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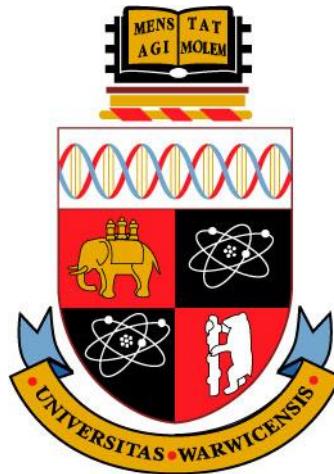
Constructing ‘China’: Culture and U.S. Think Tank Narratives – a Bourdieusian Investigation

by

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of culture, investigating to how China policy-research experts socially construct ‘American-ness’ through ‘China’ as the Other. I posit the following overarching research question: “How and why are social and cultural boundaries of ‘American-ness’ dialectically drawn by China policy-research experts within U.S. think tanks through their social construction of narratives on ‘China’ as the Other?” The empirical foundation is comprised of 40 face-to-face, in-depth interviews with China policy-research experts across 26 internationally leading think tanks in Washington, DC, and New York, USA, as well as four interviews with relevant experts (i.e. State Department and academia). Additional methods encompass participant observation, contextuality, triangulation, informal conversation, descriptive statistics/database, and collection of written material. The multimethod, ethnographic research strategy is coupled with a social constructionist epistemologically driven study, and deploys Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and the embedded conceptual “thinking tools” as the theoretical framework (including cross-tabulation and ethnographic/interpretivist contents analysis). The engagement with Bourdieu is also dialectic in its own right, herein allowing obtained field-data and ‘native categories’ of the research subjects to unveil new lines of inquiries as well as to expand and nuance Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools” themselves in a “bottom-up” fashion. This study contributes to the *Bourdiesuan* sociological ‘turn’ in International Relations (IR) research (in particular, making the non-state, individual level the focal point of the inquiry, in addition to contesting the assumptions concerning immateriality/construction innately preceding materiality/physicality – within the IR constructivism research programme), and to the specific think tank literature by propagating a third ‘school of analysis’, i.e. conceptualising the thinking of policy-researchers. More broadly, this study provides an important perspective on a key bilateral relationship (U.S.–Sino relations) in U.S. Foreign Policy (and for the world) as well as a prominent category of key players in U.S. Politics.

Key words: Policy-researcher; expert; think tank; U.S.; China; culture; ‘American-ness’; US.-Sino relations; Bourdieu; Theory of Practice; ‘field’, ‘capital’, ‘habitus’, ‘doxa’, ‘strategising’, ‘interests’, ‘epistemic reflexivity’; social construction; Self; Other; Otherness; identity; conceptual boundaries; boundary-construction; boundary-markers; sociological meso-level; dialecticality; relationality; narratives; International Relations research; Bourdiesuan sociological ‘turn’; interview; ethnography; social constructionism; U.S Foreign Policy; U.S. Politics; transdisciplinary.

*"The American difference, the ways in which the United States varies from the rest of the world (...) suggesting it is qualitatively different (...) The United States is exceptional in starting from a revolutionary event, in being "the first new nation", the first colony, other than Iceland, to become independent. It has defined its *raison d'être* ideologically (...) The American Creed can be described in five terms: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire."*

- **Seymour Martin Lipset¹**

"American identity has been a set of universal ideas and principles articulated in the founding documents by American leaders: liberty, equality, democracy, constitutionalism, liberalism, limited government (...) the American Creed."

- **Samuel Huntington²**

"It has been our fate as a nation, not to have ideologies but to be one."

- **Richard Hofstadter³**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As a social phenomenon, ‘American-ness’⁴ relates to the meaning and substance of *being American*. The above quotes attempt to capture the very essence of an American identity. However, the collection of ideas portrayed above are neither identical, nor do they reveal if the depicted stances are constant or how they are indeed socially constructed. Many an American would find resemblance between their identity and the above statements – but not necessarily all of them or all the embedded elements. ‘American-ness’, then, is a contested concept where individuals’ varied meaning-production reflects divergence in what is manifested as

¹ S.M. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A double-Edged Sword* (London: Norton & Company, 1996), 19; A.D. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University Press, 2000/1840), 36.

² S. Huntington, “The Erosion of American National Interests,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 29.

³ H. Kohn, “Review: The American Idea”, *The Review of Politics* 17, no. 3 (1955): 411; Lipset, *ibid.* 18.

⁴ The distinguishing nature of the term ‘American-ness’ and ‘Americanism’ will be discussed later in this chapter.

‘American-ness’ – and what is not. This study investigates the influence of culture on how policy-research experts in China-related areas within U.S. think tanks located in Washington, DC, socially construct ‘American-ness’ as an embodiment of their identity within the context of ‘China’ as the Other.

As Self (or Selves),⁵ however, ‘American-ness’ cannot be self-categorised, disentangled from an Other.⁶ In order to understand how one party perceives itself, it is de rigueur to understand Otherness.⁷ Otherness plays an indispensable role in constituting an identity due to retaining the potential of amassing knowledge about those who are constructing this particular Other. This is a result of that Otherness can only be realised within our own culture.

The mutually constituted Self/Other constellation and the non-dichotomised relationship signals that ‘American-ness’ ought to be investigated as a contested phenomenon through the social construction of an Other. Additional questions in this endeavour encompass what does *not* constitute ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ – and why.⁸ The study rejects notion of an ‘American-ness’ portrayed as identity(-ies) reducible to an observable and quantifiable, fixed and static physical entity, which can be measured or investigated taxonomically, *ahistorically*, *acontextually*, and detached from meaning. Exploring the interrelatedness of the Self/Other dialectic is therefore not only epistemologically and ontologically warranted, but also of

⁵ This multiplicity take on Self is briefly addressed in point 1.8.1 (this chapter).

⁶ F. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969a).

⁷ R. Shusterman, “Understanding the self’s others,” in *Cultural otherness and beyond*, eds. C. Gupta & D.P. Chattopadhyaya (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 107-114.

⁸ See P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1984a); see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977); E. Goffmann, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959); see M. Lamont & V. Molnar, “The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences,” *Annual Review Sociology* 28 (2002): 167-195; I.B. Neumann, “Self and Other in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2(2) (1996): 139-174.

profound importance in grasping the changing essence of ‘American-ness’ through relations with an Other.⁹

The relationship between Self and Other also implies that the nature of ‘American-ness’, as an identity (Self), is intersubjectively constituted, and constituted by, the nature of the mirroring Other.¹⁰ This stricture permeates the overarching research question, posited as:

How and why are cultural and social boundaries of ‘American-ness(es)’ dialectically drawn by policy-research experts in China-related areas within U.S. think tanks through their social construction of narratives on ‘China’ as the Other?

Achieving a mere definitional understanding of ‘American-ness’ is neither an objective nor an end point of this academic inquiry. The dynamic nature of ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ as social phenomena explored above signals that attribution of meanings are ever-changing due to the boundary-production is based on individuals’ social construction. The overarching research question, rather, serves as a departure for problematising and deconstructing the conceptual dialectic of ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’. The concepts displayed in the overarching research question will be introduced later in this Chapter, and discussed in depth in Chapter Two (i.e. theoretical framework). The latter Chapter will also address relevant social

⁹ See J. Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (London: Routledge, 1993); D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity* (Manchester: University Press, 1992); J. Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: University Press, 1981); see P. Du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman, *Identity: a Reader* (London: Sage Publication Ltd., 2000); S. Hall, “Introduction: who needs identity?,” in *Cultural Identity*, eds. S. Hall & P. du Gay (London: Sage, 1996): 1-17.

¹⁰ I am not using the word ‘mirror’ in a Lacanian fashion (i.e. the ‘mirror stage’ concept from Lacan’s psychoanalytical theory (see J. Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977)) but simply as a metaphor: the mirror reflection of yourself cannot be separated from your own being.

theory for this study (section one), including the research philosophical and methodological approaches (section two).

The overarching research question features an international research problem which I argue is relevant for being examined within the International Relations (IR) discipline. It will be examined in a transdisciplinary manner set within a broader investigatory *frame*. The study positions Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice in addition to the social theoretical concepts of 'culture' and 'identity' at the forefront of my research. It is tantamount to an *international* problem due research subjects are constructing their "China-narratives" based upon experiences and knowledge accumulated across country-borders (including intercultural encounters with Chinese and other international players). Furthermore, think tanks are a player in the sphere of public policy (regardless of being influential or impactful, or not) through policy-research, advocacy, and/or consultancy).

The investigation is *transdisciplinary* as it employs sociological and social anthropological concepts and theories, in particular Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the associated conceptual "thinking tools" (i.e. 'habitus', 'field', 'capital', 'doxa', 'interests', and 'strategies') – in addition to 'reflexivity'.¹¹ This

¹¹ See Pierre Bourdieu 1984a, *Distinction*, op.cit.; see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977); R. Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu, revised edn* (London: Routledge, 2002); A. Leander, "Staging International Relations Practicing Bourdieu's Sociology" (paper presented at the International Studies Association panel "Practicing Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology: A Different Reading of the International," ISA, New Orleans, US, 2010); A. Leander, "Habitus and Field," *International Studies Association Compendium Project* (Blackwell, 2009a); A. Leander, "Thinking Tools," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. A. Klotz & D. Prakash (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 11-27; V. Pouliot, "Putting Practice Theory in Practice," (paper presented at Bourdieu in International Relations workshop, Copenhagen, December 7-8, 2010); V. Pouliot, "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities," *International Organization* 62(2) (2008): 257-288; D.L. Swartz, "Bringing Bourdieu's master concepts into organizational analysis," *Theory & Society* 37 (2008): 45-52; M. Williams, *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

transdisciplinary nexus connects the study with the *Bourdieuian* sociological diffusive entry-point into IR research. This ‘turn’ entrenches my approach to explore culture and identity conducted within the frontier of the IR research agenda (hereafter, the *Bourdieuian* sociological ‘turn’ as argued by Leander¹²).

The structure of this chapter is as follows: It continues by unpacking the overarching research questions by elucidating key concepts. In its entirety, this chapter sets the scene of the study and the nature of the coupled academic investigation of the thesis. This includes briefly presenting a justification of the study, its purpose and aim, areas of literature, main arguments, research framework, potential contributions, in addition to reflecting on the surrounding contextuality of the research problem.

1.1 Unpacking the overarching research question

This section briefly introduces the employed terms and concepts displayed in the overarching research question. The highlighted social theory will be expanded and discussed in more depth in the theoretical framework chapter (Chapter Two).¹³ The below explanations allude to how the concepts are conceived to be applied in this particular study. In effect, the purpose of delimiting the scope in this chapter relates to both the boundaries of the investigation as well as the deployment of theory within the thesis.

¹² A. Leander 2009, *Habitus and Field*, op.cit.

¹³ In Chapter Two (theoretical-framework). The discussion focuses on achieving congruency with other applied social theories and the study’s research design as a whole.

1.1.1 Relationship between ‘American-ness’, ‘Americanism’, America, and the U.S.

This study applies the term ‘American-ness’ in relation to what constitutes being an American. Thus, the former term is distinguished from the closely related expression ‘Americanism’, albeit often appearing as interchangeable.¹⁴ This approach is aligned with the vocabulary in social theory: ‘American-*ness*’ (my italicisation) is predominantly associated with individuals (the main focus of this study, i.e. policy-researchers affiliated with think tanks), and the “-ness” is aligned with the lexis of social theory’s conceptual boundary-production such as “we-ness”, “sameness”, and “Otherness (my italicisations). ‘Americanism’, however, is in the broader political science and IR research chiefly signifying non-individual, macro-level phenomena such as ‘national interests’ (the *raison d’état* of the nation, and special interest of dominating domestic sectors in policy-making)¹⁵ and ‘ideology’ (a set of dogmas about the nature of a good society, the Creed, and a civic national thesis about itself, which in the U.S. must be committed to in order to avoid being perceived ‘un-American’ (my italicisation)).¹⁶

In this study, ‘the U.S.’ relates to the national level – a nationality but without assuming the existence of only *one* culture contained by its country-borders. That would be an “ecological fallacy”,¹⁷ which entails the illogical notion that culture(s)

¹⁴ It is neither an aim to explore the nexus of the two aforementioned terms, nor to ascertain typologies in any hierarchy.

¹⁵ N. Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for global Dominance* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 29.

¹⁶ A. Lieven, *America, Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (Oxford: University Press, 2004), 36; Lipset 1991, op.cit. 31; see Katzenstein, P.J., and Keohane, R.O. (eds.), *Anti-Americanism in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ ‘Ecological fallacy’ refers to the misconception that people situated in the same area share the same attitudes, and the assumption that a human being’s characteristics are corresponding to the average of a group (see D. Landis & J.H. Wasilevski, “Reflections on 22 years of the international journal of intercultural relations and 23

remains non-transformative, static, and fixed as a singular entity constrained to the physical spatie of the country.¹⁸ For the very same reason, ‘U.S.’ rather than ‘American’ are pertained to in regard to ‘think tanks’ as a means to avoid implying that individuals working in the think tanks have internalised a *singular, national* culture. Nonetheless, ‘the U.S.’ predominantly relates to the “nationality” of the think tanks. Consequently, the study does not refuse an individual to become included as a research subject due to his or her nationality, ethnical, or cultural background.¹⁹ This stance relates to that an American national may possess vastly different socio-cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it is very common that think tanks welcome visiting scholars from different countries around the world, and thus a part of the ‘social reality’ existing within the think tank scene.

1.1.2 Conceptual (cultural, social, and symbolic) boundaries

Conceptual boundaries comprise cultural, social, and symbolic boundaries, including cultural processes during boundary-production.²⁰ It serves as the foundation of how social identities concerning being American are formed – a social categorisation process signifying an accentuated “us” and “them” which creates a sensation of “same-ness” and uniqueness from others.²¹ This evolves out from the interplay

years in other areas of intercultural practice,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23(4) (1999): 535-574.

¹⁸ E. Leach, “Tribal Ethnography: past, present, future,” in *History and Ethnicity*, eds. E. Tonkin, M. McDonald & M. Chapman (London: Routledge, 1989).

¹⁹ Surveying U.S. think tanks reveals that there are individuals working on China with a Chinese/Asian-American background. This underscores the social constructionist approach of this study, herein that ‘American-ness’ may divulge itself in many different forms.

²⁰ See Lamont & Molnar 2002, op.cit.

²¹ F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1971); F. Barth 1969a, op.cit.; see R. Brubaker, “Ethnicity without groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43(2) (2002): 163-189; see R. Brubaker & F. Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29(1) (2000): 1-47; R. Jenkins, *Categorization and Power* (England: Sage Publication, 1997); J.E. Stets & P.J. Burkes, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(3) (2000): 224-237.

between the construction of Self and ‘China’ as the Other.²² Self features a difference to Otherness.²³ The difference is shaped by culture and contextuality.²⁴ Conceptual boundaries relate to how they are being drawn and what uphold them, attributed meanings to the boundaries, and what ensues inside them and what is excluded.²⁵ ‘American-ness’ contains different meanings and operates at different “levels” (or spheres) through meaning and boundary-production. This emphasises the contested nature of both Self and the Other as a result of different boundary-production processes.²⁶

1.1.3 Dialecticality (dialectic)

Dialecticality is reflected in the way the overarching research question is constructed: How the conceptual boundaries of American-ness are drawn *through* the social construction of ‘China’ as the Other. The social construction of American-ness(es) as Self/Selves and ‘China’ as Otherness(es) are inseparable, mutually constitutive phenomena.²⁷ Here, Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice offers a dialectic middle-way between the thesis and antithesis of subjectivism and objectivism respectively.²⁸ Importantly, think tank policy-research experts do not draw

²² See Campbell 1992, op.cit.; S. Harrison, “Cultural Boundaries,” *Anthropology Today* 15(5) (1999): 10-13.

²³ Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.

²⁴ P.L. Berger & T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Anchor, 1966); see M. Hammersley & P. Atkinson, *Ethnography* (London: Routledge, 2007); see Shusterman, 1998, op.cit.

²⁵ F. Barth, *Manifestasjon og prosess* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1994); see Barth 1971, op.cit.; Pierre Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,” *Sociological Theory* 12, (1) (1994): 1-18; Jenkins 1994, op.cit.; R. Jenkins, “Ethnicity etcetera: Social anthropological point of view,” *Ethnic and racial studies* 19(4) (1996a): 807-822; R. Jenkins, *Social Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1996b); Lamont & Molnar 2002, op.cit. New introduced concepts, such as (social) identity and the different forms of boundaries, will be discussed in more details in Chapter Two (section one).

²⁶ “Levels” may reflect, for example, individual, organisational, national, and transnational ones. However, I am not applying this term in a taxonomic sense as my ontological stance acknowledges that individuals possess agency, at least partly, to change preconceived boundaries of ‘levels’ and to traverse them. This harmonises with approaching the research problem on the sociological meso-level.

²⁷ P. Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, ibid.; R. Jenkins 1996b, *Social Identity*, ibid.

²⁸ R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit.; P. Bourdieu 1984, ibid. 51.

conceptual boundaries dialectically, but the Self/Other constellation forms and functions as a dialectic intertwined in constitutive processes.²⁹ It follows, dialecticality as the concept, is a mode of non-linear thinking inherent as an “ontological assumption” in all concepts making up the overarching research questions. It implicates all human conduct and relationships where the imagery is circular in a continual movement between the whole and its parts.³⁰

The dialectic identity-formation of think tank policy-researchers should be understood as produced and re-producing boundaries of Otherness (i.e. ‘China’) as opposed to a dualistic approach where the two elements of Self and the Other operate separately. Meaning-construction applied to ‘China’ as the external is internalised in ‘American-ness’ as Self, and ‘American-ness’ is externalised in the accounts of what constitutes ‘China’.³¹ The dialectic relationship also makes ‘American-ness’ an ever-transforming phenomenon in accordance to the nature of the mutually constitutive Other and its Otherness.

1.1.4 U.S. think tank policy-research experts

As stipulated above, ‘the U.S’ signifies the “nationality” of the think tank, defining the organisational form of ‘think tanks’ and establishing typologies remain a main issue in think tank research.³² Frequently applied definitions include “university

²⁹ L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Routledge: London, 2006), 37.

³⁰ T. Benton & I. Craib, *Philosophy of social science: the philosophical foundations of social thought* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001)

³¹ See Barth 1971, op.cit.; Pierre Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, trans R. Nice (Stanford: University Press, 1990b); Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.; Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; Campbell 1992, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, op.cit.; Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, op.cit.

³² D.E. Abelson, *A capitol idea: think tanks and US foreign policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006); D.E. Abelson, “The business of ideas: the think tank industry in the USA,” in *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas*, eds. D. Stone & A. Denham (Manchester: University Press, 2004); D.E.

without students”,³³ the UNDP’s “[the] bridge between knowledge and power”,³⁴ and “relatively autonomous organizations engaged in the research and analysis of contemporary issues independently of government, political parties, and pressure groups”³⁵. I am approaching think tanks in harmony with the latter definition as I find it to reflect the diverse nature of think tanks. U.S. think tanks are amongst themselves highly pluralistic (for example, ideological orientation, mission and objective, organisational forms, degree of transnational networks, degree of specialisations, balance between research contra policy-advocacy, varied amounts of influence, and independence). Differences may be greater when comparing with countries featuring other historical foundations, political cultures, and national identities. Nonetheless, to obtain a universal definitional understanding is not a focus of this study as it does not theorise about think tanks beyond operating as research sites for my present study.³⁶

Abelson, *Do Think Tanks Matter? Assessing the Impact of Public Policy Institutes* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); D.E. Abelson, “Think tanks in the United States,” in *Think tanks across nations*, eds. D. Stone, A. Denham & M. Garnett (Manchester: University Press, 1998); J.G. McGann, “The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2009,” (2010), Available from: <http://www.ony.unu.edu/2009%20Global%20Go%20To%20Think%20Tank%20Rankings%20%28TT%20Index%29%20last%20version.pdf>; J.G. McGann, “The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2008,” (2009), Available from: <http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/GlobalGoToThinkTanks2008.pdf>; Thomas Medvetz, “Think tanks as an emergent field,” *The Social Science Research Council* (2008), Available from: http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%7Ba2a2ba10-b135-de11-afac-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf; see National Institute for Research Advancements n.d., NIRA, Available from: <http://www.nira.or.jp/past/index.html>; see D. Stone, “Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes,” *Public Administration* 85(2) (2007): 259-275; D. Stone & A. Denham (eds.), *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas* (Manchester: University Press, 2004); D. Stone, A. Denham & M. Garnett (eds.), *Think tanks across nations* (Manchester: University Press, 1998).

³³ R.K. Weaver, “Changing World of Think Tanks,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 22(3) (1989): 563-578.

³⁴ D. Stone, “Think Tanks and Policy Advice in Countries in Transition,” *How to Strengthen Policy-Oriented Research and Training in Viet Nam* (presented at the Asian Development Bank Institute Symposium, Hanoi, 2005): 2.

³⁵ D. Stone, “Think Tanks,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, eds. N.J. Smelser & P.B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), 68-71.

³⁶ See Medvetz 2008, “Think tanks as an emergent field,” op.cit. – for a discussion concerning defining the term ‘think tank’.

It could plausibly be made the case that think tanks can be bestowed upon an elite status.³⁷ The latter can be defined as: “A social group distinguished from other social groups by a particular kind of *perceived power*” (my italicisation).³⁸ The argued and perceived influence of think tanks on a country’s politics and foreign policies, public opinion-shaping, and policy research, warrant labelling think tanks as elite organisations as well as those individuals working within them as ‘think tank elites’.³⁹ The term ‘elite’ may operate at two inseparable levels. These levels entail the organisational level in terms of the arguable prominent position in policy-network enjoyed by impactful think tanks, and secondly, the individual level (i.e. those conducting China-related research and/or policy-advocacy within such organisations) due to their professional affiliations, capabilities through education

³⁷ See Abelson 2002, *Do Think Tanks Matter*, op.cit.; McGann 2010, op.cit.; McGann 2009, op.cit.; J.A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

³⁸ J. Scott, *Sociology: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 65. It seems to be an “ontological blindfold” in mainstream think tank research (see Stone 2004, op.cit., for a similar supporting argument). For example, most research revolves around those think tanks considered the most reputable and/or well-known. However, this pool of think tanks represents the minority and not a majority of the think tank population neither in the world (1815 in the U.S. alone (see McGann 2010, ibid. 15, 18) or within the U.S. Therefore, the degree of elite status may starkly vary, and thus challenged when contemplating questions such as ‘who decide what think tanks are holding an elite status or not’, and for whom’ and ‘in what area’ (the latter taking into account that most post-1976s think tanks operate in specialised areas, also referred to as the fourth wave (McGann 2009, ibid.; J.G. McGann, “Academics to Ideologues: A Brief History of Think Tanks in America,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 25(4) (1992): 733-740).

³⁹ It should here be noted that the issue of ‘influence’, closely linked to the preceding point concerning ‘elite status’, relates to a major debate amongst practitioners as well as academic scholars (see D.E. Abelson 2002, ibid.; Stone 2004 op.cit.; Stone & A Denham 2004, *Think tank traditions*, op.cit.). There are examples of influence being exercised by think tanks in the literature (e.g. D.E. Abelson 2006, *A capitol idea*, op.cit.; Croft, *Culture, Crisis and America’s War on Terror* (Cambridge: University Press, 2006); McGann 2009, ibid.; A. Rich & R. Kent Weaver, “Think Tanks, the Media and the Policy Process” (paper presented at the *American Political Science Association*, Washington, DC, 1997); S. Schifferes, *Battle of the Washington think tanks* (2003). Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2914969.stm>; D. Shambaugh, *Beautiful imperialist: China perceives America, 1972-1990* (Princeton: University Press, 2001) but in my opinion, to endeavour finding a tool for measuring influence will always be a case of attempting to “quantifying the unquantifiable” due to issues of power and perceptions (see Guttormsen 2010a, for an earlier discussion). The think tanks themselves either believe they have influence, or are forced to communicate that they do, in order to survive in the competitive marketplace of “business of ideas” (Abelson 2006, ibid.; D.E. Abelson, “The business of ideas: the think tank industry in the USA,” in *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas*, eds. D Stone & A Denham (Manchester: University Press, 2004)).

and research training, in addition to access to policy-networks.⁴⁰ Without dismissing the above, this study rather makes use of the term ‘policy-research experts’ to reflect their actual core activities and their own vocabulary (i.e. areas of expertise).

1.1.5 Social construction

Social construction is the “spine” of the investigation concerning how U.S. think tank policy-researchers construct ‘China’ as the Other, and what constitutes ‘American-ness’ through these “China-narratives”. The phenomenon of social construction branches out across the entire study, including the research philosophical stance to the format of interview questions. In essence, social construction relates to the policy-researchers’ ‘thoughts about reality’ (i.e. ‘China’ and themselves), and is evident in four aspects in the way the research is carried out.

First, it relates to the research philosophical stance.⁴¹ In terms of a social constructionist epistemology (how do we know what we know), the inquiry acknowledges that people socially construct ‘reality’. Hence, it is not a given which exists as purely rationale where objective knowledge can be detached from individuals.⁴²

Second, the study makes a distinction towards social constructivism in the way that ‘reality’ is constructed across a cultural group through public and social process

⁴⁰ These elements are associated with Bourdieu’s various forms of capital, a key conceptual “thinking tool” in his Theory of Practice (see P. Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; A. Leander 2010, op.cit.; A. Leander 2009, op.cit.; A. Leander 2008, op.cit.; R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit.; M. Williams 2007, op.cit.).

⁴¹ In the theory chapter (Chapter Two), I will discuss the philosophical grounding in more detail, as well as the notion of a subjective dominated ontology (my italicisation), and the distinction from social constructivism.

⁴² M. Alvesson & K. Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2009); P.L. Berger & T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Anchor, 1966).

transcending one policy-researcher's mind.⁴³ Thus, there may be multiple 'social realities', Selves, Othernesses, cultures, and indeed avenues for investigating potential contested and uncontested areas of 'American-ness'.⁴⁴

Third, drawing conceptual boundaries is the mechanism for social construction. Moreover, in terms of dialecticality, the *meanings* of 'American-ness' and 'China' are not static but ever-transforming social phenomena. It follows that 'meaning' does not objectively exist "out there", but rather, in an interplay between the individual policy-researcher (agent) and pre-existing cultural structures in society.⁴⁵

1.1.6 Narratives

In this study, 'narratives' serves as cultural sites where policy-researchers interpret existing relationships amongst people and make sense of their reality.⁴⁶ In the sociological tradition, narratives have come to be understood as story-telling activities integral to personal and collective life (i.e. about China and being American).⁴⁷ It is, therefore, through their narratives which I can investigate social constructions of 'China' and 'American-ness'. The dialectical inclination in my approach is evident when arguing there are no universals governing the structure of a narrative.⁴⁸ Ontological and public narratives are the forms mostly focused upon, i.e.

⁴³ See R.M. Keesing & A.J. Strathern, *Cultural anthropology: A contemporary perspective*, 3rd edn (Belmont: Thomson, 1998).

⁴⁴ See Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, *Ethnography*, op.cit.

⁴⁵ A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984); D. Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 96; L. Wacquant, "Pierre Bourdieu," in ed R Stones, *Key Sociological Thinkers*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 266-267.

⁴⁶ M. Patterson & K.R. Monroe, "Narrative in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1(1) (1998): 315-331.

⁴⁷ D. Mains, "Narratives and Accounts," in J. Scott, *Sociology: The Key Concepts* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 113-117.

⁴⁸ See Derrida, cited in Patterson & Monroe 1998, op.cit.

making sense of who we are (the former). This depends on the institutions where the policy-researchers are embedded in (the latter).⁴⁹ Narratives perform as discursive acts and a metaphor for social interactions conveyed as socially understood messages. Such speech acts are situated within and drawing upon ontologically prior discourse, herein structured collections of representations. The investigation extends beyond mere linguistic notions (i.e. words) and is therefore differentiated from ‘discourse analysis’

The relationship between think tanks and individuals in terms of narratives are dynamic. Ongoing analysis of field-data may reveal if narratives operate on multiple levels. I am drawing upon Bourdieu’s hierarchical notion of ‘power’ as well as symbolic power/-violence in order to organise inter-relationships between potential multiple narratives, for example, externally between think tanks and/or within a think tank. The social construction of ‘China-narratives’ may include both immaterial and material faculties.

1.1.7 ‘China’ as the Other, and Otherness

China without the apostrophes designates the country of China as opposed to the social construction of ‘China’, which is denoted as the cultural Other. Otherness, however, is the ascribed qualities to that Other. As established in the introduction of this chapter, Self (aka ‘American-ness’) is mutually constituted through an Other.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ M. Pattersons & K.R. Monroe 1998, *ibid.*; Croft 2006, op.cit., highlights that a meta-narrative may develop, which manifests itself as “common-sense”. In accordance to the post-structuralist scepticism against “transcendent and universal truths”, I am not assuming any such meta-narratives to exist unless field-data informs me otherwise (see J-F. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington & B. Massumi (Manchester: University Press, 1979)). What is more relevant in my study relates to interests and strategies associated with their narratives in regard to ‘China’.

⁵⁰ F. Barth 1969a, *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, op.cit. ; R. Shusterman 1998, “Understanding the self’s others,” op.cit.

Investigating this particular Self/Other dialectic provides access into ‘American-ness’ as social identity (aided by constructed boundary-markers).⁵¹ This does not mean that ‘American-ness’ and an epitomised social identity in regard to being American cannot be grasped in other ways of Self/Other constellations, for example mirrored through a vast range of other countries as Others. However, this is beyond the purview of this current study.

The boundary-production relating to constituting an Other takes a social anthropological route, i.e. *Othering*. Accordingly, the focus is directed towards what qualities the policy-research experts perceive as distinctively different from ‘China’ as the Other. My research, therefore, realigns beyond the ‘differences’ and endogenous cultural traits of “us” and “them” as objectified categories which groups ascribe to.⁵² Therefore, it follows the Barthian ‘school’ of Otherness concerning how the production of conceptual boundaries are maintained (and reproduced) as a means of separating groups.⁵³

This echoes Bourdieu’s argument that micro-sociologists are “stopping where the real fun begins”, i.e. social constructionist studies precluding a focus on why people construct the boundaries the way they do, and how such boundaries functions as elements of social reality.⁵⁴ In this sense, the theoretical inquiry moves beyond the

⁵¹ See J. Butler 1993, *Bodies That Matter*, op.cit.; D. Campbell 1992, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, op.cit.; J. Derrida 1981, *Positions*, op.cit.; see P. Du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman 2000, *Identity: a Reader*, op.cit.; S. Hall 1996, “Introduction: who needs identity?,” op.cit., 1-17.

⁵² “Mere” representations of China are not dismissed in this study. The effort in categorising representations is only an initial step prior to making sense of the boundary-production of Self and Otherness. Representations of China will be analysed by applying an ethnographic contents analysis of written policy-research material produced by relevant policy-research experts (see the research-framework, Chapter Two, section two).

⁵³ F. Barth 1969a, *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, ibid.

⁵⁴ M. Alvesson & K. Sköldberg 2009, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, op.cit. 37.

exploratory purview conveyed in the quote by the prominent scholar, Lipset:⁵⁵ “it is impossible to understand a country without seeing how it varies from others. Those who know only one country know no country”. This is true, but only half of the story (i.e. only taking account the difference between two countries, but not based on relations between how the two countries are constructed). In my inquiry, I would argue, this harmonises with Bourdieu’s notions of ‘interests’ and ‘strategies’ as the aforesaid focus is not only placed on what is considered making us ‘different’ – but why and how.

The study thus converges on boundary-markers⁵⁶ where identity is not constructed solely endogenously but also from “the outside”.⁵⁷ This study also opens up for addressing the phenomenon of *fixating* the Other.⁵⁸ This should not be understood, however, as multiple ‘objectives’ of Otherness (such as China and multiple other countries) but different socially constructed *meanings* about ‘China’.

⁵⁵ S.M. Lipset 1996, *American Exceptionalism: A double-Edged Sword*, op.cit. 17.

⁵⁶ This opens up for a very important discussion at the forefront of contemporary social theory debates, herein sociological relationalism (both in regard to boundary-markers but also Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (for the latter, see D.L. Swartz, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” *Theory & Society* 37 (2008): 45-52)). This theme will be addressed in the theory-chapter (Chapter Two). See also discussions concerning theoretical advancements in the subsequent literature review chapter.

⁵⁷ This approach to the Self/Other nexus is very different to Sartre’s nexus of two different and detached modes of beings, such as Man and Woman in Simone de Beauvoir’s take on it (see M. Crotty 2003, *The foundations of social research*, op.cit. 167) (J. Lauring & D.S.A. Guttormsen, “Challenges of Ethnicity in Organizational Interaction: The Role of Language Use in Expatriate Management,” in *Race and Ethnicity: Cultural roles, Spiritual Practices, and Social challenges*, ed. JK Crennan (New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc., 2010); I.B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other. The 'East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); I.B. Neumann, “Self and Other in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2(2) (1996): 139-174).

⁵⁸ I will briefly discuss the issue of “fixating” images about ‘China’ as Otherness in more detail in the analysis chapters (see E. Said (*Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books, 1989), rebuttals by Irwin (R.G. Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: the Orientalist and their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006a) and R.G. Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (New York: Overlook Press, 2006b)) and Lewis (B. Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: University Press, 1993)), as well as Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ (S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996)), Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ proclamation (F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992)), and Chapman (M.K. Chapman, *The Celts, The Construction of a Myth* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992)). It plays a significant role in upholding boundaries and may reveal why this is the case (see Neumann 1999, *Uses of the Other*, op.cit.; M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, op.cit.). This phenomenon is also revisited in the analysis chapters.

1.2 The overarching research question: Revisited – The issue of boundary-production

The overarching research question posits both how and why conceptual boundaries are being drawn as dialects. The former relates to the fashion of how conceptual boundaries are being drawn (including boundary-markers and impact of culture on the process of social construction), whereas the latter denotes the strategies and interest of think tank individuals as practice.⁵⁹ Drawing upon Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, these two elements signal the inclusion of culture and strategy into the 'constructivist vision' of IR research.⁶⁰ This translates into how U.S. think tank policy-research experts not only socially construct 'China', and consequently 'American-ness', but how they are potentially able to advance their interest in addition to the underlying motivation for doing so without necessarily being fully conscious about it.

In the overarching research question, the terms 'culture', 'Self', and 'Otherness' are designated in plural forms. As far as 'culture' is concerned, multiplicity relates to the aforementioned dialectic processes where culture change and that the boundaries of the country and cultures are not indistinguishable. In terms of 'Self' and 'Otherness' (and Selves and Othernesses), multiplicity here reflects the perspective that individuals in think tanks possess multiple Selves and imagine copious Othernesses.

⁵⁹ See Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; V. Pouliot, "Putting Practice Theory in Practice" (paper presented at Bourdieu in International Relations workshop, Copenhagen, December 7-8, 2010); V. Pouliot, "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities," *International Organization* 62(2) (2008): 257-288; M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, op.cit. The differentiation from the conventional economicistic, rationalist, or utilitarian avenues of explanation will briefly discussed in Chapter Two (P. Bourdieu 1990b, *Logic of Practice*, op.cit.; Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, ibid.; Pierre Bourdieu & L.J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 25; M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, ibid).

⁶⁰ Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, a central theme of this study's theoretical framework will be elaborated on in Chapter Two.

These phenomena may traverse hierarchical borders and boundaries as well the ‘American-ness’/‘China’ constellation (aka Self/Other).⁶¹ For example, several Selves and Othernesses may exist in a think tank across research/policy fields, between individuals with different ethnic/cultural backgrounds,⁶² and different constructed narratives about various facets of ‘China’. The nature of this potential multiplicity will inform the research direction in accordance with how the think tank experts construct their ‘social realities’.⁶³

1.3 Empirical foundation & Scope

‘American-ness’ is studied through the social construction of “China-narratives” by individuals conducting China-related policy-research, policy-advocacy, and/or consultancy in think tanks based in Washington, DC. The DC think tank landscape, as organisations, performs as the empirical foundation of the research (where data is collected from). This foundation can be understood as two different levels (or spheres) as narratives may apply to the macro-level (i.e. stance of the entire think tank), but also as multiple versions amongst one or more individuals (or groups of individuals). Organisationally, the individuals may work in different sections within the think tank and also have multiple affiliations within and/or beyond its organisational structure and hierarchy.

⁶¹ See G. Deleuze, Foucault (London: Athlone Press, 1986). This Nietzschean, anti-psychological notion of subjective perspectivism on ‘multiplicity’ relates to that an individual possesses multiple Selves but not separate in one body (or hexis, in Bourdieusian terms).

⁶² As individuals partake in a web of social relations, different experiential and knowledge backgrounds are created, thus, resulting in the dynamism of multiple Selves and Othernesses (Gergen, cited in M. Sökefeld, “Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology,” Current Anthropology 40(4) (1999): 417-447; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, Ethnography, op.cit.).

⁶³ See P.J. Buckley & M.K. Chapman, “The Use of Native Categories in Management Research,” British Journal of Management 8(4) (1997): 283-299. This facilitates for exploring construction of contested conceptual boundaries applicable to both Self and Otherness (and boundary-markers) as coexisting phenomena in a Self/Other dialectic, which is less explored in social theory within IR research.

As a result, this study *does not* theorise about think tanks, U.S.-Sino relations (or cultural foundation of U.S. foreign policies towards China), Self/Other from a Chinese perspective, institutionalising think tank narratives or their influence/impact, or attempting to statistically generalise and inferring conclusion to the wider think tank environment in the U.S., or beyond. The boundaries of the study, however, should not be misapprehended or confused with fixed boundaries of the direction of the actual academic inquiry within this space.

Principally, the study is carried out at the individual level but observed and interacted within organisations. I am, however, not assuming the two levels as nomenclature. I argue that it would be both an epistemological (knowledge are accumulated across learning processes) and an ontological fallacy (think tanks do not operate in isolation as a Weberian model of bureaucracy of complex organisations – but in interaction with others where learning take place). Any organisational place is a fluid and dynamic ‘space’.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ See Z. Gille & S.O. Riain, “Global Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28(1) (2002): 271-295; Leach 1989, op.cit. 34-47); G.E. Marcus, “The end(s) of ethnography: Social/Cultural Anthropology’s Signature Form of Producing,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23(1) (2008), 1-14; G. Marcus, “Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95-117; P. Metcalf, “Global ‘Disjuncture’ and the ‘Sites’ of Anthropology,” *Cultural Anthropology* 16(2) (2001): 165-182; U. Hannerz, “Being there ... and there ... and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography,” *Ethnography* 4(2) (2003): 201-216; M.C. Rodman, “Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality,” in eds. S.M. Low & D. Lawrence-Zuniga, *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 204-223 – for various stances concerning methodological issues of ‘space’ and place in regard to multivocality and social disembeddedness. Implications will be discussed in Chapter Two (theory-chapter). I have also earlier discussed these issues in D.S.A. Guttormsen, “Unlocking Complexity with Simplicity: A Social Constructionist take on the ‘Ethnographic Interview’ in Multilingual and Intercultural ‘Multi-site’ field research,” *Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies* (2010b), 157-165. Available from: ISBN: 978-1-906638-65-8 (CD), ed. J. Esteves, I.E. Business School, Madrid, Spain; D.S.A. Guttormsen, *International and Intercultural Experiences of Expatriates in Hong Kong: an Ethnography* (MPhil thesis, University of Leeds, 2010c).

1.4 Degree of significance

I am arguing that the research features significance in six areas. First, to the best of my knowledge, in terms of novelty, there are no prior ethnographic studies of think tanks in IR research (or beyond), including the China policy-research environment. The study, therefore, provides a “testing ground” for the methodological relevance. Second, extending on the above point, the study also facilitates for increased focus on the applicability of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and the embedded conceptual “thinking tools” in a *Bourdiesuan* sociological take on IR research.⁶⁵ Drawing upon Bourdieu’s social theory in this regard also provides a transdisciplinary facet to the research, herein sociological and social/cultural anthropological oriented social theory and concepts into IR research. In effect, the study contributes to the research vocabulary in the pluralistic constructivist research programme within the IR discipline.

Third, as far as the specialised think tank literature is concerned (and part of the wider interest group literature), previous studies concerning think tank policy-researchers’ conceptualisations of ‘China’ have not been identified (as a cohesive ‘school of thought’). In fact, the subject-field in regard to think tanks is a recent phenomenon but experienced an upsurge in scholarly attention at the turn of this

⁶⁵ As an example of this advancement, there is a research project relating to the Bourdiesuan sociological ‘turn’ of IR at the Centre for Advanced Security Studies (CAST), University of Copenhagen, Denmark, lead by Dr Trine Villumsen (see Research, 2010, Available from:

http://polsci.ku.dk/english/staff/Academic_staff/publikationsliste/?personid=121276, n.d.; Trine Villumsen, 2010, Available from: <http://cast.ku.dk/people/researchers/tv/>, n.d. (see R. Adler-Nissen, ed., *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking key concepts in IR* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013)). In actual fact, Copenhagen (not to be confused with the ‘Copenhagen school’ in (critical) security studies) emerges as a prominent intellectual capital in regard to Bourdieu in IR research, contemplating on Professor Anna Leander (Copenhagen Business School) (Anna Leander 2011. Available: uk.cbs.dk/staff/ale), Dr Stefano Guzzini (Danish Institute for International Studies) (Stefano Guzzini, 2010. Available from: <http://www.diis.dk/sw11172.asp>), and Dr Rebecca Adler-Nissen (Rebecca Adler-Nissen, n.d. Available: <http://www.cep.polsci.ku.dk/english/people/dokument3/>) (see B. Buzan & M. Albert, “Differentiation: a sociological approach to international relations theory,” *European Journal of International Relations* 16(3) (2010): 315-337). See the literature review (Chapter Three) for details concerning the usage of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice in IR.

Millennium.⁶⁶ Fourth, by positioning the study in the IR discipline, a study entrenched in culture and identity as well as think tanks and individuals working within them – also contribute to the significance of the study through “talking to” IR research which predominantly and historically has focused on the state-level.⁶⁷ Consequently, IR research’s intentionality has been to marginalising the role of culture.⁶⁸

Fifth, investigating the particular Self/Other nexus in the U.S.-China context is interesting in its own right. For the former, the epitome of being American revolves around ideas rather than socio-biological traits, the latter being common in non-settler states. As suggested by the U.S. Department of State – “American Identity:

⁶⁶ See Stone and Denham 2004, op.cit. – who provide some contemporaneous examples of PhD researchers and young scholars. Other recent examples include, for example (listed alphabetically), Lepont's (“The Think Tanks in Washington: Allies or Enemies of the American Political Parties?” (paper presented at the ECRP Graduate Conference, Dublin, 2010) research about US think tanks and perceptions of universal health reform, Medvetz' (2008, ‘Think tanks as an emergent field’, op.cit.) research on US think tanks and knowledge production applying Bourdieu, van Efferink's (“Polar Partner or Poles Apart? How two US think tanks represent Russia?” (paper presented at the PSA Graduate Conference, Oxford)) study of US think tanks representations of Russia, van de Wetering's (“In the Eye of the Beholder: Comparing U.S. and Indian Think Tanks' Views of Each” (paper presented at the PSA Graduate Conference, Oxford, 2010)) comparisons of US and Indian think tanks (2010), and Samaan's research concerning U.S. think tanks' corporate strategies in the post-Cold War era – and as an auxiliary interest; I. Medina-Iborra and D.S.A. Guttormsen, DSA (forthcoming 2014) 'Visibility and Activity: Foreign Affairs Think Tanks in the United Kingdom', in *Contemporary Knowledge Production of Think Tanks: An International Perspective*, China Social Science Press; D.S.A. Guttormsen (“Think Tanks: Taking Stock of What We Know, and How We Know It? A Thematic, Methodological and Research Philosophical Exploratory Review” (paper presented at the PSA Graduate Conference, Oxford, 2010a)), Iborra Medina and Guttormsen (“Who Thinks for Me? Think Tanks' Visibility and Activity in Contemporary Britain” (paper presented at the PSA Graduate Conference, Oxford, 2010)), and Villumsen (“Think tanks in Europe: Shaping Ideas of Security,” *Militært Tidsskrift* 136(2) (2007): 143-160).

⁶⁷ See E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939: an Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939); S. Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); M. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948); K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979). I recognise that my research equally could have been positioned in the emergent field of Cultural Sociology. Albeit that many aspects of my research do resonate with such a discipline/subject-field, it is a subjective decision to look at the applicability of sociology (the Bourdieusian variant in particular) into IR as the latter discipline is the disciplinary position I have chosen to work from.

⁶⁸ J.T. Checkel, “The constructivist turn in international relations theory,” *World Politics* 50 (1998): 324-348; J.T. Checkel, “International norms and domestic politics: bridging the rationalist constructivist divide,” *European Journal of International Relations* 3 (1997): 473-495; P. Katzenstein, *The culture of national security: norms and identity in world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996a); P.J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996b); T. Risse-Kappen (ed.), *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Ideas, Not Ethnicity. Since the United States was founded in the 18th century, Americans have defined themselves not by their racial, religious, and ethnic identity but by their common values and belief in individual freedom.”⁶⁹

Moreover, it is not the question of merely being ‘different’, but the belief of being *exceptionally* different – a core idea in American Creed.⁷⁰ According to McCrisken, there exists a “belief that the United States is an extraordinary nation with a special role to play in human history; a nation that is not only unique but also superior.”⁷¹ On the other hand, China as the Other is especially relevant to juxtapose ‘American-ness’ with when considering the country’s profoundly impactful role in the international system and indeed for the U.S. foreign policy decision-makers. This point was encapsulated by the Director of East-West Centre, Washington DC, Satu P. Limaye, who expressed that the strategic importance of China to the U.S. is evidently reflected by that most U.S. governmental directories need to be involved in any policy-negotiations involving China.⁷² Furthermore, in the words of the prominent China scholar, Professor Gordon Redding:⁷³

I am not sure how many of us fully realise the extent of the privilege we enjoy by being witness to, and participate in, the greatest societal transformation ever attempted: moreover, to be in the nerve centre, the research and development laboratory, perhaps even the revolutionary cell, from which will come, if it comes at all, the gradual rejuvenation of an ancient, and still pre-modern civilization.

