

**"AXIS OF EVIL" AND "GREAT SATAN?" AN
OPERATIONAL CODE ANALYSIS OF U.S.-IRAN
MISPERCEPTIONS**

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The thesis titled

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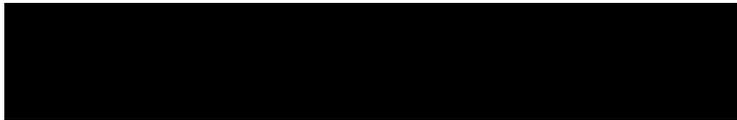
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ABSTRACT

For the past forty years, the relationship between the United States and Iran has been defined in terms of hostility and mutual suspicion. Unfortunately, many scholars have subscribed to this view in the past, which was the product of often oversimplified and far too generalized approaches to studying foreign policy. While most traditional analysis methods focus on a macro-level examination of decision making and the strategic behavior of a nation as a whole, this study proposes an alternative viewpoint. Individual actors play a central role in the decision-making and shaping of foreign policy. Therefore, evaluating their beliefs and perceptions about the external world is crucial to understanding foreign policy consequences manifesting in the interactions between nations. This study aims to thoroughly investigate the belief systems of the U.S. and Iranian leaders between 1953 and 2020 to assess the true nature of their relationship and each one's strategic motivations.

The leading research questions addressed in this thesis are: What are the belief systems of the U.S. and Iranian leaders that drive the interactions between the two countries? What are some shared patterns among these leaders' beliefs, and how does each compare to the average leader? Are these results consistent with theoretical assumptions about their relationship? To answer the research questions, this work employs the quantitative Operational Code Analysis, which uses individual leaders' verbal material to determine their belief systems. The outcomes are then analyzed by performing a series of difference of means tests. Following their statistical preferences are assessed in accordance with the principles of Brams' (1994) Theory of Moves (TOM) and Theory of Inferences about Preferences (TIP). The results show that the representation of the U.S. and Iranian leaders' nature and motivations across conventional wisdom is not entirely accurate. Hence, reinforcing the value and significance of individual-oriented approaches to studying foreign policy.

Keywords: Iran, United States, foreign policy, operational code analysis, belief systems, strategic preferences, Theory of Moves (TOM), Theory of Inferences about Preferences (TIP)

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview and the Purpose of the Study

When approaching the study of foreign policy, it is critical to identify the underlying factors that play a crucial role in foreign policy decision-making, which consequently defines the nature of the relations between states. The more traditional among the international relations scholarship, concerning foreign policy, consider the nation-state to be the main subject of analysis, rather than directly studying the powerful state leaders-the individual actors who influence foreign policy first-hand. As the nation-states are essentially comprised of the decision-makers, it becomes necessary to examine their belief systems as a causal factor in policymaking (Richter, 2016). Thus, the scope of this thesis encompasses the examination of U.S.-Iran relations through the analysis of individual leaders' foreign policy beliefs.

Over the years, the relationship between the United States and Iran has been debated among many scholars, country officials, and even the general public. Unfortunately, the common wisdom regarding U.S.-Iran relations, frequently manifesting within the literature and the opinion of society, appears to resort to "uncritical and unproblematic treatment of our enemies as well as as an assumption that they are almost naturally destined to be our enemies". Furthermore, those enemies are usually perceived as irrational lunatics, leaders, hostile by nature, who use ideology to justify their aggressive foreign policy toward the U.S. and its allies (Malici and Walker, 2016, pp. 4-5).

The thesis argues that each country's assumptions about another's beliefs are too often based on prejudice or long-standing and unchallenged misrepresentations, directly causing the tensions within the relationship. The general question that this study focuses on is: What are the actual foreign policy beliefs and motives of the U.S. and Iran, and are they consistent with one another's assumptions? In order words,

we examine whether this relationship's rhetoric is built on realities or if it is solely an outcome of distorted preconceptions on both ends.

This work addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the philosophical (diagnostic) and instrumental (prescriptive) beliefs of the American and Iranian leaders?
2. How do the foreign policy beliefs of the examined decision-makers compare to the average world leader? How do they compare to one another?
3. What are the strategic orientations of the U.S. and Iran in pursuing their foreign policy objectives? Do they approach the issue of foreign policy in a matter that is predominantly rational/pragmatic or ideological/revolutionary?
4. How do these leaders view one another? How accurate are their assumptions about the other's strategies?

This study attempts to close the gap between speculations and the reality of the U.S.-Iranian relations by testing their beliefs about one another against another's actual belief systems. The study uses qualitative literature to determine both countries' beliefs about the nature of their interactions. These theories are then examined in relation to quantitative data obtained from operational code analysis in order to reduce "analytical uncertainties" (Leverett, 2005, p. 18) about this relationship. Through the application of the operational code analysis method, this thesis demonstrates that the antagonistic nature of the relationship between the countries is not entirely the result of facts, but mainly the result of false assumptions about one another. The work also evaluates the United States and Iran's foreign policy

strategies to explain the specific character of their relationship by using the belief systems of the countries' leaders.

Considering the historical aspect of the U.S.-Iranian relations, there is no doubt that their leaders hold a pessimistic view of each other as a hostile and uncooperative nation. However, what this thesis aspires to do is to check the validity of these assumptions. The research's underlying objective is to confront negative narratives dominating the way the countries see one another in hopes that a more thorough understanding of the driving forces behind the opponent's actions will allow for the relations between the U.S. and Iran to improve.

1.2 Historical Background and Significance of the Topic

On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students occupied the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, taking hostage 66 people, including 52 U.S. citizens. The student-supporters of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Revolution leader, demanded that Iranian authoritarian ruler Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, a long-term American ally, is extradited to face a trial in Iran. That day was the beginning of a 444-day diplomatic standoff, which forever damaged the relations between the United States and Iran. Quite unfortunately, until the 1979 Hostage Crisis, many Americans knew nothing or very little about Iran. Even more unfortunate was the fact that on November 4, they finally learned about the Iranians-angry religious fanatics, the "devilish savages" (Campbell, 1993, p. 43) holding hostage innocent U.S. civilians. Since then, both the U.S. and Iran seem to be hanging onto certain false beliefs regarding one another, contributing to their growing mutual apprehension, further damaging their relations. While the events of 1979 originated a narrative among the American public dominated by intense opposition to Iran, the decline in the Iranian opinion of the U.S. dates back to 1953.

On August 19, 1953, CIA and MI6-British intelligence forces carried out the "Operation Ajax", which led to regime change within Iran. The coup d'état overthrew Mohammed Mossadegh- the Iranian Prime Minister and Chairman of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, who was brought into the office in 1951

popular election. Unfortunately for Britain, shortly after the election, the Iranian Parliament held a vote resulting in the nationalization of the company. The oil nationalization was viewed by the U.S. and Britain as part of the Cold War power struggle, and therefore, likely to disturb the equilibrium across the region. The consequence of this belief was the "Operation Ajax", which replaced the popular Prime Minister with the autocratic Mohammad Reza Shah.

As a result of the 1953 coup d'état, there seems to be a notion among the Iranian scholars and clergy that the United States is after them, seeking regime change and Iran's global isolation. Similarly, it appears that some U.S. policymakers believe that Iran is extremely hostile toward America and is driven by the desire to sabotage U.S. efforts in the Persian Gulf (Sariolghalam, 2003). Historically, the fact that their interactions were marked with aggressive behaviors partially explains the emergence of anxiety that resulted in these presumptions. However, the mere existence of these beliefs is not sufficient evidence for their correspondence with the truth.

Given the geostrategic importance of Iran and the US's global status, one would assume that the two sides would make efforts to mend their relationship. Besides the 615 miles of coastline that belong within Iranian territory, the country geographically dominates the Strait of Hormuz. Referred to as a "global chokepoint", the Strait of Hormuz serves as a point of access for oil tankers to global markets; therefore, it is highly relevant not only on a geopolitical but also on an economic level. As a result, in the face of relations with the U.S., Iran's geostrategic significance seems to carry a more substantial value than the ideological apprehensions (Ali, 2008). At the same time, Iran lies within the region that is very strongly affected by prolonged conflict and, therefore, directly linked to the matters of international security.

The importance of analyzing the U.S.-Iranian relations also involves the American hegemonic position on the international stage and its continuous efforts of extending influence over the region through foreign policy toward the Middle East, essentially translating into multidimensional global security interests. In his writings, Kamrava (2011) expands on this theory, suggesting that that "Iran's regional security policy, in the meanwhile, is largely determined by the role and position of the United States in what Iran considers its rightful sphere of influence" (pp. 184-185).

1.3 The Structure of Research

The countries' opinions of each other had been collected across various descriptive studies, while their actual belief systems were obtained from quantitative analysis. The method employs operational code analysis of the leaders' beliefs using verbal material of the U.S. and Iranian leadership within five distinct periods, which were determined influential to the two countries' relationship. For the purpose of examining beliefs and behaviors of the subjects, this method combines the operational code analysis with elements of a game-theoretic approach, which allows us to measure: how the leaders see themselves and the other; what are their foreign policy motivation; and whether these agents are oriented towards conflict or cooperation in their policy considerations. A further statistical comparison is conducted, serving as a tool for observing the differences and similarities between the two subjects' beliefs and those of the average leader. Additionally, this work examines how the beliefs of the American and Iranian leaders evolved over time.

The analysis is divided into five phases across time, separated by significant historical events, which are believed to have generated critical shifts in the narrative of U.S.-Iranian relations. The first of the five episodes begins on August 19, 1953, with the U.S.-led coup d'état, which resulted in Prime Minister Mossadegh's overthrow. The second one begins on April 1, 1979, the day Iran voted for the national referendum to become the Islamic Republic and create the new Constitution of the Theocratic Republic. The third episode starts in 1998 after the election of Mohammad Khatami as the new Iranian President. The next episode commences on January 29, 2002, when George W. Bush delivers his speech before the Congress in which he names Iran a part of the "axis of evil". This episode terminates with the end of 2016, the year of implementation of the JCPOA nuclear agreement. The last episode begins on January 20, 2017, with Donald Trump, who openly opposed the Iran nuclear deal, assuming the President of the United States' office. This episode concludes with Iranian general Soleimani's death on January 3, 2020.

The organization of this thesis incorporates a total of six chapters, beginning with the introduction and ending with the conclusion. Following the introductory section is chapter 2, which takes a closer look

at the relevant literature. It begins by illustrating the essential aspect of the operational code analysis, followed by an overview of the quantitative approach within the relevant literature. The chapter ends by discussing the U.S. and Iranian beliefs that are the most prevalent across the qualitative studies on this subject. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and the research design, explaining the selection and preparation of data, as well as the process of analysis. Chapter 4 demonstrates the quantitatively measured belief systems of U.S. and Iranian leaders, resulting from the VICS analysis and difference of means test. These outcomes are then compared to the assumptions made by each country's leaders about the other's beliefs. Chapter 5 applies the VICS scores for master beliefs to construct the strategic preferences of the Iranian and U.S. leaders. The chapter also asks whether the leaders' predictions about their counterpart's strategies and tactics corresponded with reality. Chapter 6 discusses the research method's efficacy, outlines the finding, and incorporates general policy suggestions.

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of chapter 2 is to evaluate the existing literature applicable to the focus of this study. Based on the methodological model, the literature has been organized into three groups. The first group examines the origin and evolution of the operational code analysis, as well as the fundamental principles of this approach. The following section evaluates the quantitative approach to studying the leaders' decision making and discusses how this method complements the research analyzing the interactions between states. Finally, the last section reviews previous qualitative works addressing the character of the U.S.-Iranian relations and their beliefs about one another.

2.1 Development of the Operational Code Analysis

The concept of "operational code" was first defined by Merton (1940) as one that involves beliefs, world view, and vocabulary learned and exchanged by a person with other organization representatives. However, it was Nathan Leites, who first, in his studies: *The Operational Code of Politburo* (1951) and *Study of Bolshevism* (1953), applied this concept to the field of political psychology. Leites' 1951 analysis of the Politburo's operational codes was a combination of cognitive heuristics and characterological personality traits that driven Soviet decision-making (Walker, 1990). The study quickly gained popularity, as there was already a growing desire to understand what motivates the powerful elites. However, Leites' method was not without flaws. The first one to point them out was George (1969) who argued that, "While the complexity of the work adds to its richness and intellectual appeal, it has also made it unusually difficult for readers to grasp its structure or to describe its research mode" (p. 193). To resolve this issue, George decided to focus on the cognitive aspects of Leites' theory, emphasizing the analysis of beliefs as the "maxims of political strategy" George used Leites' division of "epistemological" and "instrumental" beliefs

and developed into a set of ten questions, which include five philosophical and five instrumental questions (see Table 1). The philosophical questions address the leader's beliefs about the fundamental nature of the political universe, nature of the conflict, and scope of the leader's role in the development of history. The remaining instrumental questions aim to uncover the leader's approach to political strategy.

