

## **Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson as Cultural Icons of U.S. Foreign Policy**

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*The conventional account of American diplomacy in the modern era is marked by a cultural tension between realist and idealist themes symbolized by the statecraft of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. However, a revisionist account has emerged to challenge and even reverse the conventional account of Roosevelt and Wilson. This poses an intriguing empirical puzzle that is essentially psychological, as it pertains to the belief systems of these two presidents. In order to investigate this puzzle and its implications for U.S. strategic culture, we employ an automated content analysis of the public statements by the two leaders regarding their operational code beliefs about the nature of the political universe and the best approach to effective political action. The results reveal similarities and differences in their belief systems and illustrate how psychological models can provide insights into the psychocultural origins of U.S. diplomacy that remain relevant to the present day.*

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Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson personified the forces leading to the transformation of American foreign policy from an isolationist to an internationalist orientation in its passage from a regional to a global power at the beginning of the 20th century. In the conventional account of U.S. diplomatic history, the two leaders represent within American culture the classic traditions of Realism and Idealism, respectively, in the conduct of foreign relations (Osgood, 1964). However, a revisionist account by Ninkovich (1994, 1999) has emerged at the end of the 20th century to challenge this interpretation and even reverse their identities as cultural icons; he emphasizes that their leadership reflects more the

impact of modernization processes manifested by the spread of Western civilization around the globe.<sup>1</sup> The existence of rival accounts of the roles of these two leaders as cultural icons presents an important empirical puzzle to resolve in the course of explaining the transformation of U.S. foreign policy at the dawn of the 20th century. This puzzle is essentially a psychological one: what are the underlying beliefs—realist, idealist, or some combination—of Roosevelt and Wilson?

Our objective in this paper is to assess whether and how the belief systems of Roosevelt and Wilson reflected the main ideas associated with the cultural traditions of Realism or Idealism in American political thought, which are also found in the general IR theories of neorealism and neoliberalism and in both Western and non-Western political thought.<sup>2</sup> We are not trying to test explicitly any of these theories here, nor are we pitting them against constructivism, the third school of general International Relations theory that is currently popular (Wendt, 1999). Our more modest objective is to assess the extent to which Realism and Idealism as variants of American “strategic culture,” i.e., as a mix of shared worldviews and strategic orientations, are embedded in the belief systems of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson to guide the conduct of American foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

Two recent examples of analyses that test the links between such cultural explanations and the belief systems of individual leaders are Feng (2005) and Malici (2005, 2006). Feng investigates Johnston’s (1995b) claim that Mao Zedong as a 20th-century leader was a “Parabellum realist” rather than a “Confucian idealist” in the context of these dual cultural traditions within Chinese strategic culture. Malici investigates whether Kagan’s (2003) thesis about Venustian (peace-

<sup>1</sup> Ninkovich (1994, pp. xi–xii) defines modernization as the process of acquiring the characteristics of Western civilization, “a rational-legal outlook dominated by science, the professionalization and bureaucratization of institutions, and, not least, the emergence of a global division of labor as a result of the workings of the market economy.” While Ninkovich takes a global perspective on the impact of the modernization process on the conduct of American foreign policy, others emphasize the impact of modernization as a domestic source of American foreign policy. In their accounts, the shift by the United States to a more assertive, even imperialist, role in world politics on realist, idealist, or Marxist grounds is also a manifestation of attempts to provide nationalist or economic rationales to hold together a swiftly changing American society undergoing rapid industrialization, urbanization, and cultural transformation as well as facing opportunities and challenges from abroad (Ferguson, 2004; Kolko, 1969; LeFeber, 1983; Lake, 1999; McGowan and Walker, 1981; Wiebe, 1967; Williams, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> The traditions of Realism and Idealism have manifested themselves in different guises in different cultures and historical eras, including Western (Bull, 1977; Carr, 1964), Hindu (Sarkar, 1964), and Confucian (1980) cultures. These traditions are represented today by neorealist and neoliberal theories of international relations. Several theories coexist under the umbrella labels of neorealism and neoliberalism. Useful reviews and assessments of the research programs associated with these different theories are Keohane (1986), Baldwin (1993), Keohane and Martin (2003), Moravcsik (2003), Schweller (2003), and the essays in Vasquez and Elman (2003).

<sup>3</sup> The concept of strategic culture is technically a collective property of groups and organizations which members of these entities share in varying degrees. Johnston (1995a, p. 48, n. 31) suggests that “there are similarities as well with Ole Holsti’s definition of belief systems and Alexander George’s concept of operational codes. . . . The difference, however, is that strategic culture refers to collectively held preferences, and analysis focuses on collectively produced and shared cultural artifacts rather than on an individual’s belief system or operational code.”

ful idealist) versus Martian (warlike realist) cultural norms in European culture are reflected in the respective belief systems of current political leaders in Germany, Britain, and France. These studies show that a leader's belief system may reflect an idiosyncratic constellation of influences from more than one cultural tradition, which makes leaders indispensable psychological agents rather than interchangeable creatures of systemic constraints or cultural forces in the explanation of foreign policy decisions (Greenstein, 2004). A leader's beliefs may reflect and resemble the assumptions and explanations associated with a general theory of international relations. However, they may also qualify and even compete with those general theories and with a cultural explanation of foreign policy decisions.

Other U.S. leaders after Roosevelt and Wilson in the 20th century have emphasized one or both of the cultural traditions represented by these two statesmen,<sup>4</sup> and the domino theory has emerged as a metaphor for Wilsonian "crisis" internationalism that captures both of them.<sup>5</sup> Security in the 20th-century international system became indivisible, represented by a row of falling dominos, because the growing economic interdependence of states and the ability of modern Great Powers to project their military power on a global scale provided the potential for a local conflict to escalate into a global war.<sup>6</sup> Although Eisenhower articulated the domino metaphor at midcentury (Khong, 1992), Wilsonian leadership as a cultural archetype articulated its assumptions with the logic of collective security much earlier, which influenced the conduct of U.S. diplomacy in various guises for most of the 20th century following World War I. Franklin Delano Roosevelt accepted this logic as he constructed the United Nations Organization, and so did every U.S. president after World War II (Ninkovich, 1994, 1999).

Even the noncrisis internationalism pursued by Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover in the 1920s differed in degree from the "normal" internationalism of the

<sup>4</sup> President William Howard Taft, whose presidential term separated the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations, also fell between them along the Realist-Idealist continuum as a statesman who grasped the interdependence evolving among the Great Powers on a global scale. However, he emphasized only the growth of economic ties among them with his "dollar diplomacy" and economic treaties in the Caribbean and the Far East without attempting to make the security architecture of the international system more robust (Ninkovich, 1994, pp. 21–36; 1999, pp. 25–47).

<sup>5</sup> Wilsonianism is defined by its assumptions about the nature of world politics, paraphrased here as: (1) war is no longer a viable instrument of diplomacy; (2) the advent of total war threatens to poison the world political environment for liberal democracy; (3) the European balance of power has become permanently unhinged as the fulcrum of world politics; (4) the necessity of U.S. military intervention in Europe demonstrates the global scope of modern politics and warfare; (5) the failure of the European balance of power and the interdependence of the modern world makes it significantly likely that any local conflict could escalate into another world war (Ninkovich, 1999, p. 13). This doctrine emerged as a version of "crisis" internationalism in the context of World War I, which led to Wilson's prescription for a collective security organization in response to the forces of modernization that had created this redefinition of the nature of world politics.

