The Theory of Narrative Conflict

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ABSTRACT

Speculation regarding interstate conflict is of great concern to many, if not, all people. As such, forecasting interstate conflict has been an interest to experts, scholars, government officials, and concerned citizens. Presently, there are two approaches to the problem of conflict forecasting with divergent results. The first tends to use a bird's eye view with big data to forecast actions while missing the intimate details of the groups it is studying. The other opts for more grounded details of cultural meaning and interpretation, yet struggles in the realm of practical application for forecasting. While outlining issues with both approaches, an important question surfaced: are actions causing interpretations and/or are the interpretations driving actions? In response, the Theory of Narrative Conflict (TNC) is proposed to begin answering these questions. To properly address the complexity of forecasting and of culture, TNC draws from a number of different sources, including narrative theory, systems theory, nationalism, and the expression of these in strategic communication.

As a case study, this dissertation examines positions of both the U.S. and China in the South and East China Seas over five years. Methodologically, this dissertation demonstrates the benefit of content analysis to identify local narratives and both stabilizing and destabilizing events contained in thousands of news articles over a five-year period. Additionally, the use of time series and a Markov analysis both demonstrate usefulness in forecasting. Theoretically, TNC displays the usefulness of narrative theory to forecast both actions driven by narrative and common interpretations after events.

Practically, this dissertation demonstrates that current efforts in the U.S. and China have not resulted in an increased understanding of the other country. Neither media giant demonstrates the capacity to be critical of their own national identity and

preferred interpretation of world affairs. In short, the battle for the hearts and minds of foreign persons should be challenged.

DEDICATION

For all those family, friends, and teachers that maintained unwavering passion and belief in me throughout this process. For your constant support, I am grateful beyond measure. Success in this endeavor and in my life comes from this community of support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concern of this project is to better understand the communicative conditions

for interstate conflict. The focus is not on tactical decisions about when to engage in war

or the precise timing of war. Those issues are not helpful in understanding or predicting

conflict but are decisions of larger systems of bureaucracy and military. Rather, the goal

of this project is to identify patterns in discourse that have resulted in conflict. Narrative

theory will be used to identify these patterns of discourse. Narrative theory will not only

provide a theoretical framework for understanding the stories and issues that are driving

the conflict within the discourse, but will also bring a greater understanding of the

perceptions of two parties being researched to the fore. The final goal of this project is

create a more robust understanding of the perceptions and beliefs leading to conflict and

give more effective means for intervening in conflict through this theory of narrative

conflict (TNC).

Predicting interstate conflict is not a new project. As Chadefaux (2014) attests,

previous attempts at predicting conflict have lacked comprehensive and generalizable

findings, have ignored cases where war did not occur, and have used yearly indicators

that miss the escalation of tensions in real time. In the following, I review a number of

articles that have added to the academic work of conflict prediction, yet are lacking in the

above-mentioned areas.

Holsti (1963) used qualitative analysis to identify end-means chains of key

decision-makers' attitudes to try to determine perceptions of an inevitable Thucydides

trap.[1] Holsti theorizes that prior to conflict events the tensions could be measured on a

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[1] The Thucydides trap, as explained by Karl Eikenberry, refers to the seemingly inevitable
and violent conflicts between rising and existing powers (Eikenberry 2014). As one

scale so as to show an estimated value for intention of conflict. Holsti uses a qualitative system of content analysis with unspecified variables for measuring rising and falling tension while not including actual conflicts. This theory piece underspecifies how scholars might achieve reliability with a 64-cell matrix measuring eight degrees of each perception of self and perception of other. While Holsti proposes an interesting idea that is based on a multifactor analysis, the variables proposed are underspecified; as Chadefaux (2014) argues, there remains no fine-grained tools for measuring tension. Further, with 64 cells needing to be tested for validity, the means by which a reliable metric of tensions is reached is not explained. In contrast to Holsti, TNC proposes taking a macro, or transhistorical, approach through narrative theory to view tensions between countries, but also to map out self- and other-narratives.[2]

Another attempt at conflict prediction by Newcombe, Newcombe & Landrus (1974) created an international 'tensiometer' based on military expenditures, gross national product, and geographic location. Their basic formula equates threat perception with estimated capability multiplied by estimated intent. They approached this problem by examining the military expenditures, gross national product and theoretical military expenditures. They had to normalize the data to compare the rich nations from the poor nations and also tested their meter for regional and alliance variations. The results, while interesting, are based on yearly indicators of gross national products and publically available military expenditure, which lack the ability to accurately show real-time gains and losses in tensions. Further, the perception of each nation is not accounted for in this economic model of conflict.

power rises and the status quo power enters into competition with the new comer. Increasingly bitter conflicts ensue and end in total war.
[2] Self- and Other-narratives I take to be synonymous with concepts of the in-group and out-group. It is appropriate to start with the concept of self before the group because TNC, as a larger goal, will be used at the individual level too.

Gleditsch & Ward (2011) created promising models that give statistical predictions of conflicts, yet the models fall short of comprehensive, timely conflict prediction. Though the model relies on scarce data, it is promising in its attempts to classify and track the origins of contentious issues. They do so by theorizing about past conflicts and their resulting influence on increased future conflict. Gleditsch & Ward do consider issues of sovereignty as a significant factor in conflict prediction, which appears to play a significant factor in the conflicts examined in this paper.. While this study goes further in its attempts to contextualize disputes by isolating particular types of disputes, it does not go as far enough by explaining the rationale for the dispute itself. Importantly, it does provide evidence that tracking contentious issues between countries might result in better ability to forecast these types of events.

Chourci (1974) offers theoretical insights into the important questions regarding forecasting. Notably, consideration needs to be given to the scope of the forecast, the relationship between countries, and the non-linear aspect of international relationships. Chourci argues for the importance of theory when forecasting, lest we fall into 'crude prophecy.' Accordingly, forecasting can be anchored in careful specification of the system in question and under different contingencies, in probabilities and degrees of possibilities, in preference structures, or trends and projections. Chourci also argues for an emphasis on "managing social complexity and the explosion of knowledge, and incorporating existing data about social and political systems in ways that are parsimonious, theoretically useful, and methodologically sound" (p. 78). Finally, we must adopt a dynamic orientation towards the future and the range of possible events. As will be argued later, TNC accomplishes this by finding the dynamics in changing nationalistic narratives within a dynamic societal system and methodologically discovering present narratives and testing for their impact on events.

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In yet another study, Leetaru (2011) developed a computational text analysis tool that combs news articles for preset positive and negative sentiment analysis of national stability. Applying tone and geo-location to over 30 years of news articles, Leetaru did find interesting correlations between the negative tone of articles, for instance a mass uprising in Egypt, and the US invasion of Iraq. Further, "pooling together the global tone of all news mentions of a country over time appears to accurately forecast its near-term stability" (p. 22). Yet, an important critique by Chadefaux of this article points out that it ignores cases where war did not occur. For forecasting purposes, it is important to have the ability to understand the general instability of a country, but there remains a gap between demonstrating instability, understanding the causes, and discovering a viable solution. TNC, in contrast, will inductively understand the unrest by examining the local narratives and their structure to contextualize unrest with the end-goal of being able to create counter-narratives that can be used in interventions.

Finally, Chadefaux (2014) used a large data set of newspaper articles that codes based on keyword findings rather than attempting to gain an in-depth understanding of the conflict itself. From 1902 to 2001, Chadefaux had a machine code for country mention and tension words created using a thesaurus. Chadefaux did not delve into the details of each article, especially given the breadth of the analysis. Chadefaux did discover a dramatic increase in conflict-related news items prior to conflict. Further, Chadefaux captures a sense of rising tensions, yet he does not identify salient contextual factors behind the rising tension. Chadefaux does not explain why they are rising, just that they are rising and are positively correlated with conflict-related words.

These models and methods do not capture a robust and reliable means of understanding, prediction, and intervention (Hunt, 1996). By either reducing the explanation for rising tension to economic indicators or negative and positive attitudes

to less context-based indicators, these models provide novel means of predicting conflict. However, without increased precision in identifying meaningful points of tension, the conflict cannot be accurately forecasted. Underspecified variables for attitude towards self and other or indicators that decontextualize the conflicts limit our understanding of conflicts themselves and limit forecasting ability. Importantly, the above studies emphasize the importance of thinking in systems – using theory to inform forecasting and in contextualizing conflicts – and they agree that conflicts ought to have leading indicators.

To date, these research projects have been data-rich, but they have lacked deep comprehension of the issue in question. One reason for turning to big data is the inability of content matter experts to predict future conflict (Tetlock, 2005). Tetlock's study provides little support by content experts for their predictive power of interstate conflict. It is also problematic to use content experts because it is difficult to generalize their results or conclusions (Chadefaux, 2014). There have yet to be experts of the same country that reliably agree about future conflicts, let alone experts able to create a model for predicting interstate conflict reaching the same depth of understanding required for the predictions they make. The field appears to have settled either on large data with reductionist indicators of conflict or on a depth of understanding that is too difficult to recreate in a functional model.

Before proceeding, it is important to heed Feder's (2002) words of caution. He warns against the single-predictive outcomes models that most theories tend to create. For example, Newcombe, Newcombe & Landrus's (1974) model trades depth for breath when they primarily examine a country's military expenditures, which could just as easily have other causes. For instance, a country might spend more on military as their GDP growth increases. Even in cases where the military expenditures are rightly

interpreted as a response to increased tension, a question remains: in response to what or whom? Feder's caution comes in light of policy makers' tendency to want a bottom-line approach. In short, when given a range of probable outcomes, they will go with the most probable and ignore the rest. Feder suggests that rather than focusing on probability or prediction, research that informs policy should aim to survey the future – considering reasonable outcomes – and force decision makers to engage in uncertainty management. To create a model that is able to do this will require greater breadth and depth. If TNC accomplishes the basics in depth it can be scaled and adjusted to reach the breadth.

In chapter 2, I begin by providing an overview of forecasting models that I will be examining. I will return to the problem of reductionist indicators and other attempts to account for depth in existing research literature. By way of illustration, the topic of suicide bombing will demonstrate the explanatory differences within the social sciences about conflict.[3] While the subject of suicide bombing is not central to TNC, it does aptly illustrate the intellectual divide between what I refer to as the economic models of conflict and the cultural models of conflict. Shoemaker, Tankard, and Lasorsa (2004) note that a good theory is first meant to explain. Then, based on the accuracy of the explanation, the theory is able to predict. While the economic and cultural models provide logically possible explanations, they fall short of forecasting conflict, which casts initial doubt on the accuracy of the explanation. Further, establishing the causal relationship between two variables (modes of rationality or cultural elements with conflict) requires that researchers see the change in the independent variable prior to the

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[3] I recognize the issue of examining suicide bombing form these divergent perspectives, however the topic provides enough coverage on both sides; whereas concerns of interstate conflict was not as robust. For this reason, I'll be using the analysis of suicide bombing as a prime example for how each approaches a given issue of conflict.

dependent. The models of conflict do great work to show correlation between the variables, yet the following inquiry will examine if each reached satisfactory levels of explanation and/or causation. On the topic of suicide bombing, Bloom (2004) remains justified in saying there is no single theory that explains the complex motivations behind these acts. This dissertation will demonstrate that these theoretical approaches, while meaningful in their own rights, have not reached the level of accurately explaining the continually elusive reality of conflict at the level of the individual, the larger nation-state, or civilization.

To accomplish these criteria, in Chapter 3, I explain how using narrative theory, systems theory, nationalism, and strategic communication will result in a more complex and nuanced understanding of the narratives influencing interstate conflict. The theory will expand on the content of potential conflicts by analyzing narratives that appear within discourse preceding conflict events. The link between storytelling, nationalism, and conflict is central to understanding the development of national identities as well as how national identities are bound and framed within narratives and stories. The guiding framework and hypothesis is that these narratives and stories coalesce into a larger framework of shared rhetorical desires expressed in and through discourse (i.e., strategic communication). Through the lens of nationalism, a country asserts its perception of how its goals are being encroached upon by another nation state while the other state simultaneously seeks to fulfill its goals (incompatible with the other states' goals), and the likelihood of conflict consequently increases.

In the Chapter 4, I provide context for the specific case study used in the project and the methods used for analysis. The South and East China Seas have been and continue to be a major concern of international conflict. To the concern of American allies and other countries in the region, China continues to expand its military and

economic appetite while asserting historical claims to the entire region, encounters

between various nations' Coast Guards and fishermen from other claimants continue,

and all of these put together produce anxieties about the likelihood of international

conflict. These factors have historical backgrounds that inform interpretations of these

events and the various desirable outcomes. For China, a narrative about the century of

humiliation resurfaces while views of America vacillate between the old cold warrior and

possible friend. To concerned parties, there exists a spectrum between seeing China as a

rising threat that will subsume the whole region with its growing military might that is

driven by an insatiable hunger for natural resources and seeing China as a player

returning to the world stage to take its place next to America. While the aim is to create a

model that can eventually be applied to a large data set, the model will first be applied to

a smaller data set to allow for more in-depth hand-coded qualitative content analysis.

Also in Chapter 4, I explain the details of the content analysis procedure, the

codebook creation, event-based data, and the time series analysis used to draw

correlations. This is where the I formally state hypotheses and explain their selection. In

chapter 5 I present the results.

Finally, in chapter 6 I analyze and discuss the findings of the case study, its

implications for the TNC, limitations of the study itself, and future research. This chapter

will be covering both the qualitative analysis and the quantitative. Importantly, I discuss

further case studies to falsify claims made in this project, questions that need to be

studied, and where this theory will go.

CHAPTER 2

MODERN FORECASTING: ASSUMPTIONS, IMPLCATIONS, AND CRITIQUE

This chapter examines current approaches to forecasting conflict. I summarize these approaches in two board categories: economic models and cultural models. After summarizing each approach, I critique them to highlight shortcomings and summarize what knowledge has been gained. The topic of suicide bombing will serve to highlight the differences in interpretation and explanation of conflict events from both the economic and cultural approaches because it crosses disciplinary boundary in terms of previous analyses.[4]

Existing Models of Conflict

Economic Models of Conflict

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is a major theory in political science, and it has generated rich theoretical debate and analysis of political behavior. Debates about what influences actors and the theoretical assumptions researchers ought to have while conducting research have been central to the discussions surrounding RCT. RCT has also generated a considerable amount of controversy. Yet, for the controversy generated, there is just as much research, some of which focuses on predicting behavioral outcomes. This section will focus on summarizing and criticizing how the theory has constructed models for conflict prediction.

RCT is a broadly defined set of theories that are related to social phenomena whereby outcomes of individual actions can be constructed as broadly rational (Wittek, Snijders & Nee, 2013). RCT uses deductive assumptions regarding one's motives, beliefs,

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[4] While this choice of comparison does not fit well into interstate conflict it was selected due to the larger volume of work from both schools of thought on this issue. Interstate conflict, simply did not have the same depth of coverage, therefore I selected a conflict topic covered by both.

and incentives towards a 'rational' course of action. RCT minimally assumes that agents have the following mental features: maximization of utility, rationality (instrumental or bounded), and self-interest (Eriksson, 2011). Maximization of utility means that when they are presented with an array of options, they will pick the one that best serves their objective. The belief that actors are rational varies in terms of the amount of information available. If the actor has all information, unlimited cognitive capacity, and maximization of decision making criteria, they are said to have strong rationality (Wittek, Snijders & Nee, 2013). Alternatively, bounded rationality assumes actors have limited access, selective attention, and only satisficing options are available to them.

Azam (2005) and Wintrobe (2006) both give examples of how RCT could apply to understanding terrorism. Azam (2005) considered suicide bombing as a function of monetary saving for the community. Suicide bombing is viewed as a perfectly rational action when seen as an investment in the next generation. The suggestion then is for anti-terror campaigns to devise plans to reduce the probability that the next generation will enjoy the investment garnered from the act of bombing. Wintrobe (2006) takes another perspective informed by RCT. He theorizes that members of extremist groups are doing rational calculations that trade beliefs for solidarity with the group, which maximizes the utility of the individual. As the member changes their beliefs, Wintrobe argues that they desire more solidarity and are therefore willing to adopt beliefs and values more akin to the leaders. These analyses are often presented in algebraic equations that reduce the actor's choices to quantifiably knowable entities with probabilistic outcomes. The action of suicide bombing, in both cases, is seen as fundamentally irrational and therefore a way to explain the 'rationality' of the bombings is sought. Applying RCT to the leadership in terrorist organizations, Neumayer and Plumper (2009) say, "Leaders of terrorist group are predominantly rational and act

strategically to reach their goal of gaining political influence on the political system of their home country" (p. 712). The followers/suicide bombers share in the ideological appeal of the leader, seek peer acknowledgement, and have political grievances against the foreign country presently acting in their local context. In the process of quantifying, choices, beliefs, and values RCT is rationalize the otherwise inconceivable behavioral outcomes of suicide bombing.

RCT arose during the '50s and '60s as an economic approach to politics. In the '90s, the theory's popularity became widespread. During this time, Green and Shapiro (1994) wrote the most famous criticism of RCT, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*. The sharpest criticism of the theory was that the theory is not a falsifiable: "[S]uccessful empirical applications of rational choice models have been few and far between. Most of the early rational choice work was either not empirical at all, or it was crude and impressionistic" (Green and Shapiro, 1994 p. ix). To the critics, RCT was an empirical failure. Yet, the theory remains alive and well.

Strong proponents of the theory have hailed RCT as the only genuine advancement in political science (Riker, 1990). Another proponent, Gary Becker, advocates for the assumption of strong rationality as a universally applicable model for creating decision-making models (Wittek, Snijders & Nee, 2013). Despite its continued use, RCT itself lacks a cohesive 'canon' or consensus, which is odd considering it popularity. Some theorists approach RCT by limiting the scope of the assumptions, while others maximize the scope or change the assumptions. In bounded rationality, for example, the rational assumption is limited to application in specific contexts. On the other hand, maximal rationality theorists will vehemently disagree and go as far as reducing all choices to economic decision. Due to the lack of a generalized canon, the following section will give an overview of the theory and a criticism of it as well.

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First, the 'maximization of utility' axiom assumes agents have consistent preferences expressed across their decisions about whether or not to engage in conflict. In the decision-making process, agents have a hierarchy of preferences from which they make their decisions: "In the canonical, neoclassical rational choice model, preferences are assumed to be exogenously given and stable, and individuals are selfish egoists striving toward the maximization of material gain" (Wittek, et al., 2013, p. 7). In other words, the researcher assumes the homogeneity of actors' assumptions for theoretical parsimony (Green & Shaprio, 1994). Some researchers have simplified the assumption into the maximization of one's own wealth (Jevons, 1957), while others speak of a continuum of utility in which one can be anywhere from the selfish opportunist to the agent seeking solidarity with another (Wittek et al., 2013).

Maximization of utility in an agent's decisions has been taken to be the maximization of the benefits of the agent's action (Green and Shaprio, 1994). This, however, raises questions about how agents identify what is of utility or not. This brought some economists to say the only aspect of utility that one should consider is that of the utility of wealth (Eriksson, 2011). In this view, RCT theorists have explained voting in terms of the perceived economic benefits from policies of a given candidate for the voter (Persson & Tabellini, 2003).

The problem, however, is still how to define the utility that each choice is thought to have for the actor. Does perceived intensity count against its duration (Eriksson, 2011)? Does the expensive bottle of whiskey have more utility than a very large, but cheaper bottle? To the question of the larger or cheaper bottle of whiskey, it is unclear whether the researchers should assume the utility is in reference to quality or quantity. Furthermore, how can researchers make sense of altruistic actions? For some individuals, we might be able to assume going on a house-building trip to an

impoverished country will maximize a sense of positive self-face, which is of greater benefit than the time or resources that were lost in the choice. Yet, some RCT theorists would have us reduce the sacrifices of time, money, and safety to mere economic benefits.

Returning to the realm of conflict – specifically terrorism –it is evident that the reduction of utility to a base choice of monetary gain or perceived solidarity is that which researchers in the economic model assume is motivating action (Azam, 2005; Wintrobe, 2006; Neumayer & Plumper, 2009). This raises an enormous theoretical issue: how do we measure which choice has preeminence? As Wintrobe attempts to model the choice of increased solidarity resulting in the total sacrifice of the individual for the group, how are we to make sense of this preference tinkering? Azam, similarly, engages in preference tinkering to explain the possibility of altruistic motives towards the group in the act of suicide bombing. The important difference is that while it is one thing to explain why an actor acts within a given theoretical framework, it is quite another to explain the presence or absence of these factors in an individual or group that induces the conditions for the escalation of conflict. What is more, Wintrobe's model trades solidarity for adopting beliefs of the leader and leaves open the question of why those beliefs are significant. This is echoed by Neumayer and Plumper (2009) as a central reason for people partaking in the efforts of terrorism. They go further in noting that the rationality of engaging in terror is principally aimed at gaining local influence, which is accomplished by raising the cost of stability in the region. Attacks also garner media attention that simultaneously spreads their ideology and destabilizes the local political system. For every Muslim that joins an extremist group, there are countless others that do not. While giving a logically possible answer for some, the maximization of utility principles fails to account for the content and role the beliefs and values play.

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The next assumption is rationality. To paraphrase a definition of rationality, it is a powerful normative means of resolving human conflict through reasoned discourse (Monroe & Maher, 1995). Eriksson (2011) notes,

> Instrumental rationality, for example, is a normative ideal of rational action against which actual people's actions can be measured: we can explain people's behaviors to the extent that they are approximate to the ideal.

Eriksson's description of instrumental is principally focused on the goal-oriented nature of human actions towards desired ends. In the above illustrations, the act of suicide bombing is seen as optimally rational due to either their desired solidarity or group orientation. All things being equal, each action taken is perceived by the actor to be the most desirable action. Yet, as is shown below, the range of assumptions that must be taken in account and how different outcomes are explained is not explored by existing RCT work.

The position vacillates between hyper-rationality, bounded rationality, and procedural rationality (Wittek, et al, 2013). The essence of the debate is to what extent agents are aware of their choices and how they process the information such that they make a decision that will be of maximal benefit to them. At issue here is the degree of rationality, not necessarily the kind of rationality. Hyper-rationality, or strong/thick rationality, assumes that agents have unlimited cognitive capacity to deal with information and seek to maximize their outcomes (Wittek, et al., 2013). Simons (1991; 1982; 1972) argues that adding aspects of complexity like risk or uncertainty to the demand and/or cost functions of choice replaces the assumption that agents have perfect knowledge. Assuming the actor does not possess complete knowledge of the alternatives, this explanation further complicates this idealistic sense of a fully rational person (Simon, 1972). Finally, under procedural rationality, behavior is guided by past

experiences that lead to automatic responses based on the expectation of similar outcomes (Wittek, et al, 2013).

The primary question raised in this rationality section is similar to the previous: what level of rationality are we to assume and how do we know which one is best? As teachers know well, there are obvious differences in students' ability to process information. Hence, some students are able to more quickly acquire information, while others appear to lag behind. The same is true of people outside educational settings. As a researcher, do I then assume that all my subjects are high-functioning? This deductive assumption of hyper-rationality seems to be underspecified, *prima facie*.

Turning, then, to bounded rationality, the question arises: what binds one's rationality? Researchers are forced to make assumptions regarding what the subjects are bounded by, but how to do this reliably is unclear. Take a study of policy makers as an example. By looking at public historical records, we can come to reliable conclusions regarding the information policy makers used to guide their decision. In current times, we might be able to interview those persons; yet, given the sensitive nature of some choices, it could be difficult to gather all relevant information. Even if that information were present, the policy makers could be constrained by their own cognitive capacity, time and/or pressure. What is more, not every policy maker who is exposed to the same information knows the quality and importance of the information. To what extent personal history and background play a role in the decision making process is also underspecified. Therefore, how their rationality is bounded is still unclear.

Returning, to the example of a suicide bomber, the researcher is left to make large cognitive leaps in their subject's thinking and awareness. Conducting thought experiments on motivations of a suicide bomber is not the same as conducting experiments with a participant. Nor would it be advisable for a researcher to conduct this

type of potentially dangerous research. RCT requires academics to make a tacit assumption regarding the degree and bounds of rationality without guidance as to which view is more accurate or correct and in what situations. The project of interest here is to create a means for understanding the person's reasoning prior to acting – not after the fact or in mere logical possibilities – so that a model for forecasting actions can be reliability created.

The third assumption – self-interest – is debated and placed on a continuum between fully selfish to somewhat selfish behavior. Eriksson (2011) notes that some notions of self-interest boil down to motivations of any kind. Lichbach (2003) says one of the extreme forms of rationalists begin with the transcendental ego that is defining of all human beings. Put simply, "if A is a valid act for someone, it must be valid for everyone under similar conditions" (p. 29). These are *a posteriori* truths that all persons can follow. Thus, in conflict a RCT would calculate that every person, given the known circumstances, would act in accordance with the prescribed rationality. Herein lies a problem for this theory: the given context has far too many particulars, the rationale for choosing which particulars to isolate for analysis is unclear, and the rationale for determining the subject's interest is also unclear.

The self-interest assumption does not have a clear function in the whole scheme of RCT (Eriksson, 2011). Shepsel and Bonchek (1997) define self-interest as merely acting in accordance with one's preferences – the pursuit of what the agent finds important. As a result, all kinds of choices can be plugged into the machinery of the rational choice model and will be seen to be motivated by self-interest; whether or not it is ethical, mundane, or actually selfish, the actions can be interpreted as such because they are done by an individual agent (Eriksson, 2011). Eriksson (2011) rejects the conception of maximization of self-interest because it is clear that agents are not always

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acting out of self-interest in altruistic and mundane instances. Yet, the tacit self-interest assumption remains because it allows for the prediction of goal-oriented behavior; that is, the goal is always oriented towards the maximization of self-interested outcomes.

In this third assumption, the question is similar to the first two: how and by what? How does a researcher establish that each action is self-interested and the particular aim of the self-interest in any given situation? The altruistic action of the suicide bomber for monetary gain of his greater community appears to be selfless. So, are researchers to assume that every bomber cognitively recognizes that their actions benefit the larger whole, or is it that we cannot help but benefit ourselves? Mental gymnastics can be done to create arguments for every decision being self-interested or selfish, but doing so is hardly the sign of a parsimonious and robust assumption. Perhaps, the most important question is why should researchers assume self-interest in the first place? We could just as easily assume that all actions, as Aristotle said, are goal-oriented and keep the ability for predictive behavior. If Eriksson is correct and the utility of self-interest is goal-orientation for predictive modeling, then that is not a problem. Once we begin to tacitly claim to know the motivations for all actors, it becomes a problem of falsifiability.

As the decisions of rational choice theory are expanded to the issue of collective action, these assumptions continue to place salient roles in the thought-experiments relevant to the research.

Controversy over the theory. As mentioned previously, the best-known critique of RCT is from Green and Shapiro (1994). Their main criticism is that RCT is essentially not falsifiable, and theorists commit the most heinous fallacy in post-hoc reasoning. In part, they believe this post-hoc reasoning arises from the desire to create a universally applicable model to explain behavior. RCT can be conceived so universally

that it absorbs every conceivable alternative hypothesis. The causal process of RCT becomes muddled in paradigmatic commitments to a rational actor and the need for empirical verification, which results in paying the price of verisimilitude (Green and Shapiro, 1994). Whether a researcher ought to assume (a-priori) a thick or thin rationality, maximum or minimum self-interest, or how to falsify the theory is unclear. The core question, however, identified by Green and Shapiro (1994) is why one would select this approach over another. RCT boils down to the prediction of both X and non-X, that is to say, it predicts everything. Therefore, RCT explains everything and is automatically correct. When dealing with thought experiments and logically possible worlds, anything and everything can be explained away by the tacitly unknown or unknowable, but that does not mean it reflects reality.

In response, RCT theorists have argued for a familial or paradigmatic-oriented approach. Wittek et al. (2013) note that there have been attempts at relaxing the assumptions of RCT over the years. Consequently, RCT ought to be conceived of as a broadly defined set of theories related to social phenomena. These theories relate outcomes of individual actions that can be constructed as rational. Approaching RCT as a paradigm allows researchers to take the above-mentioned assumptions as a basic framework for how people act and gives them the ability to run statistics.

Other proponents respond by pointing to the successes of the theory. Gachter (2013) says it is a successful theory because many people like and use the theory. The poverty of an alternative does not give a *de jure* justification for a theory: "Rational choice theorists saw off the branch on which they are perched if they insist that their view be favored because no one has better defended an alternative general theory of politics while at the same time embracing some version of segmented universalism, partial universalism, or the family-of-theories view" (Green and Shaprio, 1994, p 192).