⁶⁹ M.J. Friedman, “American Identity: Ideas, Not Ethnicity” (2008). Available: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2008/03/20080307154033ebyessedo0.5349237.html#axzz2sffqNQx>.

⁷⁰ See B. Buzan, “American exceptionalism, unipolarity and September 11: understanding the behaviour of the sole superpower,” *Guoji Guancha (International Review)* 38 (2005); J. Lepgold & T. McKeown, “Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional? An Empirical Analysis,” *Political Science Quarterly* 110(3) (1995): 369-84; S.M. Lipset 1996, *American Exceptionalism*, op.cit.

⁷¹ T. McCrisken, “Exceptionalism,” in eds. A. DeConde, R.D. Burn & F. Logevall, *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 2nd edn, vol. II (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2002), 63-80.

⁷² Satu Limaye, 14 May 2009, pers. comm.

⁷³ S.G. Redding, “Culture and business in Hong Kong,” in *Dynamic Hong Kong: Business & Culture*, eds. G. Wang & S.L. Wong (Centre for Asian Studies Occasional Papers and Monographs No. 127, 1997), 85.

Sixth, drawing upon Bourdieu's Theory of Practice facilitates for employing an ethnographic study which assigns primacy to field-research in terms of informing me about the relevance of the different conceptual "thinking tools" and indeed the relationality between them. Conventionally, these concepts tend to be researched separately or being pre-conceived, albeit Bourdieu produced his practice theory where the aforementioned concepts are working in tandem.⁷⁴ This positions the study at the frontier of sociological research as far as Bourdieu is concerned due to the potential to comment on relationality of the "thinking tools" in an empirical sound setting integral to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice.⁷⁵

1.5 Main arguments

The main arguments purported in this section relates to the overarching research questions as well as the identified literatures. The main findings and associated arguments will be presented in the thesis' conclusion, i.e. Chapter Seven. In the latter chapter, the main arguments below will be explored in more depth.

As far as the overarching research question is concerned, the main argument consists of four elements. First, 'American-ness' is constituted through an Other, hence depending on how 'China' is being perceived. The Self/Other dialect, therefore, comprise multiple Selves and Othernesses, and the cultural influence is evident in how the boundaries and meaning-attribution is socially and culturally constructed. Second, 'American-ness' is a contested socially constructed phenomenon where

⁷⁴ Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit; Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit; Leander 2010, Staging International Relations Practicing Bourdieu's Sociology, op.cit.; Leander 2009, Habitus and Field, op.cit.; Leander 2008, Thinking Tools. op.cit. 'Relationality' will be discussed in Chapter Two as an unfolding social theoretical aspect relating to conceptual boundaries, Otherness, and relationships between Bourdieu's conceptual "thinking tools".

⁷⁵ See Swartz 2008, "Bringing Bourdieu's master concepts into organizational analysis," op.cit.

some boundary-markers are shared whereas others are distinct for a particular produced boundary. Third, the contested nature of ‘American-ness’ depends on the think tank’s (including the individuals working within them) association on the domestic political and ideological spectrum in the U.S. (and/or other dynamisms). Subsequently, fourth, in essence, this is the basis for identity-formation.

Additional research themes concern each of the identified strands of literature depicted in Chapter Three (i.e. literature review). For the first strand (Bourdieu in IR research), I argue that Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice is highly relevant for achieving deeper and richer understanding of social phenomena. Its application therefore enriches the conceptual and methodological vocabulary in IR research and achieves more rigorous meaning and context-based studies – in addition to a way of presenting data and the analysis. Culture plays a profound role in these processes. The study also facilitates for a more empirically sound exploration where the field-research informs the relevance for the various “thinking tools” through deploying Bourdieu in conjunction with ethnography. The study elucidates the interplay and relationality between the various conceptual “thinking tools”, which is shown to be much underexplored.⁷⁶

For the second strand (analytical schools in the specialised think tank literature), I am arguing that the research has shown the plausibility and relevance for a third analytical school, which makes conceptualisations of the *thinkers* (aka policy-research experts) its focal point. Moreover, in terms of think tanks in the IR literature, I argue it has the potential to widen the platform of non-state key players

⁷⁶ See M. Emirbayer, “Manifesto for a Relational Sociology”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2) (1997): 281-317; Swartz 2008, op.cit.

in the international system, such as on the organisational and individual levels (think tanks and think tank policy-researchers as individuals respectively). Similarly, positioning think tanks as non-state actors within the context of U.S.’ relations with China links the think tank literature with the constructivist research programme in IR. Furthermore, it also marries the perspectives of policy-researchers with U.S.-Sino relations and especially U.S.’ foreign policies towards China.

1.6 Potential contributions

This study, I argue, has the potential to contribute to knowledge through three generic ways.⁷⁷ First, the study contributes with novel theoretical synthesis. Employing Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, and additional social theory from Sociology and Social Anthropology, combines different bodies of literature in a rather unconventional way in IR research. It further explores the *Bourdiesuan* sociological ‘turn’ in IR as well as increasing transdisciplinary IR research. At the same time, though, it facilitates for “testing” the relevance and credibility of the Bourdiesuan theoretical approach. Synthesis is also made between think tanks and IR literatures.

Second, the research has also elicited new primary data collection (in-depth interviews), which cannot be replicated due to changing contextuality and intersubjectivity. Third, the research endeavour also facilitates for developing propositions which can be investigated in future research. These propositions can emerge during the ongoing analysis of collected data. This study is also, to the best

⁷⁷ I am here making use of Professor Matthew Watson’s (University of Warwick) ‘list of ten’ ways to make a contribution.

of my knowledge, the first ethnographic study carried out inside think tanks, and specifically in relation to policy-researchers (within a China policy-research expert environment) in International Relations and Political Science research, with a focus on conceptualising “China perceptions”.

1.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce the study by unpacking the overarching research question as a means to communicate how these elements are understood and employed in this thesis (i.e. investigatory scope). The empirical foundation, main arguments and potential contributions were then presented. The framework of the investigation will be expanded in the following chapters: the subsequent Chapter Two comprises two sections; the scope of the applied social theory, and second, the research framework (aka methodology). The literature review constitutes Chapter Three and addresses, principally, Bourdieusian research in the IR discipline and the specific think tank literature.

In concert, Chapters One to Three comprise the theoretical Part A of this study. This does not only encompass terms and concepts portrayed in this introductory-chapter – but indeed, signalling a limited body of the social theoretical literature deemed relevant to employ conjunctually. Practically speaking, the theoretical framework is consolidated by drawing upon social theory in a consistent manner. This usage also identifies the delimitations of the usage in this study, in the pursuit to answer the overarching research question. A secondary focus is to position the terms and concepts within the relevant debates in the IR discipline.

Part B of this thesis is devoted to the analysis chapters – Chapters Four to Six. This set of chapters present derived main themes from the ‘total universe of data’⁷⁸ based on what matters the most to the research subjects (i.e. ‘native categories’⁷⁹ and their construction of ‘social reality’). Main themes are also unveiled based on the inductive, iterative, hermeneutical analysis process. These processes entail juxtaposing data obtained in the field with a selected body of literatures, in addition to engaging with new areas of literature sources depending on the direction of the analysis (warranted by the field-research). The application of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice operates as a common-thread across the analysis chapters.

In short, in Chapter Four, the China policy-research environment will be positioned within think tanks as a Bourdieusian social field. Bourdieu’s concepts of field, capital as well as interests and strategies (and to some extent habitus and doxa) will appear as the explanatory framework of various dynamics which have substantial influence on the manoeuvrability of both the “China-thinking” and China-related activities of relevant policy-researchers. Both Chapter Five and Chapter Six draw particularly on Bourdieu’s doxa when propagating various separate but interrelated elements of ‘American-ness’ within the context of ‘China’ as the Other. Chapter Seven will conclude the thesis by pinpointing main arguments, findings, and contributions to original knowledge – in addition to highlighting limitations, theoretical and practical implications, as well as proposals for future research.

⁷⁸ See M.B. Miles & A.M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: an Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd edn (London: SAGE Publication, 1994).

⁷⁹ See P.J. Buckley & M.K. Chapman, “The Use of Native Categories in Management Research,” *British Journal of Management* 8(4) (1997): 283-299.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE INVESTIGATORY SCOPE

2.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter serves as the theoretical statement of the thesis. Its purpose is to delimit the scope concerning the theoretical application of the academic investigation. In essence, the chapter explicates how the overarching research question stipulated in Chapter One will be responded to and how it has been researched. Additionally, this chapter provides the theoretical vocabulary of the analysis conducted in Chapter Four to Six. The present Chapter precedes the literature chapter for two particular reasons. First, this study adheres to the ‘cyclic’, “bottom-up” research process which assigns primacy to field-research (and not theory). Second, as an extension of the foregoing point, the study has been justified on the basis of its degree of significance in its own right.

The engagement with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and the embedded conceptual “thinking tools” in particularly, reflects the focal area of the analytical inquiry. The purpose of this chapter is achieved by unpacking the purpose and aim statement established for this study, followed by elaborating the analytical as well as the overarching frameworks (i.e. U.S.-Sino relations and U.S. think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon). Collectively, the first section of the present Chapter Two stipulates how selected areas of social theory will be applied in addition to depicting relevant contextuality in which the analysis is conducted. The second section

presents the research framework (aka methodology) of the study. It elucidates the research praxis of the investigation – theory as method – and is thus relevant to include in the present Chapter. Throughout the study, I strive for “methodological fit” which signifies that the philosophical underpinning of the study exhibits congruency between all components within the research framework, as well as between the research framework and its ontological and epistemological foundations.⁸⁰

The reason for deploying Bourdieu’s social theory as the theoretical framework is as follows. First, I argue that employing Bourdieu is interesting and relevant in its own right. His social theory is underused in IR literature but reflects a new strand of the sociological ‘turn’ in IR (i.e. *Bourdieuian* sociological ‘turn’). Applying Bourdieu, in this regard, increases the focus on including praxis, habit and un-reflexive behaviour, empirical and multi-method research, relationality, strategising, culture and context.⁸¹

Second, his practice theory also provides a conceptual framework which can be operationalised⁸² – being ‘irreverent’ rather than ‘corpus’.⁸³ As a researcher, it provides me with a holistic “vocabulary” – a mode of thinking – for investigating the research problem and presenting the analysis. Third, Pouliot illustrates for me the

⁸⁰ A.C. Edmondson & S.E. McManus, “Methodological fit in management field research,” *Academy of Management Review* 32(4) (2007): 1155-1179; T. Zalan & G. Lewis, “Writing About Methods in Qualitative Research: Towards a More Transparent Approach,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004), 507-528.

⁸¹ See F. Merand, “Strategizing about Strategy” (Seminar, Bourdieu in International Relations, 2010); V. Pouliot, “Putting Practice Theory in Practice” (paper presented at Bourdieu in International Relations workshop, Copenhagen, December 7-8, 2010); Swartz 2008, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” op.cit.

⁸² See A. Leander 2006, op.cit.

⁸³ A. Leander 2006, ibid. 9-10.

most important point in this regard, moving away from only focusing on text (what is being said) and behaviour (a heritage from positivism, behaviourism, and social psychology), but also un-reflexive behaviour (doxa, as reflected in this thesis' main arguments, proposed in the analysis chapters). I find this particularly interesting when examining the influence of culture on the social construction of narratives concerning ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ – aspects which in the words of the social anthropologist Agar often are located outside our “personal frame of references”.⁸⁴

2.1 Purpose & Aim statement

Having established the overarching research question, this section spells out the research scope – and in effect – the design:

The purpose of this study is to examine social constructions of contrasting narratives about ‘China’ by expert policy-researchers in U.S. think tanks within the overarching framework of U.S.-Sino relations and think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon. The research focuses on the impact of American culture(s) and the boundary- and meaning production in regard to what constitute ‘American-ness’ as Self(-ves) and China as the Other, in addition to how such China-narratives are manifested in work-activities. The study has important implications on the role of culture, identity, practice, and context in the constructivism research programme debates in International Relations research.

I aim to investigate this international problem on the sociological meso-level by conducting a Bourdieusian-inspired ethnography of aforementioned experts who are conducting China-related policy-research in Washington, DC based think tanks. I will focus on think tanks which reflect divergent positions within the domestic U.S. political and ideological spectrum in order to obtain rich, context-based understanding.

The employed concepts not already addressed in the introductory-chapter will be addressed below.

⁸⁴ M. Agar, “The Intercultural Frame,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18(2) (1994): 221-237.

2.1.1 Contrasting narratives

The meaning of narratives was explicated in Chapter One. The notion of *contrasting* narratives, however, relates to ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ as contested social phenomena. As think tanks often associate themselves with a particular political and/or ideological allegiance, this study uses this spectrum as a starting point for exploring contrasting narratives. I am not assuming, however, that the boundaries of contrasting narratives equate to the organisational boundaries of a think tank.

2.1.2 Overarching framework: U.S.-Sino relations & U.S think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon

The overarching framework performs as a macro-structure of how the policy-researchers’ “China-narratives” in U.S. think tanks can be understood within. In this study, I have assumed that U.S.-Sino relations as well as U.S. think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon⁸⁵ are particular relevant surroundings in this regard. The rationale relates to that policy-researchers are immediately affected by the nature of U.S.’ standings with China.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the interplay between U.S. think tanks has also imminent potential to significantly influence a think tank’s ability to contrive in the competitive markets of ideas (which includes possible constraints on the evolving “China-thinking” and production of policy-research within think tanks).

⁸⁵ I am purposefully applying the combined term ‘socio-political’ in order to signal that “all events, processes, and practices” (see Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 3) within the political and social spheres are not separable. I thus disagree with Hay’s stance (analytical level), who promulgates that a political analysis is different from a cultural analysis due to the former is “concerned with the distribution, exercise and consequences of power” (Hay 2002, ibid., 3). For example, power is not uniquely dealt with by the realist tradition but rather outdone by post-structuralism (S. Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)).

⁸⁶ ‘Standings’, here, denotes what is deemed relevant (contextually) by research subjects and the analysis of the China policy-research environment in Washington, DC – for example, bilateral and multilateral relations, domestic politics in the U.S. and/or China, and perceptions and dealings beyond the formalised state-to state-encounters.

2.1.3 Culture(s)

The concept of culture is a focal point in this investigation. Defining culture is a tricky one, which anthropologists ironically try to evade.⁸⁷ Social anthropologist, Radcliffe-Brown stated “I should like to invoke a taboo on the word *culture*”.⁸⁸ I draw upon Bourdieu’s sociology and social anthropological advancements consistent with the former. Bourdieu’s notion of the culture concept has been ambiguous indeed. Consequently, various authors are unsolved on where to place him due to the uncertainty in what ways Bourdieu himself conceptualised ‘culture’.⁸⁹ For now, three assertions can be ordained. First, I follow Lizardo’s notion of Bourdieu, as a post-*culturalist*, reconceptualising the need for a conceptual understanding of ‘culture’. Through the focus on practice, this stance allows for the following dialectic: mental structures as well as social structures as a system of action and perception that is acquired in a tacit state through tacit mechanisms. In this space, actors execute practices in accordance to the tenants of such a system.⁹⁰ This epistemologically diverts from Geertz’ stance on anti-mentalism and anti-psychologism as well as with structuralism – but rather incorporates public culture.⁹¹ This relates especially to Geertz’ notion of ‘thick description’.⁹² Grenfell sensibly illuminates that one way Bourdieu sensed culture was as “language, traditions, characteristics and beliefs”⁹³

⁸⁷ Agar 1994, “The Intercultural Frame,” op.cit. 221-237. Kroeber and Kluckhohn identified 164 ways of defining ‘culture’ in British social anthropological literature (A.L. Kroeber & C. Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952)).

⁸⁸ R. Radcliffe-Brown, *A Natural Science of Society* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), 53.

⁸⁹ Omar Lizardo, “Pierre Bourdieu as a Post-cultural Theorist,” *Cultural Sociology* 5(1) (2011): 2.

⁹⁰ Lizardo 2011, ibid.; L. Wacquant, *Body and Soul: Notes of an Apprentice Boxer* (Oxford: University Press, 2004).

⁹¹ This diversification, albeit a minor point, is interesting as Geertz has become an “intellectual household name” in IR research when transdisciplinary inquiries into culture have been made by IR scholars and into other social science disciplines such as sociology and social anthropology (see L. Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science,” *The American Political Science Review* 96(4) (2002): 713-728). Applying Bourdieu, therefore, also reflects an opportunity to expand on this tradition (aka ‘Bourdiesuan sociological ‘turn’’).

⁹² J. C. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁹³ Grenfell, cited in O. Lizardo 2010, op.cit. 3.

The void of an explicit conceptualisation of ‘culture’ on the part of Bourdieu is at the core of Lizardo’s ‘post-culturalist’ argument, which cannot be compartmentalised into the field of cultural sociology, where;

(...) his significance as an intellectual figure is perceived to lie in having abandoned the traditional parameters of cultural explanation in anthropology. He did this by developing a radically different conceptualization what culture ‘is’ and of how ‘culture works’ (as well as how it is transmitted and acquired).⁹⁴

Language is a central facet of a cultural analysis which draws upon Bourdieu’s social theory and sociology of language. Language operates a sub-system of culture and can neither be distinguished, nor be analysed detached from cultural contextuality and social conditions warranting the production and reception of the former. This also encompasses Bourdieu’s emphasis on linguistic practice rather than a mere execution performance as a critique against formal linguistics featuring an abstract domain of language such as Saussure and Chomsky.⁹⁵

Language is linked to Bourdieu’s conceptual ‘thinking tools’ in multiple ways. The ‘linguistic habitus’ contains a cultural propensity to express certain things – a combination of competence in speaking ‘properly’ and employ this social capacity appropriately. The ‘linguistic market’ features sanctions and censorship relating to a doxa – herein what cannot be said.⁹⁶ The use of language is consequently part of the competitive struggles in the field of U.S. think tanks (as well as China policy-research experts more specifically).

⁹⁴ O. Lizardo 2011, *ibid.* 4.

⁹⁵ R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 152-153; R.M. Keesing & A.J. Strathern, *Cultural anthropology: A contemporary perspective*, 3rd edn (Belmont: Thomson, 1998).

⁹⁶ P. Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 138.

Second, reflecting on the first point above, I exploit a social constructionist standpoint of ‘culture’ (as opposed to a social constructivist slant). The ideational system embodied in social anthropology emphasises systems of shared ideas as part of public and social processes, which underlie and are expressed by the conduct of human lives.⁹⁷ Learning processes are the basis for culture as a system of shared meaning that transcends the realisation within one individual’s mind – not “only” being an outcome of cognitive processes within one person’s construct of social reality.⁹⁸ This facilitates for talking about an “American culture” without stating it being a “*national* culture”.⁹⁹ Arguably, culture cannot be understood by separate values and behaviour, or biological, psychological processes and social existence – all are in fact integral components in development of Man.¹⁰⁰

Harmonising with social constructionism, Bourdieu supported a conceptualisation of culture as a system, i.e. consisting of durable transposable dispositions or organising actions.¹⁰¹ Thus, ‘habitus’ becomes culture, and it follows that the former develops into both the research praxis as well as the modus operandi. The ambiguity concerning Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of ‘culture’ makes it appropriate to also incorporate the social constructionist facet in this study. The approach of studying culture is thus aligned with ethnography embedded in a social anthropological

⁹⁷ R.M. Keesing & A.J. Strathern 1998, *Cultural anthropology*, op.cit.

⁹⁸ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, A Study in Religious Sociology* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1912); Keesing & Strathern 1998, *ibid*.

⁹⁹ There is an array of epistemological, ontological, ecological, and methodological issues related to the notion of a ‘culture’ being “national”. It would be an “ecological fallacy” to assume a “national culture” as boundaries of a ‘culture’ are not equal to those boundaries of a ‘nationality’. Social categorisation makes it unviable according to Jenkins (*Categorization and Power* (England: Sage Publication, 1997)). Such fallacy denotes that people located in the same area share the same attitudes, and the assumption that a human being can be characterised as corresponding to the average of a group (D. Landis & J.H. Wasilevski, “Reflections on 22 years of the international journal of intercultural relations and 23 years in other areas of intercultural practice,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23(4) (1999): 535-574).

¹⁰⁰ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), Ch 1.

¹⁰¹ P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977).

tradition in addition to social constructionism. Furthermore, the above-mentioned anti-psychologism elucidates the importance of positioning the study at the sociological meso-level, which includes identifying relevant overarching frameworks. In effect, the study distances the academic inquiry from comprehending ‘culture’ as an independent “variable” where culture is merely a part of cognitive processes associated with epistemological constructivism – evident in social psychology.¹⁰²

Third, as a consequence of the above, ‘culture’ in this study is not to be understood as ‘high culture’ or cultural artefacts.¹⁰³ The latter indicates one out of two senses which Bourdieu applied the term ‘culture’.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, neither Bourdieu’s enterprises relating to the seditious effort to dissipate the classical boundaries between ‘Culture’ and ‘culture’ in addition to his work on boundaries of the cultural field, class, sociology of cultural consumption, the arts and aesthetic, cultural taste¹⁰⁵ nor the French intellectual milieu in which Bourdieu’s work was heavily moulded by¹⁰⁶ – are not a focus in this study.

¹⁰² For example, the Hofstedeian paradigm is prominent. See S.P. Bate, “Whatever Happened to Organizational Anthropology? A Review of the Field of Organizational Anthropology and Anthropological Studies,” *Human Relations* 50(9) (1997): 1147-1175; M. Chapman, “Social Anthropology, Business Studies, and Cultural Issues,” *International Studies of Management & Organization* 26(4) (1997): 3-29; G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values* (London: Sage Publications, 1980).

¹⁰³ See O. Lizardo 2011, op.cit. 3. This is not to say that materiality or objectives are deemed irrelevant in this cultural analysis. The field-data will indicate the relevance for any such inclusions. This point also signals an important juncture between the post-structuralist Bourdieu and IR’s constructivism where the latter levies a primacy of ideas/construction and where materiality is (merely) contingent upon the former (Ramon Pacheco-Pardo, “Review article - Beyond Power Transition: Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century,” *Fudan Journal of Chinese Studies*, 5. See also Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” *International Organization* 46(2) (1992).

¹⁰⁴ Grenfell, cited in O. Lizardo 2010, ibid. 3.

¹⁰⁵ See R. Jenkins 2002, 128-137.

¹⁰⁶ H. Joas & W. Knöbl, *Social Theory*, trans. A. Skinner (Cambridge: University Press, 2009).

2.1.4. Work-activities

This element relates to the research subjects’ in-house activities concerning China-related activities within the think tanks. It provides an additional opportunity to identify contextualised “China-narratives” in various in-house venues and settings with subsequent prospects for participant observation and triangulating data. In this study, this is inhibited to interview-contextualities as well as seminars and conferences available for the public.¹⁰⁷

2.1.5. Identity

Identity is an inescapable facet of being.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, it relates to essential questions such as “who am I” and “which groups do I belong to?” In concert with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and ‘culture’, ‘identity’ comprises the core of this study. ‘American-ness’ is in this regard studied as identity-formation and construction as well as representations of the Other. In addition, identity-negotiation will also be included when empirically warranted. I am drawing upon post-structural sociological and anthropological perspectives in terms of identity rather than social psychology (i.e. focusing on what individuals find making them distinctive and how this is positioned within a culture rather than solely exploring self-image).

According to Bourdieu, ‘identity’ is constituted by the production and reproduction of the internalised habitus which people unconsciously uphold.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore,

¹⁰⁷ See section two (research framework, this chapter), under ‘limitation’, for additional elaborations and justifications.

¹⁰⁸ D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity* (Manchester: University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁹ P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990a; P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990b).

identities are not determined by social positions or geography.¹¹⁰ For example, one think tank policy-researcher is not solely a woman or solely a member of a U.S. think tank. Rather, Lizardo's 'post-culturalist' labelling of Bourdieu can also be traced in regard to 'identity'. Bourdieu and Wacquant re-position 'identity' into 'socialised subjectivity'¹¹¹ as a notion of dispositional terms situated within "the pre-reflective, embodied nature of practical activity".¹¹² In this discursive approach for capturing 'identity', policy-researchers would have an embodied 'sense' of how to behave and a 'feel for the game' (i.e. practical schemes) derived from agents' early formative years (which are reinforced from the group) as opposed to conscious calculation and constant rules.¹¹³

To continue the anti-structuralist approach to identity, identity and action are coupled and not identifiable, but partly constructed by contextual social structures and sources of power.¹¹⁴ This approach stands opposite to recent cultural research from a constructivist perspective in the IR discipline, which seems trapped in a relatively structuralist line, as was the case with social and cultural anthropology – but three decades ago.¹¹⁵ A statement of identity *guiding* behaviour reflects both a separable factor, a fixed entity, and a material persona which indeed resonates with a more positivist inclined social psychological behaviourist tradition.

¹¹⁰ W. Bottero, "Intersubjectivity and Bourdieusian Approaches to 'Identity,'" *Cultural Sociology* 4(1) (2010): 3-22.

¹¹¹ P. Bourdieu & L.J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 126.

¹¹² W. Bottero 2010, op.cit. 4.

¹¹³ See W. Bottero 2010, *ibid.*, 4; P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 12; P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977), 15; P. Bourdieu 1991, *Language and symbolic power*, op.cit. 235; P. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998).

¹¹⁴ M. Williams, *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹¹⁵ For example, A.M. Klotz & C. Lynch, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2007).

Identities are accessed through “China-narratives” (which includes observed behaviour – including through research subjects’ own narratives) of the policy-researchers. Identity-construction is based on formation of social groups through social categorisation.¹¹⁶ The various think tanks as organisations as well as individuals working within them possess multiple identities depending on the Other, and they might not be coinciding.¹¹⁷ Building further on Barth, focus should be moved beyond comparing identities according to a set of categories, but rather investigate why and how conceptual boundaries are constructed and maintained differently (reflected by boundary-markers).¹¹⁸ This study focuses mostly on the latter.

2.1.6 Context (*contextuality*)

The concept of context can be defined as “the surroundings associated with phenomena which help to illustrate that [sic] phenomena”.¹¹⁹ A conceptualisation of context highlights two important processes, namely contextualisation of the phenomenon (level) being studied (construction of “China-narratives”), which is integral to the second aspect; that of the research process (and thus the role of the researcher).¹²⁰ Contextuality may be played out traversing several levels (such as individual policy-researchers, think tanks as organisations, and external levels as

¹¹⁶ R. Brubaker, “Ethnicity without groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43(2) (2002): 163-189; C.J. Calhoun (ed.), *Social theory and the politics of identity*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1994), 13.

¹¹⁷ ‘Multiplicity’ was discussed in the previous chapter one. Consequently, I am acknowledging the Nietzschean subjective perspectivism in regard to ‘multiplicity’: A person’s identities cannot be detached from each other. Hence, the opposition to structuralism is evident also because identity is not thought of as an identifiable entity, but instead integral to behaviour, thought, culture, personality and so forth as a representation. Also see preceding point on identity.

¹¹⁸ F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1971).

¹¹⁹ Capelli and Sherer, cited in P. Marschan-Piekkari, C. Welch, H. Penttinen & M. Tahvanainen, “Interviewing in the Multinational Corporation: Challenges of the Organisational Context,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004), 245.

¹²⁰ Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004, op.cit.

interdependent, interwoven, and mutually influencing levels such as varying aspects of American culture)¹²¹ as well as methodologically (conditionality concerning the selected research approach) and substantively (i.e. organisational conditions and constraints affecting the research process).¹²² Context is also evident in terms of geographic, temporal, and cultural dimensions of context,¹²³ and that ‘text’¹²⁴ should be understood within its historical-cultural surroundings.¹²⁵

All definitions lead to an understanding of contextuality being *non-static*. Field-research governs to some extent the nature of contextuality in which data is analysed and re-analysed within. Two such main areas were highlighted in point 2.1.2 (this Chapter); U.S.-Sino relations and think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon. American culture(s) and organisational facets within think tanks are highly relevant – so are national identity and domestic political culture (depending on the empirical relevance).

2.1.7 Constructivism research programme debates in IR research

Constructivist research in IR research is not a theoretical focus of this study. My research does, however, have the potential to comment on its position within the IR discipline and its various strands. IR relates here to the discipline (or subject-field) (“the study of the political and social interaction of state, non-state actors, and

¹²¹ Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004, *ibid.*

¹²² See G. Johns, “In praise of context,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 22(1) (2001): 31-42.

¹²³ D.M. Rousseau & Y. Fried, “Location, location, location: contextualizing organizational research,” *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 22(1) (2001): 1-13.

¹²⁴ ‘Text’, here, does not only entail written words but also spoken words and figurative (see M. Alvesson & K. Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2009)).

¹²⁵ M. Alvesson & K. Sköldberg 2009, *ibid.*

individuals”).¹²⁶ These debates are prospectively dealt with through aligning the inquiry with the *Bourdieuian* sociological ‘turn’ in IR research.

Practically speaking, this entails potential contribution (depending on the analysis of field-research data) of Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology for nuancing debates in the IR constructivist camp.¹²⁷ This relates particularly to the roles of practice, culture, and identity, in addition to research philosophical and social theoretical standpoints – and to some extent ethnography as methodology.¹²⁸ The constructivist research camp, a social theoretical ontology rather than a theory of IR I would argue, can be broadly divided into ‘conventional’ and ‘critical’ constructivism.¹²⁹ They share, nonetheless, the focus on how ideational forces play out.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ M. Griffiths, O’Callaghan, T. & S.C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008), vii.

¹²⁷ See S.J. Barkin, “Realist Constructivism and Realist-Constructivism,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 348-352; J.T. Checkel, “The constructivist turn in international relations theory,” *World Politics* 50 (1998): 324-348; R.N. Lebow, “Constructive Realism,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 346-348; J.B. Mattern, “Power in Realist-Constructivist Research,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 343-346; J. Sterling-Folker, “Realist-Constructivism and Morality,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 341-343; P. Jackson Thaddeus (ed.), “Bridging the Gap: Towards a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue,” *International Studies Review* 6 (2004): 337-352; P. Jackson Thaddeus & D.H. Nexon, “Constructivist Realism or Realist-Constructivism?,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 337-341; M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002) – for review texts of constructivist research in IR, as well as Guzzini, S. & Leander, A. (eds.), *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) for an evaluation of Wendt and social theory in IR. See also D.S.A. Guttormsen and M. Jacoby, “Bridging a ‘Gap’?: Academia and the Realist – Constructivism Debate” (paper presented at the LSE Millennium annual conference, October 22-23, 2011) (short-listed for special issue, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*), for an in-depth discussion concerning the IR discipline and multi-paradigmatic dialogues.

¹²⁸ B. Buzan & M. Albert, “Differentiation: a sociological approach to international relations theory,” *European journal of international relations* 16(3) (2010): 315-337.

¹²⁹ See T. Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” *International Security* 23(1) (1998): 171-200. ‘Conventionalists’ include eds Adler, E. & Barnett, M. (*Security Communities*, Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 29-66), Finnemore, M. (*The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)), Hopf, T. (*Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002)), Katzenstein (ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996b)), Reus-Smit (“The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions,” *International Organization* 51(4) (1997): 555-589), Ruggie (*Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998)), and Wendt (*Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999)) (rejecting that objective truths can be achieved but tend to claim this for their own research subjects, and that a Weberian (‘verstehen’) interpretation is necessary in order to grasp social action). ‘Criticalists’ feature, for example, Campbell (1992, *Writing Security*, op.cit.), Der Derian, J. (*On Diplomacy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987)), Tickner, J.A. (*Gender in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992)), and Walker, R.B.J. (*Inside/Outside: International Relations as*

2.1.8 Sociological meso-level

This approach is aligned with Bourdieu's 'constructivist structuralism', or 'structuralist constructivism', where agency (microindividual) and structure (macrostructural) always operate dialectically in an inseparable fashion.¹³¹ At this level, policy-researchers would collectively form large social structures (for example organisations and communities such as a new think tank or luncheon seminars), influenced by interaction and negotiation concerning 'social reality' amongst the individuals, but depending on a situational context/structure.¹³²

In the conducted research, these processes operate by American culture(s) influencing how U.S. think tank policy-researchers negotiate about what constitutes 'China', and consequently 'American-ness', in their narratives. Contextual influence may also come from organisational cultures within the particular think-tank and/or policy-networks/communities during interaction (for example, meetings and seminar in the U.S. or in China) in addition to relations between the two countries. The meso-level is therefore a merged and intermediate sphere for problem-solving between macro- and micro (face-to-face human interaction) levels which are not merely abstractive, but indeed 'reality' to be analysed.¹³³

Political Theory (Cambridge: University Press, 1993)) where truth-claims are rejected due to lack of common ground, and concentrates on rendering truth and power.

¹³⁰ J.T. Checkel, "Social Constructivisms in Global and European Politics," in *Review of International Studies* 30 (2004): 229-244; J.T. Checkel 1998, "The constructivist turn in international relations theory," op.cit.; M. Finnemore & K. Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4(1) (2001): 391-416; A.M. Klotz & C. Lynch 2007, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations*, op.cit.; A. Klotz & D. Prakash (eds.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); J. Ruggie 1998, *Constructing the World Polity*, op.cit.; A. Wendt 1992, "Anarchy is what states make of it," op.cit .; A. Wendt 1999, *Social Theory of International Politics*, op.cit.

¹³¹ P. Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; R. Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, revised edn (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹³² J.G. Bruhn & H.M. Rebach, "Problem Solving at the Mesolevel," in *Sociological Practice: Intervention and Social Change*, 2nd edn (Springer, 2007), 115-145.

¹³³ Also see the corresponding point about field.

2.1.9 Bourdieusian-inspired ethnography

The nature of the methodology and data-collection methods employed in this study is depicted in section two (this chapter). For now, it can be stated that the study makes use of ethnography as its research strategy (aka methodology) with in-depth interviews, participant observation, ethnographic/interpretivist contents analysis of research subjects' written policy-research (and collection of written material) in addition to triangulation as the research methods. The use of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the embedded conceptual "thinking tools" are what makes the study a 'Bourdieusian-inspired' endeavour. This exploration of Bourdieu's social theory reflects the main focus of this thesis, and thus the principal area from which contributions will be proposed.

Bourdieu in some respects personifies the linkage of Sociology and Anthropology with the IR research agenda (i.e. the *Bourdieu*sian sociological 'turn' in IR). In IR and Political Science, ethnography has often mistakenly been considered solely as an observation-technique detached from social theory and the participating element of *participant* observation such as in *Research Methods in Politics*.¹³⁴ On the contrary, ethnography emerged as a uniquely distinct feature of the Social/Cultural Anthropology discipline entrenched with more than 100 year of intellectual history.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ P. Burnham, K.G. Lutz, W. Grant & Z. Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). See W. Vrasti, "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37(2) (2008): 279-30; J.P. Rancatore, "Strange: A Reply to Vrasti is It," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39(1) (2010): 65-77; L. Wedeen, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 255-272; W. Vrasti, "Dr Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying about Methodology and Love Writing," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39(1) (2010): 79-88.

¹³⁵ Keesing & Strathern 1998, op.cit.

2.2 Analytical framework

In this sub-section, I shall elaborate on Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as the principal explanatory framework. Importantly, my particular engagement with his sociology of sociology entails opting for three different – but highly interlinked – paths in terms of how to “read” Bourdieu’s practice theory – and how to deploy it. First, I am approaching Bourdieu through the lenses of relevant experts in the area – professors Anna Leander and Richard Jenkins; a Leanderian and Jenkinsian reading,¹³⁶ which find it unproblematic not being able to pin down Bourdieu as an ethnographer, social anthropologist or sociologist – or as a structuralist or post-structuralist. In fact, he might, to various extents, be labelled as any of these “categories”.

This harmonises well with my pursuit of a *transdisciplinary* inquiry, in addition to a “bottom-up” oriented ethnographic study which accommodates for epistemological-driven research – predominantly informed by the nature of the research problem and its contextuality. Specifically, as part of the *Bourdieuian* sociological ‘turn’ of IR research, I am aligning the study with Leander’s efforts to discuss the employability of Bourdieu rather than merely descriptively explaining his “thinking tools”. This coincides with my endeavour to make use of the undertaken research as a case to be theoretically and conceptually “tested” in terms of its relevance and capability to unveil new layers of information and subsequently knowledge.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ See A. Leander 2011, “The Promises, Problems, and Potentials of a Bourdieu-Inspired Staging of International Relations,” *International Political Sociology* 5: 294-295; Swartz, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” *Theory and Society* 37 (2008): 45-02; R. Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. – respectively.

¹³⁷ A. Leander 2011, op.cit. 295.

Second, as indicated in the main argument (preceding chapter), I am approaching Bourdieu's conceptual "thinking tools" with a focus on theoretical advancements as far as the employment of his social theory within IR research is concerned. This effort encompasses two elements – applying a broader set of the "thinking tools" simultaneously, in addition to illuminating the relationality between them.¹³⁸ Third, aligned with the ethnographic research strategy, the employment of the "thinking tools" is based on the field-research rather than pre-conceptions. As my study does not aim to investigate Bourdieu's social theory within the broader social science landscape, I shall not focus on positioning his work in the broader theoretical debates.

2.2.1 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and embedded conceptual "thinking tools"

Bourdieu's theory of practice serves as the theoretical framework of this study. This approach includes various conceptual "thinking tools", i.e. 'habitus', 'field', 'doxa', 'capital', 'interests', and 'strategies'.¹³⁹ Bourdieu's practice equation reads as follows:¹⁴⁰

$$\text{Practice} = ((\text{Habitus}) (\text{Capital}) + \text{Field}).$$

¹³⁸ See Swartz 2008, "Bringing Bourdieu's master concepts into organizational analysis," op.cit.

¹³⁹ Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.; P. Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit.; A. Leander, "Staging International Relations Practicing Bourdieu's Sociology" (paper presented at the International Studies Association panel: "Practicing Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology: A Different Reading of the International", New Orleans, 2010); A. Leander, "Habitus and Field," *International Studies Association Compendium Project* (Blackwell, 2009a); A. Leander, "Thinking Tools," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. A. Klotz & D. Prakash (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11-27; V. Pouliot, "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities," *International Organization* 62(2) (2008): 257-288; M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, op.cit. I have earlier discussed the above applicability specifically for my research (D.S.A. Guttormsen, "Applicability: Pierre Bourdieu's social theory and American elites' social construction of 'China'", (paper presented at European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), Dublin, August 30 – September 1, 2010d).

¹⁴⁰ P. Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit. 101.

Importantly, the above summarised formula of Bourdieu's practice theory underscores the interrelationships between the concepts where practices are produced by the combined performances and not by independent effects of either "thinking tools".¹⁴¹ Thus, treating the concepts below separately does not indicate an approach or understanding of them as having the faculties to operate in isolation.

With his practice theory, Bourdieu sets out to solve the struggle of structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss and existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. Bourdieu's own exertion was to synthesise the subjectivist and objectivist epistemologies.¹⁴² He furiously rejected determinism but also ventured out to avoid explaining social life where conscious and deliberate action would suffice as explaining how people act. His overarching endeavour was to construct a theory of social practice and society.¹⁴³ Bourdieu also dismissed grand theories as well as theorising for its own sake, and rather focused on "(...) a set of thinking tools visible through the results they yield (...)"¹⁴⁴ This is at the core of how his practice theory is applied in this study.

I am, thus, less engaged with Bourdieu's epistemological critique of social research – the main source of motivation for elaborating the Theory of Practice.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore,

¹⁴¹ D. Swartz, *Culture & power: the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Chicago University Press, 1997), 141.

¹⁴² R. Brubaker, "Rethinking Classical Theory. The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu," *Theory and Society* 14(6) (1985): 745-774; P. Jackson, "Pierre Bourdieu, the 'cultural turn' and the practice of international history," *Review of International Studies* 34(1) (2008): 155–181; R. Jenkins, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Reproduction of Determinism," *Sociology* 16(2) (1982): 270-281; R.W.K. Lau, "Habitus and the Practical Logic of Practice: An Interpretation," *Sociology* 38 (2004): 369-387; J.J. Sallaz & J. Zavisca, "Bourdieu in American Sociology, 1980-2004," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 21-41.

¹⁴³ P. Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 66-67.

¹⁴⁴ L.D. Wacquant, "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989): 50.

¹⁴⁵ The critique involved a theoretical shift from cultural rules constituting analytical models which effectively governed behaviour (structuralism) to an "emphasis upon the generation and pursuit by actors of strategies"

I am consequently also less concerned with the economicistic and deterministic criticism of Bourdieu's work, as well as with building methodological contributions relating to the ethnographic research strategy, as the latter plays a lesser role than the devised Bourdieusian theoretical framework in this study (herein 'theory as method').

2.2.1.1 Reflexivity

Bourdieu's reflexivity is at the core of his epistemological reflections.¹⁴⁶ Reflexivity is, however, not one of his conceptual "thinking tools" per se. It does, though, play a crucial role in the ability to practice his praxis in regard to knowledge claims.¹⁴⁷ In Bourdieusian terms, reflexivity here takes a radically different form than "narcissistic reflexivity" which is constrained to take notice of its own presence (as the researcher) in discourses.¹⁴⁸ Later in this Chapter, I will provide a self-reflexive account as a 'theoretical posture' to the China policy-research environment in DC – the social world in question.¹⁴⁹

In this study, I am pertaining to two central features in this regard – imparted as a self-reflexive account concerning the undertaken research: 'participant objectivation' and 'the objectification of objectification'.¹⁵⁰ The former relates to detachment of research and the notion of objectivism, whereas the latter entails being reflexive of

(Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 45). Bourdieu's ethnographic field-research in Algeria and France played a significant role in this transformative move – as well as in this realisation of reflexivity (P. Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, 8, *op.cit.*)

¹⁴⁶ Brewer 2000, *Ethnography* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 37-55.

¹⁴⁷ Lender, A 2006, 'The 'Realpolitik of Reason': Thinking International Relations through Fields, Habitus and Practice', CBS, Institute of Intercultural Communication and Management Working Paper (83), 26.

¹⁴⁸ Leander 2006, *ibid.* 18.

¹⁴⁹ Jenkins 2002, *op.cit.* 47.

¹⁵⁰ See Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 68.

the social categorisations being in play as well as employed research methods.¹⁵¹ This is necessary, in Bourdieu's eyes, in order to establish appreciation of my accounts as an ethnographic researcher, and involves two steps: to move away from the situation itself (my encounters with policy-researchers, think tanks, and American culture(s), and second, to take a step back from the actual act of observing.¹⁵²

2.2.1.2 *Habitus*

'Habitus' is the key mediating concept for Bourdieu, which he uses to bridge the 'explanatory gap' in understanding practice: between the extremes of an aggregate of individual behaviour and individual decision-making or constituted by 'supra-individual structures'.¹⁵³ It is a product of social conditionings – and easily transformable.¹⁵⁴ This concept functions as our semi-conscious orientation about the world,¹⁵⁵ and reflects taken for granted and unreflected ways of thinking and acting formed by accumulated experiences in different fields.¹⁵⁶

Bourdieu defines the concept as "a system of lasting transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment at a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained, dialectically produced by those results."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 52.

¹⁵² P. Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, *ibid.*, 59-60; L.D. Wacquant 1989, *op.cit.* 32-35.

¹⁵³ R. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 74.

¹⁵⁴ P. Bourdieu 1990a, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, *op.cit.*

¹⁵⁶ A. Leander 2009, "Habitus and Field," *op.cit.* 3.

¹⁵⁷ Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, *op.cit.* 82-83

In order to obtain a better grasp with Bourdieu's appropriation of the term (i.e. 'habitus'), his definition in *Outline of a Theory* is stipulated: "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted.¹⁵⁸ Both the dispositions and generative schemes are located in the body (i.e. human beings)¹⁵⁹ – inside the head of policy-researchers, only existing through interacting social actors and their practices as integral to behaviour, in addition to 'practical taxonomies' at the core of the generative schemes based on sensory experiences.¹⁶⁰

'Dispositions' are not merely attitudes – but can plausibly be thought of as thinking (cognitive) *and* feeling (affective).¹⁶¹ The 'generative basis' of practices equates to the aforementioned dispositions which consolidates the habitus. Jenkins pinpoints that "the habitus disposes actors to do certain things, it provides a basis for the generation of practices" which are "produced in and by the encounter between the habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which actor is moving, on the other".¹⁶² The dispositions are transposable which can be translated to the logical of another field.¹⁶³ Moreover, the dispositions are being durable which underpin their foundation for social experiences and learning experiences which have been adjusted to objective conditions of being.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ P. Bourdieu 1977, op.cit. 95.

¹⁵⁹ P. Bourdieu 1979, *Logic of Practice*, 66-79, op.cit.

¹⁶⁰ P. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 74-75. And more so than teaching (*ibid.* 76).

¹⁶¹ P. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 76.

¹⁶² P. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 77-78. See P. Bourdieu 1990b, *The Logic of Practice*, op.cit. 52-65, and P. Bourdieu 1991, *Language and symbolic power*, op.cit. 37-42.

¹⁶³ P. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 78; P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 200-270, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ P. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 79.

Bourdieu also refers to this embodiment as ‘hexis’ as the demeanour of the embodied person. It is here where the personal (idiosyncratic) and the social (systematic) are combined as a mediating nexus of social actors’ subjective worlds and cultural worlds.¹⁶⁵ Social performance becomes generated as routines rather than learned rules and principles. And it follows, not necessarily being fully aware of the actions – dispositions are beyond consciousness, but not separated from it: “(...) subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, that what they do has more meaning than they know”.¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, Elster points out the lack of a causal link between Bourdieu’s habitus and what people do.¹⁶⁷ Jenkins elucidates also the resemblance to Talcott Parson’s structural functionalism: “social stability is the product of the internationalisation of shared values, beliefs and norms” – and where habitus is the source for ‘objective’ practices but isolated being as ‘subjective’ principles produces by objective patterns of sociality echoing determination or an elevated version of functionalism.¹⁶⁸ However, the criticisms of determinism in his intellectual thinking were dismissed by Bourdieu – for example, because of the exhibited dynamic interplay explicated above (i.e. the field). Additionally, habitus *disposes* actors to carry out particular actions as a basis for where practices are (re)produced between habitus and its dispositions (e.g. practical taxonomies) as opposed to a deterministic

¹⁶⁵ P. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 75.

