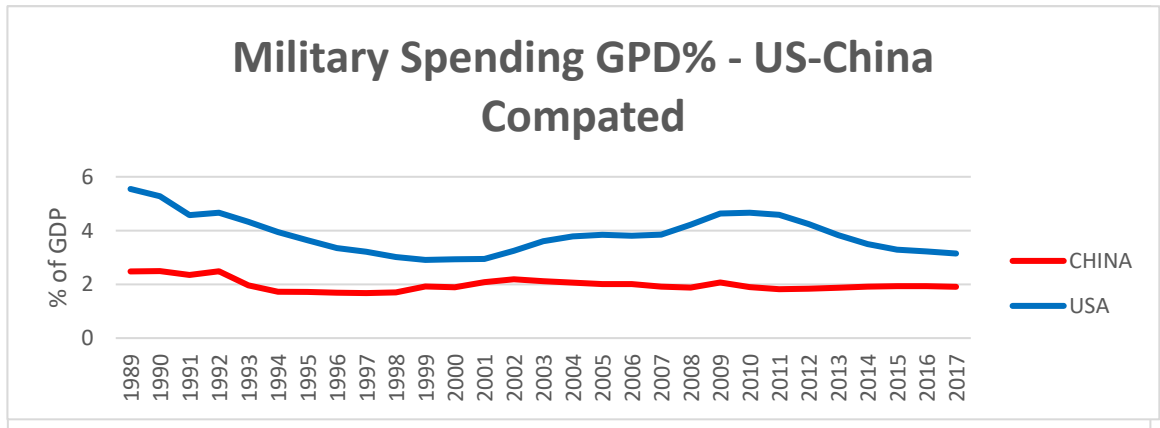


Figure 5.3. U.S. vs. China CINC Scores, 1990-2012

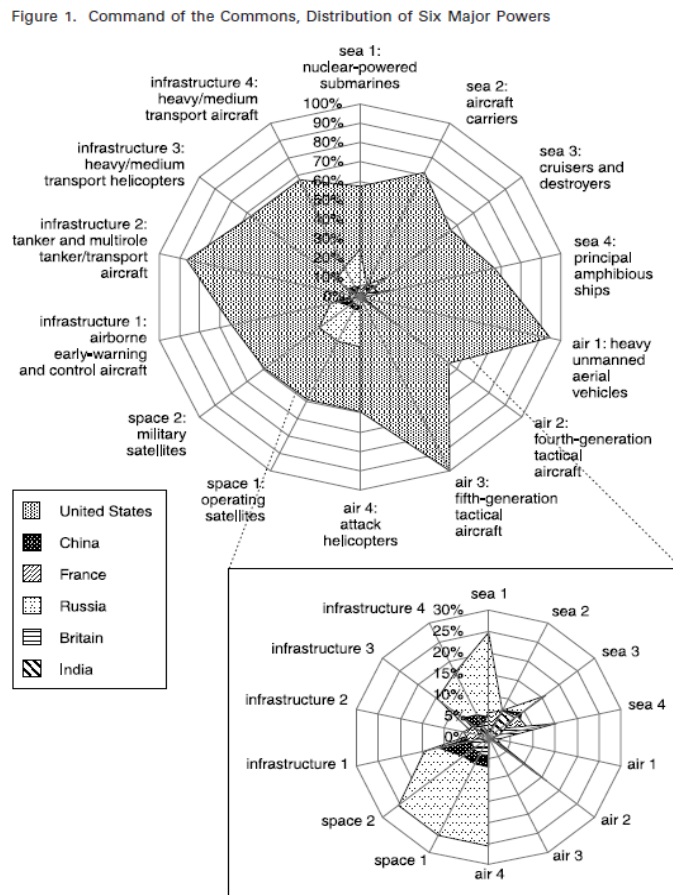


CINC falls short in various ways due to its overdetermination of 19th and 20th-century metrics of military-economic power and overemphasizing national population, which skews rankings for populous states like India, Indonesia, and China especially which often ranks higher than the U.S. despite being dwarfed by its military expenditure. Furthermore, by ignoring significant force multipliers such as technological prowess, troop quality, doctrine, and deployment, CINC provides only a rough sketch. Nevertheless, it has proven to be a venerable means to illustrate the overall distribution of military capabilities globally.

Figure 5.4. below illustrates the military prowess of the U.S. recently (2014) by the

global percentage of power projection systems/platforms it possesses. The data unambiguously shows that the U.S. spends more on defense, not only in absolute terms but also as a proportion of GDP as compared to China. Furthermore, between 1990-2018, U.S. military spending fluctuated only slightly with minor dips after the Gulf War, *i.e.*, reductions during the first Clinton term, and notably again after 2011 until the Trump presidency, at which point U.S. military spending reached its peak.

Figure 5.4. Comparing the Distribution of Power Between Major Powers in 2014⁴¹²



⁴¹² Brooks and Wohlforth, *America Abroad.*, p. 20.

Posen, as well as Brooks and Wohlforth, points to the importance of material capabilities in conjunction with consideration of the command of the commons, the availability of weapons system as well as platforms capable of power projection beyond its hemisphere.⁴¹³ When considered holistically, the metrics point to an overwhelming American material edge over the next five most capable states. Figure 5.4., for instance, quantifies the overwhelming material advantage that the U.S. presently enjoys, which demonstrates how the present international system is *permissive* for the U.S. regarding its freedom of action to pursue ambitious grand strategies. The international system in the period under study has virtually always been permissive for the U.S. by metrics of power. Matters of permissiveness and restrictiveness as a *perceptual constraint* is a different matter. In the case of the former, the absence of clear rivals and predictable threats militate against cohesive policy formation and empower less-than-grand strategies. System-level permissiveness can facilitate risk-acceptance in situations of uncertainty, especially when decision-makers perceive themselves to be in the domain of losses, or when dissatisfaction with international order is, overall, high.

5.3.2. Content Analysis of Narratives

For this research, U.S. FPEs represent the most influential decision-makers, and the immediate officials and advisors responsible for foreign policy. These include U.S. Presidents, NSC Advisors, Secretaries of State, and other officials as dictated by the context. The content analysis focuses primarily on U.S. Presidents and their speeches. Of thirty-five speeches by U.S. FPEs at the UNGA Plenary Sessions between 1990-2018,

⁴¹³ See Posen, “Command of the Commons”; Brooks and Wohlforth, *America Abroad*.

reveals several key ideas about what the U.S. communicated to the world, within the halls of the top international public forum in the past three decades.

The first implication is the commonsensical observation, albeit an important one since it validates the overall theoretical and methodological premise of the study. There is a degree of overlap between narratives suggesting satisfaction and dissatisfaction with positive versus negative framings respectively. That is dissatisfaction narratives and loss-framing, and satisfaction narratives and gains-framing overlap despite their mutually exclusive coding. When plotted on charts (see figures 5.5 and 5.6 below), the overtime trends in the data showcase this tendency with greater clarity within the circumscribed parameters of the present analysis.⁴¹⁴

The trendline (figure 5. 5.) suggests that in the post-Cold War period, U.S. FPEs have increasingly made more references to expected losses, uttered more sentences denoting uncertainty, more frequently drawn attention to the negative consequences of unfolding international drama, and, overall, expressed greater ambivalence about America's fortunes. American FPEs have increasingly made more references that would denote dissatisfaction with international order. References to American exceptionalism and the U.S. national interest (but not also broader global interests), utterances signaling intent for unilateral action, purely ideological and moralistic criticisms of UN members, and criticism of other great powers increases over time. It is worth noting that while individual narratives that reference some aspect of dissatisfaction remain low overall, spiking during the Bush II administration and, later, with the Trump administrations, the overall trend does

⁴¹⁴ See appendix for percentages of coding of individual documents.

not change even when speeches from 2017 and 2018 are omitted to account for the dramatic shift in narrative.

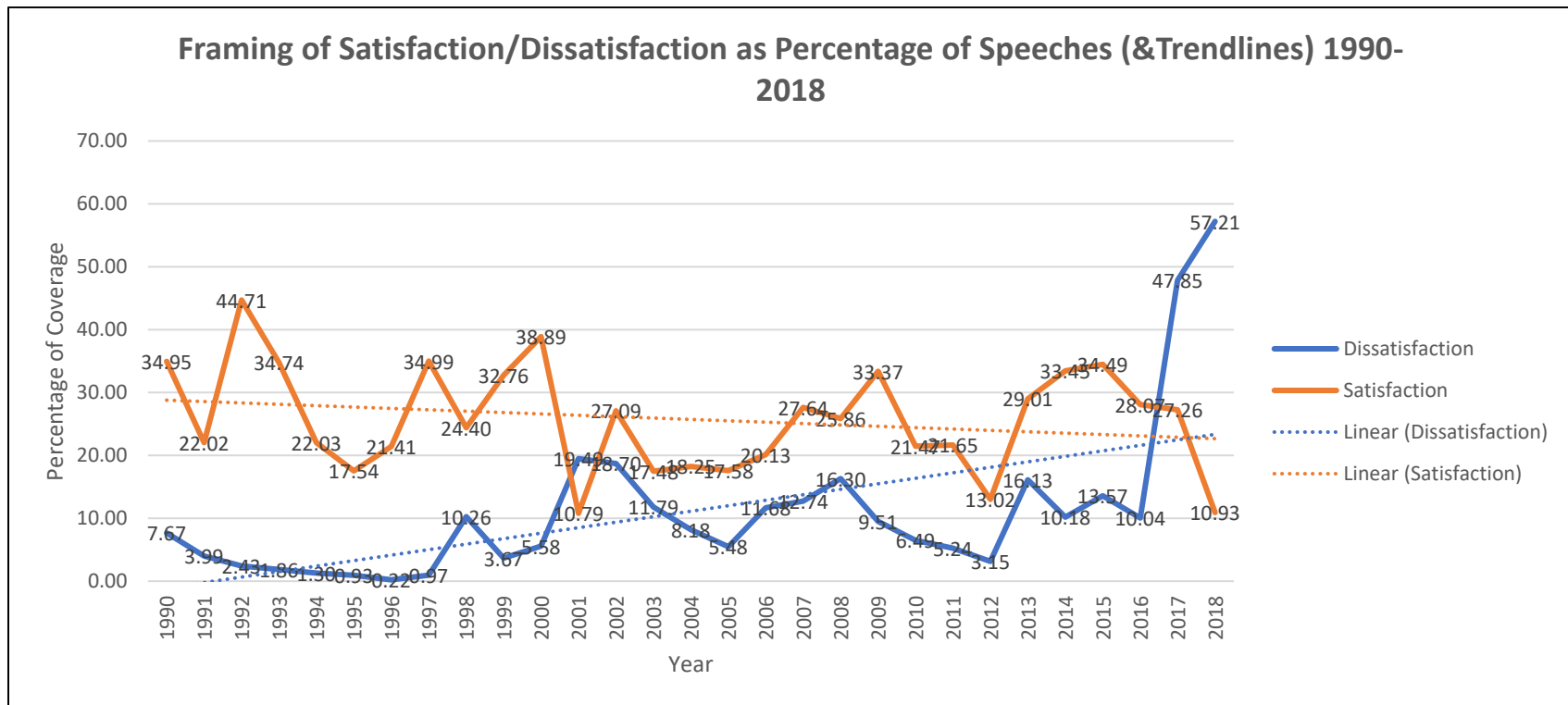
Conversely, U.S. FPEs have overtime made fewer references to potential benefits or possible gains from multilateralism and collective action, professed less certainty about the international system, and are less likely to underscore positive developments (see figure 5. 6. below). Furthermore, American FPEs made slightly-fewer references overtime denoting satisfaction with international order. There is an overall decrease in internationalist narratives as well as instances when global common interests feature ahead of U.S. interests.

The second implication for the analysis is that the content of the speeches seem to reflect prevailing developments in the international system, which vindicates the theoretical of this research: that there is a relationship between what FPEs say and international outcomes. With the benefit of hindsight, we can surmise that FPEs articulate narratives in response to the evolving conjuncture, and to issues that matter to them, which explains some of the variations in the speeches. The analysis does not suggest that American FPEs purposefully choose certain words or narratives to communicate their relative satisfaction with international order and thereby signal their full intentions to the international community. The fact, however, that U.S. Presidents would bring up certain narratives indicates that some issues are more salient than others, reflecting even if imperfectly some of the sentiments, beliefs, and psychological dispositions of a group of decision-makers with sufficient influence over the formulation and communication of U.S.' interests to the international community. We can conjecture, therefore, that American FPEs might have felt greater satisfaction/dissatisfaction in certain periods and may have

had varying levels of risk-propensity accordingly. This research also corroborates an essential finding on the use of force and risk propensities of U.S. presidents: use of force to protect existing commitments is widely seen in the public as a popular move for presidents while perceived “expansion” does not curry favors with voters and can be considered as risk-taking.⁴¹⁵

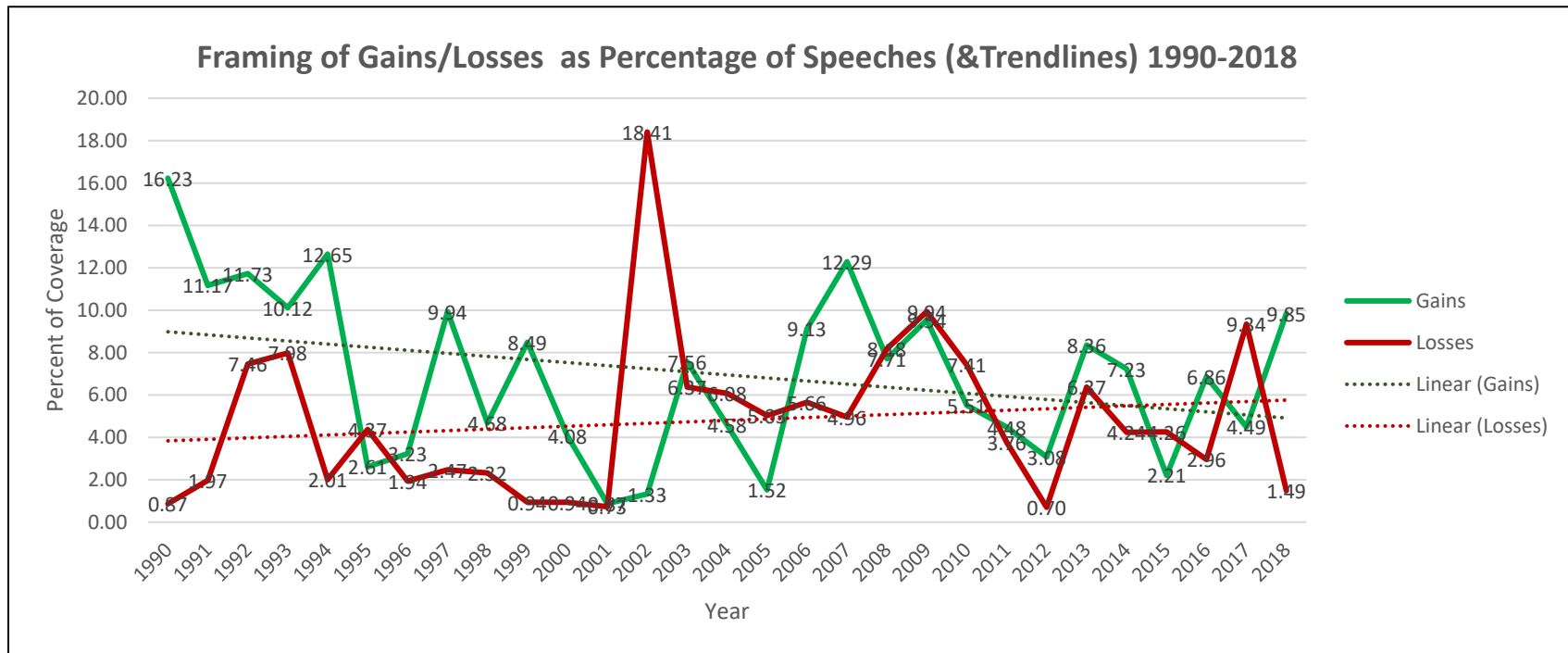
⁴¹⁵ See Miroslav Nincic, “Loss Aversion and the Domestic Context of Military Intervention,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (March, 1997), pp. 97-120.

Figure 5.5. U.S. FPEs' narratives about satisfaction with international order⁴¹⁶



⁴¹⁶ See Appendix I for a detailed list of documents and FPEs covered in the analysis.

Figure 5.6. U.S. FPEs' framing of gains/losses concerning international order⁴¹⁷



⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

5.4. U.S. GRAND STRATEGY IN THE POST-COLD WAR REDUX

There are significant continuities in U.S. grand strategy during and after the Cold War. The superimposition, under the auspices of the U.S., of a Liberal International Order upon the traditional Westphalian international system in the second half of the twentieth century shaped global patterns of amity and enmity on the bases of regimes' loyalty to one superpower patron or the other. This arrangement helped to secure peace among great power states at the cost of fomenting debilitating proxy wars in the periphery, regime changes, and a decline in the political pluralism that was a hallmark of traditional international society. Nevertheless, bipolarity seems to have promoted much-needed certainty, stability, and alliance cohesion. The end of the Cold War, however, fundamentally altered the calculus by elevating the U.S. to the status of a unipole, thereby placing the U.S. in a position to create a "new world order."⁴¹⁸

To reiterate the main argument, the Elite Responsibility Approach conjectures that a favorable international environment and psychological proclivities towards positive thinking *vis-à-vis* international order and FPEs' perceived prospects initially encouraged them to pursue, multilaterally, more ambitious policies abroad. As FPEs' satisfaction with international order dipped due to deteriorating circumstances, so too did U.S. grand strategy become more unilateral.

What is important to note is that the unipolar moment did not translate into unrestrained use of force by the unipole. Far from actively recreating a new world order by

⁴¹⁸ See George H. W. Bush, "September 11, 1990: Address Before a Joint Session of Congress," (Washington DC: Congress of the United States of America, September 11, 1990).

force, American conduct of foreign policy on distant regions unfolded with at least a scintilla of deference to international society. Why would an ascendant unipole deign to appease a significantly weaker foe like Iraq, carefully operate within a UN mandate, and resist, after the operations, the opportunity to displace an autocratic leader?⁴¹⁹ In fact, even in the run-up to the operations in Iraq, U.S. FPEs were reluctant to use force and sought diplomatic options, going so far as to appease Saddam.⁴²⁰ Beyond the matter of the use of force, the U.S. also relinquished a historic opportunity to expand its power into the former sphere of the collapsing Soviet Union.⁴²¹ American restraint was also evident in international law as the U.S. continued the trend of buttressing arms limitations regimes while advocating a form of strategic enmeshment. Counterintuitively, then, the unipolar moment coincided with an order-conforming grand-strategic orientation for the U.S.

American grand strategy evolved from less-ambitious order-conforming strategies under George H. W. Bush (Bush I, hereafter) to a reforming disposition under the Clinton administration as systemic developments not only enabled but also necessitated a more significant investment of resources. The power vacuum and uncertainty left by the collapse of the Soviet Union appears to have made American decision-makers think of themselves as being solely responsible for the management of the international system. Absent a superpower rival, and with the emergence of so many conflicts in the periphery, American

⁴¹⁹ Especially considering that the same administration had no qualms about doing exactly that in Panama a year earlier.

⁴²⁰ See Yetiv, *Absence of Grand Strategy*, pp. 5, 70, 170.

⁴²¹ This appears to be a minor increment to the overall situation in the emerging post-Cold War security structure. Cf. Shifrinson, *Rising Titans*, p. 147.

FPEs felt they had more to lose should they fail to respond to rising challenges. Pushing for a more liberal and internationalist agenda, extensive humanitarian interventions, and democracy promotion, therefore, become endemic to this period.⁴²² While the U.S. invested greater capital into the use of force, much of these materialized as multilateral interventions spearheaded by significant American investment and leadership. The U.S. also began to throw its weight around as it sought to reinvent NATO and promote its expansion into the former Soviet Union. Finally, America adopted an ambitious human rights agenda designed to inject military power into humanitarian interventions. All these features evoke the idea of reforming international order through expansive policies while promoting international legitimacy through multilateralism.⁴²³

The trend of American interventionism that appeared during the Clinton administration reached its apogee under George W. Bush (Bush II, hereafter). There were significant differences between the two regarding style and ambition. The so-called “Bush Revolution” in foreign policy, resulted in a foreign policy that was unabashedly unilateralist along a litany of global issues at various theaters of operations. Indeed, Bush II-era FPEs heralded a period of what this research typifies as order-challenging behavior. Since past U.S. administrations tipped their hats to some form of multilateralism and

⁴²² To avoid confusion, there is nothing puzzling about why a hegemonic state would want to formally institutionalize its power and values.⁴²² While this period is infinitely valuable for theorizing, as evidence by recent additions to the literature on U.S. efforts to eclipse the U.S.S.R., the post-Cold War period provides a much more fruitful area of inquiry. Some example works include Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*; Shiffrinson, *Rising Titans, Falling Giants*.

⁴²³ Chalmers Johnson, for instance, argues that Clinton’s foreign policy was imperialist, and possibly more effective than that of his successor due to his care in fostering multilateralism and international rhetoric. See *Idem.*, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2004), p. 255.

deference to rules back when American unipolarity seemed more indomitable, the unipolarity argument cannot account for this change alone. With the blowback from 9/11 and the introduction of a Global War on Terror, a U.S.-led coalition intervened in Afghanistan and, much more controversially, invaded Iraq in 2003. The latter is especially noteworthy because it failed to garner sufficient support by the international community as the U.S. had to resort to an ad-hoc coalition rather than through traditional mechanisms such as the UN or NATO. The U.S. became subject to several other international-legal controversies concerning the human rights regime and the convention on torture.

The following Obama administration showcased greater deference to the *raison de syst me* as it reversed *some* of the excesses and unilateralism of U.S. foreign policy. The freedom of action, both regarding material preponderance and social influence, bestowed by unipolarity, led the U.S. to attempt at shaping international order by way of reinforcing its liberal order. In this period American grand strategy appears more temperate, eliciting on the surface level elements of retrenchment to significant environmental restrictions on grand strategies, such as a stagnating resource base and the burdens of existing commitments. While many have noted the contrary that the Obama presidency marks a notable shift in tone and rhetoric in U.S. foreign policy, away from Bush II-era unilateralism, these assertions seemed dubious even in earlier years of Obama’s tenure.⁴²⁴ Using the framework of this dissertation, one could also argue that Obama extricated the U.S. from significant commitments by preferring to “lead from behind,” which was

⁴²⁴ See Skidmore, *Unilateralist Temptation*, pp. 6, 15, 65-66.

detrimental to international order since principled activism and reliability are hallmarks of preserving an international order. With the rise of anti-establishment figures in the liberal West, most importantly the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States, scholars thought more seriously about how the U.S. is undermining its position. Since existing approaches either focus too much on China or single out a specific maladaptation in U.S. domestic politics, they do not seem to provide an adequate account of U.S.’ particular brand of “great-state autism.”⁴²⁵ The chapter elaborates on these arguments, as depicted in Table 5. 2. below, in the following sections.

Table 5. 2. U.S. Grand-Strategic Orientations in the Post-Cold War

	Years	Permissive Environment	Risk Propensity	Satisfaction	Predicted Order Orientation	Primary Observable Strategies
Bush I	1989-1993	RESTRICTIVE ⁴²⁶	LOW	HIGH	CONFORM/ REFORM	<i>Multilateralism Restraint Enmeshment</i>
Clinton	1993-2001	PERMISSIVE	MODERATE	HIGH	REFORM	<i>Leadership Expansionism Reformism</i>
Bush II	2001-2009	PERMISSIVE ⁴²⁷	HIGH	LOW	CHALLENGE	<i>Unilateralism Imperialism Radicalism</i>
Obama	2009-2017	RESTRICTIVE	MODERATE	MODERATE	RETRENCH	<i>Withdrawal Appeasement Conservatism</i>

⁴²⁵ This term is borrowed from Edward N. Luttwak, *The Logic of Strategy vs. The Rise of China* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2012). While Luttwak employs this concept to explain the unique challenges that China faces as a rising great power, and the strategic mistakes it is bound to make, other great powers are not immune from. The gist of the term is that leaders of great states often have to contend with various domestic constraints and issues, which makes it difficult for them to juggle these with the competing demands of their overseas commitments.

⁴²⁶ The immediate aftermath of the Cold War is somewhat of an exception due to continuities inherent to the quick transition process. The restrictive environment of bipolarity quickly gave way. Nevertheless, attaining unipolarity midway into his presidency could not have translated into dramatic foreign change under George H. W. Bush.

⁴²⁷ Note that under the period of study, the international environment for U.S. is always permissive as far as capabilities are concerned, but ambiguities over threats, opportunities, and the relative availability of allied support appears to matter the most.

5.4.1. Order-Conforming, 1989-1994

Presidents Bush I and, initially, William J. Clinton presided over a highly order-conforming U.S. wherein multilateralism and restraint prevailed, which presents a kind of paradox. The data analysis reveals that conditions were ripe for this type of orientation. From the purview of military capabilities, U.S. power was unmatched as it attained formal primacy in the international system. The U.S. also had the freedom of action to pursue an ambitious grand strategy, but it did not need to. Stephen Walt perfectly encapsulates the dilemma:

This position of primacy was the permissive condition that allowed Washington to pursue a highly ambitious foreign policy—to “shape the world”—without having to worry very much about the consequences. Because the United States was already wealthy, powerful, and secure, there was little need to “go abroad in search of monsters to destroy” and little to gain even if these efforts succeeded. The result was a paradox: U.S. primacy made an ambitious grand strategy *possible*, but it also made it less *necessary*.⁴²⁸

Where threat perceptions and systemic opportunities mattered, however, Iraq’s unreasonable contestation of the Middle Eastern regional order had a disciplining effect.⁴²⁹ Given the broader objectives of the Cold War, the primary American strategy was always to deny the Soviet Union any influence in the region and to ensure that oil could safely flow from the region to world markets. U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East did not reflect a set of enunciated principles that would consistently serve as guidelines for broader U.S. objectives. Instead, the U.S. appears to have vacillated between various balancing strategies, alternately opting to balance either power or threats—what Steve

⁴²⁸ Stephen Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*, p. 13.

⁴²⁹ See Yetiv, *Absence of Grand Strategy*, p. 68.

Yativ calls “reactive engagement.”⁴³⁰ In this transitional period, neither balancing against power nor threat was vital. It is therefore surprising that the U.S. far from adopting some form of preponderance chose to pursue a policy of constructive engagement per NSDs 10 and 26.⁴³¹

The threat that Iraq posed to international society was all too apparent to the international community as Saddam’s illegal activities provided a much-needed security referent around which U.S. FPEs and the international community could unite.⁴³² Furthermore, there was a strong sense that U.S. FPEs constructed the national agenda around the notion that Iraq was primarily a global threat to energy security *first*, which was then a threat to U.S. interests —*raison de système* prevailed.⁴³³ Thus, in correlation with a highly favorable international environment, we find evidence that American strategic narratives at the UN reflect a substantial degree of satisfaction with international order, apart from Iraq’s conduct, and numerous references to certainty, gains, and America’s

⁴³⁰ See Steve A. Yativ, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf 1972-2005* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 11-13. Note, also, that there is a significant overlap between the general findings of this research and Yativ’s findings on U.S. grand strategy *vis-à-vis* the Middle East. For him, U.S. lacked a formal and consistent grand strategy as each succeeding administration appears to have striven for different balance of power options in earlier years while eventually succumbing to pursuing primacy.

⁴³¹ See The White House, *National Security Directive 26: U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf* (Washington DC: The White House, October 2, 1989).