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Eriksson (2011), however, advocates for continued use of RCT by suggesting theorists respond to and adopt aspects of the cultural theorists' work. Tsebelis (1990), among others, claims that culture does not enter into RCT explanation. RCT has been focused on *homo economius*, which ignores identity, symbolic interactions, or culture as influencing factors of choice (Eriksson, 2011). For instance, why various groups have different values of goods and services is explained within the mire of cultural values and beliefs; these are the very mechanisms of decision-making RCT is interested in explaining, yet they are rarely systematically or empirically accounting for.

Another criticism that I want to bring is that RCT does not explain how people think or function. The questions I have raised in this section about the assumptions bring this out. Recalling the notion that a good theory first explains then predicts also reveals the problems of this theory. Not only has prediction in general been elusive with the explanations of actions are varied and unsatisfactory. Take the terrorism topic that reveals problem of explaining such as act. There are two articles that applied the theory to the related topics of terrorism (Sanchez-Cuenca 2013) and interstate conflict (Morrow, 2013), which will be addressed/analyzed.

Sanchez-Cuenca (2013) engages with how RTC has been applied to the study of terrorism. RCT applies to the organization and actors to show how utility is maximized for each. Sanchez-Cuenca concludes, "as with many other analogous collective action dilemmas, rational choice theory has not provided satisfactory explanations" (p. 382). Further, he argues that the models are disconnected from empirical research. Sanchez-Cuenca reviews RCT explanations of maximization of utility for the individual by theorizing actions as extreme forms of helping the community. Another explanation is that the individual trades his individual autonomy for solidarity with the group. Once the value of solidarity with the group outweighs autonomy, the action of suicide for the

group becomes a rational decision. Sanchez-Cuenca concludes by noting these hypotheses need empirical grounding, but that future theories and research should not doubt the RCT assumption of goal-oriented action.

Not only are these theoretical assumptions merely hypothetical, but they are also reductionist in nature. Attempting to reduce the complexities of suicide bombing to a mere cost-benefit analysis based on group solidarity is to reduce the belief systems to some tangible benefit without contextualizing and explaining the interconnectedness of this belief/benefit with other relevant beliefs supplied by the person's culture or worldview. With such a perplexing and complex question as self-sacrifice, we should not settle for reductionist hypotheses. Piazza (2010) shows the motivations for committing an act of terror are far from singular; in fact, it might be more accurate to say there is no singular profile befitting a 'terrorist'. In this area, RCT has not answered the challenge of empirically supported models brought by Green and Shapiro (1994). Arguing over rules and possible outcomes in games of fiction can be captivating, but hardly edifying for the reality in which we live. Sanchez-Cuenca (2013) is right to suggest that we ought to keep in mind the goal-orientation of actions, but this is a tautology. We need to understand what those goals are rather than assuming we know them. Hypothetical motivations without the analytical ability to understand their power over behavior tells researchers little.

Similar to how terrorism is justified by a reductionist understanding of motivation, one RCT perspective has reduced interstate conflict to bargaining (Morrow, 2013). Morrow (2013) notes war is the result of both sides seeking advantageous bargaining positions, and they are incentivized to seek that position by privatizing relevant information. War results when both sides refuse to make concessions or reduce their own desired outcome. Morrow, however, introduces an important piece of

information for the modern-day public commitments and threats: "Domestic groups care about the results of their state's foreign policy and can impose costs on their leaders" (Morrow, 2013, p. 422). When a public commitment is made, the cost of following through or altering the position becomes more intense. As Lantis (2002) argues, it is better to think of leaders as users of rather than changers of culture. Once that commitment is made publically, the public is forced to respond. The easiest public commitments to make, therefore, are ones that are consistent with the public's desired outcome(s), or the leader will need to convince the public that its interests and desired resolutions are accomplished by following a new course of action. In both situations, the public is the group that needs convincing based on their current positions. This is more complex than a one-on-one bargaining. It is public-to-public bargaining via the representatives. The complexities of public discourse – what the public will and will not agree to based on their worldview – does not favor reducing interstate conflict to bargaining. It is not a bad analogy, but it hardly captures the nuances and complexities needed to be effective.

In this section, the core tenants of RCT have been reviewed and objections have been raised about its explanatory power. The least contended concepts used by RCT are maximization of utility, rationality, and self-interest. For each case, the disagreements within the field have been shown and pertinent questions posed for trying to apply the theory. Ultimately, it is apparent that the theory's reductionist approach has resulted in thin descriptions and their tools for problem solving do not provide real world solutions. Shoemaker, Tankard, and Lasora (2004) set the criteria for a good social science theory as that of first explaining how a phenomena works. RCT provides exceedingly broad underspecified mechanisms for explanation, such that everything is explained. While theory construction builds off of *a priori* knowledge of the world to create falsifiable

hypothesis, RCT reduces the content of beliefs to baser interests without understanding the content of beliefs, their impact on desires, and what people choose to do. As stated above, RCT approach the phenomena of terrorism by identifying solidarity and ideology as significant factors for the suicide bombers while never explaining the why the individual picks extremist ideology and groups to follow. While hypothetical general principles are explained, the particulars are lost. Next, I move on from what I labeled economic models to various attempts to make fuller descriptions in cultural models.

Cultural Models

In contrast to the above 'economic model,' there are alternative models based on culture. The cultural model is distinct in its attempt to understand the symbolic process of values, norms, beliefs, roles, rituals, language and other formal and informal means of understanding culture and the correlation to conflict (Geertz, 1973; Swindler, 1986). The cultural models have also created alternative explanations for the act of suicide bombings. Feirke (2009), in response to RCT, asserts RCT makes it difficult to take language or emotional content into consideration for the explanation of the act. The different connotative meanings behind the two words (suicide or martyrdom) used to describe these acts of terror create a different structural logic embedded in cultures that use the different words. Feirke concedes,

> While this does not explain why some individuals choose to engage in an act of voluntary death, while others do not, it does provide an understanding of how the act is given meaning and reproduced within particular communities, as well as how recipient communities make sense of the act and define a response" (p.179).

Feirke points researchers toward thicker notions of everyday discourse in order to heed the emotional resonance influencing actions. Bloom (2004) approaches this topic slightly differently by focusing on the context of the conflict in question. While Bloom did not rely on any one factor as primary motivator of the act, she did identify dehumanization of the opponent, the relatively weak position of the terrorists against a

larger state-apparatus (in this case Palestinians against Israelis), and cycles of violence that together appear to produce ongoing violence as relevant factors. Brym and Araj (2006) echo this hypothesis as they move away from the individual characteristics of the bombers to the macro-level discourse present in newspapers. They claim that the Palestinian suicide bombings are motivated by the desire to retaliate against Israeli killings of Palestinians, which is reflected in the local newspaper discourse. Evident in these three approaches is the focus on the symbolic structures of meaning within discourse and their effect on interpretation and outcomes.

While economic approaches are essentially reductionist, individualist, and give an indiscriminant explanatory mechanism, the cultural model attempts to avoid these pitfalls by studying distinct characteristics of the group, general behavioral responses, identity, and worldviews. Yet, at this point, these cultural models struggle to agree on their basic unit of analysis as well as how to systematically study it. In this section, the prominent position of the clash of civilizations as presented by Huntington (1996) will be given, as well as responses from the other scholars in an attempt to clarify a possible basic unit of analysis as well as a method for studying it. Hofstede's (1991) values are utilized to falsify Huntington's thesis. Concepts of strategic culture, nationalism, and constructivism have also been used to explain conflict from a cultural perspective.

Huntington's (1996) *Clash of Civilizations* book offered a possible model of culture that attempts to explain interstate conflict. The central theme of his work is "that culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilization identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world" (see Chapter 1, Flags and Cultural Identity). Huntington posits that the best means of examining the world is through the lens of culture – not economic, political, or ideological systems. Culture cannot be separated from economics, politics, and ideology,

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but it cannot be reduced to these either. It must be approached as a complex system. I will argue that Huntington's model is an improvement yet falls short by reducing culture to religion.

At the outset, according to Huntington, his project was to create a paradigm for understanding global politics in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Therefore, he never viewed his work as a sound work of social science. His thesis is more akin to a strong hypothesis. This is an important caveat because, according to the scholars below, his theory does not stand up under empirical scrutiny. Even if these scholars accurately tested Huntington's thesis, what I believe accounts for this thesis' popularity is its common sense approach to the world. Anyone who has studied the beliefs and history of the world's religions knows that Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have more in common than each does with Hinduism or Buddhism for example. It is also the case that Western Europe, the U.S., and Australia have more in common than these countries do with China or Japan. To deny this is to deny the value of those different beliefs and cultures, which for many are the foundation on which they build their world and life views. Despite any shortcoming in Huntington's theory, this idea regarding similarities and differences between values and culture continues to have prominence even amongst critics, and it needs further explication.

According to Huntington, politics is merely the advancing of our cultural values and identity. It is an attempt to answer the question, who are we? Much of the work in politics attempts to draw distinctions between who we perceive "us" to be and who we believe we are *not* or whom we are 'against'. Civilizations, Huntington theorizes, are the broadest level at which we can identify these commonalities and differences. Huntington (1996) notes,

> The philosophical assumptions, underlying values, social relations, customs, and overall outlooks on life differ significantly among civilizations. The revitalization

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of religion throughout much of the world is reinforcing these cultural differences. Cultures can change, and the nature of their impact on politics and economics can vary from one period to another. Yet the major differences in political and economic development among civilizations are clearly rooted in their different cultures. (Kindle, locations 341-345).

He notes that understanding any group without reference to their particular civilization will not fully capture the historical and cultural differences between groups. Noting processes of change is not enough.

The primary controversy of his categorization of world civilizations is their associations with particular cultures and religions. Huntington makes this choice by examining the various means of identification: one world, two worlds, 184 states, or what he settles on, the eight civilizations. Each civilization, he believes, represents significantly different philosophies, values, social relations, customs, and overall outlook on life. He decides that the eight civilizations, which can be distinguished primarily by their religious affiliations, is the most fruitful way to parse the data. This thesis has been challenged and said to be lacking because he conceptualizes particular religions and civilization together, not necessarily because of his focus on culture.

Finally, Huntington's thesis views different cultural ethos coming to conflicting points rooted in their differing values, beliefs, and identities. Huntington calls these "fault-line wars" that result from trenchant associations of identity and otherness. Kinship relationships between groups become the most important issue; thus, when it comes to fundamental concerns of identity and power, compromise is difficult. Essentially, he is arguing that humans have not transcended tribal identity; rather, the tribes have just become larger entities and these tribes have come in greater contact with one another.

In light of civilizational identities and cultural differences, Huntington believes that the differences between groups and their view of the world can be better explained

by cultural identities. Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness, he believes, will guide the coming century of conflicts. While the West continues to believe its views maintain a dominant, universal position in global politics, non-Western countries will continue to point out the hypocrisy of the West's views. For instance, despite numerous human rights violations, the West continues to treat Saudi Arabia as an ally while deriding the Chinese for what some would say are less serious violations. Furthermore, Islamic groups tend to view the West as corrupt, materialistic, decadent, immoral, and perhaps worst of all, atheistic. Huntington argues that these views of the self and other are the central motivating factors behind disputes in the modern era.

The claims in *Clash of Civilizations*, however, have been widely contested on empirical grounds (Henderson & Tucker, 2001; Inman, Kishi, Wilkenfeld, Gelfand, and Salmon, 2014; Leng & Regan, 2003; Regan & Leng 2003). Henderson and Tucker (2001) note the largest issue is Huntington's reduction of culture to religion, which was necessary to support the underlying clash thesis. Yet, they notably say the influence of culture in conflict has yet to be accounted for in conflicts. Leng and Regan (2003) test this hypothesis in outcomes of mediations in militarized interstate disputes and did not have support for the hypothesis of religion being a predictive factor. Yet, Henderson (1997) notices a positive association between religion and incidences of war between 1820 and 1989. Leng and Regan (2003), however, find that the data indicates culture matters when the dispute is between democracies or similar cultures, other than Islam. Regan and Leng (2003) find no relation between culture and interstate disputes. Inman et al. (2014) discover religion had little impact on the desire to pursue mediation in interstate disputes; however, other factors of cultural differences—attribute heterogeneity, language, and race—have negative impact on the likelihood of mediation.

Finally, Henderson and Tucker's (2001) study uncovers similar findings: religion did not test positively for influence on war.

Inman et al. (2014), however, find that when culture is defined as language, religion, race, and heterogeneity, all of these except religion impact the likelihood of two countries seeking mediation in a dispute. Inman et al. (2014) also use Hofstede's cultural dimensions; they discovered that collectivistic states are more likely to pursue mediation than individualist states. This is supported by Lefebvre & Franke's (2013) study, finding a feeling of similarity between cultures sharing in collectivism or individualism. They discovered that the collectivists are not open to outsider interventions, are less rational (based on a Spicer & Adler-Smith scale), and less likely to keep long-term deals. Furthermore, Inman et al. (2014) found collectivist cultures higher in uncertainty avoidance are less likely to seek mediation.

Leng and Regan's (2003) study looks primarily at social and political cultures in mediated disputes. Their study indicates, "that cultural similarities or differences matter, but they offer no indication of why" (p. 443). They conclude that dyads sharing either collectivist or individualist characteristics are less likely to engage in military disputes, yet regional location was also a significant factor in moderating outcomes. They believe the latter is likely due to each country's ability to project military force regionally and the issues of conflict being regionally centered. For instance, if the dispute is regarding territory or resources, it is unlikely that a country in South East Asia and another in Latin America will have conflicting claims due their geographic distance.

These studies conclude that religion as a predictive factor for conflict in Huntington's thesis is problematic, yet his central theme of cultural differences influencing disputes continues to be confirmed. While Huntington's work attempted to answer how culture matters, these studies seem to acknowledge that it does too. Either

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lost within the mire of particulars or hasty generalities to capture findings between seemingly significant differences, these studies are stuck in a predicament of not being able to answer what ought to be paid attention to. When it is all said and done, culture matters, but systematic study, prediction, and explanatory power are far off. So, even though his theory may have problems, Huntington attempts to explain how the framework of beliefs, values, and norms results in conflict. At minimum, the scholarly community testing Huntington's hypothesis has concluded that the titles of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc. are not predictive of conflict. That is progress. The question of how culture functions in conflict remains unanswered.

Moreover, these studies, as a rule, rely on large database collection that is not necessarily focused on conflict, which is arguably a significant weakness. These data sets, like the economic models, do not account for more fine-grained indicators of rising tension or rationales. For example, in the 1995 Spratly Island crisis between the Philippines and China, neither side requested or accepted mediation, yet indicators of collectivism are predictive of seeking mediation (Inman et al., 2014). Apparently, this is not the case in this dispute. Either this is indicative of a problem with the conceptual representation of the culture, the concepts do not relate to conflict, or there are unknown variables at work that could be producing a significant.

Hofstede's indicator does not capture the nuisances needed to answer the perennial hypothesis of how cultural identity (however it is measured) matters in creating and/or seeking to settle differences. These large indicators all lack contextual indicators that could explain why China and the Philippines, despite both sharing broadly collectivist cultures, continue to engage in territorial disputes.

In the recent disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, cultural indicators are more likely to reduce the significant factors of the dispute between China and Japan than

they are to illuminate the real dispute. It would be too easy to reduce the two countries to language, race, governmental forms, economics, or other similar markers. None of these can truly account for the background and history of the parties. No indicator accounts for the particular historical background between the Chinese and Japanese. Dating back to the late 1800s, these two countries have had significant disputes that continue to resurface today. Consequently, it is imperative that what people in these types of conflict are saying is not ignored. Russia serves as another example. With Russia invading Ukraine, it is possible to ignore the justification given by Putin that indicates the historical and identity significance of Crimea to the Ukrainian and Russian identities, but it is better to take it seriously and to account for identity and culture while not reducing choice to a base selfishness or abstract indicators. Would the Chinese and Japanese or Russians and Ukrainians say that their forms of government matter in the dispute more than history, language or identity? If not, then is there a method of verification beyond merely accepting one party's perception?

There is another theory that explains conflict in light of culture that has not yet been covered. Lantis (2002) engages with the two concepts of political and strategic cultures. Through the concept of "political culture," he attempts to explain causal beliefs, values, norms, moral judgments, and sense of emotional attachment through empirical means. In essence, political culture is an attempt to use anthropological models to understand state and cultural behavior (Lantis, 2002). The concept of political culture, however, did not garner more attention than the first few theorists who proposed it and soon fell out of favor.

Subsequently, as constructivism has gained favor in the academy, the concept of strategic culture has reemerged as a viable link between national security policies (Lapid, 1996). Constructivism gave the social sciences an approach that conceptualized identity

and interest as socially constructed (Wendt, 1992). Johnston (1995) used this idea when he conducted an historical analysis during China's Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Johnston concluded that the strategic culture was more consistent with classical realpolitik. In another work, Berger (1998) analyzed Japan's strategic culture, and he concluded that persistent antimilitarism heavily influenced cultural identity even though they were set to become both an economic and military superpower. This drastically slowed the development of Japan's military in the post WWII era. Most importantly, Berger argues strategic cultures are relatively static entities due to a widely-shared set of ideas: difficulty of disconfirming the ideas, psychological elements of consistency seeking that results in inconsistent data being ignored, and consistent data being assimilated.

This model is difficult, yet it offers some promising perspectives for further research. First, the use of constructivism to justify a static notion of culture is difficult in that constructivism supposes that culture is an ever-evolving entity that goes through a process of formation and reformation through the construction of social reality. Therefore, if strategic culture is an ever-changing entity, it cannot be at the same time a static culture. However, if the theory is to be isolated to the decision making body of a particular state, then it is possible to suggest that the strategic culture can be more firm. In this way, the concept offers promise for future analysis.

Predating Lantis (2002), Banerjee (1997) argues the elites are the purveyors of common historical narratives. The elites represent the culture through narrative structures and use these to define foreign policy goals. Amending this, Lantis (2002) says, "contemporary scholarship contends that elite behavior may be more consistent with the assertion that leaders are strategic 'users of culture' or redefine the limits of the 'possible' in key foreign and security policy discourses" (p. 107). Cruz (2000) further suggests the elites are limited by their use of strategic culture and either gain or lose their

ability to use culture due to its entrenching limitations. In other words, leadership is able to use culture but bound by the present possibilities within any given culture's narrative. For example, if an American leader began to employ a revolutionary narrative style, like the Tea Party – if they are to retain legitimacy – they cannot wholly contradict this narrative. That is to say, if a Tea Party leader supports liberal policies without sufficient justification to show how this is consistent with the revolutionary narrative, the leader is likely to fall out of favor with his or her electorate.

In this analysis of models that use culture as a driving mechanism for understanding conflict, a number of positive elements have emerged that I will subsequently use to build my narrative-based theory. The idea that leaders are users of culture and limited by each culture implies leaders will reflect normative cultural thoughts. Thus, leaders' discourse will garner a robust glimpse into the broader culture, but it will avoid needing to do the implausible work of analyzing an entire culture's worldview. By conducting textual analysis to understand how members of society and leaders use and represent culture through policy and media, the shortcomings of reductionist models that favor broader tools of analysis, such as Hofstede's or RCT, can also be avoided. All models reduce the object of study to manageable indicators, but the reductionism by RCT and the inconsistencies in the cultural models suggest these indicators either compromise depth or breadth in their chosen tools. The theory I propose here will reduce culture and conflict to narratives represented in discourse in order that means-ends chains that persist within the culture can be identified.

Finally, Henderson and Tucker (2001) argue nationalism should be given a closer examination than culture or civilization because it could cause more inter-civilizational conflicts:

nationalist struggles may engender intercivilizational conflict such as those that Huntington foresees; however, culture differences, in the future as in the past, are likely to remain one of several factors including political, military, economic, and demographic ones that give rise to international conflict. (p. 333)

As I mentioned previously, the concept can be thought of as another attempt to conceptualize identity or culture as a cause of war and fails to significantly differentiate culture and nationalism. This needs to be and will be explained more fully in the subsequent sections.

Limitations of the Cultural Models. The above does create a more favorable reading of the cultural models than the previous economic models of conflict; however, problematic assumptions and limitations are present within the former as well. The cultural models have recently shifted away from Hofstede's value orientations in favor of rich description and emic understanding. McSweeney's (2002) central critique is summarized in saying Hofstede's core assumptions are circularly proven by his research design. Hofstede assumes cultural homogeneity within each population, assumes his four to five dimensions are adequate to capture any shared values within a culture and differences between cultures. Essentially, McSweeney questions the validity of the units of measurement and claims they are highly dubious from the start. The driving force behind this and other critiques is paradigmatic in nature. For example, Williamson (2002) sees the deterministic factors within functionalism as resulting in concerns for free will. Further, these cultural approaches are problematic because they ultimately reduce the object of study to inconsequential factors that do not capture the robustness of culture, which can only be found in the thick descriptions favored in the interpretivist paradigms.

The issue with Huntington's theory is similar to the issue with Hofstede's: the design of his research is somewhat simplistic and does not capture the complexities of culture. While scholars respond to the clash thesis through empirically falsifying the

thesis that religion is the root cause of conflicts, even these responses reveal shortcomings in the current cultural approach. At best, Huntington theorizes a plausible root cause of conflict; at worst, he does not recognize the inconsistencies with which most adherents hold to these worldviews or religions. If it is the case that persons are inconsistently holding to their religious ideologies, then to empirically falsify this variable by using an assumed homogeneous term like Hinduism or Islam in falsification is undermined because the term is underspecified. The conclusion, therefore remains indeterminate. My argument rests on the fact that persons hold these views inconsistently, which can be tested empirically. For now, great divides within each system of belief can serve as tentative proof of these inconsistencies. Western Christianity and Islam both have a variety of differences of interpretations that, if followed consistently, would result in different actions. When exploring whether or not Christians and Muslims have conflict, it is important to clarify which brand of Christianity and Islam are being tested: Seventh Day Adventists? Charismatics? Sunni? Shi'ite? What about so-called "extremist views" of Westboro Baptist Church or the ideology that was behind Bin Laden? We cannot merely dismiss this underlying thesis by making a straw man and declaring explanatory victory. Assuming consistency within a particular interpretation becomes problematic for forecasters because all followers do not consistently hold violent interpretations. While the refutations of Huntington's position take us further, they do not answer the core question: how do we study culture and do (or which) cultural difference(s) lead to conflict?

If I have represented the above positions correctly and they are, in fact, representative of our best attempt to study culture and conflict, then it is unconvincing to conclude that we have falsified our null hypothesis: culture has no impact on conflict. Once more, the complexity of our inquiry is extensive because the very nature of the

subject matter is incredibly complex. While there are clearly measurable variables to test

ranging from geographical location to religious affiliation (Christianity, Atheism, Islam,

etc.), the inward realities of the individual mind are more difficult to ascertain.

Outcomes and external factors can be measured and observed, while the inner reality is

more difficult. Which beliefs at one time are acting as the central motivation(s) for the

action?

The conceptual connection between culture and conflict is far from being a new

idea. The classical works, including Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz advance, Lantis

(2002) notes, the idea that culture and national security policies are connected.

Clausewitz (1873) says,

> With reference to the first of these three points (is war an isolated act) we must
> remember that neither of the two opponents is for the other an abstract person,
> ... War never breaks out quite suddenly, and its spreading is not the work of a
> moment. Each of the two opponents can thus to a great extend form an opinion of
> the other from what he actually is and does, not from what, theoretically, he
> should be and should do. (p. 4)

Howard (1998) expounds on Clausewitz's view of war and the study of this phenomena:

> To Clausewitz's mind, this whole "scientific" approach was fundamentally flawed.
> War, he pointed out, was conducted against an adversary who possessed a will of
> his own –"a living object that reacts." It was thus quite unlike a science or even an
> "art," as it had more traditionally been described. (p. 13)

Clausewitz considered the character of the masses and the political purpose to be

determining factors in these situations of war. The above-mentioned theories, I believe

have attempted to give answer by reducing culture to large labels or the mind to general

functions and imposing that on the whole.

RCT attempts an abstraction of human consciousness while the cultural

approaches seek to quantify culture. Both of the actions of conception and perception of

human consciousness and will are needed for this inquiry and building on the works

reviewed above is fundamental. However, we have yet to explore how variables interact

as a systems and how we might map out these complexities. In the above mentioned

articles (Chadefaux 2014; Gleditsch & War 2011; Leetaru 2011; and Newcombe, et al

1974) attempt to forecast conflict, with the latter two getting into the realm of discourse.

Leetaru's sentiment analysis focuses on set phrases to capture sentiment, while

Chadefaux focuses on keywords to capture rising and falling tension. What is missing is a

systematic understanding of identity, discourse, and action.

The literature indicates a need for understanding the issues of identity, discourse,

and action, yet in the area of conflict the attempts have not been fruitful. When exploring

different identities within India, Banerjee (1997) theorized that national identities are

modeled as narratives with typical plot structures whose elements are organized in

opposition. These systems of thinking, he believed, were circulated in discourse and

generated motives and strategies for action:

> National identity can be reconstructed as a story with certain plot structure.
> Actually, it is less like a traditional one-track story and more like an interactive
> story whose plot has more than one branch or track, and the one taken depends
> on the action of the reader/player. The national identity story is rarely put into
> words all at once, but rather it is told in bits and pieces as the situation warrants;
> but always much more of it is invoked than told. The story is invoked to interpret
> situations and to produce decisions and motivate actions in response. The story is
> retold in new situations to construct a rigged array of choice available to the
> nation. It matches alternative courses of action to unequally favorable tracks. The
> favored track of national identity story is one of unidirectional historical and
> moral progression. The disfavored track is one of regression and degeneration.
> National identities are not invulnerable. The story cannot be fitted to each new
> situation with equal credibility. The national identity story does provide
> categories and logics for its own verification, but it's not an elaborate tautology.
> (p. 33).

Additionally, he believes these plot structures can be traced through the nation's cultural

and ethnic genesis. Banerjee's theoretical contribution is significant because he links

together expected elements of the national identity, maintains the fluctuating nature of

the identity, and asserts these narratives can be identified as fragments within discourse.

Furthermore, Lantis (2002), Fierke (2009), and Braun and Genkin (2011) all call for more attention given to discourse. Lantis approaches the same issue Banerjee (1997) was examining through the concept already covered, strategic culture. Lantis views this culture as being used by the elites yet held by the collective public. Fierke (2009) notices a structural difference in the logic presented by the Western community and those supporting suicide bombers. To get to the thicker description of this logic, however, it requires attention to the messages in everyday discourse. Braun and Genkin (2011) employ the term "cultural resonance" to theoretically understand the cultural logic behind terrorism. They believe cultural resonance transcends religion and nationalism, viewing the former as religious doctrine and the latter as a struggle for national territory. Thus, they conclude that a practice such as suicide bombing is adopted based on the degree to which the individual connects the act with their cultural orientation. Tarde (1903) argues that whether or not a certain social practice gets adopted depends on how the idea resonates within, "the apparent agreement of these foreign ideas with those that are already established in dogmatic minds" (p. 245). Braun and Genkin (2011) say cultural resonance "refers to the extent to which concrete movement storylines are credible and salient enough to motivate potential participants to mobilize because they are tailored to resonate with the broader culture of the participants" (p. 6).

Benford and Snow (2000) developed the idea of cultural resonance and apply it to social movements and framing. In a given society the degree to which a frame has credibility is based on a variety of factors: Does the frame have consistency with the persons using it? Does the frame fit with events (not factual per se, but can the event be read as valid)? Benford and Snow assert that to the degree the frame resonates with the target audience's central values and beliefs, it will result in an increased likelihood of action. Finally, to what extent do the frames have what Fisher (1987) called narrative

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fidelity? In describing frames, Benford and Snow write, "Frames help render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize and guide action" (2000, p. 614).

In part, viewing narratives as systems of thought that privilege some interpretations, desires, and actions over alternatives is seen as a return to structuralism – a faux pas according to some. In doing so, it would appear that models of causation have been abandoned for the idol of rich explanation. Culturists attempted to create models of explanation through thick descriptions are interesting in their original context, are impotent when applied to conflict forecasting. How does one study worldview, value, beliefs, and desires as they relate to actions? While Huntington's thesis, constructivism, and nationalism were examined for their heuristic value to the subject of conflict, they have not mustered the same potency as RCT. A further look at public discourse is needed if we are going to continue this work and fill in some of the holes in the economic and cultural approaches to understanding interstate conflict. To do so, I suggest that we conceptualize the problem in terms of narrative, expressed in strategic communication, and viewed as a system of thought.