Along with the growth of the OCA (Operational Code Analysis) research program, scholars began to face additional difficulties. These mainly concerned the access to data from foreign leaders and ways to obtain their operational codes from sources that did not include material directly representing their philosophical and instrumental beliefs. These concerns eventually gave rise to the "at-a-distance" analysis method, which allows for identifying the leader's beliefs based on the patterns appearing in their verbal

<i>The Philosophical Beliefs in an Operational Code</i>	
P-1.	<i>What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?</i>
P-2.	<i>What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?</i>
P-3.	<i>Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?</i>
P-4.	<i>How much "control" or "mastery" do (a) self and (b) other have over historical development? What is (a) self and (b) other's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?</i>
P-5.	<i>What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and historical development?</i>
<i>The Instrumental Beliefs in an Operational Code</i>	
I-1.	<i>What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?</i>
I-2.	<i>How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?</i>
I-3.	<i>How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?</i>
I-4.	<i>What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?</i>
I-5.	<i>What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?</i>

Table 1. George's ten questions about philosophical and instrumental beliefs.

Source: George (1969, p. 200).

materials. The method analyzes the content of individual's speeches using the Verbs in Context System (VICS), which enables the researcher to determine the answers to George's ten questions regarding philosophical and instrumental beliefs (Schafer and Walker, 2006). This work uses the software for an

automated version of VICS developed by Michael Young and Robert Woyach in the late 1990s, discussed in detail in the methodology section.

As the operational code analysis continued to evolve, Holsti (1977) proposed a model of belief system typology composed of six types (A, B, C, D, E, F), each based on the source of conflict in the political universe (individual, nation, or, international), and its nature (temporary or permanent) (Özdamar and Canbolat, 2018). This typology derives from the intersection of the two master beliefs about the nature of the political universe and the view about one's political opponent (Holsti, 1977). Holsti's typology was later revised by Walker (1983), where he combined and simplified the overlapping belief system into A, B, C, and DEF types.

Many of the more recent OCA works combine the operational code analysis with Brams' (1994) game theory principles and the analysis of strategic motivations. Instead of looking at the game in a way proposed by structuralist or rationalists, this approach moves beyond a traditional concept of game-theory, attempting to define the game's nature, as seen or described by the subject. Schafer and Walker (2006) argue that the method defines the leader's beliefs about self's best approach and strategy and self's beliefs about the other's likely approach and strategy. These beliefs then form a subjective dyadic game that mirrors the interactions anticipated by the subject. The authors conclude that,

It may be wrong, or off-target compared to reality, and external observers may be able to identify a game that more directly fits reality. In the end, however, it seems that the subjective beliefs held by a leader are the ones that are most likely to influence his/her choice of moves (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 11).

While a general operational code analysis allows for determining the individual's beliefs, it does not reveal the impacts of behaving according to those beliefs. Conventional game-theory is a passive illustration of strategic interactions between two actors. What allows for dynamic analysis of these interactions is the combination of Brams' Theory of Moves (TOM) and the Theory of Interferences about Preferences (TIP). By identifying a set of beliefs from the possible combinations of subjective games described in TIP, this method models the strategies and respective equilibria formed for these subjective

games with strategies, moves, and tactics described in sequential game models of TOM. The combination model of TIP and TOM strategic preferences allows us to predict and understand the connections between beliefs, strategies, and outcomes concerning the relationship between two actors. It also helps determine how individual leaders are likely to exercise power and what types of political environment is likely to result from the exchange of power between them (Walker, 2004; Walker and Schafer, 2006). Because so many scholars had recognized the value and potential of the operational code analysis, the method had undergone a significant improvement over the years, causing it to become an incredibly useful tool for studying world leaders' belief systems.

High nAff
(Essential Alikeness)

TYPE A

Conflict is temporary, caused by human misunderstanding and miscommunication. A "conflict spiral," based upon misperception and impulsive responses, is the major danger of war. Opponents are often influenced by nonrational conditions, but tend to respond in kind to conciliation and firmness. Optimism is warranted, based upon a leader's ability and willingness to shape historical development. The future is relatively predictable, and control over it is possible. **Establish goals within a framework that emphasizes shared interests. Pursue broadly international goals incrementally with flexible strategies that control risks by avoiding escalation and acting quickly when conciliation opportunities arise. Emphasize resources that establish a climate for negotiation and compromise and avoid the early use of force.**

Preference Order: Settle > Deadlock > Dominate > Submit

Nuclear
Self

Preference Order: Dominate > Settle > Deadlock > Submit

Conflict is permanent, caused by human nature (D), nationalism (E), or international anarchy (F). Power disequilibria are major dangers of war. Opponents may vary, and responses to conciliation or firmness are uncertain. Optimism declines over the long run and in the short run depends upon the quality of leadership and a power equilibrium. Predictability is limited, as is control over historical development. **Seek limited goals flexibly with moderate means. Use military force if the opponent and circumstances require it, but only as a final resource.**

TYPE DEF

(Ambition)
High nPow

TYPE C

Conflict is temporary; it is possible to restructure the state system to reflect the latent harmony of interests. The source of conflict is the anarchical state system, which permits a variety of causes to produce war. Opponents vary in nature, goals, and responses to conciliation and firmness. One should be pessimistic about goals unless the state system is changed, because predictability and control over historical development is low under anarchy. **Establish optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Pursue shared goals, but control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Act quickly when conciliation opportunities arise and delay escalatory actions whenever possible; other resources than military capabilities are useful.**

Preference Order: Settle > Dominate > Deadlock > Submit

High
nAch

(Ideals)

Preference Order: Dominate > Deadlock > Settle > Submit

Conflict is temporary, caused by warlike states; miscalculation and appeasement are the major causes of war. Opponents are rational and deterrable. Optimism is warranted regarding realization of goals. The political future is relatively predictable, and control over historical development is possible. **One should seek optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Any tactic and resource may be appropriate, including the use of force when it offers prospects for large gains with limited risk.**

TYPE B

Figure 1. Revised Holsti Operational Code Typology.

Note: (Instrumental beliefs are in bold, and philosophical beliefs are not.)

Source: Walker and Schafer (2006)

2.2 Quantitative Literature Review

The more traditional international relations scholarship, concerning foreign policy, consider the nation-state to be the main subject of analysis, rather than directly studying the powerful state leaders-the individual actors who influence foreign policy first-hand. As the nation-states are essentially comprised of the decision-makers, it becomes necessary to examine their belief systems as a causal factor in policymaking. (Richter, 2016) Malici (2006) argues that "To consider actors as amorphous entities and to rob them of any consciousness is equivalent to denying the sociopsychological character of politics" (p.127). Rational Actor Models (RAM) suggests that the decision-makers act rationally concerning "long-term and persistent national interests of the country, and since national interests do not change, changes in leadership have little consequence" (Neack, 2008, p. 31). These models assume that "one size fits all". While they may accurately address the foreign policy strategies at the macro level, they fail to provide an exhaustive interpretation of the factors influencing individuals' decisions, which include religious, political, and moral beliefs, along with historical knowledge and experiences. These models disregard the autonomy of individuals, which acts as a direct cause of bias in their decision-making. (Richter, 2016) Quantitative "at a distance" leadership studies, such as the OCA, attempt to address those areas of foreign policy studies, which rational choice theory cannot. Feng (2006) claims that "decision-makers' beliefs are a critical factor in understanding, diagnosing, and prescribing the decision-making process of states, particularly under situations featuring high uncertainty and incomplete information" (p. 156). He continues by saying that individual beliefs strongly affect how a leader processes information by illustrating all presumptions and speculations that the subject considers to be true regarding the given situation.

This method's advantages are demonstrated by Walker (et al., 2011), who compares the study of international relations to quantum physics. According to his theory, individual leaders resemble the characteristics of particles of energy, while the states compare to planet-size particles of matter. Walker (et al., 2011) claims that the field of international relations experiences the crisis of the observer effect, such as that described in quantum theory, where the principles applied to the behavior of large-scale particles of

matter (states) need to be thoroughly modified by the principles of quantum mechanics to justify the behavior of electrons and photons-the small particles of energy (individual leaders). Özgür and Canbolat (2018) claim that "operational code analysis and its methodology is one of the strongest political psychology tools available to analyze agents' preferences and the implications of these preferences on foreign policy...the approach reveals interesting and counterintuitive results with relevant policy implications" (p. 28). Moreover, even though it is beyond the scope of this work, operational code analysis illustrates the principles of the traditional International Relations theories. Walker and Schafer (2007) explain that there is a widespread agreement among political psychologists, constructivists, and institutionalists that "neorealist and neoliberal structural theories are underspecified without including agent-oriented models of beliefs to capture the micro-foundations of strategic interactions between states" (p. 771). They present a compelling argument that the most effective approach to studying aspects such as decision-making within international relations is the combination structural analysis of particular cases and an individual-level analysis of agents' belief systems. As this work strives to deliver the evaluation resembling a high level of comprehensiveness, it follows that exact methodological model.

2.3 Qualitative Literature Review

The literature's common theme regarding the relationship between the United States and Iran seems to revolve around their mutual animosity. While this view may often reflect reality, it also appears as if the U.S. policymakers and academics lack a sufficient understanding of Iran's political leaders' beliefs (Malici and Buckner, 2008). However, the literature addressing the evolution of interactions between Iran and the United States successfully captures historical events that appear to have had significantly influenced the direction of their foreign policy towards one another. The assessment of that literature and common theories surrounding the relationship is presented below.

According to Ali (2008) and Ayoob (2011), the events of August 19, 1953, and the "Operation Ajax" discussed in chapter 1, forever defined the narrative surrounding the U.S.-Iran relations, causing the

Iranian public to begin viewing America in a very negative light. Moreover, Ayooob (2011) suggests that by reinstalling the rule of the Shah, who eliminated any secular protestors of his regime, the United States created an environment for the Iranian clergy to become a leading group opposing the Iranian government. That is precisely why, Ayooob (2011) claims, some analysts define the 1979 Islamic Revolution as an inevitable if a delayed reaction to 1953.

Ali (2008) argues that the period between 1953 and 1978 was characterized by seemingly positive relations between the two countries. However, they did not reach past the leadership. During that time, the United States policymakers were wrongfully convinced that Iran's government was in control and that there was no evidence of opposition's capacity, which caused them to miss the apparent signs of growing tensions within the country (Reisinezhad, 2011). Ironically, the two probably most notable incidents in the history of U.S.-Iranian relations occurred in 1979-not too long after Jimmy Carter called Iran the "island of stability" in 1977. The Islamic Revolution and the U.S. embassy hostage crisis of 1979 caused the hostilities underlying the relationship to surface and escalate. Maloney (2002) notes that the Iranian hostage crisis "fused the extremist dimensions of the divergent worldviews remaining within the revolutionary coalition: radical anti-Westernism and vehemently Islamist self-identification". She further indicates that the hostages represented "both symbol and stake in the internal struggle to define the nature of post-revolutionary Iran" (p. 105). Hurd (2008) extends this view by arguing that the U.S. public's aversion to Iran, which became evident after the hostage crisis, is a product of American secularism ingrained in American identity. Hurd believes that American secularism not only "conditions American foreign policy" but also "constitutes what it means to be American" (pp. 103-104), therefore legitimizing the animosity toward Iran. According to this theory, since 1979, the U.S. foreign policy toward Iran is marked by secular bias, causing the American policymakers to view Iranians as irrational religious extremists, differing entirely from reasonable, secular Americans.

As for the Iranian approach to foreign policy, while many see it as "revolutionary", or ideology-driven, Kamrava (2011) believes it is more practical and realistic, shaped by balance-of-power logic and security concerns. Nevertheless, post-revolutionary Iran's activities within the Gulf region during the 1980s

caused plenty of other actors to begin perceiving it as a threat. However, it is possible that in posing as a threat, Iran was motivated by security-related issues.