<sup>6</sup> The projection of military power and growing economic interdependence on a global scale are conditions that have expanded and contracted throughout history (Gilpin, 1981; Rasler and Thompson, 1994; Thompson, 1983). However, their global expansion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of modern weapons, transportation, and communications is unprecedented in magnitude (Modelski, 1987).

pre-World War I years.<sup>7</sup> They globalized the Open Door Policy, and the United States became a central rather than a peripheral actor in economic and disarmament pacts such as the Dawes Plan and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. FDR did not move American involvement in the 1930s to a level commensurate with U.S. power until the pressure of events in Europe and Asia fully activated his Wilsonian inclinations (Ninkovich, 1999, pp. 79–137). The cold war and America's status as a superpower then normalized crisis internationalism as the cornerstone of American foreign policy until the end of the cold war brought with it a return of normal internationalism in the elder Bush Administration and the Clinton Administration (Ninkovich, 1999, pp. 283–293).

### The Microfoundations of Strategic Culture

The rival historical accounts of the cultural legacies of Roosevelt and Wilson regarding the evolution of American foreign policy rest on different microfoundations in the form of rival belief systems attributed to the two leaders. Whereas the traditional account attributes Realist beliefs to Roosevelt and Idealist beliefs to Wilson, the revisionist account qualifies and reverses this attribution pattern. This revisionist claim reinterprets the beliefs of both leaders in an Idealist direction, qualifying the conventional account, and then portrays Wilson as more of a realist than Roosevelt in his diagnosis of the security dangers presented by modern weapons and the enhanced interdependence among members of the international system. Roosevelt never really understood the implications of modernity while Wilson grasped its implications for modern warfare by 1917 as America entered World War I (Ninkovich, 1994, pp. 19–20, 55–56).

In order to address the rival historical claims of the conventional and revisionist accounts, we shall identify and compare the beliefs of Roosevelt and Wilson by employing a typology of belief systems based on attributes associated with Realist and Idealist thought regarding the sources of conflict and the prospects and prescriptions for managing and resolving conflicts between states. Holsti (1977) employed Waltz's (1959) categories for the nature (permanent or temporary) and source (human nature, society, international system) of war and conflict to construct a  $2 \times 3$  typology of political leaders. He argued that the six types (which he labeled with the letters A through F) had different *operational codes*, i.e., they differed in their philosophical beliefs regarding the nature of the political universe and the prospects for realizing fundamental political values (George, 1969; Holsti, 1977; Leites, 1953). From these differences flowed other philosophi-

<sup>7</sup> According to Ninkovich (1994, p. 69; 1999, pp. 17–77), the earlier response by Wilson's immediate predecessors, Taft and Roosevelt, to the forces of modernization was also a version of "normal" internationalism in peace time, which emphasized the peaceful resolution of disputes through mediation and arbitration and the creation of treaties to regulate international trade and investment. U.S. presidents in the 1920s from Harding through Hoover pursued a "denatured" version of Wilson's crisis internationalism.

cal beliefs regarding the predictability of the political future, the degree of control over historical development, and the role of chance.<sup>8</sup>

Some of these types also differed in their instrumental beliefs regarding strategies and tactics, the calculation and management of risk, the role of timing, and the utility of different means in taking political action (George, 1969; Holsti, 1977). Walker (1983) subsequently retained the three optimistic types regarding the temporary nature of international conflict and collapsed the pessimists regarding the permanent nature of international conflict into a fourth type with similar instrumental and philosophical beliefs while differing over the source of conflict. The four types of leaders are arrayed along two dimensions in Figure 1, defined by their respective beliefs in the nature of the political universe (friendly or hostile) and the locus of control over historical development (self or other).

The two types in the upper quadrants are Idealists who share a belief in the cooperative nature of the political universe but differ in the degree of control over historical development attributed to self and other. Type A leaders believe that their own degree of control is relatively low while Type C leaders believe that their control is relatively high. This difference disposes the former toward more cooperative strategies and tactics than the latter, though both types are generally cooperative in their foreign policy orientations. The two types in the lower quadrants are Realists who share a belief in the hostile nature of the political universe but differ in their attributions of historical control to self and other. Type DEF leaders attribute less control while Type B leaders attribute more control to self. Both types share a conflictual orientation regarding tactics and strategies with the latter less likely to shift toward cooperation than the former.<sup>9</sup>

This alignment of Holsti's types makes the Type B leader a Realist as a result of key beliefs about the hostile nature of the political universe and the most effective strategies and tactics. The combination of a belief in the utility of conflict and violence and a belief in sufficient historical control to transform the nature of the political universe defines the paradoxical operational code of the Type B leader. This worldview is associated with the Revolutionary who blends a mix of

<sup>8</sup> Leites (1953, p. 15) originally defined the "operational code" as a psycho-cultural construct to refer to the "conceptions of political strategy" in Bolshevik ideology, i.e., the strategic culture of the Soviet politburo members. George (1969) later explicated it to include both instrumental (prescriptive) beliefs about the effectiveness of different strategies and philosophical (diagnostic) beliefs about the nature of the political universe. He also shifted its orientation from the shared cultural beliefs of a ruling group to the idiosyncratic psychological beliefs of individual leaders. George initially conceptualized these beliefs as a belief system and later as clusters of beliefs or schemata regarding particular domains of political action (George 1969, 1979; Walker, Schafer, & Young 1998). A history of the operational code research program's evolution is in Walker (1990, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> This typology of four belief systems transcends particular ideologies by classifying leaders according to the schemata in their otherwise diverse ideologies regarding the mix of cooperation and conflict in the political universe and the effective exercise of political power. For example, John Foster Dulles and Joseph Stalin are both Type B leaders in the Holsti typology even though their ideologies are antithetical to one another regarding the economic and political organization of society. See Holsti (1977), George (1979, 1987), and Larson (1994).

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TYPE A</u></p> <p>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 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. <b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Settle&gt;Deadlock&gt;Dominate&gt;Submit</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TYPE C</u></p> <p>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. <b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Settle&gt;Dominate&gt;Deadlock&gt;Submit</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dominate&gt;Settle&gt;Deadlock&gt;Submit</b></p> <p>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. <b>Seek limited goals flexibly with moderate means. Use military force if the opponent and circumstances require it, but only as a final resource.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>TYPE DEF</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dominate&gt;Deadlock&gt;Settle&gt;Submit</b></p> <p>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. <b>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 risks.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>TYPE B</u></p>

**Figure 1.** Contents of the Revised Holsti Operational Code Typology\*  
\*Instrumental beliefs are in bold, and philosophical beliefs are not.

utopian goals with Realist conceptions of strategies and tactics and a definition of the political universe as a dangerous place.

In contrast, the Type C leader is a utopian Reformer who shares a belief that big changes are possible with sufficient historical control but is relatively unwilling to employ violent means to get there. The remaining two types of leaders fit the profiles of moderate Idealists (Type A) and moderate Realists (Type DEF) who attribute less historical control to self and lack the propensity to make waves in the political universe that comes with a higher sense of historical control.

Recasting the four types along the Realist-Idealist continuum of conflict and cooperation in American strategic culture places the utopian Type B Revolutionary and Type C Reformer leaders at each pole with the moderate Type DEF Realist and Type A Idealist leaders located between them. Collectively, the four cultural archetypes represent the logic of "bounded rationality" associated with cognitive consistency theory, which explains a leader's choice propensities for the exercise of power in strategies of conflict or cooperation as a function of diagnostic propensities regarding the nature of the political universe and the degree of control over historical development by self and other (George, 1969; Holsti, 1977; Leites, 1953).<sup>10</sup>

Realist Pole (High Conflict)		Idealist Pole (High Cooperation)	
Revolutionary Type B (High Control)	Realist Type DEF (Low Control)	Idealist Type A (Low Control)	Reformer Type C (High Control)

The strategies associated with each type of leader are defined in Figure 1 by the rank order of preferences for the political outcomes of domination, settlement, submission, and deadlock in the exercise of power. All four types rank submission last, but they vary the rank order of the other three outcomes as a function of their strategic beliefs and the belief in the ability to control historical development. Type A and Type C leaders rank settlement highest because of their shared belief in the general strategy of cooperation and then differ in the rank order of deadlock and domination as attainable second and third preferences. Type DEF and Type B leaders rank domination highest because of their shared belief in the general

<sup>10</sup> This exercise of power orientation reflects the core of the prototypical operational code analysis of the Bolsheviks by Leites who asserted that the strategic conceptions of the Bolsheviks were symbolized by Lenin's cryptic question, "kto-kovo" or "who-whom," which he used to refer to the questions of "who (will destroy, will control, will utilize) whom" (Walker, 2003, p. 246). See also Leites (1951, pp. 78–81; 1953, pp. 27–29). Our typology here is similar to the one advanced by Crichlow (1998), who arrays these types along a Realist-Idealist continuum of Realists, Pragmatic Realists, Pragmatists, Pragmatic Idealists, and Idealists that correspond, respectively, to our four types plus a fifth type, "Pragmatists, leaders who pursue either a cooperative or conflictual approach to politics, reciprocating the nature of their environment" (Crichlow, 1998, p. 701).



strategy of conflict and then differ in the rank order of deadlock and settlement as attainable second and third preferences.