I begin with the problem of interstate conflict and the even broader concept of conflict itself: how can we understand conflict and forecast escalations? Thus far, scholarship has yet to analyze the narrative discourse between societies in potential conflicts. This approach has unquestioned assumptions regarding the media's influence on interstate action and national attitudes of a given population, which will be addressed in subsequent studies. However, the weakness of the cultural model is that perhaps it reduces cultural thinking to the wrong categories and does not explore how cultures talk about themselves and others prior to conflict. My narrative conflict theory will not

commit these same oversights because it will incorporate a culture's narrative weaving through public discourse of officials/leaders.

Thus far, I have argued that there is no satisfactory theory that reliably predicts interstate disputes. Rather than doing the work of dissecting the worldview of the groups involved in a conflict, scholars have used deficient indicators of conflict. While cultural indicators such as collectivism-individualism, religion, language, and/or race are significant markers of difference, they appear to only offer tenuous explanations with little hope of solving the exceptions to the theory. To be clear, the theories explored are not seen as failures but empirical successes because they are unsuccessful at predicting conflict. Science moves on and builds upon attempts, and it must take what was good and move on or theorize different paradigms and test them to address what is still missing or in need of further depth in explanation while searching for the simplest possible explanation.

The concerns raised against RCT are as follows: It uses vague terms that are applicable in any circumstance, it is unclear how to determine the utility gained from an action prior to that action, and it relies upon reductionist indicators to base economic gain while ignoring other factors in of motivation within the individual's consciousness. Acts of solidarity, charity, or even violence that are not motivated by these economic assumptions are difficult to explain within the system. In effect, it subordinates the beliefs of the individuals to creaturely comforts without justifying why this should be primary in explaining motivations. What is more, Green and Shaprio (1994) argue that the theory predicts everything, which means it is unclear how to falsify its hypothesis. In summary, RCT takes loosely agreed-upon terms and has not falsified its assumption, which has resulted in an unsatisfactory explanation of the phenomena in question – namely due to lack of predictive ability or strength.

Meanwhile, many academics have gone to the cultural models for explanations through group characteristics, generalized behaviors, identity, and worldviews. While Huntington's thesis is widely contested, the hypothesis that culture influences conflict has not been falsified. While a portion of the academy does agree on the problematic nature of assuming homogeneous labels (e.g., collectivist or Christian), thicker description has not provided more clarity when explaining how people think in a manner that will enable us to forecast behavior. While we can say that culture matters, it seems that we do not agree on: what it is, how to study it, how it matters, or its function.

Summary

As mentioned above, the goal of this project is to understand the communicative conditions for understanding and forecasting conflict between nation states. Given the above analysis and response to both the economic and cultural models of predicting conflict, I will propose the TNC that uses both the successes and failures of these aforementioned models in dissecting interstate conflict.

TNC builds on current narrative theory, strategic communication, systems theory, and nationalism. Narrative theory, as constructed by Fisher (1987), sees people *homo narrans* (i.e., people make sense of the world through stories). By focusing on narrative trajectories, my theory assumes rhetorically desirable goals reflected in public discourse. Further, steps are taken or desired by the people and government to achieve those desired goals. By surveying the narrative landscape that exists on a given issue, a greater sense of the constructed worldview can be captured, which as I will explain below, broadens and deepens our understanding of the causal thinking that created the desired outcome.

This theory is also informed by and will have outcomes for strategic communication between countries too as it builds on the work of scholars and

practitioners who have been calling for more effective efforts in informing and persuading foreign audience of U.S. goals and interest (Corman, Trethewey, Goodall, 2009; Finn, 2003; Machida, 2010; Nye, 2004; Paul, 2011). The first step in strategic communication is to understand the audience with which one is communicating. This theory proposes an effective theory of analysis that will enable policy makers to more easily understand target audiences and their constructed worldviews.

Nationalism, despite lacking a notable figurehead such as Hobbes, Marx, or de Tocqueville, continues to resurface in both the minds of scholars and the public as an important piece for understanding interstate conflicts. Anderson (2006) argues that the nation took the mental place of core identity formations previously held by religion. This is similar to in-group identification by reference to form of government and geological location (Hogan, 2009). If nationalism is responsible for framing both in-group and out-group distinctions as Bormann's (1972) concept of the rhetorical vision and Hogan's (2009) concepts of narrative and nationalism both suggest, then it ought to be possible to understand the constructed landscape through public discourse. Below an overview of nationalism will be made. Additionally, I anticipate finding narratives that support national identities and national interest as central to the interstate conflicts studied.

In the next chapter, I will build my proposed theoretical framework. I show that nationalism, narrative, and strategic communication are three distinct yet connected terms that construct observable identities, goals, and perceived conflicts with other parties.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIZING CONFLICT FORECASTING THROUGH NARRATIVE: THEORY OF

NARRATIVE CONFLICT

Fisher (1987), one well-known communication theorists of narrative, argues that

people think or understand the world, first and foremost, as storytellers or *homo

narrans*. That is to say, we think of the world in terms of story elements: plot, character,

rising action, falling action, climax, etc. For Fisher, this functions in all areas of life.

Dating back to the pre-Socratics, Fisher contends that Aristotle's concepts of logos not

only denoted logic, reason, and discourse, but also story. As the history of philosophy

unfolded and logical positivism arose, the expert became the holder of knowledge due to

their training in the rules of logic. This separated and discounted or discredited how the

common people come to know and what they thought they knew. In response, Fisher

proposes the narrative paradigm that claims, "all instances of human communication are

imbued with logos and mythos, are constitutive of truth and knowledge, and are

rational" (p. 20).

A central reason for proposing the narrative paradigm was to respond to the

social sciences continually ignoring values and denying a rational scheme for the public

and reclaim Aristotle's phronesis:

> For the most part, social-scientific theories ignore the role of values or they deny
> the possibility of developing rational schemes for their assessment. They thereby
> disregard ultimate questions of good and evil—for the good life (Fisher, 1987 p.
> 87).

To Fisher, these questions have been historically relegated to the domain of logic or

science. The highly educated were said to be the only persons capable and trained

enough to answer such important questions of truth, as well as discern what is good

versus evil. According to Fisher, however, the public uses Aristotle's concept of

phronesis, or practical rationality. Rather than using the laws of logic to determine the

truth of a statement, the public uses both the fidelity and coherence of a narrative

account in order to determine the probable truth of the matter. Fidelity, for Fisher, is

whether or not the story rings true. To judge coherence of a story is to determine if the

story has an internal logic to it. Fidelity and coherence are the tools the public uses to

interpret and assess human communication to determine whether or not

communication,

> The purpose of this paradigm is to offer a tool for assessing human
> communication that leads to a critique, to a determination of whether or not a
> given instance of discourse provides a reliable, trustworthy, and desirable guide
> to thought and action in the world (p. 90).

The narrative paradigm, therefore, provides a theoretical account for how persons come

to believe and behave and determine what they ought to do.

Kuhn (1996) is one of the theorists from whom Fisher draws. Kuhn popularized

the term 'paradigm' by conceptualizing shifts within science as paradigmatic shifts rather

than mere advancements in scientific knowledge. When Einstein's theory of relativity

was penned, it did not build on Newton; it overthrew the Newtonian framework of

science. In short, it was a new paradigm to explain how the physical world functions.

Kuhn describes these shifts as revolutionary changes whereby the previously held

paradigm is found to be inadequate and the new paradigm better explains the field of

inquiry. Fisher's narrative paradigm focuses on stories and storytelling as the principle

features of communication and public rationality. This is set in contrast – not necessarily

in contradiction – to the logical rationality of Aristotle. Notably, if story is the central

feature of the narrative paradigm, then story as the unit of analysis is the principle

means to understand a particular public's sense of rationality.

Burke (1966) was another influence on Fisher's narrative paradigm. Burke

argued that man is a symbol-using animal. For Burke, dramatism was a central concept

of how people create and use symbols to play roles and assess other people in society.

Burke is not the only scholar interested in the performance of personal identities and interaction with symbols. Goffman (1959) also claimed that people create and perform roles in society. The narrative paradigm, however, argues humans are co-creating and using symbols to order their lives and give meaning to their experiences. The narrative paradigm, while not denying the symbolic interactions of humans, does not view humans as performing roles prescribed for them by society. Rather, this paradigm says that humans continually make sense of the world around them through stories and take part in the creation and retelling of these stories. In contrast to merely being a performer in a play, Fisher emphasizes that we both create and tell the story. Thus, the narrative paradigm does not view cultures as static, but instead dynamic – changing as public telling and retelling occurs.

A central goal of Fisher's narrative paradigm is to move the creation of meaning away from an abstract society or symbols and to explain how that the public actually creates and sustains meaning through story. The narrative paradigm draws from Bormann's concepts of the rhetorical vision and fantasy theme.

For Bormann (1972), theoretical constructs are used to understand how groups create and sustain meaning. As groups create stories about the here and now, they construct a social reality, and an aim that is a part of the constructed reality. As these stories begin to pervade the society, they serve to sustain members' sense of community, impel them to action, and provide them with a social reality filled with heroes and villains who model emotions, actions and attitudes (p. 398). The Puritans serve as clear example. Their rhetorical vision saw them conquering new territory, saving the souls of the natives, and setting up a new place away from European religious oppression so that Christianity could flourish. Among their stories, Bormann discovered two themes: one of sacrifice and dedication and the other of overcoming all adversity. These rhetorical

visions are not only sense-making tools for the here and now, but they are also teleological. According to Bormann, the stories gave the people a sense of purpose and a goal to achieve. In the narrative paradigm, this is an on-going active process that society partakes together.

One of the assumptions of RCT discussed in the previous chapter is that human action is aimed at self-interested ends, but as argued above its attempt at explaining all action renders it unable to explain any particular action. Bormann (1972) holds that it is more accurate to say the teleological ends are created and sustained through story and motivate persons to act. By using narrative paradigm, researchers can study stories and discover each group's particular teleological aim. In doing so, narrative theory avoids two pitfalls: assuming selfish aims, which ignores particulars, and assuming cultures are consistent with their associated religion (generalizing the few to the many). Through the analysis of story, the paradigm allows researchers to avoid large generalizations of the public's belief by accounting for the goals and desired actions within public discourse (i.e., public rationality). The ability of RCT to explain means-ends chains is maintained while providing a rich unimposing assumption on the whole of a community. It would therefore be possible to maintain doing both qualitative and quantitative work. This paradigm takes the concerns of both the cultural models and economic models and finds a middle ground that is capable of the avoiding the reductionist problems found within each position.

It should be noted that Fisher is not the only theorist to argue for the fundamental role of narrative in public thought. Barthes (1975) maintains, "Narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" (p. 237). White (1984) says, "Narration is a manner of speaking as universal as language itself" (p. 1). Yet, there are also milder expressions of narrative. Abbott (2008) defines narratives

as a representation of events consisting of story and narrative discourse (p. 19). The important link that Fisher makes is the connection to public rationality through fidelity and coherence, which are specific enough to employ methodologically.

Halverson, Goodall, & Corman (2011) have operationalized the narrative paradigm by first differentiating narrative from story. They define story as "a particular sequence of related events that are situated in the past and recounted for rhetorical/ideological purpose" (p. 14). In turn, narrative is defined as "a system of interrelated and sequentially organized stories that have a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations according to the know trajectory of its literary and rhetorical form" (p. 14). These ideas situate story and narrative not only for ideological purposes, but also for creating desired outcomes. Finally, they distinguish the highest form as a master narrative: a "trans-historical narrative that is deeply embedded in a particular culture" (p. 14). This takes the idea of narrative and connects it with a lexicon of culturally specific stories that are reproduced as a common referent in order to supply a culture with a rhetorical vision. This operationalization takes the work of narrative and applies it to broad units of analysis, such as this project is aiming to do too.

A clarification of the term master narratives must be given because of the criticism of the term as such in Post-Modernity. Halverson, Goodall, & Corman (2011) clarify the term should not be taken as a fixed structure; rather, through repetition, reverence, and time these narratives gain stature in a given culture. From the Protestant Work Ethic in the early days of America to the struggle for blood and soil that framed Hitler's ideology; every society creates or adopts narrative forms that can change over time. Yet, some features of narratives maintain stature and are distinct from particular instantiations in a culture. While the Protestant Work Ethic narrative is co-opted, the

importance and structure of the narrative remains the same between the different retellings of the narrative. Writing in 1835, Tocqueville (2003) noted features such as equality of conditions; a focus on the judiciary; limits on the freedom of speech by the majority; patriotism; and even invents the word 'individualism' to describe the American attitude. These and other features of American society were noted by Tocqueville and such as Dewey or Weber and in different forms and more or less they persist today. In the context of Islamic Extremists Halverson, et al (2011) note, "on a pragmatic level, modernist conceptions of narrative offer important opportunities to approach an understanding of how these master narratives achieve political and ideological ends for extremists" (p 23.) In future work I will continue this discussion about narrative in postmodernity and modernity. For now, *primia facia* narratives continue to be embedded in cultures and are means of viewing how meaning is given and what desires are expressed over time.

In a similar conception, Bernardi, Cheong, Lundry and Ruston (2012) define narrative systems as interrelated stories that share story elements, cultural references, and rhetorical outcomes, which as a system work to structure expectation and interpretations (p. 18). Bernardi et al. (2012) find that these stories are always in dialogue with one another and the larger narrative system. The stories always-already influence a reconceptualization of the current narrative systems and rhetorical visions that are being put forth. In other words, the narrative system is always going through a process of reinterpretation. Bernardi et al., use the example of the American Tea Party to illustrate this point:

At the heart of their narrative is the re-articulation of the origins of American democracy from stories of egalitarianism and enlightenment to stories of deeply religious "fathers" building a new republic based on fundamental Christian principles. This reframing of America's political origins follows the same basic event (story) as the competing narrative told in most history books, but emphasizes different parts in the telling (discourse) and taps into contemporary cultural traditions (the rhetoric of political evangelism) (p. 21).

It is through the telling and retelling of individual stories that publics or individuals are able to influence the larger narrative system and reorient the dominant interpretation of subsequent stories that fit into the narrative system.

Master narratives contain what Halverson, Goodall, & Corman (2011) call story forms and archetypes. The story forms can be understood as a pattern that defines typical character, actions, and sequences of events (p. 20). For example, Halverson, Goodall, & Corman note that a deliverance narrative such as David and Goliath is a structure that has repeated within narratives like Star Wars or Muhammad and the Meccans. The story form follows a trajectory of the weak achieving victory over the mighty due to divine help. Islamist Extremists follow this form in their deliverance story in the Battle of Badr. Halverson, et al (2011) note "the Badr master narrative asserts that the power of the deity is greater than any earthly power through the story of the miraculous victory" (p48). In this instance, the deliverance story form is used to convey a powerful message to remain strong in one's faith even against overwhelming odds. As this story form or other forms are followed, they create a structure of meaning with preferred outcomes and provide motivation for reaching these goals. Within each story form, there are archetypes or standard characters that one might expect. In the David and Goliath narrative, David stands for the weaker party while Goliath stands for the stronger. Working together, the story form and archetype create interpretations, desired outcomes, and a set of actions to achieve these outcomes.

Strategic Communication

Earlier, I used the term strategic communication without defining it or drawing connections to the theory being built. In this section, I will work to unclutter the network of related terms in strategic communication and explain how this theory draws from the literature and helps further it. Public diplomacy, soft power, propaganda, and strategic communication all work to inform, influence, and persuade foreign audiences, but are not all the same.

Strategic communication is defined by Paul (2011) as "coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engaging intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives" (p 3). The goal of strategic communication is to create a shared perspective in support of the government's policies with a foreign audience. The states are the actors using strategic communication.

Public diplomacy, soft power, and propaganda are related concepts. According to a Congressional Research Service Report, public diplomacy is "a term used to describe a government's efforts to conduct foreign policy and promote national interests through direct outreach and communication with the population of a foreign country" (p. 3). Zaharna (2007) notes that public diplomacy is the "way in which government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions" (p. 87). The conceptual distinction between public diplomacy and strategic communication involves who is doing the influencing (Paul, 2011). In the case of public diplomacy, the public is also engaged in influencing foreign audiences to support their country. Soft power is another term that is in this nexus. Nye (2004) defines it as "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting

positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (p. 21). This was a term coined by Nye (2004) to contrast from hard power, which focuses on economics or military might. The final term, propaganda, is believed to be so obvious as to not need defining (Paul, 2011). Yet, that is unsatisfactory. These other terms deal with speakers and speakers' goal. To get some definition of the term I turn to the head of Nazi propaganda under Hitler, Goebbels. Goebbels' conception of propaganda was more akin to the psychological management of the masses and the totalitarian organization of society through the elimination of rationality and use of fear; it is not a dialogue (Herma, 1943).

There are notable similarities in these terms but the modern differences that make collapsing them difficult. Currently, term propaganda carries an unscrupulous meaning notably more akin to strategic deception, which is due to the association with Nazism. O'Shaughnessy (1996), states:

> Propaganda simplifies and exaggerates: it is often propelled by a clear, purposive and coherent ideology. Idealism, even utopianism may motivate its sponsors and often characterize its imagery. It eschews argumentative interchange: seldom is there any element of give and take.

Whereas strategic communication attempts to engage a target audience with information. The noticeable difference is that the latter involves is ideally engaging in a dialogue for the purpose of persuasion while the former will use whatever means to eliminate a rational discussion. Admittedly, some forms of strategic communication today are in essence no different than propaganda. Yet, what is meant here by strategic communication is different from public diplomacy because of whom the actors are. Yet, it would be rightly placed with soft power as a co-optive enterprise with the goal of persuasion and action.

The resources and measures for this nexus of terms are slow and cumbersome, but the TNC provides a means to increase understanding between parties. This theory posits that the primary means to understand another is through the narratives they tell

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about themselves and others. These narratives provide the means-end chain of understanding whereby enhancing the end-users of strategic communication towards a more proficient use.

Hyman (1947) notes that the barriers facing information campaigns are more than the flow or type of information given; rather, the psychological barriers that make persons interested or uninterested in the information is more important. Merely giving the 'proper' information or more information will not overcome this obstacle. Supporting this point, Reynolds & Seeger (2005) argue that messages are more effective when they are aligned with the audience's values, needs, background, culture, and experience. Strategic communication is more effective when using and understanding narrative because narratives provide both historical and social constructions that influence audience perspectives. Tromblee (2009) notes that the importance of narrative is found in telling us how events are bound together in the audience's minds. Corman, Trethewey, and Goodall (2007) suggest that practitioners engage with what they call pragmatic complexity, which is to say that practitioners should recognize the effects of noise, interest levels, and competing messages. Further, messages are interpreted in unintended ways, and interpretations are not always consistent (Corman and Dooley, 2008). By using narrative to first understand the range of interpretations and how the audience links events, TNC begins by understanding the hearts and minds of the audience, but it ends with a complex model of message formation by accounting for a range of interpretations, which gives a realistic or reasonable picture of audiences' possible conflict responses.

The role of this nexus of terms becomes two-fold in TNC. The objects of analysis are the strategic communication and public diplomacy communication about events for the narrative content. This first function is primarily descriptive and works to reveal the

interpretive frameworks within different levels of society. Second, the prescriptive applications to one's own society and other societies to increase understanding and engagement. I do not assume similar interpretations within societies or governments or between societies and governments. Rather, I skeptically expect disunity at all levels. At the point of engagement the goal is more transparency and discussion of differences in dialogue with others. I do not believe the application of this theory will avoid all conflicts, but if used properly can increase edifying dialogue between parties.

Nationalism

The third concept that I am including in this theory is nationalism. Smith (2013) defines nationalism as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'" (p. 9). Anderson (2006) sees nationalism as an "imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). Anderson (2006) and Gellner (1983; 2008) both trace the origins of nationalism to the Reformation and the rise of a standardized education.

Theses theorists argue that nationalism is a modernist concept, one that only arose when in modernity the common people we able to more readily obtain knowledge from books. The most influential factors paving the way for nationalism were the printing press, education, and the subsequent rise of literacy. As the Reformation brought about a widespread desire for Bibles written in the vernacular of various regions, the state of literacy began to rapidly change. At last, the lay people gained access to large amounts of written language. Anderson (2006) argues this change in language altered the relationship between the people, the church, and the nation. The printing of the vernacular allowed the people to begin to connect in a way that was previously unheard of in society. Print capitalism would unify the field of exchange and communication

(Anderson, 2006). Then came the creation of newspapers, which engendered a deeper imagined connection between thousands–if not millions–who were beginning to understand that they, collectively, were consuming the same material. This rapid rise in literacy also spurred on a generalized education system (Gellner, 1983). Previously, education was specialized by vocation; however, as industrial society demanded a higher base skill in the worker, education became more generalized. Gellner argued that the increased mobility seen in the industrial society was brought on due to a standardized state education system. In short, a greater standardization of education systems allowed for a greater adoption and reproduction of knowledge once held only by the clergy. Thus, state education and literacy are thought to have created the condition and sustained the existence of a common, imagined, national identity.

Hogan's (2009) work on nationalism and narrative seeks to connect these two concepts. He argues that prototypes, like archetypes[5] discussed in the narrative section, create an emotional connection with certain cultural signs and symbols. These signs and symbols become distinguishing marks of in-group and out-group distinctions. Hogan goes on to say that "there has never been a theory of nationalism that does not already acknowledge the importance of causal sequence and human action" (p. 167). Hogan (2009) describes three core themes known as the prototypes: heroic, sacrificial and romantic. Hogan says the heroic plot is characterized by usurpation and a restoration in which a rightful ruler is displaced and reinstated. The sacrificial plot has two goals: the first is concerned with avoiding pain, and the second is concerned with gaining prosperity. In the romantic plot, there are two lovers that are separated with two possible endings – tragic, or comic. While Hogan identifies prototypes in three ways he also

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[5] Archetypes and prototypes conceptually are not significantly different.

argues that based on neurological research even if we do not believe the validity of the prototypes expressed in our culture they continue to shape our beliefs.

In summary, narratives and nationalism are systems of thinking that create in-group and out-group distinctions through the creation of prototypes that, in part, are created and sustained by a common educational and discourse systems. The narrative systems create cause and effect orientations in groups' thinking that supports a desired trajectory, and this narrative system continues to work at unconscious levels within our mind. Nationalism, as a related strain of the narrative system seeks to support the geographically centered, yet wholly imagined community, which seeks to maintain autonomy, identity, and unity. Therefore, I am proposing to examine narratives and their given trajectories as elements that support a nationalistic framework.

Systems Theory

The final theoretical concept that informs the building of TNC is general systems theory. A general system consists of elements that interact and determine the changing of the state of the system (Von Bertalanffy, 1950). Luhmann (1982) argues that society, when thought of as a system, "is the encompassing social systems which include all communications, reproduce all communications and constitutes meaningful horizons for further communications" (p. 131). Yet, a systems approach, unlike many major approaches today, focuses on a system's interaction with the environment--and not identity--as the emphasis for study (Luhmann, 1982). When conceptualizing society as a system, the problem that Luhmann states is the differentiation between the environment and the system itself.

According to Luhmann (1982) a family (a social systems) exists in an environment of other social systems (other families, the state, economics, church, educational, etc.). "Social systems are self-referential systems based on meaningful

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communication. They use communication to constitute and interconnect the events (actions) which build up the system" (p. 131). Society, however, as said above, makes the communication between these systems possible. Society itself cannot communicate and no one system could be said to be 'society-itself' since it includes all forms of communication. The terms here are a bit ambiguous. By society, Luhmann is referring to a global society and not the concept of nation-states. Yet in the global system he finds the only meaningful separations are the political systems. The central concern of TNC is how to understand and forecast conflict between nation-states with future applications to smaller groups and individuals. As such conceptualizing a nation-state (US) as a separate system makes the other nation-state (China) an aspect of former's environment and vice versa. The rationale for separating the nation-states from one another is to examine the environmental affects on each given system. By isolating these systems the effects of their communicative interactions should be made visible.

Central concepts in general systems theory are non-summativity, wholeness, goal-orientation, equifinality, and open/closed systems. As Bertalanffy (1950) argues regarding non-summativity, systems cannot be understood by examining a single part. As the common saying goes, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; any given societal systems is greater than its economic system. As systems progress, specialization occurs, which results in the irreplaceability of some features and increased effects and importance of those features. Today, our major aspects of society functions at the whim of the stock exchange, yet it is a specialized system that has barriers to entry for the layperson. If one of the irreplaceable parts goes through a process of change, it could result in a breakdown or reorganization of the whole system. When the market crashes, sectors that are outside of the economy are often impacted too. Governments get involved; churches feel the strain; families, relationships, ethics, and all aspects of

society undergo economic or psychological concerns. In prolonged cases such as recessions or depressions each member of the societal system is affected, which can result in a systemic reorganization. Yet a system can also maintain persistence at one level while undergoing perpetual change at another level. While a societal system is experiencing a time of turmoil, the environment of the society – what is outside the system – might continue to be stable. While political turmoil occurs during an election cycle, aspects outside of politics might remain stable, such as the economy, families, education, etc.

Another aspect that Bertalanffy theorized was the finality or goal-orientation of a system. Goals, for Bertalanffy, were determined by the structure of the system. He believed that open systems, having a flow of inputs and outputs with the external world, have a state of equifinality. That is to say, open systems are able to reach their final state despite the change in different parts. It should follow that the structures of society create inherent goals that can be observed within the communication that constitutes the system. To put it more succinctly, structure determines direction. With physical systems the end states are determined by structure itself. It is like Newton's mechanistic view of the physical world, if we knew the initial properties and the laws of physics we could predict the objects behavior. The goal orientation of the systems has an important interaction with the open/close structure of the system. Bertalanffy believes close systems do not behave equifinally. Closed systems, when they reach a state of absolute equilibrium cease to change. The open systems, in contrast, are going through a series of inflows and outflows of component materials, which can reach steady states determinant on the basic components present such as a species reaching its size limitations due to genetic limitation.

Bertalanffy distinguished four types of dynamic teleology and for the purpose of this theory one is relevant. The first is direction of events towards a final state as if the present is dependent on that state. Second is direction based on structure where the order of a machine yields the desired results. Thirdly, the organic regulation, which states that the same final state can be reached from different initial conditions and by different means. Lastly, true purpose in the Aristotelian sense. The future goal is already present in the thought and directs the present action. It is the last sense that the goal orientation of narrative systems in of primary interest to TNC. Within the system of meaning that narratives constitute is a structured goal that guides present action and is understood by the mind to give meaning to the perceived past, present, and future.

Another relevant system characteristic is hierarchy. Boulding (1956) noted the characteristics of systems that appear to be important to the study of society. Boulding stated that each discipline studies the individual, but each individual, be it an atom, electron, single organism, or a person is determined by the smaller components or by principles of equilibrium or homeostatsis that are based on preferred states of the individual. Each of the individuals studied exhibit actions that are in some way related to the environment of that individual. Each individual action, according to Boulding, is explained by the structure and arrangement of the lower individuals that compose it. Consequently, the structures of the lower parts created a preferred state for the whole. The question naturally arises as to how we can discover the preferred state, how this fits with changes in the system, and what, if any, affect does this have on interactions with other systems.

We can expect from the way systems theory lays out the process of reaching equilibrium and homeostasis that a society will seek desired states or outcomes consistent with equilibrium or homeostasis structured at the lower levels. The question

is, what are those lower levels? If Fisher (1987) is correct and narrative is the primary embodiment of public rationality, then challenges to the systems of meaning introduce change to the systems that call for a response if a desired state is to be maintained or again reached. Bormann's (1972) example of the Puritans coming to America to escape religious tyranny and seeking to save the souls of the natives should be thought of as the group responding to a challenge of this kind with the tools they had. The Puritans were forced to reach new state of equilibrium in their beliefs when their beliefs went against the established norms of their given societies. Their response manifested itself in newly established norms or goals in the Americas consistent with their basic beliefs. Thus, the goal became to obtain freedom of worship. Denouncing and escaping tyranny and as well as bringing salvation to the natives (an old view of evangelizing with a new application) created a distinct in-group and out-group, with expressed goals which allowed those in the system to work towards that desired state, which Boulding defines as equilibrium or homeostasis.