When Mohammad Khatami was elected to be President in 1997, the tone of Iranian foreign policy became more friendly toward the region and the U.S. However, whatever dialogue Khatami's efforts managed to establish ended abruptly on January 29, 2002. That was when, in his infamous speech before the Congress, President George W. Bush labeled Iran, along with North Korea and Iraq, as the "axis of evil", accusing them of sponsoring terrorism and acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The situation did not improve when, in 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became the new President of Iran. Interestingly enough, when it comes to Ahmadinejad, the literature does not appear to be seeing eye to eye. Ali's (2008) view of President Ahmadinejad reflects that of many U.S. policymakers, who perceived the president as an irrational actor, guided by belligerent motives. Considering Malici and Buckner's (2008) analysis of Ahmadinejad's operational codes, as well as Kupchan and Clifford's (2005) study *Iranian Beliefs and Realities*, this work argues against Ali's (2008) claims. Malici and Buckner (2008) describe Ahmadinejad as a rational leader, who though sees the U.S.' sanctions as "highly hostile and threatening", favors cooperation strategy over conflict. Similarly, Kupchan and Clifford (2005) consider Iran under Ahmadinejad "stable". Additionally, they point out that, in this particular case, the policymakers fail to see the full picture by focusing on an individual leader. That prevents them from adequately assessing whether or not Iran poses a threat, as Iranian foreign policy decisions are made among the political elite and overseen by the Supreme Leader, rather than the President.

Nevertheless, throughout the years, the relationship between the U.S. and Iran remained distant and continued to be defined by mutual suspicion. According to Abdullah (et al. 2020), it began to improve during the administration of Iranian President Rouhani, who successfully reached a nuclear deal with P5+1 countries. The signing of the JCPOA agreement pushed forward the lifting of sanctions against Iran, some of which dated back to 1979. However, any hopes for further progress in the relationship between the two countries were shattered when President Trump declared the U.S. withdrawal from the treaty (Abdullah et al., 2020). However, leaving the Iranian nuclear deal was not the only "bold" action taken toward Iran by

the Trump administration. On January 2, 2020, the U.S. drone strike successfully assassinated Qasem Soleimani- the head of the Iranian Quds Force. Suddenly some began predicting a "global war" resulting from Iran's retaliation in response to Soleimani's death. However, a good chunk of literature provides empirical evidence that nothing like a war between the U.S. and Iran will take place, at least not any time soon. While Iran's foreign policy is oriented more toward cooperation than conflict, Iran's acts of aggression are driven strictly by a security dilemma. As Asmar (2020) has observed, Iran responded to Soleimani's killing by firing missiles at two Iraqi military bases where the U.S. soldiers were stationed. The author argues that the missiles, rather than being a legitimate threat to the Americans in the region, served more as a psychological instrument, addressing the regime's need to display their power in order ensure security. The following chapters of this thesis are intended to extract similar assumptions about foreign policy and relations between the U.S. and Iran to those discussed here and re-evaluate them against the results of quantitative analysis.

Overall, the qualitative literature agrees that throughout the years, the United States leaders had defined Iran as a rogue state, guided predominantly by extremist ideology. It further states that the Iranian decision-makers believed in the hostile nature of the United States, as well as their eagerness to isolate Iran internationally.

The examined literature highlights the importance of combining qualitative and quantitative research models in order to provide a more meritorious explanation of the nature of state interactions. This study aims to contribute to foreign policy studies by emphasizing the value of the actor-oriented approaches while pointing out the misleading nature of the over-simplified theories regarding the states' behavior.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter offers a detailed overview of the research methods and describes the individual steps necessary to perform a thorough analysis of the data. Moreover, it discusses the process of data collection, including the criteria according to which the data has been selected, the size of the sample, as well as the sources and databases from which the texts were obtained.

3.1 The Operational Codes

According to the qualitative research on the subject, both Iranian and American policymakers seem to have strong beliefs about the other's hostility, which drives their foreign policy decisions. The methodology described below has been chosen because it produces empirical data that relies entirely on the evidence derived directly from the collected texts of individual leaders. When tested against these assumptions, this data presents proof for either inaccuracy or correctness of the conventional beliefs about this relationship. The study of operational codes proves to be especially beneficial within circumstances featuring a high level of uncertainty, and the relationship between the United States and Iran is undoubtedly that.

Unlike other research methods, quantitative analysis of leaders' belief systems allows for more objective conclusions and is likely the most direct way of studying foreign policy decision making. That is because the approach is designed to examine the leaders' actions and strategic motivation through "their own eyes", as opposed to third-person observation and subjective interpretation of their behaviors, usually featuring unavoidable bias. Furthermore, by presenting the subject's viewpoint and that of his opponent, the study generates a dyadic representation of the relationship. Additionally, the method allows for an efficient

yet, exhaustive comparison of the subjects' beliefs with those of the average leader from the norming group, the possibility which other approaches are not able to provide.

3.2 Verbs in Context System (VICS) and Profiler Plus

For this study's purpose, the leaders' recorded speeches are used as fundamental units of analysis. The beliefs obtained from them serve as causal devices for foreign policy decisions across Iranian and American regimes (Özdamar and Canbolat, 2018). One of the initial steps in the process is completed using Profiler Plus V. 7.3.17, automated software that applies VICS (Verbs in Context System) coding method to the speeches. The software analyzes the speeches' content, recognizes patterns, and assesses the values of the leader's philosophical and instrumental beliefs defined in George's (1967) ten questions. In order to reach valid results, the data selection must conform to the criteria specified by Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998): "(1) the subject and object are international in scope, (2) the focus of interaction is a political issue, and (3) the words and deeds are cooperative or conflictual" (p.182). Besides, the Profiler Plus software must be able to produce a minimum of fifteen coded verbs for the speech to be included in the analysis (Schafer and Walker, 2006).

3.3 Data Selection

In an effort to calculate the American and Iranian leaders' operational codes between 1953 and 2020, a total of ninety-five speech acts were collected. Fifty-two of which belonged to the U.S. decision-makers such as the Presidents, Vice Presidents, U.S. Ambassadors to Iran, Secretaries of State, etc. The majority of these transcripts were accessed through the website of The American Presidency Project hosted by the University of California, Santa Barbara (presidency.ucsb.edu), and from multiple volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, available at the official website of Office of the Historian of the Department of State in Washington, D.C. (history.state.gov). Other transcripts were obtained from the

presidential libraries' websites (fordlibrary.org, jimmycarterlibrary.gov, reaganlibrary.gov) and databases such as Nexis Uni (formerly Lexis Nexis).

The remaining forty-three texts came from the Iranian officials; the Shah of Iran, the Supreme Leader, Presidents, Foreign Ministers, and the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations. Most of the transcripts were collected from the Islamic Republic of Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (mfa.ir), as well as the Office of the Supreme Leader website (leader.ir) and khamenei.ir. Plenty of texts were also acquired from databases such as irandataportal.syr.edu and Nexis Uni, while others came from the U.N. Library (digitallibrary.un.org) and the UNESCO (webarchive.unesco.org) archive websites. In addition, the sample includes a few statements from memri.org, npr.org, theguardian.com, pbs.org, and transcripts.cnn.com. In each phase 'n' represents the number of texts used for that particular episode.

Because this work primarily examines foreign policy and the relations between the U.S. and Iran, all of the speeches focus on their foreign policy toward one another. Therefore, we indicate that the P-1 value, which tells us how an individual perceives others in the political universe, will always concern the specific actors they discuss in their speeches (Malici and Buckner, 2008).

To obtain the results needed for this type of analysis, that is, the countries' specific beliefs about each other, some editing of the text is necessary prior to coding by the Profiler Plus software. Nevertheless, it must be noted that any editing of the original statements has been kept to a minimum for the sake of external comparability, as the sample is later compared with the norming group's data. Additionally, close attention has been paid to assure that the author's intention and the meaning of the text were not lost due to the editing. The steps taken as a part of the clean-up process were inspired by Lavikainen's 2016 study and are described below:

1. First, the references to very distant history, irrelevant to the events or foreign policy issues discussed in the speech, were edited out.

2. Direct quotes of people other than the speaker themselves were edited out, as they expressed the beliefs of the person being quoted, not those of the particular speaker, a distinction which the Profiler Plus software would not be capable of making.
3. Analogously to the previous step, all the quotes from books, poems, the Bible, the Quran, etc. were edited out.
4. Some of the content not relating to politics but a protocol, such as overly emphasized and repetitive pleasantries, were deleted.
5. The statements that exclusively discuss other countries' foreign policy, not involving or affecting the studied nations, were not analyzed.
6. Certain self-indicators and pronouns, which were likely to be coded by the software as other, were appropriately adjusted with minimum alteration of the original text. (e.g., George W. Bush saying: "American armed forces are at war against terrorism" would be changed to "Our armed forces are at war against terrorism," etc.)

Thanks to the editing process, it can be assumed that the VICS's coding results successfully address how Iran and the United States perceive one another and what each believes is the other's preferred strategy to approach their political goals.

3.4 Data analysis

After obtaining the leaders' scores for philosophical and instrumental beliefs in each phase, their average values and standard deviations were calculated. This information allowed for conducting a number of the difference of means tests. For every phase, there were three difference of means tests performed: (1) U.S. vs. Iran; (2) U.S. vs. Norming Group; (3) Iran vs. Norming Group. These tests act as a tool for understanding how the beliefs of each country's leadership compare to one another and to those of the average world leader.

The norming group mentioned throughout the study, and often referred to as the "average leader", are the mean scores recorder among the sample (n=168) of thirty-five world leaders from different geographical areas and historical time frames. These include leaders of both weak and strong nations and facing various economic circumstances. The data for the average leader has been kindly provided by Mark Schafer of the Department of Political Science at the Louisiana State University.

The difference of means test shows which of the compared values present a statistical significance. It tells us whether the difference between the beliefs of the examined leaders and the average leader is 'large enough', or significant enough, to assume that the difference does, in fact, exist, or if instead, it was accidental (has occurred by chance).

The norming group's values serve as a baseline for comparing and contextualizing the VICS scores reviewed in this study. The analysis and discussion reported in chapter 4 present a mechanism for translating the numbers into 'real-life' situations and provide a reader with a perspective for examining the meaning of the leadership belief systems.

3.5 Theory of Inferences about Preferences (TIP)

The next step of the analysis utilizes a deductive Theory of Inferences about Preferences (TIP), which links the master beliefs with different preference orderings towards the strategic interaction outcomes of settlement, deadlock, domination, and submission between self and other (Walker, 2004; Özdamar and Canbolat, 2018). That results in distinct general strategic orientations (one for self and one for other) for any provided interaction, which derive from each player belief system regarding the effects of settlement, deadlock, domination, or submission. Determining these will provide two significant elements of information regarding each leader's subjective game: the outcome expected by a particular actor and the anticipated response of his opponent (Schafer and Walker, 2006).

Self and other values and preference order in a 2×2 strategic game.

<i>Self</i>	<i>Other</i>
Prop. 1. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (+, <), then Settle>Deadlock>Submit>Dominate= Appeasement	
Prop. 2. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (+, =), then Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance	
Prop. 3. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (+, >), then Settle>Dominate>Deadlock>Submit= Stag Hunt	
Prop. 4. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (-, <), then Dominate>Settle>Submit>Deadlock= Chicken	
Prop. 5. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (-, =), then Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	
Prop. 6. If (1-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (-, >), then Dominate>Deadlock>Settle>Submit= Bully	

"+" indicates above, and "-" indicates below the mean of the norming group. <, >, and = indicate below, above, and within one standard deviation of the norming average, which is $P4a \pm 1$ SD. Norming group scores for $N = 168$ are $P-1 = +.27$, $SD = 0.28$; $I-1 = +.35$, $SD = 0.34$; and $P-4 = 0.21$, $SD = 0.11$. Norming group data was obtained from Mark Schafer, Department of Political Science, Louisiana State University.
Source: Özdamar and Canbolat (2018)

Table 2. A Theory of Inferences About Preferences (TIP)

Source: Malici and Buckner (2008, p. 791)

3.6 Belief Systems Typology

Finally, using the philosophical and instrumental indices, the following master beliefs are mapped on a Cartesian coordinate system (Figure 2) representing the four types of belief systems (A, B, C, DEF): P-1 (nature of the political universe); I-1 (strategic approach to goals); P-4a (belief about one's ability to control historical development); P-4b (belief about the other's ability to control historical development). The typology coordinate system is fixed along three motivational axes of power, affiliation, and achievement. Two main quadrants- upper and lower, represent two general foreign policy strategies- Assurance (upper) and Prisoner's Dilemma (lower). The upper half consists of two quadrants (Type A and Type C), divided into two smaller quadrants expressing the Assurance strategy's variations. That same pattern applies to the lower half. The coordinate system has been designed based on the mean values for the norming group of thirty-five world leaders, serving as a comparative reference (Özdamar and Canbolat, 2018).