⁴³² Importantly, but neglected in the present study, is the importance of legitimacy not just as a measure of conformity to order, but as a quality that enables certain ambitions in World politics. In an excellent comparative study of the Two Gulf Wars, Lamina Lee shows that legitimacy, played an important role in determining the way the conflicts unfolded. In the case of the First Gulf War, for example, much of the international community condemned Saddam’s actions as being illegitimate and U.S. was able to responsibly exercise legitimate power to build a coalition and overturn the occupation of Kuwait. *Idem.*, *US Hegemony and International Legitimacy: Norms Power and Followership in the Wars on Iraq* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), esp. Chapter 2.

⁴³³ See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 491.

favorable prospects. If the present theory is correct, there should be ample evidence in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy that exhibits a preference for multilateralism, restraint towards other great powers, and a disposition towards following international norms. Finding this evidence in conjunction with FPE discourses about international order that affirm their overall satisfaction with the existing arrangements would further enhance the validity of the framework.

5.4.1.1. Use of Force

In this period, it is difficult to assess U.S.' strategy *vis-à-vis* style of use of force and disposition towards international order because multilateral operations realistically require some level of leadership. Pure unilateralism, absent any allied assistance and consent, is virtually unheard of in modern history. At most, both dispositions feature within a continuum from perfect collective security on one hand and hegemonic dominance on the other.⁴³⁴ It is, of course, counterintuitive to argue that force-use is evidence for restraint, much less at the hands of an ascendant unipolar state. This researcher would nevertheless like to convince the reader that where the use of force and alliance relations mattered, U.S. strategy most closely falls under the rubric of multilateralism.⁴³⁵ To wit, the Bush I Presidency oversaw significant military operations beyond U.S. borders. The U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989, and the First Gulf War (August 1991) are the most prominent examples in this period. In both cases, the Bush I administration is culpable for harming international order by causing instability through military intervention. The

⁴³⁴ See Onea, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, pp. 91-92.

⁴³⁵ See Lee, *US Hegemony*, pp. 26-28.

former operation is nothing short of a unilateral exercise of power against a client state within the hegemon's hemisphere, which resulted in an externally imposed regime change. The latter, meanwhile, succeeded in reversing Iraq's occupation of Kuwait but further destabilized both the region and caused untold misery in Iraq by frustrating Saddam Hussein's ambitions and harming the Iraqi economy through extended sanctions. Both episodes, nevertheless, showcase elements of America's order-conforming orientation in this period.

The Gulf War is an exemplar of multilateralism, and out of other possible alternatives, the U.S. chose the least risky, least ambitious, and order-abiding approach. The literature has a well-established record in explicating the causes and execution of the Gulf Conflict.⁴³⁶ The stalemate of the Iran-Iraq War left both countries in tatters. The latter had to reckon with an extensive \$80-100 billion in debt, but Iraq had also received extensive military aid from the U.S. during the war and amassed a powerful military.⁴³⁷ Saddam had failed to achieve his primary objective of annexing *Shat-el Arab*. Feeling indignant that the Arab world owed him for fighting Shiite Iran, and displeased that OPEC countries in the Gulf had snubbed him by refusing to lower production and raise global oil prices, Saddam would go on to use this considerable military to pursue irredentist claims

⁴³⁶ See, most prominently, Steve A. Yetiv, *The Persian Gulf Crisis*, (Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1997); Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane, *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1994).

⁴³⁷ See Yetiv, *Absence of Grand Strategy*, p. 77.

over the oil-rich State of Kuwait.⁴³⁸ All of this precipitated in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, which set the stage for the Gulf War.

Bush I was initially indecisive about using force but seemed willing to use force.⁴³⁹ Only after realizing, on October 30, that intervention would be costly did Bush I opt to create a broader coalition to maximize success.⁴⁴⁰ In other words, Bush wanted to guarantee while minimizing risks through multilateralism.⁴⁴¹ Content with the developments in the post-Cold War, U.S. FPEs were risk averse. These factors, combined with allied reassurances, such as UN endorsement as well as guarantees of aid by Margaret Thatcher, seems to have made multilateralism the option. As Podliska argues, it was a simple utility calculation.⁴⁴²

Within months of Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait, the international community mobilized not only to demand Iraq's unconditional withdrawal but also authorized the UN to use of force for achieving compliance.⁴⁴³ Rather than rebuking Iraq outright, the Bush I administration acted patiently. In the run-up to this event, the U.S. was hard at work to assuage Iraqi hostility and cajole Saddam with financial opportunities.⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

⁴³⁹ See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 317.

⁴⁴⁰ See Podliska, *Scientific Study of U.S. Hegemony*, pp. 151-152.

⁴⁴¹ Freedman and Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, 112.

⁴⁴² See Podliska, *Scientific Study of U.S. Hegemony*, p. 151. We will revisit this point later. Why was U.S. more willing to act unilaterally and risk committing way more resources in the second Gulf War?

⁴⁴³ See UNSC Resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 671, 674, 676, 677, and most importantly 678.

⁴⁴⁴ For example, U.S. offered cheap agricultural loans to the Saddam regime. Note that Saddam's official pretext for the occupation was not just that he considered Kuwait to be a part of Iraq (as under the previous

After the occupation, both Bush I and his NSC Advisor Brent Scowcroft elected to reverse the situation and deny Saddam a *fait accompli*.⁴⁴⁵ Not only were they willing to use force, but they were prepared to resort to extra measures to destabilize Iraq to topple Saddam.⁴⁴⁶ Once again, the U.S. had the capabilities, and its FPEs even preferred to pursue an ambitious agenda. The Gulf War unfolded as the “perfect” war not only its execution and success but also the way the final decision received the mandate from formal channels of the UN.⁴⁴⁷ Instead of unilateral intervention, U.S. spearheaded diplomatic efforts at the UN to authorize, first, sanctions against Iraq and then assembled a U.S.-led coalition that would act under the mandate of the UN, which was to enforce by any means the stipulations of UNSC Resolution 678.⁴⁴⁸ Impressively, the process of building this UN coalition required the U.S. to earn the approval of adversaries like the Soviet Union and China.⁴⁴⁹

Naturally, American FPEs were all too cognizant of a favorable shift in the international system; one that they believed granted them the “rarest opportunity to reshape world order.”⁴⁵⁰ There was no urgency to do so as the Bush I administration was content

administrative divisions of the Ottoman Empire both Basra, under Iraqi control, and Kuwait belonged to the *sancak* of Basra), but that because Kuwait was undemocratic and the monarchy was illegitimate. See Yetiv, *Absence of Grand Strategy*, p. 77.

⁴⁴⁵ See M. K. Bolton, *The Rise of the American Security State: The National Security Act of 1947 and the Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2018), p. 123.

⁴⁴⁶ See Woodward, *The Commanders*, pp. 236-237.

⁴⁴⁷ See Lee, *U.S. Hegemony and International Legitimacy*, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40, esp. 42.

⁴⁴⁹ This theme is explored in the next section.

⁴⁵⁰ See George H. W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 564.

to reinforce a very favorable status quo. To the extent that U.S. speeches at the Plenary Sessions of UNGA reflect the broad consensus of the administration, one can observe a palpable optimism about America's prospects. The U.S. was very satisfied with an international order, believing that promoting amicable relations with other great powers and acting through collective security would best serve international order and then American interests.⁴⁵¹ There is thus an emphasis on the collective interests of the international community.

Before exploring other aspects of American order-conforming behavior, however, we must also consider the exceptions. The U.S. decision to intervene in Panama and remove Noriega from power is a shadow study of sorts. U.S. did not act multilaterally, nor pursue any form of international arbitration through formal international organizations like the UN System. Despite Noriega's illegitimacy and penchant for facilitating illicit activities like drug trafficking, most Latin American countries subjected the Reagan and Bush I administrations to opprobrium due to their violation of the principle of non-intervention.⁴⁵² The fact that Noriega was an official installed by the U.S. only adds to the controversy. American modus operandi in this earlier affair seems to have set a precedent for the latter

⁴⁵¹ See Andrew Fenton Cooper, Richard A. Higgott, and Kim Richard Nossal, "Bound to Follow? Leadership and Followership in the Gulf Conflict," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 3 (1991), pp. 391–410, esp. 395; G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of International Leadership," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3 (Fall, 1996), pp. 385–408, esp. 386.

⁴⁵²See Alan Ridding, "The World; In Latin America, Noriega Is A Principle," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1988.

Gulf War.⁴⁵³ The intervention in Panama took place against a regime that the U.S. had empowered (like Iraq), and the operation took place as a final resort after diplomatic and other efforts had failed.

5.4.1.2. Great Power Relations

In this period the U.S. exhibited a mixed strategy towards other great powers, particularly the Soviet Union. Aspects of U.S. foreign policy showcased a more ambitious treatment of a declining foe but based on U.S.-Soviet relations, U.S. strategy showcases a conservative strategy of restraint. Evidence for this can be found in U.S.' treatment of the Soviet Union/Russia, as well as China, both at the UN and the broader geopolitical landscape. This "restraint" towards other great powers is even more surprising given not only the imbalance of power between the U.S. and the rest but also to the qualities of the actors. For a long time, the U.S. relied on the enmity of its venerable foil, the Soviet Union, to formulate its grand strategy. Following a period of renewed hostilities with the Soviet Union and a period extended military spending, combined with the fallout of domestic liberalization, and diminishing commodity prices left the latter unable to compete. As the Soviet Union was disintegrating, the U.S. was selective in pressing its advantage and overall limited antagonizing the Soviet Union.

German reunification and NATO expansion was one major area where the U.S. pursued an ambitious and "reformist" agenda. As Soviet power waned in Eastern Europe and its former satellites demanded the withdrawal of Soviet forces, U.S. and the Soviet

⁴⁵³ See Eytan Gilboa, "The Panama Invasion Revisited: Lessons for the Use of Force in the Post Cold War Era," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vo. 110, No. 4 (Winter, 1995-1996), pp. 539-652.

Union also began to negotiate the status of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the future contours of European security. The final bout of negotiations in February-March 1990 resulted in an implicit agreement along the lines that the Soviet Union would accept the reunification of Germany and that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) would remain in NATO but that former GDR territories would remain demilitarized. All parties agreed to the terms, but the U.S. ended up renegeing on this agreement as it pushed for NATO expansion into the former GDR, to the chagrin of Helmut Kohl.⁴⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the U.S. showed restrained towards the Soviet Union during the latter's dissolution phase. Instead of opting to support the independence movements against Moscow, or further antagonize its moribund foe, the U.S. left its antagonist to its own devices. The U.S. explored, moreover, the possibility of providing the Soviet regime with much needed economic assistance and thereby to promote its "moderate behavior."⁴⁵⁵ Said aid did materialize but only after the collapse of the Soviet Union became imminent. In the meantime, U.S. also actively supported a settlement by which the successor states of the Soviet Union would relinquish control over, and transfer, all present WMDs to Moscow, as a precondition to their recognition as sovereign, independent states once this outcome proved to be inevitable. The U.S. may have preferred a weaker Soviet Union, but one that the U.S. would ultimately trust to guard its nuclear arsenals against proliferation and capture by rogue elements, all the while disarmament efforts would continue.

⁴⁵⁴ See Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Enlargement," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Spring, 2016), pp. 22-24, 37-39.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

None of this, of course, meant that the U.S. had a benign attitude towards other great powers. What has become an oft-cited NSC document, the Defense Planning Guidance (DPG, hereafter), illustrates the defense establishment's receptiveness to primacy.⁴⁵⁶ Accordingly, the document envisaged that the U.S. "must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role."⁴⁵⁷ The document confirms what an orthodox understanding of world politics would predict: that the most dominant state should be satisfied with the status quo and should work to preserve it. The statement that the U.S. ought to prevent the emergence of rivals is a challenge to a normative understanding of world politics, but not necessarily to the preservation of an existing international order.

Far more importantly, however, is that the Bush I administration seems to have moderated their stance on this document. After a public backlash, the administration revised the DPG on April 16, 1992, adding a sanitary language that downplays American exceptionalism while highlighting the imperative for collective security and multilateral action with Allied states. Tudor Onea notes further notes that the administration, *sans* Dick Cheney, shunned the possibility of antagonizing the U.S. public, but also decided that the

⁴⁵⁶ This was an extremely controversial development. Dubbed by some as the "Wolfowitz Doctrine", the original DPG released on February 18, 1992 decreed that U.S. ought to "preclude the emergence of any future potential competitors," which included not only the former Soviet Union but also U.S. allies like Germany and Japan (pp. 3, 16). Where common interests and continued cooperation with Western Allies were concerned, the document urges the U.S. to prevent European measures to create defensive capabilities and institutions independent of U.S./NATO (p.18). We know much of the content of this document thanks to a leaked version that formed the basis of a contemporary *New York Times* op-ed, *i.e.* see Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *New York Times*, March 8, 1992.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

DPG contradicted their core beliefs about the new world order.⁴⁵⁸ They concluded that maintaining U.S. preponderance necessitated a multilateral *modus operandi*, as presiding over a rules-based world would better serve U.S. interest in the long-run.⁴⁵⁹ Naturally, U.S. FPEs seem content with international order and acting through formal institutions, as also evidenced by the high-levels of satisfaction garnered from the President's speeches at this time, and general prevalence of positive framing of expected utility.⁴⁶⁰ The possibility, and perceived necessity, of unilateralism, remained a looming possibility.⁴⁶¹

5.4.1.3. Norms

Regarding the Bush I administration's approach to the legal and normative fabric of international society, the U.S. appears to have adopted a strategy of enmeshment. As a "responsible citizen" of international society, it adopted an overall conservative strategy that encouraged rivals to adapt to the norms of the prevailing international status quo on matters of high politics. With varying levels of ambition and success, U.S. sought to expand on arms limitations with the Soviet Union, pursue a limitation on chemical and other WMDs, and a seek a general limitation on conventional weapons. The Bush I administration featured Realist-minded FPEs that did not, arguably, take enough of a

⁴⁵⁸ That primacy need not contradict a rules-based international order and multilateralism can achieve this for a better price.

⁴⁵⁹ See Onea, *US Foreign Policy*, p. 48.

⁴⁶⁰ See Fig. 5.1 and 5.2.

⁴⁶¹ The final Bush I era National Security Strategy evidences unilateralist undertones as US forces were expected to "be prepared to respond rapidly, to deter, and, if necessary, to fight and win unilaterally or as part of a coalition." There were inklings of unilateralism in U.S. non-proliferation and arms control strategies as well, although the implications for this is ambiguous. See The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, January 1, 1993), pp. 1, 15-18.

principled stand against the collapsing Soviet Union, nor condemn China appropriately in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.⁴⁶² The American track-record regarding international legal conduct was nothing short of ambivalent. The U.S. violated principles such as sovereignty and non-intervention in its hemisphere. The U.S. leadership desired a similar outcome in Iraq as well, but the Coalition did not exceed the operational freedom beyond what the UNSC decreed. Overall, this was an ambivalent record that nevertheless was moderate in comparison to U.S. conduct in other periods.

5.4.2. Order-Reforming Under Clinton

Whatever global designs the Bush I administration had, it would not be able to pursue them for very long. Belittled by Clinton for lacking a foreign policy vision, Bush I lost the 1992 election. It has become customary in the literature to point out that Clinton also lacked a foreign policy vision as the Presidency was “less interested in international affairs than at any time in the previous six decades combined.”⁴⁶³ So while Clinton found it convenient to blame Bush I for, allegedly, coddling China after Tiananmen Square or Saddam by letting him stay in power, Clinton did not seem to offer anything different.⁴⁶⁴ Clinton instead found it convenient to talking about the economy and adopting a tougher stance on non-democratic forces but did little to improve upon his predecessor’s policies.⁴⁶⁵ Clinton’s

⁴⁶² See Onea, *US Foreign Policy*, p. 41.

⁴⁶³ See Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75 (January/February 1996), pp. 16-32.

⁴⁶⁴ See Thomas L. Friedman, “The 1992 Campaign— Issues: Foreign Policy; Clinton’s Foreign Policy Agenda Reaches Across Broad Spectrum,” *New York Times* (October 4, 1992).

⁴⁶⁵ See Michael J. Green, *By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the East Pacific Since 1783* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 454.

prevarication was all the more surprising since, as Porter suggests, he had a historic opportunity to change the course of American grand strategy.⁴⁶⁶ While the previous administration came to power when structural forces still exerted a more-disciplining influence on U.S. foreign policy (i.e., the continued existence of the Soviet Union), the Clinton administration enjoyed the most clement international system. This configuration afforded the most possibility of choices for the least incursion of costs for Clinton, who thus had the luxury of reducing American military commitments. Walt's dilemma was, therefore, most acute under the Clinton administration.

What transpired was a shift, first, towards a unique blend of circumscribed activism that this dissertation calls order-reforming, and gradually towards order-challenging approaching the end of the millennium. It is difficult to pin down a working label for the Clinton presidency vis-à-vis its disposition towards international order because there appears to be much controversy concerning the extent to which U.S. grand strategy deviated from previous periods, or evinced unilateralism in this period. For instance, Trubowitz argues that due to overall lack of geopolitical slack, the Clinton presidency downsized military spending, shifted to butter, avoided costly military interventions but all the while avoiding full-blown retrenchment since the U.S. did increase its security commitments.⁴⁶⁷ The problem, as Trubowitz recognizes, is that while his theory predicts strategic underreach, U.S. foreign policy appears more ambitious in this period. Still, some

⁴⁶⁶ See Porter, "Why America's Grand Strategy Has Not Changed," p. 21.

⁴⁶⁷ See Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, pp. 107, 121.

others note that Clinton wanted to pursue multilateralism and internationalism, but Congress and other domestic forces stymied his efforts. Skidmore, in particular, argues that like his successor, Clinton's grand strategy ultimately came to exude unilateralism, especially in his later years.⁴⁶⁸ Posen and Ross call the Clinton approach "selective (but cooperative) primacy," which amounts to "multilateralism while promoting U.S. leadership."⁴⁶⁹ The Clinton administration itself preferred the appellation of "leadership" and "assertive multilateralism."

This section lends support to the view that Clinton era foreign policy was far more ambitious as evidenced by the number of U.S. interventions as well as its the increasing trend towards a more-unilateral disposition towards the use of force. Furthermore, the U.S. decision not only to expand NATO but also invent a new role for its use abroad for the first time ever, against Bosnia, is more consistent with a strategy of expansionism. Finally, regarding norms, the U.S. shifted from enmeshment to an active promotion of global humanitarian initiatives (and intervention) that could best have characterized as reformism, while Clinton's willingness to shirk from important internationalist treaties leave the administration's record in an ambiguous state.

The analysis suggests that while U.S. military spending declined in this period, most allied nations and other great powers also displayed a similar trend. Moreover, the budget reductions reflect the end of the Cold War more than anything since the cuts

⁴⁶⁸ See Skidmore, *Unilateralist Temptation*, p. 4. See, also, Lee, *U.S. Hegemony*, p. 1. See also Clyde V. Prestowitz Jr., *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003), p. 158.

⁴⁶⁹ See Posen and Ross, "Competing Visions," p. 42.

disproportionately reduced investment into ballistic weapons as well as personnel, while keeping conventional forces the same and capable of global deployment.⁴⁷⁰ The U.S. had freedom of action, without a doubt. The content analysis, meanwhile, corroborates their relative satisfaction with international order. The narratives positively framed developments. The exception, however, was in Clinton's earlier years where he had to react to unfolding international crises. UNGA speeches by Clinton, as well as Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright antecedent meetings, show that the U.S. was overall satisfied with international order, although negative framing seems to trail unfolding regional crises closely. For example:

On efforts from export controls to trade agreements to peace-keeping, we will often work in partnership with others and through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. It is in our national interest to do so. But we must not hesitate to act unilaterally when there is a threat to our core interests or to those of our allies.⁴⁷¹

Clinton's 1993 speech affirms the U.S.' commitment to multilateralism and connects national interests with *raison de système*. This is expected from an internationalist president and administration seeking to exercise benign leadership for the world. What is also apparent is the unilateralist undertone of the speech. This is no doubt a warning to the international community that the type of embarrassing situations encountered in Somalia or the setbacks in the ongoing war

⁴⁷⁰ See Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*, p. 121.

⁴⁷¹ See William J. Clinton, "Speech Delivered by William J. Clinton at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 27, 1993).

in Yugoslavia will not deter the U.S. The same unilateralist attitude is present also in the 1994 speech:

When our national security interests are threatened, we will act with others when we can, but alone if we must. We will use diplomacy when we can, but force if we must.⁴⁷²

Clinton's earlier speeches included more instances of dissatisfaction and negative framing.⁴⁷³ One reason for this, as Onea argues, could be disgruntlement as Clinton felt his reputation was under challenge because both domestic and international opponents had snubbed his earlier efforts at promoting multilateral with minimum commitment.⁴⁷⁴ It is hardly surprising that the Clinton era policy, and UN speeches, had more frequent negative-framing and more references to anticipated losses due to failure to act. What follows is an overview of Clinton era order-reforming strategies.

5.4.2.1. Use of Force

The overall U.S. strategy of force-use in this period falls under the category of "Leadership," which in all fairness is how the Clinton administration FPEs thought of their overall approach.⁴⁷⁵ This dissertation conceptualizes "Leadership" as a designation for a special kind of approach to the use of force. It refers to a situation in which a state has the wherewithal to use of force unilaterally but actively works to promote ad hoc multilateral

⁴⁷² See *Idem.*, "Speech Delivered by William J. Clinton at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 26, 1994).

⁴⁷³ See Appendix and figure 5.5.

⁴⁷⁴ See Onea, *US Foreign Policy*, pp. 55-58. More than U.S. prestige, however, Clinton also wanted to avoid creating the image that the Democratic Party was a push over when came to security issues. See also Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 23.

⁴⁷⁵ See Steven Holmes, "Christopher Reaffirms Leading US Role," *New York Times* (May 28, 1993).

coalitions rather than operating strictly under the UN aegis, all the while retaining the exclusive right to exercise, or not, force independently from the coalition. It is a *via media* between a pure form of unilateralism and multilateralism through formal international institutions. This type of “multilateralism-plus” focuses on exercising a leadership role to get others to commit resources, which perfectly encapsulates the Clinton approach. At no other time in modern history would such a concept be more needed than during the Clinton administration given the frequency of the use of force. A shortlist of these interventions includes Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq, and Kosovo. It is beyond the scope of this research to explore all these interventions in-depth chronologically and exhaustively, but the discussion uncovers overarching themes that suggest a transition from less to more assertive styles of use of force.

The first theme is how reluctant the Clinton administration was to use force despite being so supportive of international humanitarian interventions, but how the U.S. gradually accepted investing more resources into interventions. The second theme is how inconsequential these regions were to the interests of major powers, particularly the ones undertaken for humanitarian purposes.⁴⁷⁶ The third theme is that the Clinton era FPEs invoked multilateralism and international commitments to organizations like the UN and NATO so that the President could bypass domestic checks on power.⁴⁷⁷ Thus, these types

⁴⁷⁶ See David N. Gibbs, *First Do No Harm Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷⁷ See Ryan C. Hendrickson, *The Clinton Wars: The Constitution, Congress, and War Powers* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002). See also David Gray Adler, “‘The Law’: The Clinton Theory of the War Power,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March, 2000), pp. 155-168.

of operations could have only taken place in an international environment that was pliable to U.S. interests. The use of force, no matter how circumscribed, is risky for all states including great powers; thus none of these actions are dismissible as minor, *per se*. While Clinton era interventions were smaller compared to the First Gulf War, which necessitated a greater distribution of risk, they were also less irrelevant for U.S.' strategic interests. The Gulf War was in a critical location for American energy and other security interests. Not so for other regions. When combined, these themes point to the importance of how U.S. FPEs perceived international order. The Clinton administration must have felt like a colossus shackled by various domestic opposition groups as well as significantly weaker opponents, prompting the Clinton administration to adopt a harder line against friend and foe alike, so long it did not require the U.S. to commit ground troops.

Whether for failing to live up to expectations of ambitious goals or due to recalcitrance by domestic actors, American FPEs became increasingly disillusioned with each intervention. Initially, whenever multilateral initiatives fell or become unpopular domestically, the Clinton administration either abandoned policies or even joined in the invective, as was the case in Somalia and Bosnia. For example, under the Bush I administration, U.S. had committed troops and resources under UNOSOM to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia, which chronically suffered from warlordism.

As for the Clinton administration, the problem was that while it supported multilateralism, it was also unwilling to commit more U.S. resources. There was a gap between UN expectations and member countries to commit, which led to much acrimony

between the U.S. and the UN, forcing the former to settle for a symbolic force to provide humanitarian assistance.⁴⁷⁸ In the events that transpired in Somalia between June 1993 to October 3, 1993, 18 American soldiers died, another 74 wounded, and the U.S. lost critical military assets. The administration promptly withdrew all American forces, save for token forces to allay accusations of retreat.⁴⁷⁹

In the meantime, the Clinton administration, long dissatisfied with Bush-era prevarications, sought a tougher stance on the deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia too.⁴⁸⁰ It sought both UN and NATO support to pursue a war in Yugoslavia. It was not obvious why the U.S. involved itself in the European theater when its allies were willing to take the initiative regarding the dissolution of Yugoslavia, as was the case with major European powers like Germany, which had already extended diplomatic and financial support to the Bosnians, Croats, and Slovenians. Neither Realist principles nor concerns over humanitarianism have forced the U.S. to undercut its European allies' efforts to resolve the conflict, one way or another. In sum, what therefore developed was a kind of multilateralism in which the U.S. would require international cooperation in the name of humanitarian interventionism, but only if willing allies would share the burden. US became

⁴⁷⁸ See Boutros Boutros-Ghali holds the distinction of being the only UNSG so far to have been denied a second term as the Security Council voted 14/15 in favor of his reelection, but he could not circumvent the U.S. veto.

⁴⁷⁹ See Halberstam, *War in Time of Peace*, pp. 262-264.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Gibbs, *First Do No Harm*, p. 12. He argues that the Bush I administration was heavily invested in the conflict from day one and encouraged the Bosnians and Croats to secede from Yugoslavia. Interesting to note also that while Bush I sought to avoid Bosnia as an entanglement, Clinton had embraced the issue even as a presidential candidate and made the bombing of Serbian assets in Bosnia one of his campaign promises. See, also, John Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy Between the Bushes* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), p. 26.

involved in Yugoslavia not only as part of the UNPROFOR but also through independent operations conducted with NATO allies.⁴⁸¹

The developments in Mogadishu and Bosnia point to the same problem; that the Clinton administration's efforts were frustrated time and again. It is difficult to divine the intentions of leaders, but we have strong reason to believe that Clinton and other FPEs were dissatisfied not with international order or multilateralism *per se*, but their inability to get results. There was a pervading notion that the U.S. was becoming a "punching bag of the world." Meanwhile, prominent administration officials like Albright pleaded that more assertive action was necessary to avoid further humiliation.⁴⁸² After the Srebrenica Massacre in 1995, patience was wearing thin, deeming necessary to act soon and decisively because the "[situation in Bosnia was] killing the U.S. position of strength in the world."⁴⁸³ Clinton himself also had a pretext for quick and decisive action for he did not wish to drag an already-unpopular conflict longer, which could jeopardize his upcoming bid for reelection.⁴⁸⁴ All of this culminated in an intense aerial campaign against the Serbs under Operation Deliberate Force. At the height of this campaign (August 30-September 20, 1995) Clinton's UNGA speech from 1995 seems to reflect his concerns over America's role and lack of support for multilateralism:

⁴⁸¹ This led to the "dual key" problem whereby NATO would not be able to pursue its missions (such as enforcing a no-fly-zone) as it conflicted with UN directives and UNPROFOR operations.

⁴⁸² See Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, pp. 91-10.

⁴⁸³ See Elain Sciolino, "The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy Shaped by U.S. Military Role," *The New York Times* (July 29- 1996).