Application to TNC

I am hesitant to fully adopt this theory because it assumes logical mathematical presuppositions of all systems in the empirical world (Bertalanffy, 1950). The conceptual advantages of systems theory, however, are that it provides a framework whereby the larger existence of society can be explained in relation to its parts. The system can be understood as whole rather than a compilation of individual, isolated units. It supposes the inflow and outflow of inputs and outputs and assumes a goal orientation of the system that might not be obvious during each case studied.

Beginning with narrative rationality as public rationality, we can conceive of a narrative system. The narrative paradigm, according to Fisher (1987), constitutes public rationality through the collective telling and retelling of stories. These stories are created

and maintained by the public as a whole, and the individual participates in this process through narrative. This is in line with Craig's (1999) conception of the field of communication as the study of the constitutive effects of communication and James Carey's (1975) cultural definition of communication as a "symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, transformed, and repaired."

Both narrative and nationalism provide de jure goals for the system to reach. Narratives both express and reinforce the nationalistic goals, but most importantly, provide a kind of roadmap for achieving an end state. This is because narrative rationality, with its emphasis on fidelity and coherence, is a guide for determining desirable action. It is also consistent with the idea that the group or the social system determines ends-means chain discourses that reinforce the goal and the means to the goal. Nationalism then gives the goal of maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity (Smith, 2013). Viewing this as a dynamic system of narrative requires viewing the potential network of internal and external feedback loops. To begin uncovering this systems, I hypothesize that a society's narrative system reveals the desirable courses of action to achieve national goals, which can include conditions for conflict engagement with subsequent antagonistic interpretations that follow. Consistent with this position the RQs that I work with are:

> RQ1: How do narratives expressed in the newspapers influence the events?
>
> RQ2: How do events influence the narratives expressed in the national
> newspaper?

The desired action is primarily because narratives create in-group and out-group distinctions. When these distinctions are made, and the out-group is conceived of as having incompatible goals from the in-group, this expressed conflict is reflected in an increase in nationalistic narratives. These narratives are communicated with intent to

internal and external audiences, for a nation (as is the aim of this study) that is expressed

through strategic communication.

Background on the Dispute and Narrative Origins

Simon (2015) indicates Washington's strategic goals have been relatively

consistent since the end of the Second World War. As the world's preeminent maritime

power, the Pacific Command's task has been to maintain freedom of sea lines of

communication. Secondly, U.S. forces deployed to Asia are tasked with preventing the

rise of regional hegemons that could interfere with American goals in politics, economics

and security. Under the Obama administration, the U.S. was reducing its capacities in

the Middle East and refocusing on the goal of having 60% of U.S. Naval power present in

the East Asia region. In July 2012, Secretary of State Clinton declared the freedom of

navigation in the South China Sea a national interest, ushering in the Administration's

change in focus or pivot to the global hegemony or peace under America.

Pax Americana is the Latin for American Peace, and refers to its military and

economic preeminence. This, however, has come under question as the wars in the

Middle East have persisted during the Bush and Obama administrations, quickly

followed by the financial downturn of 2008. One of the continuing concerns for the

current administration is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by North

Korea and terrorist organizations.

In the Pacific, one of the most important and contested areas of security is the

maritime law and freedom of navigation. While the United States has not signed the

United Nation Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), it does support the enforcement of it and backs

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) efforts to peacefully resolve

regional disputes. As such the Obama Administration's rebalances has been generally

welcomed by Asian nations with the exception of China. Yet, the issue of maritime law

continues to be a contested topic and the United States inability or unwillingness to sign the law reduces credibility is the eyes of some.

Unsurprisingly, China sees the rebalancing as interventionism and a return to Cold War thinking. The 2008 economic crisis and the failure in the Middle East garner an attitude of doubt towards America's ability to achieve their policy objectives. Further, Simon (2015) notes the ongoing perception that American policy is hostile towards PRC concerns.

Research suggests there are many concerns regarding role China will play in the coming decades and whether or not it will clash with the U.S.. Henry Kissinger (2012) notes that some American analysts believe China has two long-term goals: "Displacing the United States as the preeminent power in the western Pacific and consolidating Asia into an exclusionary bloc deferring to Chinese economic and foreign policy interests" (p. 44). Ikenberry (2012) states, "Many of these grand narratives about the global power transition suggest that the 'American era' of global leadership is passing away" (p. 58). He goes on to suggest that as China grows in power, its willingness and ability to reshape the global order will increase; however, the United States will resist these shifts. He believes this resistance will result in struggles and conflicts between the two powers. On the other hand, Retired General Eikenberry (2014) argues that this so-called 'Thucydides trap' is avoidable if the relationship is properly managed. Eikenberry (2014) describes the Thucydides trap as competition between the rising power and status quo power, resulting in increasingly bitter conflict and ultimately ending in all-out war.

The 20th century has been called the "American Century" by some because America led the world in terms of science and technology (S&T), policy, economics, military, and culture; the 21st century has also been hailed by others as the "China Century." This is not because people believe the U.S. will fall out of power but because of

China's growing role in the global economy and global affairs. China's rise is due to sustained economic growth since Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) opened China to the outside world in the late 1970s. In 1976, after the death of Mao Zedong (1893-1976), Deng won the power struggle with the Gang of Four and ruled over China. Deng then began opening China's economy to the outside world. Deng declared, "Getting rich is glorious." Then, as if he had released decades of built-up tension and potential, Deng's declaration seemed to allow China's economy to take off. Deng proceeded to open up China's exclusive economic zones (EEZ), negotiate the reacquisition of Hong Kong, and accomplish what Mao had desired—a prosperous and (almost) unified China.

Since 1978, though, China's rise has not been smooth. It is a country full of contrasts. After Tiananmen (1989), China saw a mild decrease in foreign investment in the country (Simon and Cao, 2009). Today, however, direct foreign investments are soaring. While the system has made many people rich in China's new economy, a great number remain poor. Corruption is possibly one of the largest contributing factors to this phenomenon. As China's new President and Party Secretary Xi Jingping has stated, corruption is one of the biggest threats to the party's legitimacy ("Xi Jingping's remarks"). Will their new leader fix the problem or allow corruption to continue? Only time will tell. Corruption has also led to a massive pollution problem—not only in their skies, but also in their water sources, which are becoming extremely polluted due to illegal chemical dumping (Fenby, 2014). Some officials are either unable or unwilling to enforce laws that have banned the dumping of these chemicals (Becker, 2006). These are only a few of the contrasts that are present in China's meteoric rise.

While China has gained much of their economic success by becoming the world's largest manufacturer, this has created terrible working conditions in a country where gaining workers' rights has proved difficult (Becker, 2006). There are laws in place, but

they are not often enforced. For observers of China, this has become a common theme. While China is successful overall, the country has created an unknown deficit in various sectors of society. Chinese leaders understand that this model is unsustainable and are seeking to correct the country's economic future through innovation (Simon and Cao, 2009).

To add further complexity to this situation, the unclear roles of nationalism, state-controlled media, and foreign policy make China's future even more uncertain. In the recent South and East China Sea disputes, there have been protest movements denouncing Japan, which have resulted Chinese people setting fire to Japanese automobiles. The government was apt at keeping these protests from getting completely out of control, but it is unclear whether or not the government can maintain this level of control over its own people. A primary attempt of controlling the people has been to guide public opinion, maintain stability and control, the government has tried to exert control over the media, yet some members of the public see through the façade (Guo, 2012). In addition to the internal pressures, China has added pressure from foreign media, which they perceive publishing biased stories against China. This reinforces a severe soft power deficit in foreign countries (Nye, 2011; Zhao, 2012). For a resource-intensive economy, developing key relationships with resource-rich countries is vital to the survival of their country. With 90% of the water polluted and massive pollution problems due to the poor quality of coal, China must foster foreign relationships to sustain its massive population's increasing resource needs (Becker, 2006).

As China begins to look externally to fulfill its hunger for economic development and resource consumption, its neighbors have become increasingly concerned over what appears to be overt aggression. One cause for concern is the secrecy of Chinese leaders. In the West, it is easy to read and understand the opinions of world leaders, their

respective legislative bodies, and the people they govern. The communication by all of these parties is tightly controlled in China, which makes it difficult to comprehend and respond to the factors influencing the state's behavior. Yet, through gaining mutual understanding of the problems at hand, it will be possible to intervene and discuss salient differences while cultivating a richer interpretation of the other country's actions. For instance, instead of interpreting China's increase in military expenditures merely as an increase in perceived tensions, we can open up other possible interpretations that a greater degree of context will offer (Newcombe, Newcombe & Landrus, 1974).

This section provides the theoretical basis for the TNC. To summarize with familiar communication terms: nationalism provides the content of the message; strategic communication the channel; narrative the structure and nature of communication itself, the encoding, decoding, and noise; and systems theory as a macro lens for viewing the whole system. Furthermore, the background for the narratives was presented, which will provide a context the qualitative data analysis discussed in the next section. Next, I discuss the data selection, methods for analysis, both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and the summary of results.

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONGOING CONFLICTS: METHODS AND ANALYSIS

"History doesn't repeat itself but it often rhymes" misattributed to Mark Twain

This chapter consists of five parts: background on the case study, source of the data, event analysis, content analysis, time series analysis, and hypothesis testing. I begin by providing background for the case study itself. Then, the next few sections discuss the particulars of the case study from which the newspaper data is gathered, the events data, and time series analysis of this data. Finally, the chapter concludes with determining whether observed relationships are statistically significant.

To test TNC, I begin with the China-U.S. relationship as a case study. The relationship is chosen because it is the most important geo-political relationship of the 21st Century. China and the U.S. have achieved a degree of economic integration, yet there is still political separation that is completely unlike any other relationship between world powers. In order to test the present theory and answer the hypotheses introduced in this chapter, I propose using content analysis with both an autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) forecasting model and Markov Chi-Square model. As previously stated, prior studies have ignored instances where war did not occur, used sparse indicators, and missed the escalation of tensions in real time (Chadefaux, 2014). To advance our forecasting ability and address these concerns, I add a longitudinal focus, include conflict events and non-conflict events, and contextualize concurrent perceptual changes through content analysis. This data set accomplishes these tasks by expanding the date range from 2010 – 2014, drawing on a timeline of events gathered from the texts themselves and collaborating with online sources, as well as conducting a qualitative narrative analysis of the articles.

Data Sources

The sovereignty of the regions is under intense political dispute. With many
nations laying claim to the region, each has its own perspective on whether or not the
disputed territories are islands, who has sovereignty, and what evidence supports their
claim. Modeling the rising and falling tensions in the region is difficult and observers are
left wondering which threats are evidence of real tensions in the region. Further, the
economic model and cultural models have both approached the problem differently: the
former through an underlying desire for self-interested gain and the latter through an
explanation of more nuanced cultural features. Striking a balance between, I capture the
nuance in the qualitative narratives while testing the underlying economic assumption of
RTC through the quantitative modeling of an economically focused narrative. For this
purpose, I assume these countries will not unexpectedly enter into wars (a question that
would be interesting to empirically test); however, the tension is not a stationary value
either. For these reasons, I select the autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA)
to be used in my analysis. Again, the RQs below tested will be as follows:

RQ1: How do narratives expressed in the newspapers influence the events?

RQ2: How do events influence the narratives expressed in the national
newspaper?

To date, few studies have combined both the narrative content and the event-based data
for their forecasting potential. Past studies have been focused on key words or phrases
within the text but not the on-going narratives themselves. Recalling the previously
mentioned studies, Newcombe, et al (1974) did conduct their 'tensiometer' of military
expenditures, GNP, and locations from 1964-1966, but ignored the perceptual factors
during that period of time. Gleditsch & Ward (2011), similarly, took a large time period

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but reduced their analysis to territorial disputes without having non-conflict events. Leetaru (2011) reduced the contextualization of the conflicts to positive and negative keywords contained in news articles yet ignored cases where conflicts did not occur. In the cases where researchers ignore periods of no conflict, it becomes difficult to apply their forecasting models to periods of general stability that increase in levels of instability. It is problematic because researchers seem to have created type I errors by limiting data to the conflicts themselves – not establishing any baseline or normal relationship measures may limit the understanding of conflict scenarios. Non-conflict events are paramount for creating ongoing and accurate models for forecasting because they establish normal relations as well as give meaning to the "abnormality" of a conflict event. For example, if the U.S. and China's normal relations are marked by persistently testing the boundaries without entering into open conflicts, yet a model only examines periods where conflict did happen then we are not only assuming a static relationship but decontextualizing the unique and changing or persistent perspectives within each country. Generally, it can be said that forecasting attempts discussed in this project have not contextualized the content data and have only studied broader indicators. This study begins to address this shortcoming and applies a novel approach by tracing the narrative landscape.

Event Data

First, in the event data there are two prominent machine datasets developed for the purpose of forecasting international conflict based on the CAMEO (Conflict and Event Mediation Event Observation) codebook. Gerne, Schrodt, Yilmaz, and Abu-Jabr (2002) developed the CAMEO systems to capture events within states and subtle attributions of the actors. The codes cover a broader range of possible events from public statements, appeals, expressions of intent to cooperate, consulting, engaging in

diplomatic cooperation, engaging in material cooperation, providing aid, yielding, investigating, issuing demands, disapproval, rejection, threats, protests, military posturing, reducing relations, coercion, assaults, fights, and engaging in unconventional mass violence (terrorism). Each code has an expansive range of sub-codes.

These databases use the so-called "Goldstein" weights to assign a positive and negative value to each event. Interestingly, the scale used is not the one originally developed by Goldstein (1992); instead, it was developed by Reising, a graduate student at the time (Schrodt, 2015). Goldstein developed the scale due to a limitation of assuming all events could be placed on a continuum of conflict-cooperation. To overcome this limitation he created a -10 to +10 ratio scale for the events found in CAMEO. Eight international relations faculty from USC assigned values to the events and standard deviations were used to determine the accuracy of the scale with application to previous datasets. This scale has been used in both Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) and Integrated Conflict Early Warning Systems (ICEWS) to assign relative values to each event type. For example, GDELT assigns a military attack a -10, halting negotiations -3.8, while visits are assigned a +3.8.

These coding systems are applied in both GDELT and ICEWS. GDELT is an open source project developed by Leetaru to use advanced natural language processing to predict conflict. The DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project Agency) funded project. ICEWS is another system used for conflict forecasting and is currently the program of record for the Department of Defense and developed by Lockheed Martin. ICEWS data is publicly released on a monthly basis without the ability to check the source material, whereas GDELT gives access to the source data.

ICEWS is a similar forecasting tool developed and owned by Lockheed Martin. It is currently the program of record in the DoD (Department of Defense) and continues to

be used. The project has been funded by the U.S. government for more than 40 years, beginning with the work of Andriole and Young in 1977 (O'Brien, 2010). According to O'Brien, the adoption of this model was based on the desire to influence events before they became unmanageable.

Plagued by a large amount of false positives, GDELT, has a tendency to miscode events and code events that other datasets do not (Hammond & Weidmann, 2014; Schrodt & Analystics, 2015). Ward, Berger, Cutler, Dickenson, Dorff, & Radford (2013) claim less than 50% of the coded events are correctly identifying the types of events in the news sources. GDELT, in contrast to ICEWS, allows for manually verifying the accuracy of the data by going to the specified articles, which when conducted manually reveals further evidence of false positives. ICEWS, on the other hand, cannot be verified in this manner, yet it is said to be more accurate (Schrodt & Analystics, 2015). Due to the lack of accuracy of GDELT and the unverifiable accuracy of ICEWS, event-based data I will manually collect conflict data from textual mentions from LexisNexis, and the timeline data from text themselves and new sources like the BBC.

An additional problem both of these databases introduce with CAMEO and the Goldstein scale is the assumed homogeneity of significance of events to all actors. Goldstein's scale creates an important question for future research: do different actors perceive specific events differently and, if so, how do they perceive them differently? It is problematic for the researchers to assume national opinions remain stationary and that each event is given the same significance. For example, historical context changed the attitudes of Koreans and Chinese towards Japanese visitations to the Yasukuni Shine. The shrine did not always carry with it such a negative connotation prior World War Two. Perhaps this is a vestige of the models that assume absolute values can be assigned to subjective experiences.

The events data were primarily gathered from the texts in the project. While online searches were conducted and timelines were found they did not get into the minutia of the events occurring. For example, visits, posturing, agreements, and some ships colliding were not captured. Alternatively, the texts themselves did capture what online sources had and more. The event data, by virtue of being included in the articles, passed a face validity threshold of salience for the audience. That is not to say all important events will be included, but if events were unimportant then they would not be included within the news articles. Finally, this is the same logic that the current forecasting tools in GDELT and ICEWS employ.

News Sources

Today, there is a much greater number of news resources available than previous times in history. This has paved the way for machine coding tools like ICEWS and GDELT possible. However, factoring in the time-consuming nature of hand coding the data, I narrowed my focus to two sources: Xinhua News Agency and New York Times. I selected the two sources based on the high circulation of publications in each country and the availability of historic records in LexisNexis Academic. The differences are further explained in this section and returned to in the final chapter. LexisNexis Academic allows users to download the full text files of each of the articles that allows for input into the qualitative analysis tool, MAXQDA. By placing these parameters on data collection, I inherently limit the generalizations that can be drawn from my analysis because I am only capturing the most widely circulated position

In LexisNexis, broad search terms: "South China Sea" and "East China Sea," where used to search from 2010-2014. For the New York Times, LexisNexis had available blogs and the International Herald Tribune, which is written for an Anglophone audience. The periods of 2010-2014 were selected for two reasons: on July 2010, China

became the world's largest energy consumer, and by April 28th 2014 the U.S. and Philippines signed a defense pact because of tension in the region. This query resulted in N = 4,082 after filtering for similarity with 2,735 texts from Xinhua News agency and 1,347 from the New York Times. (See Table 1)

Additional search terms were used to search Xinhua during the 2010 and 2011 date ranges; however, no significant differences were discovered. LexisNexis lists the keywords found in each of the articles and a search was conducted with the additional terms: Senkaku, Spratly, Parcel, Diaoyutai, Pratas, and Scarborough Shoal. In the end, adding additional search terms did not garner additional relevant articles. For example, when the above keywords were added to the original search terms, 41 additional articles were discovered in 2010, yet they were all found to be about irrelevant topics. Consequently, it was decided that the search terms sufficiently covered the region. (see Table 1).

Xinhua News Agency. China's state media is often perceived to be a shackled and party-controlled apparatus; however, the reality of the situation is slightly different (Guo, 2012). Reporters Without Borders ranks the current standing of China's freedom of the press as 176/180 countries, saying:

> As well as building a Great Firewall to monitor and control blogs and social networks, the Communist Party exercises total control over China's many media outlets. Independent journalists such as Gao Yu are harassed and jailed. (RSF, 2016)

It would appear that Zhao's (2008) observation of tensions between market forces and party propaganda has not increased the freedom of the press in the country. While some news continues to slip past governmental nets, reporters are be punished and the party line continues to be reported.

Xinhua is the official news agency of the PRC and the largest source of news in the country. The everyday practices of the media are overseen by the Propaganda

Department (PD), which sustains the party's ideological dominance over the media by use of its propaganda discipline through word of mouth and telephone calls (Zhao, 2008). An example of the rules passed down by PD is that it is forbidden to criticize the party committee with which they are affiliated. Further, the Xinhua News Agency is the final authority in enforcing and establishing the unified party line. In some cases, the only news outlet officially allowed to have a voice is Xinhua, while other agencies must carry the 'general copy' (tonggao) (Zhao, 2008). The party line is not necessarily a concrete code of dos and don'ts, but the dos and don'ts can be determined by context. Some educated citizens understand the dynamic between Xinhua and the party, thereby reducing the credibility of the reports. Interestingly, LexisNexis describes Xinhua in the following way: "It (Xinhua) is an authoritative source for information on Chinese government affairs, economic performance, and Chinese views on world affairs."

New York Times. Reporters Without Borders currently rate the US as 41/180 countries for freedom of the press.

> US media freedom, enshrined in the First Amendment to the 1787 constitution, has encountered a major obstacle – the government's war on whistleblowers who leak information about its surveillance activities, spying and foreign operations, especially those linked to counter-terrorism. Furthermore, US journalists are still not protected by a federal "shield law" guaranteeing their right not to reveal their sources and other confidential work-related information (RSF, 2016).

One reason for the ranking is the current administration's lack of transparency and their increased prosecution of whistleblowers under the Espionage Act – more prosecutions than all previous administration combined (RSF, 2016). There has also been concern about political bias and political interest groups influencing media coverage in the U.S. The New York Times is the unofficial newspaper of record for the U.S. It was founded in 1851 and is currently the second largest circulating newspaper in the U.S. and 39th in the world. In 2014, the Times was circulating 2.1 million for Monday-Friday and 2.5 million

on Sunday and increasing in 2015 (O'Shea, 2015; The New York Times, 2014).

LexisNexis describes the New York Times:

> "Printing "All the News That's Fit to Print," The New York Times bears the reputation of being the United States' unofficial newspaper of record. Comprehensive coverage of national, foreign, business and local news comes from The Times' extensive foreign news network and bureaus around the United States."

In contrast to Xinhua, the NYT does have freedom to publish articles that deviate from government approved opinion, which allows for more diverse perspectives.

Table 1. *Summary of Texts Collected Prior to Applying Relevancy Criteria*

Year	Xinhua	New York Times
2010	291	146
2011	377	121
2012	718	315
2013	655	311
2014	694	454
Total	2,735	1,347

Content Analysis

Content analysis went through a four-phrase process: identifying relevancy criteria, inductive coding, revision of codebook, and final coding. First, due to the larger amount of data extracted through the broad search terms, I established a relevancy criterion. Relevancy of a text is based on whether or not the text discusses the on-going conflicts in the region. Irrelevant data such as weather reports or fishermen accidents and other non-germane content was set aside.

Events. Recognizing that events are interpreted or perceived differently by different audiences, I and my coder focused on stabilization vs destabilization as criteria

for positive, negative, or ambiguous events. For positive events we coded types of events

related to: diplomatic visits, resuming relationships, or signing of deals (i.e., trade or

codes of conduct). These were assigned a value of +1. Negative events were anything that

had the possibility of destabilizing the region: sending patrols in contested areas,

publishing official criticisms, conflicts, planting of flags, and the like.[6] These were

assigned a value of -1. Other events that could be either stabilizing or destabilizing were

assigned a value of 0: military exercises, elections, political change, etc. From January 1,

2010 to December 31, 2014 we coded a total of 112 relevant events (n = 112) that either

America or China took part in. After the events were coded +1, -1, or 0 they were then

further broken down by country. For example, on 5/26/10 US Secretary of State Clinton

visited China which gave a positive value for both China and the US because they both

took part in a stabilizing event. In contrast, on 7/26/10 when Secretary Clinton

announces an increase involvement by the US in the region only the US was assigned a

negative score due to their sole involvement. Due to either one or both actors actions

each event has the potential to assign codes to each actor, with a maximum of two.

Originally, there were 180 events collected from the project's news articles themselves.

Those were reduced to 112 due to either China or the U.S. and Allies not being the

principle actor or the actions were towards third-parties. For example, "Korea expands

its ADIZ" on 12/9/13 or "Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi visits Brunei" on 5/4/13 were

removed. As a result, the 112 events themselves were translated into 141 total scores

between the two countries. Using Krippendorff's Alpha for scores assigned to events, α =

.894.

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[6] See the Appendix for the event and narrative codebooks.

Table 2. *Events Data*

	America	China	Total
Positive	30	24	54
Negative	42	45	87
Total	72	69	141

I assumed that a country's narrative influences their own event outcome and not one another's events. For example, American's use of *Pax Americana,* a more favorable telling of America's actions, does not necessarily impact the actions taken by China or the narratives used there. While these could be interesting analysis to conduct in future research for this dissertation I did not conduct those. This assumption is not empirically verified, it is a conservative assumption for the narratives occurring within the U.S. and China first drives their desired outcomes. One limitation placed on this approach is due to not separating America and its Allies into different entities. However, America's close ties with some regional countries warranted inclusion.

The values assigned to some events are proven difficult due to the nature of the event. For example, annual military exercises with American and Japan or the Philippines are not always clearly increasing instability. Yet, China at this time tends to accuse the Americans of emboldening regional actors against China. In contrast, the allies might feel more assured by these actions as a show of support. As such, such events were given a 0 score due to their ambiguous nature.

Narrative Data. The process for coding these documents began with inductive coding following Bernard and Ryan's (2010) method. In this phase, I looked for thematic categories to assign to the unit of observation. Bernard and Ryan (2010) follow Opler's view of themes as a "number of dynamic affirmations, called *themes*, which control behavior or stimulate activity. The activities, prohibitions of activities, or references which result from the acceptance of a theme are its expression" (p. 54). Themes are

discovered through observational techniques of repetition of stories and academic material covered later in this chapter. The primary emphases of the thematic codes are the rhetorical representation of the other.

The paragraph was selected for the unit of observation for parsimony's sake. The document level would not allow for a fine-grain analysis, and newspapers break each article into segmented paragraphs each containing a theme. Each paragraph, importantly, was either coded with one thematic code or left blank. For reliability, the frequency of each code contained in a document was measured, not the reliability of each paragraph. The assumption being that readers categorize or understand themes at the article level, not the paragraph level.

An additional rationale for looking at the frequency of these narrative fragments in the documents is that narrative fragment frequency within a document increases the acceptance of or familiarity with the narrative itself. One assumption made here needing further interrogation is whether or not the increased exposure to a narrative or narrative structure increases the coherence and fidelity of the narrative in the minds of the reader. When we are exposed to narratives from a younger age, like the Chinese are to the Century of Humiliation, then it is repeated in news and other social artifacts there should be increased acceptance for that narrative. In America there is the commonly referred American Dream that is taught, with occasional attempts to shine light on the harsh reality that few achieve it, yet despite evidence Americans find it persuasive. In both of these examples, the level of exposure appears to impact the narrative rationality of the individuals. My assumption here is to take this common sense example and extrapolate it to the textual level. As narratives are repeated, even in fragments, the very act of increasing the frequency reinforces the acceptance.

To begin creating codes, the whole of 2010's data and a random sample of data from other years were coded until we reached saturation. At first, a large amount of inductive categories were created based on differing attributions by one actor about another and about themselves. For example, there were sections coded for China seeing America as meddling in their affairs and questioning America's intentions in the region. In total, 37 categories were created. Following the advice of the committee and Bernard and Ryan (2010) who say, "Coding is supposed to be data reduction not data proliferation," the codes were further reduced (p. 86). A code relation analysis in MAXQDA was performed in order to find co-occurrence of codes within texts. Based on the occurrence of the code in the same text and inductive themes that appeared in the texts, I reduced the codes to seven.

I then repeated the coding process but was unsatisfied with the seven codes' ability to fully represent the texts. As I would note the meddling China attributed to America there were also instances when America would refute those claims or give a charitable view on their activities, but the codes did not capture the all of those instances. Missing from the seven codes were denials of each. While not as frequent as the affirmations, the denials of these narratives is equally important when considering the shift in narratives over time and the attempt at countering narratives.

With the inclusion of denial codes, an assistant coder and I applied these codes to random texts until we were satisfied that no theme was missing and we had achieved reliability. Once again, the data was cleared, sets of texts were picked, and inter-coder reliability was established on 15 random texts that pulled from each year (Krippendorff's α = .917). Reliability was continually checked throughout the coding process to determine whether or not consistently was upheld at the textual level. In total 73 texts

were checked for reliability α = .81. This α value meets Krippendorff's (2004) standard

acceptance for reliability for the unit of observation.

In total, four thousand eighty-two (n = 4,082) articles were read, and only one

thousand eighty-two (n = 1852) were deemed relevant to the case study due to an

absence of information regarding the disputes in the East or South China Seas. The 2,138

(n = 2,138) articles that were not coded were deemed irrelevant. Many were weather

reports for the region. The cleaning of the irrelevant data was accomplished during the

coding process by both coders but an alpha score was not taken. I did however look

through the discarded texts to look for agreement. The NYT had 559 (n = 559), and

Xinhua had 1293 (n = 1293) articles that were coded.