¹⁶⁶ P. Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit. 79

¹⁶⁷ J. Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), 69-71, 101-8.

¹⁶⁸ P. Jenkins 2002, op.cit., 81-82.

or mechanistic fashion.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, change is not denied due to treating habitus “as the site of the internalization of reality and the externalization of internality”.¹⁷⁰

2.2.1.3 *Doxa*

Doxa is a taken for granted viewpoint of the world, and operates on an unconscious level.¹⁷¹ Policy-researchers are not operating separate to their circumstances – but indeed integral to the latter through acquiring practical cultural competences. This makes them blind to the arbitrariness of social reality other than the way things are which confirm their being as a result of taking themselves and the social world for granted.¹⁷² Bourdieu termed this as a practical sense and practical logic – but mostly known as ‘a feel for the game’ – where a person masters the logic of the metaphorical “game” by acquiring experiences with it.¹⁷³

When addressing it as a ‘doxic experience’, the link to social constructionism is evident:

(...) the coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures which provides the *illusion* of immediate understanding, characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from that experiences and inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility((my italicisation).¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ P. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 78.

¹⁷⁰ P. Bourdieu & J.C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage, 1977), 205. See P. Jenkins 2002, ibid. 79.

¹⁷¹ P. Jackson 2008, “Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘cultural turn’ and the practice of international history,” op.cit.; A. Leander 2010, “Staging International Relations Practicing Bourdieu’s Sociology,” op.cit.; A. Leander 2009, *Habitus and Field*, op.cit. 4.

¹⁷² P. Jenkins 2002, ibid. 70.

¹⁷³ P. Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, op.cit. 61.

¹⁷⁴ P. Bourdieu 1990, *The Logic of Practice*, 20.

Being an illusion, social reality is not fixed and not always true. Bourdieu's doxa concept exhibits here similarities with Goffman's social life as a theatre metaphor:¹⁷⁵ although policy may create history and define the standing in U.S.-Sino relations, policy-researchers cannot choose their own circumstances. This alludes clearly to the importance, and relevance, of manoeuvring this study at the sociological meso-level and incorporating overarching frameworks in this study as macro-structures. Moreover, it underscores practice as an art of necessary improvisation, as it does not exist a rule for every situation a policy-researcher encounters in social life – nor is there time to have subjective expectations for every conceivable situation ('objective probability') in routine social life. Thus, actors improvise.¹⁷⁶ Doxa is also pivotal in grasping the 'logic of practice' and illuminate the links to reflexivity due to knowledgability is derived from experience.¹⁷⁷

Doxa, therefore, I find particularly relevant for examining the social construction of 'American-ness' on the one hand, and 'China' as habitus in interplay. Doxa becomes *visible* in the Self/Other constellation – 'American-ness' as doxa – *through* China as the Other, traceable in policy-researchers' narratives which serve as cultural sites.¹⁷⁸ This transpires because both the real as well as the thought world are structured inseparable and acknowledged as self-evident.¹⁷⁹ This is especially relevant when

¹⁷⁵ E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre (New York: Anchor Books, 1959).

¹⁷⁶ See P. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 70-71.

¹⁷⁷ J.F. Myles 2004, "From Doxa o Experience: Issues in Bourdieu's Adoption of Husserlian Phenomenology," *Theory, Culture and Society* 21(2) (2004):102.

¹⁷⁸ See C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma and M. Postone, *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993): 167.

¹⁷⁹ Calhoun, LiPuma and Postone 1993, ibid. 179.

investigating policy-researchers, because their scholarly doxa is heavily ingrained through instituted practices in language and educational systems.¹⁸⁰

2.2.1.4 Field

‘Field’ is a twin concept of ‘habitus’,¹⁸¹ and can be understood as a ‘social space’ with an embodied spatial element and its own logic shaping action.¹⁸² Bourdieu defined the concept of field in many different ways, for example – in an interview with one of his prominent protégées (Loïc Wacquant):¹⁸³

I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents, or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relations to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). Each field presupposes, and generates by its very functioning, the belief in the value of the stakes it offers.

This “structuring structure” shapes a human’s conduct and is formed based on accumulated experiences across fields.¹⁸⁴ Thus, there exist multiple fields including the ‘meta-field’,¹⁸⁵ which has the most power to shape other fields – a “structural homology”.¹⁸⁶ The structured system reflects that policy-researchers and institutions such as think tanks possess different social positions where power relations make up the internal structure of the field. This also shows the interrelationship with the

¹⁸⁰ P. Bourdieu & L.J.D. Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 169-170.

¹⁸¹ A. Leander 2009, op.cit. 8.

¹⁸² P. Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field,” *Sociological Theory* 12(1) (1994): 1-18.

¹⁸³ L.D. Wacquant, “Toward a Reflexive Sociology,” *Sociological Theory* (1979): 39.

¹⁸⁴ A. Leander 2009, “Habitus and Field,” *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ A. Leander, “The ‘Realpolitik of Reason’: Thinking International Relations through Fields, Habitus and Practice” (Working paper no. 83, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, 2006), 2-27.

¹⁸⁶ Bourdieu 1994, op.cit.; Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit. 232; Swartz 2008, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis”, op.cit. 130.

concept of capital. A field configures social roles, positions of agents (including institutions) and imposing structures, in addition to historical processes leading to giving different roles.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, these fields have rules where the important “stake of stakes” relates to monopolising the right to define “the legitimate principles of the field”.¹⁸⁸ The social field of think tanks – and the China policy-research environment specifically, is defined by the particular “stakes at stake”.¹⁸⁹ There is always a struggle about the stakes (a field of struggles, by definition)¹⁹⁰, where policy-researchers would pursue maintaining or improving their positions of exercising the above right to define ‘legitimate principles’.

In this thesis, Chapter Four will particularly engage with the perspective of think tanks and the China policy-research environment being a social field. Furthermore, the aforesaid chapter reflects the sociological meso-level positioning of this study. This is highly relevant considering the ‘field’ is a meso-level concept itself where individuals conduct actions in the social world in which they are embedded. It is therefore natural to position this study in its entirety at the sociological meso-level. Consequently, the inclusion of the overarching frameworks is helpful and relevant. This is a result of the importance to understand the relationship between the field in question and the meta-field – or ‘field of power’ (politics) which distributes hierachal power relations and thus structuring all other fields.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ W.F. Hanks, “Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34(1) (2005): 67-83; R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 85.

¹⁸⁸ Bourdieu 1991, op.cit.

¹⁸⁹ R. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 84-85.

¹⁹⁰ R. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 85.

¹⁹¹ R. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 86.

Bourdieu emphasised that “to think in terms of field is to *think relationally*.¹⁹² Indeed, in such thinking, social relations are at the core.¹⁹³ Within the context of the underlying enterprise of this study (i.e. the *Bourdiesuan* sociological ‘turn’ of IR research), the aspect of relationality is an important one and serves as an area of potential theoretical advancement.¹⁹⁴ The concept of field is entwined with the remaining “thinking tools” in Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Habitus and field are integral: A habitus is only in play with a field, thus, generated practices will vary depending on the nature of the field.¹⁹⁵ The commonalities between habitus and the stakes in the field equates to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘capital’ which is competed about in the particular field¹⁹⁶ – an economic metaphor which I shall present in the subsequent sub-section below. The boundaries of the field are not fixed – but rather transforming. This elevates the relevance of employing ethnography as the research strategy as such boundaries can only be determined by empirical research. The locations of such boundaries are warranted where the fields of policy-researchers cease to impinge on their practices.¹⁹⁷ Their behaviour is acted in accordance with the habitus of the field. It served as one of Bourdieu’s responses to the critique of alleged determinism.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² L.D. Wacquant 1979, “Toward a Reflexive Sociology,” *ibid.* 39.

¹⁹³ R. Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 84.

¹⁹⁴ This was propagated by Swartz (2008, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” *ibid.*).

¹⁹⁵ Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 82.

¹⁹⁶ Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 86.

¹⁹⁷ Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 85, 89.

¹⁹⁸ Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, po.cit.116.

2.2.1.5 Capital

Habitus partly constitutes *capital*, the effective power based on what resources the agent possesses.¹⁹⁹ This is the predominant focus in my approach to this “thinking tool” as opposed to Bourdieu’s meta-theoretical work where capital is utilised to understand a society’s class structure as a model.²⁰⁰ Capital itself comes in different consolidations, as goods or resources, which are at stake in a field. On a few occasions, Bourdieu highlights ‘political capital’ which indicates a variation of social capital as “the source for observable differences in patterns of consumption and lifestyles”.²⁰¹ It can be either delegated or be individual which would cease to exist with the disappearance of the person holding this institutionalised power.²⁰² The position in the field depends on an actor’s relationship to the type of capital being valued in the particular field (their ‘objective definition’).²⁰³

Social capital entails valued relationship networks with significant counterparts, which Bourdieu defined as:²⁰⁴

Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.²⁰⁵

The cultural form may relate to competence or legitimate knowledge in an area of practice deemed to be of social value.²⁰⁶ Albeit being an economic metaphor, the

¹⁹⁹ J.J. Sallaz & Zavisca 2007, “Bourdieu in American Sociology, 1980-2004,” op.cit.

²⁰⁰ H. Joas & W. Knöbl 2009, *Social Theory*, op.cit. 388.

²⁰¹ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction.: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002b), 16.

²⁰² D. Swartz & V.L. Zolberg (eds.), *Bourdieu: influence, critique, elaboration* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004): 322.

²⁰³ R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 85.

²⁰⁴ P. Jenkins 2002, ibid. 85.

²⁰⁵ P. Bourdieu & L.J.D. Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 119; P. Bourdieu, P. Bourdieu, “The forms of capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. trans. Richard Nice (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241-258.

usage of capital seems not to follow this trail of thoughts. In Bourdieu's work on education, cultural capital is not transacted in a monetary way: when a think tank or policy-researcher has exercised its cultural capital it does not necessarily disappear. As long as there is a struggle about it, cultural capital can be bestowed upon others or itself in future actions.²⁰⁷ Cultural capital can also be institutionalised within institutions.²⁰⁸

Economic capital takes form as monetary and wealth.²⁰⁹ Expanding on the above notion of cultural capital being transferred to younger generations, in *Distinction*, Bourdieu employs Weber's social stratification model which hints of capital being part of a zero-sum game.²¹⁰ Less evident in Bourdieu's thinking, is the notion of linguistic capital – that words *do* have power. When possessing the dominant language, if recognised, signals a speaker's distinction (and the profit produced by discourse).

Symbolic capital is deemed a critical source of power (for example honour or prestige).²¹¹

Symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it.²¹²

²⁰⁶ R. Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 85.

²⁰⁷ R. Jenkins 2002, ibid. 112.

²⁰⁸ P. Bourdieu & J-C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: SAGE, 1977).

²⁰⁹ Bourdieu also used ownerships of homes and luxury cars, and income as indicators when approaching economic capital as in statistical work (see R. Jenkins 2002, ibid., 140).

²¹⁰ See R. Jenkins 2002, ibid., 138.

²¹¹ Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, ibid.; J.J. Sallaz & J. Zavisca 2007, "Bourdieu in American Sociology, 1980-2004," op.cit.; R. Stones, "Habitus," in *Sociology: Key Concepts*, ed. J. Scott (London: Routledge, 2006), 79-82; R. Jenkins 2002, ibid., 85.

²¹² P. Bourdieu 1991, *Language and symbolic power*, op.cit. 164.

This symbolic power, or symbolic violence, is in play if recognised by others and as a result of when “power or capital becomes symbolic, and exerts a specific effect of domination, which I call symbolic power or symbolic violence (...).”²¹³ If unequal distribution of any capital is judged legitimate, the agent possesses symbolic capital.²¹⁴ This is a central point as capital also constitutes the stake which actors in the field constantly struggle about. Capital can be accumulated with the outlook of securing a better position and advancing interests in the field – or several fields. Only participants, through their habitus, can understand the objective structures of the field. Thus, outsiders may not fully understand the nature of it, which results in that strategies for success employed in one field, may work less effectively in another (i.e. less transposable).²¹⁵ This is also a crucial reminder about the importance of a reflexive approach as the researcher.

The link to the field is signalled by that the chances for winning the stake in the (aforesaid metaphor) ‘game’ are defined by those agents controlling the various forms of capital, in addition to not only being a ‘field of struggle’ and for “power amongst the holders of different forms of power”.²¹⁶ Collectively, the different forms of capital make up social resources which warrant actors’ social positions.²¹⁷ They can be distinguished, however, by their reducibility to assist disguising the economic aspects during transmissions where there is also a risk for a loss.²¹⁸ Cultural and social forms of capital can only be derived from “root capital”, herein economic capital – but at a cost: to produce the relevant and effective power in the given

²¹³ P. Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, op.cit. 111.

²¹⁴ J.J. Sallaz and J. Zavisca 2007, op.cit.

²¹⁵ P. Jackson 2008, “Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘cultural turn’ and the practice of international history,” op.cit.

²¹⁶ Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 79.

²¹⁷ P. Bourdieu 1986, “The forms of capital,” op.cit. 241-258.

²¹⁸ P. Bourdieu 1986, “The Forms of Capital,” op.cit. 54-55.

field.²¹⁹ Social and cultural capital carries also the faculty of convertibility on certain conditions – the cultural form into economic capital institutionalised as educational qualifications, and social capital convertible into the economic form institutionalised as a title of nobility.²²⁰

Bourdieu employed capital in various forms predominantly in regard to class. In this study, however, I am deploying these key concepts as “thinking tools” rather than an analysis of ‘class’.

2.2.1.6 Interests and strategies

Interests and strategies make up the practice theory, but are not used in an economicistic, rationalist, or utilitarian form but rather gives agency. This must be understood in the interrelationship between habitus, field, and capital – socially constituted in a dialect with a field. Strategies relate to how policy-researchers in think tanks would pursue such interests,²²¹ in an ‘organising framework of cultural dispositions (the habitus)’ rather than understanding social practice based on rules which govern and/or produce behaviour.²²² This stance is also intertwined with Bourdieu’s epistemological critique of social knowledge (moving beyond Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist anthropology) which emerged during his early ethnographic studies of Berber peasantries in Algeria.²²³ This is theoretical advancement at its best, and aligned with the “bottom-up” process in ethnographic research: where ethnographic field-research not only provided him with access to a more credible

²¹⁹ P. Bourdieu 1986, *ibid.* 53-54.

²²⁰ P. Bourdieu 1986, *ibid.* 47.

²²¹ P. Bourdieu 1990a, *op.cit.* 88; M. Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, *op.cit.*

²²² R. Jenkins 2002, *op.cit.* 39

²²³ R. Jenkins 2002, *op.cit.* 39, 45-65; Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 30-71; Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, *op.cit.*, 162-199.

‘social reality’ of his research subjects, but also undoubtedly laying the foundation of Bourdieu’s entire social theoretical enterprise.²²⁴

2.3 Overarching frameworks

This section highlights two overarching dynamics argued to be particularly influential in terms of achieving understanding of policy-researchers’ social constructions: U.S.-Sino relations as well as think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon as two overlapping Bourdieusian fields featuring separate “stakes at stake”.²²⁵ These frameworks are engaged with throughout the thesis when appropriate and relevant. In essence, these subjectively selected frameworks constitute the situational context/structure element at the sociological meso-level.²²⁶

The below sub-sections are by no means intended to be a review of the actual *literature* on U.S.-Sino relations and U.S. think tanks – but, rather, to briefly highlight some main features and characteristics of the actual social phenomena.

2.3.1 U.S.-Sino relations

Arguably, U.S.-Sino relations are the most important bilateral relationship in the world.²²⁷ The Director of the East-West Centre, in Washington, DC, Satu Limaye pinpointed the strategic importance of China to the U.S. as reflected in that all governmental directories tend to be involved in any dealings with the Chinese government.²²⁸ The ‘rise of China’ (whatever that might mean to different policy-

²²⁴ See Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 41.

²²⁵ See Jenkins 2002, *ibid.* 85.

²²⁶ J.G. Bruhn & H.M. Rebach 2007, “Problem Solving at the Mesolevel,” *op.cit.*

²²⁷ A.I. Johnston & R.S. Ross (eds.), *Engaging China: the management of an emerging power* (London: Routledge, 1999); Z. Zhu, *US-China Relations in the 21st Century, Power Transition and Peace* (Routledge: London, 2006).

²²⁸ Seminar 14th May 2009, Chatham House.

researchers and their analyses and judgements), as a phenomenon and concept, reflects unprecedented prospects of a power-shift with the U.S. hegemony as well as a global shift between the West and East. It has become one of the dominant areas for discussion in the public domain²²⁹ and scholarly IR research²³⁰ – in particularly in regard to international security.²³¹ The two countries are deeply and intensely engaged with each other across a vast range of policy-areas and exceedingly interdependent. These gargantuan complexities are reflected in the very diverse research being conducted and numerous events on China on offer at DC think tanks. Moreover, the nature and direction, as perceived, more than any other contextual factor arguably have an impact on the manoeuvrability in research and work-activities for policy-researchers as well as in their potential ability to defining the topical agenda.

²²⁹ See for example the German Marshall Fund of the United States report *Global Shift – How the West Should Respond to the Rise of Asia* (June 15, 2011). Electronic version available: <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/publications/global-shift-capstone-report-released>; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 2011 Report to Congress (Nov 2011, Available: http://www.uscc.gov/annual_report/2011/annual_report_full_11.pdf.); P.I. Levy & M. Busch 2010, "The Case against a China Currency Case," *The American* (7 Oct 2010, Available: <http://www.american.com/archive/2010/october/the-case-against-a-china-currency-case>. B. Garrett, "Thinking Outside the Bilateral Box: Global Challenges and the China-U.S. Relationship," *New Atlanticist: Policy ad Analysis Blog* (2011), Available: <http://www.acus.org/trackback/46929> (29 Aug 2011); C.F. Bergsten, B. Gill, N.R. Lardy & D.J. Mitchell, "The Balance Sheet: China – What the World needs to know now about the emerging superpower," *Center for Strategic and International Studies / Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006); K. Gorden, S. Lyon, E. Paisley & S. Pool, "Rising to the Challenge A Progressive U.S. Approach to China's Innovation and Competitiveness Policies", *Science Progress* (2011), Available: <http://scienceprogress.org/2011/01/rising-to-the-challenge/>; K.G. Lieberthal, *Managing the China Challenge: How to Achieve Corporate Success in the People's Republic* (Brookings Institution Press, 2011).

²³⁰ Ramon Pacheco-Pardo, "Review article - Beyond Power Transition: Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century," op.cit.

²³¹ A. Friedberg, "Ripe for rivalry: prospects for peace in multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18(3) (1993): 5-33; A. Goldstein, "Great Expectations: interpreting China's arrival," *International Security* 22(3) (1997): 36-57; T. Luard, "China takes place on world stage" (2004).

Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3763370.stm>; G. Segal, Does China Matter?," *Foreign Affairs* 78(5) (1999): 24-36; D. Shambaugh, "China's military views the world: ambivalent security," *International Security* 24(3) (1999): 52-79; D. Roy, "Restructuring foreign and defence policy: the People's Republic of China," in *Asia-Pacific in the new world disorder*, eds. A. McGrew & C. Brook (Bath: Routledge, 1998), 137-157.

By drawing upon secondary literature – in addition to surveying research and policy profiles of China policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks – I shall highlight examples of the array of issues which they frequently engage with.²³² For example, in the financial sphere, in a Congressional hearing (15 Sep 2011), Bergsten of the Peterson Institute elucidated the overshadowing issue of China undervaluing its Renminbi artificially low through intense intervention in the foreign exchange markets. Subsequently, this augments its international competitive strength as well as the trade surplus.²³³ However, think tanks are not in unison when it comes to the implications for the American job market.²³⁴ In the economic realm, Nathaniel Ahrens states in a Carnegie paper that “Indigenous innovation has become the greatest immediate source of economic friction between the United States and China”.²³⁵ This signifies Chinese stimulating domestic innovation in their procurement preferences in a protectionist fashion in order to excel upwards in the industrial value-chain.²³⁶ It is of concern at the state-to-state level, being one of the key issues on the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue talks in May of 2010.²³⁷ In terms of security issues, there are several areas which prevail within

²³² Such a list can by no means be exhausting. Furthermore, presenting them as categories relates mostly to depicting main areas but without implying that the boundaries of this categorisation are fixed or that the issues do not traverse several of them. Finally, this brief highlight of focus-areas relate predominantly to policy-researchers within think tanks and not the academe. I am also deliberately not dwelling into a discussion of what tend not to be focused on (normatively) in their policy-research, as this will be addressed in the analysis chapters.

²³³ Correcting the Chinese Exchange Rate (Congressional Testimony). Available: <http://www.iie.com/publications/testimony/bergsten20100915.pdf>, 1, 3-4.

²³⁴ See for example Adam Hersh of the Center of American Progress, “China’s Currency Problem Isn’t the Only Problem The United States Needs to Invest to Remain Globally Competitive,” Available: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/china_currency.html.

²³⁵ 25% of respondents in a survey conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce reported that this hurt their business (The American Chamber of Commerce, People’s Republic of China, *China’s Business Climate Survey, 2011*, March 19, 2011. Available: <http://www.amchamchina.org/upload/cmsfile/2011/03/22/efb2ab9d3806269fc343f640cb33baf9.pdf>.

²³⁶ Nathaniel Ahrens (July 2010), ‘Innovation and the Visible Hand: China, Indigenous Innovation, and the Role of Government Procurement’, Available: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/07/07/innovation-and-visible-hand-china-indigenous-innovation-and-role-of-government-procurement/jd>.

²³⁷ Dieter Ernst, “A Smart Response to China’s ‘Indigenous Innovation’ Policies,” (May 21, 2010), Available: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/news-center/east-west-wire/a-smart-response-to-chinas-indigenous-innovation-policies>.

policy-communities and public discourses. This includes, for example, the meaning of the expansion and modernisation of the Chinese military,²³⁸ China's intentions and behaviour in Mainland-Taiwan relations as well as the South-China Sea,²³⁹ and cyber-security.²⁴⁰ Prominently on the agenda, are also technology and energy issues,²⁴¹ environmental concerns,²⁴² and human rights issues and democracy.²⁴³

Having touched very briefly on some of the key issues in U.S.-Sino relations (and a very limited list of sources – predominantly published by my interviewees in the field), such surroundings also play an evident role in the U.S. domestic political debate – often heatedly debated within think tanks as well as policy-communities more broadly. This relates to sensitive and politicised debates evolving in the U.S. – for example if America is declining – linked with U.S. soft power and its humongous

²³⁸ K. Crane, R. Cliff, E.S. Medeiros, J.C. Mulvenon & W.H. Overholt, *Modernizing China's Military: Opportunities and Constraints* (RAND Corporation, 2005). Available: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG260-1.pdf; J. Dobbins, D.C. Gompert, D.A. Shlapak & A. Scobell, *Conflict with China: Prospects, Consequences, and Strategies for Deterrence*, RAND Corporation (2011). Available: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2011/RAND_OP344.sum.pdf; D. Blumenthal & M. Mazza, "A One-Sided Arms Race: China's military ambitions are boundless," *The Weekly Standard*, January 24, 2011; P.W. Singer, "Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Chinese Aircraft Carrier?" *The Washington Examiner*, July 28, 2009; S. Chen & J. Feffer, "China's Military Spending: Soft Rise or Hard Threat?" *Asian Perspectives* 33(4) (2009): 47-67; J. Logan, "F-16 Deal Is an Emblem of Larger Problem," *China-US Focus*, October 8, 2011.

²³⁹ A.D. Romberg, "Cross-Strait Relations: Setting the Stage for 2012," *China Leadership Monitor* 34 (2011); D. Roy, "Taiwan Strait Thaw Likely Not Permanent," *The Honolulu Advertiser* November 8, 2009; W. Lohman, "Defrost the U.S.-Taiwan Relationship," *WebMemo*, *The Heritage Foundation*, March 1, 2011; B.S. Glaser, "Tensions Flare in the South China Sea," *South China Sea Papers* (2011), Available: <http://csis.org/publication/tensions-flare-south-china-sea>; S. Cropsey, "Anchors Away: American Sea Power in Dry Dock," *World Affairs* January/February, 2011.

²⁴⁰ "China and Cyber Security," Event, April 28, 2010, *The Heritage Foundation*, Available: <http://www.heritage.org/events/2010/04/china-and-cybersecurity?query=China+and+Cyber+Security>.

²⁴¹ K.J. Tu, "A Warning for China's Nuclear Sector," *China Dialogue*, August 10, 2011.

²⁴² J.L. Turner, "Small Government, Big (Green?) Society: Emerging Partnerships to Solve China's Environmental Problems," *Harvard Asian Quarterly* (2004) and "Cultivating Environmental NGO-Business Partnerships in China," *China Business Review*, November, 2003; X. Tan, "Clean technology R&D and innovation in emerging countries—Experience from China," *Energy Policy* 38(6) (2010): 2916-2926.

²⁴³ L.C. Greve, Democratic China and the Future of Tibet, Conference, 2011, Available: [http://www.ned.org/about/staff/louisa-greve/democratic-development-in-the-tibetan-exile-community-progress-opportunity- \(9 Jul\)](http://www.ned.org/about/staff/louisa-greve/democratic-development-in-the-tibetan-exile-community-progress-opportunity- (9 Jul)).

budget deficit,²⁴⁴ the plausibility of job losses to China which became a mantra in the last mid-term election, in addition to Chinese direct foreign investment into the U.S.²⁴⁵

2.3.2 Think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon

The varied nature of think tanks and the relations between them also represent a central and influential contextuality regarding what policy-researchers think about China – as well as *how* they think and the China-related work they engage with.

Think tanks, as with most other organisations, do not operate in isolation. Hence, factors such as the media cycle, domestic political agenda, organisational factors, and the very individuals themselves are all in concomitant play. As organisations, think tanks have grown rapidly during the last three decades and have now become a global phenomenon with a modus operandi increasingly transnational in nature.²⁴⁶

According to prolific writers in the area, Abelson and McGann, the evolvement of U.S. think tanks reflects different generations differentiated by key markers such as the degree of policy-advocacy focus, specialisation, ideological foundation as well as

²⁴⁴ See M. Fullilove n.d., "Smart Power: Exaggerating America's decline," *Opinion Editorial*, *The New York Times*, Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/17/opinion/17ht-edfullilove.4.13773273.html>; C. Shulong & C. Songchuan, "Is America Declining?", *Brookings Northeast Asia Commentary* 54 (2011), Available: http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1109_america_declining_chu.aspx; F. Zakaria, "Are America's Best Days Behind Us?" *Time Magazine US*, March 3, 2011, Available: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2056723,00.html>; P. Buchanan, "Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025?" *Thomas Dunne Books* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011).

²⁴⁵ D.H. Rosen & T. Hanemann, "An American Open Door?: Maximising the Benefits of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment," *Special Report*, *Asia Society*, May, 2011, Available: <http://asiasociety.org/policy/center-us-china-relations/american-open-door>; Chinese Foreign Direct Investment: Is It a Threat to the United States, Domestically or Globally? (with Daniel Rosen, Derek Scissors, Stapleton Roy), Webcast (event), Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, 21 June 2011, Available: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/chinese-foreign-direct-investment-it-threat-to-the-united-states-domestically-or-globally>.

²⁴⁶ D. Stone & M. Garnett 1998, 6; D. Stone, "Global Knowledge and Advocacy Networks," *Global Networks* 2(1) (2002), 5; Stone & Denham 2004, 34; D.E. Abelson, "Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: An Historical Perspective," *Electronic Journal of the US Department of State* 7(3) (2002): 9.

donors' preferences.²⁴⁷ The American context has proved particularly fertile for the growth of think tanks, contemplating on the

(...) highly decentralized nature of the American political system, combined with the lack of strict party discipline and the large infusion of funds from philanthropic foundations, have contributed greatly to the proliferation of think tanks in the past quarter-century.²⁴⁸

Think tanks, also known as policy research institutions,²⁴⁹ have become prominent actors in policy processes in several countries.²⁵⁰ This is particularly the case with the U.S. – the global capital of think tanks heavily ingrained in the political consciousness, that when posing the question of its relevance to Mr Samuel Sherraden of the New American Foundation – it became a quintessential question of its being and his livelihood.²⁵¹ In 2009, Washington, DC, was housing nearly a quarter (393, 22%) of the country's total number of think tanks, i.e. 1815.²⁵²

Various precursors of the contemporary form of think tanks have emerged since the late nineteenth century, such as the Boston Conclave of 1865 – an assemblage of amateurs advocating for public health and sanitation in reforms of prisons, insane asylums, orphanages, and schools.²⁵³ Moreover, the Institutes of International Affairs (IIA) evolved in the early 1920s in the aftermath after the First World War taking on an ad-hoc state role in liaising “unofficially” with counterparts in sensitive issues

²⁴⁷ According to Abelson 2002, “Do Think Tanks Matter? Assessing the Impact of Public Policy Institutes,” McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal) and McGann (McGann, JG 2009, The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2008, Available from: <http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/GlobalGoToThinkTanks2008.pdf>, 11), we have witnessed four to five waves of think tanks.

²⁴⁸ D.E. Abelson 2002, “Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy,” op.cit. 9.

²⁴⁹ Stone and Garnett 1998, 1. Also known as ‘independent public research policy organizations’ (McGann 2010, 11). See Stone (2007) for a discussion concerning ‘meanings’ of the term ‘think tanks’.

²⁵⁰ D. Stone and M. Garnett 1998, 1.

²⁵¹ Interview, Mr Samuel Sherradan.

²⁵² McGann 2010, op.cit. 15, 18.

²⁵³ J.A. Smith 1991, “The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and The Rise of the New Policy Elite,” 24-25.

abroad as well as assisting their nation's foreign policy elites in rallying the public behind various governmental policy-initiatives.²⁵⁴ Higgott and Stone highlight the paramount importance of this period where the Chatham House and Council for Foreign Affairs (established in the UK and the U.S. in 1920 and 1921, respectively),²⁵⁵ for the inspiration for forming IIAs as a world-wide movement.²⁵⁶ Also in the early 1900s, the academic-based pure policy-research establishments were pushed forward by leading industrialists and philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and Robert Brookings.²⁵⁷ It is, thus, a misconception that think tanks represent a new phenomenon – they have, rather, taken new forms and identities.²⁵⁸

Illuminating this development provides important understanding of the workings of this socio-political phenomenon as contextuality. Prominent scholars portray the development of think tanks as evolving in multiple ‘waves’ – often as a response to international upheavals in the political and economic environment. Different scholars typologies think tanks into different waves, but can broadly be depicted as follows: the first wave evolved in the early 1900s encompassing the developments explicated above, which;

(...) helped build and maintain an informed domestic constituency for global engagement, keeping the internationalist flame flickering during the years between the American repudiation of the League of Nations and the coming of the Second World War.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ I. Parmar, “Institutes of international affairs: their roles in foreign policy-making, opinion mobilization and unofficial diplomacy,” in eds. D. Stone & Denham (2002), 19.

²⁵⁵ R. Higgott & D. Stone, “The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the USA,” *Review of International Studies* 20(1) (1994): 15-34.

²⁵⁶ Parmar, *ibid.* 21.

²⁵⁷ Abelson 2002, “Do Think Tanks Matter?” op.cit. 11-12.

²⁵⁸ D. Stone, *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process* (London: Frank Cass, 1996a), 26.

²⁵⁹ R. Haass, “Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Policy-Maker’s Perspective,” *An Electronic Journal of the US Department of State* 7(3) (2002): 5-6.

The focus on applying scientific expertise to engage with an array of policy issues corresponds well with Kent Weaver's definition on think tanks: "universities without students".²⁶⁰ The second wave reflects the bi-polar strategic environment emerging after the Second World War where American policy-makers sought independent advice to an even greater extent. RAND Corporation, government contractors funded by government departments and agencies, signals a new generation of think tanks. The Hudson Institute and the War on Poverty are other examples (post-Vietnam war).²⁶¹ The third wave sets the scene for advocacy think tanks – this epoch witnessed the biggest increase in specialised and ideologised-based think tanks²⁶² – also accounting for two-thirds of the current flora of think tanks.²⁶³ The Heritage Foundation, CATO and the Center for International and Strategic Studies serve as prominent examples. According to Abelson, a fourth wave appears to revolve around legacy-based think tanks of former presidents, such as the Carter Center in Atlanta and Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom in Washington, DC.²⁶⁴

2.4 Research Framework

This section comprises various sub-sections explaining the methodological effort conducted as part of this study. This entails consolidating the research design, i.e. research philosophical underpinnings, research strategy, research methods, in addition to field-research matters. The research framework stipulates the body of practices concerning how data has been collected in order to answer the overarching

²⁶⁰ R.K. Weaver, "Changing World of Think Tanks," *PS: Political Science and Politics* September 22(3) (1989), 563-578.

²⁶¹ D.E. Abelson 2002, "Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy," op.cit. 10-11.

²⁶² McGann 2008, 11

²⁶³ McGann, J.G. "Think Tanks and the Transnationalization of Foreign Policy," *An Electronic Journal of the US Department of State* 7(3) (2002): 14.

²⁶⁴ D.E. Abelson 2002, "Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy," ibid. 11.

research question in the present study. This sub-section is strongly linked with the preceding section through the deployment of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Bourdieu adamantly encouraged his readers to avoid scholastic theorising and rather approach his texts as methods.²⁶⁵ Thus, the operationalisation of his conceptual "thinking tools" should be considered as a method. Thus, this bridges sections one and two in this chapter together – and consequently between theory and methods. In fact, Bourdieu propagated that theory, epistemological reflections, and empirical research operates in tandem²⁶⁶ – in order to avoid a 'scholastic fallacy' of not being capable to reflect social reality.²⁶⁷

The research framework is also closely linked with the other theoretical aspects featuring in the first chapter as well as the analysis chapters in this thesis through the aim of "methodological fit", i.e. when the philosophical underpinning of the study exhibits congruency between all components within the research framework, and between the research framework and its ontological and epistemological foundations.²⁶⁸ Researching a particular phenomenon warrants to employ the most suitable empirical research techniques.²⁶⁹ In the deliberations below, I am also striving to achieve transparency and self-reflexivity. The former relates to an open deliberation seeking accountability for decisions made relating to methodology throughout the thesis. This allows readers to evaluate the chosen premise and promulgated findings on my part as the researcher.

²⁶⁵ N. Karakayli, "Reading Bourdieu with Adorno: the limits of critical theory and reflexive sociology," *Sociology* 38(3) (2004): 352.

²⁶⁶ R. Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit.

²⁶⁷ P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

²⁶⁸ A.C. Edmondson & S.E. McManus, "Methodological fit in management field research," *Academy of Management Review* 32(4) (2007): 1155-1179; T. Zalan & G. Lewis 2004, "Writing About Methods in Qualitative Research," op.cit.

²⁶⁹ P. Corbetta, *Social research: theory, methods and techniques* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2003).

In terms of self-reflexivity, awareness of my relationships with the research problem and research subjects may contribute to enhancing my awareness of potential biases in how I analyse obtained data. The exercise of “reflexive sociology” is a focal point in Bourdieu’s universe.²⁷⁰ Thus, I shall commit to a “systematic exploration of the unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought”²⁷¹ – ‘epistemic reflexivity’ beyond “reflection *of* the subject *on* the subject”.²⁷² In concert, such efforts assist in enhancing the rigorous of the research through establishing a stronger fundament for internal validity, credibility, and trustworthiness that exercise the utmost importance in ethnographic research.²⁷³ This is vital in interpretivist research because the researcher’s subjectivity is inevitably integral to knowledge-production and thus performing as an ‘instrument of analysis’.²⁷⁴

2.4.1 The think tanks: selection criteria

The decision to design the study as an inquiry into the DC think tank landscape (in general) and DC think tank experts conducting China-related policy-research/China policy-research community (specifically), is based on the following assumptions and premises. First, the study endeavours to investigate contrasting narratives. Hence, the

²⁷⁰ See Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 36, op.cit. This is termed ‘theory of intellectual practice’.

²⁷¹ P. Bourdieu, “Lecon sur la lecon,” in *In Other Words* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1982), 10.

²⁷² Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, *ibid.* 40.

²⁷³ See R.R. Sinkovics, E. Penz & P.N. Ghauri, “Enhancing the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research in International Business,” *Management International Review* 48(6) (2008): 689-714.

²⁷⁴ P.R. Sanday, “The Ethnographic Paradigm(s),” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24(4) (1979): 527-538. See A.B. Thomas, *Research skills: For management studies* (London: Routledge, 2004); J. McAuley, *Ethnography*, in *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research*, eds. R. Thorpe & R. Holt (London: Sage, 2008), 89-91; J.D. Brewer, *Ethnography* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000); J. Clifford & G. Marcus, *Writing Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); J. van Maanen, *Qualitative Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983); P. Atkinson, *The Ethnographic Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1990); M. Hammersley, *What's Wrong with Ethnography* (London: Routledge, 1992); M. Hammersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research* (London: Longman, 1990); N.K. Denzin, *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (London: Sage Publications, 1997); M. Hammersley & P. Atkinson, *Ethnography* (London: Routledge, 2007); N. Adler, “A typology of management studies involving culture,” *Journal of International Business Studies* 2(2) (1983): 29-47.

think tanks have been carefully selected in order to reflect divergent positions on the domestic U.S. political and ideological spectrum. It is widely recognised in academic and journalistic accounts that think tanks exhibit ideological footholds, palpable in their practice in policy-networks/communities,²⁷⁵ perceptions in the political milieu, as well as think tanks' own mission-statements. According to Richardson, think tanks seek relevant policy-communities in order to disseminate their ideas into policy-debates.²⁷⁶ As an example, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is known for its (neo) conservative penchants, whereas Brookings is associated with a centre(-left) position as well as being more neutral and academic inclined.²⁷⁷

Second, on a methodological note, I was not granted sufficient access to a think tank in order to investigate them from “the inside” longitudinally and to carry out multiple interviews with several policy-researchers within a particular organisation. It should here be mentioned that many think tanks have a limited number of individuals conducting China-related policy-research.²⁷⁸ Furthermore, the data obtained in the field also warrants such an approach. For example, research subjects themselves would often contemplate and talk about some kind of ‘community’ amongst policy-researchers conducting China-related work and research. This was

²⁷⁵ Policy-communities can be defined as “all actors or potential actors who share a common ‘policy focus’ and who, over time, succeed in shaping policy” (Stone 2004, 34-35; see J. Richardson, “Government, Interest Groups and Policy Change,” *Political Studies* 48(5) (2000): 1006-1025).

²⁷⁶ Richardson, *ibid.*

²⁷⁷ D.E. Abelson 2002, “Do Think Tanks Matter?” op.cit.; D.E. Abelson 1998, “Think tanks in the United States,” in *Think tanks across nations*, eds. D. Stone, A. Denham & M. Garnett (Manchester: University Press, 1998); AEI 2009 Annual Report, 2010. Available from: <http://www.aei.org/docLib/2009-Annual-Report.pdf>, 1; S. Croft, *Culture, Crisis and America’s War on Terror* (Cambridge: University Press, 2006); J.G. McGann, *The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2009* (2010), Available from: <http://www.onu.unu.edu/2009%20Global%20Go%20To%20Think%20Rankings%20%28TT%20Index%29%20last%20version.pdf>; J.G. McGann 2009, *The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2008*, op.cit.; S. Schifferes, *Battle of the Washington think tanks* (2003), Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2914969.stm>; *Quality. Independence, Impact, 2010*, Available from: <http://www.brookings.edu/about.aspx>.

²⁷⁸ Such as Mr Alan D. Romberg at the Stimson Center, their only China-specialist (but indeed a very rigorous one – particularly in Taiwan and Cross-Strait issues).

further manifested in their practices – for example the frequent engagement between them and appearances at think tank China events.

Third, the think tanks are comparable in the following ways: The sheer volume of included think tanks is ranked amongst the ten or 30 most influential think tanks in the U.S. as well as globally.²⁷⁹ Moreover, all think tanks are conducting China-specific policy-research with extensive networking, including across country borders.²⁸⁰ In addition, research philosophically, the selected think tanks also reflect the complexities and nuances existing in the “world out there” and how this is perceived by research subjects, including: on the organisational/individual level – strongly ideologised (for example, Heritage Foundation), conservative (for example, American Enterprise Institute), “centrist” (for example, Brookings, Atlantic Council) centre-right (for example, Hudson), libertarian (for example, Cato), centre-left (for example, Center for American Progress), academically inclined (for example, SAIS John Hopkins University), “leftist” (for example, Institute for Policy Studies), congress supported (for example, US Institute for Peace and Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars), highly ranked (the aforementioned and for example New America Foundation) and lower ranked (for example, American Council for Foreign Policies), with multiple overseas offices (for example, Carnegie) or domestic (for example, Asia Society), with activist and/or programmes seeking change on the ground (for example, National Endowment for Democracy, US Institute for Peace, Institute for Policy Studies), reputation of vast governmental

²⁷⁹ See McGann 2010, 2009, op.cit.

²⁸⁰ ‘Specific’, here, denotes to research about China and not for example just listing the country in their work when discussing a different topic. Moreover, the term also implies all policy-researchers doing research on China – many to a very high extent and some to a lower degree – but nevertheless having listed ‘China’ as an area of expertise or specialisation in their publicly available research profiles.

contacts (for example, Center for Strategic and International Studies), area-specialist think tanks (for example, East-West Center), government-based (for example, RAND, Institute for National Security Studies), policy-research being a secondary activity (for example, National Endowment for Democracy), and recently established (for example, Stimson).

Contemplating on the individual/organisational level – the pool of interviews represents both sexes, holding various positions in the hierarchy from Vice Presidents to Programme Assistants, possessing different educational backgrounds/specialisations (such as, economists, human rights, environment, strategy, security/military, U.S.-Sino relations generalists, Taiwan-specialist, naval and maritime issues), policy-researchers conducting various degrees of policy-research relating to China (ranging from “China-hands” to secondary focus), different nationalities (including Norway, Canada, New Zealand, Dutch/American, French/British) and cultural backgrounds (Asian-American and dual citizenships), being affiliated with different sectors (e.g. academia, private sector, State Department, and the media), as well as an approximately 50-year age variance.

2.4.1.1 ‘Unit of Analysis’ (UoA)

According to Craig and Douglas, it is particularly important to delimit the ‘Unit of Analysis’ (UoA) in qualitative research.²⁸¹ I am drawing upon the following congruent definitions: “The phenomenon under study, about which data is collected

²⁸¹ P. Ghauri & K. Grønhaug, *Research Methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide* (Essex: Prentice Hall, 2005).

and analysed”,²⁸² and “... objects (...) focus of attention”.²⁸³ The research subjects were selected based on the following “characteristics”: individuals affiliated with think tanks based in Washington, DC²⁸⁴ (their predominant area of work),²⁸⁵ a degree of expertise (at least self-proclaimed) in regard to conducting China-related policy-research, policy-advocacy and/or policy-advice, in addition to any nationality and cultural background(s). Moreover, secondary data will be collected from contextual sources in order to prevent having to rely on self-referential accounts only (for example, the media, private sector, as well as the academe). The contextuality of the research subjects is also pivotal to grasp in order to understand impactful cultural structures.

2.4.1.2 Sampling and sampling “size”

The non-probability sampling approach is derived from the above ‘Unit of Analysis’ (policy-researchers as individuals).²⁸⁶ ‘Purposeful sampling’ involves capturing the diversity amongst research subjects.²⁸⁷ Additionally, “snowball-sampling”, which involves securing interviewees through other respondents, was employed principally

²⁸² J. Collis & R. Hussey, *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate & Postgraduate Students*, 3rd edn (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 115.

²⁸³ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edn (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 280; A. Bryman & E. Bell, *Business research methods*, 2nd edn (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 308.

²⁸⁴ Think tanks with either a subsidiary in DC and/or head-quarter in another city but represented in the former have also been deemed appropriate to be included in this study.

²⁸⁵ This element in the research design is often known as ‘Unit of Observation’ (UoB) (see Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, *ibid.* 71.).

²⁸⁶ Probability sampling is not an option as the study does not aim to neither generalise nor statistically infer from a sample to a population. It follows, there is no sampling frame and therefore not a requirement that the characteristics of the sample units to be identical (T. May, *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*, 3rd edn (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001)). Nor would this be logical to assume when dealing with human nature which cannot be categorised taxonomically. The N-level cannot be established, even not after entering the field, as the (partly) direction of research is yet to be revealed.

²⁸⁷ P.N. Ghauri, “Designing and Conducting Case Studies in International Business Research,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari and C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004), 109-124.

for secondary data-sources.²⁸⁸ I coin the term “reflexive sample” as further delimitations depend on the direction of the research in the field (and during analysis if returning to the field). Importantly, the “sample” needs to reflect the very *nature* of evident categories (as taxonomical categories in fact do exist) as well as dynamics in the social reality which is being examined. This would be unveiled in the ongoing and simultaneously data collection and analysis during the field-work and post-field research stages of the study.

To establish a “sample size” is not required in qualitative research. This is because the aim is not to compare findings statistically with the demand to infer a conclusion. As the purpose is to understand a social phenomenon, ‘reflexive sampling’ will in fact dictate the size but only in regard to when new and relevant information can be added to the analysis. Theoretically, purposeful “sampling” will override. In this study, I have prioritised to include a pool of individuals which collectively feature the following characteristics: China-specialists, reflect the range of policy-areas (to facilitate for multivocality), the opportunity to conduct multiple-interviews (i.e. follow-up interviews), and both genders (if applicable).