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

In the United States, some people ask: *Why should we bother with the United Nations? America is strong. We can go it alone. Well, we will act if we have to, alone. But my fellow Americans should not forget that our values and our interests are also served by working with the United Nations.* The United Nations helps the peacemakers, the care-providers, the defenders of freedom and human rights, the architects of economic prosperity and the protectors of our planet to spread the risk, share the burden and increase the impact of our common efforts... Historically the United States has been — and today it remains — the largest contributor to the United Nations. But I am determined that we must fully meet our obligations and I am working with our Congress on a plan to do so.⁴⁸⁵

Clinton was appealing both to the international community but also his domestic constituents to get behind an interpretation of UN-mandated multilateralism that served both U.S. and global interests.⁴⁸⁶ The ensuing Dayton Accords in December 1995 pacified the situation. The lesson, however, was learned, as Clinton would employ the same kind of assertiveness over Iraq without the need of prior authorization or deferral to international bodies because, as Albright explained “we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall, and we see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us.”⁴⁸⁷ The U.S. would similarly go on to strong-arm its NATO allies to conduct another aerial campaign against the Serbs in 1999 without bothering to conferring with the UNSC, likely because no authorization would have been granted absent acquiescence of Russia and China, which the administration had alienated by this time. Perhaps no

⁴⁸⁵ Researcher’s emphasis. See William J. Clinton, “Speech Delivered by William J. Clinton at the United Nations General Assembly Special Commemorative Session,” (New York, NY: United Nations, October 22, 1995). This speech is interesting because it is one of these rare instances when references to potential losses is greater than gains (a minor 4.37% to 2.67%) while also representing a low-point in terms of U.S. satisfaction with international order at 17.54%.

⁴⁸⁶ This is also understandable in view of Clinton’s domestic opponents, especially Congress, See Hendrickson, *The Clinton Wars*, pp. 79-87.

⁴⁸⁷ See Madeline K. Albright, “Interview on NBC-TV ‘The Today Show’ with Matt Lauer,” NBC’s *Today Show* (Columbus, OH: February 19, 1998).

further approval was needed since only the U.S. “had the power to guarantee global security: without [U.S.] presence or support, multilateral endeavors would fail.”⁴⁸⁸

The U.S. seemed to be transitioning from Leadership (or assertive multilateralism) towards the Unilateralist end of the spectrum. Unsurprisingly, we also find narratives about justifying increasing unilateralism expressed to the world public, mainly because NATO did not have formal UNSC authorization.

We will work with our partners and the United Nations to continue to ensure that such forces can deploy when they are needed. What is the role of the United Nations in preventing mass slaughter and dislocation? Very large. Even in Kosovo, NATO’s actions followed a clear consensus, expressed in several Security Council resolutions, that the atrocities committed by Serb forces were unacceptable and that the international community had a compelling interest in seeing them end. Had we chosen to do nothing in the face of this brutality, I do not believe we would have strengthened the United Nations. Instead, we would have risked discrediting everything it stands for. By acting as we did, we helped to vindicate the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter... In the real world, principles often collide and tough choices must be made.⁴⁸⁹

The use of force during the Clinton presidency showcases how a group of FPEs with an internationalist agenda and aversion to acting unilaterally, explored alternative forms of multilateralism when potential risks increased.⁴⁹⁰ In this respect, 1995 was a

⁴⁸⁸ See Sidney Blumenthal, *The Clinton Wars* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003), p. 155.

⁴⁸⁹ There is strong deference to internationalism and collective action in these words, but also invocations that failure to act would result in dire consequences are manifest.

⁴⁹⁰ This is a point worth deliberating because Trubowitz argues that perceived risks reduced Clinton’s likelihood of pursuing multilateralism. This seems to be the case because Clinton in fact eschewed multilateralism in favor of a more-assertive attitude towards allies, preferring to act through NATO rather than UN. See *Idem.*, *Politics and Strategy*, p. 123.

watershed year because the administration, perturbed by policy failure, pushed for more multilateralism in discourse but preferred to circumvent UN and assume leadership over diplomatic efforts previously spearheaded by allies (as in the case of the Dayton Accords). The use of NATO, alongside UN, is novel because U.S. took the lead in refiguring the role and purpose of its alliance bloc, despite the “dual key” problem that reduced the efficacy of NATO operations. This last point merits further attention in the next section because it also evidences another aspect of order-reforming.

5. 4. 2. 2. Great Power Relations

If using NATO to project force outside of NATO territories for the first time was not enough, the Clinton administration added insult to injury for Russia by approving what became one of the most dramatic instances of an expansionist strategy in the unipolar moment. In 1997, the administration formally invoked the policy of “enlargement and engagement,” in which the U.S. would extend NATO membership to many of the newly independent republics of the CIS.⁴⁹¹ It is worth mentioning that this is something the administration sought to do from the beginning, perhaps in keeping with the spirit of the 1992 DPG, but NATO enlargement was slow to materialize. What explains this initial restraint?

First, while the U.S. suited to pursue expansionist strategies, the president was risk averse at the start of his tenure. Instead of pursuing a more ambitious strategy, interim solutions prevailed. Not only was NATO expansion unpopular domestically (with many

⁴⁹¹ See Goldgeiger, 1997, pp. 94-95. See also U.S. Office of the President, *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: The White House, 1995).

Democrats and Republics alike), but also various agencies as well. Moreover, it was seen as prudent to allay Russian fears that the U.S. was pursuing a *Drang Nach Osten*, the administration initially exercised restraint and sought interim solutions to the problem. Next, it was imperative for the U.S. to support the Yeltsin government and promote democratic elements therein, although not at the cost of forsaking NATO enlargement.⁴⁹² Finally, antagonizing Russia could have militated against U.S. efforts both at the UN but also for broader disarmament efforts. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994 was one such measure because it was acceptable to the Pentagon and State Department, but also as helped reassure former Soviet Republics.

Only after the shock of Bosnia did U.S. policy change. Following the resolution of the Bosnian crisis, the U.S. adopted an assertive attitude towards the other powers because this approach seemed to deliver better results.⁴⁹³ The events of 1995 also demonstrated that the invocation of NATO was all too necessary. As NATO's strategic importance grew for the Clinton administration (and the UN became a shackle), it became necessary to push for the growth of the organization while self-restraint to win Russian support no longer mattered.⁴⁹⁴ The Madrid Summit in 1997 confirmed the expansion of NATO and in 1999 the Visegrad group, consisting of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, became NATO members. In short, while members of the Bush I administration may have

⁴⁹² See Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy*, p. 126. See, also, Derek Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft*, New York, Praeger, 2005, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁹³ See Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, pp. 179, 182-187.

⁴⁹⁴ Pushing for NATO activism throughout the period may have been a broader policy of undercutting efforts by European states to craft a Security and Foreign Policy vision independent of the U.S. See Gibbs, *First Do No Harm*, p. 13.

articulated the notion that the U.S. ought to prevent the rise of peer-competitors, it was the Clinton administration that put this expansionist strategy into practice for the first time in the post-Cold War. U.S.' dismissal of Russia's formal complaint against NATO operations in Kosovo also attests to its increasing assertiveness towards great powers.

5. 4. 2. 3. Norms

The Clinton administration was active in building on the liberal international order and spearheading international legal developments, as predicted by the framework. "Enmeshment" akin the Bush I administration would no longer suffice as the Clinton administration recalibrated the way the U.S. deployed policy instruments more assertively. The previous subsections sufficiently address the administration's aggressive promotion of humanitarian interventions around the world as a theoretical instance of order-reforming. Assertive humanitarianism is logically consistent with a powerful state that is satisfied with international order but may be willing to take risks, especially if allies can help to bear the antecedent costs and risks.

During the Clinton presidency, U.S. signed several far-reaching international treaties including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban (1996), the Kyoto Protocol (1997), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998). Signature of a significant global environmental legislature like the CNTB and Kyoto Protocol are commendable steps towards building on existing international norms and a positive step towards furthering the global *raison de système*. In a disheartening move, the administration also failed not only to ratify but even deign to bring these documents to the attention of the U.S. Legislature.

Similarly, U.S. revulsion towards signing the ICC document also merits attention. The Clinton administration had actively supported the creation of the ICC since the organization fit into the broader framework of humanitarianism and was deemed all too necessary in the aftermath of Rwanda and Bosnia.⁴⁹⁵ Once the treaty began to take shape, the Clinton administration actively sought to change various aspects of the treaty to obtain special privileges like veto rights and various other exemptions.⁴⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the Clinton administration was not satisfied with the final result and refused to sign the treaty until the final signature date of December 31, 2000.⁴⁹⁷ Ultimately, a commitment to the ICC would likely require the U.S. to compromise its freedom of action in international politics voluntarily.

One could interpret the U.S. failure to ratify important international documents as a form of disengagement with international society. However, it is also true that this was not the preferred outcome of FPEs like Clinton since these treaties would have likely died at the hands of domestic opponents at the legislative level—that Clinton did not even bring the treaties to Congress for ratification to avoid antagonizing the legislature is telling. This ambivalence towards international treaties, however, further encapsulates the fundamental argument of this dissertation, that of FPEs' arbitrary tendencies and parochialism as they value political power over international commitment. At the same time, the effort to steer

⁴⁹⁵ See Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy*, p. 13.

⁴⁹⁶ See Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation*, p. 158.

⁴⁹⁷ Statement by William J. Clinton, authorizing the US signing of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Camp David, M.D., December 31, 2000).

treaties like the Rome Statute to their favor and Clinton's decision to endorse the treaty, even as a symbolic gesture, ultimately points to an order reforming orientation. Clinton's successor would see to the abnegation of this treaty.

5.4.3. Order-Challenging Under Bush II, 2001-2009

As early as the final year of the Clinton administration, U.S.' grand-strategic orientation showcased a shift towards challenging international order. The conduct of the Bush II administration in its early years, especially in the runup to the Iraq War, as well U.S. attitude towards international norms further cemented these tendencies. Popular arguments abound. Structural explanations underscore the U.S.' need to press its power in the face of mounting challenges; only by expansion could the U.S. secure itself in an uncertain world.⁴⁹⁸ While uncertainty is always problematic for decision-making and 9/11 was indeed a shock, it is inconceivable that peripheral interventions could add to American security, or deny advantages to potential rivals, is ludicrous. Various *Innenpolitik* approaches could accurately point to the relevance of special interests, especially towards the preservation of global access to oil, especially in the case of Iraq.⁴⁹⁹ Such an approach

⁴⁹⁸ Even candidate Bush II seemed to hold this view: "This is a world that is much more uncertain than the past. In the past we were certain, we were certain it was us versus the Russians in the past. We were certain, and therefore we had huge nuclear arsenals aimed at each other to keep the peace. That's what we were certain of ... You see, even though it's an uncertain world, we're certain of some things. We're certain that even though the 'evil empire' may have passed, evil still remains. We're certain there are people that can't stand what America stands for ... We're certain there are madmen in this world, and there's terror, and there's missiles and I'm certain of this, too: I'm certain to maintain the peace, we better have a military of high morale, and I'm certain that under this administration, morale in the military is dangerously low." See Jacob Weisberg, "Bush in His Own Words," *The Guardian* (November 4, 2000).

⁴⁹⁹ See Michael T. Klare, "Oil and empire? Rethinking the War with Iraq," *Current History*, Vol. 102, No. 662 (March, 2003), pp. 129-135; Doug Stokes, Sam Raphael, *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010) p. 95.

ignores the fact that there was no threat to the global production or distribution of oil. Unless, of course, U.S.' goal was to actively sabotage this industry, which could have hindered potential rivals like China but would have amounted to shooting itself in the foot. All of these are answers concerning the Iraq War. No overarching approach accounts for U.S.' declining deference to international society after 9/11.

The final answer is probably the most enduring ones: the confluence of a specific set of individuals of the Neo-Conservative persuasion.⁵⁰⁰ One could dismiss these exuberances as being unique to the idiosyncrasies of Bush II, or that revisionist Neocon FPEs are entirely responsible for the vagaries in the behavior of a unipole.⁵⁰¹ Noting that Neocon made their presence felt in D.C. during earlier administrations (the so-called Vulcans), this confluence of ideas and elites offers a logical framework for U.S. exceptionalism and unilateralism. The Neocon influence assumption founders when one considers the prevalence of non-Neocon decision-makers in the Bush II administration.⁵⁰² While an intellectual dominance of Neocons was manifest as providing an intellectual framework, they nevertheless could not act without the consent of other prominent groups. Furthermore, this group is not unique in its rejection of restraint and eschewing of multilateralism.

⁵⁰⁰ See Max Boot, "Myths About Neoconservatism," in Irwin Stelzer, ed., *The Neocon Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 2004). pp. 45-52.

⁵⁰¹ See G. John Ikenberry, "The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment," *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2004), pp. 7-22, esp. p. 10; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*.

⁵⁰² See Ivo H. Daalhalder and James N. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in American Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2005), pp. 15-16. See, also, Skidmore, *Unilateralist Temptation*, p. 55.

This section argues that while the permissive environment of the unipolar moment still held, U.S. FPEs' satisfaction with the international order, their perceptions of common interest, and expectations of gains reached their nadir. Bush II's 2001, 2002, and 2003 UNGA speeches, understandably, showcase narratives of dissatisfaction towards many UN members (and not directly linked to 9/11), but these also did not find expression through legal justification but reflected, rather, moralistic discourse. A considerable portion of these speeches also advanced pretexts for unilateral action while unilateralist and exceptionalism narratives also featured prominently in these speeches. These all find expression in the 2002 speech. There seems to be a palpable frustration with the UN as an organization as evidenced by the 2001 UNGA speech.

This struggle is a defining moment for the United Nations itself — and the world needs its principled leadership... The United Nations depends, above all, on its moral authority — and that authority must be preserved. The steps I have described will not be easy. For all nations, they will require effort. For some nations, they will require great courage. Yet the cost of inaction is far greater. The only alternative to victory is a nightmare world where every city is a potential killing field.⁵⁰³

Here, Bush is invoking a moral argument to change the status quo. More importantly, we can also observe the urgency of the tone and a narration of the dire consequences for a failure to act. Furthermore:

If we fail to act in the face of danger, the people of Iraq will continue to live in brutal submission. The regime will have new power to bully, dominate and conquer its neighbors, condemning the Middle East to more years of bloodshed and fear. The region [Middle East] will remain unstable, with little hope of freedom, and isolated from the progress of our times. With

⁵⁰³ George W. Bush, "Speech Delivered by George W. Bush at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (New York, NY: United Nations, November 10, 2001).

every step, the Iraqi regime takes towards gaining and deploying the most terrible weapons, our own options to confront that regime will narrow. And if an emboldened regime were to supply these weapons to terrorist allies, then the attacks of 11 September would be a prelude to far greater horrors.⁵⁰⁴

The most extreme challenges to international order took place in the context of a U.S. confronting the losses and uncertainty of the post-9/11 international system. After the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the declaration of the War on Terror, U.S. FPEs were able to focus on these challenges, which eventually reduced the need for further risky interventions. Moreover, while U.S. capabilities did not diminish, the legitimacy blow to the U.S. seems to have reduced its freedom of action in other ways as it reverted to less-ambitious retrenchment strategies.⁵⁰⁵

5. 4. 3. 1. Use of Force

In the early years of the Bush II administration, the U.S.' strategy of use of force approximated most to unilateralism. Inevitably, this section concerns the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in 2002 and the 2003 Iraq War. The circumstances by which the latest intervention occurred is, of course, the subject of greatest controversy since the U.S. bypassed all formal international organizations and fora, opting instead to assemble an ad hoc coalition, justified itself under the pretense of Iraqi possession of WMDs, and invoked the norm of preemptive war.

Following September 11, the Bush II administration went on to declare a global War on Terror in which terrorist and other rogue actors, including states that aid or harbor

⁵⁰⁴ *Idem.* "Speech Delivered by George W. Bush at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 11, 2002).

⁵⁰⁵ See Lee, *US Hegemony and International Legitimacy*, p. 147.

terrorist groups, were placed on the crosshairs. What is surprising is that even when the Bush II administration had the support of the international community, officials were overall reluctant to accept help. For example, following 9/11, NATO members invoked for the first time in history Article 5 of the Treaty, stipulating that an attack on one member is an attack against all members of the alliance. Under previous administrations, such an offer, one that would potentially contribute to the U.S. war effort, distribute costs and risks for potential interventions, would have been met with enthusiasm. Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz went on to respond that “if we need collective action we will ask for it. We do not anticipate that at the moment.”⁵⁰⁶ The U.S. also rejected a French offer of troop deployment in Afghanistan. The U.S. also demanded that the Taliban regime surrendered Osama bin Laden and declared that the U.S. “would not negotiate with terrorists” when the Taliban prevaricated. Eventually, however, U.S. and allied forces intervened in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, resulting in the collapse of the Taliban regime but more than a decade of protracted and costly fighting as well as national-building efforts on the part of the U.S. and its NATO allies. The first phase of the War on Terror took place quickly, without much objection, and was overall successful in its immediate goals.

In the meantime, the administration put forward the National Security Strategy document of 2002, or what would come to be known as the Bush Doctrine. There were echoes of previous defense documents arguing in favor of defeating rogue and non-state

⁵⁰⁶ See Paul Wolfowitz, “Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Press Conference in Brussels,” (speech, Brussels: September 26, 2001).

elements while sanitizing the language on primacy. Under the 1992 DPG, the Bush I administration had supported a rules-based global framework to ensure U.S. primacy. Under Bush II, unilateral action in defense of U.S. interests could be pursued unilaterally because that is what leadership required; international institutions, like the ICC, were considered to be shackled standing in the way of effective U.S. leadership.⁵⁰⁷ Indeed, while declaring “we will respect the values, judgments, and interests of our friends and partners,” the report emphasized that the United States “will be prepared to act apart when our interests and unique responsibilities require.”⁵⁰⁸ These guidelines seemed to have created a vague notion of what constituted a threat for the U.S. but constituted the context in which the Iraq War took place since the threat identification remained vague, encompassing “the overlap between states that sponsored terrorism and those that pursue Weapon of mass Destruction compels us to action.”⁵⁰⁹

While the present framework has tasked itself to uncovering general patterns rather than causes for specific events, the fact that U.S. FPEs were operating in what had become an extremely uncertain international system and were highly dissatisfied helps to contextualize the underlying conditions. There is convincing evidence to support that a high degree of risk-acceptance enabled the Iraq War.⁵¹⁰ Not only was the American public

⁵⁰⁷ See The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, September, 2002), p. 31.

⁵⁰⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 13-15.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵¹⁰ See, for instance, Babak Bahador, Jeremy Moses, and William Lafi Youmans, "Rhetoric and Recollection: Recounting the George W. Bush Administration's Case for War in Iraq" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (March 2018), pp. 4–26; Daniel Masters and Robert M. Alexander, "Prospecting for War: 9/11 and Selling the Iraq War," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2008), pp. 434-452.

feeling a palpable sense of fear and uncertainty after 9/11, but having invested in an invasion of Afghanistan, provoked the need to pursue further action.⁵¹¹ Indeed, coming off the heels of an allied invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. began to press for war with the Saddam regime. U.S. justifications for war range from the administration's desire of wanting to rebuke Saddam over his alleged possession of WMDs, his ties with terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, desires to promote regime change and democratization in the region, and even hopes of further consolidating global access to oil.

The point is that the U.S. had suffered losses and was on the warpath to recover, whether materially or psychologically and that Iraq was the most viable target.⁵¹² The issue of Iraqi possession of WMDs, however, appears in the official narrative and constituted the main gravamen against Saddam, although actual Iraqi possession of WMDs remains hotly contested to this day.⁵¹³ What served as a trigger for the war was a series of diplomatic obstructions at the UN where the U.S. sought to build international backing for an intervention. The 2002 UNGA Speech, for instance, exclusively focuses on Iraq as Bush II and the dire regional consequences for inaction against Saddam.⁵¹⁴ The U.S. and UK spearheaded further sanctions and called on the Saddam regime to cooperate with UN

⁵¹¹ As far as pro-war public and elite opinion are concerned, Masters and Alexander suggest that the decisions to go to war and not to go to war were both perceived as losses, and administration campaigning helped this process. *Idem.*, "Prospecting for War," p. 445.

⁵¹² Possible targets for regime change in a third or fourth phase were Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Authority. See, Onea, *US Foreign Policy*, p. 133.

⁵¹³ See Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails. Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 123-124.

⁵¹⁴ See Bush, "Speech at the United Nations," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 11, 2002).

Inspectors on the matter. Saddam dragged his feet but begrudgingly complied; it seems to have been too little too late.

Judging that Iraq had violated all previous Security Council Resolutions, including the most recent Resolution 1441, the U.S. and UK wanted to push for a final resolution along the lines of Resolution 678 (to justify the use of force), but the Security Council would not pass it. U.S. allies and the UNSC were more or less unwaveringly supportive of the U.S. until this point. Allies like France and Germany, and other great powers like China and Russia, did not mind U.S. punishing Iraq but also did not want war, preferring instead to prevent the U.S. from arbitrarily using force.⁵¹⁵ Since the UN weapons inspectors failed to turn up sufficient evidence, these countries would not back the U.S. The Bush II administration nevertheless declared that there was sufficient justification for a preemptive war against Iraq since it had failed to live up to the stipulations of previous UNSC Resolutions fully.

On March 19, 2003, the U.S. launched Operation Iraqi Freedom with the support of contingents from Australia, Poland, and the UK. Other states who formed the so-called “Coalition of the Willing” (or “posse”) would later provide small military and financial contributions, following U.S. coercive diplomacy. The Bush II administration’s risk acceptance resulted in what was easily the most reckless and costliest (both in casualties and costs) post-Cold War. Operation Iraqi Freedom brought to bear the fewest allies in an

⁵¹⁵ See Elizabeth Pond, “The Dynamics of the Feud over Iraq,” In D. Andrews, ed., *The Atlantic Alliance Under Stress: U.S.- European Relations After Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 30.

ad-hoc coalition, had the least overall political support from the international community, and represents the pinnacle of unilateralism.⁵¹⁶

5. 4. 3. 2. Great Power Relations

It is difficult to assess the Bush II legacy towards great powers within the present framework just because the cycle was too brief to examine properly. U.S.' relations with other great powers were already under stress during the Clinton administration, not least because of his increasing assertive attitude and encroachment on Russia's traditional sphere of influence. Based purely on values, one would not predict cordial relations between the U.S. and authoritarian China and Russia since Bush II FPEs promoted an exceptionalist worldview that places the U.S. at the center of the international system and that American values required propagation. It is also evident that considerations of domestic ideology and regime type significantly affected the calculus of the Bush II administration.⁵¹⁷ With these considerations and U.S.' circumvention of multilateral institutions and its final act of defiance towards the Security Council, the framework should accurately predict disregard towards other great powers, encroachments on other great powers' spheres of influence, and direct military confrontation. U.S. conduct in this period shows signs of these tendencies although the Global War on Terror against a variety of global terrorist

⁵¹⁶ See Michael Noonan and John Hillen, "The Promise of Decisive Action," *Orbis*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 229-246.

⁵¹⁷ See Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (Fall, 2003), pp. 365-388.

organizations seem to have exercised a disciplining effect as a wide range of states found a common enemy.

U.S. relations with the other great powers were less aggressive than predicted by the model since U.S. relations with its closest peer-competitor, China was cordial. Relations with Russia, on the other hand, were quite problematic despite the provisions of the 2002 NSS, which identified “overlapping common interests” between the two powers.⁵¹⁸ The main problem was the “Western Alliance.” If Clinton’s reinvention in the unipolar moment of NATO through new responsibilities and inclusion of more members, then U.S.’ vocation to expand NATO membership, all the while promoting EU’s eastward expansion, might have appeared as menacing.⁵¹⁹ The first round of expansion in 2004 brought Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Baltic states to NATO’s fold. Concomitant to this expansion, EU had also been expanding as it incorporated some of these states in 2004, and later, 2009 rounds of expansion, to the chagrin of Putin. These efforts extended to Georgia and Ukraine in 2008, against the protests of major NATO allies like Germany and France. The results were disastrous.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ See The White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 16.

⁵¹⁹ John J. Mearsheimer is one of the primary proponents of the thesis that America’s ideological foreign policy and efforts to expand its sphere into Russia’s sphere of interest appeared as an encroachment and vital threat, thus leading to the Russian invasion of Georgia (August 2008) and parts of Ukraine (2014). See *Idem.*, “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2014), pp. 1-12.

⁵²⁰ Another crucial factor was that the U.S. also withdrew from previous commitments the Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty and elected to deploy anti-ballistic capabilities over Poland and the Czech Republic to further reduce Russia’s retaliatory capabilities. See Jeffrey Mankoff, “The Politics of US Missile Defence Cooperation with Europe and Russia,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 88, No.2 (March, 2012), pp. 329-347.

As for China, the framework seems to be at a loss since the Bush II administration pursued a surprisingly restrained relationship. There is a discernable tendency among scholars to conflate all Bush II policies and accordingly criticize American foreign policy in other regions, such as Asia, because of their gravamen with the Iraq War.⁵²¹ China would simultaneously be labeled as a strategic competitor but respected as a great power. Both countries also found a common interest in the Global War on Terror, although cooperative efforts on this front did not materialize. It was in this period that the U.S. began to develop discourse around China as a responsible stakeholder.⁵²² Some have argued that Sino-American relations were most stable under the Bush II administration and overall uneventful.⁵²³ This clemency is easily understandable, however, in the context of the administration's focus on the Middle East. In a sense, Sino-American relations "emerged stronger from the Global War on Terror."⁵²⁴

5. 4. 3. 3. Norms

As predicted by the framework, U.S. strategy towards international norms exuded radicalism since it overturned many existing rules conventions. These include principles of multilateralism, preemptive war, and overall disengagement with international law.

⁵²¹ See Green, *By More Than Providence* p. 482.

⁵²² Deputy Undersecretary of State essentially coined this idea that China needed to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system. *Idem.*, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility? Remarks to National Committee on US-China Relations," (speech, New York City, September 21, 2005).

⁵²³ See Wanli Yu, "Breaking the Cycle? Sino-US Relations Under George W. Bush." In Iida Masafumi, eds. *China's Shift: Global Strategy of the Rising Power* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2009), pp. 81-98.

⁵²⁴ See Green, *By More Than Providence*, p. 494.

Bush II presided over a time when the U.S. largely divorced itself from multilateralism.⁵²⁵ Superior power, risk-acceptance, and dissatisfaction led to an understanding of national security that is willing to sacrifice the broader concerns of the international community, or respect for international law, with short-term parochial national interests. The attitude of the administration is as follows:

It is a big mistake for us to grant any validity to international law even when it may seem in our short-term interest to do so because, over the long term, the goal of those who think that international law means anything are those who want to constrict the United States.⁵²⁶

The Bush II administration significantly undermined multilateralism by ignoring institutions like UN, treaties like ICC, and norms like preemptive strikes. On the matter of international treaties, the Bush II readily rejected the ICC and withdrew U.S.' signature from the Rome Statute. Not only did Bush II overturn Clinton's symbolic gesture but further sought bilateral treaties with states that were already members of the ICC. The reason was so that parties to the ICC could not bring to bear the jurisdiction of the court upon U.S. citizens. In the words of Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. "will regard as illegitimate any attempt by the court or state parties to the [Rome Statute] to assert the ICC's jurisdiction over American citizens."⁵²⁷ The implication would be that even when acting

⁵²⁵ See Lisa Martin, "Self-Binding," *Harvard Magazine*, September/October (2004), p. 13; Skidmore, *Unilateralist Temptation*, p. 223; Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, p. 152.

⁵²⁶ See John Bolton, "Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?" *Chicago Journal of International Law*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2000), pp. 205–222.

⁵²⁷ "[The] United States will regard as illegitimate any attempt by the court or state parties to the [Rome Statute] to assert the ICC's jurisdiction over American citizens." See Phillipe Sands, *Lawless World: America and the Making and Breaking of Global Rules—From FDR's Atlantic Charter to George W. Bush's Illegal War* (New York, NY: Viking, 2005), p. 62. See, also, Curtis A. Bradley, "U.S. Announces Intent Not to Ratify International Criminal Court Treaty," *American Society of International Law*, Vol. 7, No. 7 (May, 2002).

in a multilateral context, such as a peacekeeping operation, the ICC would not be able to prosecute American contingents.