This theory of *different* leaders with static belief systems and strategic preferences has since evolved in dynamic and more complex directions so that the four types in Figure 1 are now considered alternative “schemata” or “states of mind” for a *single* leader, aroused in different domains of the political universe defined by issue areas and targets (George, 1979; Larson, 1994; Walker, 1995, 2003, 2004; Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998, 2003; Wendt, 1999). The theory embedded in this typology of belief systems is a psychological theory of cognitive consistency, which assumes in its classical formulation that there is an internal consistency among the elements in a leader’s belief system and an external consistency between a leader’s beliefs and decisions (Converse, 1964; Festinger, 1954; George, 1969; Holsti, 1977; Simon, 1957; Rokeach, 1960).<sup>11</sup> The contemporary formulation of operational code analysis as a psychological theory of cognitive consistency differentiates two belief systems represented by “self” and “other” schemata in which a self schema of instrumental beliefs acts as a script for effective action while an other schema of philosophical beliefs functions as a diagnostic heuristic for a leader (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Depending on the motivational biases and affective tags aroused by stimuli from the environment, different combinations of self and other schemata are engaged as the leader processes information from the environment. This information takes the form of attributes that are perceived by the leader and combined into patterns (schemata).

We argue that operational code belief systems represent complex neurological systems of cognition, feeling, and motivation, which are networks of stored knowledge activated by stimuli (see Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 29; Walker, 2003, pp. 258–265). They are also plastic, i.e., capable of modification in light of new information from the environment, which means that learning can occur (Ledoux, 2002). The interaction between preexisting information stored as neural networks and incoming information perceived as stimuli generates a process of bounded rationality in which the two sources of information are processed so as to maintain or reconfigure cognitive consistency by choosing between old and new information. The outcomes of these processes are reflected in at-a-distance speech patterns retrieved and coded from the public statements of leaders.

### Hypotheses

To test the rival historical interpretations regarding the belief systems of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, we employ operational code analysis to see if the images of self and other in their foreign policy pronouncements are

<sup>11</sup> More modern formulations include image theory, schema theory and some forms of attribution theory (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; George, 1979; Herrmann, 1988; Larson, 1994; Tetlock, 1998; Walker, 2003).



consistent with one or the other account. According to the conventional historical account, we expect to find that Theodore Roosevelt is a Realist (Type DEF or Type B) leader while Woodrow Wilson is an Idealist (Type A or Type C) leader. These theoretical expectations and the beliefs associated with each type of belief system lead us to the following hypotheses:

*H1:* As a Realist, TR's philosophical beliefs will reflect a hostile image of the political universe that is relatively pessimistic about the prospects for realizing fundamental political goals.

*H2:* As a Realist, TR's instrumental beliefs will reflect a propensity to choose military force to achieve his political goals if diplomatic means should fail.

*H3:* As an Idealist, WW's philosophical beliefs will reflect a friendly image of the political universe that is relatively optimistic about the prospects for realizing fundamental political goals.

*H4:* As an Idealist, WW's instrumental beliefs will reflect a propensity to employ diplomatic means and a corresponding reluctance to employ force to achieve political goals.

In contrast, the revisionist account leads to the expectations that both leaders are Idealists with respect to their philosophical and instrumental beliefs.

*H5:* The philosophical beliefs of both TR and WW will reflect a friendly image of the political universe that is relatively optimistic about the prospects for realizing fundamental political goals.

*H6:* The instrumental beliefs of both TR and WW will reflect a propensity to employ diplomatic means and a corresponding reluctance to employ force to achieve political goals.

These six hypotheses reflect the general foreign policy orientations of the two leaders without regard to context. However, the dynamic version of operational code analysis permits leaders to exhibit "alternative states of mind," depending on the domain, target, or issue confronting them (Farnham, 2002; Levy, 1994; Walker, Schafer, & Young, 1998, 1999). The revisionist account also suggests that Roosevelt and Wilson learned<sup>12</sup> over time, i.e., their beliefs shifted toward Idealism in the case of Roosevelt and toward Realism in the case of Wilson (Ninkovich, 1994, pp. 9–20, 38–56; 1999, pp. 25–47, 51–72). Therefore, we expect that the two

<sup>12</sup> Our definition of learning follows the distinction between structural adaptation and learning by Levy (1994), who defines the former as a change in behavior in response to a change in context without implying a change in beliefs while the latter is (a) simply a change in beliefs (experiential learning) or (b) a change in behavior (social learning) in response to a stimulus without requiring a change in beliefs or a change in context.

leaders may shift over time among the types in Figure 1, deviating from the conventional account, as follows:

*H7:* Roosevelt's philosophical and instrumental beliefs are likely to be consistent with Realist beliefs during his first term in office (1901–1904) and consistent with Idealist beliefs during his second term in office (1905–1908).

*H8:* Wilson's philosophical and instrumental beliefs are likely to be consistent with Idealist beliefs during his first term in office (1913–16) and consistent with Realist beliefs during his second term in office (1917–20).

These last two hypotheses are based on the assumption that the two leaders during their first Administrations were relatively unconstrained by others in following the respective Realist and Idealist beliefs attributed to them by the conventional account. However, during their second terms in office cues from powerful others outside the Western Hemisphere may have cast them into roles that aroused beliefs more consistent with their engagement with Great Powers (Walker, 1987, 2004; Wendt, 1999).

These cues and the concomitant geopolitical shift by the United States from a regional hegemonic position to a less powerful global position combined to make them more susceptible to adopting the role of mediator in the case of Roosevelt and the role of ally in the case of Wilson. This argument combines the mechanisms of structural adaptation (a shift in power position) and social learning (cues from others) in order to hypothesize experiential learning (a change in beliefs) by each leader (see fn. 12 and Levy, 1994). The propensity to follow the expectations of others rather than their own foreign policy conceptions in dealing with conflicts among the Great Powers also suggests a final hypothesis:

*H9:* The belief in the ability to control historical development (P-4) should be lower for both TR and WW during their second terms.

### **Content Analysis and Formal Models**

The rival historical accounts of the transformation of American foreign policy at the beginning of the 20th century are based on an extensive reading of the historical record represented by the public and private papers of U.S. presidents and other sources. They reflect each historian's interpretation of the meanings attached by U.S. leaders to their actions, which become the basis for their rival explanations by reference to the leaders' images of self and others in these sources. The controversies engendered by these contending definitions of the situation often turn on the use of different texts as evidence as well as the assumptions and criteria that guide their selection (Larson, 2001, pp. 337–359). Instead of selecting

statements to support one account or another, we use a relatively neutral sampling technique, which thereby minimizes subjective selection bias, along with systematic content analysis to test the rival hypotheses (Geddes, 1991; Lustick, 1996).