Table 3. *Summary of Texts After Relevancy Criteria Were Applied*

Year	Xinhua	New York Times
2010	108	66
2011	148	54
2012	369	134
2013	303	125
2014	365	180
Total	1,293	559

Translating to Codes. This section provides the rationale behind the coding

system found in the Appendix. As stated in previously, these codes began inductively and

were informed by research and history behind the countries; however, the driving force

in the coding process was the texts themselves. The process of coding began by marking

attributions towards China and the U.S. and who was making them. As coding proceeded

and themes began to emerge there were 37 original codes. For example, as American

actions were described as meddling, containing China, and have questionable intentions these were individually coded then subsequently grouped together as a general negative telling of American foreign policy, which focused on the historic narrative of containment during the Cold War. To combine the codes, I used a tool in MAXQDA to see the nearness of the codes with one another. Taking into consideration the history within the U.S. and China in the last chapter, the similarities between the emerging themes, and attributions being made therein I grouped the themes together into emerging narratives. Within the texts, there were references to America's *Cold War* mentality, which became the narrative theme *Cold Warrior*. Each code went followed this process promoting a different view of the specified actor. The following defines and provides examples of the codes inductively created.

Translating the American references into qualitative codes resulted in two codes and their denials: *Pax American* & *Cold Warrior*. The *Pax American (N*=1491) code places a rhetorical emphasis on welcomed support in the form of security or assurances against regional threats. Further, American attempts at remaining neutral while assuring maritime security are rhetorically seen as furthering American Peace. For example:

> "The feud over the islands, known as the Diaoyu in China and the Senkaku in
>
> Japan, reached a dangerous new level nearly two weeks ago, when both Japan and China scrambled jet fighters over the East China Sea. The United States is obligated under a security treaty with Japan to defend the islands, which were handed back to Japan by Washington in 1972 as part of the return of Okinawa." (NYT 2013 311-020)

This quote emphasizes the protectorate role of the US to their regional ally. While the *denial* (n=599) is claiming that American actions are destabilizing the region. Further, it is said that offering support to regional actors makes them more likely to act aggressively towards China than was previously done, therefore the likelihood of conflict is escalated.

> Swaine expressed worries that the Obama administration's execution of this shift and China's reaction "are combining to deepen mutual suspicion and

potentially destabilize the entire area." (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

The rhetorical emphasis of the denial of the *Pax America* narrative is that, in reality, the US involvement in the area only further destabilizes the region.

The negative *Cold Warrior* (*N=*673) code portrays America as pursuing an encirclement strategy towards China. In this view/narrative, America – together with its allies – wants to contain China. Further, America is seen as meddling in foreign affairs over which it does not have a historical or legal claim:

> Meanwhile, the United states has intensified its intervention in the territorial dispute over South China Sea between China and several southeastern Asian countries, under the excuse of protecting freedom of navigation. (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

Denying (*N=*272) this code is an explicit retort – the rebalancing is an attempt to assure peace and economic trade in the region, not to contain China:

> Interpreting Washington's Asia strategy as a move to contain China is wishful thinking. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-040)

A sub-code was created to clarify a unique from of the *Cold Warrior Allies* (*N=*2169) code. This was motivated by the high volume of instances in which regional players and their dubious motivations were said to be to blame for escalating tension:

> However, what is extremely dangerous is that Abe and his nationalistic government might be encouraged to challenge China's bottom line in territorial disputes in the belief that Obama's pledge is a shield that gives them immunity from all punishments. (Xinhua 501-694-158)

These types of phrases resulted in *Allies* as a sub-code for *Cold Warrior*. While I had wanted to consider the whole of American regional alliances as a singular actor it was too far of a cognitive leap to combine them into one group with little rhetorical evidence to support it.

Similarly, sets of codes were created for China: *National humiliation* (*N=*2037), *Red Dragon Rising* (*N=*1620), and *Silk Road* (*N=*2638). *National Humiliation* captures historical memory of un-equal treaties and China's desire to restore its sovereign

79

territory. It was separated from the others due to the significance of the narrative itself

and the question of nationalism:

> Japan's occupation of the islands are illegal and invalid. The U.S.-Japan
> defense treaty, an anachronism of the Cold War, cannot undermine China's
> territorial sovereignty and legitimate rights. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-158)

Attempts to *deny* (*N*=18) this code claimed that these regions are not part of the historic

rights of China and are lawfully under different rule. Notably, this code was not

commonly found due to the need for an explicit denial of the narrative.

> *Red Dragon Rising*, on the other hand, depicted the rise of China as a threat,

using its growing economic and military might to bully smaller nations:

> HANOI, Vietnam -- Vietnam's prime minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, accused China
> on Sunday of "dangerous and serious violations" in a territorial dispute that has
> raised anger toward China here to the highest levels in years. (NYT 2014 464-
> 188)

Denials (*N*=539) of this code were attempts to downplay the rise of China and

reinterpret the supposed threatening actions as harmless:

> "China's activities here are just, reasonable and comply with international
> practices," Hong Lei said at a daily briefing. (Xinhua 2013 501-644-188)

Meanwhile, a more positive portrayal of China was exemplified in the *Silk Road* code.

The *Silk Road* was once the historic trading route of China to foreign nations. Today, this

narrative promises a return to peaceful relations with other countries, growing economic

trade, and security as China continues to prosper:

> Chang said this year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral
> relations, and it is also a crucial year for the two sides to build the new type of
> major-country relations. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-024)

Conversely, denials (*N*=70) of this narrative were indicated by claims of the destabilizing

rise of China.

> While the party has in the past stirred the nationalist cauldron during times of
> uncertainty, some analysts said they thought such action would prove harmful to
> China at a time when it is trying to burnish its soft power. (NYT 2012 315-057)

Again, denials of this narrative are focused on the counter the notion that China's actions are bringing peace and stability to the region.

Finally, the *Economic Centric* (*N*=932) and *Solutions* (*N*=1040) codes were created. *Economic Centric* was designed to capture frequent mention of resources and trade as a motivation for the following: escalating tensions, solving the problem, or any off-hand mention of possible resources in the areas:

> Ma said the region's rich reserves of oil and gas are the major reason for the escalation of tension in the South China Sea. The United States' attempt to step up its presence in the Asia-Pacific region is also a factor, he said. (Xinhua 2011 377-092)

The last code was *Solutions*. As the name suggests, it was used to highlight any instances of a "should" or "ought," – suggested means of solving the conflict:[7]

> Both countries should make joint efforts to build the new relations, Wu said. (Xinhua 501-694-188)

For both of these codes there was no denial discovered within the texts. Rather there were created to test whether or not economics was a significant rhetorical factor in the events.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is conducted in order to justify the quantitative hypothesis and assist in interpreting the data. Data itself must be interpreted and as Bernard and Ryan (2010) note. Not only is data about reducing our experiences, but the term "qualitative analysis" is also ambiguous. While some, like the cultural model theorists in earlier chapters, take it to be the analysis of qualitative data, it can also mean the qualitative analysis of data. This section does both. Not only will it justify the hypotheses tested later, but it also provides a basis for interpreting the textual data. In each section there are hypotheses listed within the context of the codes that follow from the RQs.

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[7] For a further break-down of the definitions of the codes see the Appendix.

Importantly, the hypotheses the follow are oriented in such a way to detect potential feedback loops. Since the causal direction and loops within these systems are presently unknown the hypotheses propose to test for causality in both directions. To restate the RQs:

RQ1: How do narratives expressed in the newspapers influence the events?

RQ2: How do events influence the narratives expressed in the national newspaper?

This section reports qualitative findings from each of the sources is given. The first reveals how each country is viewed and then how they view the other country (total of four profiles). Below, I illustrate these profiles with graphs that present the mean values of codes and their standard error; however, the primary focus of this section is the qualitative data.

To put the following profiles in context, I will mention some of the codebook guidelines that are found in the Appendix. The primary guideline was to establish that one paragraph does not necessarily have one meaning; consequently, we considered the context of the article, overall message, and who was saying it to whom. America returning to the region or China's military build-up did not always mean the same thing, depending on the audience. For the Chinese, America's pivot was seen as an attempt to surround them:

> Some Chinese military leaders and analysts see an American effort to contain China. Feng Zhaokui, a Japan scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said in an article on Tuesday in The Global Times, a populist newspaper, that the United States was trying to "nurture a coalition against China." (NYT 2010 146-064)

Yet, the Americans saw this as an opportunity to take a larger role in the region and foster better relations with their allies:

But rising frictions between China and its neighbors in recent weeks over security issues have handed the United States an opportunity to reassert itself -- one the Obama administration has been keen to take advantage of. (NYT 2010 146-064)

During the coding process we had to consider who was saying these statements and what the overall message was in the context of the article. To review the codes, see the Appendix A.

America's view of America. America's view presented within the text shows their perspective to be focused on their show of strength, balancing China, and providing assurances to its allies. These ideas were captured within the *Pax Americana* thematic code. Four primary hypotheses emerged from the textual data:

H1: The frequency of the Pax Americana Denial in America forecasts American negative events.

H2: The frequency of the Pax Americana narrative forecasts American positive events.

H3: American negative events forecast America's use of Pax American Denial.

H4: American positive events forecast America's use of Pax Americana.

Figure 1. *How America View's America. Illustrates the Mean of the Narratives with a Standards Error Bar.*
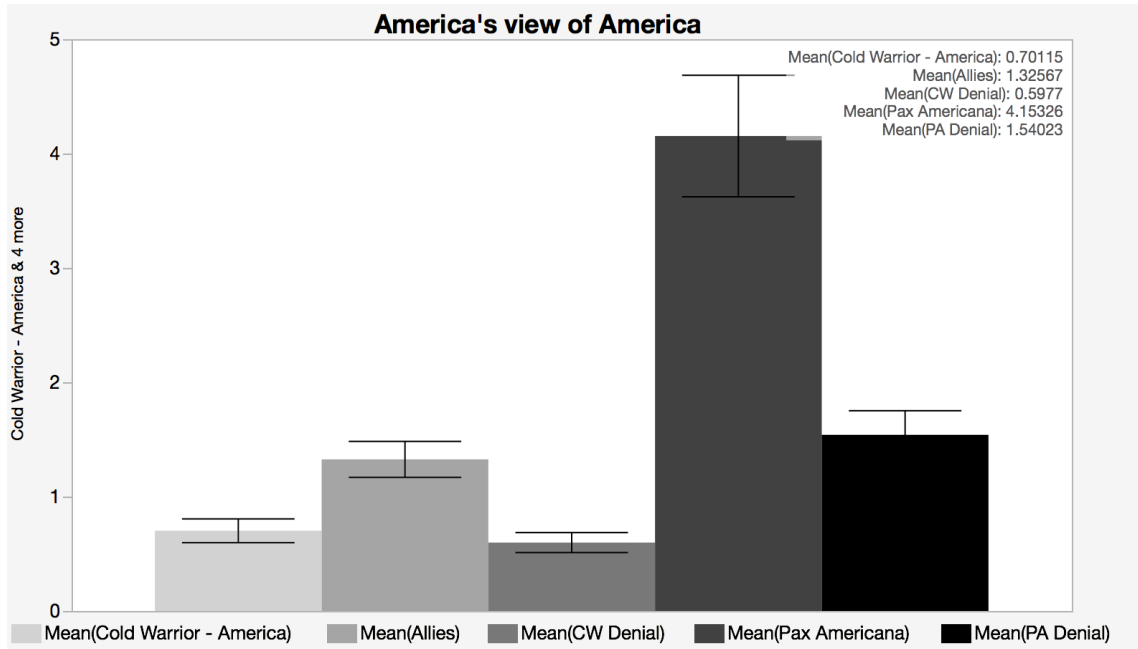
For example, the U.S. framed the sale of arms to Vietnam as a means of strengthening

their security:

> WASHINGTON -- The United States on Thursday partially lifted its longtime ban
> on the provision of lethal arms to Vietnam, a move that is intended to help Hanoi
> strengthen its maritime security as it contends with a more assertive China. (NYT
> 2014 464-351)

The ideal of a balanced Asia was central to this the Asian Pivot:

> Asia is not a monolith, and its internal balance of power should be the key to our
> strategy. Japan, India, Vietnam and other countries do not want to be dominated
> by China, and thus welcome an American presence in the region. Unless China is
> able to attract allies by successfully developing its "soft power," the rise in its
> "hard" military and economic power is likely to frighten its neighbors, who will
> coalesce to balance its power. (NYT 2013 311-024)

America's intervention was purportedly for peaceful ends and not intended to harm
anyone:

> Mr. Kerry was referring to the recent stepped-up efforts by the Asean countries to
> persuade a resistant China to agree to a legally binding code of conduct that
> would govern the peaceful resolution of disputes. (NYT 2013 311-188)

And again, that peace and prosperity were the core values and goals behind US actions in

the region:

> Mr. Panetta, who is on his first trip to Asia as defense secretary, made the
> comments at a meeting of Southeast Asian nations on this Indonesian resort
> island. He sought to reassure Pacific nations that are concerned about China's
> assertiveness that the United States, as he put it, would be "a force for peace
> and prosperity" here. (NYT 2011 121-076)

From statements such as these an overall positive portrayal of America's actions and

intentions were told and reinforced.

Pax Americana Denial. Alternatively, representation of the *Pax Americana*

Denial codes expressed general doubts about the success of the pivot and what good the

involvement was in the region.

> Vietnam isn't sure that the United States is committed to Asia for the long run,
> and officials privately complain that the region is a low priority for Washington.
> In a one-hour interview with Charlie Rose, an American television host, that was
> broadcast July 21, President Barack Obama's national security adviser, Thomas
> E. Donilon, spoke at length about China, but never mentioned Vietnam. (NYT
> 2011 121-062)

The range of topics that this code covered included budget cuts, the success of the pivot,

Obama not attending meetings, controversy in Japan about the US military, and doubts

regarding America's willingness to defend their allies. This theme as with many denials

was primarily conducted through quotations by foreign leaders.

Cold Warriors. The negative impact and views of American actions as

destabilizing were seen in the *Cold Warrior – America* code. Such as:

> SINGAPORE -- China struck back harshly at the United States and Japan on
> Saturday, as a senior Chinese military official accused Defense Secretary Chuck
> Hagel and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan of acting in concert to sow
> controversy and division in the Asia-Pacific region. (NYT 2014 464-245)

> "American devils - get out of China!" the veterans shouted, according to a report
> by the online news portal NetEase. (NYT 2014 464-208)

> The Chinese vice foreign minister warned the United States on Wednesday to
> stay out of the increasingly tense territorial disputes and maritime conflicts in the

South China Sea, which has some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and is believed to be rich in oil and natural gas reserves. (NYT 2011 121-041)

America's actions were presented as unwelcome by the Chinese. Doubts were cast on their intentions and actions were taken to be the opposite of the stated intentions, security. Do these actions cascade into destabilizing actions by the U.S. and Allies or vice versa? Given the limited use of this code within New York Times, the hypotheses for this narrative were covered by the Xinhua news.

Cold Warrior Denial. In contrast, denying or offering a re-contextualized interpretation of the actions that others assert to be destabilizing were summarized in the *Cold Warrior Denial* code:

> The United States' decision to sell weapons to Taiwan, Mr. Gates said, was not made within the Defense Department. (NYT 2010 146-095)

> But Mr. Obama said: "The notion that we fear China is mistaken. The notion that we are looking to exclude China is mistaken." (NYT 2011 121-091)

> Mr. Campbell rejected the suggestion that the United States was pursuing a Cold War-style containment of China, saying that the notion was "simplistic and wrong." At the same time, he said, "the Chinese respect strength, determination and strategy." (NYT 2012 315-177)

These examples showed alternative interpretations of events presented to the reader, but as evident in the quote above, they reframed the issue in light of the values present in the *Pax Americana* code. While stating they did not want America involved in the region, the New York Times denied these perspectives as misinterpretations. America did not want to contain China; they wanted to involve them in the security relations. Their actions in the region were in line with international norms and historical activity. In other words, within American perspective there was no ill will towards China.

This code was created to include denials of both America and its Allies because it was uncertain whether or not these were considered separate actors and if the actions of

one impacted the other. The following two excerpts are examples of some of the

narratives that were about the Allies:

> In balancing its relations between the two major powers, Vietnam has been at
> pains to reassure China, the giant on its doorstep, that it would have no alliances,
> military bases or military coalitions that threatened China. (NYT 2010 146-098)

> The Japanese government's purchase of the islands from their private owners, a
> Japanese family, was intended to prevent the governor of Tokyo from buying
> them, a step that would have heightened the clash with China further, Japanese
> officials said. The governor, Shintaro Ishihara, had said he would develop the
> islands, something the national government does not plan to do. (NYT 2012 315-
> 151)

The response given in this example was meant to counter the idea that Japan

intentionally escalated the sovereignty of the islands rather than keeping the status quo.

While the concern about this issue from the perspective presented by Japan was to keep

it out of the hands of private citizens, that same interpretation was not mentioned at all:

> He said the Japanese government hopes the purchase would not undermine the
> overall bilateral relations with China. (Xinhua 2012-480)

Yet, importantly, the notion that it was meant to deescalate the issue by moving from

private to government ownership was not considered within Xinhua. Again, this code

captures attempts to offer an alternative perspective to actions done by other regional

players.

The view found in the New York Times was one of America as a country desiring

to show its continued commitment during a pivot away from the Middle-East towards

Asia. The Obama administration was portrayed as seeking dialogue supported by

increased military commitments and arms sales in the region. With concerns by regional

players over China, the US assured them that if China were to become more aggressive,

they would be there to help. Concomitantly, America was attempting to assure China of

its just intentions in the region and that it does not want to surround or isolate them.

Even to the casual reader, there were obvious narrative tensions here. America was

simultaneously desiring to show solidarity with its allies that are worried about a rising China, while also assuring China that any show of solidarity with regional powers against China were peaceful.

Table 4. *Code Frequency, Percentage Appearance, and Number of Documents.*

Code	Coded segments of all documents	% Coded segments of all documents	Document Count
Silk Road	2638	18.71	792
Cold Warrior -Allies	2169	15.39	729
National Humiliation	2037	14.45	780
Red Dragon Rising	1620	11.49	544
Pax Americana	1491	10.58	444
Solutions	1040	7.38	623
Economics centric	932	6.61	409
Cold Warrior - America	673	4.77	272
PA Denial	599	4.25	256
RD Denial	539	3.82	309
CW Denial	272	1.93	170
SR Denial	70	0.50	35
NH Denial	18	0.13	15

Table 5. *Xinhua Frequency of Codes Per Year*

Narrative	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	SUM
Cold Warrior - America	199	59	127	57	48	490
Cold Warrior - Allies	689	421	471	63	179	1823
Cold Warrior - Denial	17	36	38	15	10	116
Pax Americana	110	112	164	19	2	407
Pax Americana - Denial	36	59	76	11	15	197
Red Dragon Rising	45	63	39	13	7	167
Red Dragon Rising - Denial	107	144	83	54	20	408
Silk Road	706	673	402	441	212	2434
Silk Road - Denial	5	0	1	0	0	6
National Humiliation	478	202	653	106	251	1690
National Humiliation - Denial	1	1	0	1	2	5
Economics centric	80	253	183	76	64	656
Solutions	293	226	150	123	88	880
SUM	2766	2249	2387	979	898	9279

Table 6. *New York Times Frequency of Codes Per Year*

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	SUM
Cold Warrior - America	47	23	42	28	43	183
Cold Warrior - Allies	128	108	72	10	28	346
Cold Warrior - Denial	33	42	47	14	20	156
Pax Americana	224	283	230	157	190	1084
Pax Americana - Denial	122	114	91	31	44	402
Red Dragon Rising	481	281	317	136	238	1453
Red Dragon Rising - Denial	49	31	19	11	21	131
Silk Road	54	67	37	20	26	204
Silk Road - Denial	24	30	6	1	3	64
National Humiliation	115	67	132	9	24	347
National Humiliation - Denial	5	2	0	5	1	13
Economics centric	103	44	81	28	20	276
Solutions	58	41	28	16	17	160
SUM	1443	1133	1102	466	675	4819

America's view of China. America's view of China is visually summarized in table 6, displaying an overwhelming emphasis on the *Red Dragon Rising* narrative and a statistically significant, yet numerically minor, emphasis on the *National Humiliation* and other narratives. America views China as a rising power that is becoming increasingly nationalistic, reaching for resources by aggressively expanding their claims over the South China Sea under the guise of historical grievances. As such the following hypotheses emerged:

H5: The frequency of the Red Dragon Rising narrative in American forecasts

American negative events

H6: The frequency of the National Humiliation forecasts American negative

events

H7: American negative events forecast America's usage of Red Dragon Rising.

H8: American negative events forecast America's use of National Humiliation.

Figure 2. America's View of China. Illustrates the Mean of the Narratives with a Standards Error bar.
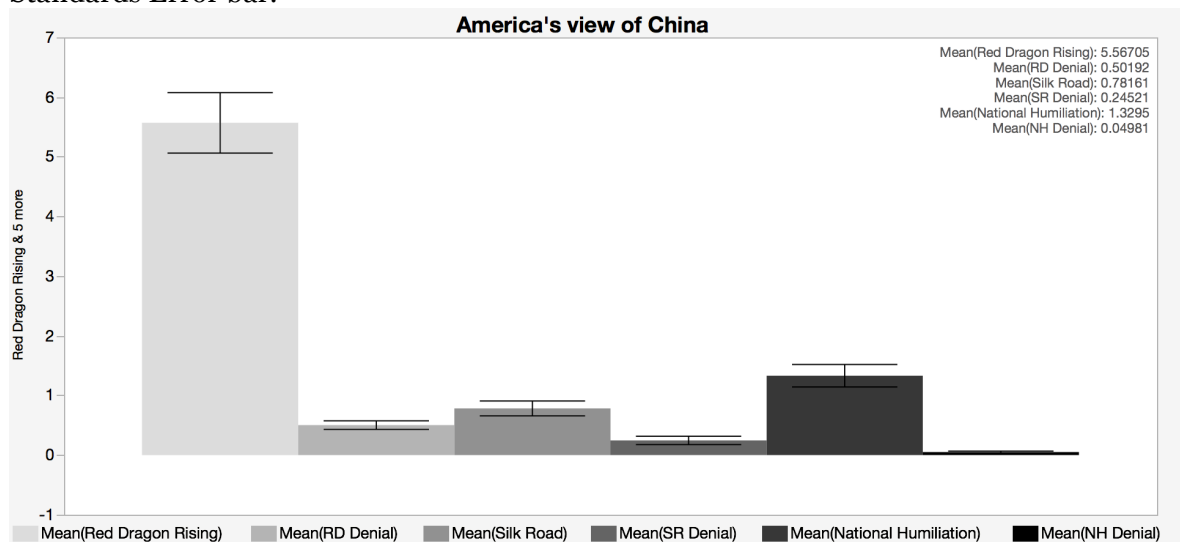
America's view of China

Mean(Red Dragon Rising): 5.56705
Mean(RD Denial): 0.50192
Mean(Silk Road): 0.78161
Mean(SR Denial): 0.24521
Mean(National Humiliation): 1.3295
Mean(NH Denial): 0.04981

Legend: Mean(Red Dragon Rising) | Mean(RD Denial) | Mean(Silk Road) | Mean(SR Denial) | Mean(National Humiliation) | Mean(NH Denial)

Each error bar is constructed using 1 standard error from the mean.

Red Dragon Rising. China was rhetorically pictured as a country that is

unfamiliar or inept in their international relations. Their aggressive push in the South

and East China Seas places them at odds with neighboring countries, as well as with

America's goal of regional security:

> Beijing is used to throwing its weight around these days -- on currency, trade, the South China Sea and many other issues. Too many governments, and companies, are afraid to push back. Maybe someone in China's leadership will now figure out that bullying is not a strategy for an aspiring world power. (NYT 2010 146-089)

This trade concern came to a head in 2011, as rare earth minerals were suddenly banned

from export. The cause of the problem, as portrayed in the texts, was a result of Japanese

forces detaining Chinese fishermen who had 'violated' Japanese waters. China contests

this. All the while the Chinese never admitted to wrongdoing:

> China's ban on exports of crucial rare earth minerals, cast by the government as a
> corporate decision made without state direction, is the most recent example of
> the tensions this drift toward state control has raised. But there are others: China
> Mobile, which dominates the nation's vast wireless market, is pressing phone
> makers to adopt a Chinese standard for wireless communications that ignores the
> accepted global standard. (NYT 2011 121-005)

China went further than a mere ban on exports. It pressed the international standards

for their own. Further, the narrative has a greater sense of fidelity to a Western audience

due to the perception of state run enterprises as direct arms of the government and party

in China. Any negative actions conducted by these businesses was rhetorically implied to

be the result of dictates sent from the central government itself:

> "If these countries don't want to change their ways with China, they will need to
> prepare for the sound of cannons," wrote the unapologetically nationalistic Global
> Times, referring to the 750 islands and spits of land in the South China Sea, known
> as the Spratly Islands, which are also contested by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and
> Vietnam. (NYT 2011 121-090)

China, in any aggressive action was therefore portrayed as an aggressor or bully to the

smaller surrounding nations with whom America has ties. These statements only gain

credibility as hostile voices in support of this nationalistic view of China are highlighted.

Amidst these tensions the West searched for a way of understanding this rise in

aggressive behavior:

> Slowing economic growth, deepening social tensions and rising military
> nationalism, centered on China's controversial claim to virtually the entire South
> China Sea, provide an increasingly unstable backdrop for hard choices that must be
> made on balancing prosperity, stability and justice, according to Chinese analysts.
> People - not just the new, monied middle class, but also farmers and the urban
> poor - are clamoring for a say over scores of issues, including corruption, land
> rights, housing and medical care, pollution and, recently, even forced abortions, a
> gruesome consequence of the one-child policy. (NYT 2012 315-076)

The perception of unstable foreign relations supports the idea that in order to deal with local tensions of pollutions, stalling economic growth, and resulting inequalities, China is left to aggressively assert itself to regional players:

> Other governments have built structures on islands they occupy, but friction over overlapping claims escalated this year when it was discovered that China was artificially expanding several islands in the Spratly Archipelago, a few hundred miles south of the Chinese mainland. (NYT 2014 464-315)

China was caught in a troublesome position, desiring to expand and not be left out of their claims while also being marked as the aggressor.

> ***Red Dragon Rising Denial.*** It is important to consider the rhetorical work accomplished in the *Red Dragon Rising Denial* because, rather than focusing on the expressed ideas and interests of China, it reassured the American audience of the strengths of US defensive capabilities over the Chinese:

> General Chang stood impassively during Mr. Hagel's call for more openness on cybersecurity. When it was his turn to talk, he said that "the defense activity of the People's Liberation Army in cyberspace abides" by Chinese law. "It will not pose a threat to others," he added. (NYT 2014 464-128)

> China watchers have a tendency to overstate the sophistication of Beijing's foreign policy and ambitions, but the truth is that China's foreign policy is highly deficient. While the outsiders often see China as a rising giant and a threat, Chinese leaders are in fact largely nervous and insecure, uncertain of how to manage, both at home and abroad, the inevitable tensions that arise from their nation's rapid ascent on the world stage. For the newly "elected" leaders, their first challenge would be how to fill the foreign policy vacuum and how to solve the country's choice between nationalism and globalism. (NYT 2013-311-064)

In each of these examples, there is a tacit reassurance that US assets and capabilities were not under a direct threat from China. The Chinese had larger concerns, namely the local problems that would result in not threatening America and its allies. The conclusion, not present in the text, appeared within the overall system of narratives presented as a whole. Another iteration of this code is:

> China's commerce ministry has denied repeatedly that a regulatory ban on exports has been imposed. (NYT 2010 146-128)

Such examples explicitly quoted Chinese officials to deny allegations of the Chinese

government manipulating trade and placing bans on materials as a means of responding

to actions that China does not approve. Yet, the fascinating work accomplished here was

not merely to cast doubt on the rise of China, but also to juxtapose it with American

action.

      Silk Road. On the rare occasion the NYT presented China in a positive light it,

once again, was by quoting Chinese officials:

> In discussing this concept, Mr. Xi takes care to emphasize that he believes there
> is room in Asia for two great powers to coexist and cooperate - as long as they
> treat each other as equals. (NYT 2014 464-386)

> Last week, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China would be happy to discuss a code
> of conduct to help nations peacefully address competing claims, while suggesting
> that China was in no hurry to have this happen. In other words, to let the
> conflicts fester. (NYT 2013 311-164)

The work accomplished here was not to actually give a plausible reading to the expressed

intentions of China but to "to let the conflicts fester" and create a malevolent motivation

within the interpretative framework presented. This created a say-do-gap; China said

they wanted to peacefully address the issue, but the reality was they were taking the long

game. Interestingly, many of these sections were quotes or expressions by foreign

officials, not Americans.