2.4.2 Research philosophy (aligned with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice)

The focal point of ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ being *socially* constructed resembles a social constructionist epistemology (how we know what we know),²⁸⁹ and a

²⁸⁸ May 2001, op.cit.; C. Welch and R. Piekkari, “Crossing Language Boundaries: Qualitative Interviewing in International Business,” *Management International Review* 46(4) (2006): 417-437; Wilkinson, I. & Young, L. “Improvisation and Adaptation in International Business Research Interviews,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekka and C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004): 207-223.

²⁸⁹ I find the IR discipline to have an enigmatic relationship between these two camps as they operate on different domains of applicability, i.e. epistemology and ‘school of thought’. This discussion, however, is outside the purview of this study.

predominant subjectivist ontology (our world-views).²⁹⁰ Policy-researchers' comprehensions of 'American-ness' through their construction of 'China' transpire through social processes whereby humans make sense of their world.²⁹¹ Thus, there are multiple 'social realities' due to human beings partaking in a web of social relations.²⁹²

Bourdieu explices that social reality is composed of an ontological overlap²⁹³ – "of a set of relations and forces that impose themselves upon the agents, 'irrespective of their consciousness and will'" and features the "innumerable acts of interpretation whereby people jointly construct lines of (inter)action".²⁹⁴ Meaning-production and knowledge about social reality is produced, and re-produced, between the individuals and their social interaction with their world.²⁹⁵ Perceptions of an Other should be understood within this dialectical and dynamical interplay between agents (i.e. American policy-research experts) and structure (e.g. American culture(s)).

2.4.3 Research strategy: Ethnography

Ethnography has been employed as the research strategy (aka methodology). This choice signals the direction and a system of how to employ research methods as a

²⁹⁰ 'Predominant', here, implies a dialectical understanding of the "subjectivism versus objectivism" dichotomised ontology (i.e. either completely subjectivist or objectivist) must subside for the view that 'social reality' is constituted by dynamicity, fluidity, and ever-transforming dialectical processes which never permanently "land" on either side of the continuum (see P.L. Berger & T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Anchor, 1966); P. Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.; P. Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.).

²⁹¹ P.H. Andersen and M.A. Skaates, "Ensuring Validity in Qualitative International Business Research" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkan and C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004).

²⁹² M. Hammersley & P. Atkinson 2007, *Ethnography*, op.cit.

²⁹³ I. Marcoulatos, "John Searle and Pierre Bourdieu: Divergent Perspectives on Intentionality and Social Ontology," *Human Studies* 26(1) (2003): 67-96.

²⁹⁴ L. Wacquant, "Pierre Bourdieu," in *Key Sociological Thinkers*, 2nd edn, ed. R. Stones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 266-267; see Marcoulatos 2003, op.cit. 67-96.

²⁹⁵ See P.L. Berger & T. Luckman 1966, *The Social Construction of Reality*, op.cit.; M. Crotty 2003, *The foundations of social research*, op.cit.

means to obtain plausible answers to the overarching research question of this study.²⁹⁶ The *empiricist* Bourdieu himself very much championed the ethnographic research approach.²⁹⁷ In his view, theory and data are inseparable without the capability to separately reflect social reality.²⁹⁸ The employment of ethnography in this study resonates with the social anthropological influenced ethnographic literature. This reflects what was pinpointed earlier, that Bourdieu's operationalised conceptual "thinking tools" (as part of his Theory of Practice) is what composes the methodological effort in this study a *Bourdiesuan*-inspired ethnography. Thus, this particular organisation of the methodological approach also signals Bourdieu's social theory as method as the prevailing application of ethnography in this thesis.

Brewer defines ethnography as:²⁹⁹

(...) the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by methods of data collection which capture their social **meanings** and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.

This involves describing the cultures of the Other.³⁰⁰ A focal point in my study is the aim to describe (in parts) the culture of the policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks as the Other (from my own point of view as the researcher), which in this study revolves around the phenomenon of 'American-ness' and 'China'.

²⁹⁶ T. Zalan & G. Lewis 2004, "Writing About Methods in Qualitative Research," op.cit. See research question in Chapter One.

²⁹⁷ R. Brubaker 2002, "Ethnicity without groups," op.cit.; H. Joas & W. Knöbl 2009, *Social Theory*, op.cit.; L. Wacquant 2004, *Body and Soul*, op.cit.; P. Bourdieu & L.J.D. Wacquant 1992, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit.

²⁹⁸ P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000). He framed this as a 'scholastic fallacy'

²⁹⁹ J.D. Brewer 2000, *Ethnography*, op.cit. 10.

³⁰⁰ M.B. Miles & A.M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: an Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd edn (London: SAGE Publication, 1994).

Ethnography can take many forms. In this study, it is chiefly applied as a research process – closely linked with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and a social constructionist epistemology as the main vehicle of interrogation. Nevertheless, this study seeks to provide ‘thick description’,³⁰¹ i.e. to achieve triangulated rich knowledge of a social phenomenon by incorporating various elements of ‘the total universe of data’,³⁰² (for example, the interviewees’ oral accounts, additional sources such as academic research, policies, reports, statements, observations, other in-depth interviews, conversations, as well as American culture(s) as research subjects’ ingrained contextuality). And because the comparative element is superficial and because of the focus on *contrasting* narratives, I emphasise the argument that a polyphony of “China-narratives” uttered by think tank policy-researchers are played out as an integral part of the enmeshed contextuality.

I predominantly employ in-depth interviews as the principal data-collection method.³⁰³ In addition, I make use of participant observation at think tank events, incorporating physicality and relevant political developments in the U.S. as influential contextuality,³⁰⁴ as well as collecting written material as a means to

³⁰¹ I am not implying that I pursue the ethnographic methodological base of naïve realism (i.e. the notion, originating with Malinowski and upheld by Geertz) of the ability of the researcher to impart that there is one truth which can be told in one way, and to be a mere conduit of uncontaminated and non-biased data, non-theoretical, non-reflexive, and detached from the text and research process (Brewer 2000, op.cit. 37-55; see D. Marsh & G. Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)). ‘Thick’ in the thesis, rather, denotes ‘in-depth’ through the ability to also observe research subjects and relevant work activities with the potential to unveil unlocked information, triangulate data, and making sense of complexity.

³⁰² Miles & Huberman 1994, op.cit.

³⁰³ P.J. Buckley & M.K. Chapman, “The Use of Native Categories in Management Research,” *British Journal of Management* 8(4) (1997): 283-299; R.G. Burgess, *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research* (London: Routledge, 1984); D.S.A. Gutormsen, “Unlocking Complexity with Simplicity: A Social Constructionist take on the ‘Ethnographic Interview’ in Multilingual and Intercultural ‘Multi-site’ field research” (paper presented at Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies, 2010a): 157-165. Available from: ISBN: 978-1-906638-65-8 (CD), ed. J Esteves, IE Business School, Madrid, Spain; M. Mehmetoglu 2004, op.cit.; Spradley, JP 1979, *The Ethnographic Interview*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London; Thomas 2004, op.cit.

³⁰⁴ Brewer 2000, op.cit; Sanday 1979, op.cit.

conduct an interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis.³⁰⁵ Additional data-methods encompass personal field-notes,³⁰⁶ descriptive statistics, triangulation,³⁰⁷ self-reflexivity, and incorporating my understanding of contextual structures taking advantage of seminars, symposia and other relevant events within the wider think-tank, academic and political community in DC.³⁰⁸

2.4.3.1 Field-research

Field research is the main feature of ethnographic research – an aspect which has made social anthropology unique amongst other social science disciplines.³⁰⁹ As part of my doctoral research endeavour, I spent three months researching the China policy-research environment in U.S. think tanks anchored in Washington, DC. The output in terms of collected data will be relayed in the below sub-sections corresponding to the research method in question.

This study does not claim any methodological contribution to knowledge as far as the ethnographic approach is concerned. Nonetheless, it moves beyond a modus operandi as a mere ‘empiricist data-collection machine’,³¹⁰ and rather illuminate the relevance for ethnographic research in IR including the important role of self-

³⁰⁵ See A. Ahuvia, “Traditional, Interpretive, and Reception based Content Analyses: Improving the Ability of Content Analysis to Address Issues of Pragmatic and Theoretical Concern,” *Social Indicators Research* 54(2): 139-172; D.L. Altheide, “Reflections: Ethnographic Content Analysis,” *Qualitative Sociology* 10(1) (1987): 35-71; Bryman 2008, *Social Research Methods*, op.cit.; H-F. Hsieh & S. Shannon, “Three approaches to qualitative content analysis,” *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (2005): 1277-1288; D. Silverman, *Doing qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2004).

³⁰⁶ R.G. Burgess, *Field Research: A sourcebook and Field Manual* (London: Routledge, 1991), 191-194; R. Emerson, R. Fretz & L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

³⁰⁷ Brewer 2000, *ibid.*; J. Wolfram Cox, “Triangulation,” in *The Sage dictionary of qualitative management research*, eds. R. Thorpe & R. Holt (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 222-224; R.K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London: Sage, 2003).

³⁰⁸ P.L. Berger & T. Luckman 1966, *The Social Construction of Reality*, op.cit.; A. Giddens 1984, *The Constitution of Society*, op.cit.

³⁰⁹ Keesing & Strathern, op.cit.

³¹⁰ W. Vrasti 2008, “The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations,” op.cit. 279, 295.

reflexivity and theorising in a “bottom-up” fashion, in addition to ‘theory as method’ (i.e. Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, in particular). Moreover, the methodological effort in this study, as with Bourdieu’s early ethnographic ventures, is closer aligned with the social anthropological tradition when it comes to theoretical construction. This ethnography does not simply “report on the inner workings of social words based on close-up observation (...)³¹¹ but allows for building theories “bottom-up” as well as engaging with a body of theoretical work (i.e. Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and social constructionism). This diverges with the Geertzian strand of cultural anthropology often relied upon by the sociological intellectual sphere (as opposed to, for example, British traditions and *social* anthropology) and the sociological Chicago School.³¹² In essence, it provides a case for IR research to traverse divides between sustained theoretical work and fieldwork.³¹³

2.4.4 Research methods

The primary research method in this ethnography is in-depth interviews. As I am not seeking to purport a methodological contribution, the focus rests on explaining the scope of deployment of each specific research method depicted below rather than problematising them.

2.4.4.1 In-depth interviews

The in-depth interview constitutes the chief research method in this ethnography. The present study is, indeed, an interview-based ethnography drawing upon Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice. This research method has been employed, primarily,

³¹¹ B.H. Hancock, “Following Loïc Wacquant into the Field,” *Qualitative Sociology* 32(94) (2009).

³¹² B.H. Hancock 2009, *ibid*, 94

³¹³ B.H. Hancock 2009, *ibid*. 93.

to collect data from China policy-research experts within U.S. think tanks – but also of contextual interviews from relevant experts not affiliated with think tanks in order to solicit non-self referential perspectives (i.e. affiliations such as academia, the U.S. State Department, and the business-sector).

During my three-month fieldwork, located in Washington, DC, I conducted in total 44 in-depth interviews. Table 1 below depicts the ‘universe of data’³¹⁴ as far as the interviews are concerned (interviewee and principal affiliation).

³¹⁴ Se Miles and Huberman 1994, op.cit.

Table 1 – Interviewees and affiliations

	Interviewee	Principal Affiliation
1	Ms Ellen L Frost	Peterson Institute for International Economics
2	Ms Louisa Greve	National Endowment for Democracy
3	Mr Samuel Sherridan	New America Foundation
4	Prof Andre Laliberte	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
5	Dr Bryce Wakefield	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
6	Ms Sue Levenstein	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
7	Dr Philip Levy	American Enterprise Institute
8	Mr Dan Blumenthal	American Enterprise Institute
9	Prof Stein Tønnesson	US Institute for Peace
10	Dr Adam Hersh	Center for American Progress
11	Mr Peter Marsters	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
12	Mr Seth Cropsey	Hudson Institute
13	Mr John Feffer	Institute for Policy Studies
14	Dr Andrew Scobell	RAND Corporation
15	Dr Satu Limaye	East-West Center
16	Dr Robert Hathaway	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
17	Mr Dale Swartz	American Enterprise Institute
18	Dr Charles Horner	Hudson Institute
19	Mr Nathaniel Ahrens	Formerly, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
20	Mr Walter Lohman	The Heritage Foundation
21	Dr Douglas H. Paal	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
22	Mr Iskander Rehman	German Marshall Fund
23	Ms Debra Liang-Fenton	US Institute for Peace
24	Dr Banning Garrett	Atlantic Council
25	Mr Alan D Romberg	Henry L. Stimson Center
26	Dr Paragh Khanna	New America Foundation
27	Male policy researcher	World Resources Institute
28	Dr Keith Crane	RAND Corporation
29	Dr Kenneth G. Lieberthal	Brookings Institution
30	Mr Kevin Tu	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
31	Mr Ed Paisly	New American Foundation
32	Ms Bonny Glaser	Center for International and Strategic Studies
33	Ms Sandy Pho	Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars
34	Mr Pieter Bottelier	SAIS John Hopkins and Carnegie
35	Dr Jamie Metzl	Asia Society
36	Mr Leland Miller	America Foreign Affairs Council
37	Mr Dan Rosen	Peterson Institute for International Economics
38	Female policy researcher	Institute for National Strategic Studies
39	Ms Malou Innocent	Cato Institute
40	Mr Justin Logan	Cato Institute

Table 2 shows the distributions between primary and contextual (secondary) interviews.

Table 2 – Primary and contextual (secondary) interviews

Primary (think tanks)	Contextual (affiliation)
	Dr Steven Balla (George Washington University)
	Prof Bruce Dickson (George Washington University)
	Dr Deepa Ollapally (George Washington University)
	Prof Hugh Gusterson (George Mason University)
<i>Total: 40</i>	<i>Total: 4</i>

Table 3 presents the average duration of the interviews as well as number of think tanks and average number of interviewees per think tank.

Table 3 – Average duration (interviews)

Primary Interviews	Contextual Interviews	No. Think Tanks	Per think tank
57 minutes	55 minutes	26	1.5

The in-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, thematic fashion with open-ended questions aligned with the research philosophical foundation of the study – the constructionist symbolic interactionist model.³¹⁵ It was similar to what Burgess calls ‘a conversation with a purpose’.³¹⁶ The interviews focused on respondents’ construction of meaning and ‘social reality’ in regard to ‘China’ and effectively ‘American-ness’. This is diametrical to the positivist stimuli model (evolved from behaviourism) where the aim is to compare or achieve statistically generalisation

³¹⁵ J.P. Spradley 1979, *The Ethnographic Interview*, op.cit. A.B. Thomas 2004, *Research skills*, op.cit. 152-154.

³¹⁶ R.G. Burgess 1984, *In the Field*, op.cit. 102.

based on testing hypotheses, and assumes that people respond in the same way on physical stimuli.³¹⁷

Interviewing is acknowledged to be a powerful technique to elicit in-depth understanding of context,³¹⁸ and thus a particular advantage when the aim is to obtain rich and deep knowledge about a little understood social phenomenon. Furthermore, it facilitates for improved understanding of how respondents construct meaning and social reality, and being constructed by it. Importantly, this included allowing myself to be informed “bottom-up” – for example, I would not set any parameter for what I considered to be an ‘expert’ on China policy-research. Consequently, if they identified themselves as one – he or she was included in the “sample”. “Prompts” were frequently used, i.e. seeking a more extensive response,³¹⁹ as well as improvised follow-up questions in order to capture the ‘native categories’ of respondents and central lines of inquiry amongst the policy-researchers. Identical questions would only distort the rigour of the data collection due to respondents’ constructions and narratives do not fit into the same set of pre-decided taxonomic categories. I have also assumed there to be an “observational element” integral in interviewing, herein policy-researchers’ own observations imparted through their oral accounts and personal narratives.

All interviews were audio-digitally recorded, except for two respondents who requested otherwise (placing significant inhibitions of what the individual would feel comfortable to convey in an interview), and one wanting to be “off-the-record” due

³¹⁷ Thomas 2004, op.cit.

³¹⁸ Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004, op.cit.

³¹⁹ Atkinson, cited in A.B. Thomas 2004, *Research skills*, op.cit. 163-164.

to returning to a federal department. Most interviews were solicited via email contact based on my perusal of all policy-researchers across more than 50 think tanks based in Washington, DC. I used McGann's ranking as well as general directories.³²⁰ I also benefited from personal introductions and interacting with policy-researchers at think tank events. In total, I invited close to 130 policy-researchers whom I had identified as relevant research subjects. The main reason for unsuccessful requests were time constraints – in addition to a few declining reporting back due to the following: not agreeing with the premise of my study (relevance of culture) including misunderstanding of the scope (i.e. culture as explanation of Chinese economic development), not stationed in Washington, DC (for example working at a sub-office abroad and/or living elsewhere), and my inability to showcase that my study would contribute to “world peace”! Approximately, 15 interviews did not materialise due to changing schedules and/or not having sufficient time whilst I was located in Washington, DC.

2.4.4.2 Participant observation

Non-covert, participant observation has also been employed as a research method – where the researcher cannot be separable from what is being observed and discussed.³²¹ In addition to the “observational element” during interviews (highlighted in the previous point), this particular method entails think tanks events,

³²⁰ J.G. McGann 2010, “The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2009,” op.cit.; J.G. McGann 2009, “The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations In The World 2008,” op.cit.; Think Tanks Directory 2008, Available: <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/library/research/guides/think-tanks-directory.htm>; FPRI Security and International Affairs Think Tank Directory 2007-9, Available: <http://thinktanks.fpri.org/>; NIRA’s World Directory of Think Tanks 2005, Available: <http://thinktanks.fpri.org/>.

³²¹ I argue that it is an “ontological fallacy” of many positivists, objectivist inclined researchers to equate non-participating observation with ‘objectivity’. The mere physical presence of somebody, or just the notion of the possibility that somebody is present, is indeed participation as exhibiting no reaction is a reaction too. It is a ‘binary opposition’, a researcher cannot be present and not present. For example, how many would really believe you if you stand in a room and state “I am not here”?

the interview-setting and sites (body-language, physical environment in offices, buildings and other surroundings), and contextuality (such as material culture and physical surroundings in the city, ideas purported in the media). The selection of events is somewhat biased as I was only able to attend those I had access to (i.e. RSVP available for the general public). Table 4 showcases attended events.

Table 4 – Attended events

Date	Time	Event title	Location
Tue 3 May	10.30-11.30AM	Asia – Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd	Brookings
Wed 4 May	12noon	Asia regionalism	EastWest Center
Mon 9 May	5.30-6.30PM	Conversation with Power – Brian Till	New America Foundation
Tue 24 May	1-2PM	America in the World - Secretary of Defense R Gates	AEI
Mon 13 June	1-5PM	Can the United States remain united	New America Foundation / National Press Club
Mon 13 June	4-5.15PM	Will Religion Challenge the Chinese State? (Prof Andre Laliberte)	Wilson Center
Wed 15 June	2-3.45PM	China: New type of superpower	Brookings
Thur 16 June	12.15-1.45PM	Friend, Foe, or Fallacy: How to Think about China's Rise	New America Foundation
Fri June 17	2-3PM	The Civilizing Mission: How France Sees Its Role in the World	Elaine Sciolino (Wilson Center)
Mon June 20	9AM-2PM	Global Shift – How the West Should Respond to the Rise of China	The German Marshall Fund of the United States
Tue 21 June	10AM-2PM	Chinese Foreign Direct Investment: Is it a Threat to the United States, Domestically or Globally? (Derek Scissors, Daniel Rosen, Stapleton Roy)	Wilson Center with Asia Society
Thur 23 June	12noon-2PM	Giving USA 2011	Hudson Institute
Mon 27 June	6.30-8PM	India and China: Today and Tomorrow	Asia Society
Wed 29 June	9-11.30AM	The China Challenge: Mixing Economics and Security	The Heritage Foundation
Tue 12 July	2-3.30PM	The New Imperial China: A US-Japanese Strategic Response	Dr. Masako Ikegami (Stockholm University) EastWest Center

Open observation of people in their natural setting is central in social research,³²² and mere observation does not qualify as ethnography. It plays an important role in a Bourdieusian-inspired ethnography as it facilitates for engaging with research beyond mere text. A self-reflexive dialogue will assist me to become more aware of my own preconceptions and ‘native categories’ as a researcher. Subsequently, this directs the focus towards the primacy of the social constructions of the individual policy-researcher rather than my own. Field-notes (written and electronic) were used as assistance – and thus not considered a method on its own (containing description but also about my own thinking).

2.4.4.3 Collection of written material

This research method involves collating written material published by the research subjects on topics relating to their “China-narratives” and views on America within this context. ‘Published’, here, indicates material made public, such as written documents (reports, articles, opinion-editorials), uploaded on a website; ‘text’ as part of multimedia broadcasts, material distributed at events, and to a smaller extent, books. It also includes relevant contextual information, such as commentaries about think tanks and U.S.-Sino relations in the media. In concert, the above constructs part of the contextuality in which narratives are constructed within. This process is thus continuous (before, during and after fieldwork).

³²² J.D. Brewer 2000, *Ethnography*, op.cit.

2.4.4.4 *Triangulation*

The inherent multi-method nature of ethnography provides an opportunity for data triangulation.³²³ This increases the rigour and internal validity of the research findings.³²⁴ Triangulation involves using multiple sources of evidence. In the present study this involves in particular juxtapositioning interviews, observation and written material. Developing such “converging lines of inquiry” makes the proposed findings and conclusion more convincing.³²⁵ Triangulation is an analytical tool which becomes a research method due to the interpretations of diffused data may lead to new understanding of data.

2.4.4.5 *Descriptive statistics*

This research method has been diminutively employed in this study, and relates to tables containing background details of the policy-researchers as research subjects. These can be used to cross-tabulate data and to assist with the “mapping of the field” in Bourdieusian-terms as a means to pinpoint think tanks’ positions in a social field.³²⁶ Bourdieu himself made use of descriptive statistics, which is also relatively normal in ethnographic research in the wider social sciences.

2.5 Research process and design – a reiteration

Both the research process and research design reflect the social constructionist research philosophical underpinning and methodology established for this study. In terms of the former, the ethnographic study adheres to the ‘cyclic’ research process where data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously during all stages of the

³²³ J.D. Brewer 2000, *Ethnography*, op.cit.

³²⁴ D. Silverman 2004, *Doing qualitative Research*, op.cit.

³²⁵ R.K. Yin 2003, *Case Study Research*, op.cit. 98.

³²⁶ This is one of the undertakings in the first analysis chapter.

investigation. Furthermore, the academic inquiry commences with field-research (i.e. the policy-researchers situated within their natural context) rather than identifying theoretical “gaps” in a pre-established body of literature. This is radically contrasting the ‘linear’ or hypothetico-deductive model embedded in positivist informed quantitative research. Here, the inherent aim is to test hypotheses and compare hypothetical expectations – and where empirical generalisations are either accepted or rejected.³²⁷ The ‘cyclic’ research design, rather, is also reflected in how this study engages with literature.

As far as the research design is concerned, I argue that this study achieves adequate “methodological fit” by means of consistently consolidating this study governed by the epistemology of social constructionism – as recommended by Klotz and Prakash.³²⁸ This approach is very much in the spirit of Bourdieu – contemplating on him being a forerunner at the onset of the 1990s in bringing theoretical motivated research design coupled with empirical research.³²⁹

2.6 Analysis

In the preceding text, I have presented the frameworks of how data has been collected (ethnography and social constructionism) and will be presented in this thesis (Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and embedded conceptual “thinking tools”). In this particular sub-section, I shall briefly describe the ways data has been analysed. As already mentioned, these processes are neither taxonomic nor taking place in distinguished sequences.

³²⁷ Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, op.cit.; A.B. Thomas 2004, *Research skills*, op.cit. 25.

³²⁸ A. Klotz & D. Prakash (eds.) 2008, *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*, op.cit.

³²⁹ M. Lamont, “Looking back at Bourdieu,” in *Cultural Analysis and Bourdieu’s Legacy: Settling Accounts and Developing Alternatives*, eds. E. Silva & A. Warde (London: Routledge, 2010).

Data is analysed as part of a deliberate and systematic inquiry which is an ongoing, inductive, iterative hermeneutical process where theory can be established in a “bottom-up” process.³³⁰ This ‘cyclic’ research design is the main aspect which this study takes from its ethnographic research strategy. These processes entail generalising and explaining on the one hand, and natural field data on the other.³³¹ Findings are juxtaposed with relevant body of literatures to support, modify, or build new theories based on empirical findings (the latter assigned primacy in the research process). In the present study, Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as the analytical framework, and the elements in the practice equation performing as the required “tools” (i.e. habitus, field, doxa, practice) – also known as the FIPH approach³³² – constitutes the (discourse) analysis of data as something you *do* rather than a separate method (or just text).

The hermeneutic approach underscores the relevance of the prevalence of interviewing in this study: to interpret meaningful human actions from the perspective of the agent within his or her context (and its structural conditions, i.e. ‘native categories’ of U.S. think tank China policy-research experts)³³³ where ‘subjective’ meanings are produced.³³⁴ What constitutes meaningful data is not always known prior to engaging with it iteratively during data analysis processes. In a Derridean sense, interpretations or meanings cannot be fixed due to the ‘hermeneutical circle’ is ever-transforming. Readers, including researchers, redefine

³³⁰ J.D. Brewer 2000, op.cit.; M.B. Miles & A.M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: an Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd edn (London: SAGE Publication, 1994).

³³¹ C. Davies, *Reflexive ethnography: a guide to researching selves and others* (London: Routledge, 1999).

³³² See A. Leander 2008, “Thinking Tools,” op.cit.

³³³ P. Eriksson & A. Kovalainen, *Qualitative Methods In Business Research* (London: Sage, 2008).

³³⁴ N.G. Noorderhaven, “Hermeneutic Methodology and International Business Research,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds. R. Marschan-Piekkari & C. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004), 84-106.

and reinterpret with our own frames of references.³³⁵ This includes adding questions in subsequent interviews based on what I interpreted to be relevant to inquiry about based on what is expressed by previous interviewees or cues from germane contextual surroundings. The process elaborated above differentiates ethnographic research from mere “common sense”.

2.6.1 Establishing main themes: Subjectivity, Mind-mapping and Interpretive/Ethnographic contents analysis

An important process in this study, as with all interpretivist research, relates to establishing main themes which are portrayed in the analysis chapters based on the theoretical foundation. Carrying this out in a transparent manner is particular important in an ethnographic study, which has no pre-specified methodological route. First of all, I acknowledge that the decisions made in this regard contains elements of subjectivity – but justifiable as this process is aligned with the subjectivist ontology. Subjectivity is played out in two interrelated ways: main themes have been chosen based on my interpretation of what matters the most ('native categories') to the policy-researchers, and secondly, that decisions concerning the main themes are taken within the stricture of the research questions (i.e. social constructions of 'American-ness' and 'China').

In this endeavour, I am employing key elements from interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis and the activity of mind-mapping. I have used this approach successfully for my previous MPhil research in International Business.³³⁶ As far as

³³⁵ Scott, cited in A.B. Thomas 2004, *Research skills*, op.cit.

³³⁶ Approved MPhil thesis deemed of very high quality by the external and internal examiners, where my former MPhil Lead Supervisor, Dr Malcolm Chapman (trained social anthropologist with a DPhil in the discipline and

the former approach is concerned, this process entailed the following features. First, each audio-recorded interview was listened to in its full length at least four times. The first round reflects the ‘cyclic’ research process in this study, herein utilising the relayed oral accounts from interviews in order to alter the interview-questions in subsequent interviews (during the field-work).

The second round of listening, post-fieldwork, facilitated for noting down keywords from the oral accounts in accordance to main elements embedded in the overarching research question: ‘American-ness’, ‘China’ – in addition to the emerging themes during the course of interviewing: the nature of the “China-thinking” and China policy-research environment within U.S. think tanks as a Bourdiesuan social field.³³⁷ The notations on a plain sheet of paper took form as mind-maps where related topics were linked with arrows. The size of the circles around a topic-heading would be larger or smaller in accordance to the degree of significance. The notions also included the time when the topics were discussed (as well as quotes) in the recording.

The third and fourth round of listening continued the process described above and reduced the risk of important sequences of information being overlooked. During the four rounds of listening, I also summarised/transcribed the interviews and thematically coded them in accordance to both emerging main themes as well as pre-selected main areas of inquiry. Furthermore, in the mind-maps, the final listening focused chiefly on the application of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking-tools” – not

who has carried out substantial amount of fieldwork) deemed this approach as sufficiently rigorous for research degrees.

³³⁷ The latter elements of obtained field-research data probed the relevance for the first analysis chapter in this thesis.

how to fit them to the imparted information, but allowing the ‘text’ to inform me about the relevance of such application. Self-reflexive contemplations took place parallel to these processes, herein critically reflecting on how I analysed the data.

The above-explicated mind-mapping echoes the functioning of coding data. I chose the former due its visual faculties, such as linking different circled texts with other areas. Thus, I found transcribing all interviews and coding with software programmes such as NVivo not to offer my analysis any particular advantages. Rather, I find the mind-mapping approach to facilitate for more creative thinking and allowing me to observe how various elements of information might be linked. And very importantly, this approach is aligned with an interpretive and contextual-based ethnographic investigation, as main themes subjectively (by myself) derived from each interview – and traversing them – are not mirrors of neither frequency of topics being discussed in an interview nor without being subjected to the process of interpreting the implied meanings of the policy-researchers’ contextualised utterances. Furthermore, the juxtapositioning between literature/theory and field-research data also accommodates to explore new lines of inquiry and/or reading the interviews from new angles. Ultimately, it is the direction of the data analysis in tandem with the stricture of the overarching research questions which govern the categorisation of how data is presented in the three analysis chapters.

The second feature of the analysis approach relates to what is known as interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis. The *interpretive* version of contents analysis entails counting *interpretations* of contents rather than quantification of the *contents* of text. It differs from traditional contents analysis (quantitative) in the way

the coding is done and how the quality is assessed – for example how different parts of a text may influence sense-making of other parts when taking context into account.³³⁸ This aspect involves also written material in addition to interviews. Here, the aim is to make sense of written material (including electronic communications, newsletters and podcasts uploaded on websites) in regard to what constitutes ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ in the narratives as cultural sites amongst China policy-research experts affiliated with U.S. think tanks.

Importantly, analysis encompass identifying patterns in the ‘total universe of data’, which consequently governs how main themes and arguments are derived through the processes of informing the researcher (me) in a “bottom-up” fashion. Aligned with the methodological and research philosophical underpinnings of this study, the above decision as far as analysis is concerned signals that data is not applied in order to support pre-conceived arguments.

2.6.2 Cross-tabulation

In this study, to a low extent, cross-tabulating was employed to seek patterns between the background data (i.e. policy-researchers) on the one hand, and their narratives and other obtained data on the other, as well as with organisational boundaries of think-tanks. Cross-tabulation is mostly associated with quantitative research.³³⁹ However, during the analysis the notion of frequency distribution can be transferred to qualitative research (i.e. juxtaposing numbers with meaningful data).

³³⁸ See A. Ahuvia, “Traditional, Interpretive, and Reception based Content Analyses: Improving the Ability of Content Analysis to Address Issues of Pragmatic and Theoretical Concern,” *Social Indicators Research* 54(2) (2001): 139-172.

³³⁹ I.e. making patterns based on juxtaposing two variables analysed simultaneously where at least one is a nominal variable depicted as a frequency distribution table (A.B. Thomas 2004, op.cit. 209-210).

2.7 Methodological limitations

The rationale for highlighting methodological limitations relates to acknowledging that no research design can be perfect. Any methodological approach features potential for remedying short-comings and even flaws, in addition to recognising the unavoidable influence of subjectivity when I, as the researcher, am integral to the data analysis.³⁴⁰ This study cannot be replicated, due the unique nature of intersubjectivity. As mentioned in point earlier, in this study, subjectivity relates particularly to how I interpret relayed information as well as sense-making of observations and contextuality. Furthermore, subjectivity also influences which particular elements of the ‘total universe of data’ are focused upon – or not – in accordance to the premise and stricture of the overarching research question which has been constructed with particular interests in mind. The above, however, is argued not to alter the justification of the employed research framework.

Below, I shall briefly depict, in random order, a main methodological limitation for the various elements in the consolidated research design/research framework. I am not, however, including criticisms which stride beyond the premises of qualitative research (i.e. what qualitative research is supposed to achieve).³⁴¹ First, in addition to what has already been mentioned regarding subjectivism – aligned with the social constructionist epistemology, the study is less adept to examine policy-researchers’ cognitive thinking process as the study focuses more on meaning and identity-

³⁴⁰ See Sanday 1979, op.cit.

³⁴¹ This might come across as a bit superficial within the IR discipline – however, my background from conducting ethnographic research in a starkly positivist research environment (MPhil) within the area of International Business, reminds me about this “battle” of the ‘great divide’ (epistemology) where qualitative research often found itself in a stampede surrounded by statements such as “but you are interpreting what they say in the interview – that is not research”, “meaning do not change”, and “do not research it if you cannot measure it and generate universally applicable theories”. A bold and consequent attitude is thus a must to develop. Eventually, I found it best to defend my approach by *not* falling into the trap of explaining my research on the positivists’ terms (i.e. academic vocabulary and research philosophical foundation).

construction shared as a group. Second, in terms of theoretical framework, the “reading” and presentation of data are closely aligned with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and to permeate the concepts of culture and identity as well as methodology with Bourdieu’s take on these aspects. This does not indicate a belief that Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology is superior to all other social theoretical approaches.

Third, in the methodological realm, being an *interview-based* ethnography constrains opportunities for elaborate triangulation (for example, with observational data). However, the multi-method nature of the research design moves beyond an interview-*only* type of study and thus provides additional avenues for inquiry into social constructions of ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’. Furthermore, the purposeful and snowball “sampling” techniques do lead to marginalising particular voices within the China policy-research environment. However, again, as the study is not seeking to compare think tanks, test hypotheses, or deduce inferences from statistical generalisations – 44 in-depth interviews still provides a significant foundation of qualitative empirical data. This, I find, to position me well to *theoretically* generalise – to derive theoretical propositions and concepts about policy-researchers as a fluid environment.³⁴² This stance can be substantiated by referring to the highly appropriate “reflexive sampling”: engagement with research subjects who reflect (not represent) the empirically sound and broad dynamics relevant for the academic inquiry.³⁴³

³⁴² See A.B. Thomas, op.cit. 132. I agree with Thomas, this equally valid procedure ought not to be referred to as ‘generalisation’ as it creates expectations of replication in the strict quantitative sense of the word. As he very appropriately states: “it is as well to be aware (...) of falling into methodolatry: in research, slavishly following procedures is no substitute for applying imaginative intelligence” (ibid. 133)

³⁴³ I discussed ‘reflexive sampling’ extensively in my MPhil thesis (D.S.A. Guttormsen, “International and Intercultural Experiences of Expatriates in Hong Kong: an Ethnography” (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Leeds, 2010b), 82-83, 94-95).

2.8 A self-reflexive account: Thinking with the ‘Thinker’ against the ‘thinker’

As a starting point, Bourdieu emphasised a reflexive epistemological pluralism but without privileging a form of knowledge as representations of reality.³⁴⁴ Self-reflexivity is an essential element in Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology – and arguably ought to be included in any qualitative research endeavour. His obsession with this feature (‘objectification of objectification’)³⁴⁵ has placed Bourdieu at the forefront of the social sciences in this regard. It serves as a self-analysis of the researcher (me, the ‘thinker’ in lower case) as a cultural producer through the conducted research within sociohistorical contextuality.³⁴⁶ Reflexivity concerns the opposing idea of objectivity and neutrality of knowledge.³⁴⁷ In the spirit of Bourdieu, I find it sensible to turn the “thinking tools” which I employ in this study (those of Bourdieu, the ‘Thinker’ in higher case) against myself (‘thinker’ in lower case).³⁴⁸

Importantly, albeit presented as a separate sub-section in this thesis, the self-reflexive dialogue is not intended to be a one-off exercise aiming to produce one, fixed account. The dialogue juxtapositioning Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology and my own critical reflections have ensued throughout the entire research endeavour – as it is the actual thinking on my part which is the essential activity.³⁴⁹ I purport that

³⁴⁴ See R. Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 59-60. Prominent examples in Bourdieu’s work include his early studies on marriage patterns in Algeria (which also was paramount in the emerging critique of structuralism) (P. Bourdieu 1990a, *In Other Words*, op.cit. 8), cultural tastes (Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit. 503-518), and French academia (Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1984b), 69-72).

³⁴⁵ R. Jenkins 2002, ibid. 61.

³⁴⁶ L.J.D. Wacquant, “Sociology as Socio-Analysis: Tales of ‘Homo Academicus’,” *Sociological Forum* 5(4) (1990): 677-89.

³⁴⁷ Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, *Ethnography*, op.cit.

³⁴⁸ See A. King, “Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A ‘Practical’ Critique of the Habitus,” *Sociological Theory* 18(3) (2000): 417-433.

³⁴⁹ A.L. Cunliffe, “Social poetics as management inquiry: A dialogical approach,” *Journal of Management Inquiry* 11(2) (2002): 128-146.

this exercise has an interlinked two-fold advantageous output: it enhances transparency allowing the reader to assess my judgements and decision-making as far as research design and analysis are concerned. Furthermore, it assists in decreasing distortion of internal validity of the research.³⁵⁰ Turning the ‘Thinker’ (i.e. Bourdieu) against the ‘thinker’ (me – the researcher) moves beyond a mere “interpretation of interpretation”,³⁵¹ or solely dealing with the relationship between the researcher and subject of the research.³⁵² With this effort, I move beyond mere “epistemological prudence” and towards ‘epistemic reflexivity’ as propagated by Leander.³⁵³

Wacquant highlights that Bourdieu’s perspective on reflexivity encompasses a focus on the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in the analysis process rather than the researcher as individual – the burden lies on the collective enterprise, and maintaining epistemological security of sociology.³⁵⁴ Bourdieu’s focus on potential bias of the researcher due to the intellectual position in the academic field is particular original within the social sciences.³⁵⁵ It involves the danger to fail investigating “the differentia specifica of the logic of practice” and subsequently failing to offer systematic critique of “presuppositions inscribed in the fact of thinking of the world”.³⁵⁶ In practice, my reflexive dialogue entails contesting my intellectual positions in subject-areas such as American politics and think tanks, U.S.

³⁵⁰ A. Bryman & E. Bell, *Business research methods*, 2nd edn (Oxford: University Press, 2007); A.L. Cunliffe 2002, op.cit. 128-146.

³⁵¹ M. Alvesson & K. Sköldberg 2009, *Reflexive Methodology*, op.cit.

³⁵² M. Easterby-Smith, R. Thorpe & P. Jackson, *Management Research*, 3rd edn (London: Sage, 2008).

³⁵³ A. Leander 2008, “Thinking Tools,” op.cit.

³⁵⁴ L.J.D. Wacquant & P. Bourdieu 1992, op.cit. 36.

³⁵⁵ Wacquant & Bourdieu 1992, ibid. 39. Examples on theoreticians of intellectual practice include Garfinkel, Clifford, Marcus, Tylor, David Bloor, Steve Woolgar, Platt, Ashmore, Gouldner, Bennett Berger, Giddens, and John O’Neill (see Wacquant & Bourdieu 1992, ibid. 36).

³⁵⁶ Wacquant & Bourdieu 1992, ibid. 39.

Foreign Policy, U.S.-Sino relations, policy, and sociology of knowledge – but also personal opinions about American culture and the intersubjective nature with encountered policy-researcher and think tanks in the U.S.

As far as disciplines are concerned, I embarked on this doctoral research project searching for a disciplinary identity as a researcher. My educational trajectory reflects my profound motivation to establish an international and intercultural profile, and in effect, traversing the International Business and International Relations disciplines. In my formal education, however, I have not obtained degrees which offer a “professional” or “vocal” identity connected with a discipline (e.g. historian): I am not a sociologist or anthropologist, and not a political scientist. Having studied two IR degrees, the positioning of the present study as looking “outside” from IR was a choice of both convenience – but also being conscious about establishing a research profile in alignment with a discipline. Furthermore, drawing upon experience with ethnographic and, to some extent, transdisciplinary research as an evident facet of my MPhil International Business degree, I also would like to label myself as an ‘international transdisciplinarian’. In essence, falling between multiple chairs – so to speak – also reflect lacking a “full” body of social theoretical knowledge in disciplines interfacing with my study. This slight sensation of “inferiority” in this regard, might be a result of my national background: a Norwegian system where professionalised titles are strongly upheld and legally protected in addition to a more firm trajectory where PhD students in principal can only conduct doctoral research within the discipline where they obtained their MPhil (and often reflecting the undergraduate major).

Before commencing the present research, intellectually, I was profoundly influenced by my experiences as a postgraduate research student in International Business. A “corporatised” milieu heavily entrenched in positivist embedded quantitative research agendas where the ‘qualitative’ and ‘interpretive’ occur at the peripheral of the business academe and often considered inferior. If not explicitly uttered – it was often felt working as a “disciplinary doxa” embodied as the modus operandi in mainstream research. It is here, where I developed an adverse “epistemological allergy” towards positivism. Not necessarily within its own paradigm, but rather in the way it was practiced in cultural research, the neglect of tapping into decades of social theoretical advancements, in addition to the symbolic power it held and symbolic violence it exercised when monopolising what warranted “common-sense”, “research proper”, and what ought to matter (defining the “stake at stakes” and what capital which had any value in the field of business-academia).

This is perhaps evident in my overly interest in methodology and research philosophy as far as research design is concerned. To remain only accountable for the firmly delimited research scope became a way of “sensing the game” – and to survive through gaining some capital by questioning their underlying assumptions – an exposure many of them (i.e. positivists) had little familiarity with. Ultimately, this has likely made me particularly sympathetic of Bourdieu’s epistemological critique underlying his Theory of Practice. Coupled with my drive for researching the international and intercultural, a dialectical approach to understand Self/Other constellations, identity and culture seem destined. Fair to say, my “allergy” has also made me wary of the Political Science degrees which flourish in the think tank environment.

For my MPhil, however, where I conducted an ethnographic investigation of Scandinavian expatriates in Hong Kong drawing upon social anthropology and sociology, I was supervised by a rarity in business-schools: a trained social anthropologist. The applied focus on theory, fortunately, gave me a relaxed viewpoint on labels and taxonomic categorisation. Thus, Barth appeals to me as I am more interested in why and how we consider “us” and “them” differently, not the *difference* alone. My thinking has increasingly becoming rooted in giving primacy to the epistemological drivers for research as well as the social conditionings. My entry point into constructivism research programme debates in IR research is therefore not if “ideas matters” but instead the unavoidable reality of intersectionality between physicality and construction – an Achilles heel for the social sciences. It follows – it is not an ultimate objective to be either a structuralist or post-structuralist. Consequently, I consider ethnographic research (“bottom-up”) a line of intriguing inquiry rather than a potential minefield or mystery of inconvenience.

My international outlook and embrace of grappling with Self/Other constellations caused a challenge and possibly bias when a sheer volume of my American interviewees exhibited (in my view) little interest (perhaps even capabilities) to reflect upon and contest their perceptions (i.e. ‘American-ness’) – which Cunliffe refers to as an unquestioning culture.³⁵⁷ Coming from a small country (Norway), I am used to looking inside-out with little experience in being immersed in a national contextuality where a “whole world” is contained within the country borders. Furthermore, being from a country where “everyone are social democrats”³⁵⁸ and

³⁵⁷ Ann Cunliffe, “Assessing Reflexivity in Professional Doctorate Practice and Research” (paper presented at a The Higher Education Academy event, University of Bedfordshire, Luton, 14 March, 2014).

³⁵⁸ See Guttormsen 2010c, op.cit.

where the political continuum is eschewed far towards the political left in an American context – I certainly easily read oral accounts and utterances through social democratic lenses. It dawned upon me, whilst located in Washington, DC, as opposed to Norway (a middle-power state at the best – regionally), the U.S. need to respond to an array of challenges only due to its sheer size. Due to being very interested in world affairs, and thus U.S. foreign policies, I do have biases relating to how I perceive Americans (as a generalisation) are perceiving and understanding “the world”. I only see one ‘social reality’ out of the myriads which exist – and I need to remind myself about that none are superior. For example, my discontent with Fox News could easily influence my thinking about policy-researchers in The Heritage Foundation as this channel was projected on a large TV-screen in the lobby. This serves also as a good reminder that my research objective is not to “speak for” an interviewee or justify their utterances. The aim, rather, is to understand them on their own terms (‘native categories’) and impart this to readers – albeit not with the belief that I can preserve “uncontaminated data” but my interpretation of such oral accounts and other obtained data.

Thus, in sum, I was in a way a “Frenchman in America”, as with Bourdieu, doing “European” research (read: qualitative). A constant self-reflexive dialogue with myself during all aspects of the research endeavour demands, as well as creates, a healthy, creative inquisitive mind which are required when the researcher is to such a high degree intertwined in the research process. Again, this written output is not major significance, but the advantages from immersing myself with these thinking processes, are. This type of gaze is something all researchers, particularly those

wedded to the qualitative, interpretivist domain, should vigorously engage with, as well as across the aisle with the positivists.

CHAPTER 3

AN EXPLORATORY LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter has a two-fold purpose. Principally, it reviews two selected bodies of literature in order to justify the relevance of the present study by elucidating how the research contributes to original knowledge. The selected literatures are reviewed as part of an *exploratory* literature review, i.e. a focus on identifying trends (breadth) in the literature rather than depth.³⁵⁹ This review addresses the literatures from the disciplinary position of International Relations (IR).

The first strand of literature surveys the application of Bourdieu in IR research. This inquiry is delimited to his Theory of Practice and the associated conceptual “thinking tools” including ‘habitus’, ‘field’, ‘capital’, ‘doxa’, ‘interests’, and ‘strategies’. This particular review section does not include Bourdieu’s meta-theoretical work. This undertaking links directly to the underlying enterprise of this study: to enlarge a recent research trend labelled as the *Bourdiesuan* ‘sociological turn’ in IR research.³⁶⁰ This pursuit places my study at the very core of IR’s interface with Bourdieu’s social theory. The prominent Bourdieu and IR scholar, Anna Leander, highlights a “flurry of publications, conference panels and collaborative research projects inspired by Bourdieu” which she argues “has made a basic understanding of his mode of thinking part of what is expected from “mainstream constructivist” IR scholars”. Consequently, she calls for inquiries to move beyond descriptively

³⁵⁹ A.B. Thomas 2004, op.cit. 72-73.