The Iraq War called into question the norm on preemptive attacks in international law. Customary law allows preemptive war if there is indeed an imminent threat, and that the preemptive action is commensurate and proportional to the threats. The UN System also provides the possibility of empowering a preemptive strike under the self-defense clause of Article 51 of the Charter, if states meet the stipulations of customary law. Failing these, UNSC Resolutions can also empower a preemptive strike. In the runup to the Iraq War, the U.S. did not satisfactorily fulfill these conditions. Enshrining the 2002 NSS document with the imperative of transcending international legal constrictions, the Bush II administration sought to circumvent this long-standing norm. There is a reason to suppose, however, that the U.S. approach to this norm might not have been so radical. As Hurd argues, while the U.S. acted as a legal revisionist, it also sought to justify its behavior to the international community and replace the delegitimated norm with a new one. For example, ambiguities of the international system encouraged the U.S. to justify itself through the norm of self-defense. In this process, the U.S. presented itself as a proponent of the status quo concerning international law.⁵²⁸

In addition to preemptive war, the administration sought to “reform” the international legal order by abnegating the Geneva Convention or the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The treatment of prisoners

⁵²⁸ See Hurd, “Breaking and Making Norms,” pp. 203-204.

of war from the U.S.' Iraqi campaign and the War on Terror led to numerous human rights violations in places like Abu Gharib and Guantanamo Bay. Thus, the U.S. not only failed to conform to the broader rules and norms of international society but even failed in respect to traditional liberal and "American" values, which will likely weaken future U.S. efforts to provide effective global leadership.⁵²⁹

The U.S.' disengagement with international organizations and multilateralism would have an impact on the Bush II administration by reducing other states' trust in the U.S. thus reducing U.S.' freedom of action. Whatever the case, once the U.S. committed to two wars and an ambitious region-transforming project in the Middle East, it did not have any more resources to spend on other conflicts. Having committed to balancing certain enemies and tasks, the systemic environment became less ambiguous and, therefore, more "restrictive" for the U.S.

5. 4. 4. Order-Retrenchment: Fin de Siècle and Beyond

Starting with the latter part of the Bush II administration, the international system began to exert a restrictive condition on the U.S. The onus of two costly wars, diminished international legitimacy, the return of "great power politics," and an economic recession significantly reduced U.S. freedom of action. Simultaneously, American strategic narratives, both in general but especially at the UNGA, show moderate signs of dissatisfaction with international order, and negative framing. This trend surprisingly continued under Obama because of the administration's stated preferences towards

⁵²⁹ See Barry Buzan, "A Leader Without Followers? The United States in World Politics After Bush," *International Politics*, Vol. 45 (2008), p. 563.

internationalism and multilateralism —or “un-Bush.”⁵³⁰ It is interesting to note that Obama, for example, devotes painstaking effort in his UNGA speeches to distance U.S. foreign policy from the Bush II legacy and to respond to critics.

I am well aware of the expectations that accompany my presidency around the world. These expectations... are rooted... in a discontent with a status quo that has allowed us to be increasingly defined by our differences, and outpaced by our problems. But they are also rooted in hope... that real change is possible, and the hope that America will be a leader in bringing about such change. I took office at a time when many around the world had come to view America with skepticism and distrust. Part of this was due to misperceptions and misinformation about my country. Part of this was due to opposition to specific policies, and a belief that on certain critical issues, America has acted unilaterally, without regard for the interests of others. This has fed an almost reflexive anti-Americanism, which too often has served as an excuse for our collective inaction.⁵³¹

The United States is chastised for meddling in the region, accused of having a hand in all manner of conspiracy; at the same time, the United States is blamed for failing to do enough to solve the region’s problems and for showing indifference toward suffering Muslim populations. I realize some of this is inevitable, given America’s role in the world. But these contradictory attitudes have a practical impact on the American people’s support for our involvement in the region, and allow leaders in the region, as well as the international community sometimes, to avoid addressing difficult problems themselves.”⁵³²

⁵³⁰ See, for example, J. Freedland, “After a Flurry of Early Activity, the Obama Doctrine is Taking Shape,” *The Guardian* (March 11, 2009); Michael Tomasky, “Obama the Un-Bush Woos the UN” *The Guardian* (September 23, 2009)

⁵³¹ See Barack H. Obama, “Speech Delivered by Barack H. Obama at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session,” (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 24, 2009).

⁵³² *Idem* “Speech Delivered by Barack H. Obama at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session,” (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 24, 2013).

In a sense, then, even the leadership narratives revolved around a complicated notion of declining global influence, so much so that a U.S. president felt the need to bring this to the attention of the international community. No matter the internationalist and multilateralist sentiments of the Obama administration, there were obvious signs of dissatisfaction with the global response to the U.S.

Another important facet of the Obama administration was its concern for the domestic economy (which often found its way into the UNGA speeches as well) and genuinely believed in the merits of a grand strategy of retrenchment.⁵³³ This section argues that while retaining many of the classical features of past U.S. administrations, we can nevertheless identify under the Obama administration a grand-strategic orientation is less ambitious, something which this researcher is not alone in pointing out.⁵³⁴ The framework predicts that the final years of the Bush II and the Obama administrations approximated to order-retrenchment as the use of force was limited, that the U.S. acted with restraint towards other great powers (although it did not simply appease them), and was overall ambivalent towards international law.

Whereas order-conforming dictates principled activism towards preserving international order, order-retrenchment is consistent with exceptionalist in that a

⁵³³ See Colin Dueck, *The Obama Doctrine: American Grand Strategy Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 36.

⁵³⁴ See, e.g., Dueck, *The Obama Doctrine*; Colin Dueck, “The Strategy of Retrenchment and Its Consequences,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (April 13, 2015); Robert Lieber, *Retreat and its Consequences: American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Paul Miller, “Reassessing Obama’s Legacy of Restraint,” *War on the Rocks* (March 6, 2017).

state will more likely shirk such responsibilities. Thus, while we can credit Obama for talking a different game as compared to his predecessor, the U.S.' grand-strategic orientation is similar to that of his predecessors. Even the former is questionable because Obama's strategic narratives from his UNGA speeches suggest some dissatisfaction with international order. The primary change from the early Bush II era to the later-Bush/Obama administrations is U.S.' declining freedom of action due to its embroilment in two major occupations, a severe recession, and the "return" of great-power politics following the Russian invasion of Georgia (and semi-invasion of Ukraine) and the inescapable rise of China.

5. 4. 4. 1. Use of Force

American force use in this period was negligible compared to previous periods and logically corresponds to "withdrawal." Both Bush II and Obama focused on stabilizing existing conflicts rather than extending any new commitments. Furthermore, the Obama administration was willing to participate in multilateral operations in limited ways. All of these policies, even the U.S.' very-limited participation in multilateral endeavors, make sense under the rubric of a restrictive international environment, dissatisfaction with international order, and moderate to low-risk acceptance. In the final years of his administration, Bush II sought to stabilize the situation in Iraq due to failures in state and peace-building in Iraq, and the inability of the occupying forces to pacify local sectarian, and other, violence.⁵³⁵ Domestic losses might have played a role as well since the

⁵³⁵ See Nicholas J. Schlosser, *The Surge* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History United States Army Washington, 2017), p.7.

Republican Party had made significant losses in the 2006 Congressional Campaign and concerns over his party's future might have encouraged some action. Based on the findings of the content analysis we can observe an upward trend in perceived losses and dissatisfaction with international order in the 2007-2008 period. It may just be that Bush II did not want to lose, and that failure to commit more troops to avoid further losses would have translated into further problems down the line.⁵³⁶ Deploying additional troops to increase local security and stabilize the Iraqi government was merely a means to preserve something the U.S. had heavily invested. As of January 2007, the U.S. committed an extra twenty thousand soldiers in the region, which at first escalated, but then reduced violence in Iraq, much to the pleasure of the administration. In his final Speech to the UNGA in 2008, Bush II expressed great satisfaction on this front.⁵³⁷ Obama withdrew most of these troops in 2011 under the previously agreed framework.

Obama sought to retrench U.S. power in another way by insisting on an Afghanistan-Pakistan (Af-Pak) first approach designed to clear out remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, which still bedeviled the region. In another way, however, Obama's push for a surge also meant that the U.S. would be committing to operations over Pakistan as well where Al-Qaeda often found safe havens due to the inability and, sometimes, the unwillingness of the Pakistani government to enforce sovereign control and

⁵³⁶ See John Rielly, "The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Legacy," *Dans Politique Américaine*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2008), pp. 73-86.

⁵³⁷ See George W. Bush, "Speech Delivered by George W. Bush H. at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 23, 2008).

security over its territories.⁵³⁸ Within a year, the U.S. had up to 100,000 troops stationed in the area. Despite necessitating more resources, the Af-Pak Surge is in spirit a retrenchment policy since it sought to stabilize an existing commitment. Moreover, the administration began withdrawing these troops until 2016.

The U.S. was inactive during a tumultuous period in a region of critical importance. That is, the U.S. seems to have pursued hedging strategies in the greater Middle East area during the Arab Spring when several prominent regimes imploded. In the case of Libya, the U.S. was loath to respond unilaterally.⁵³⁹ Only by UNSC mandate, and at the request of prominent NATO allies like UK and France, did Obama assent to a formal U.S. commitment to setting up a No-Fly-Zone over Libya in conjunction to the confusion accompanying the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi.⁵⁴⁰ Libya was not of immediate concern for the administration and thus preferred to take up the “lead from behind” approach of minimal multilateralism.⁵⁴¹

The lead from behind appears to have become a leitmotif for the administration. In the context of a declining situation in the Middle East restrictive international conditions, ambivalence towards international order, and risk-averseness seem to have necessitated a

⁵³⁸ See also, Ishtiaq Ahmad, “The US Af-Pak Strategy: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2010), pp. 191–209; Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for “Surge” in Afghanistan,” *New York Times* (December 5, 2009).

⁵³⁹ In addition to Libya, U.S. also deployed forces as part of the UNASOM to combat Al-Qaeda and pirates off the coast of Somalia as stipulated by UNSC Resolutions 1846 and 1851.

⁵⁴⁰ U.S. similarly provided limited assistance to France during its intervention into Mali.

⁵⁴¹ See Jeffrey Michaels, “NATO after Libya,” *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 6 (2011), p. 57.

shifting of risk and responsibilities to regional allies and local affiliates.⁵⁴² The Civil War in Syria unfolded with various regional and external great powers backing local groups, which deepened the conflict. For its part, the Obama administration avoided confrontation but sought to provide humanitarian assistance as well as military aid to rebel groups. An important milestone, however, was the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons. In the early stages of the conflict, the Obama administration declared that it would consider the use of chemical weapons as a red line.⁵⁴³ This ultimatum was put to the test in late 2013 after the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime. Just as the U.S. was prepared to undertake limited airstrike operations against the Assad regime, Russia offered a modus vivendi in Geneva whereby the Assad regime would assent to the disclosure and destruction of its stockpile of chemical weapons under the supervision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Surprisingly, Obama deferred to the U.S. Congress to decide on whether to enforce the red line.⁵⁴⁴ Assad got away with a proverbial slap on the wrist. It might be fair to argue, based on developments in the Middle East, that the U.S. showed signs of isolations and limited multilateralism.

Wherever U.S. operations materialized, it usually took the form of aerial bombardment, provision of no-fly-zones, or direct assistance to local proxies, such as in the conflict in Syria and the unfolding drama in Iraq following the emergence of the Islamic

⁵⁴² See Eugenio Lilli, *New Beginnings in US-Muslim Relations: President Obama and the Arab Awakening* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2016), p. 240.

⁵⁴³ See Mark Landler, "Obama Threatens Force against Syria," *New York Times* (August 21, 2012).

⁵⁴⁴ See Karen DeYoung, "Obama's Decision to Turn to Congress on Syria Decision Triggers Debate," *Washington Post* (September 4, 2013).

State (ISIL, hereafter). Since 2014, the U.S. has increased troop presence in key locations in Iraq, both to strengthen its assets but also to assist the Iraq government. In sum, while the U.S. actively used force around the world, these operations are small in scale and are low-cost, often involving ad-hoc coalitions or local proxies, which is consistent with the predictions of the model.

5. 4. 4. 2. Great Power Relations

The framework predicts that restrictive international environments and FPEs operating in less-than-satisfactory international environments will more likely lead to appeasement of other great-power states. This scenario was not the case for the U.S. relationship with Russia since in 2007-2008, the Bush II administration sought to continue pushing for NATO's expansion to include Georgia and Ukraine. While formal membership had not materialized, it was only a matter of time since "NATO" decided that the two countries would become NATO members.⁵⁴⁵ In August 2008, Russia invaded Georgia and deposed its Pro-Western president, Saakashvili. Interestingly, despite its previous assertive attitude towards Russia, the Bush II administration could only protest.

Obama, however, deescalated the tensions, which is something the framework predicts. The so-called "reset" of U.S.-Russian relations in March 2009 was necessary because Obama viewed askance the possibility of maintaining cooperative relations with Russia if he were to follow his predecessor's policies. The Obama administration, therefore, sought to assuage Russian fears over further U.S. encroachments by putting on hold Georgia and Ukraine's NATO-membership bids. This has not in any way succeeded

⁵⁴⁵ See, Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," p. 3.

in improving U.S.-Russian relations. Responding to the removal from power of Viktor Yanukovich, the president of Ukraine, Russia responded by encroaching on Ukrainian territory and beginning the process of annexing the strategically important peninsula of Crimea.⁵⁴⁶ The Obama administration's response to Russian intransigence was merely to introduce economic and political sanctions. Already sanctioning Russia under the Magnitsky Act (2012), the Obama administration introduced further sanctions on several Russian business people and companies in a way to deny technology transfers and goods for oil and gas exploration/extraction as well as bans on individuals associated with Putin. In the meantime, the Obama administration seems to have a mixed relationship with Russia as U.S. and Russia now find themselves at cross purposes, and yet seem able to cooperate on some issues, in the Middle East. Obama's approach to Russia, in short, approximates to retrenchment and appeasement.⁵⁴⁷ The Obama administration's approach to China has typically been labeled under the labels of retrenchment.⁵⁴⁸ Primarily, Obama oversaw the strategic reprioritization of U.S. capabilities, or what is called the "Pivot to Asia." Recognizing the emergence of China as a peer-competitor, the Obama administration has prioritized strengthening the U.S. alliance network in Asia, sought to reassure allies, but also positively engage with China. The U.S. has sought to decrease its commitments in the Middle East in favor of Asia, but the seeming absence of a coherent strategy has rendered

⁵⁴⁶ See, *Ibid.* Yanukovich was a "pro-Russian" leader who, although democratically elected, was thought of as being closely aligned with Putin and unwilling to act against his wishes.

⁵⁴⁷ See Dueck, *The Obama Doctrine*, p. 71.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

it difficult to reach a judgment on U.S. conduct towards China.

5. 4. 4. 3. Norms

Each of the past examinations of U.S. conduct towards international law and norms has focused on U.S. accessions (or lack thereof) to various international treaties, or how the U.S. has undermined various international conventions on issues concerning the *raison de système*, like the environmental preservation or the use of force. Here might be a suitable juncture to briefly explore the intersection of diminishing propensities for risk-taking, use of force, international ethical issues, and technology. In other words, the rise of “targeted killings” in international relations via Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones).⁵⁴⁹

Drone warfare, in some ways, represents the pinnacle of low-risk, unconventional warfare. Targets can be tracked, located, and destroyed with minimal risk, and therefore have become a popular weapons system against terrorism and other forms of asymmetric warfare. Based on publicly available data the U.S., along with Turkey and Israel, is one of the major employers of this technology over several theaters of war, such as the Af-Pak region, Yemen, and Iraq.⁵⁵⁰ The primary problem with this type of warfare is that at present it challenges principles at the cornerstone of the Westphalian international order. These include the principles on the legitimate right to the use of force and sovereignty, among other things.⁵⁵¹ While drone use may be a legitimate practice and many states seem to be

⁵⁴⁹ See Rosa Brooks, “Drones and the International Rule of Law,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol 28, No. 1 (2014), pp. 83-103. See Inderjeet Parmar, Linda B. Miller and Mark Ledwidge, eds., *Obama and the World: New Directions in US Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge 2014), pp. 188–193; Martin Senn and Jodok Troy, “The Transformation of Targeted Killing and International Order,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2017), pp. 175-211.

⁵⁵⁰ See Senn and Troy, “Targeted Killing”, Appendix A1 for various estimates on global casualties.

⁵⁵¹ See Brooks, “Drones,” pp. 91-92; Senn and Troy, “Targeted Killing,” p. 183.

pushing for this agenda, provided that sufficient legitimacy and authorization can be obtained from bodies like the UNSC, the fact that the U.S. leads the global statistics in targeted killings, including in territories where it has no formal mandate, is a destabilizing practice for international order.

5.5. CONCLUSION

American grand strategy in the post-Cold War took shape in the most positive of circumstances, as reflected in the order-narratives and psychological framing of U.S. FPEs. Material preponderance afforded the U.S. a significant freedom of action to pursue expansive military operations and ambitious promotion of liberal values abroad if it chose to but the overall restrictiveness of the international environment disciplined policymaking in a way that helped U.S. FPEs identify Iraq as an ambiguous threat not only to the U.S. but also the broader international community. From the standpoint of procedure and legitimacy, the First Gulf War was exceedingly successful. American restraint seems to have had a blowback effect.

Conforming to international order by adhering to the UN mandate was unpopular, especially by domestic political opponents like Clinton who harangued Bush I for his lack of foreign policy vision. Moreover, critics may well argue that U.S. restraint in this affair was nothing more than an insidious ploy by the Bush I administration to prop up American unipolarity. His successor, Clinton, meanwhile supported a more expansive agenda. While the Clinton administration's internationalist tendencies reveal satisfaction with international order, there was a marked increase in perceived losses and negative framing, which is also evidenced by increasing risk-acceptance, and concomitantly unilateralism. This trend continued under Bush II and the post-9/11 permissive international environment

in which highly-dissatisfied FPEs pursued order-challenging strategies, but this was unsustainable. Finally, under Obama, the American grand-strategic orientation closely resembled retrenchment. While Obama seems more committed to international institutions and internationalism than Bush II, U.S. grand strategy nevertheless retained much of its exceptionalism but on a less ambitious scale. The rise of China and the reemergence of Russia as proper competitors helped to discipline U.S. grand strategy.

In lieu of any further insights about the Trump presidency at this point, we can certainly speculate that America's *perceived* decline will continue to resonate the American domestic political discourse and manifest as part of the strategic narrative. The unfortunate consequence is that this will not simply lead to greater bombast in rhetoric. Instead, leaders acting within the domain of losses will be more risk-acceptant and more willing, even if only on a discursive level, to pursue assertive policies that might risk alienating allies or aggravate cooperation.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding any further with the analysis, an important caveat is due. Many prominent works in the literature stress that China is fundamentally a unique country that is heir to a set of special geopolitical, historical, cultural circumstances.⁵⁵² As such, discussions on Chinese aspirations in world politics seem to range from its peaceful intentions that underscore Chinese values and status-related aspirations, all the way to Realist ambivalence about China's true intentions.⁵⁵³ More likely than not, Chinese foreign policy executives face similar challenges and limitations as do their counterparts elsewhere.⁵⁵⁴

This chapter does not speculate the "true" intentions of Chinese FPEs. Instead, it elaborates on trends in Chinese grand-strategic behavior in the post-Cold War period and its prevailing strategies concerning the use of force and its attitude towards allies, its relations with great powers, as well as its conduct in international law. It does so by tracing the behaviors back to the specific permutations of permissiveness of the international system and FPEs' strategic narratives. It makes no attempts at predictions based on current trends in Chinese grand-strategic behavior. The main goal, therefore, is to assess, with available primary and secondary sources: a) the social and material constraints on China,

⁵⁵² See Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2012).

⁵⁵³ See Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm."

⁵⁵⁴ Once again, Luttwak's point concerning great-state autism may be *apropos* here. See Allison, *Thucydides Trap*.

b) the extent to which Chinese foreign policy executives construct narratives consistent with the *raison de systemè* of international order, and c) whether or not China's foreign policy behavior bears any consistency with the proposed grand-strategic orientations.

This chapter argues that during the post-Cold War period, China's overall satisfaction with the international order gradually increased, which encouraged China to pursue an order-conforming grand strategy. In conjunction with an increasingly permissive environment, however, China soon adopted an order-reforming disposition.

6.2. APPROACHES TO CHINESE GRAND STRATEGY

The notion of Chinese grand strategy is subject to many controversies.⁵⁵⁵ Some have argued that China does not have a grand strategy so to speak or any coherent policy design.⁵⁵⁶ Whatever continuities there are to Chinese behavior serves the sole purpose of

⁵⁵⁵ The literature on China's grand strategy is rich. See, for example, Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); *Idem.*, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2015); Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Bijian Zheng, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October, 2005), pp. 18–24; Ashley J. Tellis, "China's Grand Strategy," *Claws Journal* (Summer, 2010); Wang Jisi, "China's Search for a Grand Strategy: A Rising Great Power Finds Its Way," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90, No. 2 (March/April, 2011), pp. 68-79; Zicheng Ye, *Inside China's Grand Strategy: The Perspective from the People's Republic* (Lexington, KY: The University of Press of Kentucky, 2011); Stig Senslie, "Questioning the Reality of China's Grand Strategy," *China: An International Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (August, 2014), pp. 161-178; Feng Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony: Grand Strategy and International Institutions In East Asian History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).; Flynt Leverett and Wu Bingbing, "The New Silk Road and China's Evolving Grand Strategy," *The China Journal*, No. 77 (January, 2017), pp. 110-132; Giovanni B. Andornino, "The Belt and Road Initiative in China's Emerging Grand Strategy of Connective Leadership," *China & World Economy*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (2017), pp. 4–22 Aaron L. Friedberg, "Globalisation and Chinese Grand Strategy," *Survival*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2018), pp. 7-40; Lukas K. Danner, *China's Grand Strategy: Contradictory Foreign Policy?* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁵⁵⁶ See Angela Stanzel, "Grand Designs: Does China have a 'Grand Strategy'?" *European Council on Foreign Relations*, No. 234 (October, 2017), p. 4.; Robert Sutter, *China's Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the End of the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2012), p. 140. See, also, Shinju Yamaguchi, who argues that China's grand strategy is beginning to coalesce under the strong leadership of Xi Jinping. *Idem.*, *Strategies of China's Maritime Actors in the South China Sea A Coordinated Plan under the Leadership of Xi Jinping?* *China Perspectives, China's Policy in the China Seas*, Vol. 3 (2016), pp. 23-31.

addressing China's immediate needs and assuaging its weaknesses, which sometimes requires China to pursue sub-optimal and contradictory foreign policies.⁵⁵⁷ These scholars are skeptical about the possibility of a coherent intellectual framework guiding the foreign policy of China, essentially arguing that pragmatic necessity trumps ideological convictions.⁵⁵⁸ As often suggested in the literature on "Third World" balancing, developing states, particularly ones with authoritarian regimes, are more sensitive to domestic threats.⁵⁵⁹ It comes as no surprise that much of what China appears to be doing reflects the deep-seated insecurity that Chinese elites feel about their grasp on power. Other scholars, nevertheless, make the case that grand strategy involves an intellectual framework and long time horizons that most states possess, unwittingly or otherwise.⁵⁶⁰ China, therefore, might have a grand strategy. Here too, there is much controversy over the nature and sources of

⁵⁵⁷ Barry Buzan, "The Logic and Contradictions of 'Peaceful Rise/Development' as China's Grand Strategy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter, 2014), pp. 381–420; Christopher Layne, "The Influence of Theory on Grand Strategy: The United States and a Rising China," in Annette Freyberg-Inan, Ewan Harrison, and Patrick James, eds., *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 103–135.

⁵⁵⁸ Xiaoyu Pu and Randall L. Schweller, "Status Signaling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue-Water Naval Ambition," in William C. Wohlforth and Deborah Welch Larson, eds., *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 141.

⁵⁵⁹ See, Jack Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring, 1988), pp. 662.; Jack Levy and Michael Barnett, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer, 1991), pp. 369-395. See, also, Stephen R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January, 1991), pp. 233-256. For one consequence on China's foreign relations, see M. Taylor Fravel, "Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall, 2005), pp. 46–83.

⁵⁶⁰ See Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy*, p. 4; Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, p. 1.

Chinese grand strategy, as it straddles anywhere between *Realpolitik*, Communism, and Confucianism.⁵⁶¹

We find at the intersection of these debates the key discussion point that set of this research: does China have revisionist aims, or is it a peaceful, status quo, power?⁵⁶² Indeed, the academic debate complements an impressive array of narratives from the policy world about the true intentions of Chinese elites. Chinese elites, for their part, do their best to counter these policy narratives by emphasizing principles they outlined in their long-term plans, or what we can call prescriptive grand strategies.⁵⁶³ These efforts have prompted some interesting prescriptive grand strategies such as “hide the light,” “peaceful rise,” also known as “peaceful development,” “striving for achievement,” and “selective leadership.”⁵⁶⁴ A spate of recent studies has noted the contradictory tendencies of Chinese grand strategy, drawing attention to their FPEs’ diverging discourses and behaviors.⁵⁶⁵ In particular, the Chinese prescriptive notion of “Peaceful Development” seems elicits significant contradictions as China sometimes adopts assertive policies that aim to enhance

⁵⁶¹ See, e.g., Alastair I. Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); *Idem.*, *Cultural Realism*.

⁵⁶² See Robert Ross, “Beijing as a Conservative Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (March–April, 1997), pp. 33–44; Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?,” *International Security*, Vo. 27, No. 4 (Spring, 2003), pp. 6–7.

⁵⁶³ See Yongjin Zhang, “‘China Anxiety’: Discourse and Intellectual Challenges,” *Development and Change*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (2013), pp. 1407–1425; Ce Liang, “The rise of China as a constructed narrative: Southeast Asia's response to Asia's power shift,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2018), pp. 279-297; Denny Roy, “Assertive China: Irredentism or Expansionism?” *Survival*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (2019), pp. 51-74.

⁵⁶⁴ See Zheng, “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’,” p. 24.

⁵⁶⁵ See, e.g., Yong Deng, *China’s Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 3-4; Danner, *China’s Grand Strategy*, pp. 34-35.

Chinese honor (also traditional and rational goals such as military and economic power) in order to cement domestic legitimacy. It is beyond the scope of this study to profess a comprehensive and transcendental answer to this controversies. That China, and many other states, seem to deviate from a broader notion of grand strategy –declared, prescriptive, or inferred– is not exceptional. When the question of “wither grand strategy?” is replaced with a “why” and “when” questions, the incoherence argument loses its *raison d’etre*. For our purposes, therefore, neither a fixed Chinese grand strategy nor long-term consistency is necessary for the analysis. This chapter, accordingly, examines Chinese behavior and Chinese FPEs’ discourses over the post-Cold War period to corroborate whether there were reasonably consistent grand-strategic orientations and, correspondingly, the employment of appropriate strategies in various domains of state behavior.

6.3. MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

6.3.1. Material Capabilities

Noting the primacy of a state’s freedom of action, as defined by its relative military capabilities, the CINC reveals that for most of its history, China did not have a favorable material environment. Despite its overwhelming demographic advantage, which skews the data in favor of China, and its enormous economic potential, Chinese capabilities were hardly level with the U.S.⁵⁶⁶ Arguably, a part of the reason for this was that China’s enormous population base did not translate into military personnel due to China’s

⁵⁶⁶ Figures based on *Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey, “Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-1965,” 19-48 and augmented by World Bank Open Data. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/>, Last Accessed: November 11, 2018.*

abandonment of “People’s Warfare” and other mass-based military doctrines in favor a smaller and modernized force, for which reforms were already underway in the period of study.⁵⁶⁷ According to the 2012 COW data, China’s position relative to the U.S. improved gradually as China reached parity with the dominant state, the U.S., after 2001, and gradually overtook it (See figures 6.1., 6. 2., and 6. 3. below). Economically too, China went from being a backwater to a major economy in 2000, and then rose to the second-rank spot.