      Silk Road Denial. When the *Silk Road code was denied,* the emphasis

returned to local problems such as the suppression of the political freedoms granted in

the U.S.. It was framed in a way that suggested Chinese citizens were protesting against

their government or that economic bubbles (worse than any in recent American

memory) were looming disasters that would further launch China into the realm of

instability:

> If the dream's realization is close at hand, what is there to fear? Plenty, it turns
> out. One specter that continues to cause anxiety is a possible recurrence of the
> wave of protests that erupted in 1989. Newer fears include a Chinese variant of

the Arab Spring and a possible economic crisis, triggered by a collapse of the inflated housing bubble, that would undermine the party's basis of legitimacy: its ability to steadily raise living standards. (NYT 2014 464-421)

Narratives about a Chinese dream, like an American Dream, were countered as nothing more than rhetorical smoke and mirror distractions from the real problems facing the Chinese people. If anything, the superiority of America was furthered by contrast.

National Humiliation. From the labeling of the South China Sea as a core interest to recalling British Imperialism and unequal treaties with Western powers, China's interpretive position was acknowledged:

> China is also pressing the United States to heed to China's claims in the region. In March, Chinese officials told two visiting senior officials of the administration of President Barack Obama, Jeffrey Bader and James B. Steinberg, that China would not tolerate any interference in the South China Sea, now part of China's "core interest" of sovereignty, said an American official involved in China policy. It was the first time the Chinese had labeled the South China Sea as a core interest, on par with Taiwan and Tibet, the official said. (NYT 2010 146-016)

> Not until the later years of British rule -- no one seems to know exactly when -- did Chinese history courses in Hong Kong include the Opium Wars that began in 1839 and 1856, in which Britain seized the core pieces of what is now Hong Kong in retaliation for Chinese restrictions on imports of opium. During those later years, middle schools began teaching more recent Chinese history as part of world history courses, particularly through World War II, and a few optional high school courses come up to the present. (NYT 2012 315-134)

> Chinese officials says the islands are rightly theirs because they say Japan grabbed the islands during the start of its imperial expansion in the late 1800s; the Japanese say they peacefully annexed the islands, which they say were empty and unclaimed. (NYT 2013 311-230)

These codes provide a robust perceptional element behind what was a more frequently cited view by the Chinese. Nevertheless, as present in the last example, there remained remnants of the fragments of doubt added to the quotes, "the Japanese say they peacefully annexed the islands." In the context of the disputes, this provided a legal divide regarding the occupation of the islands. To what extent this was helpful in the minds of readers to garner a greater sense of empathy for the Chinese position is

unknown, but when seen in contrast to the frequency of *Red Dragon Rising* it is doubtful

that this view was taken with the level of seriousness the Chinese would have desired.

National Humiliation Denial. Once again, this code was an infrequent

occurrence, yet it represented a focus on disrupting the perception forwarded under the

National Humiliation code:

> Under the peace treaty, the islands had been placed under the United States
> administration until 1971, when the administrative rights over the islands reverted
> to Japan. It was not until the latter half of 1970, when the possibility of the
> existence of petroleum resources on the East China Sea came to the surface, that
> Chinese and Taiwanese authorities began to raise questions regarding the Senkaku
> Islands. (NYT 2011 121-011)

China's actions were firmly placed outside of the realm of their expressed intent into a

space of underlying economic motivation or resource grab.

The rhetorical profiles that were created in the NYT express deep doubt about

China's motivations and intentions behind their actions. Western values are presented in

opposition to the constraints brought under the Chinese state. That is to say, there were

underlying value claims made of Eastern state craft and human values against the

Western conception. Strong concerns were expressed with regard to China's military

land grab, rising nationalism, and underlying motivations therein. Worries were

occasionally dismissed while reframing and assurances were offered in terms of

American capabilities and good-will for the region.

China's view of China. We now turn to an explanation of the codes expressing

China's views. The codes about China's view of China and China's view of America will be

used to analyze narrative profiles constructed through media representations:

> H9: The frequency of National Humiliation in China forecasts Chinese negative
>
> events
>
> H10: The frequency of Red Dragon Rising Denial in China forecasts Chinese
>
> negative Events

H11: The frequency of Silk Road in China forecasts Chinese positive events

H12: China's negative events forecast China's use of National Humiliation.

H13: China's negative events forecast China's use of Red Dragon Rising Denial

H14: China's positive events forecast China's use of Silk Road

Figure 3. China's View of China. Illustrates the Mean of the Narratives with a Standards Error Bar.
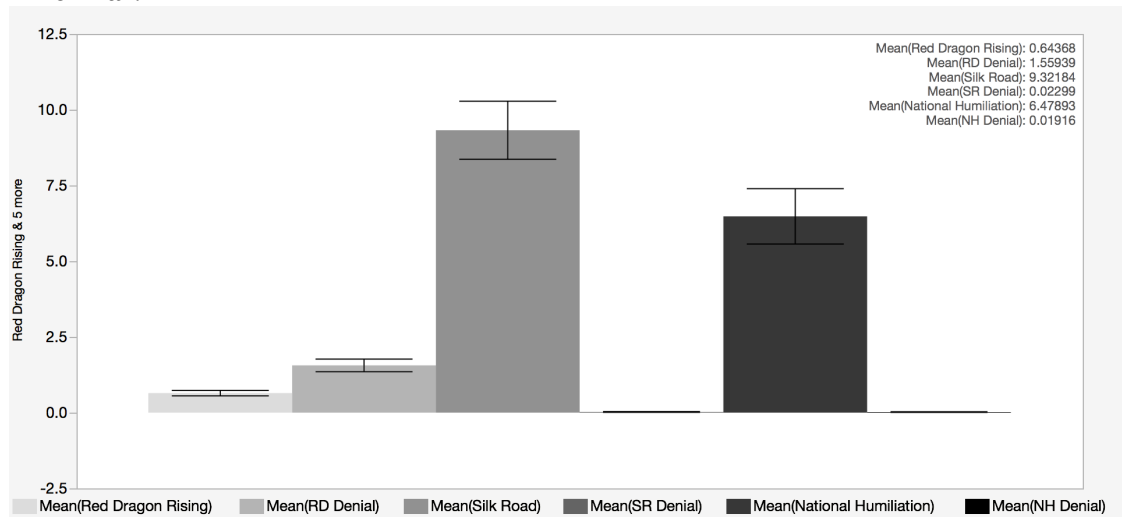
Each error bar is constructed using 1 standard error from the mean.

Red Dragon Rising and Denial. The *Red Dragon Rising* code occurred 116 times in the five-years of Xinhua data of the 9,279 coded segments, representing a small, but rhetorically important aspect of the view of self. The typical segments are quotations from outside sources and not self-criticism by the newspaper, which would be uncharacteristic of the medium:

> Japan's Defense Ministry in its annual white paper on Tuesday claimed that the nation is facing a worsening security environment as neighboring countries increase military activity in the region and Japan should bolster its own security role to counter threats. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-117)

> The United States on Tuesday criticized China by calling its exploration activities "provocative and unhelpful to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region." (Xinhua 2014 501-694-046)

These and other segments were not meant to present China to the local audience as a threat to regional peace, rather they revealed and heightened the dominant narrative of

National Humiliation. Continually, these countries appeared to intentionally misrepresent or misunderstand the actions of China from their own perspective.

In response to the *Red Dragon Rising,* China was seen to more frequently engage with counter narratives than the US. *Pax Americana – Denials* was seen 197 times compared to *Red Dragon Rising – Denial* 408 times in each respective source. These responses to foreign views of China were often reorienting the reader to the real motivations and contextual clues not mentioned by foreign complaints. For example:

> Meanwhile, the U.S. strategic shift was also motivated by fears about China's challenges to the U.S. status as the dominant power in the world, although China has made it clear that it has neither the strength nor intention to vie with the United States for dominance. (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

> China's Air Defense Identification Zone over the East China Sea is actually a necessary measure to protect China's sovereignty and security and is in line with common international practice. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-118)

The counter case that was made in Xinhua can be summarized as following international practices and explicitly stating its intended purpose to the foreign powers. Showing a level of awareness of the dominant foreign narrative, China did assure the local audience once again of the accuracy of their own predilection: China is rising peacefully yet continues to be misunderstood by foreign powers.

Silk Road. Ranging from their well-intended desires for regional stability and economic development to the touting of their visits to foreign powers, China was persistently portrayed as having good-will for all regional players. But, most of all, China was communicating its desire for regional growth while keeping the status-quo regarding disputes:

> Xi said China supports Vietnam and Thailand in playing greater roles in international and regional affairs and will step up coordination and cooperation with them in jointly defending the interests of developing countries and achieving regional stability and sustainable development. (Xinhua 2011 377-369)

> "China's policy, to resolve all the conflicts bilaterally, is very principled

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stance, and all the think-tank and intellectual organizations around the world support this concept," he said. " Whether it is South China Sea or East China Sea maritime dispute, it should be resolved bilaterally and without the interference of a third, non-regional player." (Xinhua 2014 501-694-165)

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao started his two-day official visit to Malaysia Wednesday, meeting Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and visiting the University of Malaya, among others, to boost bilateral ties and cooperation between the two countries. (Xinhua 2011 377-044)

In an effort to de-escalate tension, the Chinese side has voluntarily withdrawn two law enforcement vessels from the waters. (Xinhua 2012-138)

Even when regional players were expressing grave concerns about the intentions of China, they were seen as acting in a conciliatory manner by de-escalating tensions. The primary emphasis of the most frequently coded theme in Xinhua was that China understands the concerns of other nations, yet is staying true its own norms and laws, seeking to settle matters with bilateral negotiations, and is developing the region into a harmonious ocean. Once again, the denial of these codes were in frequent quotes from foreign powers:

The much-anticipated maritime Silk Road calls for closer collaboration among members along the route. Yet, hurdles remain with unsolved funding as well as trade and investment barriers. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-185)

China rarely fully acknowledged the concerns of regional players, instead opting to present themselves as the bearers of the proper interpretation.

National Humiliation. The narrative of *National Humiliation* serves as both response to alternatives and contextualization of the Chinese interpretive framework. The sordid history of national humiliation that is further mentioned in the previous chapter is applied to the present context so as to continue viewing historical grievances applied to the present day, further establishing historical precedent for sovereignty, and setting the stage for warrants of China's present action:

With a distorted attitude toward history, the Japanese government still refuses to admit the nature, let alone scale, of its war crimes during WWII. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-118)

As for Japan's claim over the Diaoyu Islands, China has said repeatedly that no matter how hard the Japanese side attempts to promote its wrong positions, it cannot change the fact that the Diaoyu Islands are China's inherent territory. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-140)

Here the reader was presented with a confident portrayal that China was in the position

of victim while Japan continued to deny them the closure they expected after having

gone through the atrocities committed by the Japanese before and during WII:

The countries concerned had acknowledged that the South China Sea belonged to China and the situation had remained calm until 1968, when the United Nations reported the sea had oil resources, the article said. (Xinhua 2011 377-081)

Furthermore, the narrative was justified by telling us the motivation for renewed

tensions in the region, namely the discovery of oil others desire. Oddly, this was the same

imagined reason for escalating tensions that the New York Times gave China:

Shen Danyang, spokesman of the Ministry of Commerce, said Thursday that China was greatly concerned about the issue of the illegal detention of the Chinese nationals, urging Japan to properly handle the situation. (Xinhua 2012-392)

Liu reiterated that the Diaoyu Islands and its affiliated islands have been part of China's inherent territory since ancient times and that China's claim to the islands is backed by indisputable historical evidence. (Xinhua 2012-274)

"As a maritime country, China's carrying out of its legitimate and proper maritime activities does not warrant rebuke," Hong told a daily news briefing. (Xinhua 2013 1-500-397)

Advancing the narrative of being wronged and legitimizing Chinese actions in the region

was accomplished by claiming illegal activity by Japan and evidence being ignored by

outside parties. Continuously referring to historical documents, Xinhua reminded

readers of the credible claim that China has over the region:

Historical documents show in detail Chinese fished and traded around the Xisha Islands during the Song (960-1279), Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, which serves as proof for China's jurisdiction of the area. (Xinhua 2014 1-500-010)

In addition to increasing fidelity, it created an added sense of perceived foreign

hypocrisy in using history and legal precedence to justify their claims, yet dismissing

China's similar claims as illegitimate and aggressive.

Instances of denouncing these claims were few, yet they did acknowledge the

other position:

> Another argument for Japan's claim to the Diaoyu Islands is that the islets are
> not included in the territory which Japan renounced under the San Francisco
> Treaty signed with the United States in 1951 and at the time they had been placed
> under the administration of the United States. Japan also cited a bilateral
> agreement signed with the United States in 1971, claiming the United States
> "reverted" administrative rights of the Diaoyu Islands to it under that document.
> (Xinhua 2010 291-169)

These happened at infrequent rates, suggesting Xinhua did not engage in or acknowledge

opposing claims within the region.

In Xinhua, China was presented as a country that is simultaneously at odds with

others yet attempting to move forward with its own goals for the region that are rooted in

a sense of economic prosperity for China and others wanting to work with it. Yet, when

China's desires were hindered, the blame was placed on the shoulders of America and

regional countries. The historic memory of the humiliation remained a persist feature of

the narrative system employed to interpret how they should interpret the events.

China's view of America. Outside of China, the regional players were not

viewed with confidence in their intentions. The historical narratives that China

understandably replayed continued to dominate the view of outsiders. As such, the

question naturally arose as to what the relationship between these narratives about

America and Allies was and the implications on the events themselves as reflected in the

following hypotheses.

H15: The frequency of Cold Warrior Allies in China forecasts Chinese negative

events

H16: The frequency of Cold Warrior America in China forecasts Chinese negative events

H17: China's negative events forecast China's use of Cold Warrior America

H18: China's negative events forecast China's use of Cold Warrior Allies

Cold Warriors. While America was viewed as a strong nation, all of its actions within the region were unwelcome. Seen as either interventionists or attempting to contain the rise of China, America's outdated Cold War thinking was dominant in the narrative systems within China:

> Meanwhile, the United States has intensified its intervention in the territorial dispute over South China Sea between China and several southeastern Asian countries, under the excuse of protecting freedom of navigation. (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

To take it further China viewed US intervention in the region as generally destabilizing any peaceful actions or resolutions that they might enact. By backing their allies, selling arms to former foes, continuing to patrol, and commenting on Chinese actions, America was emboldening those with whom China was seeking bilateral negotiations and making solutions increasingly difficult:

> Washington's backing has emboldened countries like Japan and the Philippines to take series of provocative moves, which worsened the already tense situation and complicated the efforts to seek an amicable solution through dialogue. (Xinhua 2014 1-500-416)

> It is not the first time Washington has meddled in this region. Over past years, the South China Sea has become a new frontier in U.S. strategic pivot to Asia. (Xinhua 2014 1-500-029)

Overall, the pivot to Asia by the Obama administration was met with tepid feeling enshrouded with historical memory leading to distrust of Western powers.

Figure 4. *China's View of America. Illustrates the Mean of the Narratives with a Standards Error Bar.*
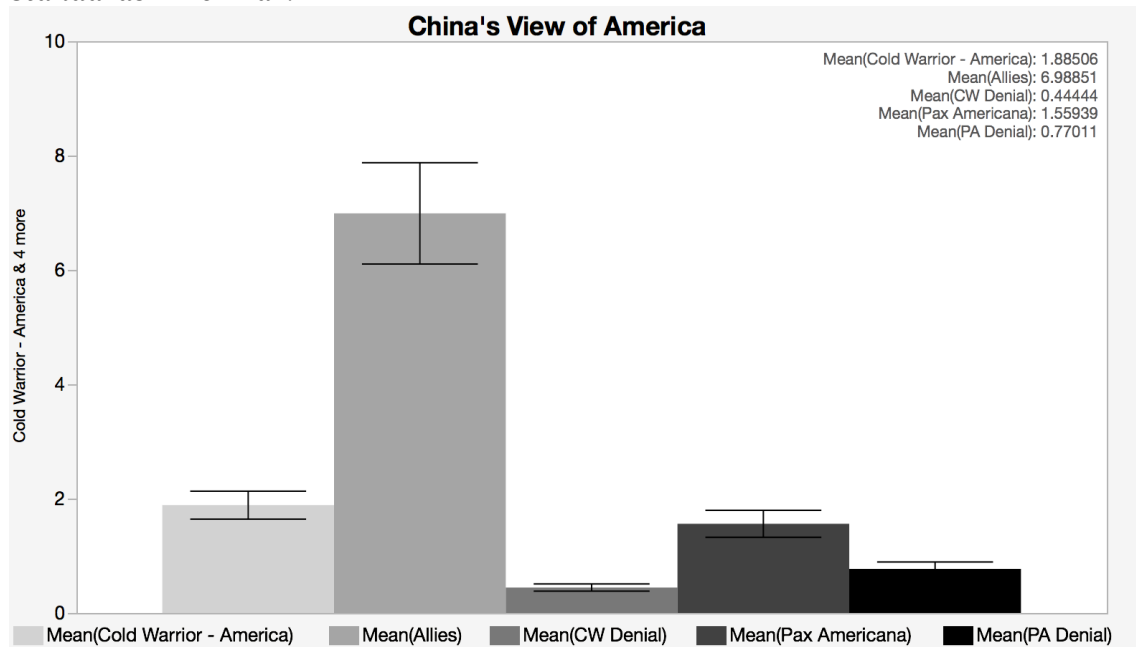
Each error bar is constructed using 1 standard error from the mean.

Cold Warrior Allies. Regional countries were not exempt from this all-

reaching historical memory either. Japan, in particular, was framed within the memory

of past wars. From wartime seizer of the Diaoyu Islands to war crimes committed by

Japanese soldiers, the Chinese continually interpret actions as hostile towards China:

> It is not the first time that Japan attempted to justify its grab of China's Diaoyu Islands by telling the world that "it is naming the islands," even though they were already named. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-116)

> Japan asserted its sovereignty over the islands during the China-Japanese War in 1895 and seized the islands through illegal means. (Xinhua 2012-467)

> While accusing China of attempting to change the status quo in the East China Sea, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry seemed to forget that Japan fired the first shot with the provocative move to "purchase" and "nationalize" the Diaoyu Islands last year. China is simply forced to take countermeasures to defend its legitimate rights. (Xinhua 2013 501-644-076)

Outside of Japan, Vietnam was another target of the narrative systems dominating the

interpretive framework found in Xinhua:

> Vietnam's unilateral action has complicated and escalated the problem and violated the consensus reached by both leaders, as well as the spirit of the

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Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), said Zhang. (Xinhua 2012-241)

While relying on consensus over legally binding agreements China saw the actions of others as violating the agreements reached in favor of unilateral actions that ignored or were outright hostile toward China's goals and intentions.

Cold Warrior Denial. Denying the Cold Warrior narrative did not go as far as altering the perceived intentions of America or others. Rather, while rejecting the actions, the narrative worked to create doubt about the success of these actions:

Interpreting Washington's Asia strategy as a move to contain China is wishful thinking. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-040)

At other times the narratives would add an element that regional nations expressed the intent of working with China to achieve peace:

He voiced his willingness to work with the Chinese side in a bid to continuously advance Japan-China strategic and mutually beneficial relations. (Xinhua 2010 291-256)

Rarely, however did China expressly contradict the claims made in the *Cold Warrior* narrative:

Washington does not intend to undermine China's stability or contain it, and supports the country's reform, the U.S. president said. (Xinhua 2014 501-694-169)

Similar to many forms of the denial codes these were quotes from foreign leaders and not Chinese leadership or news casting their intentions in a different light.

Pax Americana. Not unlike the denial codes, this positive conception of American actions was framed within the voice of Americans, which created a perceived credibility gap:

The U.S. military hopes to work with the Chinese side to establish a stable and reliable framework for bilateral relations, Schiffer said, adding that uninterrupted dialogue and exchange helps avoid misunderstandings. (Xinhua 2010 291-180)

At the same time, Obama stressed that the United States "looks forward to being able to welcome Japan to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations as

early as possible once current TPP members complete their domestic requirements," the statement said. (Xinhua 2013 1-500-202)

While this code occurred only a few times, it often included quotes from Americans making claims about their desire to build bilateral relations and maintain security while not interfering in Chinese affairs.

Pax Americana Denial. While denial of *Pax Americana* fits in a similar rhetorical space as the *Cold Warrior* codes the emphasis here was found to be casting doubt on the peaceful impact that America was having in the region while emphasizing their declining power:

> The decade-long anti-terrorism campaign, which diverted the U.S. attention and resources to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, has fueled the perception of the U.S. decline as the sole superpower, especially when it is suffering from a prolonged economic downturn and a worsening debt crisis. (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

> Swaine expressed worries that the Obama administration's execution of this shift and China's reaction "are combining to deepen mutual suspicion and potentially destabilize the entire area." (Xinhua 2011 377-368)

The focus of these statements was on undermining the credibility of America, not casting doubt on the intentions of the country.

This section offers a view of America found in the texts that appears as a distant power interfering and meddling in regional affairs only to find its actions to be destabilizing and its ability to influence in precipitous decline. Even regional actors were placed within the narrative framework of the historical humiliation suffered at the hands of multiple foreign powers as they expressed disagreement with the conclusions China had arrived at concerning the sovereignty of the South and East China Seas. When a country began to deviate from China's desires or negotiation outcomes they were labeled as hostile.

China's overall perception continued to be haunted by the historical memory of a once great empire to become a third-world nation. The narrative system was rhetorically crafted around the Century of Humiliation. While the outcomes seemed to be going according to their goals, regional players and America were seen as helpful, but they were also representative of old wounds to the Chinese. They hardly stopped to consider the perspective of the other. Instead, they were rather quick to set the actions of others in this framework.

Solutions and Economic Narratives. The final set of hypotheses examined were the Solutions and Economic Narratives hypotheses created from the review of RCT. Given the underlying assumption of economics at the center of human motivation, I sought to test the ensuing hypotheses.

 Some of these economic notions were focused on the amount of resources contained in the region, amount of trade between countries, and natural resources:

> China is the world's biggest energy consumer and heavily dependent on imported oil and natural gas with 58 percent and 31.6 percent respectively imported in 2013. (Xinhua 2014 1-500-114).

> On the economic front, China has become Japan's largest trading partner since 2011, when the volume of two-way trade reached 346.11 billion U.S. dollars, an increase of 14.2 percent year on year. (Xinhua 2012-367).

> A recent report on China's involvement in the South China Sea by the International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental research organization that focuses on conflict resolution, noted that much of the attention on the sea stemmed not only from the issue of sovereignty but also "the region's abundant natural resources and strategic location." (NYT 2012 315-043).

Furthermore, given the abundance of solution-oriented suggestions that appeared within the texts (n=1040), I wanted to test whether the solutions resulted in positive events as well:

H19: The frequency of Solutions in China forecasts Chinese positive events

H20: The frequency of Solutions in America forecasts American positive events

H21: China's positive events forecasts China's use of Solutions

H22: American positive events forecasts America's use of Solutions

H23: All Positive events forecasts use of the Economics Narratives

H24: All Positive events forecasts use of the Solutions Narratives

H25: The frequency of Economic in both countries forecasts positive events

H26: The frequency of Solutions in both countries forecasts positive events

Examples of these solutions appeared throughout the texts ranging from trade and

political actions to security, but sharing in the common thread of action:

> Asian countries need to build a community of shared interests, common destiny
> and shared responsibilities, Li said when delivering a keynote speech at the
> opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2014
> held in Boao, a coastal town in south China's Hainan province. (Xinhua 2014 501-
> 694-026).

> Instead of letting regional disputes derail the overall development of
> Washington-Beijing ties, the new U.S. ambassador to China could play a positive
> role in promoting bilateral relations, easing regional tensions, and contributing
> to peace and stability. (Xinhua 2014 1-500-416).

> Prime Minister Wen Jiabao told the two Americans that China and the United
> States should not view themselves as rivals, according to the Chinese state news
> media. (NYT 2010 146-049)

These initially did not interest me as narratives of trade and solutions appeared to hardly

be followed through on: however, testing these hypotheses is useful in examining the link

between the assumed economic self-interest of the countries and the events that ensue.

In my analysis of these two narratives and their significance within the stories

themselves, in terms of quality, I discovered nothing of note that would lead me to

conclude these are the most important motivating factors for either country. If anything,

the similarity of these narratives to the Chinese *Silk Road* makes them go together. The

most frequent narratives appearing within the text, summarized in Table 5, were the in-

group and out-group depictions of *National Humiliation*, *Cold Warrior, Silk Road, Pax

Americana,* and *Red Dragon Rising*.

Quantitative Analysis Approach

The qualitative analysis, while interesting for mapping the narrative landscape, is not conducive for creating a forecasting model that was promised at the outset. To assess TNCs ability to forecast two different models were selected: a time series and a Markov chain. The strength of selecting the two different approaches was associated with the direction of the research questions and the magnitude that the event or narratives would have on one another. The logic is that events create a need for interpretation such that a greater frequency of the dominant narratives would follow their associated event. This logic favors testing with an ARIMA model because events are interpreted as soon as they happen, and are detectable within short lags of the events. Second, that if narratives can forecast events then they must be present for an unknown period, up to several weeks, prior to the desired event such that the narrative framing is in play long enough to build support for the actions associated with the events. By this logic, ARIMA is not a suitable model because there is no likely causal effect at a consistent, known, and short lag time. Thus, I tested the hypotheses about narratives causing events using a simple Markov model. This form did not deal with the weight of the events or narratives, rather whether or not the observed narratives and the events relationship was more than the expected over the course of five weeks.

Time Series Analysis. In the time series ARIMA model, the events become the independent variable (cause) and the narrative data becomes the dependent variable (effect).

Modeling social dynamics requires the ability to follow changes through time. While stationary regression models describe how an independent variable affects the

outcome of dependent variables, these models assume no feedback between variables. TNC, however, as described in the previous chapter, assumes a variety of types of feedback between variables. For example, the internalized narrative impacting the interpretation and subsequent actions of the group are a form of this feedback between the two variables. The actions impact subsequent interpretations from the stock of narratives persisting through the group's memory and potentially influencing actions taken. For example, kinetic events (e.g. ramming another vessel) influence the interpretation within the discourse (e.g. the other group is responding because they invaded our territory) and the desirable response (e.g. boycotting goods from that country). Mathematically, the left and right sides of our equation change one another. As such, regression models are inappropriate for modeling these closed-loop systems due to the inherent feedback: "The common thread is that many social science hypotheses are concerned with the degree of persistence or memory, which refers to the rate at which a process moves toward an equilibrium level after being perturbed by a shock" (Box-Steffensmeier, Freeman, Hitt, & Pevehouse, 2014, Chapter 5, section 1). Importantly, to test TNC's hypotheses, the shock can be either rhetorical or physical.

ARIMA models include three terms: autoregressive (p), integrated (d), and moving average (q). The auto-regressive term (p) represents the idea that the best predictor of behavior at time *t* will be behavior at *t* -1, which can extend even further back (Box-Steffensmeier, et al, 2014). Integrated process (d), or the "I," denotes series that are nonstationary. Some changes in the series have the possibility of integrating themselves into data generation. According to Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2014), the autoregressive shock of an event diminishes exponentially over time, whereas the integrated process accumulates and does not leave. The last term (q) notes the moving

average where the impact of the event persists exactly q periods and then ceases to impact the data.

The statistical analysis is conducted using the ARIMA model. The observational time *t* is set at one-week interval throughout the five-year dataset (260 periods over 5 years). Other possibilities were to set the interval daily, monthly or yearly. The decision for weekly intervals is in response to Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo's (2002) and Wanta and Hu (1994) arguing for an optimal time lag for national media at weekly intervals. The caveat on this range is that each cites widely different time periods for lags within agenda setting literature, noting there is no agreed-upon period. Perhaps the simplest explanation for this decision is the one-week interval was in part due to inconsistent events and texts; thus, it is based on the tentative arguments from agenda setting literature and making a conservative estimate that a one-week period was selected. Once again, future research needs to be conducted in this area.

Markov Model. While the ARIMA model was used to determine the relationship between the events to narrative data, the same logic could not apply to reversing the direction of the hypotheses. In switching the direction, the relative magnitude of the narratives shifts from an immediate presence to one that persists for an unknown period of time. The Markov Model's inherent logic better fits because of the time lag. The observational period was set for five week processing the narrative instance. To calculate the relationship, this used a chi-square test for the independence of variables by calculating the frequencies to evaluate the relationship between the two variables and the population (Gravetter& Wallnau, 2011). The assumptions for the test of independence are the following: independence of observation and size of expected frequency. The former indicates that the observations are not from a singular source, while the latter requires the size of the observations to be greater than five due to the

distorting nature of a small expected frequency. In total there were 257 total

observations across the five-year period due to accounting for each narrative's impact

over the course of the proceeding five weeks.