CHAPTER IV:

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 presents an examination of the U.S. and Iranian beliefs about one another across the five episodes. The assumptions about each other earlier demonstrated in the qualitative literature are now assessed in relation to the VICS scores obtained through the operational code analysis. A short discussion about each country's view of its counterpart produces a distinct hypothesis, which is then either verified or rejected by the quantitative data. Next, a series of statistical tests are performed to compare each actor's beliefs to one another and the norming group. While this comparison addresses research question number two, a comprehensive evaluation of leaders' philosophical and instrumental beliefs addresses research question number one.

4.1 Philosophical and Instrumental Beliefs

The VICS analysis results for each of the phases are displayed in the tables included in the following sections. The first five indices in each table reveal the leader's philosophical beliefs, providing the reader with an idea about the leaders' perception of external factors, such as the nature of the political universe and the other actors. The first value (P-1) represents the leaders' belief about the inherent nature of the political environment. Next is the P-2 index, which demonstrates whether the leader is optimistic or pessimistic about the prospects for realizing their political aspirations. P-3 score indicates the extent to which the individual is convinced about the predictability of the political future. Below is the P-4 value, expressing the balance between the level of control over historical development one attributes to self (P-4a) and other (P-4b). Finally, the last of the philosophical questions (P-5) examines the individual's opinion of the role of "chance" in the development of political events and international relations.

Following the philosophical belief indices, the tables present the answers for the second group of George's (1969) questions, which deal with the leaders' instrumental beliefs. Contrary to the first group, instrumental beliefs represent one's internal view of themselves and what they consider to be the best approach to fulfilling their political goal. The instrumental questions, therefore, reveal the leaders' strategic and tactical preferences. Consequently, the I-1 value points out to the individual's direction of strategy (either cooperative or conflictual), while the I-2 unfolds one's opinion of the most effective tactics for pursuing the policy objectives. Risk orientation is measured by the I-3 score, which indicates how the leader perceives the risks associated with undesirable political outcomes. More specifically, this number shows how one deals with control, acceptance, and calculation of those risks. The I-4a and I-4b indices specify the best "timing" of action, showing the leader's tendency to shift their tactics in pursuit of advancing his or her interests. I-4a shows the propensity for switching between cooperative and conflictual moves, while I-4b shows shifting between words and deeds. The fifth instrumental question (I-5) determines the utility and role of different means in exercising one's power. The exercise of power is defined as the application of control in one's relationship with the other, achieved with positive or negative words and deeds. The positive or cooperative means include Reward, Promise, and Appeal, and the conflictual include Oppose, Threaten, and Punish.

4.2 Phase I: 1953-1978

The literature discussed in chapter 2 suggests that between 1953 and 1978, the leaders of Iran and the United States saw one another in a particularly positive light. Their foreign policy consequently emphasized their mutual friendship and reinforced the shared interests. That indicates that the American and Iranian beliefs about each other would show higher P-1 scores. Furthermore, their analogous view of themselves as cooperative nations predicts not only the collaborative direction of their strategies (I-1) and tactics (I-2) but also a sense of optimism about reaching their political goals (P-2). All these factors combined imply a higher likelihood of both countries using predominantly positive means in exercising

control in their mutual relationship (greater values for I-5 a, b, and c than for I-5 d, e, or f). Therefore, the first hypothesis upholds:

Hypothesis 1: According to the U.S. and Iranian opinions of each other during 1953 and 1978, both nations' beliefs about the nature of the political universe (P-1), as well as their strategic (I-1) and tactical (I-2), orientations were more cooperative than those of the average leader. Both countries were also more optimistic about realizing their political values (P-2) and more prone to exercise their power via peaceful means (I-5a, b, c).

The results in Table 3 demonstrate that during 1953-1978, the Iranian (P-1= 0.52) and American (P-1= 0.45) leaders believed the political universe to be "definitely friendly" (for reference, see Appendix 1). That essentially means that both countries' leaders saw the fundamental character of their political opponent (i.e., one another) as cooperative. Furthermore, both viewed the political world as more friendly than the average leader, as their P-1 values are significantly higher than those of the average leader (P-1= 0.27).

When it comes to the prospects for the realization of one's political aspirations (P-2), the scores of both Iran (P-2= 0.29) and the United States (P-2= 0.25) suggest that they were somewhat optimistic. Even though these values could not be considered highly optimistic, they were still significantly more positive in anticipating the successful fulfillment of their political values than the average leader (P-2= 0.12). These scores are consistent with their high P-1 score because the governments who see the political universe as friendly also tend to believe in the likelihood of realizing their political aspirations and view conflict on the international stage as temporary.

Another index that shows statistical significance is the predictability of the political future (P-3). The P-3 values for the U.S. (P-3= 0.17), Iran (P-3= 0.20), and the average leader (P-3= 0.12) are all low. However, it seems that, at least to the U.S.'s leaders, the future was significantly more predictable than to the average leader. The P-3 score also tells us whether one has a stronger tendency to attribute cooperative

Table 3. The Operational Codes of the U.S. and Iranian Leaders in 1953-1978

		United States (n=15)	Norming Group (n=168)	Iran (n=11)
Philosophical beliefs				
P-1	Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	0.454**	0.273	0.522**
P-2	Realization of political values (pessimism/optimism)	0.254*	0.123	0.292*
P-3	Political future (unpredictable/predictable)	0.169*	0.125	0.195
P-4	Historical development (low control/high control)	0.266	0.207	0.279*
P-5	Role of chance (small role/large role)	0.950*	0.974	0.945*
Instrumental beliefs				
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.731***	0.346	0.766***
I-2	Intensity of tactics (conflict/cooperation)	0.390**	0.139	0.389***
I-3	Risk orientation (averse/acceptant)	0.380	0.272	0.383**
I-4	Timing of action			
	a. conflict/cooperation	0.268***	0.599	0.233***
	b. words/deed	0.488	0.492	0.530
I-5	Utility of means			
	a. Reward	0.256	0.145	0.231*
	b. Promise	0.098	0.065	0.035
	c. Appeal/support	0.513	0.463	0.615***
	d. Oppose/resist	0.047***	0.166	0.063*
	e. Threaten	0.007***	0.038	0.010*
	f. Punish	0.082	0.123	0.044**

Significant differences are at the following levels (two-tailed test): * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

or conflictual actions to the other. The leaders who view the political future as more unpredictable will likely link a variety of conflictual and cooperative actions to their opponents instead of designating them as one or the other.

As for the control over historical development (P-4), Iran perceived their role in constructing the political environment (P-4a= 0.28) as relatively unimportant. Similarly, during that time, the United States did not believe that they possessed a mastery over foreign policy events (P-4a= 0.27). Still, Iran's view of their historical control was significantly higher than that of the average leader (P-4a= 0.21). These indices also demonstrate that since both countries did not see themselves as essential players in shaping history, they believed that the other was in control. Iran (P-4b= 0.72) and the United States (P-4b= 0.73) were convinced that between 1953-1978, the other held a relatively high locus of control over the historical development.

Regarding the role of "chance" in political affairs (P-5), interestingly enough, while the average leader (P-5= 0.974) scored very high, the result values for Iran (P-5= 0.95) and the U.S. (P-5= 0.95) were significantly lower. Nevertheless, both of these countries saw the role of chance as relatively meaningful. These values are closely correlated with the P-3 and P-4 indices. Even though both leaders assigned the mix of cooperative and conflictual acts to the other and believed that their level of control over political consequences and historical developments was low, they did not view the political game as unusually unpredictable. As a result, the values for their role of chance index were expected to be lower than the obtained outcome.

Turning the attention to the instrumental questions in the bottom half of Table 3 offers an insight into the leaders' prescriptive beliefs, specifying their strategic and tactical tendencies. According to the U.S. leaders of 1953-1978, the best approach to political objectives derived from a strongly cooperative strategy (I-1= 0.73). At the time, the Iranian leadership shared this viewpoint, as the direction of their strategy (I-1= 0.77) leaned towards extremely cooperative and harmonious. Both of these scores are significantly higher than those of the norming group, who favors a substantially more conflictual (I-1= 0.35) method of seeking

a political aim. That also indicates that the American and Iranian leaders would have attributed the cooperative actions to self, more often than not.

Following the direction of strategy, the I-2 index illustrates the intensity of tactics each country deemed necessary for archiving its political aspirations. Here, the tactics of the United States (I-2= 0.39) and Iran (I-2= 0.39) proved to be significantly more focused on cooperation than those of the average leader (I-2= 0.14).

As for the I-3-risk orientation (I-3), that is, the control, acceptance, and calculation of risks, the norming group is rather averse to taking risks (I-3= 0.27). The United States (I-3= 0.38) and Iranian (I-3= 0.383) governments appear to have been somewhat more accepting of taking risks, however in most cases, they would have still chosen to avoid them if they can. While the difference between the U.S. and the two other groups' scores does not demonstrate statistical significance, the Iranian government's risk acceptance was significantly higher than that of the average leader.

The next score reveals the flexibility of tactics in shifting between words vs. deeds (I-4b) and between cooperative vs. conflictual moves (I-4a). Here, both Iran (I-4a= 0.23) and the United States (I-4b= 0.27) displayed significantly lower flexibility than the average leader (I-4a= 0.60) when it comes to shifting between cooperative and conflictual tactics. For the U.S. and Iran, this means that whatever their strategic approach to goals (I-1) was-cooperative or conflictual- it was likely to remain their preferred strategy, no matter the tactical approach of others. For the values of I-4b, there were no statistical differences observed between the three groups. The general tendency among leaders who are averse to taking political risks (low I-3 score) is the higher flexibility when it comes to words and deeds. That is reflected in the scores of the three groups, who, while they were relatively more risk-averse, achieved higher I-4b scores. Thus, the U.S. (I-4b= 0.49), Iran (I-4b= 0.53) and the average leader (I-4b= 0.49) were rather flexible in regard to words and deeds.

Concerning the utility of means in exercising control, Table 3 shows that during the discussed period, the United States (I-5a= 0.26) and Iran (I-5a= 0.23) frequently utilized Reward as the means of control, with Iran using it significantly more often than the average leader (I-5a= 0.15). Each group also

seems to apply the means of Appeal often; however, again, Iran (I-5c= 0.62) was the only one displaying a significant difference from the average leader (I-5c= 0.46). All of the groups also rarely used Promise. Between the three of them, Iran used it the least (I-5b= 0.04), and the United States used it the most (I-5b= 0.10). As for the Oppose strategy, it was employed significantly less by Washington (I-5d= 0.05) and Tehran (I-5d= 0.06) than by the average leader (I-5d= 0.17). Similarly, Threat was used significantly less by Iran (I-5e= 0.01) and even more rarely by the U.S. (I-5e= 0.007) in comparison to the average leader (I-5e= 0.04). Finally, the Punish means were at times used by the norming group (I-5f= 0.12). The United States, on the other hand, rarely made it their strategy of choice (I-5f= 0.08), while Iran has used it significantly less often (I-5f= 0.04) than average.

The results of the statistical significance tests reported in Table 3 confirm that between the years of 1953 and 1978, the two countries displayed an exceptionally cooperative strategic and tactical orientation in pursuing their foreign policies. Additionally, they expressed a very optimistic approach to realizing their political values and a statistically more harmonious view of political life than the average leader. This evidence generally supports hypothesis 1, meaning that between 1953 and 1978, United States and Iran rightfully assumed the good intentions and cooperative attitude of their counterpart, which were confirmed by the counterpart's actual beliefs.