Beyond material capabilities as an accumulation of assets, however, one need also consider other factors relating to how that power is possibly utilized. In other words, freedom action also relates to a state’s ability to project force outwardly. In this category, the U.S. retains an overwhelming edge over China, as well as other great-power states.⁵⁶⁸ While China lacks trans-oceanic power projection capabilities, it maintains a distinct local advantage. Nevertheless, China has demonstrated throughout the Cold War its willingness to use force in its immediate neighborhood in fulfillment of its core interests.⁵⁶⁹ More importantly, China has undertaken significant military modernization since 1996 and has significantly expanded its operational capabilities, which scholars link to a more assertive

⁵⁶⁷ See M. Taylor Fravel, “The Evolution of China’s Military Strategy: Comparing The 1987 And 1999 Editions of *Zhanlüexue*,” in James Mulvenon and David Finkelstein, eds., *China's Revolution in Doctrinal Affairs: Emerging Trends in the Operational Art of the Chinese People's Liberation Army* (Arlington VA, Center for Naval Analyses, 2002), pp. 79-99, esp., pp. 84-86.

⁵⁶⁸ See Chapter 5 of this volume.

⁵⁶⁹ See M. Taylor Fravel, “Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China's Use of Force in Territorial Disputes,” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter, 2007/2008), pp. 44-83.

foreign policy and force posturing the East and South China Seas.⁵⁷⁰ China shows signs of significant signs of military modernization, such that it may be able to overwhelm the militaries of neighboring states and possibly even U.S. forces deployed nearby.⁵⁷¹ ,

Despite its incredible growth in the past decades, however, China remains a developing country with a massive population that has the potential to threaten the regime. No matter how much China modernizes its military and expands its capabilities, its FPEs will be averse to taking on the kind of military operations that today only Russia and the U.S. can achieve. China's neighborhood is also considerably more hostile than, say, that of the U.S. China is surrounded by three regional "great" powers. Russia is currently friendly towards China but possesses power projection and WMD capabilities that surpasses Chinese capabilities.

India, meanwhile, has abysmal relations with PRC due to outstanding historical and territorial misgivings. Japan is also a great power, a U.S. ally and feels threatened. China is flanked by several countries, like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, that are not only on good terms with the U.S. but also possess considerable military assets. One of China's few allies is North Korea, which is essentially a liability for China since the North Korean regime's nuclear vocation has caused numerous problems because its conduct has forced China to choose between obeying UN sanctions and aiding its ally. Considering the

⁵⁷⁰ See Aaron L. Friedberg, "Hegemony with Chinese Characteristics," *The National Interest*, No. 114 (July/August, 2011), pp. 18-27, *esp.*, p. 19.

⁵⁷¹ See Eric Heginbotham, Michael Nixon, Forrest E. Morgan, Jacob L. Heim, Jeff Hagen, Sheng Li, Jeffrey Engstrom, Martin C. Libicki, Paul DeLuca, David A. Shlapak, David. Frelinger, Burgess Laird, Kyle Brady, Lyle J. Morris, *The U.S.-China Military Score Card: Forces, Geograhpy, and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996-2017* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2015).

intersection of material capabilities and domestic vulnerabilities, Chinese “revisionism” will be limited. The only exception to this may be if Chinese FPEs consciously attempt to harness nationalist sentiments and mobilize public support through irredentist policies. Even then, an authoritarian regime may be loath to harness nationalist energies that may spiral out of control.

Figure 6.1. Chinese Military Expenditure Compared to the U.S., 1990-2017

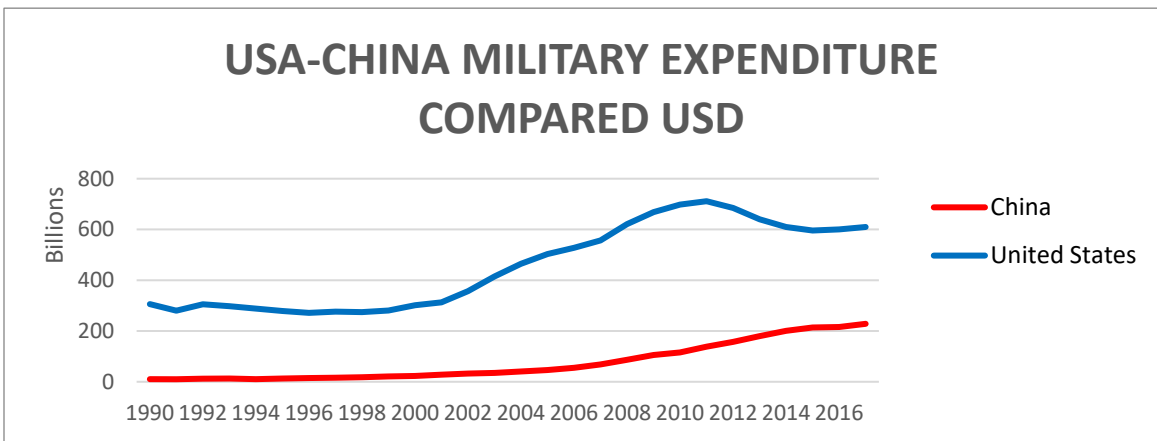


Figure 6.2. Chinese Mil. Spending, % of GDP Compared to the U.S., 1990-2017

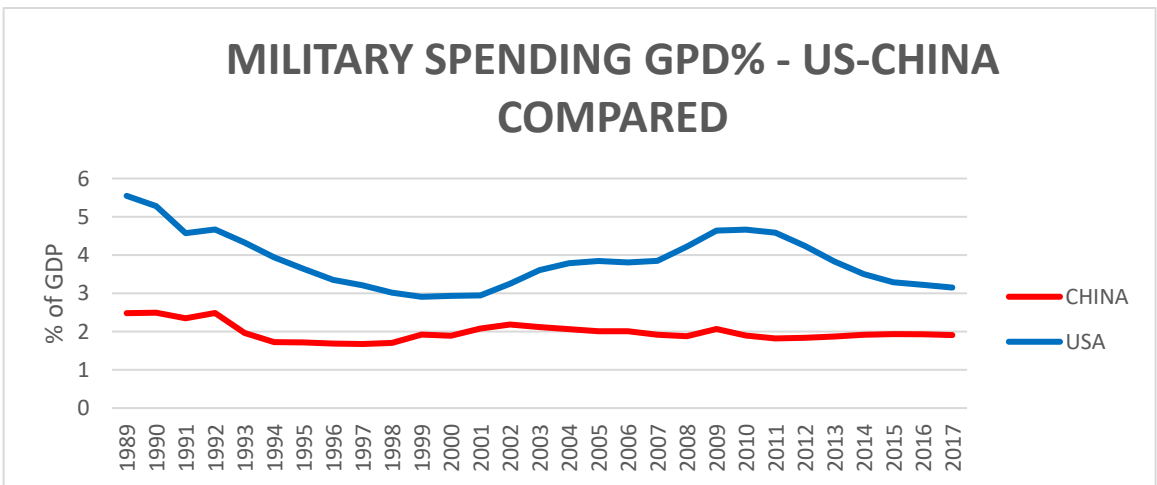
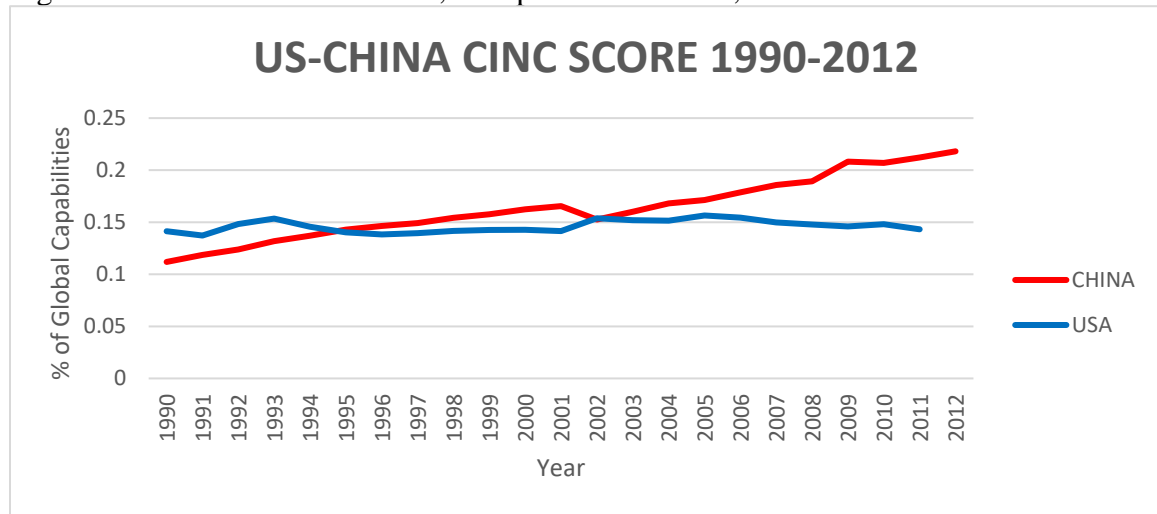


Figure 6.3. Chinese CINC Scores, Compared to the U.S., 1990-2017



6.3.2. Content Analysis of Narratives

This chapter defines Chinese FPEs as the most influential decision-makers concerning the formulation and execution of Chinese foreign policy, especially those responsible for articulating the policies to the world public as well as those responsible for creating consent (i.e., policy justifications). Chinese UN speeches have been delivered in the past by a diverse portfolio of individuals, including presidents, premiers, as well as other top executives such as ministers of foreign affairs.⁵⁷² It is worth mentioning that the “cycles” of orientations do not neatly fall under the tenures of specific heads of state. Given how influential Presidents are in both political systems, attempting periodization based on incumbent leaders’ tenures would have made sense. This arrangement is especially

⁵⁷² Since U.S. speeches were almost always delivered by Presidents or Secretaries of State, it might be necessary to list the Chinese *drammaticis personae* here for clarity. For the purposes of the present chapter, China’s post-Cold War FPEs including Chinese Presidents, like Shang-Kun, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jiping; Foreign Ministers like Qian Qichen; and Premiers like Wen Jiabao, Jiaxuan Tang, Jiechi Yang, and Li Keqiang.

applicable for American presidents because they often introduce a unique strategic or geopolitical vision with which to guide their foreign policy. Chinese presidents similarly issue doctrinal papers that comprehensively lay forth their policy principles. Nevertheless, the potential of Chinese presidents to have decade-long tenures, combined with the trends in the data as well as China's international conduct, made an exclusive, leader-based, temporal division unnecessary.

There is a notable difficulty in attempting to divine Chinese narratives about world order. An analysis of thirty-five UNGA (thirty-four addresses to the Assembly and six statements) from 1990-2018 reveal that for a better part of this period the speeches elicit very high-degrees of thematic and substantive similarities as compared to their U.S. counterparts.⁵⁷³ Often, earlier speeches, especially in China's order-retrenching period in the 1990s much of the disagreements the speeches always invoke the same themes and repeat the same ideas virtually verbatim. The differences in values across the years reflect changing degrees of emphasis on certain narratives.⁵⁷⁴

Another critical element is that the Chinese speeches underscore dissatisfaction narratives as they relate to issues of national sovereignty and international justice. Especially in the 1990s, Chinese order narratives revolve around sovereignty concerns and justice for the oppressed developing countries. Virtually, every speech references the differences between "rich countries" and "small countries," the need for the former to aid

⁵⁷³ Note that some years have multiple speeches due to the addition of Special Sessions (like the Millennium Conference). The notable omissions from the available data were short, rebuttal speeches.

⁵⁷⁴ See Appendix.

the latter, the need to move beyond the “Cold War mentality.”⁵⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the significance of territorial sovereignty and, consequently, references to Taiwan and other *terra irredenta*, were common features as well but such narratives declined in frequency over time. One narrative, however, remained an ever-present feature of Chinese speeches: that of sovereignty, from which we can reasonably estimate that Chinese preferences, and willingness to pursue riskier strategies would be more inelastic.

In suggesting that China gradually adopted first an order-conforming and then an order-reforming orientation, the analysis finds that earlier Chinese discussions mainly revolve around developmental issues and procedural statements about China’s foreign relations that do not automatically translate into order narratives. Even China’s earlier satisfaction narratives reflect a high-degree of “revisionism.” Much of the coded narratives are those dedicated to changing, reforming, the UN. This discourse may reflect dissatisfaction or a desire on the part of Chinese decision-makers to enhance their influence in world politics. Another way to read this tendency is to think about UN reform as a kind of representational dissatisfaction.⁵⁷⁶ Since the narratives concern the functioning of a long-standing and significant international organization, one that could be considered the lynchpin of the liberal international order, reform narratives were coded as expressing implicit consent for the functioning of the existing international order.

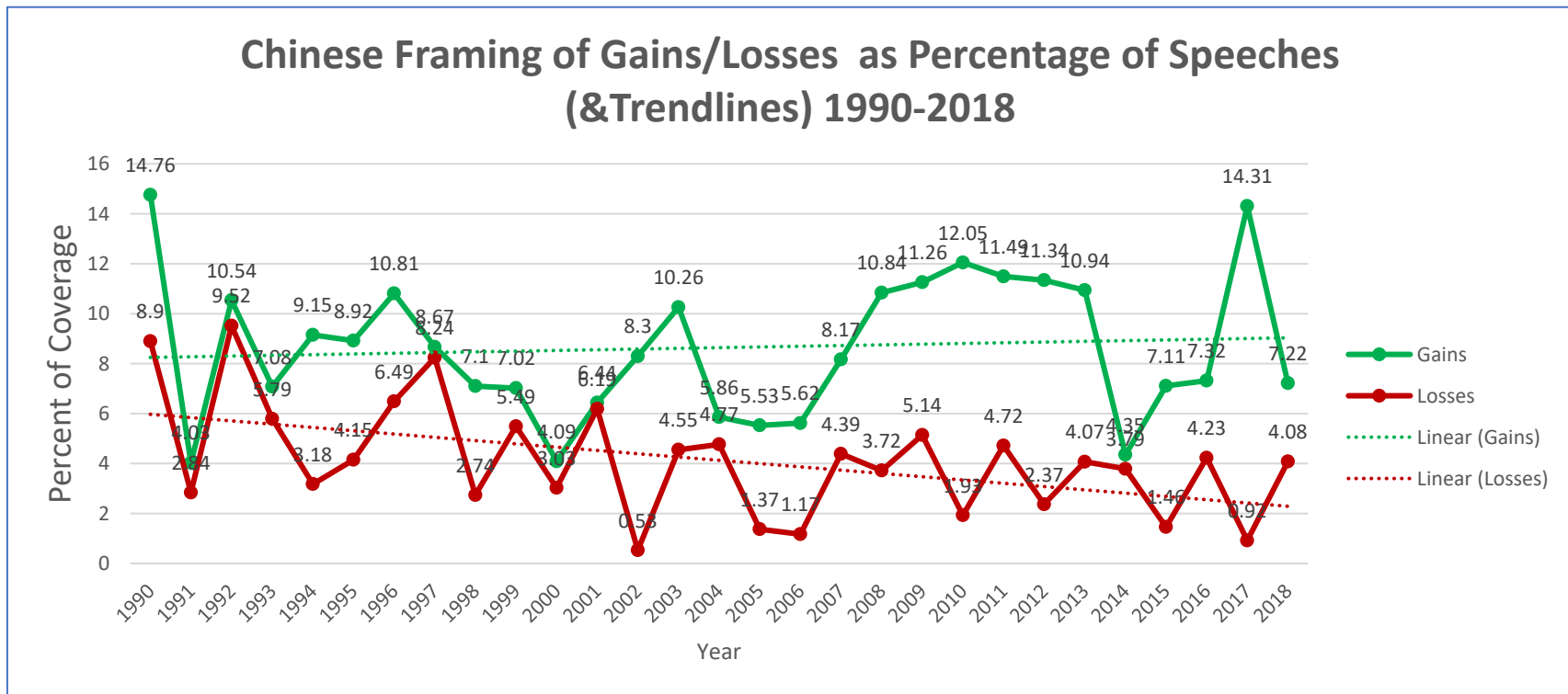
More promising for the framework is the overtime reduction in narratives around UN reform, which again arguably reflects a parochial desire to obtain greater influence

⁵⁷⁵ In fact, such attitudes have not disappeared from the Chinese lexicon. See Ben Blanchard, “Senior Chinese diplomat says China, U.S. Must Avoid Cold War Mentality,” *Reuters* (September 25, 2018).

⁵⁷⁶ Newman and Zala, “Rising Powers and Order Contestation.”

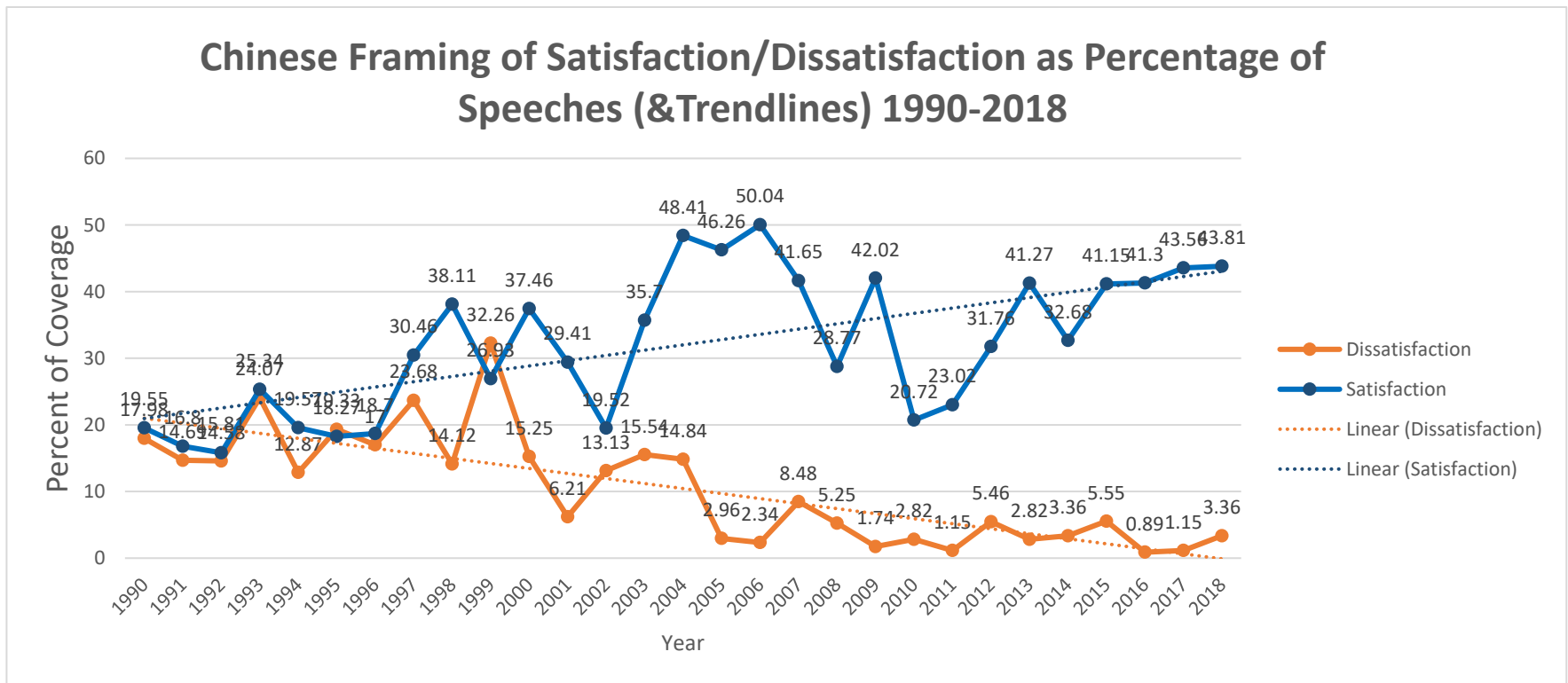
rather than upholding order *per se*. Despite this drop, Chinese satisfaction narratives increased tremendously over time as references to common interests and internationalism markedly increased.

Figure 6. 4. Chinese FPEs' framing of gains and losses⁵⁷⁷



⁵⁷⁷ See Appendix I for a detailed list of documents and FPEs covered in the analysis.

Figure 6.5. Chinese FPEs' narratives about satisfaction and dissatisfaction⁵⁷⁸



⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

6.4. POST-COLD WAR CHINESE HISTORY

Between 2003-2010, Chinese grand strategy was order-conforming. Using 2003 as the cut-off period between order retrenchment and conforming orientations may seem arbitrary since China was already starting to increase its participation in major global organizations and expanding its diplomatic network. Increased participation in global institutions appears to be the only metric. China's use of force patterns, general ambivalence with regards to its global responsibilities, and its relations with other great powers, all suggest that China was not yet conforming to international order. Table 6. 1. summarizes the predictions of the framework.

Table 6. 1. Chinese Grand-Strategic Orientations in the Post-Cold War

	Years	Permissive Environment	Prospect Framing	Satisfaction Framing	Predicted Order Orientation	Primary Observable Strategies
Shang-Kun & Zemin	1988-2001	RESTRICTIVE	MODERATE	LOW	RETRENCH	<i>Withdrawal Appeasement Conservatism</i>
Zemin & Jintao	2001-2010	RESTRICTIVE	HIGH	HIGH	CONFORM	<i>Multilateralism Restraint Enmeshment</i>
Jiping	2010-Present	PERMISSIVE	HIGH	HIGH	REFORM	<i>Leadership Expansionism Reformism</i>

The division also makes sense given the organization implanted in the previous chapter whereby the tenure of U.S. presidents provided a sound basis for dividing different eras. The reasoning was that while elites and decision-makers of lower echelons may have remained the same, a change in administration invariably reshuffled the FPE deck. Furthermore, in the U.S. system presidents are free to, often expected, to leave behind a doctrinal legacy. This trend is even more pronounced in the Chinese case since each

president articulates formal ideological positions and doctrines about their strategic priorities.⁵⁷⁹ Finally, and most importantly, the data also helpfully demarcates specific dates as being significant. For instance, 2002 coincides with both China formally eclipsing the U.S. in terms of their CINC scores all the while Chinese narratives at the UN experienced a sharp positive increase in terms of satisfaction narratives.

Chinese grand strategy in the post-Cold War was modest during the post-Cold War as its restrictive international environment, constricted its ambitions. Moreover, its order-narratives evinced dissatisfaction, while its FPEs were plagued with uncertainty and insecurity. Material weaknesses denied China the significant freedom of action to pursue expansive military operations and, moreover, impelled China to pursue accommodationist strategies towards other great powers. Even when China had important points of disagreement with the U.S., its displeasure only materialized as opprobrium; never as concrete policies. As the decade went on, China gradually began to integrate into various regional and multilateral institutions.

Moreover, its economy started to boom. In the turn of the new millennium, China's security environment had become a bit more pacific due to the numerous treaties it established with neighbors. More importantly, Chinese FPEs expressed great satisfaction towards international order and they elicit much greater certainty about their prospects, all of which signaled a risk-averse and peaceable grand-strategic orientation. Finally, around 2010, China's growing power and improving strategic circumstances not only enhanced its

⁵⁷⁹ See Fang Lexian, "On Deng Xiaoping Diplomatic Thoughts of Transcending the Differences of Social Systems and Ideologies", *World Economics and Politics*, No. 11 (1998), pp. 18-20.

freedom of action but also made it more assertive. Still, Chinese FPEs' were extremely satisfied with international order and viewed positively their prospects, which culminated in order-reforming strategies.

6. 4. 1. Order-Retrenching, 1990-2001

The framework predicts that during the 1990s, China's grand-strategic orientation amounted to order-retrenchment. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, China still retained behavioral characteristics that while rejecting international order was nevertheless reluctant to undermine it through pursuing risky and expansive strategies. What to the U.S.' was the unipolar moment to China a period of relative weakness and instability. China faced a restrictive international environment in three ways. Firstly, in terms of its capabilities. As a still-developing nation, China's economic base was relatively weak and not capable yet of developing a world-class military that could match the U.S. and its allies in the region. Chinese FPEs were acutely aware of their material incapacity to stand up to the superpower states and thus opted to avoid confrontation.⁵⁸⁰

Secondly, the collapse of the Soviet Union proved to have a surprisingly negative consequence for China. Normally, such a power vacuum ought to have enhanced Chinese freedom of action. Yet, China was not able to exploit such a shift. Instead, its strategic value for the West declined. This is because, counterintuitively, China's main "enemy" during the Cold War was not the bourgeois West but its Soviet neighbor. This conflict

⁵⁸⁰ This is the essence of the doctrine put forward by Deng Xiaoping, which advocates that China ought to bide its time, and keep a low profile. For a discussion, see Dingding Chen and Jianwei Wang, "Lying Low No More?: China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy," *China: An International Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2 September 2011), pp. 195–216.

emanated from ideological differences and strategic interests. Chinese and Soviet interpretations of Marxism seemed irreconcilable.⁵⁸¹ Aggravating the problem was China's desire to lead the Third World as an alternative to the Western and Soviet blocs. China also feared and resented the Soviet Union due to the latter's imperial attitude towards other socialist countries.⁵⁸² Most importantly, both countries failed to settle their long-standing border disputes, culminating most notably in a clash along the Ussuri River. It was this gap that the Nixon administration sought to exploit through Triangular Diplomacy and promote China as a counter-balance to Soviet power, thus setting China on a path to normalizing relations with the West, which paved the way for both economic and political support. The problem was that absent the Soviet threat; the U.S. had fewer incentives to accommodate China.⁵⁸³

Finally, improving relations with the West and opening its economy to the global market kicked off a period of tremendous economic growth for China. It also exposed the regime to the ill-effects of liberalization as opening up to the outside world fomented domestic dissent. China's domestic stability and international diplomatic reputation nadir in the Post-Cold War period due to the events of Tiananmen Square.⁵⁸⁴ The loss of Western

⁵⁸¹ See Mingjiang Li, "Ideological dilemma: Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1962–63," *Cold War History* Vol. 11, No. 3 (2011), pp. 387-419.

⁵⁸² Consider for instance the heavy-handed Soviet repression of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

⁵⁸³ See Allen S. Whiting, "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall, 2001), pp. 103-131.

⁵⁸⁴ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign relations*, pp. 132-133.

support manifested in an arms embargo on China and, additionally, risked China's trading relations with Western powers; particularly with the U.S.

China's international environment was also restrictive in the sense that it did not fundamentally alter Chinese threat perceptions nor create any maneuvering space to pursue alternative policies. One key Chinese policy objective, as corroborated by the literature as well as the FPEs' accounts, is the fulfillment of China's territorial ambitions. Specifically, China aimed to reacquire some of its neighboring territories on which it has historical claims. China had long-standing border disputes with virtually all its neighbors, which during the Cold War culminated in confrontations with neighboring states, including the use of force.