³⁶⁰ See A. Leander, “Habitus and Field,” *International Studies Association Compendium Project* (Blackwell, 2009a), 8

introducing his “thinking tools” and towards assessing the promise of Bourdieusian thinking in IR.³⁶¹

The second strand engages with the specialised think tank literature. It proposes a new ‘analytical school’ which focuses on conceptualisation and analytical investigation beyond mere description – a common characteristics in the pre-21st century literature.³⁶² This strand of literature also connects with two secondary inquiries which deepens the argument as far as relevance of this study is concerned. First, the discussion highlights the lack of focus on think tanks as organisations in IR research and as key players in U.S. foreign policies towards China. In effect, these aspects consequently contribute to hoist awareness of non-state players in IR – a discipline predominantly and conventionally preoccupied with the ‘state’ as the acknowledged, dominant and solitary key player in the international system.³⁶³ Second, this strand also reviews studies relating to ideational aspects and U.S.-Sino relations, in particularly U.S.’ perceptions of China. Collectively, these two secondary inquiries are in point of fact contributing to diffuse think tanks into IR research and U.S.’ China-policies as non-state actors explored from the individual level (i.e. policy-researchers). Both literature strands are utilising, principally, policy-researchers (within China-related areas) as the ‘unit of analysis’ and their affiliated Washington, DC, based think tanks as the empirical foundation.

³⁶¹ Anna Leander, “The Promises, Problems, and Potentials of a Bourdieu-Inspired Staging of International Relations,” *International Political Sociology* 5: 294-295.

³⁶² Personal conversation with Professor Diane Stone, 6 April 2010 (leading international expert on think tanks – amongst other areas).

³⁶³ See Guzzini 1998 op.cit.; Morgenthau 1948, op.cit.; Waltz 1979, op.cit.

Importantly, in terms of the second purpose of the review, this chapter also identifies opportunities for theoretical development. In brief, this endeavour relates to the simultaneous deployment of Bourdieu’s “thinking tools” and a focus on the dynamic relationality between them – a multiple usage of Bourdieu’s concepts which lacks across the social sciences.³⁶⁴ The second reviewed section on think tanks, however, rather accommodates for submitting an empirical contribution to the specialised think tank literature, the IR research agenda in addition to U.S. Politics and Foreign Policy.

A study based on theoretical gaps in the literature is not required – as opposed to the traditional research process where theory is assumed to have primacy.³⁶⁵ The role of literature, in this study, reflects the ‘cyclic’ research process aligned with ethnography where field-research (data/field-research) is granted (predominantly) ascendancy. The research problem as a *social phenomenon* – not specific theoretical “gaps” in the literature – serves as the epistemological and ontological driver of the inquiry in this study.

This is carried out in order to potentially support, confirm, modify, or build new theories through verification and validation of findings.³⁶⁶ In the present study, this

³⁶⁴ Swartz 2008, op.cit. 45-52. The sheer volume of Bourdieu-inspired studies tends to employ the concepts separately.

³⁶⁵ See Burnham et.al, *Research Methods in Politics*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45-46 for an example of the latter. On epistemological and ontological grounds, I disagree with this depiction, which for me, appears as a result of assuming that what constitutes research *proper* in Political Science equates to what behaviourism and positivism dictate as “true” through institutionalisation of what is portrayed as “common-sense”. In fact, I argue that these theoretical strands reflect the ‘native categories’ of political scientists as a Bourdieusian ‘doxa’. See also D.S.A. Guttormsen and M. Jacoby 2011, op.cit.

³⁶⁶ J.D. Brewer, *Ethnography* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 107; G. Gobo, *Doing Ethnography* (London: Sage, 2008), 227; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 21, 159; Mehmetoglu 2004, op.cit. 38, 119, 126; A.B. Thomas, *Research Skills for Management Studies* (Routledge, 2004), 26. See R.M. Keesing & A.J. Strathern,

occurs particularly through support (relevance of Bourdieu in IR research), modify (the applicability of Bourdieu in IR research), and build new theories (think tank policy-researchers' perceptions of China and Bourdieu's sociological sociology as explanatory framework).³⁶⁷ I acknowledge that the identified areas of literatures are indeed intertwined in a subjective process, which subsequently influences the actual selection of what literatures I aim to contribute to.

The search of literature has been employed, principally, as part of five approaches. One approach relates to database searches (ABI Global/Inform and ESCBO) by using various strings of keywords. The second approach entails to browsing through a set of influential and relevant IR journals (hence not only using impact-factor based rankings as a parameter), and by using the similar/same strings of keywords as search words within these particular journals. Third, the keyword-strings were also applied in various searches making use of the Google Scholar search engine. Fourth, authoritative review articles are drawn upon,³⁶⁸ and finally, I applied the same approach for academic journals and databases in books searches.

3.1 Literature strand 1: Bourdieu in International Relations (IR) research

The first strand of literature relates to the deployment of Bourdieu's social theory in International Relations (IR) research. The main enterprise of this study coincides with the underlying endeavour of the research, i.e. contributing to bring more of Bourdieu thinking into the IR discipline (and subsequently adding to the body of

Cultural anthropology: A contemporary perspective, 3rd edn (1998); J. van Maanen, *Qualitative Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983).

³⁶⁷ The 'confirm' aspect plays a more diminutive role as I am not "testing" pre-established hypothesis/propositions, neither in a quantitative nor qualitative sense.

³⁶⁸ This encompass in particularly A. Leander, "Habitus and Field," *International Studies Association Compendium Project* (Blackwell, 2009a).

studies associated with the *Bourdieuian* ‘sociological turn’ of IR research). Thus, the literature review is principally directed to this strand more so than the successive one. In particular, this relates to the use of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and associated conceptual “thinking tools”.

3.1.1 “Outside-In” perspective

According to the prominent Bourdieu-scholar Anna Leander, Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ entered the lexis and purview of the IR research agenda during the various ‘turns’ of the 1980s.³⁶⁹ It transpired, however, foremost amongst scholars outside the IR discipline who researched what ensues to be the core of the discipline’s intellectual activity - ‘international problems’. These developments also elucidate an important facet of IR within the broader context of the classical social science landscape. IR has not been a frontrunner in intellectual advancements as far as social theory is concerned. For example, Bourdieu’s core work was published in the early 1960s,³⁷⁰ and furthermore, social constructionism was already a household name in classical social science disciplines, for instance Berger and Luckman who prominently dominated this stage in the mid-1960s.³⁷¹ Moreover, Social Anthropology had dealt with identity since the 1930s and immersed itself with

³⁶⁹ For example, ‘reflectivist’, post-modernist, and “sociological” ‘turns’ (Leander 2009a, *ibid.* 13).

³⁷⁰ This point also illustrates the strong Anglo-Saxon nature of IR as a discipline, for example contemplating on the later publication dates of Bourdieu’s work in the Anglophone-world (sometimes a decade later) and the fact that Bourdieu really never fitted in within a strongly departmentalised and non-interdisciplinary focus in US research culture (D. Swartz, “Pierre Bourdieu and North American Political Sociology: Why He Doesn’t Fit In But Should,” *French Politics* 4(1) (2010): 84-99, and see Ole Wæver, “The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations,” *International Organization* 52(4) (1998): 687–727)

³⁷¹ See P.L. Berger & T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Anchor, 1966). An important note on IR’s poor relationship with research philosophy (in this case epistemology) was touched upon in Chapter Two: the discipline’s dealing with the different premises of constructivism (and its social psychological intellectual heritage) and constructionism (and the predominantly social anthropological theoretical camp) with distinctive variations and implications on how to study the world, culture as well as identity. This may amount to, at worst, 2-3 decades which have results in an unconscious use of the social psychological heritage through constructivism which consequently evolves into a conflictual relationship with a constructionist epistemology.

meaning-production inquiries and a retreat from the notion of being an objectivist science in the 1960s.³⁷²

Returning to Bourdieu, the focus on these particular concepts also reflects the dominant research paradigm in IR: A permeating structuralism (in social theory) and the state-centric focus within the realist ‘school of thought’ in IR and cognate subject-fields. Two lines of inquiries evolved within this “outside-in” perspective, namely the international preceding the national (where international elements are shaping the national of whatever being studied), and the inverse notion – the national shaping the international or transnational (for example how the logic of the field moulds internationalisation strategies and being structured by the relevant habitus).³⁷³

As part of the first line of inquiry, studies engaged particularly with power-relations and elite’s capital accumulation. For the former, for example, Bourdieu’s study of the Kabyle society during the 1970s encapsulates the above juncture by showing that colonialism and worker migration were key sources of societal change.³⁷⁴ His exposure in the field also led to his departure from the heavily dominating theoretical orientation of structuralism – in particular championed by his mentor, French social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. In the Kabyle House, amongst Berber peasantry in Algeria experiencing their marriage patterns, Bourdieu discovered the lack of predictive power of the structuralist rules when investigating what people

³⁷² M. Chapman, “Social Anthropology, Business Studies, and Cultural Issues,” *International Studies of Management & Organization* 26(4) (1997): 4.

³⁷³ A. Leander 2009a, “Habitus and Field,” op.cit. 12-15.

³⁷⁴ P. Bourdieu, *Algeria 1960: The Disenchantment of the World: The Sense of Honour: The Kabyle House or the World Reversed: Essays*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: University Press, 1979).

actually do (practices). The rules dictated that marriage ought to be between partial cousins (ideology). However, he found that this form of marriage only represented 3-6% of the cases. Thus, he replaced such rules of marriage rituals with a model of social practice where strategies are integral to cultural disposition (i.e. habitus).³⁷⁵

Similar findings have been identified by various other scholars. Boltanski identified the reinforced internationalisation of the French economy in the 1950s through Americanisation of the international economy.³⁷⁶ Lebaron pinpointed how French economists possessed dominating positions making it possible to renegotiate their status and the logic of the “French field of economics” through the transformation of the international field (i.e. from qualitative Keynesian economists to one dominated with neo-classical underpinnings creating the capital (diplomas and titles) into a valuable form of capital).³⁷⁷ Swartz argues that important hurdles for a breakthrough for Bourdieu in American Political Sociology and Political Science are strongly related to the distinctive nature of Bourdieu’s work. This was evident, for example, through his French nationality and the “leftist” label, and arguably the firm disciplinary boundaries in the American academe whereas Bourdieu’s work often fell between two stools.³⁷⁸ In a similar review paper, Chen and Zhang showcase the usage of Bourdieu in Chinese academic literature and research in regard to China. The authors argue that Chinese scientist have learnt, very recently, about Bourdieu via their North-American colleagues rather than from Europe.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ R. Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 1992, op.cit. 38-41.

³⁷⁶ L. Boltanski “Visions of American Management in Post-war France,” *Theory and Society* 12(3) (1983): 375-403.

³⁷⁷ Lebaron, “La dénégation du Pouvoir. Le champ des économistes français au milieu des années 1990. “*Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 119 (1997): 3-27. See Leander 2010, “Habitus and Field,” 13.

³⁷⁸ D.L. Swartz 2009, op.cit. 94.

³⁷⁹ N. Chen and X. Zang, “Bourdieu and Chinese Sociology,” *Sociologica: Italian Journal of Sociology* (2009).

‘Habitus’ and ‘field’ have been used in studies revolving around elites accumulating capital in the international sphere which subsequently position them to renegotiate their status and nature of capital in their home countries. Examples include internationalisation of Brazilian elites,³⁸⁰ Bolivian elites,³⁸¹ Latin-America as a region in general,³⁸² as well as in Bourdieu’s own backyard – French institutions such as grandes écoles,³⁸³ public administration,³⁸⁴ and political career paths in France.³⁸⁵

Reversely, in the second line of inquiry, Leander identifies the national ‘habitus’/‘field’ shaping the international/transnational fields. She depicts how the logic of the field shapes internationalisation strategies and structured by the relevant ‘habitus’ promoted by different actors at the national level.³⁸⁶ Studies include, for example, humanitarian law (lawyers playing an intermediate role between law and diplomacy as a keystone in innovating European law),³⁸⁷ international legal orthodoxy and consensus (the authors refer to a ‘social habitus’),³⁸⁸ European integration (a common culture amongst European officials which enables them to

³⁸⁰ M.R. Loureiro. “L’Internationalization des milieux dirigeants au Brazil.” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 121/122 (1998): 42-52.

³⁸¹ F. Poupeau. “Sur deux formes de capital international. Les “élites de la globalisation” en Bolivie.” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 152 (2004): 126-133.

³⁸² Y. Dezelay & B.G. Garth. *The Internationalization of Palace Wars: Lawyers, Economists and the Contest to Transform Latin American States* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

³⁸³ G. Lezuech. “L’Internationalization des grandes écoles francaises.” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 121/122 (1998): 66-67.

³⁸⁴ P-Y. Saunier. “Tel Mickey-Mouse jouant au Tennis...” Charles S. Ascher et l’internationalisation de la public administration. “*Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 152 (2004): 49-56.

³⁸⁵ N. Kauppi, “European Union Institutions and French Political Carrées. “ *Scandinavian Political Studies* 19(1) (1996): 1-24; N. Kauppi, *Democracy, Social Resources and Political Power in the European Union* (Manchester: University Press, 2005).

³⁸⁶ Leander 2009, op.cit. 14.

³⁸⁷ M.R. Madsen, “From Cold War Instrument to Supreme European Court: The European Court of Human Rights at the Crossroads of International and National Law and Politics,” *Law and Social Inquiry* 32(1) (2007): 137-159. Madsen refers, however, to a ‘collective habitus’ rather than a ‘national habitus’ (pp. 149, 151).

³⁸⁸ Y. Dezelay & B.G. Garth. *The Internationalization of Palace Wars: Lawyers, Economists and the Contest to Transform Latin American States* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 69.

effectively embody the interests of the Community),³⁸⁹ transnational professional field of economics (through application of global (predominantly US) standards concerning work and professional practices also at local levels which reproduces transnational mechanisms into their economic professional identity),³⁹⁰ European level immigrant policy (using Bourdieu's convertibility of capital to understand different immigrant groups),³⁹¹ transnational policing networks,³⁹² and transnational anti-corruption discourse.³⁹³

3.1.2 Within IR: “Constructivist structuralism”³⁹⁴

From the onset of the 1990s, the IR community witnessed a somewhat closer engagement with ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ inside the discipline. It reflects a time when IR scholars enlarged their inquiries into broadened trodden areas of the social sciences, humanities, and political sciences. The focus nevertheless was theoretical-driven, hence not in dialogue with the aforementioned international studies.³⁹⁵ One stream of research relates to the very core of Bourdieu’s research, as well as social theory in general – to transcend the divide between subjectivism and objectivism.

³⁸⁹ D. Georgakakis, “European Civil Service as Group: Sociological Notes about the ‘Eurocrats’ Common Culture,” in *The European Dimension of Administrative Culture*, eds. J. Beck & F. Thedieck (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2008), 283. Georgakakis focuses on the formation of the habitus and points out that the durability of the shared culture is highly dependent on produced and reproduced social and political processes (2008, 10).

³⁹⁰ M. Fourcade-Gourinchas, “The Construction of a Global Profession: The Transnationalization of Economics,” *American Journal of Sociology* 112(1) (2006): 149-195. Fourcade-Gourinch uses Bourdieu’s field dynamics to explain how particular groups, in this case the economists; assert control over competing economists (2006: 155).

³⁹¹ V. Guiraudon, “De-Nationalization control: analyzing state responses to constraints on migration control,” in *Controlling a New Migration World*, eds. V. Guiraudon & C. Joppke (London: Routledge, 2001).

³⁹² D. Bigo, *Polices en Réseaux. L'Experience Européenne* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1996).

³⁹³ M. Coerdray, “Le double jeu de l’import-export symbolique. La construction d’un nouveau discours sur la corruption,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 152 (2004): 81-90.

³⁹⁴ Bourdieu himself used this term interchangeably with ‘structuralist constructivism’ – both in a non-Saussurean and non-Lévi-Strauss tradition. But rather, when it came to ‘structuralism’ or ‘structuralist’, he argues that it exist objective structures beyond the symbolic systems such as myths and language in the social world itself. These constraining objective structures are independent of an agent’s consciousness and will (see Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” *Sociological Theory* 7(1) (1989): 14-25).

³⁹⁵ Leander 2009a, “Habitus and Field,” op.cit. 15.

“Constructivist structuralism” relates to the dialectic relationship between agency and structure as never separate and constantly transforming.

Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ have been used to investigate the inside/outside division by Ashley (specific norms existing in different regional practices, hence any conceptualisation of a universal culture is a practice of imposing a particular international order)³⁹⁶ and Bigo and Tsoukala (actors with agency operating and moving between different Bourdieuian fields).³⁹⁷

Several cognate studies can be included, including power in Guzzini’s study of realist thought, the IPE dimension in particularly, as an evolution of a paradigm arguing that its historical evaluation must be understood between the internal and external history – the latter encompassing both the intellectual environment where power plays out due to theories are constructed within this realm as well as occurrences in world affairs.³⁹⁸ Holzscheiter presented the use of non-material power in transnational discourse by non-state actors such as NGOs.³⁹⁹ In the field of security, Leander applied Bourdieu’s ‘structural power’ and shifts of power from public/state to private/market. This has become evident contemplating on private military companies (PMC) as a player, i.e. from the civil to the military sphere.⁴⁰⁰ Pouliot establishes a bridge between practical and theoretical relations to the world

³⁹⁶ R.K. Ashley, “Imposing International Purpose: Notes on a Problematique of Governance,” in *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*, eds. E-O. Czempiel & J. Rosenau (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989), 251-290.

³⁹⁷ D. Bigo & A. Tsoukala (eds.), *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal Practices of Liberal Regimes* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

³⁹⁸ S. Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

³⁹⁹ A. Holzscheiter, “Discourse as Capability: Non-State Actors’ Capital in Global Governance,” *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 33(3) (2005): 723-747.

⁴⁰⁰ A. Leander, “The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies,” *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 33(3) (2005), 803-826.

by addressing practices/logic of practicality in security communities where “peace exists in and through practice when security officials’ practical sense makes diplomacy the self-evident way to solving interstate disputes”.⁴⁰¹ Jackson debates the role of culture in regard to social orientations of social actors and the structural environment,⁴⁰² and Mérand and Pouliot reflect on the International Studies subject-field.⁴⁰³

3.1.3 Within IR: Interfacing with IR/IPE theories

Leander reports that ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ were increasingly engaged with at the start of the 1990s, and more so in relation to specific IR (and International Political Economy (IPE)) theories. In this instance, the conceptual “thinking tools” provided avenues for contesting traditional aspects of inter-state relations, such as an international society of states constituting a field with its own “stakes at stake”, power positions, and habitus.⁴⁰⁴ Götze conducted research in this style by employing ‘habitus’/‘field’ in her research on democratic peace.⁴⁰⁵

Büger and Villumsen followed suit by applying the same topic as an empirical case in order to show how the gap between IR theory and practice should be avoided and rather focus on their interconnectivity. The authors drew upon Bourdieu’s Practice Theory in order to grasp IR as social practices and where democratic peace theory

⁴⁰¹ V. Pouliot, “The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities,” *International Organization* 62(2) (2008): 257, 283.

⁴⁰² P. Jackson, “Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘cultural turn’ and the practice of international history,” *Review of International Studies* 34(1) (2008): 155-181.

⁴⁰³ F. Mérand & V. Pouliot, “Le monde de Pierre Bourdieu: Éléments pour une théorie sociale des relations internationales,” *Etudes Internationales* 41(3) (2008): 603-625.

⁴⁰⁴ Leander 2009a, op.cit. 15.

⁴⁰⁵ C. Götze, “Sameness and Distinction: Understanding Democratic Peace in a Bourdieusian Perspective,” in *Democratic Wars: Looking at the Dark Side of Democratic Peace*, eds. A. Geis, L. Brock & H. Müller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006a).

was established as the anti-thesis (binary) to war. They call upon increased reflexivity of researchers' activities, and that self-reinforcing "truth-claims" in a web with U.S. foreign policy makers, think tanks, NATO bureaucrats and politicians in regard to what issues warrants the label 'security issue', or not, during complex science-politics interactions, need to be studied in a relevant context and actors.⁴⁰⁶

Furthermore, along these lines, 'habitus' and 'field' were deployed by Hopf in the area of foreign policy. He applies constructivist lenses on foreign policy motivation and interests, and how 'habitus' reproduce practices into regularities.⁴⁰⁷ In the area of European security and defense policy, Mérand argues that power struggles including symbolic aspects do matter as actors have structure-induced dispositions towards understanding the world. Ideas and interests are integral of such processes. He showcases how a culturally shared 'professional habitus' is being induced by NATO assisted internationalisation of European armed forces through military convergence which becomes increasingly more difficult to escape due to being invested in the 'illusion' of "the EU game".⁴⁰⁸

Adler-Nissen tackles European diplomacy using Bourdieu to understand the Council of Ministers and diplomacy as fields. The latter features a discrepancy between theory and diplomatic practice which is surrounding formal protocol when an EU member-state opts out of a major policy area. And further, exclusionary outcomes may be reduced or enhanced based on the particular diplomatic opt-out strategy. The

⁴⁰⁶ C. Büger & T. Villumsen, "Beyond the Gap: Relevance, fields of practice and the securitizing consequences of (democratic peace) research," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10 (2007): 17–48

⁴⁰⁷ T. Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 31. See Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 78.

⁴⁰⁸ F. Mérand, *European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 13, 60, 157.

diplomatic habitus is a disposition to act, perceive and think in accordance to internalised rules and values – dependent on the more power-providing and less visible political power derived from social capital.⁴⁰⁹

Additionally, Hassdorf utilises ‘habitus’/‘field’ in the area of financial markets. He approaches international finance as a field which has developed in a very volatile and politicised field of economic struggle. He applies Bourdieu’s symbolic power to show how the state imposes social meaning through authority as a means to direct authority-dependent international financial markets. This is made possible by its intersubjective nature based on social capital, and as a result of lacking economic capital as the latter source was negatively associated with “macho” policymaking during conservative Major and Thatcher governments in Britain.⁴¹⁰

Williams engages more comprehensively and rigorously with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice when laying out his “cultural security” approach. He argues for the significance of international security as a “cultural field”. Moreover, cultural *strategies* are highlighting struggles of symbolic power in international security as an explanatory framework. In effect, the approach breaks with central ontological tools within constructivism as well as mainstream IR research by linking the power struggles to the survival/transformation of NATO as well as disciplinary research

⁴⁰⁹ R. Adler-Nissen, “The Diplomacy of Opting Out: A Bourdieudian Approach to National Integration Strategies,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(3) (2008): 663-684, 668, 669, 670.

⁴¹⁰ W. Hassdorf, “Emperor without Clothes: Financial Market Sentiment and the Limits of British Currency Machismo in the ERM Crisis,” *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 33(3) (2005): 691, 721.

practice regarding liberal democratic peace perspectives and the growing authorial position of neo-conservative thinking in U.S. policy decision-making.⁴¹¹

3.1.4 Within IR: Linking with non-traditional IR/IPE research avenues

IR scholars have also used ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ to investigate IR/IPE areas in novel fashions.⁴¹² ‘Novel’, in this regard, alludes to an analytical level other than the conventional ontological tools of realists, in addition to players operating at non-state levels. Leander explores the ability to govern and shape security through their public and private networks.⁴¹³ In her 2005 article, the novelty relates to how issues concerning private military companies (PMC) are neglected to be addressed as they fall outside the ontological awareness of the reigning ‘school of thought’ of realism. She argues that power has shifted from the public (state) to the private (market) including the military sphere trumpeting the public arena – subsequently giving agency to the former. Leander uses Bourdieu to explain how PMCs hold the power to shape the security agenda through manifesting their interests and preferences as “common-sense” in terms of how to understand security. In turn, this has enabled PMCs to militarise the discourse on security in addition to being conceived as legitimate security experts due to their ‘structural power’ – dependent on their position in the field of security.

⁴¹¹ M. Williams, *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). See also Leander 2009a, op.cit. 16.

⁴¹² Leander 2009a, ibid. 16.

⁴¹³ A. Leander, “Practices Providing Order: The Private Military/Security Business and Global (In)Security Governance,” in *Business and Global Governance – Business in Global Governance*, eds. M. Ougaard & A. Leander (London: Routledge, 2009b). Also see D. Bigo, P. Bondotti, L. Bonelli, C. Olsson, C. “Mapping of the Field of the EU Internal Security Agencies,” paper produced for the *Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security (CHALLENGE)*, Project of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS, 2007); and A. Leander, “The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 33: 803-826.

Moreover, Leander elaborates and explores ‘practices’ and why they are offering an important line of inquiry – one which she argues is significant due to different forms of capital. Such capital (i.e. economic, social, cultural and symbolic) warrants whose activities matter and that the reasons why practices work in the way they do are a result of dispositions (‘habitus’) and granted views (‘doxa’). The private military/security business is used as an empirical case to show the relevance of employing Bourdieu in order to entice thinking concerning governance. This includes in particular change – taking benefit from what is being expressed and exercised, mapping hierarchy of importance of activities as well as inclusion of context (i.e. how practices relate to other practices).

Neumann highlights the void of studying the body in IR although having received increased focus in the wider social sciences. He draws upon Bourdieu’s meta-theory on class (relative rather than absolute as with Marx, and consumption rather than production). Further, he illustrates the importance of gendered bodies and classed bodies within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as a constitutive factor of how the MFA hierarchical order has an impact on diplomats differentiated life chances.⁴¹⁴ In accordance with Bourdieu, class is constituted not only by style and taste, which is frequenting in the world of diplomacy (over material and social aspects, including gender performativity).⁴¹⁵

Epstein shows how international policy agendas can be reshaped through NGO-state relations with ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ in discourses on whaling. She focused on practice

⁴¹⁴ I.B. Neumann, “The Body of the Diplomat,” *European Journal of International Relations* 14(4) (2008): 671-695. See p. 647.

⁴¹⁵ Also see Bourdieu 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.

such as states being competitively “socialised” through interacting with other players in a particular playing field and from a particular position (what people do, and not only say) – where interests are not pre-determined. This breaks up with the individualist-utilitarian model of ‘interests’.⁴¹⁶ Götze explains how social hierarchies in China were reshaped by civil society creating new forms of symbolic power through struggling over social hierarchies which should be understood within cultural structures which are conditioning practices.⁴¹⁷

Lastly, Pop provides an explanation of democratic transition in former communist East-European countries. Different categories of actors mobilise symbolic capital, and the desire to save face and avoid open conflicts result in practices aiming to reproducing power hierarchies. ‘Habitus’, ‘field’, and practices are used to traverse both macro and micro dimensions of the domestic/international interaction in regard to Romania’s relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the 1990s where macro-structures constituted possible interaction on the micro level as different fields. Pop elucidates that the epitomes of ‘field’ (i.e. “(...) identifiable actors, the distribution of their assets, the structural relationship between the positions of the actors in the field, the stakes of field-specific struggles, the boundaries that separate out the insiders from the outsiders ...”) are evolving processes. Pro-market reforms were played out by Romanian political parties on the

⁴¹⁶ C. Epstein, *Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse*, (Harvard: MIT Press, 2008).

⁴¹⁷ C. Götze, “Whose civil society is it anyway?” in *China’s Opening Society*, eds. Y. Zheng & J. Fewsmith (London: Routledge, 2006b), 36-53.

international arena in an effort to be reintegrated into the global political economy as resistance was played out at the national level.⁴¹⁸

3.1.5 Within IR – and beyond: advancements through diffusion of Bourdieu

The review in this sub-section (i.e. Bourdieu in IR research strand) is being brought to an end by reiterating the initial encouragement by prominent Bourdieu-scholar, Professor Anna Leander: to assess the promise of Bourdieusian thinking in IR rather than merely describing his theory.⁴¹⁹ This statement, presented in a 2011 *International Political Sociology* article, reflects a bold move to advance the application of Bourdieu in IR research. Leander progresses with this mission by addressing, and indeed incorporating, posited criticism of Bourdieu’s “structuralist constructivism”.⁴²⁰ This new milestone also underscores the very timely aim to examine the relevance of deploying Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools” in my own study – and the relationality between them even more so. Furthermore, in my study, the focus on collecting new data through ethnography as the methodology enhances this properness as it accommodates for both “testing” the relevance of Bourdieu’s “thinking tools” as well as functioning as a sounding-board for exploring further advancements.⁴²¹

The criticism has increased in strength proportional to the broader engagement with Bourdieu, hinting that “the promise is a false lure”.⁴²² Main threads of such criticism

⁴¹⁸ L. Pop, “Time and crisis: Framing success and failure in Romania’s post-communist transformations,” *Review of International Studies* 33 (3) (2007): 395-413. See pp. 395, 396, 398.

⁴¹⁹ Anna Leander, “The Promises, Problems, and Potentials of a Bourdieu-Inspired Staging of International Relations,” *International Political Sociology* 5(3) (2011): 294-295.

⁴²⁰ Anna Leander 2011, *ibid.* 294.

⁴²¹ See D. Bigo & M.R. Madsen, “Introduction to Symposium ‘A Different Reading of the International’: Pierre Bourdieu and International Studies,” *International Political Sociology* 5(3) (2011): 219.

⁴²² Anna Leander 2011, *op.cit.* 295.

relate to the evident traces of structuralism featuring Bourdieu's social theory,⁴²³ and the diverse group of (predominantly) French "pragmatic" stances having been staged against Bourdieu's "critical" sociology.⁴²⁴ Leander advances Bourdieu in IR research by moving Bourdieu's sociological thinking in a direction which incorporates key criticisms by the "pragmatists" in order to be able to paint a different 'international'.⁴²⁵ This approach of reading Bourdieu has augmented the interface with this social theory, and moved the inquiry from an interdisciplinary modus operandi ("merely" borrowing from Bourdieu) and rather into altering the very practices of conducting IR research in studies applying his thinking (i.e. diffusion) – what I would label *transdisciplinary* research.⁴²⁶

3.1.6 Bourdieu in IR research: Synthesising and theoretical development

To reiterate, the purpose of this literature review chapter is two-fold. It aims to identify trends in a delimited area of literature in addition to seeking opportunities for theoretical development by juxtaposing the aforementioned trends with the established research study. Before embarking on this exploration, it should be noted that the surveyed publications are by no means an exhaustive body of literature published by Bourdieu – nor does it include all studies where his Theory of Practice has been applied. Following Leander, I am focusing on research centering on

⁴²³ See R. Jenkins 1992, op.cit. Chapter 2, and A. King, "Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A 'Practical' Critique of the Habitus," *Sociological Theory* 18(3) (2000): 417-433; L. Seabrook & E. Tsingou, "Power Elites and Everyday Politics in International Financial Reform," *International Political Sociology* 3(4) (2009): 457-461.

⁴²⁴ This strand of criticism also relates to the too evident structuralism. See T. Bénatouil, "A Tale of Two Sociologies: The Critical and the Pragmatic Stance in Contemporary French Sociology," *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(2) (1999): 379-396; M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Chapter 4.

⁴²⁵ A. Leander 2011, *ibid.* 296-309.

⁴²⁶ *Transdisciplinary*, here, relates to that borrowings from other disciplines (in this case Bourdieu from sociology/social anthropology) also alter the inquiry in the host discipline (i.e. IR) by being informed through the engagement with the borrowing discipline. It is a fruitful pathway for theoretical advancements as it expands the scopes of the lines of inquiries as well as the methodological and academic lexis.

international research problems as the focal point, and being associated with the IR discipline.⁴²⁷

Based on the above survey – relevant to the stricture of my study – I argue there are five identifiable trends in regard to the application of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice in IR research. First, in terms of the scope of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”, it can be noted that ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ are the most frequently deployed concepts followed by ‘capital’ and the Bourdieusian approach to grapple with ‘power’. It follows, importantly, that marshalling the various conceptual “thinking tools” in tandem (more than two) appears infrequently. Even more so is the lack of focusing on the relationality between them albeit being fundamental to Bourdieu’s practice theory.⁴²⁸ Part of this argument relates to that concepts such as ‘interests’, ‘strategies’, and ‘doxa’ have been underused.

Moreover, self-reflexive deliberations are hardly non-existent in published work, but are nevertheless central to Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology.⁴²⁹ From the perspective of the researcher, this calls for the worthwhile exercise to harness Bourdieu’s “thinking tools” on myself – to use the thinker (Bourdieu) against the thinker (me).⁴³⁰ This undertaking has the potential to augment transparency, trustworthiness, and credibility of the research. This can be achieved by attempting

⁴²⁷ Leander 2009a, “Habitus and Field,” op.cit. 14-15.

⁴²⁸ See Swartz 2008, op.cit. 45. This call for a relational perspective related in particular to the main concepts in Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, namely ‘habitus’, ‘capital’ and ‘field’, and within organisational studies. A commendable exception is ‘Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis’ by M. Emirbayer and V. Johnson (see *Theory and Society*, 37, pp. 1-44) (Swartz 2008, ibid. 45).

⁴²⁹ See D. Bigo & M.R. Madsen, “Introduction to Symposium ‘A Different Reading of the International’: Pierre Bourdieu and International Studies,” *International Political Sociology* 5(3) (2011): 219.

⁴³⁰ See A. King, “Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A ‘Practical’ Critique of the Habitus,” *Sociological Theory* 18(3) (2000): 417-433.

to become more aware of my own biases which inexorably exist due to the subjective processes in play when a researcher is integral to the analysis.

Second, following from the previous point, a majority of papers are conceptual. Collectively, they are seldom contributing with new empirical field-research.⁴³¹ Subsequently, this precludes the research inquiry to espouse a “bottom-up” approach. This could better inform the investigation regarding the relevance of which concepts are warranted to employ (depending on the field-research) as well as the relational nature between them. Third, the interlinked lines of inquiries of think tanks and their policy-researchers as well as China in concert reflect a substantial space for where Bourdieu’s sociology scarcely has been applied.⁴³² Fourth, contemplating on geographical areas, it is also prevalent that there is a lack of applying Bourdieu in a North-American context or, alternatively, which ensues to be performed in a very disjointed manner.⁴³³

As far as theoretical development is concerned, the above review of Bourdieu in IR research reveals potential for achieving advancements in two interrelated lines of inquiries. First, in terms of the scope of deploying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, I am not endeavoring to extract one conceptual “thinking tool” and afterward test it empirically. According to Swartz, this has been the common appropriation of

⁴³¹ Indeed, this point coincides with the claimed contribution relating to new empirical data-collection (contemplating on aforementioned Professor Watson’s ‘list of ten’). Also, I am very sympathetic to the argument that IR research inherently is ‘empirical’ as research address unfolding world events. With the lack of empirical research, in this context, I am more thinking of collecting data from research subjects rather than providing yet another analysis. This is a very evident trait of IR research – without implying at all that benchmark and innovative work do not materialise in this manner. See D. Bigo & M.R. Madsen 2011, op.cit. 219.

⁴³² See also Guttormsen 2010a.

⁴³³ See Swartz, op.cit. 47.

Bourdieu in the American academe in their familiarisation with his social theory.⁴³⁴

Quite the opposite, I shall operationalise several of the “thinking tools” conjunctively as the composition of the overall framework (i.e. Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice). This process would be governed by the nature of the obtained field-data and the evolving direction of the “bottom-up” analysis.

As a result, theoretical development is accomplished through launching more, and underused, “thinking tools” in concert. Employing them in tandem is not unparalleled in IR research. However, considering that the opposite is more the norm, this study exposes IR and in effect “tests” the bearing of the Theory of Practice in three manners: multiple “thinking tools” (combined with an assiduous self-reflexive elaboration on my part as the researcher) in addition to a more balanced usage of the concepts. Furthermore, the “bottom-up” inquiry where field-data is rationed (chiefly) primacy reflects a use of Bourdieu (and IR research in general) in a more social constructionist epistemological direction aligned with the ‘cyclic’ research process associated with this study. This reflects a focus on what matters to the research subjects rather than my own pre-conceived categorisations of their ‘social reality’ (i.e. how ‘China’ and ‘American-ness’ are constructed).

An additional significant realisation is argued to be achievable in the present study. The first facet relates to the relationality of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”. This study does not pursue to “merely” employ Bourdieu’s “thinking tools” but a focus on including more of them in concert and a more balanced usage – but also to incorporate how they work in relation to each other and thus producing a fuller and

⁴³⁴ See Swartz, *ibid.* 47.

more rigorous analysis with the potential to unveil more nuanced understanding of the data. In fact, this endeavour realigns beyond the conventional demarcated area of IR research. Indeed, the relational method is central in Bourdieu's sociology,⁴³⁵ and his concepts were not intended as stand-alone (for example, as a theory of doxa or theory of field).⁴³⁶ As Swartz points out, this issue and potential progression is an issue pertaining to sociology (and beyond) as well.⁴³⁷ Consequently, thus, my study has a potential to engage with a wider audience beyond the IR discipline in this particular facet of my research.

In terms of the second facet, my study also advances the Bourdieusian inquiry in IR research farther (though not uniquely) in regard to self-reflexivity which is integrated in the overall analysis. I will conduct a monologue (or in fact an internal dialogue with myself) as an ongoing self-reflexive elaboration throughout the study in addition to employing Bourdieu's pillar concepts. The concepts are themselves to be utilised self-reflexively by making use of new empirical research (in Washington, DC) which offers a generative usage of Bourdieu rather than mere exegesis. And finally, the rationality linkages between Bourdieu's concepts are accommodated for through deploying the pillar "tools" (for example, habitus, field, capital) –when warranted

This displays incorporating dynamics, contextuality, and an empirical case (essential in ethnography) which is innate in Bourdieu's thinking. The approach is connecting

⁴³⁵ Swartz 2008, op.cit. 47.

⁴³⁶ P. Bourdieu and L.J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to reflexive sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 96.

⁴³⁷ In Swartz 2008 (op.cit. 45), the point concerning relationality relates to sociology and social theory in general and not only organisational analysis which the article specifically engages with.

micro and macro levels in the analysis.⁴³⁸ Bourdieu's obsession with dialogue between theory and research occurs where new theoretical insights emerge out of empirical investigations.⁴³⁹ For example, this insights "talks to" the widely used rational theory in IR – and beyond – such as calculations of self-interests, rational-choice theory in addition to fields as non-static entities that are not only constituted by formal and physically delimited space – a deterministic feature often a source of criticism against Bourdieu's social theory.⁴⁴⁰

3.2 Literature strand 2: Think tank literature and IR

The second strand of literature relates to the specialised think tank literature. Aligned with the style of an exploratory review, I am discussing trends within this body of literature rather than specific findings in studies carried out concerning think tanks.⁴⁴¹ This coheres as think tanks perform as the 'unit of observation' (hence, not the main 'unit of analysis' – the latter being individual China policy-research experts) and serves as an overarching framework (i.e. socio-political phenomenon). Again, the purpose of this section of the review is to identify how this study can contribute to this particular literature. This activity differs from the previous sectional review in two areas due to not being directly linked to the underlying spur of this study (i.e. to explore the relevance and applicability of Bourdieu): I am claiming original *conceptual* contribution/advancements rather than theoretical

⁴³⁸ See Swartz, ibid. 47 and 51. This connection, between micro and macro levels, I argue, coincides and thus constitutes what I have earlier described as the 'sociological meso-level' (Chapter Two). In fact, according to Bourdieu, a field is a meso-level itself (W.F. Hanks, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34(1) (2005): 67–83.)

⁴³⁹ Swartz 2008, op.cit. 51.

⁴⁴⁰ See Swartz 2008, ibid. 48, and P. Jackson, "Pierre Bourdieu, the 'cultural turn' and the practice of international history," *Review of International Studies* 34(1) (2008): 155–181.

⁴⁴¹ I discussed the trends in the think tank literature in a conference paper at the PSA Graduate conference 2010, which highlights main themes within the two 'school of analyses' regarding applied methodological and theoretical frameworks, geographical representations, research philosophical underpinnings as well as suggested future research directions (D.S.A. Guttormsen 2010a, op.cit.).

advancements to the aforementioned academic literature (in this case, the specialised think tank literature) and is subsequently allocated less space in this review.

Reflecting on that the inquiry in this study is running in the nexus between the academe and the policy profession, I am emphasising that the vast amount of literature published by policy-researchers outside the academic realm have not been included. In practical terms, this means that only peer-reviewed material is included in compliance with academic standards.⁴⁴² The former type of literature is on the contrary a source of data which will be analysed by employing an interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis. It is purposeful to identify these somewhat blurry lines in order to avoid confusion: many policy-researchers do have a PhD and are thus an academic albeit not necessarily being affiliated to an academic institution or work within that profession. Some policy-researchers alternate frequently between the worlds of academia and policy or simultaneously hold offices in both – where a portion of them produce papers which later becomes academic publications.⁴⁴³

Linking think tanks to an IR study accommodates for contributing to the latter discipline through focusing on non-governmental organisations at another level than

⁴⁴² By no means does this reflect my stance in what I find “proper” or “correct” analysis. As the blurry lines themselves suggest, a pure distinction is not empirically sound, and it can be the case that an expert on a given topic works in a think tank rather than at a university (or both or alternating). However, as I am “talking to” academic literature which I am also obliged to contribute to, it would be an inconsistency to include non-academic literature in this review. However, it should be acknowledged that what constitutes ‘academic literature’ is a blurry line itself. The peer-review process, which I uphold as the distinguishing marker between ‘academic’ and ‘non-academic’ is not an infallible approach. For example, what is, then, a comprehensive report produced by academics such as the *Global Shift report* at the German Marshall Fund’s Transatlantic Academy reviewed by an international advisory board (see <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/publications/global-shift-capstone-report-released>)? Academic for sure – but perhaps not an academic publication per se.

⁴⁴³ This is frequently the case at the more academic inclined think tanks or research organisations such as the US Institute for Peace and the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars which executes major Visitorship/fellowship-programmes predominantly welcoming prominent and published academics. GMF too, but on a smaller and more eclectic scale, such as business people, journalists.

that of the state. In this regard, the focus on think tanks and affiliated policy-research experts abate the arguably lack of focus on non-state level organisations. Think tanks are also interesting to explore in their very own right – being overlooked institutions. They are a key player in U.S. domestic politics and foreign affairs. However, their influence are often too hastily dismissed within academic research – for example, when the author does not engage with such institutions on-the-ground and rather relies on “observable evidence” remotely located, and consequently not completely privy to grasp the roles of think tanks and their entanglement in U.S. socio-political discourses and political system.⁴⁴⁴ Two plausible explanations for this relate to the indistinct relationship with non-academic work concerning think tanks which sometimes does not make it onto the academics’ “radar”.⁴⁴⁵ Second, IR scholars outside the U.S. may be less prone to engage with think tanks because of being a particularly American socio-political phenomenon.

⁴⁴⁴ One example, with humbleness, is partly related to D. Stone, “Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes,” *Public Administration* 85(2) (2007): 260, 275-276.

⁴⁴⁵ Excellent, thought-provoking pieces about think tanks might be missed out on, such as Peter Singer’s of the Brookings Institution ‘Factories to Call Our Own: How to understand Washington’s ideas industry’, published in the *Washingtonian*, a widely read American weekly magazines in August 2010 (see <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/16506.html>). The same symptomatic hypothesis applies to the spaces of blogs (see for example ‘Freakonomics blog’ (<http://www.freakonomics.com/2011/08/30/a-postcard-from-brookings-wolfers-bids-d-c-a-fond-farewell/>), ‘On think tanks’ (<http://onthinktanks.org/>) and ‘Goran’s musings’ (<http://goranpolicy.com/>)), prominent and impactful newspapers (for example the ‘Think Tanked’ column in Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/think-tanked>), and in particular related to the main theme of ‘American-ness’ in the current study – the discourses concerning America which often are much more widely read amongst the general public and policy decision-makers than those produced within academia, for example James Fallon interviewed in the *Atlantic* (another national and renowned weekly magazine, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/01/how-america-can-rise-again/7839/>) and the ‘Danger Room’ blog which is hustling and bustling with a young generation of newcomers on the DC think tank scene (<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/>) (email, Mr Brian Till, New America Foundation, 3rd April 2010). As an anecdote, reflecting the above-mentioned ‘blurry lines’, Mr Steve Clemons very understandably had to withdraw from our interview appointment, then a Director and policy-researcher at the New America Foundation, due to transiting to assume the post as editor at large with the aforementioned *Atlantic*. In addition, dealing with such material also provides think tanks (through policy-researchers) a voice, aligned with the “bottom-up” approach embedded in ethnography, rather than only being presented through the strictures of academic lenses embroiled in a researcher’s pre-categorisation and intellectual bias if only relying on an ontology with identical boundaries to those upheld in academic literature.

3.2.1 Rapidly evolving and diversifying literature

Although think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon and professional research organisations have been around since the first half of the 19th century and from the early 20th century in the U.S.,⁴⁴⁶ little scholarly investigation existed prior to the 1990s.⁴⁴⁷ Diverting from a benchmark book edited by Stone and Denham, academic inquiry branched into research encompassing policy research institutions beyond the Anglo-American sphere as well as to into other subject-fields (such as comparative politics and public policy,⁴⁴⁸ in addition to Security Studies and IR).⁴⁴⁹ This research was conducted by academics possessing other disciplinary backgrounds, herein sociologists, economists and anthropologists,⁴⁵⁰ and only recently with a focus beyond nation states (i.e. transnational think tanks and those located in other countries).⁴⁵¹

3.2.2 Typologies of think tank research

This exploratory review follows a categorisation of think tank research suggested by Professor Diane Stone – an internationally leading scholar in the area. Stone lays out two ‘school of analyses’ argued to encapsulate the scope of inquiry within the specialised think tank literature. One of these research avenues focuses on think

⁴⁴⁶ For example, The Institute for Defence and Security Studies (1831, London), and Brookings (1916, Washington, DC) respectively.