In the following analysis of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, we control for confounding effects by sampling a set of documents for both leaders with the following shared characteristics. They are prepared messages rather than spontaneous statements, presented to the same public audience. In addition, they reflect “actionable” beliefs, i.e., the attributions to self and others retrieved from these texts explicitly frame foreign policy issues and contain contents for which the leaders are likely to be held accountable. Their subsequent actions are likely to be interpreted by their audiences against the backdrop of these statements, which makes it likely that their contents will mirror their definitions of the international situation and steer their foreign policy decisions (Farnham, 2002; Schafer, 2000; Tetlock, 1985, 1992; Walker, 2002; see also Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Rosati, 1987).

Specifically, we test our hypotheses by examining the attribution patterns of the two leaders in a content analysis of their rhetoric regarding foreign affairs from their annual messages or addresses to Congress (Baker and Dodd, 1925–27; Richardson, 1913). In the case of Theodore Roosevelt there are only seven annual statements since he became President during his first term after McKinley was assassinated. In the case of Woodrow Wilson the eight statements included the substitution of another message to Congress early in 1917 because of the lack of foreign policy content in the annual message late in 1916. Wilson was also the first president to read his messages to the assembled Congress rather than send them by courier. While the number of documents is relatively small in number for each leader, the number of attributions in each document is relatively large and aggregated for making analytical inferences.<sup>13</sup> The sample is stratified by year so that it is representative of their beliefs over time. We also control for spatial-temporal effects by disaggregating them into the first and second terms in office for each leader.

We measure the beliefs of each leader with quantitative indices so that the hypotheses derived from each historical account can be falsified and the results interpreted in a nuanced way. We also utilize a simple theory of inferences about preferences associated with different belief systems, which provides a link between the beliefs and foreign policy strategies of each leader and allows us to examine the consistency between their belief systems and foreign policy patterns from the historical record. These features of our research design are discussed in more detail below.

Contemporary operational code analysis uses the automated Verbs In Context System (VICS) of content analysis in Figure 2 to identify philosophical and

<sup>13</sup> The total number of attributions coded for the two leaders in the fifteen speeches is 4,379 for an average of approximately 1,095 per leader per presidential term, which is about the sample size of a typical national survey of political attitudes in public opinion research.

## PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS

	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Index*</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
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)	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

## INSTRUMENTAL BELIEFS

	<u>Elements</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
I-1.	APPROACH TO GOALS (Direction of Strategy)	%Positive minus %Negative 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 b. Word v. Deed Tactics	Where X = Coop and Y = Conf Where X = Word and Y = Deed	
I-5.	UTILITY OF MEANS (Exercise of Power)	Percentages for Exercise of Power Categories a through f	+1.0 very frequent to 0.0 infrequent
	a. Reward b. Promise c. Appeal/Support d. Oppose/Resist e. Threaten f. Punish	a's frequency divided by total b's frequency divided by total c's frequency divided by total d's frequency divided by total e's frequency divided by total f's frequency divided by total	

**Figure 2.** Verbs in Context Belief Indices in a Leader's Operational Code.

\*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 (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998, 2003).

\*\*“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 and McGaw, 1980, p. 88).

instrumental beliefs and locate a leader within the quadrants of the revised Holsti typology of belief systems. VICS focuses on the verbs in the leader's public statements and the attributions regarding the exercise of power to a generalized Self and Other to construct the indices in Figure 2 (Walker, Schafer, & Young, 1998, 2003; see also Young, 2001). The balance, central tendency, and range of attributions between Self and Other and among the categories of conflict and cooperation for the exercise of different forms of political power indicate different underlying general beliefs.<sup>14</sup>

For example, the balance of total attributions between Self and Other indicates a speaker's general belief about the locus of control over historical development (P-4) between Self and Other in the political universe. The balance between conflict and cooperation attributions for Other (P-1) indicates a speaker's general belief about whether the political universe is conflictual, mixed, or cooperative. The balance between conflict and cooperation attributions for Self (I-1) indicates a speaker's general belief about the mix of cooperation or conflict as an effective strategy. The indices for the remaining beliefs are derivatives of the indices for these three key beliefs, which makes the collective set of indices a belief system whose elements are interdependent and vary with changes in the indices of the three key beliefs for Self (I-1, P-4a) or Other (P-1, P-4b).

The VICS indices for P-1 Nature of the Political Universe, I-1 Strategic Approach to Goals, and P-4 Ability to Control Historical Development are mapped as dimensions on the vertical (P-1/I-1) and horizontal (P-4) axes in Figure 1. These coordinates locate a leader's images of Self and Other in the four quadrants of the Holsti typology by reference to the means and standard deviations for a norming group of world leaders ( $n = 35$ ) from a variety of regions and historical eras (Walker, Schafer, & Young, 2003). The norming group's scores for the three master beliefs are P-1 =  $+ .28$ ,  $SD = .20$ ; I-1 =  $+ .39$ ,  $SD = .23$ ; P-4a =  $.21$ ,  $SD = .07$ ; P-4b =  $.79$ ,  $SD = .07$ .<sup>15</sup>

We infer a leader's rank order of preferences regarding the political outcomes of settlement, deadlock, domination, and submission for Self and Other from the rank order of these outcomes associated with each quadrant in Figure 1. Each

<sup>14</sup> The face and construct validity for each of the indices in the Verbs in Context System is discussed in Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998, 2003). Their discriminant and construct validity is tested in several papers (Feng, 2005; Malici, 2005, 2006; Malici & Malici, 2005; Schafer & Walker, 2006; Walker, Schafer, & Young, 1998, 1999), which indicate that the indices discriminate among leaders in theoretically consistent directions (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The reliability of the indices is also consistently high (greater than 90% agreement) within each of these studies, which either use trained coders or an automated software version of the VICS dictionary of verbs and Profiler + as a text parser for identifying parts of speech (Young, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> A norming group for interpreting the scores of particular leaders is desirable because almost all leaders generally present themselves and their states as cooperative (I-1) with a relatively modest level of historical control (P-4) in a friendly political universe (P-1) in terms of their absolute VICS scores for these indices. The norming group means for these three beliefs (I-1, P-1, P-4), therefore, are used as midpoints to distinguish leaders whose beliefs are either above or below the scores of the average world leader and to place Self and Other in one of the four quadrants of the Holsti typology.

proposition below states whether the subject locates Self (I-1, 4-a) or Other (P-1, 4-b) in a particular quadrant (A, B, C, DEF) associated with a particular ranking of these four outcomes:

*Prop. 1 (Type A). If (I-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (+, <), then Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit.*

*Prop. 2 (Type C). If (I-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (+, >), then Settle>Dominate>Deadlock>Submit.*

*Prop. 3 (Type DEF). If (I-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (−, <), then Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit.*

*Prop. 4 (Type B). If (I-1, P-4a) or (P-1, P-4b) is (−, >), then Dominate>Deadlock>Settle>Submit.*

The symbols (+ and −) in these propositions represent the z-scores of the I-1 and P-1 indices above (+) and below (−) the mean for the norming group of world leaders. The symbols (> and <) represent the z-scores of the P-4a and P-4b indices above (>) or below (<) the mean for the norming group.

The intersecting preferences for Self and Other from these propositions identify the possible formal models the “subjective game” in an operational code belief system (Maoz, 1990; Walker, 2004). They are  $2 \times 2$  games of strategy with ordinal preference rankings for the outcomes of settlement, domination, submission, and deadlock formed by the intersection of cooperation (CO) and conflict (CF) choices by Self and Other (Rapoport and Guyer, 1966; Stein, 1990). Depending on the location of the “initial state” of play in one of the four cells, different strategic choices of “stay” or “move” are prescribed by the rules of play for the player with the next move from a Theory of Moves (TOM) developed by Brams (1994; see also Maoz & Mor, 2002; Walker, 2004; Walker & Schafer, 2006).