The two outcomes that somewhat varied from what has been anticipated were the scores for P-5 and I-5. Although hypothesis 1 prescribes the regular utilization of all three cooperative means (Reward, Promise, and Appeal), the I-5 values suggest that Iran have had frequently resorted to the use of the two of them (Reward and Appeal) while rarely using Promise. On the other hand, the U.S. had not utilized those means any more commonly than the average leader. As for the negative means such as Oppose, Threaten, and Punish, both countries had employed them remarkably less than the average leader.

The majority of the philosophical and instrumental indices see eye to eye, show definite proof for the considerable level of trust and a conviction about the friendly motives of one another. However, the P-5 scores being relatively high indicate that both actors believed that "chance" plays a prominent role in the

political world. Chance influencing political events means that the future is quite uncertain, and the actions of others are unpredictable. However, that should not be the case if one is positive that the other's intentions are peaceful. That may indicate that despite the amicable relationship, both nations had their doubts about another's true aspirations.

4.3 Phase II: 1979-1997

There is no doubt that throughout 1979-1997, the relationship between the actors underwent a negative change, fundamentally due to the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis. During that time, many U.S. officials would have described Iranian leaders as highly hostile and irrational lunatics. If, in fact, the U.S. was right, the outcomes in Table 4 would reflect low Iranian scores for I-1 and I-2, suggesting strongly conflictual strategy and tactics. Following this notion, Iran is also expected to resort to negative means in advancing their interests, resulting in high values for I-5 d, e, and f.

Iran's I-3 scores would further increase, assuming that the American decision-makers were accurately convinced about the increasing unpredictability of the Iranian "religious fanatics" whose political actions were driven strictly by ideology. These beliefs give a basis for the formulation of the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a: From 1979 to 1997, the Iranian approach to foreign policy had turned very aggressive and radical; therefore, their scores for I-5 d, e, and f had risen, while their I-1, I-2, I-3 values had considerably decreased.

After 1979, a notable change had also occurred in Tehran's view of the American leaders. The qualitative literature indicates that during the second phase, the Iranian officials were convinced that the U.S. government was determined to isolate their country internationally, ultimately seeking the regime change within Iran (Ali 2008; Sariolghalam 2003). If correct, these assumptions would produce similar

outcomes to the assumptions made by the U.S. about Iran. If the U.S. did have malicious intentions toward Iran, their I-1, I-2, and I-5 d, e, and f scores would demonstrate a conflictual orientation. Despite what the U.S. believed about Iran, the Iranian leaders did not necessarily view the Americans as irrational actors; hence we should not expect a change in the U.S.'s I-3 scores. Consequently, another hypothesis derived from the Iranian view of the U.S. follows:

Hypothesis 2b: The second period marks a striking drop of the U.S. I-1, I-2 scores due to their desire to pursue a regime change in Iran, as well as increased use of conflictual means (I-5 d, e, f) in their exercise of power.

Table 4 shows that during the second phase, neither Iranian (I-1= 0.16) nor U.S.'s (I-1= 0.26) strategic approaches to foreign policy were more conflictual than that of the average leader (I-1= 0.35). Therefore, both nations' views about their opponent were incorrect.

Iran failed to predict the intensity of the U.S.'s tactics between 1979 and 1997, which did not turn out to be remarkably hostile (I-2= 0.11). Even though Iran's preferred tactics seem to combine the cooperative and conflictual methods (I-2= 0.02), they do not exhibit significantly more aggression than those of the norming group (I-2= 0.14), proving the inaccuracy of the U.S.'s assumptions on this matter.

Another evidence of the American misrepresentation of the Iranian nature is reflected in Iran's aversion to risky behavior (I-3= 0.14), showing that instead of being radical and blindly following a religious ideology as the U.S. had thought, Iranian leaders were rather pragmatic and rational.

Looking at the I-5 scores further highlights the flaws in the countries' beliefs about each other, as the frequency of their use of negative means of control is comparable to the average. Iranian assumptions about the high likelihood of the U.S. resorting to the measure of threat are particularly inaccurate. The data indicates the U.S. use of Threat (I-5e= 0.02) to be significantly less common than that of the average leader (I-5e= 0.04). Based on VICS analysis results and the difference of means tests discussed above, we confidently disprove both hypotheses.

Table 4. The Operational Codes of the U.S. and Iranian Leaders in 1979-1997

		United States (n=18)	Norming Group (n=168)	Iran (n=14)
Philosophical beliefs				
P-1	Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	0.109*	0.273	- 0.037***
P-2	Realization of political values (pessimism/optimism)	0.004*	0.123	- 0.109***
P-3	Political future (unpredictable/predictable)	0.141	0.125	0.123
P-4	Historical development (low control/high control)	0.228	0.207	0.154*
P-5	Role of chance (small role/large role)	0.968	0.974	0.982
Instrumental beliefs				
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.260	0.346	0.162
I-2	Intensity of tactics (conflict/cooperation)	0.108	0.139	0.022
I-3	Risk orientation (averse/acceptant)	0.242	0.272	0.210
I-4	Timing of action			
	a. conflict/cooperation	0.588	0.599	0.730
	b. words/deed	0.647**	0.492	0.479
I-5	Utility of means			
	a. Reward	0.186	0.145	0.134
	b. Promise	0.058	0.065	0.033*
	c. Appeal/support	0.386	0.463	0.414
	d. Oppose/resist	0.181	0.166	0.181
	e. Threaten	0.015*	0.038	0.078
	f. Punish	0.174	0.123	0.161

Significant differences are at the following levels (two-tailed test): * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Besides the discussed indices that directly relevant to the claims made in the hypotheses, statistically significant differences were also reported across other categories. Table 4 reveals a considerable shift in both countries' beliefs about the nature of the political universe compared to the first phase. While between 1953 and 1979, they viewed the political environment as very friendly, during the second phase,

the United States (P-1= 0.11) and Iran (P-1= -0.04) saw it as mixed and even hostile. Compared to the norming group, both countries perceived the nature of the political universe to be significantly more conflictual than the average leader (P-1= 0.27).

The level of optimism about the realization of political goals has also dropped since the previous phase. During 1979-1997, the United States (P-2= 0.004) and Iran (P-2= -0.11) became significantly more pessimistic about achieving their political values than the average leader (P-2= 0.12).

As for Iran specifically, they attributed a statistically higher locus of control over historical development to the other (P-4b= 0.85) than the remaining two groups. Furthermore, the relatively low value of I-5b suggests that Iran (I-5b= 0.03) used the means of Promise to exercise power notably less frequently than the average leader (I-5b= 0.07).

Lastly, the general tendency of the U.S. leadership during the second phase was comparable to the average leader's belief system, with the exception of the I-4b index. According to the data outcomes, the U.S. (I-4b= 0.65) was considerably more likely to shift their tactics between words and deeds than both Iran (I-4b= 0.48) and the average leader (I-4b= 0.49).

4.4 Phase III: 1998-2001

According to qualitative research, the years between 1998 and 2001 represent another dramatic change in the Iranian approach. The new Iranian President, Khatami, introduced a much more peaceful narrative, seeking to re-establish the dialogue with the United States. The U.S. recognition of this new friendly approach would suggest that, in their eyes, Iran's foreign policy strategies began to alter to become more cooperative (Kamrava, 2001). Consequently, the hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: Between 1998 and 2001, the strategies of Iranian foreign policy toward the United States became progressively friendly, increasing their I-1 and I-2 scores.

Table 5. The Operational Codes of the U.S. and Iranian Leaders in 1998-2001

		United States (n=3)	Norming Group (n=168)	Iran (n=3)
Philosophical beliefs				
P-1	Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	0.221	0.273	0.371
P-2	Realization of political values (pessimism/optimism)	0.073	0.123	0.186
P-3	Political future (unpredictable/predictable)	0.123	0.125	0.180
P-4	Historical development (low control/high control)	0.247	0.207	0.253
P-5	Role of chance (small role/large role)	0.970	0.974	0.957
Instrumental beliefs				
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.429	0.346	0.515
I-2	Intensity of tactics (conflict/cooperation)	0.264	0.139	0.241
I-3	Risk orientation (averse/acceptant)	0.167	0.272	0.217
I-4	Timing of action			
	a. conflict/cooperation	0.570	0.599	0.483
	b. words/deed	0.747	0.492	0.667
I-5	Utility of means			
	a. Reward	0.280	0.145	0.217
	b. Promise	0.047	0.065	0.040
	c. Appeal/support	0.387	0.463	0.503
	d. Oppose/resist	0.147	0.166	0.100
	e. Threaten	0.023	0.038	0.027
	f. Punish	0.113	0.123	0.120

Significant differences are at the following levels (two-tailed test): * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Looking at Table 4 and Table 5, we see the increase in Iran's I-1 and I-2 indices between phases II and II. Performing a difference of means test allows for a conclusion that the values for I-1 and I-2 reported for Iran in phase II have increased significantly between 1998 and 2001, proving that they did, in fact, become more friendly than they were before. Yet, Iranian I-1 and I-2 scores for phase II do not display any

statistical difference from the average (I-1= 0.35) (I-2= 0.14). Therefore, we cannot entirely prove hypothesis 3, even though there has been a positive change in Iran's strategic and tactical orientation.

Table 5 also shows that Iran was using negative means of control less frequently during phase III than in the previous years, while their use of positive means did not change much from what it was in the second phase.

The U.S.'s P-1 values show that they still saw Iran as rather unfriendly since there is no observed statistical difference between their P-1 scores from phases II and III. However, this does not indicate that their belief about Iran's hostility was significantly stronger than the average leader's belief about other nations' hostility in the political universe.

The quantitative results for the I-5 index also demonstrate that in the third phase, the U.S. was not applying the means of Oppose and Threaten more often than the average leader would, which generally displays a more friendly approach.

Overall, between the years of 1998 and 2001, U.S.'s and Iranian scores for all the VICS indices proved to be neither statistically different from one another nor the norming group.

4.5 Phase IV: 2002-2016

This phase is defined by the aftermath of the 2002 George W. Bush's State of the Union speech, in which he stigmatizes a group of nations, including Iran, as the "axis of evil". The President's statement has only added to the already deep-seated belief about Iranian hostility among the American decision-makers. Additionally, as the new Iranian President- Ahmadinejad-took office in 2005, his strong claims rejecting the legitimacy of the Holocaust and proposing the removal of Israel from the map only caused a further decrease of Iranian popularity among the Americans. Soon enough, the U.S. government and the majority of the U.S. public formed the opinion of Ahmadinejad as a lunatic and an irrational madman. At that time, Iranian support for terrorism and their possession of weapons of mass destruction became a widely-spread

conviction among Americans; therefore, to them, Iran under Ahmadinejad was a rogue state, posing a serious threat to the United States and their allies.

During that time then Iranian leaders had become increasingly frustrated as a result of U.S. arrogance. The U.S. attempts to deny the Iranian nation the right to autonomy in the form of the independent civilian nuclear program were yet another manifestation of the American hostility toward Iran.

Qualitative studies also suggest that both countries viewed each other as far more conflict-oriented than the average leader. Some would argue that if a group of independent observers was to decide which country's strategic direction is more antagonistic than another's, many would have pointed to Iran. That would not have come as a surprise considering the intensity of Ahmadinejad's hostile narrative. From this overview, the following hypotheses are derived:

Hypothesis 4a: According to the U.S. beliefs, phase IV shows a rise in Iranian hostility and aggression (low I-1 and I-2 scores, and the increased I-5 d, e, and f values). Their antagonistic position eliminates any tendencies for shifting between conflict and cooperation, as their strategic orientation stays confrontational at all times (low I-4a score).

Hypothesis 4b: In the eyes of Iranians, the United States pursues their adversary foreign policy while frequently applying the means of threat and Punishment against Tehran (high I-5e and f scores). Furthermore, the U.S. arrogant nature manifests in their attribution of a high level of political control to self (larger P-4a value).