⁴⁴⁷ D. Stone, “Introduction: think tanks, policy advice and governance,” in *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas* (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 2. See also D. Stone, A. Denham & M. Garnett (eds.), *Think tanks across nations* (Manchester: University Press, 1998).

⁴⁴⁸ See D. Stone, *Banking on Knowledge: The Genesis of the Global Development Network* (London: Routledge, 2000b).

⁴⁴⁹ See I. Parmar, “Mobilizing America for an Internationalist Foreign Policy: The Role of the Council on Foreign Relations,” *Studies in American Political Development* 13(2) (1999a): 337-373. and I.Parmar, “The Carnegie Corporation and the Mobilisation of Opinion during the United States’ Rise to Globalism, 1939-1945,” *Minerva* 37 (1999b): 355-378.

⁴⁵⁰ See D. Stone 2004, *ibid*.

⁴⁵¹ D. 2004, “Think tanks beyond nation-states” (2004): 34-50, D. Stone, “Think Tanks Across Nations: The New Networks of Knowledge,” *NIRA Review*, Winter (2000a): 34–9, and R.J. Struyk “Management of Transnational Think Tank Networks,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 15(4) (2002): 625-638.

tanks as organisations, whereas the second ‘school’ has chiefly been preoccupied with influence within policy-networks.⁴⁵² Common to both ‘schools’, however, is the concentration on description rather than conceptualisation.⁴⁵³

The first analytical school (i.e. organisational forms) features one of the main topics in think tank research – that of defining a think tank.⁴⁵⁴ Waever echoed the staggering increase in the numbers and spread of think tanks in 1989, and explored tension between models of understanding their nature, namely ‘universities without students’, ‘contract researcher’, and ‘advocacy think tanks’. Construing with referring to them as non-profit think tanks, he concludes with four lessons: no single model can explain their operations and financing; that managers in these think tanks must lead consistently in regard to financing; production, staffing and perceptions in order not to scare off relevant stakeholders; influence seems to be disproportional to increase in number of think tanks; and that the role of think tanks might not be transferable to other countries which feature other political systems.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² D. Stone & A. Denham (eds.), *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas* (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 2.

⁴⁵³ Prof D Stone, 6 April 2010, pers. comm.

⁴⁵⁴ D. Stone, “Introduction: think tanks, policy advice and governance” (2004), 2-5. See also McGann & Weaver (eds.), *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action* (London and New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 4.

⁴⁵⁵ R.K. Weaver, “The changing World of Think Tanks,” *PS Political Science and Politics* September (1989): 563-578. More than two decades later, these perspectives remain a strong foothold (Professor Donald E. Abelson, 11 October 2011, seminar). I strongly concur with the latter point, which is evident when a researcher allows him or herself to be informed in a “bottom-up” fashion and by giving field-research primacy. In Norway, for instance – a political landscape which I am very familiar with, international leading “think tanks” such as the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs (NUPI) with many-doubled higher publication rates than the nation’s leading University of Oslo, do not fit into either of these typologies due to being extraordinarily focused on peer-reviewed academic research and publications. Furthermore, the meaning of the ‘independent-dependent’ dichotomy assumed in the U.S., herein that the farther away you are from the state the more independence enjoyed by a think tank (regardless of private interests being main donors), has a completely different connotation in Norway: physical and conceptual distance to the ‘state’ is not thought of as inappropriate closeness in Norway (or Scandinavia) – but funding from private sector indeed would be (PRIO Director Dr Kristian Berg Harpviken, 30 August 2011, pers. comm.; PRIO Special Advisor on External Relations Ms Ingeborg K. Haavardsson, August/September 2011, pers. comm.; Research Fellow Mr John Karlsrud, NUPI, August 2011, pers. comm.; see <http://www.prio.no/> and <http://english.nupi.no/>).

McGann and Waever analyse further the scope and growth of research organisations (aka think tanks) in both the developing and developed world in regard to producing expert knowledge about the societies and policies implemented in them by governments.⁴⁵⁶ Smith focuses on U.S. think tanks and their impact on American policies through looking at think tank evolution and policy-researchers as elites.⁴⁵⁷ Common to these studies were questions revolving around managing and funding of think tanks as well as their positions for exercising influence.⁴⁵⁸

In the second ‘school of analysis’, according to Stone,⁴⁵⁹ the research efforts tend to centre on a main activity of think tanks, herein policy. This relates in particular to abilities of influencing policy processes and the role of ideas and expertise during decision-making – seeking changes in politics and relationships with states by exercising, and subsequently, impact. Measuring influence is a core question. Influence is constrained and dependent, for example due to contextuality such as closeness to government and involvement of the latter, which vary across country borders and consequently in policy-making processes. Stone highlights, therefore, methodological issues with measuring ‘influence’ as it can be contested through different interpretations and willingness to disclose information about what has happened.⁴⁶⁰ James for this reason rather focuses on policy influence and social relevance in terms of setting the agenda and influence the wider public with policy

⁴⁵⁶ McGann & Weaver (eds.) 2000, *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action*, 1.

⁴⁵⁷ J.A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks And The Rise Of The New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

⁴⁵⁸ D. Stone 2004, op.cit. 2.

⁴⁵⁹ D. Stone, ibid. 2.

⁴⁶⁰ D. Stone, ibid. 10-11, and D. Stone 1996a, op.cit. 105-106. I made a similar, epistemological and ontological driven argument referring to this as an inevitable effort of measuring the immeasurable in I. Iborra Medina & D.S.A. Gutormsen, “Who Thinks for Me? Think Tanks’ Visibility and Activity in Contemporary Britain” (paper presented at the PSA Graduate Conference, Oxford, 2010).

narratives.⁴⁶¹ Context is played out in many ways, for example what is considered not independent in the U.S. (i.e. relying on government) might be considered independent in another country, such as in Norway where think tanks are very academically oriented.⁴⁶² My study has the potential to collect new and non-replicable data post-2010, hence more or less a decade after the aforementioned studies to inform these literatures were published.

3.2.3 Theoretical orientations

The abovementioned elite studies reflect an early research tradition where such elites were part of power approaches in studying think tanks with a focus on the macro-level. However, as noted by Stone,⁴⁶³ some countries have closer relationship to particular think tanks thus making elite studies a study of the minority rather than the majority.⁴⁶⁴ In addition to elite studies, think tanks have also been investigated from other theoretical and analytical perspectives. Neo-Marxists consider think tanks as way of politically mobilising business for privileged capitalists as a controlling factor where class interests are upheld by state action.⁴⁶⁵ Himmelstein, however, takes a somewhat more neo-pluralist and structuralist stance, herein that diversity

⁴⁶¹ S. James, "Influencing Government Policymaking," in *Banking on Knowledge: The Genesis of the Global Development Network*, ed. D. Stone (ed.) (London: Routledge, 2000), 165-182. In a similar vein, I made the proposition that instead of influence and impact, researchers ought to approach this issue as a position to being able to exert influence, or not (hence leaving out the causation aspect) in 'Who Thinks for Me? Think Tanks' Visibility and Activity in Contemporary Britain', ibid.

⁴⁶² I made this point in Iborra Medina and D.S.A. Guttermoen 2010, op.cit.

⁴⁶³ D. Stone 2004, op.cit. 11. My study, however, is not an elite study as I am not applying elite theories albeit referring to them as policy-research experts because of their expert knowledge and potential access to policy-networks where general members of the public would not naturally have access to (nor through their profession or knowledge).

⁴⁶⁴ See D.T. Critchlow, *The Brookings Institution, 1916-52: Expertise and the Public Interest in A Democratic Society* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1985) and T.R. Dye, "Oligarch tendencies in national policy making: the role of private planning organisations," *Journal of Politics* 40 (1978): 309-31 - as examples. This resonates with the methodological criticism of McGann's global rankings which are heavily based on self-referential data (i.e. think tanks ranking each other).

⁴⁶⁵ D. Stone 2004, ibid. 12. See also J.S. Peschek, *Policy Planning Organization: Elite Agendas and America's Rightward Turn* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), J. Stefanic & R. Delgado, *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America's Social Agenda* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), and W.G. Domhoff, *Who Rules America Now? A View for the '80s* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1983), 82.

amongst think tanks is rather a result of divided capital and that they tend to be ideological oriented and partisan.⁴⁶⁶

Neo-Gramscians approach think tanks as actors in ‘knowledge networks’ where “professional associations, academic research groups and scientific communities are organized around a special subject matter or issue”. Inclusion is based on expert recognition as well as more subtle scholarly and scientific validated credibility”.⁴⁶⁷

The Neo-Gramscians style illustrates that these networks are linking private knowledge of actors and institutions with material interests and structures of globalised capitalism where ‘organic intellectuals’ serve as translators of ideas of different organisations.⁴⁶⁸ Parmar extends this framework by including the transnational aspects of the hegemonic projects.⁴⁶⁹ Pluralist studies emphasise think tanks operating in a market place of ideas with competition between them in a space of many ideas in the open. The roles are portrayed as transparent and educating as a counterforce to polity and others with interests to set the policy-agenda such as the media and corporatists.⁴⁷⁰ The earlier discussed Büger and Villumsen article peripherally includes American think tanks as a player in their discussion in regard to democratic peace.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁶ J.L. Himmelstein, *To the right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 159.

⁴⁶⁷ D. Stone, “Global Knowledge and Advocacy Networks,” *Global Networks* 2(1) (2002): 2.

⁴⁶⁸ D. Stone 2004, op.cit. 12. See T.J. Sinclair, “Reinventing Authority: Embedded Knowledge Networks and the New Global Finance,” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 18 (2000): 487-502, and I. Parmar, “Institutes of international affairs: their roles in foreign policy-making, opinion mobilization and unofficial diplomacy,” in *Think tank traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas*, eds. D. Stone & A. Denham (2004), 19-33.

⁴⁶⁹ I. Parmar 2004, ibid. 19-33.

⁴⁷⁰ D. Stone 2004, ibid. 12-13. See C.H. Weiss, “The Uneasy Partnership Endures: Social Science and Government,” in *Social Scientists, Policy and the State*, eds. S. Brooks & A-G. Gagnon (New York: Praeger, 1990), 97-112.

⁴⁷¹ C. Büger and T. Villumsen 2007, op.cit.

Stone, however, takes a stance with such a taken-for-granted “purist” role of think tanks by purporting three myths: that think tanks are bridges (in fact, divide between theory/”Ivory Tower” and practice/”real world” is an ontological fallacy as think tank themselves produce these boundaries); that think tanks serve the public interest (think tanks often create their own power/knowledge nexus where recognition from scholarly credentials impinge upon the role as “neutral” hence not being independent of the state or society and rather a one-way, “top-bottom” approach to the “public”); and that think tanks *do* think (the presumption of think tanks being an intellectual enterprise is challenged by high frequency of recycling ideas as well as expertise from other sectors who might lack qualifications to enter university appointments, constructing problems to fit solutions, as well as moving boundaries between science and politics through policy-entrepreneurship).⁴⁷²

Several studies are undertaken under the umbrella of the network literature, emphasising the policy-networks and interaction between think tanks and other actors – defined as a “mode of governance that incorporates actors from both inside and outside government to facilitate decision-making and implementation”.⁴⁷³ This area encompasses various conceptual models, such as ‘policy communities’, ‘epistemic communities’, ‘advocacy coalitions’, and ‘discourse coalitions’. These types of networks may accommodate elite views as networks might exclude the public and those with divergent values and interests, and also Marxists point of views possessing capital by the dominant players within the network.⁴⁷⁴ The advocacy coalition approach highlights the long-term nature of policy and the

⁴⁷² D. Stone, “Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes,” *Public Administration* 85(2) (2007): 260, 275-276.

⁴⁷³ D. Stone 2004, op.cit. 13.

⁴⁷⁴ D. Stone, *ibid.* 13.

processes of altering those including ideational factors which are argued to have been neglected.

The discourse coalition emphasises language and political symbolism influencing how problems are defined and understood as part of an ‘argumentative turn’ in policy research – often derived from epistemological and methodological shifts due to change in political regimes (government).⁴⁷⁵ Stone also refers to this strand of network literature as constructivist due to its emphasis on intersubjective knowledge as a driver and where ideas independently can have an impact on policy. Similarly, Haas argues for ‘consensual knowledge’ and the role of experts in times of policy uncertainties as part of his ‘epistemic communities’ approach.⁴⁷⁶

3.2.3.1 Think tanks and Bourdieu

To the best of my knowledge, the only identified study within the think tank literature which employs a Bourdieusian approach is that of the American scholar Thomas Medvetz. However, in the area of China-policy research and to understand ‘American-ness’ amongst policy-researchers, the established study seems to be a first. Medvetz investigates think tanks as a sociologist within American politics, whereas I am rather researching think tanks as an ‘international problem’ and aligned with the contemporary and emergent area of Bourdieu-research within the IR discipline. Medvetz uses Bourdieu’s synthetic approach of the material and symbolic

⁴⁷⁵ F. Fischer, “Policy Discourse and the Politics of Washington Think Tanks,” in *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, eds. F. Fischer & J. Forester (Duke University Press, 1993), 21-42. See D. Stone 2004, op.cit. 13.

⁴⁷⁶ See D. Stone, ibid. 13, and P.M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *International Organization* 46(1) (1992a): 1-35, P.M. Haas, “Banning chlorofluorocarbons: epistemic community efforts to protect stratospheric ozone,” *International Organization* 46(1) (1992b): 187-224, and P.M. Haas (ed.), *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination* (World Peace Foundation and The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1992c).

when developing the concept of ‘hybrid intellectuals’ in regard to theorising think tanks and public policy experts in the U.S.. He argues that it overcomes the separated constructivist (non-reflexive policy-research where which particular ‘social reality’ of someone does matter) and structuralist (instruments of economic and political power) accounts of understanding think tanks.⁴⁷⁷

In his endeavour to locate typologies concerning think tanks, he applies Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘social space’ and ‘field of power’ in order to break with scholastic definitions and conceptualisation of think tanks, and rather understands think tanks as having different positions in the field due to various amounts of capital and exercising different relations with other players – as “*constitutively hybrid* organizations situated in an intermediate structural position”.⁴⁷⁸ My study provides an opportunity to comment on this from the perspective of the China policy-research environment.⁴⁷⁹

3.2.4 Think tanks in U.S. foreign policy towards China and IR research

The current study researches think tank policy-research experts in regard to what constitutes ‘America-ness’ in their narratives concerning ‘China’ as the mutually constitutive Other. This issue is unfolding within the overarching framework of U.S.-Sino relations in addition to being positioned as an IR study. Although not a focus of the study’s overarching research question, I shall in this sub-section briefly point out the void of think tank research in the above areas. This further illustrates

⁴⁷⁷ T. Medvetz (under review in AJS), “Hybrid intellectuals: Toward a theory of think tanks and public policy experts in the United States,” (2007): 1-2, 35-36.

⁴⁷⁸ T. Medvetz, “Think tanks as an emergent field,” *The Social Science Research Council* (2008), Available from: http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/crm/new_publication_3/%7Ba2a2ba10-b135-de11-afac-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf.

⁴⁷⁹ This will be addressed in the first analysis chapter in this thesis (Chapter Four).

the broad space in the literature which my study is “talking to”, and thus a potential of being relevant to. Indeed, there is a devoid of research focus on think tanks as organisations in studies concerning U.S. foreign policy towards China besides those working within them.

Studies of perceptions of China amongst American political players are not plentiful. Such efforts have largely included partakers other than policy-researchers. Examples encompass perceptions between the countries within a bilateral trajectory (i.e. national perceptions, Chinese and American perceptions of each other, images and symbolic gestures),⁴⁸⁰ scholars and players in educational and scientific exchange schemes,⁴⁸¹ in American print media,⁴⁸² and members of the U.S. Congress.⁴⁸³ An exception relates to a book published by the Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS) comprised of essays concerning mutual perceptions between China and the U.S. The compilation of essays encourages to re-examining images used to perceive each other through exploring views of various professionals – such as global strategists, historians, journalists, military experts, business representatives, human rights activists, and government officials.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁰ D.M. Lampton, *Same bed, different dreams: managing U.S.-China relations, 1989-2000* (University of California Press, 2001), 65, 162, 221, 239, 267, 358, 360.

⁴⁸¹ D.M. Lampton, J.A. Madancy & K.M. Williams, *A relationship restored: trends in U.S.-China educational exchanges, 1978-1984*, Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (U.S.) (Washington, DC: National Academic Press, 1986).

⁴⁸² A. Liss, “Images of China in the American Print Media: a survey from 2000 to 2002,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 12(35) (2003): 299-318.

⁴⁸³ S. Lubman, “The dragon as demon: images of China on Capitol Hill,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 13(4) (2004): 541-565.

⁴⁸⁴ C. McGiffert (ed.), *China in the American Political Imagination*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC (2003). This point was also emphasised by one of my excellent interviewees, Satu P. Limaye, Director of the East-West Center (in DC) – herein that international relations (also with capital letters) often could be better/more broadly be understood when incorporating other levels than that of the state.

Think tanks have been addressed in U.S. foreign policy research, but seldom in a specific relation to another country. These studies feature few or no links to policy issues regarding China.⁴⁸⁵ An interesting exception is Dickson's mentioning of the "blue-team" which also included American think tank members and their forceful communicated threat-perceptions concerning China's military modernisation.⁴⁸⁶ Policy-research experts in think tanks themselves, of course, write about U.S.-Sino relations in terms of policy-issues. The sheer volume of this production, however, ponders on the relations with China and not the role of think tanks per se.

Chinese IR think tanks, however, have been addressed as a separate phenomenon by China hand, Professor David Shambaugh, at the George Washington University and the Brookings Institution. He points out the vast perception gaps of 'the world' between Chinese think tanks and "the rest of the world".⁴⁸⁷ Other studies elucidate think tanks as a key centre for expert knowledge in the Chinese government,⁴⁸⁸ an increasingly influential role in Chinese foreign policy,⁴⁸⁹ as well as their role in policy process of reforms⁴⁹⁰ – including their limitations.⁴⁹¹ The lack of

⁴⁸⁵ D.E. Abelson, *A capitol idea: think tanks and US foreign policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), Donald E. Abelson, *American Think Tanks and their role in US Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996).

⁴⁸⁶ B.J. Dickson, *Red Capitalists in China: The Party, Private Entrepreneurs, and Prospects for Political Change* (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 11.

⁴⁸⁷ D. Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 575-596, and D. Stone, "The Foreign Policy Club," in *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process*, D. Stone (London: Frank Cass, 1996b), 184-202.

⁴⁸⁸ B. Naughton, "China's Economic Think Tanks: Their Changing Role in the 1990s," *China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 625-635.

⁴⁸⁹ B.S. Glaser & P.C. Saunders, "Chinese Civilian Foreign Policy Research Institutes: Evolving Roles and Increasing Influence," *China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 597-616. Bonnie Glaser, another of my excellent interviewees represents some of the few China policy-research experts in my study who has an academic publication record in prominent outlets.

⁴⁹⁰ M.S. Tanner, "Changing Windows on a Changing China: The Evolving 'Think Tank' System and the Case of the Public Security Sector," *China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 559-574, and S. Ming-Shen with D. Stone, "The Chinese tradition of policy research institutes," in *Think Tank Traditions: Policy research and the politics of ideas*, eds. D. Stone & A. Denham (Manchester: University Press, 2004), 141-162.

⁴⁹¹ R. Higgott & D. Stone, "The limits of influence: foreign policy think tanks in Britain and the USA," *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994): 15-34.

communication is evident in Wang's call "to improve matters, Chinese and U.S. government agencies and their foreign policy think tanks should launch a sustained and thorough dialogue on the issue and explore ways to prevent separatist forces from making a rash move" as a means to maintaining stability with the U.S.⁴⁹²

3.2.5 Synthesising: Literature area 2 – Think Tank literature and IR

To reiterate the nature of an exploratory literature review: the focus is directed towards identifying trends in a delimited area of selected literatures and not reviewing the studies themselves. I would like to address three identified features of the specialised think tank literature derived from the above review and in relation to the IR discipline. Firstly, in terms of the two 'school of analyses' propounded by Stone which reflects the scope of think tank research, I argue there is a considerable lack of focus on the actual individuals conducting the *thinking* on conceptual topics (i.e. understanding of 'China' and in essence – 'American-ness'). When a focus has been appointed to individuals, it has often involved political scientists examining the theoretical roles as elites⁴⁹³ within a U.S. domestic political context,⁴⁹⁴ or U.S. Foreign Policy in general.⁴⁹⁵

I suggest that my study warrants and accommodates for an additional, *third* 'school of analysis' in the specific think tank literature. This 'school' instils a focus on the

⁴⁹² J. Wang, "China's Search for Stability with America," *Foreign Affairs* 84(5) (2005): 39-48.

⁴⁹³ See Thomas R. Dye, *Who's running America: The conservative years*, 4th edn (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986) and Joseph G. Peschek, *Policy-Planning Organizations: Elite agendas and America's Rightward Turn* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) – cited by J.A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 311.

⁴⁹⁴ One example, is the benchmark study of US think tanks by J.A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

⁴⁹⁵ D.E. Abelson, *A capitol idea: think tanks and US foreign policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), Donald E. Abelson, *American Think Tanks and their role in US Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996).

thinking of the thinkers, so to speak – in the present study being the conceptualisation of U.S. think tank China policy-research experts' thinking in regard to ‘American-ness’, ‘China’, as well as the Other and Otherness. Thus, I am making a second claim in terms of original contributions of this study, i.e. a conceptual contribution. I consider such undertaking conceptual rather than a theoretical one contemplating on Bourdieu being deployed as a set of *conceptual* “thinking tools” in terms of the *processes* of thinking of (social construction in particular) ideas (i.e. what constitutes ‘China’ and ‘American-ness’).

This is accomplished through both collection of new empirical data (in fact multiple data source through, predominantly in-depth interviews, but also observation and triangulation) as well as novel theoretical synthesis between IR research and the specialised think tank literature. From the former’s point of view, the sociological meso-level which diffuses individual and organisational levels contributes with more research on the non-state level which dominates the IR discipline (and Political Science, more so). I argue there is a substantial relevance to link the specific think tank literature with the IR discipline:

Foreign policy think tanks and institutes of international affairs are of interest to the wider debates in international relations for two reasons. On the one hand, they aspire to be participants – if mostly marginal ones – in the foreign policy making process. On the other hand, notwithstanding the tension between these two roles, some contribute directly to international relations *as a field of study*.⁴⁹⁶

Second, as far as theoretical frameworks are concerned, Bourdieu has been diminutively employed as a thinker (i.e. conceptual/analytical framework) in the specialised think tank literature. A Bourdieusian-inspired study, therefore, signals a

⁴⁹⁶ R. Higgott & D. Stone, “The limits of influence: foreign policy think tanks in Britain and the USA,” *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994): 15-34.

novel way of studying policy-researchers and, secondary, the think tanks they are affiliated to. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice beckons various lines of inquiries due to the operationalisation of his conceptual "thinking tools". This has the profound potential to unveil additional layers of information and untangle complex and nuanced 'universe of data' collected in the field. Moreover, the focus on policy-researchers might fruitfully increase interests of this evident part of the policy-world in IR as the research agenda pertains to the divide between the world of academia and practitioners.⁴⁹⁷

Third, the focus on conceptualising policy-research experts' perceptions of 'China', in which analysis of 'American-ness' is realised, provides an avenue for purporting a rare perspective concerning U.S. foreign policies towards China and U.S.-Sino relations in general – those of China policy-research experts.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the research trends, in accordance to the style of an exploratory review,⁴⁹⁸ in chiefly two bodies of literatures: Bourdieu in IR research, and the specific think tank literature. The established study is positioned within, and thus "talks to", the IR discipline. The exploratory review both indicates space in the literature for the present study, and effectively, justifies it. This review has established the relevance for a study deploying Bourdieu's practice theory to analyse policy-researchers' "China-narratives" and what constitutes 'American-ness' – which subsequently warrants a new, third, 'school of analysis' in the specialised think tank literature. Relevance is also identified for showing the importance of

⁴⁹⁷ D. Stone 1996a, op.cit. 207, 211, 212.

⁴⁹⁸ See A.B. Thomas 2004, op.cit. 72-73.

culture and a social constructionist epistemology in IR research, in addition to being able to portray perspectives of policy-researchers on U.S. foreign policies towards China as well as more broadly within U.S.-Sino relations. I am also promulgating and seeking theoretical advancement through the use of Bourdieu – in particular with a focus on the relationality between his conceptual “thinking tools” and making use of them concurrently.

The first chapter in this thesis outlines the investigatory frame of the present study by unpacking the overarching research question as well as delimiting the scope of the inquiry and the various elements of the research design. The second chapter aims to justify the relevance of the study in addition to identify the space in the literature concerning how my study can contribute with original knowledge (i.e. IR constructivist research programmes, specific think tank literature, as well as U.S. Politics and Foreign Policy (towards China)) and novelty (i.e. first ethnographic study of think tanks and first within a Bourdieusian conceptual framework – to the best of my knowledge). Chapter Three ('theoretical framework') elaborates on the theories and concepts applied in this study which was set-out in Chapter One. This Chapter establishes the theoretical approach to collect, analyse, and present data and findings (i.e. lays out the explanatory framework). In concert, these three chapters comprise the theoretical framework of the thesis. This foundation reflects how and why data has been analysed, scrutinised, problematised, criticised, and presented in the ensuing analysis chapters (Chapter Four – Six).

- “We think, therefore we are”

Commentary on the prominent presence of think tanks in U.S. politics and foreign affairs – a paraphrasing of Descartes’ ‘Cogito ergo sum’ (“I think, therefore I am”)⁴⁹⁹

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM A ‘SOCIAL FIELD’: THE CHINA POLICY-RESEARCH EXPERT COMMUNITY IN U.S. THINK TANKS

4.0 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate a multitude of social phenomena which impinge on the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” and associated work practices by China policy-research experts across U.S. think tanks anchored in Washington, DC.⁵⁰⁰ This is achieved by positioning the community of China-policy research experts as a Bourdieusian ‘social field’. The analysis is predominantly based on in-depth interviews, but also draws upon collected written material, descriptive statistics, and participant observation (including of material culture/contextuality). Conceptually, this effort is chiefly utilising Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘field’ and

⁴⁹⁹ See René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1644 [1991]) where the subsequent Latin version of the phrase appeared. There are numerous confusions and disagreements over the credibility and plausibility over Descartes’ original statement - “Je pense donc je suis” (in French, in *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, 1637) – which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is an interesting observation to make as it could potentially serve as an innovative and different perspective on investigating think tanks – for example, the relational elements of ‘existing’ in terms of individual policy-researchers’ thinking on the one hand, and physicality of organisations on the other. This is touched upon below, and deserves further attention in future research endeavours.

⁵⁰⁰ This first analysis chapter signals the commencement of Part B in the thesis, i.e. analysis/empirical chapters.

‘capital’. Furthermore, social theoretically, the engagement with Bourdieu is not merely an effort in applying his “thinking-tools” as a means to collect, analyse and present data, but also to conjoin with his sociology of sociology in a dialectic manner through informing the analysis in a “bottom-up” fashion. This has the potential to propose additions to Bourdieu’s Practice Theory delineated from empirical findings. This further begets to contribute to broadening Bourdieu’s theoretical application to the IR discipline as part of the *Bourdiesuan* ‘sociological turn’ and its evolving research agenda.⁵⁰¹

This Chapter is divided as follows. First, the premise of the chapter, and its investigatory scope, are explicated. Second, the alignments with the overarching research framework of this study are illuminated. Third (the main section of this chapter), I shall paint the ‘social field’ of China policy-research experts through Bourdieusian lenses by applying, predominantly, his key concepts of ‘field’ and ‘capital’. Additionally, the inquiry will also address the relationality between Bourdieu’s concepts,⁵⁰² and subsequently introducing and illuminating unveiled aspects and/or additional concepts warranted by the field-research. I will be interfacing my field-data in particularly with the work of Tom Medvetz – who has advanced think tank research in a *relational* direction including deploying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice. The fourth section discusses impacting facets, including social phenomena such as influence, the conundrum with defining think tanks, associated roles identified in relation to think tanks, and contesting the usage of ‘expert’ amongst policy-researchers. Furthermore, when warranted as part of the

⁵⁰¹ See the Special Issue ‘Bourdieu and the International’ (volume 5, issue 3 (2011), pp. 219-347, of the *International Political Sociology*).

⁵⁰² This is lacking not only in IR but in the social sciences in general (see David L. Swartz, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” *Theory and Society* 37 (2008): 45-52).

self-reflexive deliberation, I will critically reflect on my own personal experiences in the field – as an ‘objectification’ of personal contemplations. Fifth, in the concluding section of this chapter, I will articulate the main arguments running through this Chapter – which is to be synthesised with the proposed areas of main contributions of the thesis in its entirety. A self-reflexive discourse shall display my subjective decisions in regard to choosing particular lines of inquiries and areas of literature to juxtapose field-data with.

4.1 The premise of this chapter – concepts and terms

This sub-section briefly reiterates the assumptions made, pertinent to the chosen lines of inquiry in this particular Chapter, on seven accounts: the plausibility of equating policy-researchers with expertise; the relationship between policy-research and China (the country); the existence of a *community* amongst China policy-research experts; the approach of equating the community with a *Bourdieuian field*; the boundaries of what constitutes a ‘think tank’; the appropriateness of including research subjects localised in New York; in addition to the links between China policy-researchers as a community with the construct of being a Bourdieuian field and the influence of being a sociological meso-field.

First, although being contestable, I am not disputing the notion that China policy-research experts can be labelled as experts/specialists on China and/or the realm of U.S.-Sino relations (if that is the way he/she presents themselves as) and if reflecting an aspect (i.e. claimed expertise/specialisation) of ‘social reality’ within the China policy-research community based on how they socially construct and strategise within the architecture of this ‘social field’.

Most policy-researchers list their areas of expertise/specialisation on their websites – and for the same reason, I am not differentiating the latter term from the former due to both formulations seek, and enjoy, the role of authority (to various degrees) in the public sphere. For example, John A. Bolton, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) frequents in the role as expert-commentator on various Fox News Channel programmes. In fact, the notion of being an expert/specialist served as a main principle for deciding whom would be deemed part of my “sample” – which also would include those who had written extensively on China but without necessarily listing ‘China’ as an area of expertise/specialisation (but for example “East-Asia”). It is a term that policy-researchers are baffled with themselves. In effect, this reflects an important boundary-marker in their self-categorisation as ‘policy-researchers’. Hence, a discussion concerning expertise as an influential factor becomes interesting and warranted to scrutinise as a means to grasp the aforesaid ‘social field’, and consequently representing a finding in its own right (which will be discussed later in this Chapter).

Second, expertise is not precluded to those investigating the People’s Republic of China only.⁵⁰³ With few exceptions, most analysts conduct policy-research in additional countries and/or themes⁵⁰⁴ other than China – and occasionally not having China as a *main* area of specialisation.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, there are also policy-researchers

⁵⁰³ An example relates to Malou Innocent, Foreign Policy Analyst at the CATO Institute, who also researchers Afghanistan and Pakistan (see <http://www.cato.org/people/malou-innocent>).

⁵⁰⁴ An example is Debra Liang-Fenton at the US Institute for Peace who researchers democracy and peace across various the African and Asian continents (see <http://www.usip.org/experts/debra-liang-fenton>).

⁵⁰⁵ For example, Satu Limaye, Director of the East-West Institute in Washington, DC, who researchers also on the Asia-Pacific in general as well as Japan and India (see <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/about-ewc/directory/satu.limaye>, n.d.).

with a particular expertise/specialisation relating to China.⁵⁰⁶ In the undertaken study, any policy-researcher who has claimed specialisation/expertise (thus, authority) on China and/or U.S.-Sino relations (or particular aspects of it) has been deemed eligible for this study. There are also nuances – expertise/specialisation on China and in regard to U.S.-Sino relations, are often used interchangeably by think tanks themselves as well as in public discourse – hence, not problematised.

Furthermore, there is what I call “issue-experts”,⁵⁰⁷ i.e. those who study China (and might claim/portray some degree of authority in this regard among external audiences). This may be accomplished due to the nature of the issue rather than expertise/specialisation/interest/motivation concerning China and/or U.S.-Sino relations. Seth Cropsey, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, investigates China predominantly due to his expertise in international security and terrorism (naval and maritime issues specifically) where U.S.-China relations in the South-China Sea makes China, indeed, an unavoidable country to include in your research.⁵⁰⁸ Similarly, Keith Crane, Director of Environment, Energy and Economic Development at the RAND Corporations, repeatedly avoided to answer questions (during our interview) concerning the political aspects of U.S. foreign policies towards China (and U.S.-Sino relations in general) as his specialisation related to

⁵⁰⁶ For example Louisa Greve, Vice President for Middle East/North Africa, East Asia and South/South East Asia, Multiregional programmes (see <http://www.ned.org/louisa-greve>), who specialises on democracy particularly in relation to China, and Alan D. Romberg, Distinguished Fellow (East-Asia), at the Henry L. Stimson Center, who focuses specifically on Cross-Strait relations in regard to China (and Asia in general) (see <http://www.stimson.org/experts/alan-d-romberg/>).

⁵⁰⁷ Hence, assuming such authority might be intended or unintended – or a result of intentionality, and conscious and unconscious).

⁵⁰⁸ See http://www.hudson.org/learn/index.cfm?fuseaction=staff_bio&eid=CropSeth.

military modernisation (which makes China of utmost importance) but not China per se.⁵⁰⁹

Third, the existence of a community comprised by policy-research experts on China can be justified by empirical evidence. In an email from Jennifer L. Turner, Director of the China Environment Forum at the Wilson Center, indicates a closely knit congregation of China policy-research people within the DC think tank environment.⁵¹⁰ Her colleague at the Wilson Center, Sue Levenstein, a Programme Assistant on the Asia Programme, expressed when probed about a community:

Absolutely... you know, in my experience, just from interacting with people who work on a particular issue, is that regardless if it's China or if it's Pakistan, everyone knows each other. And you go to these think tank meetings and it's all the same people, who show up, and knowing it is a small world – it is a small world – everybody knows each other by name.⁵¹¹

As an extension of the evidence imparted above, when interacting with interviewees and other policy-researchers, nobody seemingly rejected the notion of a *China community* across the DC think tank environment. Arguably, it is a social construction, and practised space, which already exist.⁵¹² Observations in the field also support the notion of a China-community, for example in the recycling of speakers.⁵¹³ This point is echoed by Bryce Wakefield, a Programme Associate (Asia) at the Wilson Centre:

⁵⁰⁹ See http://www.rand.org/about/people/c/crane_keith.html.

⁵¹⁰ Email correspondence 4th April 2011, Jennifer L. Turner, Wilson Center.

⁵¹¹Levenstein, Sue. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 24, 2011 (006-F).

⁵¹² In interviews and invitation to partake in my study via email, I often referred to "China-thinking" and "China-community". As there are multiple 'social realities' (see Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2007)), I make no assumption that the boundaries of these community are not varied – a point which ties into the notion of the field being a 'cross-over field' which performs a constitutive hybrid social space.

⁵¹³ This point should not be exaggerated; to some extent it is a natural phenomenon due to think tanks often find themselves only having one or a couple of people working on China (from a methodological point of view, thus, it

(...) those think tanks will often have the same people speaking (...) for an event at a certain think tank – they basically bring in *their* expert.⁵¹⁴

Importantly, the construction of ‘community’ should not be mistaken as an epistemic community as the descriptions and analysis of China, and in effect U.S-Sino relations, are dynamic and vast within the DC think tank environment. Thus, the Bourdieusian construct of a ‘social field’ differs from Haas’ notion of epistemic communities in several ways:⁵¹⁵ China policy-research experts do collectively reflect a body of professionals pursuing influence through providing knowledge to policy-makers. Furthermore, they are known to each other as some sort of network. However, by no means does this China-field feature policy-researchers who all possess the label as a ‘recognised expert’ or that universal mechanisms concerning how to validate ‘expertise’ is instituted. Furthermore, as a group, they do not share a set of normative and casual beliefs, intersubjective understandings or are creating one mutually acknowledged reality.

Fourth, there are two entwined facets to this point, namely the relevance of approaching the China policy-research community as a field (Bourdieuian sense) on the one hand, and the germane linkage between applying the notion of ‘field’ in regard to the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” on the other. The former facet relates to elucidating the opportunities, strengths, and limitations that China policy-research experts face during work and production of their “China-thinking”. The Bourdieusian lens provides a vocabulary for analysing the China policy-research

made more sense not to conduct a comparative study of China policy-researchers *between* think tanks). A more interesting minor point relates to ideological boundaries in this regard; during my time in the field and the myriad of events which ensued, would extremely rarely feature speakers from the other end of that spectrum.

⁵¹⁴Wakefield, Bryce. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. May 19, 2011 (005-E).

⁵¹⁵ See Peter M. Haas 1992a, op.cit.: 3.

community coherently – and appropriately so – contemplating on the present relational aspects (as shown above).

This extends to the second facet, herein that “China-thinking” does not evolve detached from cultural structures or organisational factors but rather dialectically in symbiosis with such surroundings – where thinking also relates to negotiated social realities.⁵¹⁶ Again, the construct of being a ‘field’ – hence a meso-field – enhances the focus on the enmeshed macro-structures and micro-individuals and not investigating policy-researchers in isolation.

Fifth, the organisations included in this study are assumed to be identified as ‘think tanks’. However, two of them do not label themselves as such in terms of their self-image.⁵¹⁷ For example, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) creates distance to the ‘think tank’ identity. Louise Greve (NED), states at the very outset in our interview:

NED is not a think tank. It is primarily a grant-making institution. It is a private organisation, organised and incorporated in Washington as what we call 501(c)3. The classic straight forward non-profit registration status under U.S law. And the intention was to serve, however, a public purpose, which is to provide non-governmental support from the U.S. to counterparts abroad who are working for democracy in their own countries (...) private actor to private actor, but with public money, so it has a public purpose, it has a public character – at the same time NED staff are not governmental employees, we have our own Board of Directors who are private citizens (...) always bi-partisan (...). It is a mixed character in some ways.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Two such ‘macrostructures’ have been established in this thesis (see Chapter Two); think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon (focal point of this chapter) and U.S.-Sino relations. This does not, of course, imply an assumption that there exist no other relevant and impactful phenomena in this ‘field’.

⁵¹⁷ Two out of 23 think tanks in my “sample”.

⁵¹⁸ Interview, Louise Greve, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) (002-B, recording: 00:11).

In the aforesaid email from Jennifer L. Turner at the Wilson Center, expresses “we actually don't call ourselves a think tank, but I can explain that later!”⁵¹⁹ This point was echoed by her colleague, Bryce Wakefield:

We are actually not supposed to call ourselves as a think tank, and rightfully so, we are a center for *advanced research*.⁵²⁰

The justification for including NED and the Wilson Center are based on the following. Epistemologically, this study seeks to grasp the nuances of the multiple ‘social realities’ which exists “out there” where organisations such as NED and the Wilson Center are indeed considered as think tanks. No other interviewees discounted them as such as they are both evident in the broader policy-networks in addition to the general think tank scene. Thus, the identity as ‘think tank’ is externalised by audiences beyond these actors’ self-image.⁵²¹ This sentiment is accentuated by both NED and the Wilson Center appear, and prominently so, on the influential McGann ranking of influential *think tanks*.⁵²² Furthermore, the organisations gladly accepted my invitations to partake in the study (which explicitly targeted, and requested, ‘*think tanks*’).⁵²³

Sixth, this study has included both research subjects as well as think tanks located in New York.⁵²⁴ The rational relates to the following, in addition to appropriately being

⁵¹⁹ Email from Turner, Wilson Center.

⁵²⁰ Interview, Bryce Wakefield (005-E). 29.59

⁵²¹ See C. Lemert and A. Branaman (eds), *The Goffman Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), 2-3.

⁵²² This is a somewhat two-edge sword, also experienced by Norwegian think tanks which attempt to uphold the academic elevation and thus distance themselves from the “think tank” label (often allotted a binary meaning of ideologised/party-politics), which is relational – herein, ‘think tanks’ perceived as “non-academic”. However, they gladly announce their prominent positions on the McGann ranking. See PRIO and NUPI.

⁵²³ See my invitation-email.

⁵²⁴ I conducted three interviews in New York as part of my study (the fourth one was cancelled due to changes in Trevor Houser’s itinerary, Visiting Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a Partner at the Rhodium Group).

part of a “convenience sampling”. For example, Dan H. Rosen who works, and was interviewed, at the Rhodium Group located on 10 East 40th Street address in New York, is a Visiting Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics (DC).⁵²⁵ This makes him an eligible interviewee and I would argue that his physical location would rescind the counter-argument. The same applies to Leland R. Miller who works in a New York based global strategy and management consultancy firm, but is conjunctually affiliated with the American Foreign Policy Council (in DC) as a Fellow in International Economics.⁵²⁶

Additionally, the head-quarters of the Asia Society is located on a fashionable 725 Park Avenue address (in New York), but has a very active branch-office in Washington, DC, where I attended several events on Chinese Outward Direct Investment in the United States, and socio-historic comparisons of India and China.⁵²⁷ Thus, in all instances, they are affiliated via their organisations to Washington, DC. And again, from a social constructionist perspective, their presence in DC also makes them part of the think tank environment and surrounding ‘social realities’ there, and I am not “authorised” to discount these nuances in a study aiming to be informed by the field-data (“bottom-up”). In fact, it provides a ‘social reality’ concerning the relationship between the DC and New York think tank environment.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ See Dan H. Rosen, http://www.iie.com/staff/author_bio.cfm?author_id=18.

⁵²⁶ See Leland R. Miller <http://www.avascentinternational.com/International/About/Leadership/Leland-R-Miller.aspx>.

⁵²⁷ On 21 June and 27 June 2011, respectively.

⁵²⁸ See sub-section on ‘impacting dimension’ later on in this chapter.

4.2 Aligning this chapter with the overarching research framework

This sub-section will demonstrate the “methodological fit” between the present chapter and the overarching research framework of the study.⁵²⁹ The three empirical/analysis chapters in this thesis (i.e. Section B) interface with the four core aspects in Section A (i.e. social constructionism, Bourdieu, methodology, and significance) – in addition to overarching facets of contributions – as signposted below.

For this particular chapter,⁵³⁰ illuminated empirical findings are connecting with all areas of proposed contribution of this thesis.⁵³¹ This is achieved by applying Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools” on new collected data in order to supplement original knowledge to the specific think tank literature (through a particular focus on the China policy-research expert community/’field’). This infuses with the corresponding main arguments purported in this thesis: the relevance of deploying Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”, which elucidates the potential for obtaining more in-depth, meaning and context-based understanding of factors impinging on the “China-thinking” in U.S. think tanks and work-practices, in addition to achieving deeper and contextualised understanding of the ‘field’ (for example the hurdle of defining think tanks) through a focus on relationality. Furthermore, the focus on the actual policy-researchers as individual thinkers unfolds the fruitful prospects of introducing a third ‘school of analysis’ in the specialised think tank literature – and

⁵²⁹ See Amy C. Edmondson and Stacey E. McManus, “Methodological fit in management field research,” *Academy of Management Review* 32(4) (2007): 1155-1179; Tatiana Zalan and Geoffrey Lewis, “Writing About Methods in Qualitative Research: Towards a More Transparent Approach,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, eds Rebecca Marschan-Piekkari et al. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004): 507-528).

⁵³⁰ The current Chapter Four.

⁵³¹ See point 5.0 (Chapter One); employment of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tool” as part of adding to the Bourdieusian ‘sociological-turn’ of IR, new primary data-collecting (featuring novelty due to applying Bourdieu to policy-research experts themselves within U.S. think tanks), and consequently, the prospects of developing new propositions based on identified empirical data.

as important voices regarding U.S. foreign policy towards China – in addition to elevating individuals and think tank organisations as non-state players in International Relations (IR) research. It brings policy-researchers' own thinking and conceptualisations to the forefront of the specialised think tank literature – and on the IR research agenda (exalting the individual level), and its sub-fields such as U.S. Politics, U.S. Foreign Policy, and U.S.-Sino relations.

The specific arguments put forward in this particular chapter substantiate the above areas of contributions and arguments. Based on the new collected empirical data, the scope of such argument encompass the following:⁵³² relationality of the ‘field’ and ‘capital’ concepts and their explanatory power in terms of the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” and work practices, moving beyond the issue of defining think tanks through making sense of the configuration of the China policy-research field and roles played within them, problematising the relationship between policy-researchers as individuals and think tanks as organisations, opposing Medvetz’ findings regarding the highly contestable nature of ‘expertise’ and ‘academician’, the arguably need for a more nuanced concept of influence and impact where Bourdieu’s practice theory is particularly helpful in grasping ability for “positioning”, advancing Medvetz’ model of think tanks as a Bourdieusian ‘field’, and proposing further nuancing of Bourdieu’s concept warranted by the collected field-data. Moreover, it takes stance with mainstream constructivist research programmes in IR research which tends to assume ideas and constructions as precursors for materiality and structures as opposed to being a dialect where contextuality of context would rather determine the nature of this nexus and interplay.

⁵³² Listed in random order.

Lastly, a sufficient degree of significance can also be derived from the prospects of relevance to research beyond the IR discipline (the disciplinary foothold of this study) through the *sociological* ‘turn’ of IR research. This relates particularly to Swartz encouragements for incorporating multiple conceptual “thinking tools” conjunctually in addition to focusing on the relationality between them. Furthermore, new angles of operationalising the aforementioned “thinking tools” will also be presented when warranted by the analysis of obtained data.⁵³³

4.3 The ‘social field’ of China policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks

In this main sub-section of the current chapter, I am proposing how the ‘social field’ of China policy-research experts can be constructed. In addition, I address an array of factors which plausibly influence the ‘field’ – and in particular the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” and associated work-practices across the think tanks, anchored in Washington, DC. These lines of inquiry are warranted by the data collected in the field, which I juxtapose with selected bodies of established literature – and in particular Medvetz’ work on the application of Bourdieu to inquiry about think tanks.⁵³⁴ In my opinion, Medvetz has advanced the social theoretical inquiry into key issues concerning think tanks, and his work is particularly pertinent to address due to having produced the only published work which incorporates Bourdieu regarding U.S. think tanks (to the best of my knowledge).