Additionally, the historical legacies of colonialism and China's ruling ideology made it necessary to expunge foreign presence from Chinese territory. To this end, reacquiring Hong-Kong and Macau were important goals for the Chinese leadership. Most importantly, however, China sought to decisively solve the Taiwan issue, which has both domestic, strategic, and symbolic implications for the mainland. Domestically, the continued existence of an alternative and hostile Chinese government threatened the legitimacy of the Communist Party. Strategically, Taiwan served a similar purpose as West Berlin did for American power projection. It provided at once a bastion for Western ideology as well as military bases for the U.S. that could encircle and contain China. Finally, Taiwan was historically a part of China, and its continued independence is a

symbolic rebuke to Chinese aspirations. No matter how amiable China may seem in discourse and disposition, Taiwan appears to represent a kind of red line for China.⁵⁸⁵

Chinese FPEs had an ambivalent attitude to international order. On the one hand, both at the UN and in other fora, the emerging unipolar structure, including the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reemergence of Germany as a regional actor, were interpreted as signaling an end to rigid bipolarity and a decisive shift towards multipolarity. As Qichen noted in his 1990 address to the UNGA:

Profound changes are taking place in the world today. German unification will soon become a reality, co-operation between various regions of the world is increasing. The trend towards multipolarization has grown noticeably. However, power politics continue. Political, economic and ethnic strains have become increasingly evident, and tensions and complicated situations have emerged in some regions.⁵⁸⁶

The end of the Cold War also made China more vulnerable. In addition to the diminishing strategic value of China as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, Chinese FPEs anticipated a rise in regional conflicts and the risk of Western intervention also seemed to be distinct possibilities.⁵⁸⁷ Even as the Gulf War unfolded, China's leaders perceived that they could be next as the next target of U.S.-led regime change.⁵⁸⁸ An examination of discourses reveals that Chinese FPEs were dissatisfied with international order as

⁵⁸⁵ See Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," pp. 33-44, *esp.*, p. 33.

⁵⁸⁶ See Qian Qichen, "Speech Delivered by Quichen at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, October 4, 1990).

⁵⁸⁷ See Joseph Yu-shek Cheng, "China's Foreign Policy in the Mid-1990s," *Center for Asian Pacific Studies, Working Paper Series*, No. 28 (1995), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁸⁸ See, Bonie Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions – Interests and Ambitions," *Asian Survey*, Vol. xxxiii, No. 3 (March, 1993), pp.259-260.

evidenced by their frequent criticism of Western powers, narratives about building a new international order, and overt concern for territorial sovereignty.⁵⁸⁹

If the framework is correct, we should be able to observe evidence in China's conduct a tendency to shirk from major international undertakings that could be risky. In terms of the use of force and diplomatic disposition, we would expect that China would be "withdrawn" or, simply, reluctant to use any force barring the defense of perceived core interests. In terms of its attitude towards the balance of power and its relations with great powers, the framework predicts that an order-retrenching China would more likely "appease" other major powers. As for international legal conduct and normative aspirations, an order-retrenching attitude would not outright break international norms and laws but insist merely on "conservative" and parochial interpretations that negate their applicability to their case.

6. 4. 1. 1. Use of Force

In this period, the model predicts that China would be unlikely to use force. Debilitating domestic weaknesses and an unfavorable international context compromised China's ability to use sustained force. Nevertheless, the core Chinese interests provided an enduring rationale, and pressing need, for China to exert military power even when it was arguably least capable of attaining desirable political outcomes. An order-retrenching state may be motivated to revise international order, but a combination of material weaknesses, risk aversion, or inability to define core interests would militate against decisive use of force. As indicated earlier, it is not surprising that there have been instances in recent decades in

⁵⁸⁹ See Li Jingzhi and Lin Su, eds., *Contemporary World Economy and Politics* (Beijing: Renmin University Press, 1999), esp., chapter 5.

which China used force, but its use of force in the 1990s was limited in comparison to previous decades. Even its participation in UN Peacekeeping Missions remained relatively circumscribed until it adopted an order-conforming disposition in the 2000s. In fact, in 1990 China was contributing a mere *two* Peacekeepers as observing staff members to UNTSO.⁵⁹⁰ China's sole military contribution in this period was its contribution of observers, as well as a small contingent of engineers and soldiers to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, a country virtually next door to China.

China's reluctance to participate in UN Peacekeeping Missions was likely the product of weakness rather than any inherent dissatisfaction with the international order simply because Chinese military developments in this period were also lackluster and highly reactive as compared to the proactive disposition of the PLA during the Cold War.⁵⁹¹ Additionally, accepting international intervention against minor states would have conflicted with China's anti-imperialist aspirations. China was beginning to accept the notion of conditional intervention against other states.⁵⁹²

As for the use of force elsewhere, whereas contemporary discussions of Chinese conduct in the South and East China Seas draw attention Chinese assertiveness and attempts to acquire greater control, such a narrative would have been harder to sustain in

⁵⁹⁰ See Beijing, *China's National Defense in 2008* (Beijing, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, January 20, 2009).

⁵⁹¹ See Whiting, "China's Use of Force," pp. 106-120.

⁵⁹² See Zhongying Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," *Global Responsibility to Protect*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January, 2009), pp. 237-252, *esp.*, p. 250; Jonathan Holland, "Chinese Attitudes to International Law: China, the Security Council, Sovereignty, and Intervention," *NYU Journal of International Law & Politics Online Forum* (July, 2012).

the 1990s when China's ambitions were limited to maintaining a favorable presence. For instance, in 1994 China seized Mischief (*Meiji*) Island, which was a part of the long disputed Spratly Island chain and constructed a military base.⁵⁹³

Fravel notes that Chinese attitudes towards border-dispute settlement took on different shapes based on the nature of the territory and the proximity of domestic threats. For instance, areas like Hong-Kong, Macao, and Taiwan are considered part of the Chinese "Homeland," and Chinese willingness to compromise was inelastic no matter how secure, or not, the Chinese government felt.⁵⁹⁴ By this interpretation, it is unlikely for China to remain indifferent to developments in these vital areas regardless of its order-retrenching orientation.

China nevertheless engaged in limited uses of force, mostly in the form of naval exercises as a form of force posturing and coercive diplomacy. The most dramatic of these instances in the post-Cold War period was its efforts to intimidate Taiwan in 1995-1996. China considers Taiwan a core national interest and has demonstrated its resolve to use force, if needed, on past occasions.⁵⁹⁵ In 1995-1996, China conducted missile tests as well as massive-scale military exercises, complete with live ammunition, near Taiwan. This round of conflict was encouraged by U.S. support for the then Taiwanese president Lee Teng-Hui, who advocated a pro-independence agenda. Despite their reassurances to

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.* See, also, Michael Yahuda, "China's Recent Relations with Maritime Neighbours," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2012), pp. 30-44. The extent to which this is a revisionist policy is debatable. See Johnston, "Is China a status quo power?" p. 28.

⁵⁹⁴ See M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Strategy in the South China Sea," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Special Focus: The South China Sea Dispute (December, 2011), pp. 292-319.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

the PRC, the U.S. government nevertheless facilitated Lee Teng-hui's visit to Cornell University, his *alma mater*, to deliver a talk that featured overtones in support of Taiwanese independence.⁵⁹⁶ This academic visit was perceived by the PRC as a violation of its official “one China, two systems” policy and a direct challenge to its vocation of reunification with Taiwan.⁵⁹⁷ China responded with a strong condemnation, declaring that PRC “will not sit idle if foreign forces interfere in China's reunification and get involved in Taiwan independence.”⁵⁹⁸ Aggravating the situation was the upcoming Legislative Yuan election in Taiwan where pro-independence factions had been gaining momentum.

Both as a signal of resolve and as a form of coercive diplomacy, the PRC took military measures, which manifested as a series of missile tests and military exercises too close for Taiwanese comfort. In July 1995, the PLA launched multiple missiles on the sea lanes between Taiwan and Japan. These were followed up by the PLA's annual exercises in November, which took place in Dongshan Island of the Chinese coast but also near Taiwan. The exercises brought 160,000 soldiers, and all branches of the PLA in a combined arms operation, to simulate an amphibious invasion of Taiwan, which made it the most extensive military exercise ever conducted by the PLA.

To put these developments into perspective, the PRC was by no means a peaceful state in the run-up to 1990s. For much of the Cold War, China was not seriously considered

⁵⁹⁶ See Whiting, “China's Use of Force,” pp., 119-120.

⁵⁹⁷ See Chen Qimao, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis: Its Crux and Solutions,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 11 (November, 1996), pp. 1055-1066.

⁵⁹⁸ Whiting, “China's Use of Force,” p. 121.

as a great-power state by any conceivable metric. Even in this period, it found itself embroiled in nearby conflicts. It was involved in the Korean War and even sought to use force against Formosa/Taiwan/U.S. Furthermore, it clashed with other neighboring states, including sustained inter-state wars in Vietnam. China was part of twenty-one border disputes in this period and used force in six of them. These include, among others, India and Russia, which were formidable rivals to China. The clashes with Russia are worth mentioning simply due to the scale of the conflict as fighting erupted over the Amur and Ussuri Rivers along the two countries' 4,300km long shared border; the clashes only ended after a stern warning from the Soviet Union.

Why mention these examples from the Cold War? Because the experiences of the Cold War serve as a baseline with which to measure Chinese patterns of the use of force. Naturally, China pursued an order-challenging grand strategy during much of the Cold War, until *Détente*. It was willing to use force preemptively, apply coercive diplomacy, and was overall risk acceptant, even towards more powerful states.⁵⁹⁹ The experience of force used in the 1990s, however, show an overall reduction in these tendencies. The primary reason is a material deficiency. Of course, the military exercises over Taiwan were staggering in scale considering the numerical and geographic scope of the operations. Furthermore, PRC force posturing amounted to a thinly-veiled attempt to intimidate its opponents such as the proponents of independence in Taiwan. China's reluctance to follow up on the initial operations after the favorable conclusion of the Taiwanese election and

⁵⁹⁹ See Whiting, "China's Use of Force," p. 108.

the deployment of the largest U.S. naval contingent in Taiwan since 1958 also depicts a different pattern, however. While China was risk-acceptant and willing to invest in conflict with more powerful rivals during the Cold War (including the U.S.) its reluctance in the post-Cold War period can be explained by its lack of freedom of action attributable to insufficient military capabilities to project power.⁶⁰⁰ One could nevertheless argue that the exercises and tests over the Taiwan Strait in 1995-1996 possibly carried with it the risk of retaliation by the U.S. In fact, the U.S. responded to Chinese maneuvers by deploying two aircraft carrier battle groups as a show of support for Taiwan but for all intents and purposes China did not outright clash with any foreign militaries. Moreover, the PRC quickly followed up on these exercises with a sustained diplomatic engagement with the U.S to control for damages to the relationship. On this point, China's relations with other great powers, namely Russia and the U.S., is worth exploring.

6.4.1.2. Relations with other Great Powers

China's discursive insistence on an emerging multipolarity, emphasis on developmental issues, and a low-profile international presence suggest that Chinese FPEs sought a non-ideological and amicable foreign policy. Rather than doubling down on their position as the sole socialist power and attempting to defy the Western alliance through seeking the leadership of the Soviet successor states and the Third World, Chinese elites found it more profitable to keep operating within the existing order. Chinese FPEs continued to implement the policies articulated by Li Peng, who advocated a risk-free foreign policy

⁶⁰⁰ Arguably, China was worse off in this department as well since it had reduced its total military size in favor of a higher quality military.

and restraint.⁶⁰¹ Thus, the framework predicts that in this period, Chinese foreign policy pursued limited and risk-averse appeasement policies towards other great powers. We can find evidence for this in China's formal relations with the Soviet Union/Russia and the U.S. In fact, Chinese FPEs appear to have accepted the new status quo produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and reshuffling of the former Soviet bloc. They also concluded significant border settlements, pursued better relations with Russia and, to an extent, with the U.S.

Firstly, China's decision to pursue overall decent relations with the U.S. is consistent with materialist explanations: the U.S. was simply more powerful and threatening than before. China was also dependent on the U.S.' renewal of the most favored nation trading status, which was vital for the Chinese economy. Thus, despite frequent invectives by Chinese FPEs, China made efforts to maintain decent relations with the U.S., even when Chinese FPE felt directly threatened by the U.S. over vital interests such as its sovereignty and regime stability, Taiwan, as well as its unconstrained use of force.⁶⁰² The Chinese had adopted accommodation as the preferred way to interact with the U.S.⁶⁰³

China's heavy-handed suppression of uprisings around the country, especially the student occupation of Tiananmen Square in 1989, placed China on the crosshairs of global public opinion. The American reaction greatly mattered because, since the end of *Détente*,

⁶⁰¹ See Cheng, "China's Foreign Policy," p. 14.

⁶⁰² See Rosemary Foot, "Chinese Strategies in a US-Hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging," *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (2006), pp. 77-108.

⁶⁰³ See Sutter, *China's Foreign Relations*, pp. 139-140.

human rights had become a cornerstone of its foreign policy towards the communist world.⁶⁰⁴ Combined with the triumphalism of the unipolar moment, China was under great pressure by the U.S. to democratize and improve its human rights record. U.S. conservatives declared that they were right about China all along, liberals advocated regime change, and both groups argued for the implementation of various sanctions to punish the PRC.⁶⁰⁵

While China was reluctant to take dramatic action against the U.S., the relationship suggests that it takes two to tango. That is, conflict avoidance was as much a product of Chinese restraint as well as American sensibility.⁶⁰⁶ It was the U.S. Congress that pursued punitive measures against China rather than presidents.⁶⁰⁷ For instance, while Bush I was critical of China, he nevertheless avoided an escalation of tensions. The Clinton administration, however, was unwilling to tolerate China's reckless abandon and, therefore, issued threats to the PRC by suggesting that China's continued access to international credit and U.S. markets, as well as the extension to China the status of Most Favored Nation (MFN, hereafter), would be contingent on its human rights record. Despite diplomatic tensions, however, the Chinese "backed down" and sought diplomatic exchanges with the U.S. A similar pattern also applies to the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995-

⁶⁰⁴ See Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment*.

⁶⁰⁵ See Henry A. Kissinger, *On China* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2011), pp. 411-412.

⁶⁰⁶ See Robert Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003); Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, p.140.

⁶⁰⁷ See David Skidmore and William Gates, "After Tiananmen: The Struggle over U.S. Policy toward China in the Bush Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, The Presidency in the World (Summer, 1997), pp. 514-539.

1996 because although the U.S. deployed aircraft carrier groups to intimidate China, neither side wanted to escalate the tensions.⁶⁰⁸ To deescalate the conflict President, Jiang Zemin visited the U.S. in 1997. Relations were also tense in 1999 when U.S./NATO forces erroneously bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during Operation Allied Force and led to the death of three Chinese citizens. Here too, the Chinese limited themselves to condemning the U.S., but relations quickly improved as the U.S. deescalated the conflict and provided financial compensation to the families of the deceased and injured. By this time, President Clinton removed restrictions on China placed by various U.S. agencies and endorsed its entry into the World Trade Organization, thus ensuring that politics would no longer prejudice China's export-dependent economy.⁶⁰⁹

China's relations with Russia also surprisingly improved in the 1990s because Sino-Soviet relations were hostile during the Cold War. One would have expected China to assert itself as the Soviet Union collapsed since the disorder brought about by dissolution presented a suitable opportunity for China to solve to its advantage all outstanding territorial problems with Russia. Sino-Soviet relations were already improving since the two countries had elected to normalize their relations in 1989. China counterintuitively demonstrated restraint and made notable concessions to a severely weakened Russia and unstable Russia. For instance, in 1991 and 1994 China concluded two border agreements with Russia and built on this framework with an additional border protocol in 1999.⁶¹⁰ In

⁶⁰⁸ See Kissinger, *On China*, p. 477.

⁶⁰⁹ See Friedberg, "Globalization and Chinese Grand Strategy," p. 19.

⁶¹⁰ See Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," pp. 63-64.

China's northern and eastern borders, the agreements equitably divided the disputed territories between the two as China received 52% of the river islands along the Ussuri River. As for Sino-Russian boundaries along China's western frontier, the agreements legitimized the territorial status quo. Here too, it is worth noting that China acted more conciliatory than expected. When demarcating the territory, China willingly accepted the provision that in various territories along the rivers (like Menkeseli and Ol'ginskii Island) whereby Russian locals would be allowed to continue their local fishing and other privileges despite the secession of these territories to China, which was under no legal obligation to accept such a proposition.⁶¹¹

While Chinese FPEs supplied the international community with tirades about the "Cold War mentality," its behavior offers a different story. Both towards the unipole and even towards a severely weakened neighbor, Russia, China's foreign policy approach was purely conciliatory and accommodationist, which is consistent with an order-retrenching orientation.

6. 4. 1. 3. Norms

In this period, China's conduct correlates with legal conservatism. That is to say; the model predicts that order-retrenching is expressed through a limited engagement with international institutions and a parochial interpretation of international norms that undermine international order in limited ways. A conservative attitude towards international order is that a state is unlikely to act as a responsible global citizen and help

⁶¹¹ See Knut Bolstad Jacobsen, "Rising and Revising? China and the Territorial Status Quo" (MA Thesis, Trondheim University of Science and Technology, Spring 2014), p. 26.

to adjudicate or resolve international problems. For instance, China's primary concerns were regime security and domestic stability, which translated into an excessive concern for sovereignty; so much so that virtually all of China's interactions with the rules of the international order were subordinate to this principle.⁶¹²

In practical terms, China was ambivalent towards the global human rights regime. This is not a significant challenge to international order *per se* since the Chinese never claimed to be a liberal democracy and always sought to rationalize their oppressive measures through national necessity. This attitude did, however, translate into policy preferences at the UN, for instance, where China leveraged its considerable influence not only to hamper human rights-related legislature but also to block attempts by members to condemn China on such accounts.⁶¹³ Beyond avoiding criticism, the Chinese leadership was also concerned that by enabling interventions and sanctions against human rights abuses would also form a precedent for the West to meddle in their affairs. When combined with regime insecurity and the need to keep a low profile, China ended up with shockingly limited engagement with the UN Security Council where, as one of the five permanent members, China had the right to veto resolutions. It did so very sparingly, however, preferring instead to abstain from most resolutions as a way to avoid alienating other major powers all the while signaling its political preferences. One of the few instances, when

⁶¹² For an overview of Chinese attitudes towards non-intervention, see Mu Ren, "China's Non-intervention Policy in UNSC Sanctions in the 21st Century: The Cases of Libya, North Korea, and Zimbabwe," *Ritsumeikan International Affairs*, Vol.12 (2014), pp.101–134.

⁶¹³ See Michael Fullilove, "China and the United Nations: The Stakeholder Spectrum," *The Washington Quarterly* (August, 2013).

China was willing to enable UN efforts in this period, was empowering UNOSOM. Even then, China went to great lengths to emphasize the exceptionalism of the situation.⁶¹⁴

On the other hand, the PRC was beginning to display evidence of integration into international institutions and much greater participation in the international order. Continuing the discussion from the UN, Chinese FPEs frequently referred to the centrality of the organization for global order and the need to adjudicate all disputes through the UN System. The reform of the UN constituted significant portions of Chinese UN speeches, signaling that China did want to empower the institution. In addition to its support of the institutions UN System, China also began to accede to major international treaties towards the end of the 1990s as it became a party to UNCLOS and a member of WTO.⁶¹⁵ All of these developments, of course, betray self-interest. Conducting a maritime/territorial treaty like UNCLOS was naturally motivated by China's desire to maximize its sovereignty claims over its littoral.⁶¹⁶ Acceding to UNCLOS also paved the way to a legitimate way to exploit natural resources and thereby help to satiate its growing economy's voracious appetite; membership to WTO also served a similar function.⁶¹⁷ It must be noted however that as a risk-averse novice China acted more as a rule taker than a rule maker, which shows

⁶¹⁴ See Yin He, *China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations* (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, July 2007).

⁶¹⁵ For the record, the U.S. is not a signatory of UNCLOS, nor did it ever ratify the Kyoto Protocol (see chapter 5 in the present volume).

⁶¹⁶ It did become one of the legal justifications for the nine-dash line. See Zhiguo Gao and Bing Bing Jia, "The Nine-Dash Line in the South China Sea: History, Status, and Implications," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (January, 2013), pp. 98-124.

⁶¹⁷ See Friedberg, "Globalization and Chinese Grand Strategy," p. 18.

that the practical need to integrate and avoid antagonisms far outweighed other considerations.⁶¹⁸

It appears that while China adopted order-retrenching strategies *vis-à-vis*, it kept a low profile and gradually improved its relations with great powers and integrated into major international institutions. Where it would not budge, and use force only in the most circumspect way, was on matters concerning sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thus, China's order retrenchment, starting in 1989, was neither too deep and nor did Chinese FPEs want to sacrifice economic growth by pursuing inward-oriented, exceptionalist, and ideological foreign policies that would challenge international order. The next section discusses how these gains by China shifted it towards an order-conforming orientation.

6. 4. 2. Order-Conforming, 2001-2011

At the dawn of the new millennium, China's grand-strategic orientation drifted towards order-conforming as the country started to become more integrated within international society. Though far from the "responsible global citizen" ideal-type suggested by the theoretical framework, Chinese conduct appears to have shifted towards greater conformity with international order.⁶¹⁹ If the present theory is correct, there should be ample evidence in the conduct of Chinese foreign policy that exhibits a preference for multilateralism, acting through multilateral organizations, exhibiting restraint towards other great powers, and generally complying with international norms. Finding this evidence in conjunction

⁶¹⁸ See Elizabeth Economy and Michael Oksenberg, *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999), p. 23.

⁶¹⁹ See Amitai Etzioni, "China as a Responsible Stakeholder?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (2011), pp. 539–553.

with FPE discourses about international order that affirm their overall satisfaction with the existing arrangements would further enhance the validity of the framework.

In 2002, China's CINC score passed that of the U.S. Having attained the status of the 8th largest economy in the world and positioned itself favorably in WTO; China was also poised to become a major global economy. China's material environment thus began to improve, which would, among other things, helped to propel its military modernization program.⁶²⁰ Development nevertheless is a double-edged sword. Beginning with the late 1990s, other major powers also began to view China's development as being potentially dangerous. Chinese FPEs decision to label their prescriptive grand strategy with the label of "peaceful *rise*" hardly dispelled the fears of Western powers and thus Chinese FPEs sought to counter the narrative, which among other things necessitated improving relations with neighboring countries.

Furthermore, despite the Bush II administration's focus on the Middle East brought U.S. and NATO forces to China's doorstep.⁶²¹ Although, China and the U.S. did have a common enemy in the form of Islamic terrorism and both could agree on the need to act against this global threat. Consequently, China's strategic environment was *restrictive* and Chinese FPEs saw the benefits in pursuing regional restraint and improved relations with its neighbors.

Concomitantly, Chinese strategic narratives at the UNGA show a discernable turn

⁶²⁰ For example, see Robert S. Ross, "Assessing the China Threat," *The National Interest*, No. 81 (Fall, 2005), pp. 81-87.

⁶²¹ U.S.' close relations with India did little to dispel China's anxieties.

towards satisfaction with an international order and a gradual decline in negative framing of developments. Beyond the content analysis, however, there were also specific references to ideas related to *raison de système*. For instance:

The principal task for the Chinese people in the new century is to press ahead with the modernization programme, work towards the grand cause of national reunification, *safeguard world peace and promote common development*. Indeed, the purpose of China's foreign policy is to safeguard world peace and promote common development. China needs an *environment of friendship and good-neighbourliness and external conditions of stability and prosperity*. To achieve, and safeguard, such an international environment serves China's national interests. *It is also China's duty as a member of the international community*. We believe that all civilizations and social systems in the world can, and should, exist side by side on a long-term basis, complementing one another and making progress together, in a spirit of seeking common ground while putting aside differences.⁶²²

As indicated earlier, when contrasted with the speeches from the 1990s, UNGA speeches from the order-conforming period do not show a significant increase in satisfaction levels. At the same time, however, there is an overall decline in negative framing and dissatisfaction narratives, which suggests that risk-acceptance would be minimal unless it concerned China's vital interests. More importantly, the percentage of satisfaction narratives shift from narratives about reforming the UN towards *common interests*.⁶²³ An order-conforming China more frequently invoked *raison de système* than on previous occasions. It was merely in the interest of Chinese FPEs to promote peace and stability because "without a peaceful and stable international environment,

⁶²² Emphasis added. See Tang Jiaxuan, "Speech Delivered by Tang Jiaxuan at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, November 11, 2001).

⁶²³ See Appendix.

development is out of the question for any country.”⁶²⁴

These developments manifested in doctrinal changes in China’s foreign policy as well. The so-called “New Security Concept” had already been in use during the late 1990s, which highlighted China’s commitment to peaceful development, the trend towards multipolarization, and the need for international politics to move away from Cold War “mentalities” and embrace developing countries and their needs.⁶²⁵ In the early 2000s, Chinese FPEs formulated the prescriptive grand strategy of “peaceful rise,” which was later rebranded as “peaceful development” since the former appellation invoked an ominous sense that China was challenging international order.⁶²⁶ Simply, peace, stability, and development became the defining (Chinese) narratives about order.⁶²⁷

Under these circumstances, the framework predicts that China would be less able and less-likely to likely to use force overall. An order-conforming orientation, nevertheless, is more consistent with the conduct of a good global citizen, or a responsible stakeholder.⁶²⁸ China clearly showed signs of reducing its military activities (although it did not recant its

⁶²⁴ Hu Jintao, “Speech Delivered by Hu Jintao at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session,” (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 14, 2005).

⁶²⁵ See Elizabeth Freund Larus, “China’s New Security Concept and Peaceful Rise: Trustful Cooperation or Deceptive Diplomacy?” *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (October, 2005), pp. 219-24.

⁶²⁶ See Adeleke O. Ogunnoiki, “The Emergence of China as A Global Power and The South China Sea Disputes: A Peaceful Rise or a Threat to International Order?” *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research / Social & Management Sciences*, Vol. 4, Issue 4 (April, 2018), pp. 48-78., esp., p. 65. See also, (Yan, 2006; Cho and Jeong, 2008; Liu and Tsai, 2014).

⁶²⁷ See Raviprasad Narayanan, “The Chinese Discourse on the ‘Rise of China,’” *Strategic Analysis Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2007), pp. 646-663.

⁶²⁸ See Robert Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” Remarks of Robert B. Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State, before the National Committee on U.S: China Relations,” (New York, NY: September 21, 2005).

territorial claims) but, conversely, became a more active proponent of UN Peacekeeping Missions. It also sought better relations with other great powers and neighbors alike and did so through increased multilateral engagement like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ASEAN.

6. 4. 2. 1. Use of Force

In terms of evidence corroborating the theoretical argument, this section arguably presents the greatest challenge to the logic of the framework. A more capable and satisfied, in other words, an order-conforming, China would by necessity take on greater international responsibilities. While the extent to which China was enmeshed in the legal and normative framework of international society in this period is debatable, its willingness to contribute to UN Peacekeeping Missions is unmistakable. China, moreover, did not engage in any local use of force worth mentioning in this period, opting instead for the multilateral use of force under UN auspices.

We can assess China's enhanced participation in UN Peacekeeping Missions in three ways. Firstly, one needs to consider the burgeoning number of Peacekeepers deployed. China's troop participation, comprised of officers, observers, engineers, police, and blue helmets increased from a negligible 56, in 2000, to a respectable 2038 by the year 2011.⁶²⁹ Compared to China's demographic potential, these numbers are paltry. Nevertheless, China was the most significant contributor of troops among any of the permanent members of the UNSC. Secondly, financial contributions. By 2011, China was contributing nearly 4% of the total peacekeeping budget at roughly \$300 million; a figure

⁶²⁹ See Holland, "Chinese Attitudes on International Law," pp. 17-19.

surpassed only by other permanent members of the UNSC. Finally, in this period Chinese peacekeepers were involved in a varied number, twenty-two in total, of UN Peacekeeping Missions around the world.

There are critical voices that call into question the significance of China's contributions and the sincerity of its convictions since they are not commensurate with the power and stature of China. These contributions have not dispelled the image of China as a revisionist state, and China's willingness to act as a responsible stakeholder is still under discussion.⁶³⁰ Nevertheless, China's use of force attitude and patterns betray a disposition towards greater institutional participation whilst retaining a modest and risk-averse disposition.