TOM assumes that each player will alternate moves from an “initial state,” defined as one of the four outcomes to the game, and decide to “stay” or “move” from this initial state until a “final state” is reached in which neither player decides to “move.” This equilibrium solution is determined theoretically by thinking ahead to see if either player can improve his/her outcome without returning to the initial state. TOM thereby departs from classical game theory’s assumptions about cardinal preferences and simultaneous moves, in which the solution to the game is a synoptic, single-play solution by both players (Brams, 1994). Therefore, TOM has been criticized as less powerful and precise than classical game theory (see Brams, 2001, 2002; Stone, 2001).

However, TOM’s assumptions of alternating moves and a limited nonmyopic capacity by players to think ahead are more “realistic,” requiring less heroic assumptions about a decision maker’s powers of reasoning to an optimum solution. Brams recognizes that “we use simple contingent strategies, like tit for tat, because they work well most of the time, even if they are not optimal in every

situation.” He nonetheless maintains that “players make more exacting calculations in specific games, looking two, three, or four moves ahead, especially when the outcome is important to them” (Brams, 2002, p. 395).<sup>16</sup> The ideal solution prescribed and predicted by TOM’s rules of play, therefore, is based on reasoning backward through antecedent branches of a relatively modest, four-move, decision tree. This method of backward induction is “the oldest idea in game theory . . . that has maintained its centrality to this day” (Aumann, 1995, p. 6, cited in Brams, 2002, p. 394).

The Theory of Moves for a sequential game interfaces with the psychological theory of cognitive consistency informing operational code analysis in several respects. First, the distinction between Self and Other in operational code analysis parallels the distinction between Ego and Alter as players in a two-player game with alternating moves. They both conceptualize levels of decision, i.e., strategies, tactics, and moves, as constituting a strategic interaction process in which each unit (Self and Other) makes choices based on strategic rationality.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, both operational code analysis and sequential game theory are structurally isomorphic with respect to units of analysis and levels of decision (Hanrieder, 1967; Singer, 1961).

Second, both TOM’s rules of play and the action schema or script specified by the instrumental beliefs in cognitive consistency theory distinguish an internally consistent, hierarchical order among strategies (I-1), tactics (I-2), and moves (I-5) with tactics defined as sequences of moves and strategies defined as a set of tactics leading to a particular outcome (Snyder and Diesing, 1977; Walker, 2003; see also Lake and Powell, 1999). This consistency principle in both the psychological theory in operational code analysis and the game theory in the Theory of Moves makes the two theories and their notions of bounded rationality and strategic rationality conceptually compatible as a “theory complex” (Walker, 2003, p. 270–273; see also Laudan, 1977).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Brams (2002, p. 395; my italics) attempts to reconcile this ambivalence about human decision-making processes by arguing that “real players do not painstakingly work backward from the endpoints of a game tree . . . Rather, players develop heuristics and use rules of thumb that simplify this process . . . *But whence these rules, if not from robust and time-tested simplifications that approximate the calculations of backward induction?*”

<sup>17</sup> According to Lake and Powell (1999), decision makers act rationally when they can rank possible outcomes associated with different options and then choose the option that optimizes their preferences. Strategic rationality is invoked (p. 8) to describe a situation when “an actor’s ability to further its ends depends on the actions others take.” Echoing Brams above (see also n. 17), they argue (p. 7) that these calculations “require only a minimalist definition of cognitive ability . . . theories of strategic choice commonly assume not that actors are omniscient, only that they are purposive.”

<sup>18</sup> Laudan’s (1977, pp. 48–74) notion of a “theory complex” is part of a philosophy for making scientific progress by diversifying across theories and making them compatible allies rather than treating them as rivals and choosing between them. Solving conceptual anomalies between two theories, e.g., a rational choice theory and a cognitive consistency theory, counts as scientific progress for Laudan because it represents movement along a continuum from inconsistency between theories toward compatibility and ultimately the entailment or derivation of one theory from another one.



Third, the VICS index for the nature of the political universe (P-1) is measured with the same logic as the VICS index for Self's strategic orientation (I-1) index, i.e., they are empirically commensurable, making the former an index for Other's strategic orientation (Ball, 1987; see also Lakatos, 1970). The same is true for the index of Historical Control (P-4) for Self and Other. With these Self and Other indices calculated from the same formulae in Figure 2 and based on the specific moves of Self and Other, respectively, the subjective game embedded in Self's operational code can then be constructed from the simple Theory of Inferences about Preferences (TIP) articulated in Propositions 1 through 4 above.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, it is important to remember that our application of TOM is the analysis of the subjective game of each president rather than an objective game commonly defined by two players. Conventional game theory makes a "two-sided information" assumption, i.e., that the players know they are playing the same game. This convention permits an outside observer and the players to calculate commonly defined, optimum solutions to the game that govern each player's choices as well as predict and explain the final outcome of the game. Our application does not assume or demonstrate both players are playing the same game, and therefore, we can only predict and explain with confidence the choices of one player. The stability of a final outcome may be because each player is playing the same game or because their games diverge but share a common equilibrium.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Belief Systems of Two U.S. Presidents**

To assess the operational codes of Roosevelt and Wilson, we shall use differences in the VICS scores calculated from their public statements together with the logic of their subjective games and TOM. The following results are organized by the sequence of hypotheses about the general operational codes of the two leaders in the conventional and revisionist accounts of differences between them and by the qualifications introduced by context effects across spatial-temporal domains. We test our hypotheses by comparing and contrasting the two leaders both with one another and with a sample of world leaders. The operational code scores of each leader for the general foreign policy domain are

<sup>19</sup> This simple theory employed here can also be elaborated into an expanded theory of inferences about preferences to test hypotheses about intra-quadrant locations. The expanded version permits more refined generalizations about the link between beliefs and strategic interaction and the location of a leader's images of Self and Other within sectors of the four quadrants in the revised Holsti typology in Figure 1. See Marfleet and Walker (2006). We use the simple version here instead of the expanded one because the quadrant locations of the two leaders are relatively unambiguous except for TR's location squarely on the vertical axis in Term 2. However, since both Type A and Type C leaders rank settlement as the highest preference for Self and Other, the TOM prediction is an outcome of settlement for a "no-conflict" game no matter whether Self and Other are in the Type A or Type C quadrants.

<sup>20</sup> See Marfleet and Walker (2006), who explore the implications of predicting and explaining outcomes between players with different subjective games.

compared in Table 1 with one another and with the average scores for our sample of world leaders.

The results in Table I do not support the hypotheses derived from the conventional account (H-1 through H-4) regarding differences in the presidents' philosophical and instrumental beliefs. They show that Roosevelt's philosophical beliefs about the nature of the political universe are actually more friendly (P-1), more optimistic (P-2), and less confident in the ability to control historical development (P-4) than either the average world leader or Woodrow Wilson. Wilson resembles the average world leader more closely than Roosevelt regarding these key beliefs for distinguishing between Realists and Idealists, and both leaders are virtually indistinguishable from the average world leader regarding the remaining philosophical beliefs.