In my analysis, I principally draw upon Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking-tools” of ‘field’ and ‘capital’. The engagement with Bourdieu is not only a cosmetic one (to

⁵³³ This relates to, for example, the relationality between actors in the field (i.e. individuals and organisations) and the interplay between different forms of capital and indeed the warranted necessity to problematise the concept of capital itself.

⁵³⁴ See literature review (Chapter Three) for a presentation of Medvetz’ work in this regard.

show the relevance and a style of presentation) – but more importantly – to utilise his sociology of sociology to unveil additional layers of obtained field-data, and secondly, to accommodate for proposing modifications and/or additions to this conceptual/analytical framework itself – if warranted by the data, that is.⁵³⁵ This is a cornerstone in the ‘cyclic research’ process associated with a social constructionist epistemology coupled with an ethnographic research strategy.

4.3.1 Architecture of the field⁵³⁶

The positioning of this study as a sociological meso-level is apposite due to Bourdieu’s ‘field’ is innately a meso-field. A field, according to Wacquant, is a social arena containing struggles for particular stakes (and accessing them) where the boundary of the field is ascertained by the “stakes at stake” and agents’ positions based on the capital they possess.⁵³⁷ This approach has positive implications on the presentation of empirical evidence as well as the analysis of obtained data through achieving further sense-making of the ‘field’. Furthermore, this path accommodates for unveiling new directions for analysing policy-researchers and their affiliated think tanks through a coherent social theoretical vocabulary with a focus on relationality and enmeshed contextuality.

⁵³⁵ See points 2.1 (Chapter Two) for an in-depth explanation concerning deploying Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools” as this study’s conceptual/analytical framework, as well as 3.1.7 on theoretical advancements (Chapter Three).

⁵³⁶ Although a central operation when applying Bourdieu’s field, constructing a ‘social topology’ (mapping the ‘field’ in terms of ‘objective structures’ of the positions which comprise the field and interrelationships competing for capital) (Jenkins 2002, Pierre Bourdieu, op.cit., p. 86), is arguably beyond the purview of this PhD. Such a task would be unmanageable within the parameters of any doctoral research project; for example, Bourdieu employed more than 50 “disciples” at the College of Europe (similarly to Prof Didier Bigo at King’s College) as a means to collect and run statistics of various fields. This omission (in my study) is deemed appropriate as I am only investigating a particular number of actors within the China policy-research community – as a ‘field’ – and neither the conceptualised field itself nor the homologised relations to other ‘fields’.

⁵³⁷ Bourdieu and Wacquant 2003, op.cit. 37-41.

The relations between Bourdieu's 'field' and individuals should not be understood as an orthodox where fields can be categorised as structure and individuals as agency. Rather, such field reflects a constantly transforming dialectical phenomenon of thinking *relational*⁵³⁸. In the same vein, the meso-level does not taxonomically distinguish between microindividual and macro-structural "levels"⁵³⁹. Here, Bourdieu states that in theoretical analysis, an observer's relation to the social world (i.e. 'China' and 'American-ness') is also a product of the constructed rules and models (representations) accounting for the social relations making such observation possible.⁵⁴⁰ Furthermore, 'social reality' is constructed through negotiations where social structures are also created through agency.

Consequently, to taxonomically distinguish, as social actors, the 'group'/'organisation' (think tanks) from the 'individual' (policy-researchers), is empirically unsound and illogical.⁵⁴¹ The China policy-research 'field' predominantly comprises both individual policy-researchers in China-related areas *as well as* think tanks (aka institutions) as social agents, or occupants, in a network of objective relations.⁵⁴² This involves, according to Jenkins, "to think in terms of a field involves recognising the centrality of social relations to social analysis".⁵⁴³ Policy-researchers and affiliated think tanks are entwined in structured social positions. Thus, this approach depicts the situation and relational position of

⁵³⁸ Professor Bigo lecture, *Bourdieu in International Relations*, University of Warwick, 21 February 2012.

⁵³⁹ See Bruhn & Rebach 2007, op.cit. 115-145.

⁵⁴⁰ Bourdieu, *The Logical of Practice*, op.cit. 29.

⁵⁴¹ This is an important point which should be further problematised when it comes to the notion of multi-level analysis in the quantitative research paradigm (analysis of human nature). For example in International Business research it is common-place to compare such levels, but arguably there are a lot of decisions and behaviour which are generated amongst individual on the 'firm-level' and it is not possible to distinguish the extent of context influence between these artificial "levels" of analysis.

⁵⁴² See Wacquant 1979, 'Toward a Reflexive Sociology', op.cit. 39.

⁵⁴³ Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 84.

aforesaid social agents in this particular field, in addition to its internal power structures in which capital chiefly defines what positions are being held and actors' "feel for the game" in this structured system. As a result, context, institutions, organisations are also incorporated into the analysis albeit the individual policy-researchers are the focal point of this inquiry. It is within this symbiosis where the "China-thinking", and thus Self/Other constellations, are dynamically evolving.

This begs the question concerning the, supposedly, two 'units of analysis', i.e. individual policy-researchers on the one hand, and think tanks as organisations on the other. This area not particularly problematised in Bourdieu's work. My empirical evidence exemplifies two central points in this regard: The presence of non-linear, multiple relationships between the individual policy-researchers and their affiliated think tanks (which employ them), in addition to conjoining facet of the enmeshed, inseparable nature of individuality and organisations. This assertion permeates the below analysis where the 'individual' and the 'organisational' cannot be taxonomically distinguished.⁵⁴⁴ This line of inquiry has also shown to be highly relevant when discussing other, aforementioned social phenomena, due to Bourdieu also argues that these objective relationships between the relative positions of different 'occupants' in the field, which are determining possessed capital – rather than the actors per se.⁵⁴⁵

As far as the former is concerned, the relationships between individual policy-researchers and think tank organisations are *non-linear, non-fixed, and multiple*: 50%

⁵⁴⁴ This has baffled social scientists from the onset of the disciplinary history, for example Weber and Durkheim.

⁵⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. (Stanford: University Press, 1996a), 181-2

of my research subjects are also formally affiliated/employed members of other current organisations. This includes, for example within the think tank sphere; Ellen Frost (Peterson Institute for International Economics),⁵⁴⁶ Bonnie Glaser (Center for Strategic and International Studies),⁵⁴⁷ and Malou Innocent (CATO)⁵⁴⁸ – do all hold ongoing memberships with the Council of Foreign Affairs (CFA) and International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Furthermore, Pieter Bottelier of the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the John Hopkins University (JHU) is formally attached as a non-resident fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,⁵⁴⁹ a senior diplomat in the State Department is also working with the National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), and Charles Horner (Hudson Institute) is serving on committees within the US Institute for Peace.⁵⁵⁰

Evidently, linkages between individuals and organisations are also *multi-directional* – traceable as multiple affiliations beyond the think tanks sphere. This entails, for example, with the academe – Andre Laliberte (Wilson Center) lectures at the University of Ottawa,⁵⁵¹ Adam Hersh (Center for American Progress) lectures at the University of Massachusetts,⁵⁵² Jamie Metzl (Asia Society) is teaching human rights law at Georgetown University,⁵⁵³ Dan Rosen (Peterson) lectures at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs,⁵⁵⁴ and Stein D. Tønnesson

⁵⁴⁶ See http://www.iie.com/staff/author_bio.cfm?author_id=72.

⁵⁴⁷ See <http://csis.org/expert/bonnie-s-glaser>.

⁵⁴⁸ See <http://www.cato.org/people/malou-innocent>.

⁵⁴⁹ See <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/faculty/directory/bios/b/bottelier.htm> and http://carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=expert_view&expert_id=466

⁵⁵⁰ See http://www.hudson.org/learn/index.cfm?fuseaction=staff_bio&eid=CharHorner

⁵⁵¹ See <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/staff/andre-laliberte>

⁵⁵² See <http://www.americanprogress.org/experts/HershAdam.html/>

⁵⁵³ See <http://asiasociety.org/jamie-metzl>

⁵⁵⁴ See Dan H. Rosen, http://www.iie.com/staff/author_bio.cfm?author_id=18.

(USIP) is employed at Uppsala Uni in Sweden.⁵⁵⁵ This also reflects the existence of asymmetric relationships within such linkages. Whereas Laliberte and Tønnesson are typical examples of foremost being academics working in universities and associate themselves with think tanks through prominent (employed) visitorships – the other examples reflect that the think tank functions as their primary organisation. Tønnesson also reflects an additional nuance because his principal organisation is in fact another (Norwegian) think tank; the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).⁵⁵⁶ These multifaceted affiliations have an influence on the positioning (and capabilities) in the ‘field’ relating to the type, amount and consolidation of capital – which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Other spheres include the entanglement with the corporate world herein Leland Miller (America Foreign Affairs Council and a global strategy management consultancy firm),⁵⁵⁷ Nathaniel Ahrens (CSIS, who also manages various business ventures in China, and previously with the Carnegie),⁵⁵⁸ in addition to other non-think tank organisations such as Luke Schoen (World Resources Institute and the China FAQs), and governmental bodies (American Enterprise Institute’s Dan Blumenthal who is also serving on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, as well as the Project 2049 Institute).⁵⁵⁹ The case of Blumenthal also

⁵⁵⁵ See <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/People/Person/?oid=20351> and <http://www.usip.org/fellows/index.html> and http://www.pcr.uu.se/about/staff/Stein_Tonnesson

⁵⁵⁶ I spent two months as a Visiting Researcher at PRIO (Director’s Office), an internationally leading academic think tank, in 2011, Oslo, Norway. I am very grateful for the opportunity to learn about Norwegian think tanks and to interact with their extraordinary friendly and rigorous staff. Furthermore, it was an utmost joy and learning experience to interview their former Director, Stein D. Tønnesson in Washington, DC (then representing the USIP).

⁵⁵⁷ See Leland R. Miller <http://www.avascentinternational.com/International/About/Leadership/Leland-R-Miller.aspx> (no longer with the AFAC).

⁵⁵⁸ See <http://csis.org/expert/nathaniel-ahrens> and http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=494

⁵⁵⁹ See <http://www.aei.org/scholar/dan-blumenthal/> and http://project2049.net/who_we_are.html#boardofadvisors

illustrates the existing multiplicity beyond two linkages (in addition to the main affiliated think tank).⁵⁶⁰

On the flipside of the coin, the latter aspect relates to the enmeshed nature of individuality and think tanks as organisations – where both qualify to the role of Bourdieu’s social agents in the ‘field’. I propagate to problematise this relation which is assumed to have equating boundaries in Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Being positioned as a meso-level reminds us about their interrelationship where agents are socialised into the ‘field’. The boundary-construction of ‘social reality’, ‘habitus’, and ‘capital’ of individuals do not equate with those of the organisational – nonetheless, these constituents of the ‘social field’ do not possess faculties to operate in isolation. Thinking in terms of ‘field’ – hence thinking *relationally* – prompts the social analysis to incorporate the properties of the meso-level. As it will be shown below, this distinction is crucial as ‘capital’ arguably operates across this divide – where capital ought to be understood as individual and organisational (as empirical evidence suggests above) – but they cannot be fully comprehended in isolation – only dialectically.

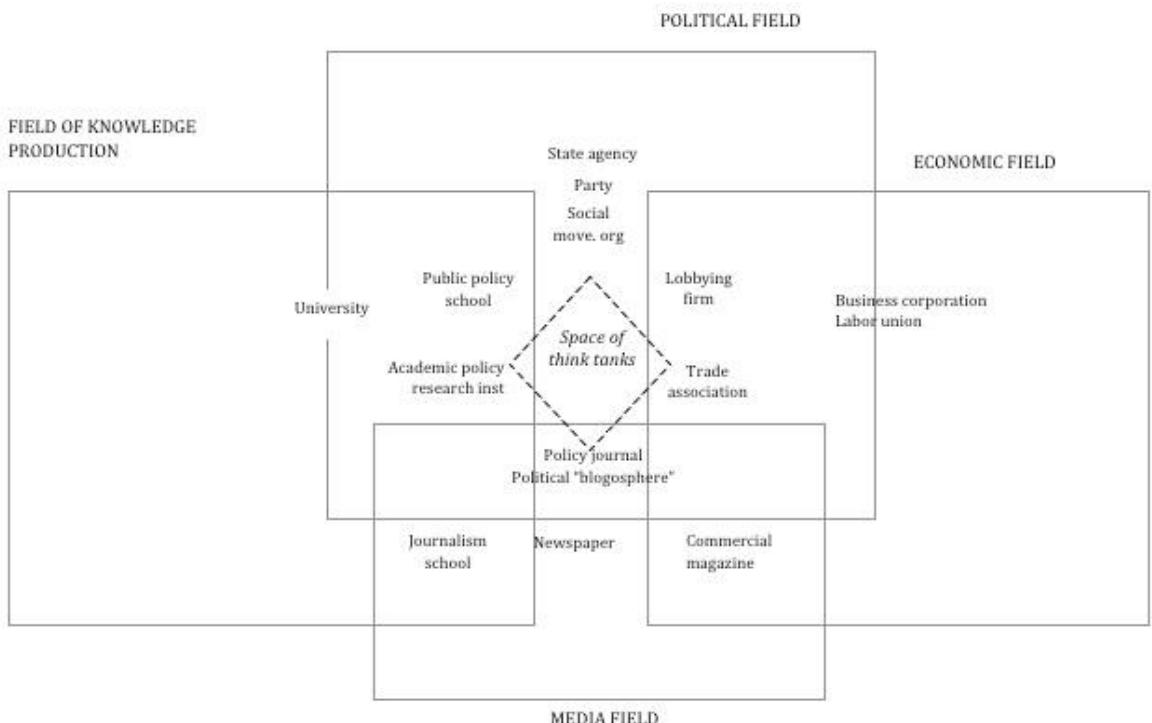
The above explicated aspects of dynamic and enmeshed relationships between individual policy-researchers and their affiliated think tanks – what I refer to as a “crossover” feature of the ‘field’ – reminisce with Medvetz’ argument concerning a hybrid ‘social field’ of think tanks (see figure 1 below).⁵⁶¹ I am in particularly interfacing my line of inquiry with Medvetz’ work, chiefly due to the following: his

⁵⁶⁰ I am not making a chart as the identification of multiple, non-linear and asymmetric linkages are not the principal ‘unit of analysis’ in this study, although important.

⁵⁶¹ See Medvetz 2008, op.cit.

work on think tanks, is one of the few scholars, to the best of my knowledge, who comprehensively incorporates and deploys Bourdieu's sociology of sociology in the analysis of think tanks and policy-research experts.⁵⁶²

Figure 1 – Medvetz' think tank model in social space⁵⁶³



I concur with Medvetz on three broad accounts in his effort to advance think tank research by deploying relational thinking via Bourdieu's social theory;⁵⁶⁴ that think tanks are constitutively hybrid organisations,⁵⁶⁵ the plausibility for depicting the preceding points in a multi-dimensional thinking-model as a heuristic device in order to feature Bourdieu's 'fields of power';⁵⁶⁶ that a social topology is relevant for

⁵⁶² See Medvetz, *ibid.*; Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University Press, 2012a).

⁵⁶³ © Tom Medvetz 2008, *ibid.* 6.

⁵⁶⁴ The only published work that I have identified which is combining US think tanks and Bourdieu.

⁵⁶⁵ See Medvetz 2008, op.cit. 5.

⁵⁶⁶ See Medvetz 2008, *ibid.* 6. In the *State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Bourdieu pinpoints three fields of powers as meta-fields (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996b).

overcoming the definitional hurdle (of think tanks) through thinking relationally⁵⁶⁷ – but that this exercise lies ahead us.⁵⁶⁸

However, my field-research divulges opportunities to further advance Medvetz' work, including taking stance with the narrow treatment of hybridity, a more empirically sound application of the term ‘social space’, lack of multidimensionality and hierarchy when constructing the field, and lack of empirical data – especially from the perspective of a specific policy-area and community. As a whole, here, my line of inquiry would provide the think tank literature with an enhanced empirical-driven, in-depth elaboration, in addition to a widened deployment of Bourdieusian conceptual/analytical approach including a reflexive inquiry into these “thinking-tools” themselves.

Firstly, regarding think tanks as a ‘social field’, I have chosen to construct the China policy-research expert community as a separate ‘field’ in its own right rather than a mere ‘social space’. This contrasts Medvetz’ notion of an ‘emergent field’, which merely overlaps with Bourdieu’s ‘fields of power’.⁵⁶⁹ I argue this to be an inconsistency in Medvetz work – as the title of his article is about an ‘emergent field’. Medvetz refers to Bourdieu’s idea concerning ‘social space’ as:

(...) the entire social structure can be represented as a multi-dimensional system of positions ordered by the volume and composition of authority (capital, in Bourdieu terminology) organising relations among individuals, groups, and classes.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ See Medvetz 2008, *ibid.* 3-4. I will discuss that in more detail later on within this sub-section.

⁵⁶⁸ See Medvetz 2008, *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ See Medvetz 2008, *op.cit.* 6.

⁵⁷⁰ Medvetz 2008, *ibid.* 4.

In my reading of Bourdieu, ‘social space’ relates to the positions of individuals (due to ‘capital’) in the ‘field’ – but not a composition of a ‘field’ itself. Medvetz does not provide a reference here (but provides one for ‘fields of power’) and consequently reflects the relevance, and need for, a deeper elaboration of think tank organisations as a ‘field’. I do not dismiss the notion of ‘social space’ – but argues it rather constitutes only a component of an ‘emergent field’ – and rather ought to be coupled with strategising of policy-researchers (discussed in more details below). Symptomatically, Medvetz does not advance further into Bourdieu’s concepts on ‘field’ and closely related social theoretical thinking in this regard.

Secondly, extending on the preceding point above; what then, constitutes the ‘field’? In essence, my effort indirectly supports Medvetz’ approach to grasp think tanks as a social structured system. However, I am advancing this enterprise through data-collection from a specific policy-area (i.e. China policy-research expert community) as opposed to conceptualising about a general think tank-field. This modifies his avenues of inquiry. Arguably, my chosen ‘field’ has its own acknowledged “stakes at stake” which the social actors struggle for: to be influential – or at least *portray* an influential position⁵⁷¹ (in general, but particularly relating to U.S. foreign policy towards China). Policy-researchers are ascribed to this ‘field’ – an illusio – through “playing the game” and having a sense of “the rules of the games”. This coincides with the included ‘field of powers’ – ‘knowledge production’, ‘economic’ and ‘political’. These meta-field possess the highest amount of influence over other fields due to being positioned at the apex of the hierarchy (of ‘fields’). The notions of ‘fields’ being defined by “stakes at stake”, taken-for-granted structures, and that the

⁵⁷¹ The issue of a *portrayed* “versus” ‘real’ (not in a materialised sense, though) influence will be discussed later in this chapter – especially in regard to ‘capital’.

nature of social positions depend on the unequal distribution of capital (or power) and thus ultimately access to profits from what is at stake,⁵⁷² assists in grappling with the nature of this community and its praxis.

I would contest the latent argument that a China policy-research field is similar to all other policy-fields. Sure, there are many commonalities – let us say, with the Japan policy-research environment across U.S. think tanks⁵⁷³ – in areas such as U.S.-Asia relations, maritime security in the South-China sea, North-Korea and power-balance. However, dissimilarities emerge when taking into account the relational nature which constitutes the type and nature of consolidation of ‘capital’ that matters. For example, in the China policy-research field, more types of capital and “stakes at stake” are in play because of its elevated importance in the current strategic environment. Essentially, China ascribes more substantially into all ‘fields of power’ simultaneously – as expressed by Nathaniel Ahrens (CSIS): “U.S.-Sino relations is now the most important bilateral relations in the world”.⁵⁷⁴

This would be opposed to, let us say Iceland: To hold and/or exercise political and cultural capital in the U.S.-Iceland policy-research field would offer a diminutively “exchange-rate” to the economic field due to the scant position of Iceland in U.S. media, political debates and public discourses, as well as being placed low on the issue-agenda in Washington. Nevertheless, it does reflect how thinking relationally through fields facilitates for a coherent vocabulary, in addition to nuanced thinking, when taking into account that possessing ‘capital’ in the sub-field of the military-

⁵⁷² See Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 84-85; Wacquant, 1979, ‘Toward a Reflexive Sociology’, op.cit. 39.

⁵⁷³ See interview with Japan specialist, Bryan Wakefield (005-E), Wilson Center.

⁵⁷⁴ See interview with Nathaniel Ahrens. See also Satu Limaye, 14 May 2009, pers. comm.

domain might have a much higher “exchange-rate” to various ‘fields of power’ contemplating on the U.S. Naval Air Station Keflavik, which was harboured at the Keflavík International Airport until 2007. This case also reflects the importance of contextuality, for example, when the Americans ceased their activities on the island – it left the country defenceless and without its own military. Hence, the stakes for Americans were somewhat removed and those holding accumulated ‘capital’ in this domain might find them to have substantially relegated in value.

Thirdly, social actors (aka the individual policy-researcher) do not move within a ‘field’ in an isolated fashion. Rather, he or she traverses multiple fields simultaneously, and different individuals are doing so across a different set of ‘fields’ depending on, principally, their area of policy-research. Furthermore, this occurs in different directions as already shown by empirical evidence concerning non-linear and multi-directional relationships between individual policy-researchers and the think tanks they are affiliated with. For example, this may entail a policy-researcher such as Luke Schoen (Associate, Climate and Energy Program, World Resources Institute, WRI) who conducts policy-research in regard to China and environmental issues, thus subscribing to the China policy-research field, in addition to, for example, the U.S. think tank field in general, the global environmental movement, U.S. politics, the Congress, and the international development ‘field’.⁵⁷⁵

However, the boundaries between the ‘field’ and the relations between them (homologies), in addition to what the “stakes” and recognised ‘capitals’ are in the specific ‘fields’ – cannot be grasped without incorporating context (for example,

⁵⁷⁵ See Luke Schoen <http://www.wri.org/profile/luke-schoen> and interview.

who holds the Presidency or the majority in Congress,⁵⁷⁶ and the numerous “social universes” which think tanks are oriented towards, that be funders⁵⁷⁷ and stakeholders/affiliations with universities,⁵⁷⁸ political parties/ideologies,⁵⁷⁹ government,⁵⁸⁰ and advocacy groups⁵⁸¹ – to mention some of the most salient one).⁵⁸²

This point supports Medvetz’ promulgation of think tanks being hybrid organisations. Thus, in addition to hybridity, the ‘social space’ of think tanks is also constitutive of its relationship – homology – with other fields. As seen above, think tanks due to its different natures are integrally and constitutively part of multiple fields. For example, RAND Corporation is embedded in the defense sub-field, the governmental-field (because of being a semi-governmental think tank), the power-

⁵⁷⁶ As an illustrative, anecdotal evidence; around 50 policy-researchers at the Center for American Progress entered the federal administration when President Barack Obama took office. He also received a 704-page book outlining a possible policy agenda. Furthermore, when President Reagan took office in 1981, he provided his cabinet members with a 1,100-page book produced by the Heritage Foundation (entitled *Mandate for Leadership*) The book contained 2,000 recommendations where, apparently, roughly 60 percent were implemented in accordance to conservative principles (see Peter W. Singer, “Factories to Call Our Own, Washington,” (2010, see <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/factories-to-call-our-own/>).

⁵⁷⁷ Different examples include Smithsonian and US Congress in regard to the Wilson Center and the US Institute for Peace for the latter, and predominantly private funders for the Heritage Foundation, and large endowments (i.e. Brookings Institution and Carnegie Endowment for Peace). For example, the American Enterprise Institute receives annually in average US\$5.7 million from corporations, representing approximately 20% of total income during the 2003-2010 time period (see http://www.aei.org/files/2012/01/10/ar2011new_15462528616.pdf; <http://www.aei.org/files/1969/12/31/2010-Annual-Report.pdf>; <http://www.aei.org/files/2009/12/18/2009-Annual-Report.pdf>; http://www.aei.org/files/2002/12/07/20081205_2008AnnualReportweb.pdf; http://www.aei.org/files/2002/12/07/20081205_2008AnnualReportweb.pdf; http://www.aei.org/files/2002/12/07/20061220_2006ARweb.pdf; http://www.aei.org/files/2002/12/07/20051213_AnnualReport.pdf; http://www.aei.org/files/2002/12/07/20050119_annualReport04.pdf). In 1987, Kent Weaver reported that as much as 63% of AEI’s income was donated by the business community (1989, op.cit. 565).

⁵⁷⁸ For example, the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the John Hopkins University (JHU) (see <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/>), and the Hoover Institution affiliated with Stanford University (not part of my “sample”) (see <http://www.hoover.org/about/mission-statement>).

⁵⁷⁹ An example is the Cato Institute plausible categorised as the libertarian think tank (see <http://www.cato.org/about.php>), and that the Center for American Progress was established primarily to counterweigh the rapidly growing conservative ideologised think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation (see Singer 2011, Factories, op.cit.).

⁵⁸⁰ Such as the RAND Corporation and the Center for Naval Analysis on China Studies (unfortunately, I was not able to secure any interviews with the CNA (see <http://www.cna.org/centers/china/>)).

⁵⁸¹ For example, the Institute for Policy Studies and Africa Action (see <http://www.ips-dc.org/about/partners>).

⁵⁸² See Medvetz 2008, op.cit. 4.

field of politics, the China research-field, the security-field and the general think tank field – and list goes on. This turns the focus towards relationships – homology – to other fields including the boundaries of the field. This cross-over field, Bourdieu’s ‘social space’, reflects that its social structure is a multi-dimensional system of positions through influence based on ‘capital’ and not solely authority as a representation of ‘capital’, as purported by Medvetz. This subsequently organises the relationships between individual policy-researchers and think tank as organisations – as warranted by collected field-data.

However, inversely to Medvetz notion of constraining hybridity to the think tank organisation only, due to the above, I argue that the ‘field’ itself is constitutively hybrid, and so are the individual policy-researchers working within them. The general think tank field, and interconnected policy-research field can intriguingly be thought of as a multi-directional, non-linear, and asymmetric composition. ‘Capital’ has varying power which depends on the corresponding ‘fields’. This serves as a reminder about another short-coming of Medvetz’ work: The proclaimed multidimensional model as a heuristic device, which in fact is one-dimensional, I argue.⁵⁸³ Within the hierarchy of fields, underneath the ‘fields of power’ (meta-fields), there are different sub-levels derived from the former – where the China policy-research field is one of them (alongside an array of other policy-domain fields). The individual sub-field will be “cross-over” with numerous other fields depending on the contextuality and nature of the praxis within that particular field.

⁵⁸³ See figure 1 (this chapter) or figure 1.1. (‘think tanks in social space’) (Medvetz 2008, op.cit. 6).

Again, the one-dimensionality of Medvetz' model constrains the self-proclaimed heuristic device from illustrating the homology interplay with other 'fields' and thus removing attention from 'capital' and its transferability and convertibility. It is not a hypothesis but serves as a heuristic tool where I have placed the China policy-research field as overlapping/traversing (with diffusing boundaries) through the various meta-fields and several other sub-fields, in a hierarchy of fields aligned with Bourdieu work. This means that any field exhibits properties to cross-over with other fields in both horizontal and vertical directions. This homology is lacking (beyond the 'field of powers') in Medvetz' current depiction and thus remove important questions prompted by the multiple fields, herein the relations beyond them (homology). The relationship between the fields – homology – illuminates the complexity of fields – and even more so the nature of the work-practices within the policy-research as a profession. There are further sub-disciplines, organised in accordance to, for example, academic disciplines (e.g. economists and security scholars, humanities and lack of area-studies scholars) and such as the influence of the evident political science degrees and Realpolitik thinking).

That policy-researchers are influencing, and influenced by, various organisations should not come as a surprise. The particular benefit of thinking in 'fields', again, is the diverted focus on relationality on the one hand – and on the other – to incorporate contextuality, evaluating how the different "stakes at stakes", 'collective habitus', and valued forms of 'capital' are consolidated in all the various 'fields', and ultimately how this might affect work-practices, manoeuvrability of "China-thinking", and abilities to influence U.S. foreign policies – essentially the "rules of the game". This links to Bourdieu's concepts of 'interests' and 'strategising' – and

reflects an incredible complex picture where a pure assessment of behaviour (in a behaviourist ontological sense) – would not provide in-depth understanding of this intricate interplay, decision-making, or how impactful dimensions might be played out.

Different forms of Bourdieu's 'capital' are in play. The amounts of power, or authority, are decided by the stake. The "stakes at stake" relate, predominantly, to exercising influence – or at least to portray to relevant audiences that they possess such 'influence'/authority. Different think tanks possess different types of 'capital', amount, and consolidation of forms of 'capital'. Thus, the nature of the consolidation of 'capital' should be highlighted beyond having what types of 'capital' (as a typology), and on transferability and convertibility. Consolidation, here, signals the combination of the different forms of 'capital' as well as the total amount and balance between them (not in a quantitative manner). Both "real" (not in a materialised sense) 'capital', and "imagined 'capital'", can be "cashed in" through equal transferability to the media power-field, as both may be recognised as equal specialists on a policy-topic and subsequently be invited as a commentary on a televised news programme. This same consolidation of 'capital', in another context (read: fields of power) may not have the same innate capability to be "cashed-in" unreservedly in other 'fields'. For example, a funder with academic inclination who normally would donate to the Brookings Institution might more readily be prepared to expand or shift their funding to somebody having a prominent publication-record (including in peer-reviewed scholarly journals) such as Bonnie Glaser (CSIS) – as opposed to, for example the former eminent journalist Ed Paisly (Vice President for

Editorial, Center for American Progress), who focuses more on non-academic outputs in a journalistic writing style, such as opinion-editorials.⁵⁸⁴

The concept of ‘context of contextuality’ becomes relevant to draw upon. Transferred to a study on think tanks, this concept in brief relates to that we need to incorporate understanding of the conceptual and physical location of a particular consolidated amount of ‘capital’.⁵⁸⁵ In regard to the multidimensional model, the relationships between hierarchical levels (vertically) must not be understood as fixed, herein that a particular combination and/or amounts of ‘capital’ would be attached to different meanings (or values) depending on what fields they are crossing over with at different levels. Thus, I argue, ‘capital’ ought to play a much more evident role when examining the ‘field’ – the former being the case with Medvetz’ work in this regard.

The most powerful think tanks, those which are exercising symbolic power are related to those possessing all forms of capital and that can be actually “cashed in” (or transferred between fields, as Bourdieu put it): Brookings, AEI, CSIS, and

⁵⁸⁴ I would like to emphasise that this juxtaposition by no means indicates a statement regarding quality of work. Paisly is a former eminent journalist with substantial on-the-ground experience, and graciously provided an extremely interesting interview account.

⁵⁸⁵ I developed this concept in my MPhil International Business thesis (Centre for International Business, University of Leeds (CIBULU)) in regard to intercultural encounters. IB as a discipline is strongly adhering to positivistic quantitative research hence essentialist, reductionist, and hypothetico-deductive, acontextual, ahistorical and non-meaning-based (S. Paul Bate, “Whatever Happened to Organizational Anthropology? A Review of the Field of Organizational Anthropology and Anthropological Studies”, *Human Relations*, 50(9) (1997): 1147-1175; Chapman 1997, op.cit. 3-29; Stephen Linstead, “The Social Anthropology of Management”, *British Journal of Management*, 8(1) (1991): 85-98) – I formulated this specifically in regard to the ‘Cultural Distance’ construct which innately assume a fixed measurable and physical distance between culture x and culture y, and thus assuming equal distance between $xy=xy$. However, if Scandinavian expatriates encountered Chinese managers at home or in China would obviously affect the nature of intercultural encounters due to contextual surroundings.

Carnegie.⁵⁸⁶ The symbolic power, here, relates to, again, the relational nature of thinking in ‘fields’; the consolidation ‘capital’ which lesser reputable or recognised think tanks possess – is partly determined by what Brookings, AEI, CSIS and the Carnegie *do possess*.⁵⁸⁷ This infiltrates work-practices. This authoritative position has been attained through building up various types of capital and historic conditionings. Those holding this capital, consequently, exercise symbolic power/violence: the ability to the “imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups of classes in such a way that they are experienced legitimate”.⁵⁸⁸ The faculty of this symbolic power accommodates to alter the behaviours of others (work-practices). For example, a sheer volume of voiced opinions, policy-influencing, seminars and produced policy-analysis at the Cato Institute, US Institute for Peace, the Center for American Progress, The Heritage Foundation, and the East-West Center (to name a few) can be associated with what they see fit in relation to what other think tanks are currently offering in the ‘market-place of ideas’⁵⁸⁹ – such as libertarian ideas, agents for change on the ground in the development world, combating rise of conservatism, focus particularly on the Congress, and working more in-depth on Asian issues, respectively.

The above substantiates my argument of both think tanks as organisations and individual within them are hybrid (not just the ‘field’, as suggested by Medvetz).

⁵⁸⁶ These “big four” were repeatedly listed by my interviews, and in general discourse, when wanting to express the epitome of think tanks.

⁵⁸⁷ For example, the book by Professor Hu Angang published by the Brookings Institution Press (see <http://www.brookings.edu/research/books/2011/chinain2020>), addressing China’s future growth was nothing more than listing of any areas where an inclining cure could be identified. It carried prominence and received high interest, but probably mostly because of the prominent “Brookings” label (as was imparted to me by others (interviewees) in Off the Record). Here, the “academic” flare of Brookings was “borrowed” to also include their published material (their own publication press).

⁵⁸⁸ Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 104.

⁵⁸⁹ Abelson 2002, op.cit. 51.

Thinking in cross over fields also facilitates for thinking of different lines of narratives within and organisation as well as collectively a think tank are comprised with employees ascribing to various fields. This debate also extends into the narratives themselves. There is a tendency of taking a predominant eschewed approach towards the organisational “level” in both the specific think tank literature and the IR discipline as a whole.

Ellen Frost (Peterson Institute) expresses: “... of course we are all trying to be objective, but there are many Chinas and many truths”.⁵⁹⁰ Moreover, as Walter Lohman, Director of Asian Studies at The Heritage Foundation pointed out, there are not always agreements between different departments within one think tank, for example where Asia scholars tend to have a more pragmatic view than defence analysts.⁵⁹¹ To pinpoint *one* organisational think tank narratives is often not plausible – nor should it be an end goal. Sue Levenstein’s (Program Assistant, Wilson Center’s Asia Program) experiences also illustrate constraints but in relation to multiple narratives within one think tank:⁵⁹²

For instance, you know the Asia program is close with Kissinger Institute on the U.S. and China here at the Wilson Center. We cover Taiwan, they China, and from time to time there is an issue of Cross-Straits relations, and then we ensure we are not openly saying something that’s completely anti-China because Kissinger fosters positive relations with the Chinese government; we have to come up with conference topics not in conflict with their mission – as long as we cover, for example we do something on Taiwan Republic of China, as long as we don’t do things on what will happen after reunification [laughter], could you imagine, we could not. We do bear in mind the constraints and avoid this when we can, for example we cannot invite Dalai Lama as it would recognise Tibet’s sovereignty.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview, Frost (001-A), recording: 1.15.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Walter Lohman, The Heritage Foundation. Symptomatically, Derek Scissors (Senior Research Fellow, Heritage’s Asian Studies Center) declined – politely and decisively – to be interviewed by me due to the aspect of “culture” in my study.

⁵⁹² Interview with Sue Levenstein, 26.00

The nomos, which construct the field, create organising laws that govern practices in the field and thus the manoeuvrability of policy-researchers.⁵⁹³ The nomos signal that there are particular macro-structures influencing the manoeuvrability of China-policy research experts. This facet coincides with the established overarching framework of U.S.-Sino relations and think tanks as a socio-political phenomenon. The political field of power (meta-field) where the nature of U.S.–Sino relations chiefly are played out dictate the scope of manoeuvrability amongst policy-researchers. For example, in order to gain political capital, to only carry out policy research in issue areas which attract diminutive interest from decision-makers, politicians, media and other interest groups, would neither produce much capital nor be associated with a particular good “exchange rate” (convertibility) into the economic form of ‘capital’.

Think tanks have become a fixture in the American political landscape.⁵⁹⁴ Ellen Frost (Peterson) encapsulates this position in what can be taken as a collective habitus of the field – alluding to their interconnectedness:

Washington is like a corporation, and think tanks like subsidiaries – following the head-quarter (aka government) as a tail of the beast.⁵⁹⁵

Leland Miller follows up the animal metaphor – hinting of people driven by a particular modus operandi which they cannot escape from:⁵⁹⁶

(...) if you are the academic type you stay in DC. People in New York are a bit different – those in DC are more political animals, wanting to serve, to influence

⁵⁹³ Bourdieu 2000, *Pascalian meditations*, op.cit. 96. This is not to say that there are no other influential overarching frameworks.

⁵⁹⁴ Medvetz 2008, op. cit.; Medvetz 2012, op.cit.

⁵⁹⁵ Interview, Ellen Frost, recording: 07.50

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Leland Miller (040-AAZ).

policy. New York is more Wall Street oriented – old view, but still true, New York makes money.

Furthermore, Peter W. Singer, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy, at the Brookings Institution, also addresses the very position of think tanks in DC in his refreshingly interesting article '*Washington's Think Tanks: Factories to Call Our Own*'. He argues that production of ideas is the industry of DC. Approaching metaphors as a language device, it is rewarding to take notice of the utterance of unintentional messages in relation to think tanks – herein re-production (thus lack of innovativeness and creativity) of ideas, a sentiment supported by a keen observer of the think tank environment – social anthropologist Hugh Gusterson at the George Mason University.⁵⁹⁷

This relationship and position also reflect the doxa of the field in addition to the predisposition to act in symbiosis with the government. None whatsoever of my interviewees nor the around 50 others I approached for an interview and conversed with at various think tank events and political seminars questioned this assumed natural, fixed position of think tanks within the U.S. political system.⁵⁹⁸ This structure is a taken-for-granted, and resemblance Bourdieu's 'doxa'. When I posed the question concerning the role of think tanks to Samuel Sherridan, Program Director, Economic Growth Program at the New America Foundation, it instantly turned into an existential inquiry:⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁷ See Interview.

⁵⁹⁸ A humorous and pertinent critique against think tanks – but without validating the specific criticism against the one tank in question (The Heritage Foundation), was performed by talk-show host Bill Maher (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcJohfS4vTQ>).

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Sam Sherridan (003-C), New America Foundation, including the follow-up interview (003-C2).

Me: How do you perceive the potential of think tanks in DC to influence U.S. foreign policies towards China?

Sam: (long pause) It is almost a broader question about how influential think tanks are, you know [laughter]. [Pause] I think ... hmm ... [long pause] it is a good question [tapping his fingers on the table], it's like what I do with my life! [friendly and a bit nervous laughter].

Me: [laughter] sorry did not mean to ruin your...

Sam: It is like my life-evaluation [laughter]. Ahm, you know, I think think tanks play an important role, kind of in between somewhat academic and journalism style, perhaps closer to the latter in the America. But possible to do two things relating to China.⁶⁰⁰

What I deduce from the above account is that what think tanks are well equipped to do and that can be considered a praxis in the ‘field’, is to *create* “social space”. This practice elevates (marginalised) viewpoints, narratives, and possibly particular speakers which might be marginalised on the debate/topic-agenda in DC – and not normally part of Singer’s ‘factory’ or frequent re-circulation of speakers and seminar topics. Here, as opposed to Medvetz’ deployment of this Bourdieusian concept, I find it more relevant to employ this concept as a work-practice among policy-researchers rather than signifying the ‘field’ itself as a whole. This effort also serves as a stark reminder of what might be placed on the top of the China policy-research agenda, especially in its communication with the wider public audiences, is highly dependent on context on the one hand, as well as politicisation on the other.

The economic form of ‘capital’ itself is especially gained through funding, where relationality to context and other fields are impactful factors, as Sue Levenstein at the Wilson Center expressed:⁶⁰¹

I think certain issues are marginalised, considered not sexy, mainly because of the group-think in DC (...) we had an event on Burma, two little conferences – one on

⁶⁰⁰ Interview Sam Sheridan, op.cit. (recording: 19:20).

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Sue Levenstein (006-F), 29:38.

Burma's economy and one about politics. Guess which one was best attended. Talking about the American audience, they think about human rights, politics, communism, and now economy, regarding China. Things like Chinese culture and history is so rich, for example the Tung dynasty – personally interested – but won't be attended. It's too academic, I just think.

Thus, contextuality of donors strongly influences the contents of “China-narratives” as any think tank is reliant on attracting high numbers (audience).

I upheld strategising as a praxis of policy-researchers. I coin the term “policy-boundary entrepreneurs” creating additional ‘social space’ for their propagated “China-thinking” which again depends on their acquired ‘capital’ and its convertibility and transferability to other ‘fields’. The significance of this work-practice, and especially the subtle references to this aspect, was somewhat surprising. Many of my interviewees requested this particular utterance to remain Off the Record. The ‘field’ is imperative here (internal structures of the ‘field’ and positioning), as it explains the links between action and habitus, which further highlights embodied and tacit approaches in the work-lives amongst policy-researchers. This substantiates the importance of thinking relationally also in regard to the simultaneously employment of Bourdieu’s “thinking-tools”.⁶⁰²

The notions of ‘capital’ become crucial in order to fully comprehend the strategising practice – as the manoeuvrability to exercise this is not equally accessible to all social agents (aka policy-researchers and think tanks). ‘Capital’, again, ought to be pushed much closer to the forefront of a Bourdieusian inquiry for a more appropriately focus on relationality. In essence, what the debate is informed by, and

⁶⁰² See Swartz 2008, ‘Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis’, op.cit. 45-52.

the capabilities and motivation/disposition for strategising, cannot be separated from the acquired ‘capital’. As Gusterson expressed – somebody like Peter W. Singer can take such a critical view because he resides at the Brookings Institution – which proclaims, and exhibits, a more academic and non-politicised/ideologised distance. Hence, self-critical and retrospective efforts are expectedly more accepted, but occur infrequently at most other think tanks. Similarly, when glancing through hundreds of commentaries of policy-researchers, these discourses are impressively silent. Not a coincidence, then, that these practices were to be found at one of the other self-proclaimed “academic” think tanks in DC. A think tank with more academic capital has more room for manoeuvre as it reflects the role and identity of the very same think tank.

Strategising is also important due its wide-ranging implications beyond the mere in-house think tank seminars. Most events are broadcasted live on the Internet and available as podcasts thereafter. Thus, the stage of think tank policy-deliberations and analysis is very accessible to people around the globe. However, many a viewer will probably, and understandably, possess very limited grasp of the “rules of the games” about the ‘field’ hence not be privy to understand these “rules” and their impact on the information they are exposed to. For example, in a Congressional hearing taking place during the summer (2011), two of my respondents at Carnegie and the Wilson Center reported about think tanks being invited to testify on a particular China-issue. They found, however, that only like-minded (who supported the wanted outcome) were invited by the applicable Committee – and indicated that their participation would have provided a more appropriate polyphony of different perspectives.

4.4 Other impacting factors

In the discussions above, the focal point has been on policy-researchers as individuals (including their affiliated think tanks) and their agency – however, without removing relationality or to detach it from the enmeshed nature of the meso-field (contextual, macro-structures). This sub-section discusses additional contextual factors as social phenomena, which evidently influence the ‘social field’ of China policy-researchers within U.S. think tanks.⁶⁰³ The effort encompasses ‘influence’, sex, roles, and expertise, as well as definitions pf think tanks and self-image. The interface with factors such as funding and the media are continued. These main themes are derived from, and thus warranted by, the obtained field-data. As the focal point of this study relates to the individual policy-researchers, the below deliberations are somewhat more brief. The engagement with Bourdieu’s concepts, however (and proposed arguments in this regard) is continued from the discussions in preceding sub-sections.

4.4.1 Influence

Influence, or to portray the position of possessing authority, has already been identified as the “stakes at stake” in the constructed China policy-research ‘field’. This determines what the social actors (aka policy-researchers as individuals and think tanks as organisations in an enmeshed symbiosis) struggle about. It further defines what forms of capital which matter in this particular field. To measure influence, or discussing the extent and approach of exercised influence (or impact), is not an objective of this study. However, due to its centrality in the narratives and constructed ‘social realities’ reported by the research subjects, it can purposefully be

⁶⁰³ Earlier discussed influential contextual, macro-structural factors in the previous sub-section revolved around funding and the media.

engaged with from the following perspective: to obtain a deeper nuanced understanding of the field itself, and to grasp ‘influence’ as a social phenomenon in relation to constrictions on “China-thinking” and work-practices by deploying Bourdieu’s concepts.

This also illustrates the relevance of incorporating Bourdieu’s social theory as it unveils new lines of inquiry when allowing the investigation to be informed in a “bottom-up” fashion by obtained field-data. In addition, by presenting new collected data, this inquiry also contributes with original knowledge to the specific literature think tank literature, herein what Stone identified as the second ‘analytical school’. It is here, where obtained field-data, in contrast with established body of literature in this domain, takes stance with the current dominance of organisations in this literature.

This sub-section, firstly, comments briefly on influence versus impact. Secondly, I discuss the need for a hierarchical understanding of ‘influence’, which in effect further advances my critique of Medvetz’ model. Thirdly, research subjects’ experiences and other observations will be presented. Fourth, I will highlight the intricate nature of influence. Fifth, I shall engage with the explanatory power of Bourdieu’s concept. The latter effort includes seeking opportunities for developing his concept of ‘capital’.