6. 4. 2. 2. Relations with Great Powers

In this period, China not only insisted on fostering better relations with other great powers, including Russia and the U.S. Two qualities define Chinese behavior in this period. Firstly, China's discourses on multipolarity and peaceful development began to manifest as increased participation in multilateral institutions. China's expanding diplomatic network and interactions with other great powers consolidated within the context of regional international organizations rather than bilateral agreements only. Secondly, China was notably more assertive towards the U.S. in this period. One should not interpret these strategies as a form of revisionism but rather a conscious desire to implement some form of balance of power policies. Without overstating its willingness to invest significant

⁶³⁰ See; Zoelick, "Whither China,,"; David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 111; Holland, "Chinese Attitudes Towards International Law; Cf. Amitai Etzioni, "Is China a Responsible Stakeholder?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (2011), pp. 539–553.

resources for international interventions, China's increasing presence in UN Peacekeeping Missions, for instance, and its participation in UNSC resolutions, signals a more responsible attitude towards international order. Thus, the strategy of appeasement gave way to restraint.

China continued to improve its relations with Russia as well as much of its frontier neighbors, which was a logical extension of China's desire to promote multipolarity and improving relations with Russia meant that both countries could provide a counterbalance to U.S. power. Secondly, Chinese FPEs felt the need to further enhance their security by pursuing regional peace, which also squared with the policy of peaceful development. Finally, the impetus from recent border agreements appears to have initiated a virtuous cycle where the relations of the two countries expanded both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Building on nascent multilateral efforts in the 1990s, especially the Shanghai Five in 1994, China, Russian, and members of the Former Soviet Union (excluding Uzbekistan) established the SCO in 2001. SCO provides a forum for member states to engage in confidence-building and promote military coordination concerning mutual security concerns and military deployments. The headquarters are not only located in Beijing, but China has acted as a major financial donor for the continued operations of SCO.⁶³¹ In the case of this period, SCO's primary function was to promote cooperation on terrorism-related security issues. To this end, SCO members also cooperated with the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan.

⁶³¹ See Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 298–305; Jing-Dong Yuan, "China's Role in Establishing and Building the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 19, No. 67 (November, 2010), pp. 855–870.

Nevertheless, neither China nor Russia had much patience for the American presence in the region. Robert Sutter mentions that both countries sought to extend SCO membership, and observer status to regional states while denying a position for extrarational powers, namely the U.S.⁶³²

Beyond Russia, China also conducted diplomatic relations with its great-power neighbors through regional organizations like ASEAN. ASEAN originated in the 1960s and comprised mainly of southeast Asian countries. In 1997, China, along with Japan and South Korea, joined ASEA, forming the ASEAN Plus Three. Since ASEAN was economic cooperation and free-trade organization, China quickly established itself as a major force due to its much-larger economy.

Nevertheless, it exercised restraint in this organization as well as evidenced by its initial reluctance to welcome, but eventually accept, the expansion of ASEAN to other countries, including rivals like India. China, furthermore, went on to spearhead the formation of a free trade area in the region. The key features of restraint, including multilateralism and amicability with other great powers, are hallmarks of Chinese foreign policy in this period.⁶³³

Diplomatic activism and multilateralism notwithstanding, one could still claim that based on its willingness to make concessions, China's grand-strategic orientation still

⁶³² The same also applies to ASEAN as well, although both Russia and U.S. participated in said organization's 2005 Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

⁶³³ Similar to SCO and ASEAN, China also participated in the foundation of the BRIC (later, "BRICS"), which is global economic partnership that brought together Brazil, Russia, India, China, India. The significance of this organization is that is manifested as a *de facto* alliance between major developing economies from the global south (plus Russia).

resembled appeasement. An examination of China's relationship with the U.S., especially at the UNSC, would hastily dispel such a notion. For instance, China vetoed U.S. attempts to pass a resolution to intervene in Iraq and topple the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. This is significant because it signaled a break from the traditional Chinese policy of abstaining from UNSC votes if, and when, China did not want to pass a resolution but was also loath to isolate itself from other great powers.⁶³⁴ For instance, the previous U.S.-led intervention against Iraq was enabled due to China's abstention at the Security Council. Traditional PTTs and other conventional theories would ascribe China's obstructionism to an instance of a rising state attempting to defy the dominant state to enhance its prestige and felt greater confidence to issue such a challenge. Certainly, the rare Chinese veto was a sign of growing confidence, but one cannot infer that China was challenging the U.S. on anti-hegemonial or revisionist grounds since even lesser and allied states opposed the proposed operation. This interpretation overlooks the fact that China was overall sympathetic with U.S. propositions calling for the disarmament of the Saddam regime. More importantly, China was not the only permanent member of the UNSC to reject this proposition.⁶³⁵

That said, this decision was hardly shocking since China has historically opposed international and humanitarian interventions of all kinds. Aside from its "anti-hegemonic" stance, China is often loath to endorse U.S. military interventions since these have the

⁶³⁴ See Holland, "Chinese Attitudes to International Law," p. 8.

⁶³⁵ France and Russia also did the same. For more on China's veto in the 2003 attempted-authorization of an invasion of Iraq, see Hikaru, Yamashita, "The Iraq War, the United Nations Security Council, and the Legitimacy of the Use of Force," *NIDS Security Reports*, No. 6 (September, 2005), pp. 38-92.

possibility of allowing the U.S. to encroach on its territories. For instance, the war against the Taliban brought U.S. and NATO forces straight to China's Western neighbor, which was highly undesirable, but China not only voted in favor of the intervention in Afghanistan but also, reluctantly, participated in U.S.-led operations with other SCO members.⁶³⁶ Arguably, the Chinese were also loath to accept any proposition that set a precedent for interventions against authoritarian regimes as it found itself at odds with the U.S. over the conflict in Uzbekistan. Finally, one could also make the case that China opposed the invasion of Iraq on the grounds of its potentially destabilizing effect on the access to, and prices of, commodities like oil, which China sorely needed to fuel its burgeoning economy.

In the meantime, the U.S.-led Global War on Terror moreover affected China's security environment in other ways too. The Bush II administration increased U.S.' focus on the Middle East, which gradually decreased the pressure on China to resist U.S. designs. Nevertheless, the U.S. administration also began to improve relations with Asian countries, most notably with India and paved the way to what would later be known as the pivot to Asia, but this merely provided a further rationalization for China's relationship with Russia and their common interest in promoting "multipolarization."⁶³⁷ China relations with the great power states, therefore, were more assertive on the one hand but generally adhered to the rules of international order. Multilateralism, diplomatic activism, and restraint

⁶³⁶ In fact, this was the first time ever that China endorsed the use of force at the UNSC. See Jianwei Wang, "China's Evolving Attitudes and Approaches Toward UN Collective Security," in G. John Ikenberry, Wang Jsi, and Zhu Feng, eds., *American, China, and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies, and Global Visions* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 104-131, *esp.*, p. 121.

⁶³⁷ Nathan Sears, "China, Russia, and the Long Unipolar Moment: How Balancing Failures are Actually Extending US Hegemony," *The Diplomat* (April 27, 2016). URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/china-russia-and-the-unipolar-moment/> Last Accessed: December 17, 2018.

formed the core of China's attitude towards other great powers. Furthermore, China seems to have accepted a global *raison de système* based on promoting multipolarity, resisting external incursions into its region, and opposition to global terrorism.

6. 4. 2. 3. Norms

The model predicts that China ought to be integrating or pursuing a strategy of enmeshment in this period. That is, we should expect to see greater Chinese participation international institutions, accession to international treaties, and adoption of norms concerning essential aspects of international order. Chinese multilateralism, restraint, increasing participation in international organizations as well as UN Peacekeeping Missions have been addressed above. This section, therefore, examines China's evolving attitudes on important questions of the norms guiding the use of force.

Chinese FPEs already had, since the 1990s, positive sentiments towards the UN and its efficacy in solving disputes and other international problems.⁶³⁸ China had always been reluctant to accept the premise of collective security since this was often invoked, or so the Chinese felt, to the detriment of developing states.⁶³⁹ By this period, Chinese FPEs came to accept the practice of international interventions in a highly circumscribed way. That is, China was more than willing to support the use of force in the context of Chapter 6 of the UN Charter, *i.e.*, self-defense, based on the consent of the subject state.

In contrast, China was more reluctant to accept modern peacekeeping operations that required a more proactive response by the international community to prevent

⁶³⁸ See Stefan Stähle, "China's Shifting Attitude Towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *The China Quarterly*, No. 195 (September, 2008), pp. 631-655.

⁶³⁹ See Wang, "Evolving Chinese Attitudes," pp. 106-110.

humanitarian crises, as well as a greater investment of resources. Humanitarian interventions, which fall under the rubric of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, but more recently elaborated in the form of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Doctrine, has been a challenge to Chinese FPEs. R2P is simply the idea that states cannot be bystanders to humanitarian disasters and have a responsibility to act against the aggressor. Interestingly, China promoted the doctrine and gave its blessing from the inception of the idea.⁶⁴⁰ Its overall conduct has not caught up to the lofty standards. China's reluctance to meaningfully uphold R2P and interventions more generally has led to ridicule. Yet, it does little to downplay China's significant activism at the UN. Perhaps, Shambaugh explains the best:

By accepting R2P in principle, endorsing and generally enforcing sanctions, contributing to UN peacekeeping missions, favoring Security Council reform, holding to a "conformist" UNSC voting record, and being deeply involved in all UN specialized agencies and commissions, China has arguably taken on the image and role of "system maintainer" and "responsible power" in the United Nations. Beijing has certainly come a very long way from its aloof and often doctrinaire posture of the past and is one of the most vocal champions of the United Nations.⁶⁴¹

Another important issue is that of international sanctions. China has often been criticized for its reluctance to honor UN sanctions. In this period, however, China has been fairly rule-abiding in this respect as it has, begrudgingly, accepted to condemn both Iran and North Korea due to their nuclear programs. In most cases, however, China resisted imposing sanctions made efforts to reduce the overall damage of the sanctions.

⁶⁴⁰ See Holland, "China's Attitudes to International Law," pp. 30-31.

⁶⁴¹ See Shambaugh, *China Goes Global*, p. 111.

China may be a responsible stakeholder, or not.⁶⁴² Its behavior in the 2001-2010 period, however, falls consistently within an order-conforming grand-strategic orientation.

6. 4. 3. Order-Reforming, 2010 and Beyond

Since 2010, China has ambiguously pursued a collection of ambitious strategies as part of its order-reforming grand-strategic orientation. The scholarly debate on the rise and future intentions of China truly took shape in this period. Driving the discussion was the perceived decline of Western powers, particularly the U.S. in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, from which China was spared. Combined with its entanglements in Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. had to retreat from its onerous commitments and focus on internal-balancing, which this research argues led to the adoption of an order-retrenching grand-strategic orientation by the Obama administration.⁶⁴³ It was not just academics or policymakers that perceived U.S. decline, but Chinese FPEs were also cognizant of these developments, which spurred them to debate the need for greater assertiveness.⁶⁴⁴

There is little reason to think that China's environment became more permissive from the purview of military capabilities only. Materially, China consolidated its positions as the second largest economy in the world and continued to build up its military

⁶⁴² See Michael Fullilove, "China and the United Nations: The Stakeholder Spectrum," *The Washington Quarterly* (August, 2013) Cf. Etzioni, "Is China a Responsible Stakeholder?"

⁶⁴³ Perhaps this also shows that perceived harm to a state's reputation for power and dominance can indeed whet their rivals' appetites. See Tudor Onea, "Immoderate Greatness: Is Great Power Moderation a Feasible Grand Strategy?" *European Journal of Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February, 2017), pp. 111-132; See, also, Christopher Layne, "This Time It's Real: The End of Unipolarity," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March, 2012), pp. 203-213.

⁶⁴⁴ Bonnie S. Glaser and Benjamin Dooley, "China's 11th Ambassadorial Conference Signals Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy," *China Brief*, Vol. 9, No. 22 (November 4, 2009).

capabilities in an equivalent way. In the meantime, between 2005 and 2017, China's military expenditure rose by 110% (U.S. spending fell by 17% in this period) to reach a whopping \$220 billion.⁶⁴⁵ Much of the investments in China's military since 1996 focused on modernizing weapon systems and improving military personnel.⁶⁴⁶ Beijing also expanded its surface and submarine fleets while also obtaining the largest Arctic-capable fleet in the world. As things stand, China now possesses not only a powerful navy but also the most substantial coast guard in the world.⁶⁴⁷ With these capabilities, China is may be able to contest the regional security order since it would have considerable leverage, *i.e.*, local superiority, over distant rivals like the U.S.⁶⁴⁸ Nevertheless, China's expanding military capabilities was and, remains still, far behind that of the U.S. The latter's military expenditure dwarfs that of China and has been increasing, barring few exceptional years, since the late 1990s.

If one enquires about perceptions of power, however, one could nevertheless make the case that Chinese FPEs began calling into question U.S. preponderance with greater conviction in this period. While Chinese FPEs made significant references to an expected shift towards a multipolar international order in their UN speeches during the unipolar

⁶⁴⁵ SIPRI Factbook, "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2017," (Solna, Sweden: SIPRI, 2018).

⁶⁴⁶ See Heginbotham *et al.*, *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard*, pp. 28-35.

⁶⁴⁷ Chinese leaders have expressed their desire to build a world-class blue water navy by 2025 to further cement their local preponderance. See Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 1, 2018).

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

moment, this tendency virtually disappeared in the 2000s and picked up again in 2011.⁶⁴⁹ We can infer by triangulating these narratives from other sources that Chinese decision-makers give considerable thought to these issues, that they perceive an unfolding power shift to their advantage.⁶⁵⁰ Thus, while material and technological discrepancies still present a formidable challenge to an unrestrained China, its decision-makers nevertheless anticipate a favorable shift, all which suggest that China's strategic environment has become more permissive.⁶⁵¹ That said, China's growth has garnered concern from its neighbors.⁶⁵²

China's permissive strategic environment also coincides with high levels of satisfaction with international order. Framing self-interest and the broader interests of the international system remained a recurring feature of FPE narratives about satisfaction with international order.

Furthermore, there is a consistent framing of gains while negative framing is

⁶⁴⁹ Virtually every Chinese UNGA speech since 2011 has referenced an irreversible trend towards multipolarity, or a newly emerging international order. For Wang (2013 and 2017), "China [is] committed to promoting democracy in international relations and the trend toward a multipolar world" and that "we live in an era defined by deepening trends towards a multipolar world, the collective emergence of emerging markets and developing countries, steady progress in globalization and the application of information technology, and an exciting new phase in the scientific and technological revolution"; all the while Xi Jinping (2015) stated that "The movement towards a multipolar world and the rise of emerging markets and developing countries have become an irreversible historical trend." See Yi Wang, "Speech Delivered by Yi Wang at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 27, 2013); Xi Jinping, "Speech Delivered by Xi Jinping at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 28, 2015).

⁶⁵⁰ See, e.g., Wang, "2013 UNGA Speech."; State Council, "China's Peaceful Development," White Papers of the Government (Beijing, China, September 6, 2011), available at http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7126562.htm, Last accessed November 19, 2018.

⁶⁵¹ Hence, this is why China is abandoning peaceful development in favor of striving for achievement. See Yan Xuetong, "From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2014), pp. 153–184.

⁶⁵² See Sears, "China, Russia, and the Long Unipolar Moment."

minimal in this period. Unsurprisingly, in this period there are numerous references by Chinese FPEs at the UNGA speeches concerning the preservation of international order. While Chinese FPEs was content, it is also possible to also trace their increasing assertiveness in these narratives as well. Consider this statement at the 2015 UNGA Plenary Session:

China will continue to uphold the international order. We will stay committed to the path of peaceful development through cooperation. China was the first country to put its signature on the Charter of the United Nations. We will continue to uphold the international order and system, underpinned by the purposes and principles of the Charter. China will continue to stand together with other developing countries. We firmly support the greater representation and voice of developing countries, especially African countries, in the international governance system. In voting at the United Nations, China will always side with the developing countries. I take this opportunity to announce China's decision to establish a 10-year, \$1 billion peace and development fund to support the work of the United Nations, advance multilateral cooperation and promote world peace and development.⁶⁵³

Here, Xi Jinping is reaffirming China's desire to uphold international order but also harkens back to Chinese discourses in the 1990s about international justice and the need for developed countries to help developing ones. Except, in this case, Jiping provides a tangible policy position wherein China commits to providing significant developmental aid to non-Western states and, aid through multilateral cooperation, all the while insisting on the importance and efficacy of the UN. The *raison d'être* of this section is to trace China's assertive behavior and correlate them to the strategic environment and FPE narratives, but it seems that the narratives under scrutiny communicate assertiveness and confidence.

⁶⁵³ Xi Jinping, "Speech Delivered by Xi Jinping at the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Session," (speech, New York, NY: United Nations, September 28, 2015).

China, the framework predicts, is more likely to pursue policies consistent with an order-reforming orientation. There is, however, a complication to examining China's behavior in this period: the fact that it is difficult to explicitly decouple issues concerning the use of force, great-power relations, and conduct *vis-à-vis* norms, especially in this period. Order-reforming predicts that a state is more likely to assert itself against perceived threats, more likely to use force multilaterally but independent from the framework of the UN, if projecting power distantly, or will only be more assertive. Unlike in the U.S. cases, it is difficult to reach a definitive judgment on the use of force style/patterns in the Chinese case because China has not formally used force outside of UN-mandated Peacekeeping Operations. Chinese FPEs risk-averseness dispels any potential for China to use force. Any belligerence and unilateral use of force on China's part has been minuscule and limited to China's immediate neighborhood, especially its littoral in the South and East China Seas. This section will, therefore, focus on China's continued enthusiastic contributions to the UN but also to its confrontations with regional rivals over maritime borders.

The framework also expects that China will be diplomatically very active in this period. A strategy of expansionism means that although a state may prefer amicable relations with other great powers it will also feel confident enough to expand its diplomatic links beyond its traditional region and, possibly, encroach on the sphere of influence of other great-power states. China's alternative economic order-building in Eurasia in the form of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), its diplomatic initiatives, and its expanding diplomatic linkages provide ample evidence for this. Finally, order-reforming would entail challenging existing norms and rules, more through entrepreneurship rather

than the outright negating of established ones. One example of this, and relates to China's relations with neighboring states, is the "invention" and implementation by China of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the South and East China Seas, while its island building policies also call into question the legal order of the maritime zone.

6. 4. 3. 1. Use of Force

China's use of force in this period is likely to conform to leadership. The discourse indeed suggested an assertive and ambitious attitude. On China's future patterns of use of force, the 2015 White Paper states that "In response to the new requirements coming from the country's growing strategic interests, the armed forces will actively participate in both regional and international security cooperation and effectively secure China's overseas interests."⁶⁵⁴ Emphasizing the importance of acting responsibly and upholding the principles of the UN, China continued to contribute a large contingent of peacekeepers and supported the UN System.⁶⁵⁵

China's engagement with UN Peacekeeping Operations in this period is nevertheless rife with contradiction. For example, in 2013 China upped its contributions to peacekeeping missions by deploying, for the first time, actual combat soldiers.⁶⁵⁶ As mentioned in the previous section, China's former policy was to deploy engineers, observers, and police officers to these missions. This signals greater integration with

⁶⁵⁴ State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *China's Military Strategy*, Beijing, May 2015.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁶ See Kathrin Hille, "China commits combat troops to Mali," *Financial Times* (June 27, 2013).

international institutions and a greater willingness, or ability, to invest in UN operations. Despite this positive development, China is also under scrutiny due to its overall reluctance to empower the UN to use force in other instances for peacekeeping purposes. China has still not dispelled the notion that it is a reactive, or inactive, power that prefers to sit on the sidelines.

Since participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations does not fully capture the extent of China's growing assertiveness *vis-à-vis* the use of force, the next issue is the intensification of the conflicts over the South and East China Seas since 2010, primarily aggravated by China enhanced military capabilities and, concomitantly, assertiveness.⁶⁵⁷ In addition to China, several other littoral states have laid claim over major islands and other geographic formations. In the East China Sea, China has a long-standing dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands with Japan. In the South China Sea, China and several other littoral states have claimed the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and Scarborough Shoal which China has been occupying since 2012. Maintaining control over these territories is deemed essential for the regional states because the two seas are major international waterways with an extremely high volume in sea traffic. Beyond this strategic utility, however, both seas are rich in hydrocarbons and can be exploited offshore.

Since 2010, the two regions have witnessed approximately fifty maritime incidents, most of them featuring China. The confrontations have primarily taken on the form of harassment and ramming of vessels, among other things, resulting in minor damages and

⁶⁵⁷ See Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Explaining Beijing's Assertiveness," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No.4 (2014), pp. 133-150.

casualties. Beyond military posturing, China has also engaged in island building as a form of power projection.⁶⁵⁸

None of these activities may seem odd when the history of the region is concerned since China has used force in far more dramatic a fashion against all most of the littoral states during the Cold War. While intensity may be lacking, the numbers indeed suggest a heightened disposition to use force.

6. 4. 3. 2. Relations with Great Powers

As a state's international environment becomes more permissive, the more likely that it can afford to undertake ambitious policies. If elites in said state anticipate a benefit to acting within the institutions of international society, the overall policy disposition will favor order-reforming strategies in which a state will either greater control over existing institutions, engage in promoting new norms, or merely constructing new institutions to restructure the international order through largely peaceful means. China was not only an active participant in major global fora but also undertook ambitious order-building projects that expanded its influence across Eurasia. In this period, the framework predicts that China would make a choice towards expansionism, in which a state revises its existing diplomatic relations to expand its influence such that it either extends beyond traditional geographic boundaries, especially into the sphere of influence of other great powers. This may also entail a conscious drive to establish new diplomatic relations or alliances and the adoption of a more confident demeanor towards other great powers, albeit without resorting to the use of force. In practical terms, we can reach a verdict on Chinese conduct in this period

⁶⁵⁸ For an overview, see Tara Davenport, "Island-Building in the South China Sea: Legality and Limits," *Asian Journal of International Law*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January, 2018), pp. 76-90.

through its development of AIIB as a type of order-building policy that is *expanding* Chinese influence.

Although a peaceful endeavor, AIIB is considered by some to be a revisionist/status seeking policy.⁶⁵⁹ These developments can be interpreted as a type of expansionist strategy because it represents an ambitious policy that expands the traditional horizons and intellectual limits of existing policies. Furthermore, it bridges distant regions of Eurasia within a broader economic framework. It is expansionist, also because, to the extent that the project extends beyond the traditional boundaries of China's geopolitical engagements and into areas the spheres of influence of other great powers, albeit in a non-aggressive way without the use of force.

The AIIB, conceived of by Xi Jinping in 2013 and materialized as a formal, multilateral investment bank in 2015, seeks to reform the global economic order by providing an alternative source of developmental and infrastructural investment for countries. In this sense, AIIB is an alternative to the institution's set up by the Bretton Woods system, such as the World Bank, and other important financial institutions like the IMF. Firstly, unlike these institutions, AIIB is agnostic about the conditionality of its aid and is concerned neither about regime type or their economic systems. Secondly, AIIB integrates China's domestic economic needs with the broader development needs of regional states and is thereby propelling China into the position of a key global economic actor. Finally, these developments reduce the influence of the United States. In effect,

⁶⁵⁹ See Andornino, "The Belt and Road Initiative," G. John Ikenberry and Darren J. Lim, "China's Emerging Institutional Statecraft: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and The Prospects For Counter-Hegemony," *Project on International Order and Strategy at Brookings* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, April, 2017), pp. 10-15.

therefore, China is creating a kind of alternative economic order within the existing international economic order.

6. 4. 3. 3. Norms

One tricky question that was posed is, in what ways is China reforming international order, specifically in regards to norms or international law? China does seem to support limited changes to certain international organizations, like the UN System, which China heartily endorses. Most discussions about reforming international order in the Chinese case, however, invariably concerns building an economic order that is fair to developing states. Most instances, moreover, are instances where China desires to change the functioning of international organizations, because it has become more assertive, and yet wishes to act within institutional barriers. These attitudes are hard to distinguish from order-conforming, enmeshment, strategies. Bearing in mind that China is hardly a paragon of virtue when upholding norms about R2P and human rights, we are left with few viable instances of reformism.

This section, therefore, invokes one crucial instance of an innovative (for the region), albeit recalcitrant, policy influencing China's neighborhood: the Chinese implementation of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). ADIZs refer to maritime areas extending from a nation's shoreline in which a governmental authority requires that aircraft (civilian or otherwise) passing through provide identification and location information in the interest of national security.⁶⁶⁰ In November 2013, China implemented

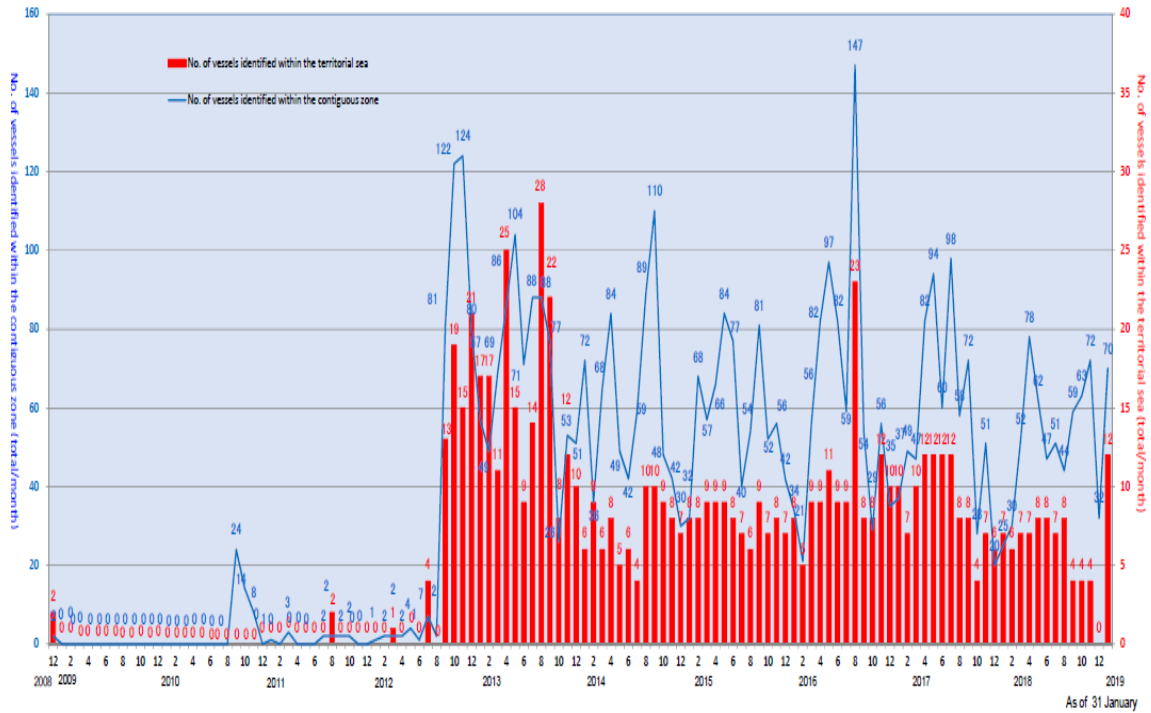
⁶⁶⁰ Ruwantissa Abeyratne, "In search of theoretical justification for air defence identification zones," *Journal of Transportation Security*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (September, 2011), pp. 87-88.

an ADIZ encompassing its *claimed* EEZ in the East China Sea with the purpose of regulating flights in the region. China implemented this measure due to the intensification of a long-standing maritime dispute with Japan concerning the fate of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Island.⁶⁶¹ Earlier, the Japanese government purchased several of these islands from their private owners to “nationalize” the territory. Since this move interfered with China claims over the region, it sought a way to deny access and, furthermore, coerce other claimants in the region. Accompanying this decision was an explosion in Chinese naval presence in Japanese territorial waters (see figure 6.6. below).

From the perspective of upholding international order, the establishment of this ADIZ was problematic because China is now claiming rights over the claimed EEZs of other littoral states, like Japan (which arguably was China’s primary target), as well as South Korea. While few countries accepted the legitimacy of this move, Japan and the U.S. were displeased. Both countries have made incursions into this territory to signal their disapproval. With the imposition of this unilateral action, one that has some historical and legal basis, China engaged in the form of reformism.