Narratives and Events

The two principle questions asked in this dissertation are whether or not events

influence narratives, as well as whether or not narratives influence events. These are

further broken down into a number of specified hypotheses based on the actor (China or

US), event type (negative or positive), publishing source (NYT or Xinhua) and the

narrative codes (13 categories). As such, there could be a relative combination of over

104 different analyses conducted on this data set, not including conducting multiple

variables in a single analysis. While analysis can continue after this project on other sets

of variables, for this project the most important codes, events, and sources were selected

for preliminary analysis. Each hypothesis was also reversed in order so that a possible

loop could be detected as well. With such a large possible number, only 24 of the 104

were further analyzed based on the coding and possible content.

Thus far this chapter has described the methods used to analyze the stated

hypotheses, given a brief background necessary for understanding the codes, and

overviewed the codes themselves. To restate the principle questions of this dissertation:

RQ1: How do narratives expressed in the newspapers influence the events?

RQ2: How do events influence the narratives expressed in the national

newspaper?

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Both time series and chi-square tests were conducted on the above-mentioned hypothesis. The results of the hypothesis are addressed below.

Events influence the narrative

RQ2's focus on events influencing narratives as an explanatory mechanism. Tables 8 shows the values of the time series analysis conducted to test these hypotheses. The results show support for China's negative events result in an increase use of *Cold Warrior America*(H17) (p=<.0001), China's negative events to *Cold Warrior Allies* (H18) (p=<.0001), and China's negative events forecast China's use of *National Humiliation* (H12) (p=<.0001). However, negative event to *Red Dragon Rising Denial* (H13), positive events to *Silk Road* (H14), and positive events to *Solutions* (H21) were not significant.

See in Table 9, on the hypotheses American: American Positive Events forecast use of *Pax Americana* (H4) (p<.05) and American negative events forecast use of Red Dragon Rising (H7) (p<.05) are supported as well. In contrast, negative events to *National Humiliation* (H8), negative events to *Pax Americana Denial* (H3), and positive events to *Solutions* (H22) were not significant.

When I test for the combined instances of the positive events by both countries and the combined instances of the *Economics* (H23) did not find significant results. However, the *Solutions* narrative (H24) I did find significant results, (p=.0008), see Table 10.

Table 7. *Pre-Whitening for all Variables*

Source	Series	Process Order		
		Integration	MA	AR
Xinhua	Cold Warrior America	1	1	0
	Cold Warrior Allies	2	1	1
	National Humiliation	0	2	2
	Red Dragon Rising Denial	1	1	1
	Silk Road	0	0	1
	Solution	1	1	1
NYT	Red Dragon Rising	0	1	2
	National Humiliation	1	1	1
	Pax Americana	1	0	1
	Pax Americana Denial	0	0	1
	Solutions	0	1	1
Both	Economics	1	1	1
	Solutions	1	1	1
Events	China Negative	0	1	1
	China Positive	0	0	2
	American Negative	0	0	1
	American Positive	0	0	2
	Both Positive	1	0	1
	Both Negative	1	0	1

Table 8. *Xinhua News Time Series (p) Probability Values*

Narratives	Negative Events	Positive Events
Cold Warrior America	<.0001	-
Cold Warrior Allies	<.0001	-
National Humiliation	<.0001	-
Red Dragon Rising – Denial	0.1459	-
Silk Road	-	0.7321
Solutions	-	0.1408

Table 9. *NYT Times Series (p) Probability Values*

Narratives	Negative Events	Positive Events
Red Dragon Rising	.0092	-
National Humiliation	.0811	-
Pax Americana	-	.0441
Pax Americana Denial	.7945	-
Solution	-	.1457

Table 10. *Both Sources Time Series (p) Probability Values*

Narratives	Negative Events	Positive Events
Economics	-	.5670
Solution	-	.0008

Narrative influencing events

The chi-square test for independence was performed to examine the relationship between the narratives and events. Tables 11, 12, and 13 contain the summary results. In the American data, the chi-square test of independence indicates a significant relation between *National Humiliation* and negative events (H8) X^2 (3, N= 257) =8.46, $p<.05$ and a significant relationship between *Pax Americana* with positive events (H2) X^2 (3, N= 257) =10.66, $p<.05$. For the chi-square test of independence, the following did not reach the critical regions were: *Red Dragon Rising* and negative events (H5) X^2 (3, N= 257) =3.65, $p>.05$, *Pax Americana Denial* to negative events (H1) X^2 (3, N= 257) =2.53, $p<.05$, *Solutions* to positive events (H20) X^2 (3, N= 257) =5.34, $p<.05$, a statistically significant relationship between the variables.

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For the Xinhua texts chi-square test for independence were conducting with the following hypothesis. Results indicate a significant relationship for: *Cold Warrior Allies* with negative events (H15) X^2 (3, N= 257) =14.60, *p*<.01; *Silk Road* with positive events (H11) X^2 (3, N= 257) =15.71, *p*<.01, *National Humiliation* with negative events (H9) X^2 (3, N= 257) =11.47, *p*<.01; and *Solutions* with positive events (H19) X^2 (3, N= 257) =8.32, *p*<.05. Hypothesis that did not yield statistically significant relationships in Xinhua were: *Cold Warrior America* to negative events (H16) X^2 (3, N= 257) =5.35, *p*>.05, and *Red Dragon Rising* to negative events (H10) X^2 (3, N= 257) =3.65, *p*>.05.

The following two hypotheses were used for all positive events and any event. The chi-square test did not find significant results for *Economics* to positive events (H25) X^2 (3, N= 257) =4.43, *p*>.05; and *Solutions* to positive event (H26) X^2 (3, N= 257) =6.33, *p*>.05.

Table 11. *NYT Chi-Square Values to Narratives and event*

Variable	Chi-square	Event type
Red Dragon Rising	3.65	Negative
National Humiliation	8.46*	Negative
Pax Americana	10.66*	Positive
Pax Americana Denial	2.53	Negative
Solutions	5.34	Positive

Df = 3 for all tests.
*<.05
**<.01

Table 12. *Xinhua Chi-square Values Applied to the Narratives and Events*

Variable	Chi-square	Event type
Cold Warrior Allies	14.60**	Negative
Cold Warrior America	5.35	Negative
National Humiliation	11.47**	Negative
Red Dragon Rising Denial	1.25	Negative
Silk Road	15.71**	Positive
Solution	8.32*	Positive

Df = 3 for all tests.
*<.05
**<.01

Table 13. *Both Sources Chi-Square with Narrative to Events*

Variable	Chi-square	Event type
Economics	6.33	Any Event
Solutions	4.43	Any Event

Df = 3 for all tests.
*<.05
**<.01

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this project was to better understand the communicative conditions for interstate conflict. In Chapter 1, I reviewed and analyzed previous attempts of forecasting for their relative successes (Chadefaux, 2014; Chourci, 1974; Gleditsh & Ward, 2011; Holsti, 1963; Leetaru, 2011; and Newcombe, et al, 1974). Previous projects use fascinating model such as economic expenditures (Newcombe, et al. 1974), while more nuanced works developed complex computational text analysis tools that focused on lexical meaning for forecasting conflict (Leetaru 2011). Yet, the models struggled to identify meaningful tension and describe the particulars of the conflict. In summary, a robust understanding of the parties and their position on any given conflict was missing. It was as if we were predicting conflict from 20,000 feet and not dealing with the persons on the ground. In seeing some shortcomings of those attempts, namely their avoidance of emic understandings and opting for the higher level structural indicates, I elected to develop a communicatively informed theory for conflict forecasting.

After further research in conflict forecasting, I came to identify two divergent approaches to comprehending conflict. The first I called the "economic approach" while the second I named the "cultural approach." In the chapter 2, I used the matter of suicide bombing to highlight the dissimilarities between the two. Despite the fact that I would primarily focus on interstate conflict and opt to conduct my case study on the prominent South and East China Sea disputes, the suicide bombing example functioned to highlight the contrasting differences between the economic and cultural models. RCT was the theory on which I focused to exemplify the economic model because it is a theory at the forefront of political scientific thought. It assumes maximization of utility or material gain, rationality by the actor, and self-interest. The heart of my criticism to this approach is that the loosely defined terms are underspecified in their parameters and indicators. It

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is unclear whether utility is to be measured by the individual's perception or by imposing it on them; in their rationality, it is not clear whether or not actors are aware of the full range of choices or if they are bound by their perception; then as a researcher, it is unclear how I am to know the end-goal of the individual's self-interest and explain mundane or altruistic acts. In contrast, the cultural approach strives to understand the symbolic process of understanding within a group and how that correlates with conflict (Geertz, 1973; Swindler, 1986). From Hofstede's (1991) cultural indicators to Huntington's (1996) conceptualization of cultural identities, this approach puts forward the thesis that culture matters, but how exactly it does and how we can use it to forecast conflict is not as clear. The infighting appeared to result in an inability to conduct forecasting of conflict as well. Rather than universally dismissing both, my theory responds to insights from both theories and requires us to dig deeper into the communicative world of culture and conflict.

In Chapter 3, I posited a theory that simultaneously accounts for the internal interpretations and indicators of heightened tensions: TNC. At the conceptual core of the whole theory is Fisher's (1987) narrative paradigm, which sees persons as primarily making sense of the world through story. I borrow from Halverson, Goodall & Corman's (2011) model when defining narrative and establishing expected narrative trajectories from rhetorical forms. Centrally, these narratives have shared story elements and can become an interrelated system of cultural references and rhetorical outcomes, which create expectations and interpretations (Bernardi, Cheong, Lundry, & Ruston 2012). Other orbiting concepts that I utilized were systems theory, nationalism, and strategic communication. Systems theory takes a macro view of phenomena because of the assumptions of non-summativity, wholeness, goal-orientations, equifinality, and open/closed systems. Nationalism is defined by Anderson (2009) as "an ideological

movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'" (p. 9). Hogan (2009) furthered these ideas by linking nationalism and narrative together as symbolic actions distinguishing in-group and out-group members or actions. Finally, the concept of strategic communication was examined to justify how nations engage with the hearts and minds of their own group members and other groups' members. At the core of TNC is the narrative paradigm and systems theory with the specific application in interstate conflict and added contextual elements of nationalism and strategic communication. Taken together, these concepts lead me to posit that society's narrative systems reveal desirable courses of action to achieve national goals, which can create the conditions for conflict.

Having conceptualized the theory in Chapter 3, I tested TNC using a mixed methods approach to analyzing the ongoing disputes in the South and East China Seas that is discussed in Chapter 4. Not only is this dispute on the minds of many, but it has also become more urgent given recent events. Are China (the rising power) and America (the status quo power) on course for an all-out war? To answer this concern, I gathered data from the most widely circulated news outlets in each country – the Xinhua News Agency and the New York Times. I aimed to establish a correlation between the narratives and the events and vice versa. If these links could be made, I could begin approaching that crucial question of whether or not war is inevitable. In other words, do America and China actually see one another as obstacles or potential partners in world affairs? Whether or not I find that to be true in the public discourse, are we doomed for that trajectory or can we change it? Chapter 4 describes how it is I approach both the content analysis and the correlation testing with Time Series and a Markov model. Through content analysis, I arrived at 13 unique narratives and stabilizing and

destabilizing events over the course of the five years. With both the events data and narrative completed, I conducted the time series and Markov tests for 26 different hypotheses that were presented in Chapter 5.

In this Chapter, I present a discussion of the theory, the study, and its findings. I revisit the research questions and hypotheses stated in the previous chapters by discussing their significance. Then, I discuss the contributions of TNC theoretically and methodologically. Next, I review limitations of my research and present future directions for research applying TNC. Finally, I will offer concluding remarks.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

I began this dissertation with the goal of better understanding the communicative conditions for interstate conflict. Two central questions immediately presented themselves: (a) are interstate conflicts able to be forecasted based on communication conditions, and (b) what impact do actions of nation states have on the narratives? To answer these questions, I began with available newspapers from the U.S. and China because they both have significant involvement in the conflict. Past research into this area had begun an interest in the events and the discourse within texts. Their methods did not examine narratives; rather, they looked for action with absolute values associated to a wide range of them. Guided by my conceptualization in Chapter 3, mainly the narrative theory and trajectories I was unclear which caused the other. Did the narratives create a desirable action as the idea of trajectories posit? Or, did the events results in a preferred interpretation? These questions eventually were articulated in the following research questions:

RQ1: How do narratives expressed in the newspapers influence the events?

RQ2: How do events influence the narratives expressed in the national newspaper?

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In total twelve of the hypothesis were supported by the time series and Markov analysis.

Table 14. *Chi-square Values Applied to the Narratives and Events Report*

Variable	Chi-square	Event type	Hypothesis Support
Xinhua News Agency			
Cold Warrior Allies	14.60**	Negative	H15: Yes
Cold Warrior America	5.35	Negative	H16: No
National Humiliation	11.47*	Negative	H9: Yes
Red Dragon Rising	1.25	Negative	H10: No
Denial			
Silk Road	15.71**	Positive	H11: Yes
Solution	8.32**	Positive	H19: Yes
New York Times			
Red Dragon Rising	3.65	Negative	H5: No
National Humiliation	8.46*	Negative	H8: Yes
Pax Americana	10.66*	Positive	H2: Yes
Pax Americana Denial	2.53	Negative	H1: No
Solutions	5.34	Positive	H20: No
Both Sources			
Economics	6.33	Any Event	H25: No
Solutions	4.43	Any Event	H26: No

Df = 3 for all tests.
*<.05
**<.01

Table 14 shows which of hypotheses were supported or not for the relationship between narratives and events by a Markov, chi-square test. For Xinhua, the negative out-group depictions of regional players and their own national humiliation at the hands of such persons are supported in their ability to forecast negative events. As has been mentioned throughout the project, narratives are created with desired outcomes in mind. There are two possible things happening here: (1) Xinhua, the government mouthpiece, increases the frequency of their reporting of either a negative out-group or a positive in-group prior to events in order to prepare the people for ensuing events; (2) this is a persistent view that is frequently displayed in the media but is not causing the destabilizing events. The first could be telling the public how the PRC is thinking or wanting the public to think about actions that are to come. I mention the second point to be conservative in this conclusion because there remain other possibilities for causation. Alternatively, the *Silk Road* and *Solutions* to positive events also show support. Once again, there appears to be a pattern emerging in Xinhua, either (1) preparing the people for how to interpret coming actions by the PRC or (2) a persistent interpretation of their actions that is being caused by a different variable. Within China, internal stability when the government is benefiting the people and fulfilling the promises – such as national reunification and becoming a world power – is a powerful motivating factor for the PRC. The latter goal appears to be fulfilled when it is standing up to regional players that have previously bullied China (*Cold Warrior Allies* and *National Humiliation*), yet it is economically benefiting the region and striving to solve the disputes (*Silk Road* and *Solution*). Continued success in this area is paramount for stability such that is comes as little surprise that these narratives would be pushed and corresponding events would follow, or at least that the expected outcome is established and the interpretation is reinforced.

The second possibility is brought up not merely to be conservative regarding these conclusions, but due to the complexity of national identity and narrative systems. The persistent interpretation that is causing the action or lack of action is also in relation to the internal narratives systems that makes up part of the whole. Whole systems of interpretations cannot be isolated or summarized in a singular communicative expression. The question of which communicative expression of the overall system of interpretation remains a salient question that needs further exploration. Yet, as the data currently stands the relationships between these narratives and events exist. Apart from mapping the origins and historic moves within the system, both internally and externally, it is difficult to know the event and narrative history such that we can isolate the interpretive crux.

Two that tests did not find support for were the *Red Dragon Rising Denial* to negative events and the *Cold Warrior America* to negative events. In the first, a test examined whether or not they would deny their hostile actions while also continuing to act in that manner. The second is interesting in that the supported hypothesis from *Cold Warrior Allies* reveals the narrative-to-action sequence is not with America but with regional players. In my view, this is supported by the latter supported hypothesis of negative events to *Cold Warrior America*, which I discuss below. Essentially, the desired outcome is against those in the surrounding region with competing claims and not overt hostilities towards America, yet there remains some animosity toward the Americans captured in the second set of hypotheses.

On the American side, for narratives-to-events, both *National Humiliation* to negative events and *Pax Americana* to positive events show support for the hypotheses, while others do not. On the one hand, *National Humiliation* to negative events implies the U.S. and Allies do not pay heed to the subjective view of the Chinese and continue to

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press their opposition to unilateral solutions by the Chinese. Alternatively, this implies the U.S. and Allies recognize how the Chinese interpret these events and still persist in opposing China's action through a show of strength. The *Pax Americana* to positive events is similar to China's positive in-group and events. America continues to extol the beneficial role of American security and intervention in the region and then conducts actions that are in-line with those soft-power goals of peace in the region. If not, then it is a persistent narrative about the impact of America in the world that is told to the public as a precursor to the event. What is most interesting here is that the NYT are not censored by government, which means this is not coordination between the actions and events, which is a possibility with Xinhua.

The unsupported hypotheses are *Red Dragon* to negative events, *Pax Americana Denial* to negative events, and *Solutions* to positive events. The *Solutions* to positive events I interpret as an American Foreign Policy misstep because it has been U.S. position to not solve the problem but to ensure bilateral agreements are reached with all parties and security is maintained. Either the U.S. is not pushing solutions or pushing solutions with little follow through. This ought to further problematize the credibility issue the Chinese continually point out about U.S. actions in the region. *Pax Americana Denial*, again, was a check to see if there was a gap between countering claims of destabilizing action while at the same time persisting in those very actions. One surprising detail was that the *Red Dragon Rising* to negative events relationship was not significant. The rhetorically desirable outcome of a growing threat in China is to show support for U.S. alliances, which is accomplished through the positive *Pax Americana* and *Solutions* to positive events. The interesting aspect of this narrative is that the independent and dependent variables switch.

Table 15. *ARIMA Values for Events to Narrative Hypotheses Report*

Event	Narrative	Probability	Hypothesis Support
	New York Times		
Negative	Red Dragon Rising	.0092**	H7: Yes
Negative	National Humiliation	.0811	H8: No
Positive	Pax Americana	.0441*	H4: Yes
Negative	Pax Americana Denial	.7945	H3: No
Positive	Solution	.1457	H22: No
	Xinhua News Agency		
Negative	Cold Warrior America	<.0001**	H17: Yes
Negative	Cold Warrior Allies	<.0001**	H18: Yes
Negative	National Humiliation	<.0001**	H12: Yes
Negative	Red Dragon Rising Denial	0.1459	H13: No
Positive	Silk Road	0.7321	H14: No
Positive	Solution	0.1408	H21: No
	Both		
Positive	Economics	.5670	H23: No
Positive	Solutions	.0008	H24: Yes

Df = 3 for all tests.
*<.05
**<.01

The events-to-narrative hypotheses (Table 15) show the interpretation or justification of a country's actions and the subsequent sense making happening internally. For example, H7 negative events by U.S. and Allies to *Red Dragon Rising* is supported. After the U.S. acts in a negative way, the suggested interpretation is to blame China. In other words, we are only doing these negative things because China is a scary force that needs to be checked or deflecting the blame to say China is doing worse. This is the classic "they started it" argument for negative behavior. Then, after positive American actions, the public interprets them, once again, as stabilizing the region and working for the good of other, which is captured in the support for positive events to *Pax Americana* (H4). These two narratives sharply contrast and justify American action against Chinese actions, which is taken as principle negatives. What these say is the predominate view expressed in the qualitative section that China is harming the region and America is seeking to save it remains a persistent view within America. I would assume this form reaches further to our actions in other regions and principles actors.

The unsupported hypotheses appear to more clearly unveil the system of interpretation. Neither negative events to *National Humiliation* nor negative events to *Pax Americana Denial* are supported. These were set to capture the sense of America being reflexive about their destabilizing actions, which they are not. Even in the NYT after America does something destabilizing, there is little self-criticism about the possible impact of those actions or how they can be furthering a perception within China that is rooted in their subjective historical memory. Now, America is not known for keeping in mind historical events and interpretations, yet I expected some sense of self-criticism. The last hypothesis that was not supported was the positive events to *Solutions*. As mentioned in the previous section, the NYT has no support for *Solutions* and Positive Events or Positive Events to *Solutions* being related. This should actually be

taken seriously by U.S. foreign policy makers because they are not offering ways forward that appear to have any followed-through or effectiveness.

Returning now to Xinhua's hypotheses for events to narratives we see three supported and three unsupported. Interestingly, I see a rhetorical relationship between the *Cold Warrior America*, *Cold Warrior Allies*, and *National Humiliation* all increasing in frequency after China conducts a negative event. Summarily, these three narratives entail a shifting of the blame to outside parties for China's action. It is a form of Chinese nationalism that is rising here, which is interesting in that it is put forth by the state run media, so the extent to which the public holds to this must be examined. State influence aside, the reality that the state is acting while at the same time blaming others is a rhetorically destructive cycle of conflict, which will undoubtedly carry over to their relationships with other countries. The hypotheses that are unsupported are negative events to *Red Dragon Rising Denial* and positive events to *Silk Road* and *Solutions*. Negative events to *Red Dragon Rising Denial* in relation to the supported events is interesting because China is not attempting to argue against accusations placed on them of building up their military force and being aggressive. Rhetorically, this counter would fit well with the others, which suggests the possibility of further tests. The last two, surprisingly, display a dearth of retrospective interpretation about positive actions. Unlike the U.S., China is not exclaiming its good deeds and how it will continue to bring safety and security to the region after it has done a positive thing; a possible opportunity to increase good will with others around then.

For China, the data is showing it is a predictable actor in terms of behavior and desired interpretations. Prescriptively, the portrayal of *National Humiliation* and *Cold Warrior Allies* leads to negative events, which then lead to further use of those narratives. There is a feedback loop occurring here. As China conducts some

destabilizing event, they retell the National Humiliation stories in order to recount the negative images of regional actors, which gives rise to a desire for more destabilizing events. China is ever the victim of the bad actors around them and is thus justified in acting rashly, emotionally, or harshly towards others. That is one way of looking at the loop. There appears to be three possibilities need to be addressed: fulfillment, escalation, or an alternative cause.

One alternative is that Chinese have been playing a long game to resolve the ongoing disputes in the region and have been building up islands while acting in hostility towards others. Rhetorically, the *National Humiliation* narrative appears to focus on the goals of national reunification, restoration of the harm done during that period, and reestablishing regional hegemony. Ostensibly, this appears to be to occurring. The Chinese are acting and expanding their territory and asserting their desires for the region with some success. If that were true, then there would be no escalation of tensions as the rhetorical desires are being fulfilled.

The second question is whether or not there are escalating tensions. In Chapter 4, I explained the difficulty of tracking the subjectivity towards different events that I have not resolved. The problem with previous methods was to assert that there are types of events taken to the same degree or magnitude across cultures. If a Chinese vessel rams a Japanese vessel, and we are assuming that one event has one meaning, then we might assume this to be a significant event. If we follow the news, perhaps our interpretation will be affirmed. Yet, if we consider the subsequent actions and resolution of that event apart from the rhetoric, we may conclude that it is benign. Within the scope of this project, I determined to not settle that issue, and instead, I opted to assert an equivalent value to all negative and positive events. In short, my data cannot answer questions related to escalation. Apart from settling valid measurements for events and escalating

tensions, tracking the rise and fall of tensions will be difficult. Yet, the problem must be addressed if there is a feedback loop or a trigger for evaluation because recognizing it becomes of vital importance to national security and diplomatic relations. I believe recognizing rising and falling tensions begins with this work, capturing the narrative systems within these countries such that trajectories and desired outcomes are known. This work will help us understand what events, sequence of events, or framing might indicate or precipitate rising tensions.

Perhaps the most interesting regarding this possible causal loop is why war has not occurred. While I do not believe the Thucydides trap – that the status quo and rising power must fight one another – to be inevitable, the question remains as to why there was not an escalation. Is it that perhaps the American loop intersects with the Chinese to deescalate the tensions such that a there is a positive feedback loop disrupting escalatory actions or desired action? One aspect is that the Chinese side plays the diplomatic theater and satisfied the desired outcome. Alternatively, the Western powers are having plenty of troubles from the 2008 financial crisis resulting in the rise of nationalism in American and Europe, yet making the CCP look better to the locals. Yet, internally for China I am concerned that when the rocky foundation of their economy is challenged, will the status quo point outward to keep the people's desire stable or will it be a beast that the CCP cannot control? To find out whether or not "runaway narratives" are possible, further research is required.

These speculations get to the real possibility of a third causal mechanism that was not captured here. First, internal events of a nation, I assume, have an impact on the manner of events and the interpretation as well. For example, the rise of President Trump might bring a more assertive and accusatory tone with the Chinese. That remains to be seen. In China, unresolved issues of income disparity and rising health concerns

due to pollution remain unsettled internal issues that might press external actions or instigate portraying outsiders in a more negative tone. For both, there are even more global and internal concerns to consider; Russian, Terrorism, North Korea, or changing political features in the region could all impact the events and interpretation. In any system, we need to understand the weight each element has and what shifts occur to cause conflict.

To answer the question of whether fulfillment is occurring, if or when escalation will happen, or whether or not an additional variable or aspect of the system needs increased consideration will need to be addressed by future studies. This data set is simply not equipped to answers those questions sets. I will mention how it could be done in the future research section.

To summarize the project, these tests sought to uncover how narratives and events interact with one another and under what conditions conflicts might arise. The newspaper data that was collected was inductively examined according to narrative themes presented in each of the articles. Fascinatingly, persistent themes used by each party to identify themselves and the rhetorical other arose. Events reported in the Xinhua expressed a large concern for a *Cold War* mentality of the U.S. and Allies while presenting themselves as a peaceable power (*Silk Road*) that has been misunderstood and abused at the hands of foreign powers (*National Humiliation*). Meanwhile, US news was seen reporting on the threat of the *Red Dragon Rising*, all the while telling of the noble intentions of the U.S.'s security measures in the region (*Pax Americana*). In total, the results demonstrate support for the ideas that events and narratives have a correlational relationship in accordance with existing narrative systems.

Contributions

The first notable theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the development

of a general communication theory of forecasting conflict within a narrative paradigm.

As argued in previous chapters, the current models and attempts at forecasting have

significant problems. RCT has produced a wide range of forecasting models, but it has

weaknesses in its vague terms, which are applicable to any and all circumstances (i.e.,

explains too much). The assumed economic utility for the actor is only stated post-hoc,

and it asserts reductionist indicators at the level of economic gain while disregarding the

complex motivational factors behind human action. I tested hypotheses that would be

narrative expressions from RCT: H23 and H25. H25 examined whether or not the

Economic narrative had a relationship with any events, and it was not supported. H23

examined whether or not positive events on both sides included responses by the

Economic narrative, and it was unsupported as well. This is significant because the RCT

model's claim of economic utility is not being expressed or influencing positive actions,

which ought to occur because avoiding conflict is a primary means of economic gain.

What this data shows, however, is the rationality of these actors is not economic in

nature. It is rational, but it is rational within a system of meaning that carries an internal

coherence and fidelity to the actors. The reality is that China and the U.S. have differing

systems of meaning that should not and cannot be reduced to economic benefit;

otherwise, the explanatory factors and ability to forecast will be unattainable. These

systems of thinking cannot be decontextualized from the expressions historically and

presently seen, and in relation to their actions.

The cultural models (as I called them) have produced rich emic descriptions of

meaning and a general theory that cultures influence actions, but they have yet to

provide clarity regarding how such meaning translates into behavior, if at all, thus

hindering our ability to forecast. This work reveals potential for pursuing a communication-based approach to forecasting conflict. The communicative expressions of each system reveal a rationality that is shared within the group and is also liable to change. Unlike the prevalent models reviewed in Chapter 2, TNC posits cultures as both stable in a macro sense but open systems that can and do alter due to both internal and external constraints. TNC demonstrates validity by satisfying the primary challenge brought against those models while capturing the meaning expressed by the groups being studied. In addition, this dissertation shows a robust means of mapping the complex causality of narrative-event chains by demonstrating the capability of mapping discourses in order to forecast events.