**Table 1.** The Operational Codes of Roosevelt and Wilson by Terms in Office

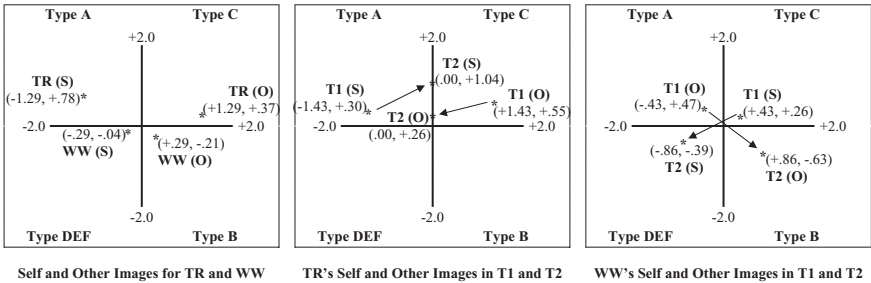
Philosophical Beliefs		Both Terms			First Term			Second Term		
		TR	AL*	WW	TR	AL*	WW	TR	AL*	WW
P-1.	Nature of the Political Universe (Friendly/Hostile)	.35	.28	.24	.38	.28	.37	.33	.28	.16
P-2.	Realization of Political Values (Pessimistic/Optimistic)	.20	.13	.11	.23	.13	.22	.12	.13	.04
P-3.	Predictability of Political Future (Low/High)	.10	.09	.08	.09	.09	.10	.17	.09	.08
P-4.	Control Over Historical Development (Low/High)									
	a. Self's Control	.12	.21	.19	.11	.21	.24	.21	.21	.15
	b. Other's Control	.88	.79	.81	.89	.79	.76	.79	.79	.85
P-5.	Role of Chance	.99	.98	.98	.99	.98	.98	.97	.98	.99
Instrumental Beliefs										
I-1.	Strategic Approach to Goals (Cooperative/Conflictual)	.57	.39	.38	.46	.39	.45	.63	.39	.30
I-2.	Tactical Pursuit of Goals (Cooperative/Conflictual)	.34	.15	.15	.26	.15	.22	.38	.15	.07
I-3.	Risk Orientation (Averse/Acceptant)	.19	.19	.15	.21	.19	.15	.19	.19	.17
I-4.	Timing of Action									
	a. Cooperation/Conflict	.43	.59	.62	.54	.59	.55	.37	.59	.70
	b. Words/Deeds	.68	.51	.71	.46	.51	.65	.78	.51	.78
I-5.	Utility of Means									
	a. Reward	.27	.14	.19	.19	.14	.22	.31	.14	.17
	b. Promise	.04	.07	.03	.04	.07	.05	.04	.07	.02
	c. Appeal/Support	.47	.49	.46	.50	.49	.46	.46	.49	.46
	d. Oppose/Resist	.14	.14	.13	.23	.14	.12	.10	.14	.13
	e. Threaten	.01	.04	.03	.00	.04	.05	.01	.04	.00
	f. Punish	.07	.12	.16	.04	.12	.11	.08	.12	.22

\*Average Leader's mean for a sample (n = 35) of world leaders from different regions and eras.

Wilson is less cooperative than Roosevelt in his strategic (I-1) and tactical (I-2) choice propensities and is also closer to the average world leader's score for these instrumental beliefs. Both leaders conform closely to the average world leader for the remaining instrumental beliefs with the exception of their respective indices for managing risks (I-4) and the utility of different means (I-5) for exercising power. They indicate that Roosevelt is less likely to shift between conflict and cooperation (I-4a), and both leaders are more likely than the average world leader to shift between words and deeds (I-4b) in managing risks. In the exercise of power Roosevelt has a significantly higher propensity to Reward (I-5a) than Wilson, and he is less likely to Threaten (I-5e) or Punish (I-5f).

These differences partly support the expectations (H-5 and H-6) associated with the revisionist historical account for Roosevelt but not for Wilson. Theodore Roosevelt's self image is a Type A Idealist, and he attributes Type C cooperative beliefs to others in the political universe. However, Woodrow Wilson's self image is a Type DEF Realist, and he attributes Type B hostile beliefs to others. These overall results are shown in the first graph of Figure 3.

It is possible that these results are due to the limitations of a general operational code analysis that does not take into account the effects of context and the dynamic alterations in the leader's "state of mind" aroused by engagement in different political domains over time. This possibility and our earlier expectations about the possible contextual effects of U.S. involvement in conflicts with the Great Powers led us to hypothesize that the two leaders are more likely to resemble their conventional Realist and Idealist archetypes in the absence of cues from powerful others. Since each leader became entangled in conflicts among the Great



**Figure 3.** Self and Other Images for Roosevelt and Wilson by Term in Office. TR = Roosevelt; WW = Wilson. Plots are z-scores for Self (S) and Other (O) indices calculated by subtracting the mean for the sample of world leaders from each leader's score in Table 1 and dividing by the standard deviation for the sample of world leaders. Scores are plotted on the vertical and horizontal axes in Figure 1 with I-1 scores for Self (S) and P-1 scores for Other (O) on the vertical axis and P-4 scores for Self (S) and Other (O) on the horizontal axis. T1 = Term 1 and T2 = Term 2 for each leader. The preference orders for each quadrant are as follows: Type A = Settle > Deadlock > Dominate > Submit; Type B = Dominate > Deadlock > Settle > Submit; Type C = Settle > Dominate > Deadlock > Submit; Type DEF = Dominate > Settle > Deadlock > Submit.

Powers during his second term in office, we contrast the operational codes of both leaders for each presidential term.

A comparison of Theodore Roosevelt's key philosophical beliefs for both terms indicates that his image of the political universe is less friendly (P-1) and less optimistic (P-2) in his second term, which does not support the expectation (H-7) that they would be more consistent with a Realist image of the political universe in his first term. His indices for strategic (I-1) and tactical (I-2) beliefs are more cooperative during his second term than his first term, which is consistent with the expectation (H-8) that he would adopt a more Idealistic strategic orientation in his second term. Roosevelt's belief in the ability to control historical development (P-4) is higher for his second term. While this increase is contrary to our hypothesis (H-11) that demands by the Great Powers would weaken his belief in historical control, the increase was not sufficient to boost his index above the average world leader's score.

Overall, therefore, TR's strategic and tactical propensities regarding cooperation shifted in an Idealist direction while his image of a friendly political universe moved in a Realist direction and grew less optimistic. These results support the revisionist claim that TR increasingly realized that other mechanisms than the balance of power were necessary to manage and resolve Great Power conflicts. The implication is that TR became more of an Idealist for Realist reasons, i.e., he accepted the demands of the Great Powers to adopt the role of mediator in an attempt to manage an increasingly hostile political universe of powerful states. Mapping these overall results in Figure 3 shows Roosevelt with a Type A Idealist identity for Self and a Type C Idealist identity for Other during his first term. There is a shift for TR toward a Type C Idealist identity for Self and a Type A Idealist identity for Other during his second term in office.

A comparison of Woodrow Wilson's philosophical beliefs in both terms shows that his image of the political universe is less friendly (P-1) and less optimistic (P-2) during his second term compared to his first term, and WW's belief in the ability to control historical development (P-4) likewise decreases in his second term. His indices for strategic (I-1) and tactical (I-2) beliefs are less cooperative during his second term than during his first term. These results support the contextual effects hypotheses (H-9 and H-10) of a shift in Wilson's operational code away from Idealist and toward Realist philosophical and instrumental beliefs along with a decrease in his belief in historical control (H-11) with the approach of World War I. Woodrow Wilson's locations of Self and Other in Figure 3 are generally where the revisionist historical account anticipates. He attributes a Type C Idealist identity to Self and a Type A Idealist identity to Other in his first term and then shifts in his second term to a Type DEF Realist identity for Self and a Type B Realist identity for Other.

These differences between leaders and the contextual effects of engagement in Great Power conflicts are also reflected in the subjective games of strategic interaction constructed from the indices for the master beliefs in their operational

codes. The Idealist and Realist subjective games offer a formal analytical framework for interpreting the narrative of foreign policy decisions by each leader, based on a theory of payoffs provided by the preceding operational code analysis of their respective belief systems and the propositions linking key beliefs with ranked preferences for the outcomes of settlement, deadlock, domination, and submission (Schafer and Walker, 2006; Walker, 2004).