Starting with an overall direction of strategy, Table 6 shows that the U.S. leaders (I-1= 0.04) held a notably more conflictual strategic approach than the leaders of Iran (I-1= 0.35) or the average (I-1= 0.35). Contrary to the other two groups, the U.S. (I-2= -0.07) also favored significantly more conflictual tactics than Iran (I-2= 0.13) or the norming group (I-2= 0.14). We can therefore conclude that the Iranian assumptions about the U.S.'s strategic and tactical orientations were correct. On the other hand, the

Table 6. The Operational Codes of the U.S. and Iranian Leaders in 2002-2016

		United States (n=9)	Norming Group (n=168)	Iran (n=9)
Philosophical beliefs				
P-1	Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	0.073*	0.273	- 0.003*
P-2	Realization of political values (pessimism/optimism)	0.016*	0.123	- 0.114**
P-3	Political future (unpredictable/predictable)	0.094	0.125	0.144
P-4	Historical development (low control/high control)	0.236	0.207	0.183
P-5	Role of chance (small role/large role)	0.979	0.974	0.971
Instrumental beliefs				
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.037*	0.346	0.351
I-2	Intensity of tactics (conflict/cooperation)	- 0.068*	0.139	0.128
I-3	Risk orientation (averse/acceptant)	0.206	0.272	0.282
I-4	Timing of action			
	a. conflict/cooperation	0.771*	0.599	0.650
	b. words/deed	0.513	0.492	0.414
I-5	Utility of means			
	a. Reward	0.097	0.145	0.119
	b. Promise	0.073	0.065	0.040
	c. Appeal/support	0.344*	0.463	0.514
	d. Oppose/resist	0.193	0.166	0.184
	e. Threaten	0.062	0.038	0.031
	f. Punish	0.226	0.123	0.110

Significant differences are at the following levels (two-tailed test): * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

American leaders' beliefs about Iranian hostility and aggression were contradicted by Iran's cooperative values for I-1 and I-2 indices. The U.S. has also falsely assumed that Iran's dominant strategy would remain confrontational, as the I-4a score for Iran suggests the average propensity for shifting between conflict and cooperation.

While among the three groups, the United States achieved the highest score for self's control over historical development ($P-4a = 0.24$), it was not enough to demonstrate a statistically significant difference from the scores of Iran ($P-4a = 0.18$) and the norming group ($P-4a = 0.21$). Hence, the Iranian claim proved to be a misrepresentation of the actual U.S. beliefs.

As for the utility of negative means in the exercise of power, the anticipations of both countries fell short, as neither U.S. nor Iranian leaders had resorted to the use of the Oppose, Threaten, or Punishment means. Nevertheless, what strengthens the indication that the United States was predominately conflict-oriented, is their infrequent use of the means of Appeal. The U.S.'s score for the I-5c index is remarkably lower (0.34) than that of Iran ($I-5c = 0.51$) or the average leader ($I-5c = 0.46$).

The above analysis shows that the U.S. view of the Iranian leadership's beliefs between 2002 and 2016 had been entirely contrary to reality. More so, this view appears to have been guided by prejudice and the unquestioned generalizations of Iranian beliefs and behavior. Consequently, hypothesis 4a must be disputed.

Looking at hypothesis 4b, we can determine that the Iranian leaders were wrongfully convinced about the U.S. attribution of a high level of political control to self, as well as their preference of means of threat and Punishment in exercising power. However, hypothesis 4b cannot be altogether rejected, as the Iranian assumptions about the conflictual nature of the U.S.'s strategy and tactics have corresponded with the truth.

A few of the remaining VICS scores are also worth noting. Within the course of the fourth phase, Iran ($P-1 = -0.003$) and the U.S. ($P-1 = 0.07$) have again drifted away from the beliefs of the average leader about the nature of the political universe, beginning to see it as significantly more hostile than the average leader would ($P-1 = 0.27$). The considerably lower U.S.'s P-1 score may be the evidence for their belief

about Iran's hostility increased under Ahmadinejad. Similarly, Iran's decreasing P-1 value explains why they continued to view the U.S. as the "Great Satan".

The norming group (P-2= 0.12) is also significantly more optimistic about achieving their political aims than either the United States (P-2= 0.02) or Iran (P-2= -0.11) within this period.

Also, the U.S.'s score for the I-4a index was considerably higher than that of two other groups, suggesting more tactical flexibility. That means that even though their overall approach was conflictual, the United States leaders were more prone (I-4a= 0.77) than others to switch between the conflictual and cooperative tactics; therefore, the state of conflict was not necessarily permanent.

4.6 Phase V: 2017-2020

Over the years of 2017-2020, the United States continued to perceive Iran as hostile and aggressive. Based on President Trump's stance regarding Iran and Muslims in general, it is plausible to assume that Iranian leaders viewed the United States as their enemy. Additionally, the events of the 2020 assassination of Iranian general Soleimani had confirmed the extent of the U.S.'s belligerent intentions in the eyes of many Iranians. Therefore, the final hypothesis follows:

Hypothesis 5: Between the years 2017 and 2020, both the U.S. and Iranian leaders expected the opponent's behavior to be notably conflictual. Moreover, both were convinced that the other would be a lot more likely to implement the negative rather than positive means in exercising control.

Looking at the I-1 and I-2 indices of both countries, we observe that here again, their beliefs about each other prove to be a misrepresentation. These scores argue against the claims made in hypothesis 5, as neither the tactics (I-2= -0.15) nor strategies (I-1= -0.14) of the Iranian leaders are highly confrontational. Even though Iran's I-1 and I-2 scores lean toward the direction of conflict, they were not significantly less

Table 7. The Operational Codes of the U.S. and Iranian Leaders in 2017-2020

		United States (n=7)	Norming Group (n=168)	Iran (n=6)
Philosophical beliefs				
P-1	Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	- 0.123**	0.273	0.043*
P-2	Realization of political values (pessimism/optimism)	- 0.160*	0.123	- 0.060***
P-3	Political future (unpredictable/predictable)	0.114	0.125	0.133
P-4	Historical development (low control/high control)	0.241*	0.207	0.150*
P-5	Role of chance (small role/large role)	0.974	0.974	0.980
Instrumental beliefs				
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.074	0.346	- 0.138
I-2	Intensity of tactics (conflict/cooperation)	- 0.001	0.139	- 0.147
I-3	Risk orientation (averse/acceptant)	0.110***	0.272	0.265
I-4	Timing of action			
	a. conflict/cooperation	0.710	0.599	0.450
	b. words/deed	0.624	0.492	0.548
I-5	Utility of means			
	a. Reward	0.133	0.145	0.080
	b. Promise	0.103	0.065	0.000***
	c. Appeal/support	0.304**	0.463	0.352
	d. Oppose/resist	0.200	0.166	0.302
	e. Threaten	0.083	0.038	0.072
	f. Punish	0.179	0.123	0.193

Significant differences are at the following levels (two-tailed test): * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

cooperative than in the previous years. Equally, the U.S.'s strategic (I-1= 0.07) and tactical (I-2= -0.001) orientations, do not demonstrate a noticeably higher hostility than the average (I-1= 0.35) (I-2= 0.14).

As for the exercise of power, Table 7 shows that compared to the norming group (I-5c= 0.46), the U.S. resorted to the use of Appeal significantly less frequently (I-5c= 0.46). The VICS scores for Tehran

also suggest a relatively rare use of the means of Threat in exercising power ($I-5e = 0.07$), which was comparable to the frequency the average leader would apply the means of Threat ($I-5e = 0.07$). Hence, the beliefs of Iran and the United States about each other stated in hypothesis 5 do not match the reality.

The remaining VICS values tell us that during the fifth phase, Iran and the United States were a lot more pessimistic about the overall essence of the political stage and the realization of their political values. The average leader's belief about the political universe ($P-1 = 0.27$) is significantly more friendly than those of the U.S. ($P-1 = -0.12$) and Iranian ($P-1 = 0.04$) leaders. In a political world that resembles hostility, the decision-makers usually do not anticipate a substantial likelihood of realizing their political goals. Table 7 supports this claim as the United States ($P-2 = -0.16$) and Iran ($P-2 = -0.06$) were highly more pessimistic about fulfilling their political values than the average ($P-2 = 0.12$).

When it comes to the level of control over historical development attributed by the actors to themselves and one another, neither the U.S. nor Iran resembled a significant dissimilarity to the norming group ($P-4a = 0.21$). However, their views opposed each other, as the U.S. leaders believed in having a significantly higher impact ($P-4a = 0.24$) on political events than the Iranians ($P-4a = 0.15$). The latter saw themselves as less in control over the political outcome. Nevertheless, both of their scores attributed a lower locus of control to self, meaning that they both saw the opponent as having more influence over historical development.

Iran's scores for other indices are close to the average and even to some of the U.S. scores. The only significant discrepancy manifests in Iran's $I-5b$ score, which is 0.00, revealing that in contrast to other groups, Iran would have virtually never applied the means of promise to gain control in their relationships with others.

The matter on which the United States disagreed with the other groups was their risk orientation. They were significantly less accepting of risks associated with the undesired political outcome ($I-3 = 0.11$) than both Iran ($I-3 = 0.27$) and the average leader ($I-3 = 0.27$). The U.S.'s $I-3$ value reflects the conviction about Iran's highly aggressive nature, showing a strong U.S. aversion to undesirable outcomes. Since their

priority was risk-avoidance, they were more likely to shift between cooperative and conflictual tactics than Iran is. That means that the U.S. would have risked submission to Iran if they behaved cooperatively to achieve a settlement. If they attempted to reach the scenario in which they dominate Iran, they would have been potentially risking deadlock as the end result.

CHAPTER V: STRATEGIES AND LEADERSHIP PROPENSITIES

This chapter focuses on assessing the United States and Iran's foreign policy strategic orientations using the leaders' VICS values for master beliefs from the previous chapter. Accordingly, chapter 5 addresses the research questions regarding the countries' strategic preferences and the accuracy of their assumptions about the strategies of the other.

The combination of I-1 and P-4a scores for each country allows for determining their preferred strategy for self. In contrast, the combination of their P-1 and P-4b scores reveals the kind of strategy they attribute to the other. The placement of these values on a Cartesian coordinate system (Figure 2) indicates each country's leadership type, derived from Holsti's revised operational code typology (Walker, 2004). Letters in parenthesis in Figure 2 stand for self (S) and other (O), while lower index numbers reflect the consecutive periods. Combined with the recommendations from the Theory of Inferences about the Preferences (TIP) (Table 2), the master belief scores reveal the desired political outcomes according to each country's beliefs. These analytical tools have allowed for the formulation of the hypotheses 6 and 7, which will be further evaluated at the end of this chapter.

Hypothesis 6: Throughout the course of their relations, the U.S. policymakers predominantly believed Iran to be a rogue state, headed by irrational leaders, whose foreign policy motives were inherently belligerent and ideologically-driven.

Hypothesis 7: Over the years, the Iranian officials widely viewed the United States as an aggressive superpower, pursuing domination through the means of their hostile (specifically toward Iran) foreign policy. However, contrary to the U.S. leaders' beliefs about the Iranian regime, Iran considered the United States a relatively rational actor.