The Theory of Narrative Conflict. TNC was created to accomplish forecasting by capturing emic meaning denoted by narratives and employ those meanings in forecasting future conflict as a result of narrative trajectories. TNC examined existing narratives expressed in the public to forecast actions. The narratives were coupled with their rhetorically desirable outcomes and tested for their ability to forecast. For the discipline, this is a theory about how communication functions in an international context.

The narratives analyzed here provide important opportunities for future research and studies. The narratives discovered here work to make sense of an ongoing struggle over sovereignty and security within the South and East China Seas. Both the US and China express a desire to make sense of what the other group's actions mean within a trepid historical context and amidst uncertainty about future security possibilities, trade relations, and alliances.

The data from The New York Times reveals that over the course of the five years studied, America desired to see itself as strong player in the region and expressed deep

concerns about potential conflicts with China while rarely tempering their concerns through reflections about the range of possible motivations for the rising military costs or actions of the Chinese. Interestingly, the U.S. newspaper does not often posit that China could be acting in a non-confrontational manner; *Red Dragon Rising Denial* is found 131 times in The New York Times as against *Pax Americana Denial*, which is found 197 times. As stated in the previous chapter, the American narrative is one of strength with little attempt to understand or seriously engage the alternative Chinese view.

On the other hand, Xinhua frequently portrays China as a strong nation seeking peaceful resolution with its regional partners; yet, particular parties like Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines – all emboldened by America's assurances – are undermining development and growth in the region. This is further contextualized within the ongoing narrative of *National Humiliation* that frames China as attempting to build its way out of its historical circumstances. Like the narratives presented in America, there is little thoughtful engagement with the alternative view.

One fascinating observation that I find from the qualitative data is that both countries lack a sense of self-reflexivity and persistent acknowledgement of the other's position. In a word, this is like the fundamental attribution error introduced by Jones and Harris (1967) found at a national level. Even at this level, states are attributing positive qualities to their own actions while seeing negative attributes in the other. This brings up a question: are there unique attributes of these countries that make them less reflective and more critical or is this a normal behavior at this level? We might assume China's state-run media is naturally less critical of the state's action because they are censored and controlled, while the free press of the U.S. would be more critical because they are free from overt control. However, that assumption is not supported here. Both

are seen to lack self-reflexivity. What this suggests is that each country's sense of narrative rationality is insulated within the newspaper and, perhaps, by the larger cultural frameworks that function at different discursive levels. To the extent that these stories are read, digested, and find agreement amongst audiences, each society's narratives will impact their ability to properly understand, engage with, and analyze the meaning given by the other country to frame or interpret any particular event. Lack of exposure or dismissiveness on the part of U.S. citizens as to how China views itself will result in a lack of understanding, undesirable outcomes, and different actions sought after for resolution. There is a historical parallel with a famous incident that started the British Empire and the Qing Dynasty down a path to the 100 Years of National Humiliation that China underwent from 1839 to 1949. In the late 18th Century, the demand for Chinese tea, silk, spices and pottery continued to rise, as did the sale of opium by English traders. In 1793, Lord George Macartney, the British diplomat to China, met with Qianlong Emperor to formally open trade between the two nations. Yet, Macartney refused the typical practice of kowtowing to the Emperor. The Emperor, in line with Chinese practices did not recognize or give England the treatment that it felt its technological and military might require. The combination of Chinese xenophobia and Western hubris led to a vast cultural misunderstanding. Combined with a number of internal pressures and growing external problems, the Chinese found themselves at the beginning of the 100 years of National Humiliation. While there is much to be discussed regarding the ethics and fault of that period of time, I believe little can be disputed in terms of the centrality of cultural misunderstanding and lack of reflexivity for all parties leading up to and persisting through these events. Not that the event itself caused the subsequent Opium Wars or unequal treaties that China endured during that 100 years. It

is, however, an example of steadfastly-held beliefs likely influencing trajectory towards conflict.

An example of a similar phenomenon is seen in the hypotheses that were supported on the part of the Americans (H2, H4 H7, & H8). These all contain a narrative trajectory and rationale to continue increased military involvement in the region and call for further support of Allies, while concomitantly blaming all regional problems on China's attempt at regional hegemony. Apart from confronting these perceived realities, I do not see how the conflict can be resolved through discussion. America will continue to see itself as the peacemaker with concerns over an alarming increase in military expenditure by China while not engaging with China's self-perception of reclaiming its national prestige and desiring economic prosperity for all.

By examining systems of narratives, one can get a deeper sense of why conflict may appear inevitable; the realities reflect different understandings that cause narratives from the other to appear to have little fidelity or coherence. Both of these sources provide and create different interpretations of events. For example, after a destabilizing event, The New York Times blames the rise of China while Xinhua blames America and her allies for furthering China's *National Humiliation*. These positions contradict one another and struggle to co-exist within the mind. For each citizen, it will take less cognitive energy to follow the patterns of interpretation within his or her given context. The idea of national identity can therefore be more fundamental to, and create or greatly impact, the media frames such that the factor of democracy or state control over the media does not negate but becomes subordinate to this underlying element of one's worldview. While internal debates might occur (between citizens in the U.S.), the out-group (China) will perpetuate the opposite interpretation of events. Thus, even when hearing the interpretation from a foreign source, the fundamental question becomes:

why should I believe the stranger over my own country? The earnest answer appears to be: they are not familiar with my system and therefore they mistake the facts. Yet, is there a breaking point whereby one's own national identity ceases to have credibility and alternative interpretations will be sought? How this can be addressed remains to be explored. It is relevant to think about what to do moving forward and how both parties can come to a somewhat mutual framing of events.

Further, the theory contributes to the field by capturing the complexity of narrative realities and their relation to events. In contrast to the RCT, which reduce goals to economic ones or cultural models, which capture rich emic material, TNC does both. Two of the central hypotheses (25 & 23) stated in this study were found to have no support. These hypotheses explained that the narratives of solutions and economics were influenced by events; however, they were not supported upon analysis of the data. This finding is significant toward not supporting the economic-focused models of predicting events for economic gain. At least, the interpretation by each news source does not follow that trend.

This theory also helps with the shortcomings of the cultural model that was reviewed in Chapter 2. To summarize the criticism of the cultural models that range from Hofstede to Huntington, culture matters, but the way in which it exerts its influence remains a contested issue. TNC, alternatively, shows the way that a system of narratives can be mapped and used to both forecast action and interpretation. In essence, culture becomes a system of beliefs that are collectively used to interpret events and set desirable outcomes for the collective.

TNC was created due to the issues raised in those theories as well as the positive aspects that remained. RCT saw the need to forecast but attempted to do so apart from understanding particular cultures. The cultural perspective engaged with culture without

forecasting. If anything, it snubbed the notion of forecasting, which can be seen in part as a response to Huntington's work. At the core, TNC struck a balance between the need to forecast and the need to understand the meaning created by the group. I believe that this theory shows promise with fine-tuning by linguistic and narrative coding aided by statistical measures that can result in better understanding of the communicative aspects forecasting conflict. It should be noted that there are flaws to the method of analysis that will be discussed in the limitations section.

Methodological Advances. This research improves on existing methods in several ways. Previous studies do not have comprehensive and generalizable findings. They ignore instances where war did not occur, and they use yearly indicators that miss escalation of tensions in real time. To address those issues, I opted for more fine-grained analysis and dove into themes within the texts themselves rather than creating a lexicon of search terms apart from reading the text. Secondly, one of the strengths of this study was the use of event-based data between the two actors, assessed by examining whether or not an action was destabilizing as well as who took part. For instance, if America and China engaged in discussion, then both were seen to take positive actions. However, if America threatened China, then they alone would be marked as taking a destabilizing action. In contrast to previous event-based data, which asserts a singular type of action is equal in all circumstances (e.g., all routine military drills are destabilizing), this study opted for a simple positive and negative scale because it was deemed impossible to truly obtain accurate data based on local interpretations. Assigning magnitudes and similarities to each event assumes the researcher has already obtained a high-level understanding assigned by the group. The alternative choice is to arbitrarily assign absolute magnitudes to types of events as GDELT does. This study opted for a more

conservative approach to this problem, by assigning singular values to all positive and all negative events.

Methodologically, this dissertation has demonstrated the novel use of conducting what most avoid, human coding. As argued in Chapter 4, machine coding isolates specific words. As a result, it misses the interpretive framework or narrative presented within the newspaper. If we create a solid sense of these narratives and their attributes through human coding, then we can program machines to become increasingly nuanced. This study demonstrates the robustness of the narrative data that is present in the two sources, which creates exciting possibilities for future forecasting. In addition, this work creates space for further use of qualitative research in forecasting. The caveat for this theory and method is that it is in need of further fine-tuning through future research.

Limitations

By nature, this study is an exploration and with the creation of a new theory there are several limitations that should be considered when examining the data. These limitations involve the various ways the data was collected and processed, which suggest means of fine-tuning for future study.

Collection. The sample size of the study, when taking into consideration the volume of publications, political differences, and structural differences, is small. The New York Times, while one of the most widely read papers in the U.S., is not representative of all the national coverage of East and South China Sea issues. The same can be said of the state Xinhua News Agency. In order to garner a better understanding of coverage, more papers within the countries should be surveyed and coded. Further, outside perspectives from regional players are missing. By adding prominent regional players, such as Japan, Philippines, and Vietnam, the regional perspective can be examined, which ought to have a significant impact on the likelihood of regional conflict.

The move to multilateral perspectives would complicate the methods developed here because every event would need to be coded for all actors that have participated in any particular events resulting in proliferation of data. Yet, by including multiple perspectives, it would serve to increase accuracy of identifying the valence of events (i.e., to what extent the Philippines is upset at being rammed by a Chinese frigate and how others perceive it too). Increased background and research into the individual countries would be necessary to correctly place the narratives themselves too. It can be accomplished but would necessitate a larger workforce. This would be a vital step because the extent to which countries such as Japan or the Philippines are tacitly encouraging or discouraging regional conflict remains unknown.

Another limitation in the data collection phase was the use of keywords to screen stories for relevance to these conflicts. While I did separate the irrelevant data and exhaustively searched for coverage regarding the conflicts themselves, I did not include all coverage on China and the U.S. within each paper nor expand to other sources. My critique that the general use of keywords results in missing important contextual points (e.g., attributions) is different than this limitation. I missed a broader representation of each country but not the discussion about each country in regards to this particular conflict. Just as expanding the sources both within each country and adding additional countries would increase the accuracy of attributing the proper perspectival valence to each event, so too would expanding coverage beyond the conflict I examined. In the future, better measures to include mention of each country and reduce irrelevant data will need to be taken into consideration.

Process. In any content analysis, the question arises as to whether or not it was valid. As Krippendorff (2004) notes, "a content analysis is valid if the inference drawn from the available texts withstands the test of independently available evidence, of new

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observations, of competing theories and interpretations, or of being able to inform successful action" (p. 313). The accepted processes were followed for themes found within the text, but future research must be conducted in order to assess the existence of the narratives themselves within other cases. Do additional narratives account for broader interpretations or do some of these share sufficient rhetorical desires and trajectories that they are combined in other outlets?

As I have mentioned previously, the event data was coded with only three options: positive, neutral, or negative. Events were gathered from the texts themselves but the meaning was assigned based on the criteria of whether they were destabilizing and which actor or actors were involved. Furthermore, the U.S. events were coupled with actions mentioned about U.S. allies (e.g., Japan and the Philippines). The logic behind that decision was that these three parties are portrayed as a singular interdependent group, which is due to their shared mutual defense treaties. That of course limits the event data as it needs to be both expanded by source (e.g., beyond Xinhua and the NYT) and actors (e.g., other regional players)

Future Directions

There are many plausible avenues to extend or test the application of TNC and this type of research. Two areas of focus should be the expansion of the theory and sources used in analysis.

First, researchers should explore the theoretical construct of narrative in contrast to other views of rationality and worldview formation. Hogan (2009) argues for the existence of universal narratives, but is it the narrative structure or the content being expressed that is more fundamental in the mind? Alternative views that social scientists maintain as valid from different concepts of narrative, linguistics, and meaning formation need to be explored in order to clarify how narratives and systems

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conceptually work within the mind. These, as *a priori* arguments, will fall more in the theoretical domain. Additionally, future research should address the potential connection between the RCT's model and how TNC can be used to replace the rational, self-interest, and utility assumptions in the former theory.

Second, this project rests on an assumption that can be tested and expanded. The assumption is that the form or structure of narrative is pivotal to desirable outcomes. A narrative trajectory, according to Halverson, Goodall, and Corman (2011), is "a system of interrelated and sequentially organized stories that have a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations according to the known trajectory of its literary and rhetorical form" (p. 14). There appears to be a range or combination of possibilities that are create a trajectory in the mind: Structures of the language used, the narrative form or type itself, the conceptual meaning of the content, the societal usage of the stories, or various forms of identity for the audience itself could all interrelate to create the desired outcome. These should be tested so that we can understand under what conditions trajectories work and if there are more fundamental aspects of the mind at work or not. To put it in a colloquial context, commentators have the expression of "saber rattling" which suggests a threating rhetorical form without ensuing action. Studying such cases will reveal if there is a specific structure or meaning that can detect saber rattling or actual threats. As I mentioned above, at what point does national identity cease to have fidelity and no longer be the driver behind attributions in international conflict? Does national identity have a subordinate or superordinate function when it comes to attribution in international conflict? This question arises from the recognition of the New York Times and Xinhua both containing few instances of self-criticism, which would indicate there is a more fundamental principle at work that guards against self-criticism. Research is needed to map the different theoretical forms

of actions to events. Second, to map the complex model of events and narratives, with internal and external factors to consider, future research should explore whether or not event history models from scholars such as Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1997) can be applied to determine the magnitude of the narrative and event series.

In order to pursue this question, it would be important to create multi-factor analyses and broaden the data sources from which they draw, going beyond the two sources used here and conducting in-context semantic analysis of events. For instance, do we see patterns with democratic countries that we do not see in more authoritarian ones? Future studies also have the possibility of being scaled down to the individual or micro-level to discover how narratives function within the individual's, group's, or organization's life – not merely a country. Understanding how individuals and groups construct and negotiate meaning will be important for uncovering what is happening with the loops discovered here. Both retrospective and prospective meaning-making need to be properly understood if we are to determine at what point or to what degree an action is likely to come from talk. Are there linguistic indicators or types of narratives that increase the likelihood of subsequent action? Knowing what is fundamental for creating trajectories and in what context different communicative elements carry a greater weight would help to create a more accurate forecast, which has implications for one of the initial goals of this project: practical means of forecasting and intervening in conflict.

Lastly, in this realm of empirical study, the data on events must be solidified. Judging the magnitude and factors of interpretation is important for properly observing the escalation of tensions. To these points, a third effort should focus on a period of time that begins in relative detente between two countries but escalates into armed conflict. This would resolve the weakness of reducing all events to positive and negative valance

and seeing if narratives can forecast escalation of conflict. For this study, the data sources will be expanded by political spectrums within a country and an engaged outsider. For example, adding the Wall Street Journal for a conservative interpretation and the Straits Times for a prominent outsider. Expanding the political spectrum will broaden the narrative material on the topics to corroborate or contradict the frequency of each narrative within the analyses. The same is true of expanding the regional coverage as it will show engagements by other actors that are attempting to calm or escalate the situation. An addition study can further expand the scope of the discourse for each country by going beyond the conflict related discourse to analyzing general discourse of each party, such that the sentiment can be quantifiably tracked by translating the narrative data.

Another important step is the scaling of this theory to smaller actors or groups. For example, Carrere & Gottman (1999), have demonstrated success in forecasting relational outcomes based on the beginnings minutes of marital conversations containing criticism from the wife and a negative response by the husband, which, in cases ending in divorce, would become increasingly negative at a faster rate than stable marriages. This research was based on earlier work by Coan & Gottman (2007)[8] specific affect coding systems (SPAFF). Codes were created to attend to verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors from affections to contempt, which were categorized as either positive or negative affects. Whether TNC can add to that body of research through the examination of narratives will determine the scalability and potential application at the interpersonal level.

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[8] This publication was a summary of the coding systems created in 1996.

Practical Implications

One of the stated goals of this project is to support de-escalation of conflict where possible. In order to do so effectively, it is important to understand the origins of conflicts by assessing the communicative attributes within narrative systems. In future research that goes beyond the above stated projects, effects of intervention plans must be studied using experimental designs on a smaller scale of groups or individuals. Are there better or worse ways of building understanding, growing fidelity and coherence, and ultimately countering narratives via other narratives? Specifically, how can the *Red Dragon Rising* narrative be countered in the American mindset, by facts, historical narratives, future actions, or patterns in counter-narratives? This is a question of persuasion and soft power applied to this theory. I find this to be the most important implication of research I have begun and will continue to pursue because of the dire consequences of conflict. If this line of research aids in understanding the conditions and indicators of budding conflict and what it is to properly engage with others in deescalating tensions, identifying differences, and settling our disputes, then all the effort is worth it.

For both China and the U.S., the results reveal current strategies for engaging in conflict between China and the U.S. have not resulted in increased understanding by the other. If our populations did understand one another, then this would be reflected in media self-reflexivity and engaging with the alternative interpretations of the other. The results of this dissertation show that neither public is engaging with the other's perspective. While leaders might be able to negotiate and de-escalate tensions, the public does not share that information or interpretation. Again, this is dealing with the conceptual issue of narrative trajectories. If our words are not idle constructs tossed out for casual consumption and they are creating strong desires to engage in or avoid

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conflict, then each country must work hard with their respective media outlets to positively impact public perception. These outlets I studied reflect or prescribe expected actions to the public. Both countries must take what some have called a *war of ideas* far more seriously and not merely at the highest levels of government but with its citizenry.

For the Americans working in Chinese foreign policy, the biggest take-away is identifying trends of which to be mindful in their research. There are clear trends that signal a near conflict, to which officials ought to pay attention. As the blame and attribution of regional players become increasingly frequent, intervention might be necessary to avoid some ensuing destabilizing event. Yet, when the discussion turns to positive solutions and economically-based outcomes, the Chinese are in a more constructive mood and should be engaged in dialogue.

For the Chinese working in American foreign policy, it is important to note that there are also trends signaling American actions. Perhaps, on a subjective level, it is odd to see the results here indicating that more discussion in U.S. media of National Humiliation means a more destabilizing posture on the part of America. In contrast, the more the U.S. discusses its benefit in the region (*Pax Americana)*, the more positive action they undertake and the more they discuss the positive consequences of their actions. It would appear America does want to help in the region. Yet, there appears to be a level of frustration with the *National Humiliation* narrative and lack of clarity regarding China's motivations. The American media does not appear to be sympathetic towards China's views, which signals a need to engage more with Western media.

For both parties, it is essential to get beyond the "blame game" and build mutual trust. In examining the data, the largest obstacle to our mutual relations is the *National Humiliation* narrative. It ends discussion and allows for no way forward. There is no real dispute about the fact that the U.S. added to the mistreatment of China during that

period. Legal examples range from the history of treaties from Shimonseki Treaty that ended the Sino-Japanese Wars in 1895 to Okinawa Reversion Treaty in 1971. The history of these treaties took away the same territories China presently claims and gave them to Japan. At the end Second World War, after aiding the Allies in the fight against Japan the Chinese believed America would help to restore their lost territory but found them given to Japan and some left in legal limbo. What should be discussed is what can be done in the present to respond to this narrative effectively and a mutually beneficial way forward. The interpretation of U.S. actions on the basis of historical behavior allows little room for new beginnings. At the same time, conclusions that America is a Cold Warrior are understandable in that our overall approach to China does not appear to have changed much. For both countries, there are real credibility concerns. The U.S. and their allies do not give much credit to China's assertion of their ownership of the region and China's assertive actions do not assist in creating that credibility. Yet, it appears China is stuck between their subjective view of national sovereignty and depending upon an international system to determine sovereignty, which predictably surfaces memories of past grievances. Engagement that is targeted at growing empathy (bridging perceptual differences) for each country's position is a first step in dealing with perceptual differences. It is only by obtaining an understanding of the perceptual position of the other that both parties can begin to decide how to respond to the real differences between them.

Concluding Remarks

Conflict has been an enduring aspect in individual lives, cultures, and civilizations. While there are several factors influencing conflicts, the one that remains at the root of it all is how we give meaning to our experiences. The concern of this project has been to understand the communicative conditions for interstate conflict and to build

TNC in order to extend our knowledge of how beliefs lead to conflicts and, ultimately, to understand when and how to intervene in relevant ways to avoid or end them. There remains, however, much to do before that goal can be reached. This project has provided a deeper look into the narratives in prominent US and Chinese newspapers regarding the ongoing and potentially fatal South and East China Sea Conflicts. Further work is needed, but understanding and solving conflicts is worth the work.

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APPENDIX A

THE CODE BOOK

Collection

Articles were collected on Lexis Nexis Academic using the search terms South China Sea and East China Sea from the New York Times (and International Herald Tribune) and Xinhua News Agency.

Relevancy.

1. Articles *must* mention the conflict in the region. Even if the SCS or ECS is a minor issue code the article for the different stories.

2. If articles are aggregated summaries of news articles mark irrelevant.

3. Articles that do not mention the conflict typically include: weather, rescue, exploration (resources and archaeology).

Duplicates. Take the final edition of a text and keep it while deleting any duplicates you discover.

Guidelines for Coding

1. Codes are based on attributes of an actor towards the target audience. For example, the Chinese could use American actions to frame attributions of America as negative. If we said America is building up its presence in the Pacific, then it depends on the audience and context as to what this means. This is the essence of framing. If America is building up its their fleet in the area and it is to show allies that it will defend them, it is different than America is building up and surrounding China. As such:

    a. Read the whole article in order to understand the general attitudes towards both actors in the whole context.

    b. Papers often use quotes to support their position, so when quotes are being coded focus on the attribution as expressed in the selected quotation. Ignore what you know of the speaker.

2. When multiple codes are present in a bloc of text go with the focus of the bloc.

   a. "Aggressive territorial claims by Beijing are unnerving China's neighbors as well as Washington. My take is that China has a strong historical case in claiming the disputed islands in the East China Sea known as the Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese. But China's claims to a chunk of the South China Sea are preposterous, and its belligerence is driving neighbors closer to America." NYT 2011 121-008

   b. This has a hint of the century of humiliations code in the historical claim, however, the majority of it expresses a concern over the aggressive rise of China.

Denials: For most of the codes that follow there is a denial code attached to them. Denials must be explicit counters to the given narrative. For example, "China is not using rare earth as a bargaining chip," Mr. Wen said. "We aim for the world's sustainable development." Xinhua 2010 146-090. This counters an explicit claim by foreign powers that China was being aggressive and undertaking hostile bargaining, or the *Red Dragon Rising*.

The Codes[9]

China

National Humiliation. China is surrounded by foreign powers seeking to isolate and curb the growth while China is attempting only to restore its sovereignty.

Typical expression: China's sovereignty is often asserted as prima facie and beyond contestation. Local protests often occur as acts of solidarity for the aggressive actions taken by foreign powers. Regional actors are said to be bullying China. The history of the

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[9] Each code is also elaborated on in the dissertation itself in Chapter 4.

century of humiliation is also recalled in relation to their actions. History includes but is not limited to the unequal treaties from the Opium Wars to the end of World War II. Redeeming past humiliations or present attempts to relive the past by America surrounding China and others treating China unfairly. Finally, a focus on China's historical and legitimate territorial rights.

Atypical: Arms sales and the ongoing conflict with Taiwan. When China is responding to or acting decisively in response to the actions of others then it is trying to be seen as a 'hero' of sorts. Actions are portrayed as defensive in nature but not necessarily aggressive.

Denial: Must be explicit reinterpretation of history or recent action as not victimizing the Chinese but something else.

Silk Road. A positive view of China's actions. The focus is on peaceful development and mutual cooperation while focusing on its efforts thus far to increase the economic trade and security in the region.

Typical Expression:

Looking to building trust, mutual development and cooperative enterprises. A large focus will be shifted to economics and emphasis will be placed on relationships while setting the conflict to the side. With conflicts the focus tends to be on principles of negotiations and peaceful settlement of the dispute.

Denial: Instances where it is said that the economic growth and mutual trust building China is doing is actually causing more problems. For example, "Tensions rose last month, after China announced plans to develop tourism in the Paracels, an area the Chinese military has controlled since 1974. The announcement was an inauspicious start to what the two countries had called their "year of friendship."

Red Dragon Rising. China is a threat to others around it in terms of military or economy, or simply speculation that they are a threat.

Typical Expression: Speculation about the conflicts within China, complaints regarding the transparency of the government, use of economic and military to bully or leverage their position. Aggressive expansionary behaviors such as building territory in the disputed areas or drilling for oil. Attacking, ramming, or being hostile towards others by any means.

Denial: The idea that the "China threat" does not exist, it is not expanding its territory, there is really nothing to be concerned with regarding China's growing military, and while they might be aggressive such actions are not truly a display of China's intentions. Ex: As for the disputes over Diaoyu Islands and the South China Sea, White said: "I don't believe China has expansionist territorial aspirations and I think it's perfectly reasonable that China should seek to defend its own position in contested territorial issues, such as in the South China Sea.

America and Allies

Pax Americana. America is a global leader of security and ensured the rise of the global economy by ensuring free and secure trade in this region. By maintaining the status quo, negotiating peace (as a mediator), and assuring its allies of their commitment the US creates a 'protectorate.'

Typical Expression: Emphasis will be placed on allies or regional actors moving towards the U.S.. To support this story, the US will note its ability to act and occasionally show support for its security policies through word or deed. While showing support for allies the U.S. will also attempt to remain neutral in ongoing regional problems. It opposes any attempts to resolve the dispute by force and tries to keep its neutrality in the

region. Part of the peace is for fostering economic growth and that will be part of the emphasis to others.

Denial: American influence in the region is destabilizing and negative. America is failing to make good on their promises, or the world is actually worse under America, and the economic down turn is their fault.

The Cold Warriors (Allies and America)

The Allies and U.S. are viewed as meddling in other countries' affairs and having dubious intentions.

Typical Expression:

The U.S. and Allies want to contain China while saying they want peace, but they are acting in a destabilizing or self-interested manner. Allies or Americans are conducting provocative actions that greatly concerning to others. Activities are seen as negative to the international community. A bad example is said to be set. Containment attitude towards China. And, explicitly calling either a Cold Warrior.

Atypical:

Allies or America have dubious intentions for the region. They should not be trusted.

Denial: We are not entering a cold war period with China and we at not trying to contain China.

Example: On the United States' pivot-to-Asia policy, the admiral stressed that the re-balance is "based on a strategy of collaboration and cooperation, not containment, and that the United States is a Pacific power that will remain a Pacific power." Xinhua 2012 501-718 187.

Economics

Mention of resources as a motivation for either solving or causing the problem.

Typical Expression:

This could be a mere mention of resources and fishing or noting the essence of the dispute is economics factors.

Example: The Paracel Islands and the nearby Spratly Islands are rich in oil and natural gas deposits, and so they are coveted by the host of nations that form a wide arc around the South China Sea. NYT 2010-146-003.

Solutions:

Any indicates a given course of action will resolve the tensions. Instances of solutions are often given with indicators of "should" or "ought."

Typical Expression:

Negotiating peace, giving up power, or fighting. If they do not fit into the above codes then place it here as a catch all for proposals of solutions.

Atypical:

Might be, ought to, will be, need to, must, etc.

APPENDIX B

EVENT DATA

The central concept of the event coding is whether an action was stabilizing or destabilizing to the region. For example, a positive event would include any diplomatic visits, resuming of relations, or signing of deals. These soft power events are said to increase cooperation in the region, which brings increased stability. On the other hand, a negative even is anything that appears to cause trouble for others, which can be sending patrols into the region, publishing materials, actual conflicts, planting flags, etc. Destabilizing events make the situation unpredictable and appear, in rhetoric at least, to warrant a hard power response. The third category is ambiguous or neutral events such as military exercises, elections, political changes, etc. The reason for the third category is that those events are cyclical and the commentary is on both ends the spectrum of stabilizing and destabilizing. Rather than determining whether Cobra Gold, an annual joint military exercise, is stabilizing or destabilizing it is makes more sense to leave it neutral for the time being. If China response to Cobra Gold by sending warship to spy that would be a separate action coded as a negative event. In addition, such an event can be stabilizing for the participants and destabilizing for non-participants, therefore they are marked as ambiguous. For coding purposes, make the stabilizing events with a 1, 0 for neutral or ambiguous, and -1 for a destabilizing event.