The results of the game theory analysis are shown in the subjective games in Figure 4 and are consistent with findings from the preceding analysis of their operational codes and the revisionist historical account. They show the opposite of what one would expect from the conventional historical account of their Realist and Idealist views (Cooper 1983; Osgood 1964). Roosevelt's general subjective game is a "no conflict" game between Self as a Type A Idealist dealing with a generalized Other who is a Type C Idealist, in which both players rank highest the same outcome (settlement). The general subjective game in Wilson's operational code is a "conflict" game between players who disagree on the highest-ranked outcome, in which Self is a Type DEF Realist dealing with a generalized Other who is a Type B Realist.<sup>21</sup>

*Roosevelt's Idealist Game.* The Nash solutions for the Idealist game in Figure 4 under the assumption of simultaneous moves associated with classical game theory predict that Roosevelt's strategy should be cooperation (CO). This choice is based on the expectation that Other will also choose cooperation (CO) leading to a mutual cooperation outcome that achieves the highest ranked (4,4) outcome for each player. A Nash equilibrium is a *myopic* equilibrium in which neither player will shift strategies, because it would not lead immediately to a better outcome. Under the assumption of alternating moves associated with Brams' sequential game theory, each player's strategy in this game is contingent on the other's choice. If one player chooses a conflict (CF) strategy, so will the other player, leading to a deadlock (3,2) outcome that is also a Nash equilibrium. If either player shifted from CF to CO, it would lead immediately to a (1,4) outcome for Self and a (4,1) outcome for Other.

Under the rules of play associated with the Theory of Moves (TOM) in sequential game theory developed by Brams (1994), however, the *nonmyopic* solution for this game remains mutual cooperation (4,4). TOM assumes that each player has the nonmyopic capacity to "think ahead" and calculate the consequences of shifts in strategy by both players. In this Idealist game each player can see that even if the starting point of the game is the myopic Nash equilibrium of (3,2), a shift in strategy by one player from CF to CO will lead to a corresponding

<sup>21</sup> Brams (1994, p. 215) notes that, "There are 78 structurally distinct  $2 \times 2$  strict ordinal games in which the two players, each with two strategies, can strictly rank the four states from best to worst. . . . Of the 78 games, 21 are no-conflict games with a mutually best (4,4) state. These states are always Nash and nonmyopic equilibria (NMEs) in these games. . . . [In] . . . the remaining 57 games . . . the players disagree on a most-preferred state." See also Rapoport and Guyer (1966) and Stein (1990).

GENERAL SUBJECTIVE GAMES								
OTHER			OTHER			OTHER		
	O	CF		CO	CF		CO	CF
CO	<u>4,4*</u>	1,3	CO	Settle	Submit	CO	3,2	1,4
TR			USA			WW		
CF	2,1	3,2*	CF	Dominate	Deadlock	CF	4,1	<u>2,3*</u>
IDEALIST GAME ROOSEVELT			USA OUTCOMES			REALIST GAME WILSON		

FIRST-TERM GAMES								
OTHER			OTHER			OTHER		
	CO	CF		CO	CF		CO	CF
CO	<u>4,4*</u>	1,3	CO	Settle	Submit	CO	<u>4,4*</u>	1,2
TR			USA			WW		
CF	2,1	3,2*	CF	Dominate	Deadlock	CF	3,1	2,3*
ROOSEVELT GAME			USA OUTCOMES			WILSON GAME		

SECOND-TERM GAMES								
OTHER			OTHER			OTHER		
	CO	CF		CO	CF		CO	CF
CO	<u>4,4*</u>	1,1	CO	Settle	Submit	CO	3,2	1,4
TR			USA			WW		
CF	3,2	2,3*	CF	Dominate	Deadlock	CF	4,1	<u>2,3*</u>
ROOSEVELT GAME			USA OUTCOMES			WILSON GAME		

**Figure 4.** Operational Code Games for Roosevelt and Wilson.

Nash equilibrium solutions are asterisked and nonmyopic solutions are underlined. Each player's preferences for the four outcomes are ranked from 4 (highest) to (1) lowest.

shift by the other player and a (4,4) final outcome. Under TOM's rules of play that specify (1) strictly alternating moves with no backtracking and (2) no cycling back to the initial state (starting point) for sequential games, the (4,4) outcome for this game from any starting point is always a nonmyopic equilibrium, i.e., "a state from which neither player, anticipating all possible rational moves and counter moves from the initial state, would have an incentive to depart unilaterally because the

departure would eventually lead to a worse, or at least not a better, outcome” (Brams, 1994, p. 224).

*Wilson’s Realist Game.* The myopic Nash equilibrium and TOM’s nonmyopic equilibrium solutions overlap for Wilson’s Realist game in Figure 4. Deadlock is the myopic Nash solution for this game under classical game theory’s assumption of simultaneous moves by each player. It is also the nonmyopic solution for this game under TOM’s rules of play. If the starting point for this game is any other cell than (2,3), at least one player has an incentive to choose “move” rather than “stay” and will make this shift in strategy when its turn to move occurs. That is, “If it is rational for one player to move and the other player not to move from the initial state, then the player who moves takes *precedence*: its move overrides the player who stays, so the outcome will be induced by the player who moves” (Brams, 1994, p. 28; italics in original). The application of this rule of play and empirical support for its plausibility along with the other rules of play for TOM is demonstrated and discussed below in the comparisons of each leader’s subjective games with their foreign policies during their first and second terms of office.

The subjective games in Figure 4 for each presidential term show a more nuanced and complex picture of individual and contextual differences between the two leaders. In the absence of engagement in Great Power conflicts during their first terms in office, the two leaders present an Idealist face to the world at the strategic level of decision. Both Roosevelt and Wilson identify Self and Other in the upper two quadrants of the Holsti typology. Roosevelt identifies Self in the Type A quadrant dealing with a generalized Other in the Type C quadrant. Wilson reverses those role identities and attributes Type C to Self and Type A to Other. Because both Self and Other identify (4,4) settlement as the highest-ranking outcome in both games, the nonmyopic equilibrium solution for each game is “move” to settlement and “stay” at the “final state” of mutual cooperation no matter which cell is defined as the “initial state” (Brams, 1994, p. 215).

However, during their second terms in office and engagement in Great Power conflicts, there are shifts in their respective strategic games. Roosevelt attributes the Type C role identity to Self and the Type A identity to Other, inserting the United States as a mediator between conflicting Great Powers. The settlement outcome receives the highest ranking (4,4) from both Self and Other once again, and the prediction in the Second Term Game is that TR will again choose “move” toward settlement as a nonmyopic equilibrium no matter what the “initial state” is between Self and Other. While the identities of Self and Other remain consistent with Idealist types in this subjective game, the preceding analysis of VICS scores has suggested that the reconfiguration of TR’s subjective game below also reflects a shift in a Realist direction regarding TR’s view of Other within the Idealist quadrants of the Holsti typology.

Woodrow Wilson’s subjective game shifted even more markedly than Roosevelt’s in a Realist direction during his second term. Now it is equivalent to his original subjective game before disaggregating the scores for his VICS indices



by presidential term. If we stipulate that the most interesting and plausible strategic interaction episodes from the historical record have the “initial states” of (a) mutual cooperation representing neutrality during the early years of World War I and (b) submission in the form of German violations of U.S. neutrality with submarine attacks on the high seas, then the corresponding predicted strategies by Wilson are (a) “stay” at mutual cooperation (3,2) and (b) “move” to mutual conflict (2,3) only after German violations of neutrality become unbearable by moving the conflict to (1,4).