⁶⁶¹ After the Second World War, Japan had to relinquish its control over the area. The Treaty of San Francisco, however, had no provisions that the island would be China. China, nevertheless maintained that the island was historically a part of China and therefore seeks to strengthen its hold over this territory.

Figure 6. 6. The Rise in Numbers of Chinese Incursions⁶⁶²



⁶⁶² Japanese Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, “Trends In Chinese Government And Other Vessels In The Waters Surrounding The Senkaku Islands, And Japan's Response: Records Of Intrusions Of Chinese Government And Other Vessels Into Japan's Territorial Sea,” Url: https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e_000021.html. Last Accessed: December 17, 2018.

6. 5. CONCLUSION

The chapter finds evidence that China is not a “revisionist” state but is only one that had different attitudes towards international order; self-interest often drove it to pursue restraint. As a weaker and insecure power within a hostile neighborhood, China’s grand strategy seemed timid and accommodationist. Throughout the study, however, Chinese elites made increasingly more references common interests of the international community, which signals that Chinese FPEs are, at least discursively speaking, becoming more satisfied with international order. Nevertheless, an order-reforming China has become increasingly more assertive towards its neighbors, especially concerning its maritime territories.

On balance, Chinese FPEs narratives on international order consistently supports the kind of arrangements one would associate with a responsible great power state as it supports the balance of power and international cooperation. The narratives strictly promote multilateralism for global governance and underscore the importance of the UN System as a major global forum for discussion the legitimate use of force in the name of order. They underscore, also, the importance of Westphalian-style non-intervention in the domestic politics of other states and, further, take great pains to emphasize that China is interested in development and helping the third world, unlike the Western powers. This last narrative, however, can also be traced to a powerful anti-hegemonic narrative and a series of other narratives that exude dissatisfaction with international order. In the 1990s, Chinese insistence on sovereignty, non-intervention, and the shift towards a fairer international

order also betray a “revisionist” streak, which gradually declined but never truly disappeared.

Overall, Chinese elites about gains and losses remained stable overtime, and there does appear to be some correlation between negative projects and likelihood of use force. To elaborate, it is not surprising that a relatively powerful China might be willing to press its advantages in the South and East China Seas by building islands, harassing neighbors’ vessels, among other things. For China to stage large-scale exercises near Taiwan in the 1990s was much riskier. In other words, there is some support that risk acceptance makes the use of force much likelier, even when a state has unfavorable circumstances to do so.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The framework of this dissertation incorporates material and structural variables with social and psychological ones. It borrows heavily from Neoclassical Realism and the English School to show that even within a material environment, among rationally-motivated decision-makers, certain international social forces exist. In this dissertation, the researcher firstly reexamined the status-quo and revisionism debate and how these fit into the notion of international order. Next, the dissertation also constructed a typology of behaviors and strategies and inferred their observable implications. It was argued that preferences for these strategies lie at the nexus of material constraints filtered and expressed through the medium of the decision-maker.

As for the decision-makers themselves, interests are in large part formed by identities, norms, and historically bounded interactions. This dissertation, however, can only offer a complementary consequentialist argument to possibly trace this dynamic. Responsible statecraft can originate from a variety of sources, but material and perceptual factors shape the ambitions of decision-makers. By tracing certain narratives about international order based on satisfaction and how payoffs are framed, and assuming a connection between these discourses and interests, one can infer the likelihood that decision-makers will adopt strategies to uphold or challenge international order. The findings suggest that satisfaction, and perceived gains, as corroborated by FPEs, might suggest whether they desire to change the international order, and their risk-propensity to achieve their goals. In other words, *raison de système* can manifest as the outcome of

rational, structural and psychological forces. This dissertation merely devised a way to attempt measuring this phenomenon.

Another broader theoretical implication is that perhaps the employment of domestic and psychological factors to understand matters of international order. To reiterate DiCiccio's diagnosis of the PTT paradigm, it is necessary to examine the sources of support for, and dissatisfaction towards the status quo through the inclusion of specific unit-level propositions.⁶⁶³ Here we reach a theoretical impasse of sorts. Ikenberry asserts that elites will buy into the system; that even authoritarian states, like China, can theoretically become a solid pillar of the liberal world order of if the hegemon purposefully sought to make it a stakeholder in the system. The findings of this dissertation support finding to the extent that China has indeed become, simultaneously, more powerful and more integrated into the liberal order, while its overall aims seem to be peaceful for the time being.

In time, and in circumscribed ways, even such autocratic states may adopt liberal and democratic values. The consequences of this process are troubling, however. Even in an advanced liberal democratic society, the specter of anti-order sentiments looms.⁶⁶⁴ Liberal norms engender democracy and democracy concomitantly carries with the possibility of change; i.e., the rise of a governing coalition that rejects the liberal order. Not only is there ample evidence for this in the democratization and war literature, but recent developments in the international system suggest that not even mature democracies are

⁶⁶³ See DiCiccio, "Power Transition Theory," p. 22.

⁶⁶⁴ The liberal World order creates winners and losers and disenfranchised groups often seek to overthrow established domestic orders, which has international consequences.

immune to these pressures.⁶⁶⁵ The contradiction is thus: authoritarian states are not an impediment to an international order, even a rules-based liberal one. In fact, they can be uniquely relied upon to uphold it. To paraphrase Napoleon, it is not when China rises, that it will shake the world; it is when it democratizes that will it pose a threat to the rest. From the previous chapters, the U.S. and China do not have a one-track grand strategy that hardly ever changes. Perhaps as a long-term trend, the grand strategy may exhibit regularity and continuity. By interpreting grand strategy as a sum of strategies concerning the means of statecraft, and in a circumscribed time-period, it was possible to delve into theoretical controversies and suggest ways to overcome them.

Finally, the contradictory and counterintuitive behaviors of the dominant and rising power states strongly rebuke the binary understanding of revisionism and status-quo seeking. Order-retrenchment and, most importantly order-reform, can be thought of as viable grand strategic-orientations that determine how and how much a state wants to affect international order. States can seek to “reform” international order under favorable circumstances while a hegemon can shirk its responsibilities to the detriment of said order.

7.2. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Since each empirical chapter discussed the findings, this section will merely touch on some important comparative points and other ideas worth reiterating. The general findings of this dissertation suggest that overtime, China’s environment has become, overall, more permissive. This is primarily the result of a growing economy and modernizing military.

⁶⁶⁵ Part of this argument reach fruition during a discussion with Robert Jervis, who did not entirely endorse the uncharitable interpretation of the researcher. October 11, 2018, Florida International University, Miami, FL.

Concomitantly, speeches from Chinese FPEs at the UN report increasing satisfaction towards international order, while making fewer references that indicate negative framing or uncertainty. The U.S. meanwhile enjoyed great material preponderance, although its preponderance was not uniform, and some local dynamics affected its policy choices. More than in these Chinese case, risk-propensity, as suggested by U.S. FPEs' framing of gains and losses, seem to have affected its propensity to use force in some cases.

These findings also correlate well with the foreign policies of both states in the post-Cold War period, but it might be difficult to speculate about the future. Will China's rise, or U.S.' decline be unpeaceful? The problem with developing a typological framework for state behavior is that it is better as a framing for state policy and an explanatory theory, rather than being a predictive one. Deductively, however, permissive environments in which states are dissatisfied with international order and anticipate future losses will be prone to aggression. As shown in the trendlines of figures 7.1. and 7.2., Chinese and U.S. FPEs framing of risks and satisfaction have changed overtime. China is becoming more powerful and capable of using force but does not necessarily have a motive. The U.S. meanwhile has become more dissatisfied with international order, and some of its narratives began to resemble those China in the early 1990s, when China was an order-retrenching state. Admittedly, a figure like Trump skews the discursive elements of U.S. policy, but even if the Trump period were omitted, the overall trend would not change. Neither China nor the U.S. are revisionist states, but their adoptive strategies and policy responses varied overtime.

Figure 7.1. U.S. v. Chinese Framing of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction

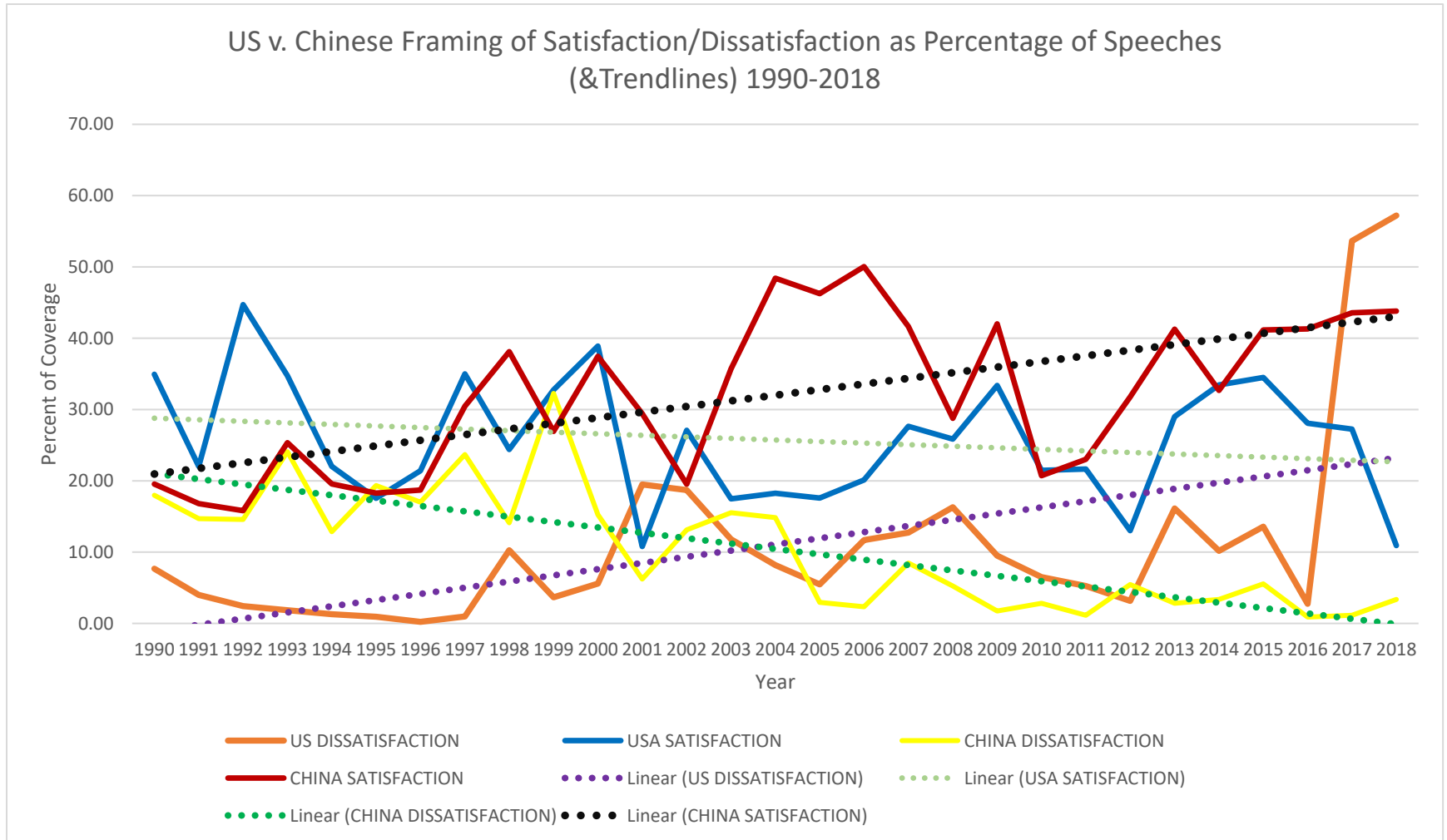
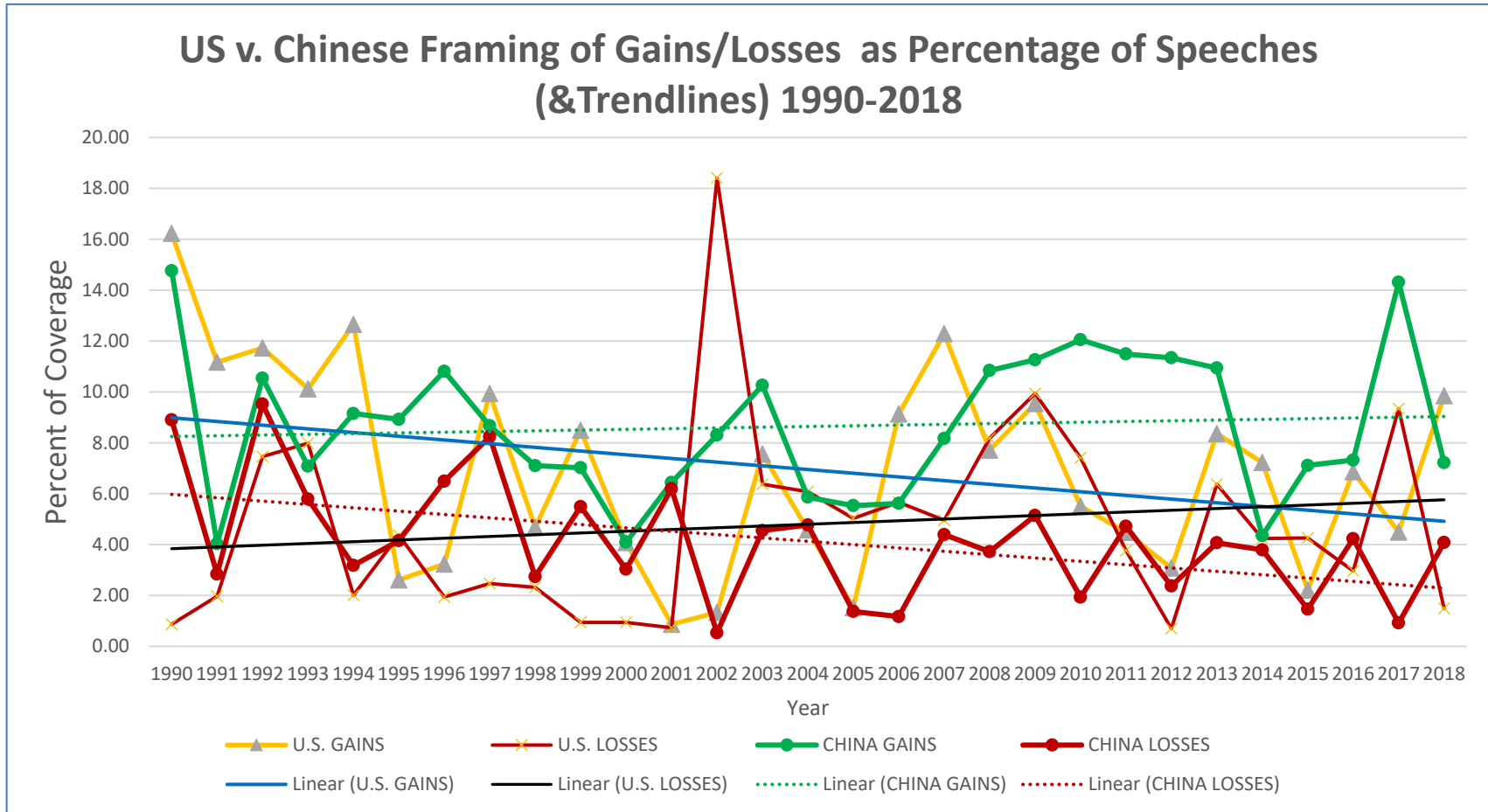


Figure 7.2. U.S. v. Chinese Framing of Gains/Losses Compared



7. 3. LIMITATIONS

This dissertation bears some faults, as will be discussed here. While this dissertation has developed a creative and widely-applicable framework, it focuses only on two major case studies. Including more country-cases would have significantly enriched the discussion while enhancing the credibility of both the framework and the research design. A second limitation is the data. To ensure the commensurability of data, originality, and richness, the research had eliminated other viable data sources.

The more serious limitation is the research design that sought to infer a type of mechanism where by decision-makers gradually adopt, and abandon, certain strategies overtime in response to their environment. For methodological purposes, it was assumed that decision-makers generally offer discursive reasoning for their intended policies, whether to coerce or to convince their audiences. Moreover, it is assumed that their words can provide collective psychological cues, which might also explain phenomena like risk-acceptance, which explains why a state might adopt a riskier or more ambitious policies despite a lack of freedom of action.

7.4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is a very difficult task to offer policy prescription when doing so is anathema to the project. Afterall, the dissertation fundamentally challenges common wisdom about assessing the foreign policy dispositions of states. Nevertheless, the theoretical, empirical, and normative conclusions of this dissertation indelibly point to the same conclusion. A binary understanding of revisionism and status quo predicated on the relationship between the dominant state, and its closest challenger does not leverage much analytical strength for sound policymaking. This dissertation professes a palpable bias in favor of –for lack

of a better term— English School axioms, such as the critical importance of *raison de systéme*, and restraint in sustaining the goals of international life. International order ought not to ossify into a static constellation of power where great powers cannot exercise their privileges to maintain or build international order. Nor should the international society deny rising powers’ justice demands. These principles are too normative and abstract to mean much.

There is one tangible policy that states can easily if they wish to uphold international order against rogue and revisionist powers. The first step is to recognize that any logic informing state behavior will invariably impel them at times to peaceful, and to destructive behavior in others. Labels like revisionism and status-quo seeking states are superficial titles that elevate certain ideologies, identities, and agendas while obstructing sensible policy. As by Stephen Walt recently explained in *The Hell of Good Intentions*, foreign policy is too important to leave to the hands of ideological amateurs. This is important because it runs the risk that decision-makers can box certain states as being unreasonable and insatiable. This in turn can make decision-makers reluctant to accept the possibility and utility of restraint towards their “foe” and thereby lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

7. 5. FUTURE RESEARCH

Perhaps the most appropriate way to build on this study is to extend the argument to other country cases. Beyond China and the U.S., many other states have been scrutinized under the contours of the revisionism and status quo debate. Several countries stand out due to post-Cold War foreign policies, while some are regularly subjected to scholarly scrutiny. Firstly, the study can examine other major powers like India and Russia. The latter is

especially interesting not only due to its unstable history but also due to its resurgence as a powerful and aggressive state which sought to resist U.S./NATO incursions into the former Soviet Union but also used force against Georgia and Ukraine. Perhaps the scrutiny of this framework could help to settle the matter of whether or not Russia is simply a reactive power, or its elites are really interested in undermining international order.

Secondly, the analysis could be expanded to regional powers like Turkey, which also went through a tumultuous period in the post-Cold War and adopted an ambitious foreign policy. Given Turkey's unprecedented activism in the Middle East, engagement with sectarian politics, and shifting patterns of cooperation, it is an ideal case study for this framework. Thirdly, "rogue" states are ideal candidates for theoretical scrutiny. States like Iran and North Korea are major regional powers, but their alleged recidivist attitudes, especially with respect to state-sponsorship of terrorism and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons make these cases ideal candidates for study.

Another potential move could be to go "deep." That is, the present study can enrich by bringing to bear discursive and narrative data from a broader variety of sources. To this end, the study could incorporate other types of UN Speeches, such as Security Council discussions. Examining domestic narratives could also be valuable since discourse can vary depending on one's audience. For example, finding out U.S. Presidents' tendencies to invoke the *raison de système* in domestic speeches like the state of the union speeches over time can reveal broader trends in U.S.' order-related attitudes. Meanwhile, there is strong evidence that Chinese elites speak a different tune towards their domestic publics on matters of security and foreign policy and contrasting the two types of speeches would be

a worthwhile endeavor.

Finally, a temporal shift may also be merited. The present study was designed in a way to examine the practical operation of the fundamental institutions of international society as they manifest in statecraft. By reformulating the framework, the present framework can possibly open up avenues for cross-fertilization between historical English School analyses of state behavior with the PTT research paradigm, among other things. In fact, the increased likelihood of the use force, and the reduced institutional cohesion of pre-1945 international orders are ideal testing grounds for propositions about states' likelihood of maintaining international order.

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APPENDIX

Percentage of References to Narratives (U.S. 1990-2018)

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gains	16.23	11.17	11.73	10.12	12.65	2.61	3.23	9.94	4.68	8.49	4.08	0.87	1.33	7.56
Losses	0.87	1.97	7.46	7.98	2.01	4.37	1.94	2.47	2.32	0.94	0.94	0.73	18.41	6.37
Criticize	2.99						0.22					7.30	0.52	2.20
Exceptionalism			0.42	1.86	0.42				6.42	2.24	1.52	1.34	0.66	1.57
Unilateralism					0.88							6.41	0.46	
Pretext	4.68	3.99	1.36			0.93		0.97	3.84	1.43	4.06	4.44	17.06	8.02
Negative Rel.			0.65				0.00							
Sovereignty														
Dissatisfaction	7.67	3.99	2.43	1.86	1.30	0.93	0.22	0.97	10.26	3.67	5.58	19.49	18.70	11.79
Praise	9.04	1.88	3.92	4.04	0.77	2.92	3.16	6.40	0.95	3.86	4.01	0.92	1.63	1.38
Interest	8.94	5.25	14.94	10.49	3.51	4.38	8.60	15.19	5.65	15.95	14.21	5.51	3.86	9.56
International	8.19	4.49	7.72	8.64	13.15	1.30	7.96	8.26	17.80	7.88	12.78	1.94	2.86	3.93
Rebuke	2.41	4.06	3.94	3.97						0.89	1.92	2.42	18.74	1.43
Positive Rel.	5.00	3.27	5.90	2.42	3.80	1.60	0.63	0.54		3.15				1.18
Reform	1.37	3.07	8.29	5.18	0.80	7.34	1.06	4.60		1.03	5.97			
Satisfaction	34.95	22.02	44.71	34.74	22.03	17.54	21.41	34.99	24.40	32.76	38.89	10.79	27.09	17.48

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Year
4.58	1.52	9.13	12.29	7.71	9.54	5.51	4.48	3.08	8.36	7.23	2.21	6.86	4.49	9.85	Gains
6.08	5.03	5.66	4.96	8.18	9.94	7.41	3.76	0.70	6.37	4.24	4.26	2.96	9.34	1.49	Losses
1.26	1.16	5.93	7.59	0.87	4.21	1.23	2.37	0.76	2.51		5.17	0.88	13.32	13.7	Criticize
4.81		1.45	4.07	7.38	3.25	3.42	1.58	2.39	4.17	0.49		1.62	23.92	18.8	Exceptionalism
0.84									1.26		0.59		4.51	3.72	Unilateralism
1.27	4.32	4.30	1.08	7.25	2.05	1.84	1.29		7.66	2.44	2.28		4.31	11.1	Pretext
				0.80					0.53	7.25	5.53	0.24	0.29	2.63	Negative Rel.
													7.30	7.32	Sovereignty
8.18	5.48	11.68	12.74	16.30	9.51	6.49	5.24	3.15	16.13	10.18	13.57	2.74	53.65	57.2	Dissatisfaction
2.64	3.80	10.83	3.56	9.07	3.92	1.60	4.80	3.92	1.60	4.80	0.75	2.38	3.49	4.83	Praise
4.26	4.75	0.54	12.43	5.35	15.61	9.41	6.59	3.99	17.56	12.10	9.75	10.64	7.02	2.4	Interest
7.80	6.73	8.76	6.64	11.16	12.16	8.00	8.96	5.11	8.03	13.95	15.60	13.78	15.44	1.46	International
1.61				0.28		1.36					2.13		0.81		Rebuke
					1.40	1.10	1.30		1.82	2.60	6.26	1.27	0.50	1.08	Positive Rel.
1.94	2.30		5.01		0.28									1.16	Reform
18.25	17.58	20.13	27.64	25.86	33.37	21.47	21.65	13.02	29.01	33.45	34.49	28.07	27.26	10.9	Satisfaction

Percentage of References to Narratives (China 1990-2018)

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gains	17.76	4.03	10.54	7.08	9.15	8.92	10.81	8.67	7.1	7.02	4.09	6.44	8.3	10.26
Losses	8.9	2.84	9.52	5.79	3.18	4.15	6.49	8.24	2.74	5.49	3.03	6.19	0.53	4.55
Criticize	1.1	1.74	0.42	4.97	1.61	2.14	2.43			8.72	3.53			
Exceptionalism	1.94	0.78			2.06	2.59	4.98	6.22	7.07	5.86	3.16	2.68	9.99	3.11
Justice	9.67	6.64	8.53	7.04	1.33	3.54	3.11	5.99	3.44	5.76	3.81	2.6	3.14	7.26
Pretext		2.09	1.75	8.1		3		4.49	1.09	1.01				2.89
Negative Rel.		0.72				1.01								
Sovereignty	5.27	2.72	3.88	3.96	7.87	7.05	6.48	6.98	2.52	10.02	4.75	0.93		2.28
Dissatisfaction	17.98	14.69	14.58	24.07	12.87	19.33	17	23.68	14.12	32.26	15.25	6.21	13.13	15.54
Praise	5.48	1.53		1.02	3.82	4.01	2.79	1.74	0.55	0.8	4.22	1.05		2.76
Interest	6.75	7.47	1.7	5.69	7.99	4.77	2.91	7.88	12.56	9.67	9.75	19.03	9.3	20.79
International	1.98	5.78	4.99	9.87	1.85	5.02	5.07	3.25	9.81	8.67	10.03	7.05	9.41	8.06
Rebuke	4.36	1.51							4.53	1.39			0.81	
Positive Rel.	0.98	0.51					1.74	3.21			1.73	2.28		1.22
Reform			9.12	8.76	5.91	4.47	6.19	14.38	10.66	6.4	11.73			2.87
Satisfaction	19.55	16.8	15.81	25.34	19.57	18.27	18.7	30.46	38.11	26.93	37.46	29.41	19.52	35.7
Multipolarity/Order		10.52		5.5	0.98	2.49	4.77	2.99	2.13	12.32	3.24	1.5	4.14	1.55
Satisfaction Total	19.55	16.8	15.81	25.34	19.57	18.27	18.7	30.46	38.11	26.93	37.46	29.41	19.52	35.7

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Year
5.86	5.53	5.62	8.17	10.84	11.26	12.05	11.49	11.34	10.94	6.35	7.11	7.32	14.31	7.22	Gains
4.77	1.37	1.17	4.39	3.72	5.14	1.93	4.72	2.37	4.07	3.79	1.46	4.23	0.92	4.08	Losses
								1	0.9					0.76	Criticize
6.7			7.73						1.51	3.05					Exceptionalism
2.65	2.96	0.81	0.75	1.14	1.74	1.32	0.74	1.5	0.17	1.06	0.89	1.15	0.5		Justice
1.04				1.31				0.38	0.78	0.33				0.77	Pretext
															Negative Rel.
3.5		1.53		2.8		1.5	0.41	2.58	2.04	0.45	1.44			1.33	Sovereignty
14.84	2.96	2.34	8.48	5.25	1.74	2.82	1.15	5.46	2.82	3.36	5.55	0.89	1.15	3.36	Dissatisfaction
	1.05	0.71		3.3						5.03					Praise
29.96	25.32	28.33	27.89	22.51	25.01	18.39	15.92	23.89	27.44	18.91	28.84	19.13	28.85	23.7	Interest
12.07	3.42	9.23	5.59	2.96	17.01	2.33	7.1	4.01	6.42	8.74	11.16	18.47	6.22	9.46	International
		0.76													Rebuke
								1.49	2.83		1.15		8.49	5.35	Positive Rel.
6.38	16.47	11.01	8.17					2.37	4.58		3.7			5.3	Reform
4.48			0.62				1.17	0.64	2.02	1.2	12.64	2.78	11.12	9.65	Multipolarity
48.41	46.26	50.04	41.65	28.77	42.02	20.72	23.02	31.76	41.27	32.68	41.15	41.3	43.56	43.81	Satisfaction

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