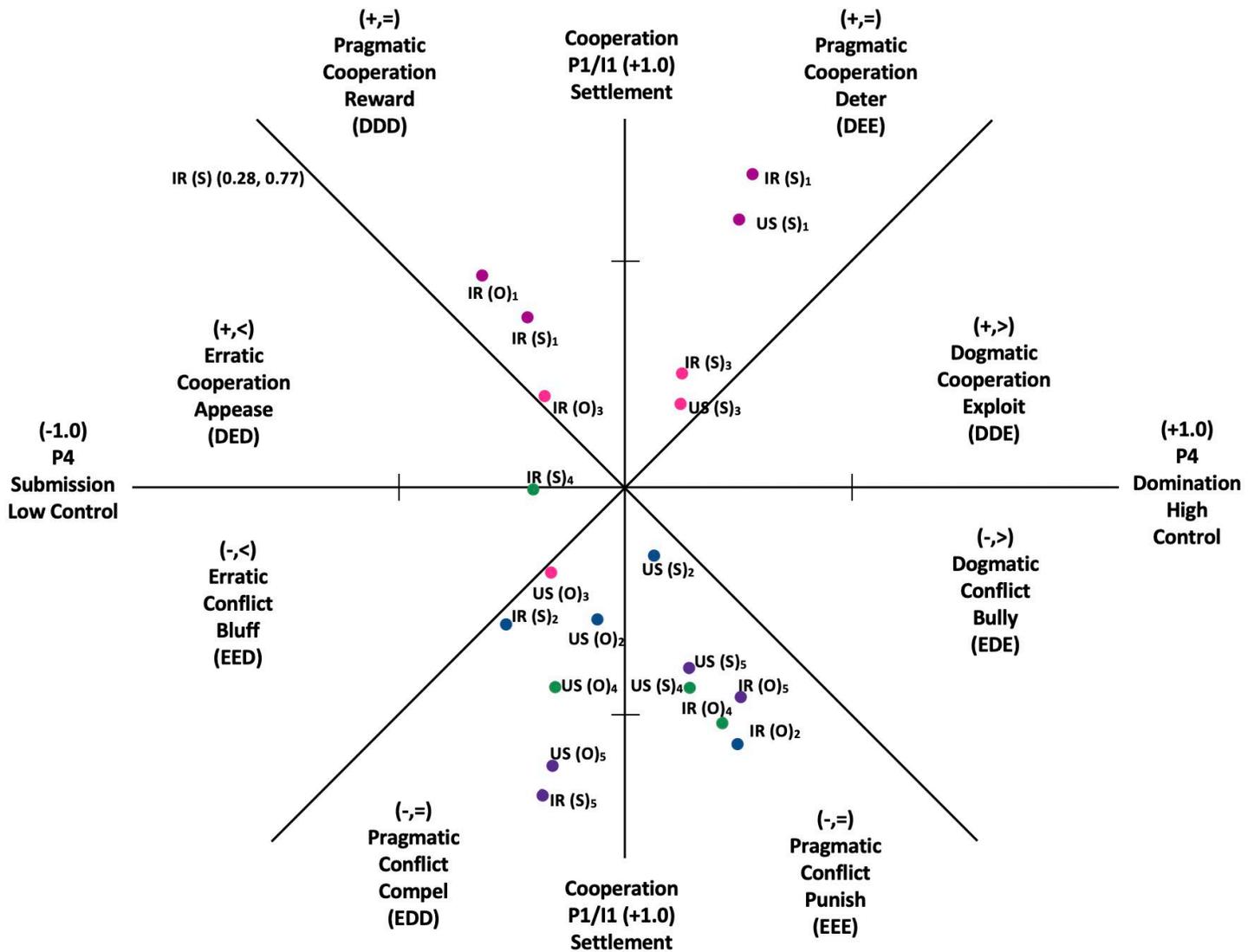


Figure 2. Cartesian Coordinate System.

Letters in parenthesis stand for self (S) and other (O). Lower index numbers reflect the consecutive time periods.

1. 1953-1978: US: (S) (0.27, 0.73); (O) (0.73, 0.45); Iran: (S) (0.28, 0.77); Other (O) (0.72, 0.52). 2. 1979-1997: US: (S) (0.23, 0.26); (O) (0.73, 0.11); Iran: (S) (0.15, 0.16); (O) (0.85, -0.04). 3. 1998-2001: US: (S) (0.25, 0.43); (O) (0.75, 0.22); Iran: (S) (0.25, 0.52); (O) (0.75, 0.37). 4. 2002-2016: US: (S) (0.24, 0.04); (O) (0.76, 0.07); Iran: (S) (0.18, 0.35); (O) (0.82, -0.003).

5. 2017-2020: US: (S) (0.24, 0.07); (O) (0.76, -0.12); Iran: (S) (0.15, -0.14); (O) (0.85, 0.04).

The origin of the coordinate system is the norming group mean values (P-1= 0.27, *SD*= 0.28; I-1= 0.35, *SD*= 0.34; P-4= 0.21, *SD*= 0.11). DEE = De-escalation, Escalation, Escalation (Deter); DDE = De-escalation, De-escalation, Escalation (Exploit); EDE = Escalation, De-escalation, Escalation (Bully); EEE = Escalation, Escalation, Escalation (Punish); EDD = Escalation, De-escalation, De-escalation (Compel); EED = Escalation, Escalation, De-escalation (Bluff); DED = De-escalation, Escalation, De-escalation (Appease); DDD = De-escalation, De-escalation, De-escalation (Reward).

5.1. Phase I: A Special Friendship.

Actor	United States	Iran
Self Type	TYPE C	TYPE C
Self Strategic Preference	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance
Other Type	TYPE A	TYPE A
Other Strategic Preference	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance

Table 8. U.S.'s and Iranian Strategies 1953-1978

The U.S. master belief scores for self are I-1= 0.73 (direction of strategy), and P-4a= 0.27 (control over historical developments for self). Respectively, these values are above (+) the average of the norming group (0.35), and within (=) one standard deviation (1 SD= 0.11) from the group's mean (0.21). These signs are consistent with TIP Proposition 2 (see Table 2), revealing that out the possible political outcomes, the U.S. preferred settlement (4), over deadlock (3), over domination (2), over submission (1). The U.S. master belief scores for other are P-1= 0.45 (nature of the political universe/image of others), and P-4b= 0.73 (locus of control for the other). P-1 value is above (+) the mean of the P-1 score of the norming group (0.27), and P-4b is within (=) one standard deviation (1 SD= 0.11) of the norming group's average (0.79) for the P-4b index. These values also meet the premises of TIP Proposition 2.; therefore, what the United States has presumed to be the preference ordering of the other, matches that of self. Furthermore, this indicates that during phase I, the United States' government can be placed in the Type C leadership category, suggesting a generally cooperative strategy and higher than average sense of historical control. Following the same logic, Washington's master beliefs about Iran during that time reveal that they saw the Iranian leadership as the Type A, with the same preference order of political outcomes as the U.S.

Between 1953 and 1978, the master beliefs of the government in Tehran about self and others corresponded with those of the U.S. That means that they saw themselves as generally more cooperative-

oriented, determined to delay escalatory actions whenever possible. Similarly, they viewed each other as rather friendly nations, willing to compromise and negotiate before utilizing the escalatory means. As scores of both countries for Ego and Alter fit the conditions of TIP Proposition 2, the subjective games of the United States and Iran for this period would have been identical.

5.2 Phase II: Iranian Revolution and the Hostage Crisis.

Actor	United States	Iran
Self Type	TYPE B	TYPE DEF
Self Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma
Other Type	TYPE DEF	TYPE B
Other Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma

Table 9. U.S.'s and Iranian Strategies 1979-1997

We can observe that while the two actors' beliefs about self and other during this phase were the same, Ego and Alter's identities were switched around. That means the U.S. saw themselves as Type B, which corresponds to how Iran perceived them. Iranians considered themselves as the Type DEF, the same way the U.S viewed them. Hence, we observe that both countries have correctly estimated each other's strategic preferences.

Type B, which both countries assigned to the U.S. leadership, is characterized by a somewhat more aggressive approach, open to the use of force when faced with the prospect of a considerable payback that is achievable with minimum risk. Type B leaders also generally look at their opponents as rational actors who can be deterred (Walker, 1986).

During this phase, Iran was believed by both countries to fit the Type DEF category, suggesting that they saw the conflict as permanent, resulting from human nature, nationalism, and international anarchy

(Walker, 1986). According to Type DEF, it is the imbalance of power on the international stage, which is the most likely cause of war. Type DEF is generally flexible in pursuing its goals and not likely to use any extreme measures to achieve them; therefore, they would not use force unless the opponent gives them no other choice.

Both actors' beliefs about self and other correspond to TIP Proposition 5. Hence, each country assumed that its rival preferred the same order of the possible political outcomes. This order is prescribed by TIP Proposition 5, meaning that both actors and their counterparts would have chosen domination (4) over settlement (3) over deadlock (2) over submission (1).

5.3 Phase III: Khatami and *Dialogue Among Civilizations*.

Actor	United States	Iran
Self Type	TYPE C	TYPE C
Self Strategic Preference	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance
Other Type	TYPE DEF	TYPE A
Other Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance

Table 10. U.S.'s and Iranian Strategies 1998-2001

In the third phase, Iran and the United States saw themselves as Type C, just like they did during the first phase. Iran believed that the U.S. resembled the qualities of Type A, which again corresponds to Iran's belief about the U.S. in the first phase. The U.S., on the other hand, viewed Iran as Type DEF. Between 1998 and 2001, while both countries believed in their own cooperative nature, Iran saw their opponent as comparatively friendly and open to negotiations. The U.S. held a contrasting opinion of Iran as a hostile nation, overall dissatisfied with the international balance of power. The U.S. also preferred the order of outcomes that fits TIP Proposition, while in their mind, Iran favored the order described in

Proposition 5. As for Iranian leadership, they were of the opinion that the U.S. would have chosen the same order of outcomes as they did (Proposition 2.).

The popular at the time containment strategy would have suggested that the U.S. preferred to dominate Iran over the mutual settlement. Nevertheless, U.S. master beliefs indicate the settlement and not dominance as the U.S.' most desired outcome.

5.4 Phase IV: *Axis of Evil* and JCPOA.

Actor	United States	Iran
Self Type	TYPE B	TYPE A
Self Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.2. (+, =) Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit= Assurance
Other Type	TYPE DEF	TYPE B
Other Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma

Table 11. U.S.'s and Iranian Strategies 2002-2016

The U.S. master beliefs about self and other in the fourth phase were precisely the same as in the second phase. They viewed both themselves and their opponents as unfriendly and believed that rivals should be deterred. The U.S. also predicted the same order of preferred outcomes for Self and Other as they did in the second phase.

Iran had a more positive opinion about themselves, as they placed themselves in the Type A category. Type A leaders fear the "conflict spiral" as the main danger of war, resulting from players misunderstanding each other intentions, which pushes them to take impulsive actions. Type A is, therefore, convinced that their opponents are likely to act under irrational convictions. Interestingly, Iran saw the other as Type B, which matches the U.S. opinion of themselves. Iran's preferred order of political outcomes

avored settlement (Proposition 2.), while they believed the U.S. would have more likely chosen to dominate Iran, rather than settle (Proposition 5.).

Iran's choice of Type A for self and Type B for other shows that the U.S. assumptions about Iran were not always accurate. Iran's association with Type A demonstrates that rather than being driven by evil motives and highly aggressive, they strived for compromise and political settlement.

5.5 Phase V: President Trump and General Soleimani.

Actor	United States	Iran
Self Type	TYPE B	TYPE DEF
Self Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma
Other Type	TYPE DEF	TYPE B
Other Strategic Preference	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma	Prop.5. (-, =) Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit= Prisoners' Dilemma

Table 12. U.S.'s and Iranian Strategies 2017-2020

During the last phase, both nations' master beliefs were again the same as between 1979 and 1997 (second phase). Here, the actors attributed hostile characteristics to both themselves and the other. Both agreed that the U.S. saw their opponents as rational actors who could be deterred, yet, believed the conflict to be temporary. On the other hand, they maintained that Iran considered conflict as permanent, resulting from the unfair distribution of power in the international system. Comparably to the second phase, both nations favored dominance over the settlement, believing that their opponent would have chosen the same outcome.

Interestingly enough, while Iran's typology predictions differed substantially during the previous years and were more accurate than those of the U.S., the final phase has brought about a significant shift, possibly indicating that Iran has adopted the U.S. point of view. Between 2017 and 2020, Iran has classified

themselves as Type DEF- the same type that the U.S. has assigned to them. Moreover, Iran placed the Other in the Type B category, matching the U.S. view of self. That suggests that both countries viewed the U.S. as relatively friendly.

After the assassination of General Soleimani, many have anticipated an aggressive response on the part of Iran. However, based on their strategic preferences, both nations would have argued against it as they classified Iran as Type DEF. That demonstrates a relatively small chance for a forceful retaliation on the part of Iran since Type DEF strives to achieve its goals with moderate means and would use military force only in the absence of an alternative.

5.6 Testing the Hypotheses

Given the above evaluation and the data discussed in chapter 4, it is now possible to determine whether these results successfully proved the hypotheses 6 and 7. To check the validity of these hypotheses, we must focus specifically on both countries' VICS scores for P-1, P-2, P-4, I-1, I-2, and their overall ranking of preferred political outcomes.

Based on hypothesis 6, Iran's inherent hostility would have resulted in a strong inclination toward domination as the ending state of political interaction. A statistically significant variation between Iran's I-1 and I-2 scores accumulated across all five time periods, and those of the average leader would have provided evidence for their ideologically-driven foreign policy. Further proof that Iran was a rogue state would have been displayed in an overwhelming preference for non-cooperative and escalatory strategies (Canbolat, 2014).