A formal demonstration via backward induction of the logic of Wilson’s strategies during World War I appears in Figure 5. The arrows in the game matrices indicate whether one side or the other will choose “stay” ( $\rightarrow$ ) or “move” ( $\rightarrow$ ) between the strategies of conflict (CF) and cooperation (CO). If the initial state is (CO,CO), then Wilson will choose “stay” and expects Other to choose “move.” If Other chooses “move” to (1,4) by shifting strategies from CO to CF, then Wilson

SELF'S STRATEGIES												
OTHER				OTHER				OTHER				
CO		CF		CO		CF		CO		CF		
CO	“ <u>3,2</u> ”			←	1,4	CO	3,2			→	“1,4”	
WW	↓		↑		WW	↑		↓		WW	↓	
	↑		↓		WW	↓		↑		WW	↑	
CF	4,1			→	2,3	CF	4,1			←	<u>2,3</u>	
WILSON'S NEUTRALITY STRATEGY: STAY				WILSON'S VIOLATION STRATEGY: MOVE				WILSON'S WAR STRATEGY: STAY				

OTHER'S STRATEGIES												
OTHER				OTHER				OTHER				
CO		CF		CO		CF		CO		CF		
CO	“3,2”			→	1,4	CO	3,2			←	“ <u>1,4</u> ”	
WW	↑		↓		WW	↓		↑		WW	↑	
	↓		↑		WW	↑		↓		WW	↓	
CF	4,1			←	<u>2,3</u>	CF	4,1			→	2,3	
OTHER'S NEUTRALITY STRATEGY: MOVE				OTHER'S VIOLATION STRATEGY: STAY				OTHER'S WAR STRATEGY: STAY				

**Figure 5.** Strategic Analysis of Wilson’s Second Term Game.

The initial state is in quotation marks and the final state is underlined. The symbols “→” and “←” indicate the respective strategic choices of “move” or “stay” by the player with the next move given the initial state (See Game 11 in Brams, 1994, p. 217).

will also shift to CF and “move” to deadlock (2,3) in order to avoid his worst outcome of submission at (1,4). Both Self and Other will then choose “stay” at (2,3), which is both a Brams nonmyopic equilibrium and a Nash myopic equilibrium. The (2,3) equilibrium’s logic is: if Self moves to (1,4), Other has no incentive to move to (3,2) while Self gets its worst outcome; if Other moves to (4,1), Self has no incentive to move to (3,2) and Other gets its worst outcome.

These logical predictions are also consistent empirically with Wilson’s actual historical choices to maintain U.S. neutrality by choosing to “stay” at the initial state of mutual cooperation with the outbreak of war in 1914 followed by German violations of U.S. neutrality. After U.S. neutrality was violated beyond recognition by Germany, moving their relations to (1,4), Wilson reluctantly chose “move” and the United States entered World War I in 1917. The ensuing deadlock as an initial state predicts that Wilson will choose to “stay” at war in the mutual conflict (2,3) cell until Germany first reorders its strategic preferences and then chooses to “move” toward submission or settlement, which corresponds to the eventual historical outcome of unconditional surrender by Germany.

We do not have quantitative indicators for Wilson’s moves in World War I nor for Roosevelt’s earlier mediation efforts during the Sino-Japanese war, which opens us to the criticism that we lack a systematic measurement of our dependent variable. While such measures are desirable, we do not view them as essential for our purpose. Our primary goal here is to analyze the intentions associated with the foreign policy behaviors of the two leaders, which we do measure with quantitative indices. We contend that the behavior of the two leaders was relatively transparent while their intentions were not. This contention is supported by the focus of the controversy in the historiography of American foreign relations, which is not over the behavior of the two leaders. It is whether and how their behavior was motivated by Realist or Idealist beliefs and preferences. This latter puzzle is the one that we have addressed in this paper and for which we have collected systematic evidence leading to an empirical solution with theoretical implications.

## Conclusion

Our analysis of the operational codes of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson offers support for the claims by historians and biographers that they had differences in their beliefs about the nature of the political universe and the most effective means for protecting and achieving their political goals. During their respective terms as President of the United States, each leader’s operational code also displayed alternative “states of mind” that present a more complex and dynamic image of the political universe and strategic and tactical choice propensities, which transcend the static categories of Realism and Idealism that informed the conventional account of their differences. While both leaders displayed Idealist beliefs when left unencumbered by the demands of involvement in Great Power conflicts, it is clear that controlling for first versus second terms in office shows

that context mattered in determining the diagnostic and choice propensities of the two leaders. They exhibited varying capacities to adapt to changing circumstances, respond to cues in their strategic environments, and recalculate their preferences for the different strategic outcomes of settlement, domination, deadlock, and submission.<sup>22</sup>

Theoretically, the empirical results support an emerging consensus among constructivists, political psychologists, neoclassical realists, and institutionalists, namely, that neorealist and neoliberal structural theories are underspecified without including agent-oriented models of beliefs to capture the microfoundations of strategic interactions between states (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Hagan, 2001; Keohane and Martin, 2003; Schweller, 2003; Tetlock, 1998; Walker, 2002, 2004; Wendt, 1999). A "theory complex," created by an agent-centered analysis of beliefs plus a structural analysis of contexts, provides the best model (George, 1979; Laudan, 1977; Walker, 2003).

Finally, the case studies of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson suggest some important implications for placing into historical perspective the foreign policies of U.S. presidents in the 21st century. The "unipolar moment" that came with American supremacy as the last superpower at the end of the cold war did not endow the United States with the omnipotence to impose a new world order (Clark, 2001; Mastanduno, 1997). A viable world order is based on vision as well as power, which is something that the George H.W. Bush as the first postcold war president lacked by his own admission (Greenstein, 2004).<sup>23</sup> A vision of world order that does not mirror emerging international realities is also not sufficient. William Jefferson Clinton did not foresee the threats of terrorism and domestic

<sup>22</sup> As discussed above, our theoretical frame called for analysis of the leaders' belief systems by terms in office. However, concerned that this division might mask other underlying patterns for each leader, we also looked for possible within-term changes by year that might represent part of a larger linear trend. The results are relatively stable and robust although the belief systems and subjective games of the two leaders vary in minor ways within terms by year. The modal (most frequent) annual pattern for Roosevelt was an Idealist belief system during both terms in office. The only exception was 1902 when his own strategic orientation fell just below the average world leader's, making him a Realist leader during the Panama Canal controversy with Colombia and the Anglo-German blockade of Venezuela (Bailey, 1958, pp. 486–498, 501–504; Morris, 2001, pp. 176–192). Even during this year he maintained an Idealist image of others in the political universe. Wilson's modal belief system during his first term (1913–1916) contained an Idealist image of both self and other. It did shift briefly toward a Realist belief system in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I before swinging back to an Idealist belief system with the adoption of the U.S. neutrality policy toward the belligerents. His modal image of self and other for the war years (1914–1918) was a Realist belief system. He reverted to an Idealist self image after the war ended in 1918, but maintained a modal Realist image of others for the remainder of his second term. In neither case do these minor, intra-term shifts represent an underlying linear trend.

<sup>23</sup> According to Greenstein (2004, 220), "vision" has at least three dimensions. "Vision is the capacity to inspire . . . [and] . . . refers to preoccupation with the contents of policies, an ability to assess their feasibility, and the possession of a set of overarching goals . . . Vision also encompasses consistency of viewpoint." His assessment of the two Bush presidencies (pp. 170, 210, 220) is that "The first Bush suffered for his lack of vision, and the second Bush may prove to suffer because of his policy vision."

violence in the postcold war world vividly enough to allocate the diplomatic and military resources necessary to nip it in the bud in Somalia, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Instead, he practiced the “dollar diplomacy” of NAFTA and WTO to enhance the economic interdependence that is just one dimension of globalization.

The Clinton Administration and both Bush administrations pursued forms of normal internationalism in the pre-9/11 era, failing to foresee the consequences of globalization, just as Roosevelt and Taft were relatively myopic about the consequences of modernization for the conduct of world politics in the pre-World War I era. Lacking an adequate vision for world order, they (like Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover between the two world wars) were fortunate to serve as stewards of American foreign policy in relatively peaceful times. Following the events of 9/11, however, the younger George W. Bush shifted belatedly to a form of crisis internationalism, adopting the vision of world order provided by his neoconservative advisors in which the United States military becomes an agent for toppling dictators like dominos and creating liberal-democratic regimes around the world. These goals were to be carried out with a military force doctrine of preemption that supplants the Wilsonian tools of diplomacy and world opinion (Halpern & Clarke, 2004; Mann, 2004). Time will tell whether this reversal of the domino theory, with its peculiar combination of precepts from Reformist Idealism and Revolutionary Realism, is seriously flawed in its diagnosis and prescription for creating a new world order in the 21st century (Layne, 2006).

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