Looking at Iran's approach to goals (I-1= 0.34) and intensity of tactics (I-2= 0.13) across the five phases, it can be concluded that they do not differ significantly from those of the norming group. Hence, Iran has not been any more belligerent in pursuing foreign policy than the average leader. During the years of 1953-2020, the Iranian regime has classified itself twice as Type C and Type DEF, and once as Type A. Types A and C subscribe to the TIP Proposition 2, which prefers the outcome of the settlement. In

contrast, Type DEF meets the conditions of TIP Proposition 5, making domination a most desired outcome. That suggests a combination of preference for settlement and domination, yet with a stronger tendency toward settlement and cooperation. As Type DEF generally strives to avoid the aggressive strategy, unless there is no other choice, it appears that Iran has been relatively peaceful and rational, showing misjudgment on account of the hypothesis. Furthermore, the hypothesis has been contradicted by the U.S. opinion of themselves as Type B leadership, which indicates that they believed that opponents behave rationally. Hence, we can disprove the hypothesis 6.

Across the five phases, the U.S. strategic ($I-1= 0.34$) and tactical directions ($I-2= 0.15$) were alike those of the average leader; therefore, the U.S. has not been overly hostile, as perceived by the Iranian regime. The U.S. leaders' attitude toward the realization of political values ($P-2= 0.06$) also seemed moderate. However, Washington believed that they possessed significantly more control over the political events ($P-4=0.24$) than the average leader, which justifies the Iranian conviction about the American arrogance and their illegitimate interference in the world politics. Throughout the years, on two occasions, the U.S. leaders have classified themselves as Type C in favor of settlement as the final state. However, they have associated themselves with Type B on three other occasions, suggesting domination as their generally preferred political outcome.

Over the years, Iran saw the political universe as highly conflictual ($P-1= 0.16$). They have upheld a significantly more pessimistic viewpoint about reaching their political goals ($P-2= 0.02$) than average ($P-2= 0.12$), which was the result of the U.S. influence on the global political stage. The fact that Iranian leadership viewed themselves as Type DEF is another evidence that Iran has been troubled by the lack of international equilibrium. Their belief about the United States being the Type B confirms that they saw them as rational and predictable.

Even though the U.S. foreign policy did not seem to be driven by conflictual strategy and tactics, as it has been argued, hypothesis 7 has accurately predicted that the U.S. had a stronger desire to dominate Iran than to reach a state of settlement. Moreover, the Iranian opinion about the U.S. leaders as rational actors proved accurate, therefore providing enough evidence to support hypothesis 7.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION

For the past sixty-seven years, the relationship between the United States and Iran and the strategic motivations behind their leaders' foreign policy agenda have been, more often than not, unclear, and therefore continuously misread. As the examined studies observe, the quality of historical interactions between the two nations generated a perceived crisis state. Based on the theoretical assumptions, while the American policymakers view themselves as democratic and peace-seeking leadership that provides security to different regions across the world, the Iranians have quite a different opinion. Similarly, while the Iranian government believes that they are a rational and cooperative nation, yet a victim of the hostile American attempts to further their international isolation, Washington begs to differ.

History has shown that misinterpretation of one's political opponent's behavior and a flawed comprehension of their strategic motivations can have disastrous consequences. The severity of these consequences has been perhaps best explained by Knorr (1976):

The greatest dangers to realistic threat perception do not inhere in the intellectual difficulties resulting from poor evidence and future uncertainty. The greater danger lies in rigid preconceptions and attitudes of which the perceiver is unaware, or not aware enough. Such preconceptions make him desire to see certain things happen, and to make what he wants to do seem justified. And the push and pull of emotions that are attached also to foreign actors in such forms as hatred and contempt can lead the perceiver astray. These intervening preconceptions and attitudes produce selectivity in the receipt and use of information; they therefore contribute to a distorted image of reality and to false expectations (p. 85).

Thus, this study has undertaken the task of providing the methodological means "to counter a dangerous and devastating cognitive bias, namely the fundamental attribution error" (Malici and Walker 2008, p. 786) in foreign policy analysis.

6.1 Efficiency of the Analysis Method

This thesis supplements foreign policy analysis research by applying the operational code methodology to explain state behavior and expand the understanding of how one regime's political beliefs and strategies refer to the average leader and other actors on the international stage. More importantly, it counters the over-simplified assumptions, which Hart (2005) argues, "significantly affect policymaking and unnecessarily close off policy options" (p. 9).

Though beyond this work scope, this approach further allows scholars to predict leaders' potential moves and their responses to specified future circumstances. By utilizing the individual-oriented psychological approach, this study helps to develop an understanding of policymakers' beliefs and, therefore, a more accurate interpretation of the effects of their foreign policy decisions. Additionally, by comparing the quantitative data and testing the conventional wisdom and often overly-generalized claims about the U.S.-Iranian relations, this paper contributes to the descriptive literature on this subject.

6.2 Making Sense of the Outcomes

The results of this analysis exhibit quite a few unexpected findings, suggesting the applicability of this methodology. One of the more surprising results has been the United States' attribution of leadership types, classifying themselves as Type B, and assigning the Iranian leadership to the Type DEF category.

The associating of Iran with Type DEF leadership qualities suggests that, according to the U.S., Iran believes that conflict is permanent. That follows the notion that the U.S. sees Iran in a very negative light. However, the U.S. choice of Type B for self goes against the common belief that the U.S. views the

regime in Tehran as irrational religious fanatics because the leaders of Type B presume their opponents to behave rationally.

Tehran makes a correct prediction about the overall strategic orientation of Washington, as their assumption about the American leadership matches the U.S. vision of self as Type B. Iran also successfully anticipates that domination is the U.S.'s most sought-after political outcome.

Washington's predictions about Iran displaying the characteristics of Type DEF is somewhat accurate since Tehran classifies themselves as both Type DEF and Type C. Nevertheless, the United States fails to accurately assess the Iranian order of preference for political outcomes, as they are convinced that Iran is seeking dominance. On the contrary, the empirical data shows that Iran would instead be more inclined to choose settlement or deadlock as the final outcome. That explicitly suggests that Iran is not a potential threat to American national security, as it is often commonly believed.

The study's overall results prove that widespread assumptions about the Iranian regime as irrational and hostile and the U.S. as the beacon of global harmony and peace do not correspond with the reality of their relations. This thesis demonstrates that while the Iranian leaders acknowledge that a good part of their national identity has been shaped by ideology and religion, they see themselves as progressively pragmatic in their interaction with the outside world. On the other hand, the operational code analysis suggests that American foreign policy is strongly influenced by the desire to inflict their domination on the Iranian government.

6.3 Final Recommendations

Within the broader context, it is vital for policymakers to continuously strive for a more comprehensive foreign policy analysis method, which grants a higher degree of accuracy in assessing the nature of foreign relations. The unaddressed or ignored misperceptions of the relations between states, over time, result in effort and resources wasted for pursuing irrelevant foreign policy paths, which instead could have been used toward the policy areas that need improvement. The misperceptions embedded in a country's

international rhetoric not only become an unwanted distraction from actual issues but also are likely to lead to an unnecessary escalation of the conflict.

Consequently, this work argues that we, as human beings, tend to fear what we do not understand, for the very reason that we do not understand it, and not because it represents a legitimate threat (at least not a threat that has been rationally assessed as such). That is precisely the case surrounding the foreign policy of both the United States and Iran. Their relationship is characterized by a sense of insecurity and mutual suspicion resulting from the lack of in-depth knowledge about the motives and beliefs of one another. Therefore, if each leader develops an understanding of how the opponent perceives them and how they see themselves, the historically antagonistic relationship will potentially evolve into a more informed and constructive interaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interpreting VICS Indices (Walker et al., 2008, pp. 227-231). *Source:* Richter (2016)

P-1. NATURE OF THE POLITICAL UNIVERSE (Hostile/Friendly)						
Hostile						Friendly
Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very
-0.75	-0.5	-0.25	0	0.25	0.5	0.75
P-2. REALIZATION OF POLITICAL VALUES (Pessimism/Optimism)						
Pessimistic						Optimistic
Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very
-0.75	-0.5	-0.25	0	0.25	0.5	0.75
P-3. PREDICTABILITY OF POLITICAL FUTURE (Very Low/Very High)						
	Predictability			Predictability		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
P-4. CONTROL OVER HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT (Very Low/Very High)						
	Control			Control		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
P-5. ROLE OF CHANCE (Very Low/Very High)						
	Chance			Chance		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
I-1. DIRECTION OF STRATEGY (Conflict/Cooperation)						
Conflict						Cooperation
Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very
-0.75	-0.5	-0.25	0	0.25	0.5	0.75
I-2. INTENSITY OF TACTICS (Conflict/Cooperation)						
Conflict						Cooperation
Very	Definitely	Somewhat	Mixed	Somewhat	Definitely	Very
-0.75	-0.5	-0.25	0	0.25	0.5	0.75
I-3. RISK ORIENTATION (Very Low/Very High)						
	Risk Averse			Risk Acceptant		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
I-4. FLEXIBILITY OF TACTICS (Very Low/Very High)						
A. BETWEEN COOPERATION AND CONFLICT						
	Flexibility			Flexibility		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
B. BETWEEN WORDS AND DEEDS						
	Flexibility			Flexibility		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	
I-5. UTILITY OF MEANS (Very Low/Very High)						
A. COOPERATIVE MEANS: APPEAL/SUPPORT, PROMISE, REWARD						
	Utility			Utility		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.08	0.16	0.24	0.32	
B. CONFLICT MEANS: OPPOSE/RESIST, THREATEN, PUNISH						
	Utility			Utility		
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	0	0.08	0.16	0.24	0.32	

Appendix 2. Calculating VICS Indices. *Source:* Malici and Buckner (2008)

<i>Philosophical Beliefs</i>			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Index*</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	
P-1	NATURE OF THE POLITICAL UNIVERSE (Image of others)	%Positive minus %Negative transitive other attributions	+ 1.0 friendly to - 1.0 hostile
P-2	REALIZATION OF POLITICAL VALUES (Optimism/Pessimism)	Mean intensity of transitive other attributions divided by 3	+ 1.0 optimistic to - 1.0 pessimistic
P-3	POLITICAL FUTURE (Predictability of others tactics)	1 minus Index of qualitative variation** for other attributions	1.0 predictable to 0.0 uncertain
P-4	HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT (Locus of control for self and other)	Self (P4a) or other (P4b) attributions ÷ [Self plus other attributions]	1.0 high to 0.0 low self control
P-5	ROLE OF CHANCE (Absence of control)	1 minus [Political future x Historical development index]	1.0 high role to 0.0 low role
<i>Instrumental Beliefs</i>			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	
I-1	APPROACH TO GOALS (Direction of strategy)	%Positive minus %Negative transitive self attributions	+ 1.0 high cooperation to - 1.0 high conflict
I-2	PURSUIT OF GOALS (Intensity of tactics)	Mean intensity of transitive self attributions divided by 3	+ 1.0 high cooperation to - 1.0 high conflict
I-3	RISK ORIENTATION (Predictability of tactics)	1 minus Index of qualitative variation for self attributions	1.0 risk acceptant to 0.0 risk-averse
I-4	TIMING OF ACTION (Flexibility of tactics)	1 minus absolute value [%X minus %Y self attributions]	1.0 high to 0.0 low shift propensity
	a. Coop. v. Conf. Tactics	Where X = Coop and Y = Conf	
	b. Word v. Deed Tactics	Where X = Word and Y = Deed	
I-5	UTILITY OF MEANS (Exercise of power)	Percentages for Exercise of power categories a–f	+ 1.0 very frequent to 0.0 infrequent
	a. Reward	a's frequency divided by total	
	b. Promise	b's frequency divided by total	
	c. Appeal/Support	c's frequency divided by total	
	d. Oppose/Resist	d's frequency divided by total	
	e. Threaten	e's frequency divided by total	
	f. Punish	f's frequency divided by total	

*All indices vary between 0 and 1.0 except for P-1, P-2, I-1, and I-2, which vary between -1.0 and +1.0. P-2 and I-2 are divided by 3 to standardize the range.

** 'The Index of Qualitative Variation is a ratio of the number of different pairs of observations in a distribution to the maximum possible number of different pairs for a distribution with the same N [number of cases] and the same number of variable classifications' (Watson & McGaw, 1980: 88).

Source: Walker, Schafer & Young (2003).