4.4.1.1 Influence “versus” Impact

I am making a purposeful distinction between the terms ‘influence’ and ‘impact’. The former relates to having their opinions being listened to by policy-makers and/or

at least informing part of the policy decision-making. Impact, however, would require a qualitative change in society and/or a distinct and sole influence on a specific policy-outcome. I have argued elsewhere, that both concepts are impossible to measure quantitatively in any meaningful manner.⁶⁰⁴ Thus, this epistemological stance is also a critique of the focus on ‘outcome’ and the premise of any model, such as Holsti’s model, depicting influence on the basis of linearity and causation.⁶⁰⁵

I argue it is more plausible to talk about ‘positioning’ (to various degrees; strong to weak continuum) in terms of abilities to influence without having to determine a quantifiable value on the outcome of the influence-seeking process. This does not “solve” the issue of measuring influence, but as my stance is that this cannot be accomplished in any meaningful way, I subsequently do not evaluate the concept of ‘positioning’ within the ontological premise of the former. In this context, think tanks and policy-researchers are indeed possessing such positions to influence, which depends on accumulated capital and structural position within the ‘field’. Thus, the inclusion of thinking in terms of a Bourdieusian ‘field’ shows the dialectical relevance of his “thinking tools” and they further assist in highlighting the applicability of the proposed ‘positioning’ concept.

Furthermore, to think relationally – the foci of applying Bourdieu’s field to the China policy-research community – is also a reminder of that “positioning” in the field’s internal structural system which is based on possessed ‘capital’, is not a fixed, quantifiable amount. Inversely, it is dynamic and transformative due to it depends on

⁶⁰⁴ See Guttormsen, DSA 2010a, op.cit.; Medina and Guttormsen 2010, “Who Thinks for Me?”, op.cit.

⁶⁰⁵ See Kalevi J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983).

the positions (and positional changes) of the array of other think tanks and other social agents within the ‘field’. Furthermore, thinking relationally also shows the determining role of capital in “positioning” and the links to the ‘fields of power’. As the activity of ‘influencing’ strongly relates to influencing foreign policy, the power field of politics is particularly relevant. It also assists in explaining why think tanks with the most amount and variation of capital also enjoy the position of the most prominent ones, i.e. Brookings, CSIS, Carnegie and AEI.

Moreover, the position of the Cato Institute is partly determined, and elevated, by the very nature of the faculties of relationality: by having fewer similar (libertarian) think tanks as competitors in the general think tank field, Cato enjoys an almost “free-standing”, outsider role – which is further enhanced due the ‘field’ features more vacant ideological space. This position is accentuated through a perceived conceptual distance to the “beltway”, articulated by Justin Logan, Director of Foreign Policy Studies at Cato – but subsequently laughed when I asked him who then is within the beltway.⁶⁰⁶ For this reason, Cato is often mentioned alongside the “big four” think tanks (above) albeit not having the same amount or range of capital. It also hints about the prevalent role of ideology in the general think tank field – as the above social categorisation is very much based on a spectrum of ideologies.⁶⁰⁷

4.4.1.2 Advancing the ‘field’: an hierarchical approach regarding ‘influence’

In addition to thinking contextually, relationally as well as through “positioning”, I am also highlighting the need for a hierarchical perspective on ‘influence’. This corresponds with the notion of sub-fields (aka hierarchy) as a core element of the

⁶⁰⁶ Interview, Justin Logan (Cato Institute), Washington, DC, USA, 27 July, 2011 (044-EEV).

⁶⁰⁷ The facet of ideology is addressed in the two remaining analysis chapters.

proposed hybrid field. This is empirically warranted by field-data and secondary research, and also takes into account Medvetz' various ‘social universes’,⁶⁰⁸ in addition to the fact that the authority exhibited (based on consolidation of capital) depends on the audience in terms of what ‘capital’ is recognised by them. I will not dwell too long on this topic but this facet should be recognised contemplating on that the relationality with other ‘fields – homology – are not fixed either. Again, context is paramount – for example, the shift of balance in the U.S Congress or who holds the Presidency might very well change the distance between various sub-fields (different hierarchical levels). Opposed to popular belief, there is a shared agreement among DC China policy-researchers that this has not been the case with U.S. foreign policies towards China post-Bush Jr.⁶⁰⁹

However, especially through Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who has more adamantly and publically championed China’s poor human rights record,⁶¹⁰ has led to increased accumulation of political capital amongst human rights policy-analysts, organisations, and watchers. In terms of homology and relational distance, this sub-field arguably has closed some of the “hierarchical gap” with the economic power-field when economic interests have been placed at the forefront. This means that the constellations of sub-fields at the different levels within the hierarchy also do not have a fixed relationship (aka “distance”), and this can only be grasped through a

⁶⁰⁸ Medvetz 2008, op.cit.

⁶⁰⁹ Hathaway, Robert. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), June 14, 2011 (016-P).

⁶¹⁰ See article Jeffrey Goldberg, “Hillary Clinton: Chinese System Is Doomed, Leaders on a ‘Fool’s Errand”, The Atlantic (<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/05/hillary-clinton-chinese-system-is-doomed-leaders-on-a-fools-errand/238591/>, 2011).

contextualised inquiry where neither materiality nor construction can be allotted primacy.⁶¹¹

In effect, my multidimensional model (based on Medvetz', unintentionally, one-dimensional heuristic device), can be further improved – by thinking of the hierarchy of fields where each level comprises several sub-fields. This takes form as a tapestry of cross-over sub-fields and these can move both horizontally and vertically in the space between the hierarchical levels. Different sub-levels of ‘fields’ may, thus, interface depending on historic conditions and contextuality. This is not a far-fetched thought, as hierarchy of fields is a very prominent idea in Bourdieu’s social theory. Thus, my contribution is more closely aligned to the advancement of thinking about fields specifically in regard to China policy-research and think tanks in general, in addition to further enhancing Medvetz’ model as a heuristic device.

The multidimensionality of the hybridity of the field, think tanks, and individuals – as practices and movements across fields are neither nor necessarily synchronised across individuals and the affiliated think tank, or unison across one think tank. This makes it impossible to count “China-narratives” and number of ‘fields’, in the same vein that determining the populace of think tanks have generated startlingly fluctuating sums.⁶¹² As anthropologist Edwin T. Ardener eminently showed in his ethnographic field-research in Africa relating to population and demographics; a

⁶¹¹ This relates to Bourdieu’s dialecticality, of this thesis and subsequently contrasts with mainstream constructivist views within IR where construction/ideas are assumed to be preceding before structures/materiality.

⁶¹² See Medvetz 2008, op.cit. – numbers varies between approximately 100 in 1991 (Smith 1991, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite*, op.cit. p. 214), 1,200 in 1996 (Lynn Hellebust, ed., *Think Tank Directory: A Guide to Nonprofit Public Policy Research Organizations*. Topeka, KS: Government Research Service, 1996), 300 in 2004 (Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), to “somewhere between 115 and 1400 think tanks in the United States” (McGann, “Academics to Ideologues,” op.cit. p. 738).

researcher can count human beings, but in terms of meaning, we cannot know what we really are counting if we are not aware of how the individuals socially categorise themselves.⁶¹³ Thus, a line with ten China policy-researchers mathematically constitutes 10 people, however, in terms of what sub-fields they ascribe to the sum might be a completely different number.

4.4.2 Experiencing and observing ‘influence’ by China policy-researchers

The research subjects were asked about their abilities and prospects to influence in relation to U.S. foreign relations towards China and U.S.-Sino relations. From the perspective of Bourdieu’s capital, there are three elements which should be highlighted; the policy-researchers reactions to influence in addition to problematising the notion of ‘influence’ across policy-researchers as individuals and the think tanks which are housing them; the acquisition of capital/influence through an imagined form of capital; and the permeating individuality outlook of exercised influence (in contrast to the dominating organisational perspective in the specialised think tank literature).

First, in terms of how policy-researchers themselves think about ‘influence’, in my interviews, all respondents acknowledged the infeasibility to gauge influence

⁶¹³ Ardener raises subsequently the question of whose interest are we following when counting and naming a population. This relates to who possesses the power to prevail in the decision-making process in this regard. Are they names or numbers, if so who are naming them and for whom? It is therefore inescapable – to acknowledge that in more areas than expected, bodies of numerical data do not necessarily warrants a culture-free or neutral (demographic) science (see Edwin Ardener 1989a, “Language, Ethnicity and Population”, in *Edwin Ardener: The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays*, ed. Malcolm K. Chapman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989a), 65-71). This is a lesson learnt from Africa, where post-colonial countries were delimited according to the victories of colonial powers – and not dynamic factor such as social phenomena previously mentioned. A revealing example relates to an African tribe, which considered an individual who had left the enclosure around the designated living area (for the tribe), as no longer a member of the tribal population (Ardener 1989a, ibid. 65-71; Edwin Ardener, E, “Social Anthropology and Population”, in *Edwin Ardener: The Voice of Prophecy and Other Essays*, ed. Malcolm K. Chapman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989b), 108-126; Diane Forsythe 1989, German Identity and the Problems of History, in *History and Ethnicity*, eds Elizabeth Tonkin et al. (London: Routledge, 1989), 137-156).

quantitatively. This was encapsulated in the frequent utterances: “how can you really know?”⁶¹⁴ As Wakefield expressed:

Hard to know what impact we have, not criteria we pride us on. Reports written here have been influential.⁶¹⁵

Malou Innocent at the Cato Institute argues:

I think think tanks are a bit unorthodox, and by unorthodox I mean, it is just a bizarre format. You aren’t tied directly to any administration; you aren’t tied directly to any governmental official. It’s the...what you can make palpable in the debate – so you push your ideas either through media, through talking to governmental officials, or meetings on Capitol Hill to spread your influence. You are not spreading anything tangible. It is very difficult to measure the impact a think tank is having on public policy unless they have talked to a specific policy-maker who has implemented this in a policy. I think it is very difficult to measure the impact of one’s influence on policy in the think tank world – that is extremely difficult.

What they all do engage with (work-practices) to various degrees of scope and authority, however, is to *exercise* ‘influence’ – enabled by the “positioning”. They are preferred talking-heads and commentators on talk-shows and news programmes on television, and authors of opinion-editorials in leading newspapers and prominent weekly magazines. They publish work (mostly non-academic outlets) and host a myriad of seminars and consultations.⁶¹⁶ When watching American television, the familiar picture from my home country of Norway with professors and other academic experts serving the role as media commentators and analysts – it was particularly noticeable how “think tankers” occupied this role in American media.

⁶¹⁴ Field-notes 2011.

⁶¹⁵ Interview, Bryce Wakefield (005-E), Wilson Center.

⁶¹⁶ An example with the corporate sphere relates to donor privileges (as funders) through the Brookings Corporate Council (see <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/About/development/Brookings%20Donor%20PrivilegesCorporate.pdf>).

The concept of “positioning” comes in handy, coupled with Bourdieu, as it explains this process. Brookings, which holds symbolic power, can be interviewed as a centre-left think tank due to this prominence even in conservative media outlets – a more articulated “leftist” labelled Institute for Policy Studies or Center for American Progress would not be as they lack general capital. The World Resources Institute holds substantial capital in the environment civil society field but may lack capital in general – political and economic in particularly – in commercial areas, or the field of security. The US Institute for Peace (USIP) holds more political capital and particularly manages well in the political power-field due to their funding being channelled through Congress. Different think tanks possess different types of capital – and a combination of them (aka consolidation), if any – where the transferability and convertibility across fields is varying. During my field-work, USIP was a prime example of this – when experiencing profound uncertainties due to the House of Representatives voted in February 2011 to remove all federal funding to the USIP (and thus its livelihood).⁶¹⁷ However, the funding was reinstated in April 2011.

The “positioning” to influence is a notion grounded in empirical data – as the sheer volume of respondents would recognise and be comfortable with talking about ‘having input’, ‘being listened to’, ‘provide an informed view’ and the alike.⁶¹⁸ Donaldson also contemplates on this being a better way of gauging influence.⁶¹⁹ Positions are here crucial, because if being “unpositioned” – there is likely a void of audience being receptive at the receiving end when communicating policy-advice

⁶¹⁷ See Al Kamen, “Just give peace a chance?”, Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/24/AR2011022406522.html>, 24 Feb 2011); interview with Stein D. Tønnesson (009-I), USIP/PRIO/Uppsala.

⁶¹⁸ See field-notes.

⁶¹⁹ Abelson 2006, op.cit. 169.

and research – or holding a ‘weak position’ where your views might be marginalised, not respected or subject to bias. In the case of USIP, it shows that capital can diabolically be, almost, removed due to macro-structures and where agency of policy-researchers and affiliated think tanks stand more or less defenceless.

The second point relates to the particular nuance of what I call ‘imagined capital’. This corresponds with the already established “stakes at stake” (portraying having authority through capital “we do not really have but can portray that we possess”). This nuance is also closely linked to my notion of approaching influence hierarchically. The notion of “imagined capital” is warranted by my interpretations of empirical data. It explains better the “rules of the game”. To exercise authority through “imagined capital” works out most effectively when encountering a generalist public when scrutiny can be expected to be less intense (as opposed to in case with a specialist audience). This is accommodated by the nature of American media where policy-researchers are called upon to address a “hot topic”/“breaking-news” in that typical “30-second spot”.⁶²⁰

As one policy-analyst explained to me; “if you research on Iraq and Afghanistan but asked to give a commentary on Yemen (and do not have knowledge about the country/topical issue) – do accept!” Likewise, to display such imaginary capital in other sub-fields can also lead to additional recognition. For example, with the earlier mentioned reference to the CATO Institute – they adamantly broadcast themselves

⁶²⁰ See interview with Malou Innocent, Cato Institute. Furthermore, during my 3-month fieldwork in DC, I eagerly followed news programmes on different television channels, Fox News in particularly as they are positioned farthest away from my viewpoints politically, hence more interesting to self-reflexively reflect upon my own views through the ontologies of Fox. Nevertheless, this participative observational element informed me about the frequent usage of this journalistic style (to some extent similar to in the UK and Australia) but quite different from the norms in Norway and Scandinavia in general.

as the ‘liberal alternative’ as far as think tank ideologies are concerned.⁶²¹ Being the only one (or amongst the very few; perhaps alongside the less famous Hudson Institute), is gaining capital due to being *relationally* distinct from the “rest of the crowd”, so to speak. It is a ‘capital’, imagined, which is available for them to “borrow” in public discourse.

This means that occasionally, one meta-field can play the role as a catalyst, where one ‘field’ is dependent on having been preceded by another meta-field. Hence, you cannot access the benefits without the interplay with the necessary, preceding ‘field’. Innocent (Cato) highlights this social phenomenon and contextuality – effectively an aspect of the established the “stakes at stake” of the ‘field’: ⁶²²

(...) what impact and effect think tank have, much easier to see effect in public debate and public discourse – and to the influence of their views (...) I can certainly speak for Cato, several years ago our position on foreign policy were considered outside the mainstream, especially because there was a lot of interventionist fever after 9/11 but also after the attacks on Afghanistan, the attacks on Iraq, and now on Pakistan. There was a war fever that gripped the nation and so we were considered outside the mainstream until, honestly, very recently, when I, I would say until 08/09, when we really gained a lot more deal of traction within the political discourse. Now, simply because we have greater influence in the public domain on television and media, this does not always reflect on policy. Ahm, you know, we can have a great numbers of hits on New York Times or BBC, but if policy-makers are still wedded into the notion of intervention and nation-building – then it would be very difficult to measure the impact on change, so I think it is very difficult so I don’t think it translate smoothly popular discourse into public-policy – two different things sometimes.

The importance of structures is evident – she continues:⁶²³

⁶²¹ The Cato Institute also organises an annual Cato University in the summer months about liberty (see <http://www.cato.org/cato-university/>).

⁶²² See interview with Malou Innocent (043-DDW), Cato Institute. 01.06

⁶²³ Innocent interview, ibid. 04.54.

Me: Is there a space for Cato – you mentioned earlier you were outside the mainstream?

Innocent: (...) before my time 06, the public was more agreeing with us, we have the same positions, but THAT effects the policy-makers as we have the public on our side. Now we have the policy-makers, the intellectuals giving us more credibility and acceptance, very interesting, we have been able to push the public debate – and through the public debate we can influence more people within Washington, I think. They might not agree with us at the end of the day, but people start to understand that we are constrained military, budgetary-wise, AND when having the public on our side, we see more invitations to conferences, more placements in newspapers, op-eds, media appearance requests, more requests, so there are tangible ways we see an increased interests in our public contributions.

The authority (“capital”) for agency relating to influence of policy-researchers are constrained by the audience – it cannot be understood within the confinement of the one ‘field’ only. This is a reminder about the non-deterministic nature of fields and thus substantiates the proposition of hybridity in a multidimensional construct (i.e. my proposed advancements of Medvetz’ original model). Nevertheless, this is imperative although this influence has a low(er) transferability and convertibility as opposed to “genuine” capital. To continue the monetary metaphor – it is “borrowed capital” in the “eyes of the beholder” (aka the audience). The flipside of such imaginary capital is that abilities to “cash-in” into other forms of capital are close to zero. However, the exposure can translate into the all-essential increased funding from donors. Thus, “imagined capital” ironically is not without any worth (potential to be converted into economic capital). Position to influence can be improved without necessarily possessing the capital, but the capabilities to do so would increase in effectiveness when acknowledged by the relevant audience(s).⁶²⁴

⁶²⁴ Depicting this social phenomenon as an impactful factor in the ‘field’, I am solely illustrating its salience and not diving into a deeper discussion regarding ‘audiences’. A separate literature exists concerning the latter – but I am deeming it beyond the scope of this study.

Third, I argue that the specific think tank literature, which principally talks about the organisational level, fails to elevate the *individual* outlook in the ‘field’ in terms of influence.⁶²⁵ I am sympathetic of the voices who would say that this is common-sense as only human-beings act – however, my point is that this consequently should be much better and comprehensively reflected in this particular literature and its research agenda. Thus, this point further substantiates my argument for the need for a ‘third school of analysis’ (the individual level and conceptualisation of why and how they think – rather than mere descriptive accounts). The point is strengthened as the epitome of gauging influence is the McGann global rankings of *think tanks* (and civil society organisations).⁶²⁶ The evident individual outlook on exercising influence accommodates for two departures from the specific think literature: the obtained empirical data justifies a much stronger focus on individuals, as well as the importance of comprehending think tanks as organisations and affiliated individuals as inseparable, and having dialectic relationships. This follows suits with the argument throughout this chapter.⁶²⁷

I shall first focus on the first instance of the above-mentioned departures. The aforesaid example with Sam Sherridan at the New America Foundation serves as an example of how ‘social space’ is opened up – but by the *strategising of individual policy-researchers*. When the interviewees are queried about influence, references turn immediately to individuals, such as Nicholas R. Lardy at the Peterson Institute, as well as China hands Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David Shambaugh at the

⁶²⁵ See (Chapter Three – literature review) concerning the first ‘school of analysis’ within the specialised think tank literature.

⁶²⁶ See McGann 2010, op.cit; McGann 2009, op.cit; Schifferes 2003, op.cit; *Quality. Independence. Impact*, 2010. Available from: <http://www.brookings.edu/about.aspx>.

⁶²⁷ I.e. as a sociological meso-level.

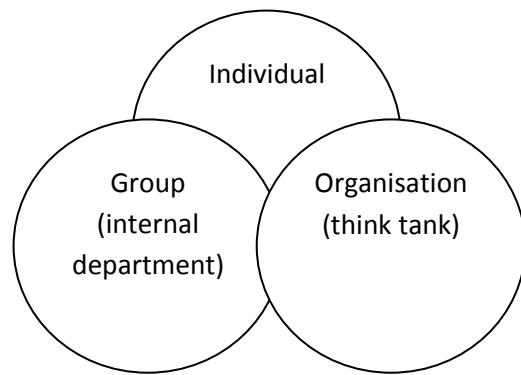
Brookings Institution. In my interview with the former at Brookings, on the question of influence, Lieberthal only had to gaze out his window on the 5th floor, and point to the other adjacent think tanks (Peterson Institute for International Economics, John Hopkins SAIS) in order to illustrate what can almost be thought of as a “physical” manifestation of ‘power’ and “all the China-expertise you need in the country” (U.S.).⁶²⁸ My other interviewees – Andrew Scobell (Senior Political Scientist, RAND Corporation) and Bonnie Glaser (CSIS) both highlighted the shortened distance to “power” and influence by former staff who currently possess or previously held top positions in the State Department and the Department of Defence.

The second aspect of the third point relates to that influence is dialectic, which can be explained by Bourdieu’s ‘capital’. Both individual policy-researchers and think tanks as organisations (depicted above) do possess ‘capital’. From the policy-researchers’ point of view, the ‘capital’ which is giving them authority and improved capabilities for “positioning” are not separate from the think tank (and its ‘capital’) they are affiliated to. CSIS is particularly known for close networks and links into government and federal departments, and thus exemplifies how the think tank on the organisational level is associated with political and cultural capital and subsequently closely interfacing with the political power-field. This is nurtured through individuals but the organisational reputation also attracts donors, or being used to attract them with such narrative. Thus, individual policy-researchers with perhaps less capital might benefit from the organisational accumulation of capital at the,

⁶²⁸ Lieberthal, Kenneth. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. Tape recording. Brookings Institution, July 6, 2011 (032-KL) – not recorded on request.

predominantly, organisational “level”.⁶²⁹ This notion relates to what many policy-researchers find China to be in the international system; a “free-rider”. See figure 2 for this dialectic set-up.

Figure 2 –Enmeshed dialecticality of capital



This dialectic form is different from the staged “imagined capital” as the former relates to elements of possessed capital – whereas the latter depicts what authority you stage through merely being *perceived* by a particular relevant audience to hold. In terms of the dialectical form of capital, the “divide” does not only occur between individual policy-researchers and affiliated think tanks (within the same field), but also with other types of organisations (for example, other strands of civil society organisations). This aspect further substantiates the notion of the above social actors in addition to the ‘field’ itself being hybridised cross-over ‘fields’ which are organised in social structures across a hierarchy.

This relates also to what Bourdieu labels as the ‘transferability’ of ‘capital’ – or said more colloquially and in line with the monetary metaphorical take on the ‘capital’

⁶²⁹ See interview with Bonnie Glaser (035-QR), CSIS, as well as Steven Balla (018-R) and Bruce Dickinson (030-GH) at Georgetown University, in addition to Hugh Gusterson (037-UV), George Mason University.

concept; “borrowed” capital, herein the prominence from related to the same form of capital but from another field. For example, David Shambaugh (George Washington University and Brookings Institution) certainly bestows academic prominence to Brookings due to his academic affiliation and standing as well as his position as a China-hand and an area-study expert as far as China is concerned (and perhaps the only one in town operating within the intersectional area between the academe and think tanks).⁶³⁰ The same process occurs when individuals can increase organisational capital by making media appearances (not only for personal reasons).⁶³¹ Furthermore, Leland Miller (American Foreign Policy Council) talks about borrowing the identity of the Council (i.e. portraying the image of a “thinker” and being plugged into the political world). He would utilise and emphasise his various titles in various context – an effort to capitalise the capital, as it were (appreciation of your capital – to continue the monetary metaphor).⁶³² Influence ought to be understood as the ‘capital’ of the think tank and the individual, where the meso-level represents the intersection between them. This is a reminder that ‘capital’ is contextual and also relational to Bourdieu’s other concepts.

4.4.2.1 “Revolving-door” and networks

It becomes pertinent to include the two above interrelated aspects when discussing influence and its individual outlook. The argument concerning the prominence of the latter is further substantiated by the emphasis policy-researchers are placing on the

⁶³⁰ Interview with Ellen Frost (001-A), Peterson Institute.

⁶³¹ Abelson 2002, op.cit. 84.

⁶³² Interview with Leland Miller (American Foreign Policy Council), op.cit.

networks of individuals. Ellen Frost highlights the social phenomenon of the appropriately illustrious term “revolving door”:⁶³³

(...) lots of people have worked in presidential campaigns, Jeff Bader is the top-man on China in the National Security Council, before on the Obama campaign, left a couple of years, went back to Brookings, and now advice on China and a “go-to-man” whom the National Security Council calls when wanting to know what they should think about China. Same with Lieberthal at Brookings under President Clinton.

Similarly, Douglas Paal (Vice President for Studies at Carnegie) reported about face-to-face consultancy with President Obama on China (and a bit annoyingly indicating that he had hoped Obama would have also taken more notice of his advice on Afghanistan).⁶³⁴ Furthermore, Bonnie Glaser (CSIS) relayed that herself and four other China-scholars had a 2.5 hour meeting with Secretary Hilary Clinton on China.⁶³⁵ They do not hide the fact that such networks and work-practices do not necessarily translate into direct influence on a particular China-policy or the government’s “China-thinking” – but more a case of having their voices heard as part of the policy decision-making process. In concert, it arguably speaks volume for the relevance of my earlier proposed concept of “positioning”.

Ellen Frost, who formerly held high-level government positions, also pinpoints the cultural aspects (role of ideas) in combination with the “revolving door” phenomenon through acquired political and social capitals – which nuances the forms of capital:

⁶³³ Interview with Ellen Frost, ibid.

⁶³⁴ Interview Douglas Paal, Carnegie (022-V).

⁶³⁵ Interview with Bonnie Glaser, CSIS, op.cit.

(...) gives you experience, you know, what is possible or not when having been in Congress and bureaucracy, people in government don't have time to think, some research but not in-depth thinking (...) outside you have time to think, what should we think, active/passive?, what do we do, a little bit more time to think. Government is all about process, meeting after a meeting, always running for an office – does not stop, just worse and worse, already beginning next election season.

This sentiment was supported by a senior diplomat in the State Department whom I interviewed Off the Record an early morning in Virginia at 8AM! In essence, this makes the “revolving door” phenomenon a particular powerful one between the government and think tanks. Expert on think tanks, Steve Balla, also highlights the importance of contextuality herein constraining factors:⁶³⁶

(...) there are more leftist in academia hence revolving door takes more form from government and back to academia, less in conservative think tanks (...) thus, certainly the case that this happens between think tanks and government – a democrat government – but also the case with right-wing think tanks and NGOs that are supplying right wing government officials with policy-ideas (...) what happens – think tanks and NGOs on the right are newer and less established, we are used to think about Brookings because republicans were only out of power since 1990s – then you saw the establishments of conservative think tanks (for example Newt Gingrich) – both sides but absolute better established on the left. More of it now.

The above also illustrates the appreciation of different forms of capital, and consolidation of them, in different fields beyond the think-tank sphere (in this case Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the academe).

John Feffer (Co-Director, Foreign Policy in Focus, Institute for Policy Studies), pinpoints the process of the “revolving door” in comparison with a key characteristic of the Chinese value-system (‘guanxi’):⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ Interview with Steve Balla, George Washington University.

⁶³⁷ Interview with John Feffer, Institute for Policy Studies, 11.11.

On specific issues think tanks can influence, like the currency issue; the new administration comes in, not necessary having the time or interest even to do home research, they can ask congressional research service to do it (...) think tanks can come in with papers, what we can really do is to have very focused impact on specialised technical issues, on the other hand, ex-staff of former government people (functions, contacts) thus translate experience plus contacts into impact. Might have nothing to do with value of what they saying, can be ludicrous, but what matters is personal connections, that means a great deal (...) discrepancy about guanxi as if operating to a feudal system not like Weber's modern society, older patriotism system relies on connections (...) peel away rational bureaucratic façade – that is how DC operate as well, the revolving door is a major part of the guanxi system here.

The above also substantiates my introduced notion of “imagined capital”.

Networks (work-practices and receiving audiences) are global and expand across country-borders (into China in particularly). One central facet, here, relates to the increased transnational dimension of the contemporary think tank world. For example, both Brookings and Carnegie have branch-offices (with full-time employed policy-research staff) in Beijing affiliated to Tsinghua University, as well as the German Marshall Fund of The United States, World Resources Institute and the Asia Society (various locations). Moreover, policy-researchers themselves frequently travel to the region. However, in China their movements are often constrained by governmental officials and consequently only allowed to meet with selected people and government offices.⁶³⁸ As many do not possess conversational (or above) Chinese language skills – they are also prevented to follow local news and interact with people with not a direct stake in their work. As a Congressman imparted (referring to his official travels to China): “I felt like a donkey on a trade-show”.⁶³⁹ Furthermore, many policy-researchers only experience what cultural research

⁶³⁸ Field-notes.

⁶³⁹ Off the Record statement, hence interview not referenced.

scholars refer to as the ‘honeymoon-phase’ as far as entering another country is concerned – dazzled by modern, skyscrapers where poor areas such as in the west of the country and topics beyond the prevalent economic, security/military and financial sphere are “out sight, out of mind”.

This serves as a pertinent reminder of the hybridised cross-over fields, policy-researchers, and think tank organisations which subscribe to ‘fields’ traversing country-borders (beyond the U.S.). There are equivalent players in China who also are embedded in the China policy-research field as social actors. This further complicates the work of policy-researchers in U.S. think tanks as macro-structures such as U.S.-Sino relations and the transnational dimension of think tanks have an impact on the “stakes at stake” and that factors playing out in another culture and country very much are beyond their control. Ultimately, this further constrains the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” and work-practices.

4.5 Expertise, roles, gender-balance, cold-war mentality, political science, language – an emerging, new generation of “think tankers”?

The aspects of expertise (constable term) and think tank roles (“borrowing” capital from the academe) have earlier been addressed (this chapter). The interchangeable use of ‘U.S.-Sino relations’ on the one hand – and ‘China’ on the other, is disingenuous. Occasionally, it assumes an expertise on the U.S. (your own country) but subsequently, then, also China albeit the term ‘U.S.-Sino relations’ depicts what is between the countries. As Ross established, internal/domestic variables within China have been grossly marginalised on the research agenda relating to a country’s

policy-making,⁶⁴⁰ the bilateral relationship,⁶⁴¹ in addition to international variables on a state's external behaviour.⁶⁴² Furthermore, I support Medvetz' notion of roles of the 'academician' – where think tanks and policy-researchers borrow the prominence (e.g. job titles such as 'fellow' and 'research professor') but not the labour or work-tasks requirements which come with it (e.g. benchmark for publications, or what constitutes 'expertise'). Collectively, it reflects another practice of strategising, i.e. *capitalising on already acquired capital.*

The aforementioned dominance in terms of the China policy-researchers' background profiles, were often picked-up on by the younger interviewees. These facets are rarely discussed and problematised in the mainstream think tank literature.⁶⁴³ Without having run descriptive statistics on the entire field (but only amongst my research subjects), it is a noticeable tendency that the policy-researchers in their early twenties is a quite different breed compared to their senior colleagues: most have lived and studied in China, speaks at least conversational Mandarin, and portrays experiences relating to having encountered Chinese culture and individual Chinese people – or alternatively Chinese-Americans.⁶⁴⁴ Without being able to draw any conclusions in this regard, the nature of policy-research on China will be exciting to follow and to look for major qualitative shifts (for example the understanding of China's internal/domestic issues and U.S. role in the world) 10-15

⁶⁴⁰ Robert S. Ross, "Engagement in US China policy", in *Engaging China: the management of an emerging power*, eds Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, (London: Routledge, 1999), 176-206.

⁶⁴¹ Robert S. Ross 1999, *ibid.* 176-206.

⁶⁴² Li Mingjiang, "Domestic Sources of China's Soft Power Approach", *China Security*, 5 (2): 55-70.

⁶⁴³ See for example textbooks from leading think tanks scholars such as Diane Stone (Think Tanks Traditions 2004, and Think Tanks Across Nations, 1998), op.cit, as well as Donaldson (A Capitol Idea 2006 and Do Think Tanks Matter 2002), op.cit.

⁶⁴⁴ For the former, this includes Sherridan (New America Foundation), Schoen (World Resources Institute), Dale Swartz (American Enterprise Institute) – and the latter Levenstein and Sandy Pho, Kissinger Institute on China and the United States (Wilson Center).

years in ahead. Samuel Sherridan (New America Foundation) constructed this contemporary generation-gap as an anti-thesis to ‘Cold-War mentality’.⁶⁴⁵

Collating descriptive statistics on the background-profiles indicates a dominant educational background of political scientists (such as PhD in Political Science or similar) rather than IR and even less so area and cultural studies. Indeed, as prominent China-hand, Ken Lieberthal at the Brookings Institution, uttered – the policy-research world is a very complex one, and not something all can do as many political scientists are more used to working with simplified models and regression analysis.⁶⁴⁶ The latter point is also a comment on the strongly positivist driven quantitative “PolSci” environment in this ‘field’ (without assuming to be different to other policy-fields), where qualitative research is not widely used, understood, or respected. My study became known as “European”,⁶⁴⁷ and “things you do at Warwick” (where the interviewee listed the terms she found most “out there”, herein “feely, feely, post-structuralism, modernism”).⁶⁴⁸ Again, as with the gender discussion (below sub-section), it would not be possible to speculate if the “China-thinking” would transpire differently in a field with predominantly sociologists and historians – but it is nonetheless a latent dimension which should be elucidated and assessed as potentially having a future impact (or an area to look for explanatory-factors).

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Samuel Sherridan (003-C), New America Foundation.

⁶⁴⁶ Interview, Ken Lieberthal, op.cit.

⁶⁴⁷ Interview (op.cit.) – said with a friendly and supporting smile by Bryce Wakefield (Wilson Center).

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Ellen Frost (001-A) (Peterson) – not uttered in any derogatory manner, which cannot be said about my interview with Lieberthal (Brookings) who responded as follows when I had explained my scope of research to him: “You are not testing any hypotheses? That study would not be accepted onto a doctoral program at any American university ... – of significance ...”.

4.5.1 Gender-balance

A striking observation during my fieldwork relates to the void of women in the China policy-research world. My interviewees were predominantly Anglo-Phone, white, middle-aged men. In my “sample”, only seven out of 44 interviewees (15%) were females. My list of targeted interviewees across most think tanks in DC revealed a similar tendency. Bruce Dickson at George Washington University contemplates on this being a difference between men and women or a more closed path of advisors and mentors – a point which Leland Miller concurred with.⁶⁴⁹ However, young (20s something) female interns are in abundance, at DC think tanks. The Foreign Policy magazine discussed the addressed issue in an article published during my fieldwork – “City of Men”:⁶⁵⁰ only one out of five policy-researchers in foreign policy were women, which makes the “China-field” even more negatively eschewed.

This negative balance is further divided when taking into account that even a lower number of women are holding positions in the dominating policy-areas in Washington, DC, herein the “hard-power” domains which women respondents themselves (in Zenko’s article) defined as military and economic forces. I cannot conclude, of course, that the policy-research would have looked differently if females constituted 50% of the think tank positions as I have not compared with a compatible China field *containing* such high number of women. Moreover, such an argument would also be flawed even as anecdotal evidence due to female policy-researchers (as with men) ascribe to more than one socio-biological taxonomic

⁶⁴⁹ See interviews with Bruce Dickinson, op.cit., and Leland Miller, op.cit.

⁶⁵⁰ Micah Zenko, 14 July 2011 (see http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/07/14/city_of_men).

category (sex). Nevertheless, from a ‘capital’ perspective, I argue that the possession of ‘capital’ is extremely eschewed gender-wise.

4.6 Defining ‘think tanks’ and self-categorisation – a question of identity

The issue of defining what constitutes think tanks as organisations is very interesting in its own right as the first ‘analytical school’ in the specialised think tank literature has been obsessed with solving this conundrum:

Discussion of think tanks (...) has a tendency to get bogged down in the vexed question of defining what we mean by ‘think tank’ – an exercise which often degenerates into futile semantics.⁶⁵¹

I am linking this debate to the appreciation and construction of Self of think tanks (identity). I find this relevant as meaning-production depends on Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘field’ and ‘capital’ and reflects strategising and work-practices among policy-researchers. Relationality and a ‘social topography’ of the ‘field’ can move the definition issue beyond essentialism – aligned with Medvetz’ attempt.⁶⁵² I concur with Medvetz’ effort to move towards social topography as a highly relevant way to circumvent the aforesaid ‘murky’ definition issue, where the field beckons the focus towards relationality. He asserts:⁶⁵³

(...) concept’s “slippery”, mutable, fuzzy nature (...) we could do better to recognize that trying to establish on paper where the think tank ends and where the university research center, the advocacy group, the public relations firm, or the political party begins only ensnares us in an endless debate about which organisations are the “true think tanks” and which are not.

⁶⁵¹ Simon James, “Review of Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process, by Diane Stone,” *Public Administration*, 76(2) (1998): 409-10.

⁶⁵² See Medvetz 2008, op.cit.

⁶⁵³ Medvetz 2008, *ibid.*

However, I also agree with Medvetz that the humongous task to map the field is a journey which lies ahead of us.⁶⁵⁴

I am also arguing for the relevance of incorporating conceptual boundaries and boundary-markers in regard to identity-construction in a Bourdieusian dialectical sense.⁶⁵⁵ The strategising, by drawing upon various forms and consolidations of ‘capital’, was prevalent among policy-researchers in terms of positioning themselves within the ‘field’. Conceptual boundary-construction is particular pertinent here due to it being a dialectic concept where social construction of what constitutes “Us” and “Them” – Self and Other – is relational as with Bourdieu’s notion of ‘field’.

The possessed ‘capital’ assigns policy-researchers and think tanks to a position within the internal structural systems of the ‘field’, and the strategising is carried out in order to alter this position for political reasons (not meant in a party-political sense). The relational aspect is empirically warranted – what one think tank does in terms of “China-thinking” and associated work-practices are relational and constitutively formed by what other think tanks do. For example, The Heritage Foundation is particularly targeting the Congress – hence, making ‘party-politics’ an evident boundary-marker as far as their identity-construction is concerned. Symptomatically – Heritage is no stranger to invite close allies on the Hill as keynote speakers to, for example, their China-events.

⁶⁵⁴ Medvetz 2012, op.cit. 115.

⁶⁵⁵ See Lamont and Molnar 2002, op.cit. 167-195; Barth 1971, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, op.cit.

When I attended Heritage’s ‘The China Challenge: Mixing Economics and Security’ seminar (29 June 2011) it prominently featured Senator John Cornyn (Republican, Texas) who, according to Heritage’s Dr Holmes (Vice President, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies), has become a strong advocate for Taiwan’s security concern and sales of fighter-jets to Taiwan.⁶⁵⁶ The honour bestowed to Senator Cornyn whose speech reminded me more about an undergraduate essay in terms of the contents, was, fair to say, equally an exercise in maintaining Heritage’s political connections, and thus political and social ‘capital’. When USIP moved away from K-street, a hotspot in the think tank world, down to Constitution Avenue overlooking the Jefferson Memorial, this was very much in line with accentuating their identity as a government-funded policy institution due to closeness to iconic landmark in Washington, DC.⁶⁵⁷ In this case, ‘governmental’ performs as one of USIP’s boundary-markers. As alluded to earlier (in this chapter), the boundary-marker of ‘academic’ is salient for Brookings and in particularly the Wilson Center – the latter which also would shy away from the marker of ‘policy-advice’, something which diverse think tanks such as Center for American Progress, Brookings, Hudson Institute would take for granted – even another semi-governmental think tank such as RAND Corporation.⁶⁵⁸

Through the theoretical and dialectical lenses of Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology, the focus on identity-construction is directed towards how “think tankers” construct themselves differently by the use of boundary-markers rather than merely identify differences between them (which often boils down to observed behavioural patterns).

⁶⁵⁶ See <http://www.heritage.org/events/2011/06/china-challenge>.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Stein D. Tønnesson, USIP/PRIO, op.cit.

⁶⁵⁸ See field-notes.

Thus, these boundary-markers are assessed relationally (social and cultural boundaries) where the inquiry relates to how they have been drawn and what uphold them through the attributed meaning of the boundaries and what unfolds inside them and what is excluded.⁶⁵⁹ This social theoretical conclusion further advances Medvetz' stance on the definition issue (to include relationality) by moving it beyond the sole problem of essentialism and towards dialectical and sociological relational conceptual boundary-construction.

Interestingly, this identity-construction plays out in, exactly, a hybridised cross-over field. Each think tank has a different Self/Other constellation, i.e. what Others they are constructing their organisational Self within. This is a dialectical interplay in its own right; on the one hand their identity is constructed through conceptual boundary-construction and materiality (such as USIP; location), on the other hand the identity-formation can influence the distribution of capital and their position in the various fields themselves (strategising – as with the Cato Institute; inside our outside the “belt-way”). Essentially, it illustrates the illogicality of a dichotomised binary to define think tanks and where assuming a universal applicability due to different countries and cultures (even within one, single think tank) have different end points on the very same continuum. Take the example of Norwegian think tanks, where higher prominence is linked to “distance from corporations” (and closer to government is not problematic), whereas in the U.S., the binary between corporation and government relates to a good/clean and bad/dirty binary.

⁶⁵⁹ Lauring and Guttormsen 2010, op.cit; Lamont and Molnar 2002, op.cit. 167-195.

4.7 Conclusion

In this first analysis chapter, I have positioned the China policy-research community as a Bourdieusian ‘social field’, which in its own right interfaces with this thesis’ main contributions. This includes advancing the investigatory scope of think tanks⁶⁶⁰ which leads to making contributions to the specific think tank literature and U.S. Foreign Policy and politics more broadly, in addition to the *Bourdiesuan* ‘sociological-turn’,⁶⁶¹ the importance of dialectical (and especially contextual macro-structural) facets in the structure/agency debate, and the relevance of dialectical and relational thinking in this regard – in IR research. The social theoretical effort is integral to a Bourdieusian analysis – the theoretical framework of this study. Additionally, the Chapter achieves to contextualise and enhance the understanding of the conducted analysis in the subsequent analysis chapters. Overall, the constructed ‘social field’ has the ability to explicate contextualised factors in more depth, and thus shows the need for an enhanced meaning-based inquiry (macro-structures) conjointly with examining individuality and agency. In concert, this serves as a means to making sense of the research problem at hand *relationally*, which substantially influence the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” and work-practices among China policy-researchers in Washington, DC, anchored think tanks.

In terms of topics, this chapter has predominantly engaged with constructing the architecture of the ‘social field’, as well as influential contextual, macro-structural factors (media, funding, politics) and microindividual agency (expertise, roles played out, gender and background profiles of policy-researchers, identity-construction,

⁶⁶⁰ Medvetz 2012, op.cit, which is based on Medvetz “Think Tanks as an Emergent Field.” (2008), op.cit.; in addition to Medvetz 2012, “Murky Power: ‘Think Tanks’ as Boundary Organizations.”, op.cit. 113-33.

⁶⁶¹ See Adler-Nissen, ed. 2013, op.cit.

influence) aligned with the sociological meso-level. Methodologically, this chapter draws principally on my conducted interview-questions relating to the above in addition to participant observation, informal conversation, collection of written material, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and field-notes. The deployment of a Bourdieusian framework has accommodated for a way to present and analyse collected field-data, but I have also been able to open up new lines of inquiries pertinent to the study of think tanks as well as allowing the field-data to scrutinise Bourdieu's conceptual "thinking-tools". My research has particularly interfaced with the work of Tom Medvetz – whose empirical study on American think tanks is one of the few which have employed Bourdieu's social theory in this realm.⁶⁶²

In this chapter, I am presenting various findings which correspond with the main arguments and proposed areas of contributions in this thesis. The application of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice has shown a high degree of relevance on three accounts. First, it accommodates for a coherent vocabulary in order to present and analyse data. Second, this conceptual frame has unveiled new avenues for investigation (questions which may not have been asked if the line of inquiry would have been subject to an alternative theoretical framework regime) – such as the relationship between individuals and groups as social actors in the 'field'. Third, the juxtaposition with new, collected field-data has allowed scrutinising Bourdieu's concept themselves – pointing out the need to differentiate between individuality and organisations as social actors in the field, and the existence of a staged "imagined capital".

⁶⁶² Medvetz 2012, op.cit.

The above prompts to relay the findings linked to conceptual contributions. The study warrants further advancements of Medvetz' heuristic device through establishing the ‘field’ as non-linear, non-fixed, asymmetric, and multi-directional – in addition to featuring a constitutively hybrid/cross-over nature as with individual policy-researchers and think tank organisations within such ‘fields’. More recently, Medvetz developed his thinking in a similar direction – however without including central elements of hierarchy or expanding the notion of constitutively hybridity beyond organisations as “boundary-organisations”:⁶⁶³

(...) it is possible to use a field theory approach to conceptualize think tanks in three different ways: first, as inhabitants of a larger field; second, as organizations that span multiple fields; and third, as organizations that collectively make up their own field or ‘proto-field’.

Moreover, I have identified the importance of hierarchy of fields as well as the dynamic horizontal and vertical movement between them (homology). Here, a ‘field of power’ sometimes functions as a moderator for an effect within another ‘field of power’ within which the relationality between the different forms of ‘capital’ (aka consolidation) influence the position in any given ‘field’. Consequently, this supports the proposed conceptual contribution of enhancing the body of research regarding the *Bourdieuian* ‘sociological turn’ in IR research. Additionally, this set-up substantiates the argument for introducing a third ‘school of analysis’ in the specialised think tank literature as well as elevating individuals and think tank organisations as non-state players in IR research.

⁶⁶³ Medvetz 2012, op.cit. 125.

Empirically, this study supports Medvetz notion of “borrowing” prominence from the academe as far as what roles think tankers play in their ‘field’ and further modified/contested the usage of the term ‘expertise’ as lacking a benchmark. Additional findings encompass the strategising practices of creating additional “social space”, “imagined capital”, “capital borrowing”, as well as capitalising on ‘capital’. I have also identified a significant gender-imbalance.

In terms of influence, policy-researchers can be argued to engage substantially with “positioning” (for influencing) as a practice – which also vaults the issue of defining think tanks as organisations. I have further shown the relevance for adding conceptual boundary-markers relating to identifying think tanks as organisations which essentially ties in with my support to Medvetz’ encouragements to surpass the essentialist definition issue by thinking relationally through a social field with a focus on how these organisation have materialised. Moreover, as far as identity is concerned, identity-construction is also utilised to improve their structural position within the ‘field’ as well as the notion of “positioning” as a means to overcome the issue of gauging exercised influence.

The above also underscores an epistemological and methodological contribution – contemplating on Bourdieu’s theory deployed as a method – through Bourdieu’s own operationalisation of this social theory, i.e. the embedded conceptual “thinking tools”. The unveiling of new research avenues is facilitated by a social constructionist embedded ethnographic research strategy (and the ‘cyclic’ research process in particular) which emphasises the primacy of field-data and gives agency

and primacy to research subjects as well as their ‘native categories’ and constructions of ‘social realities’.

As secondary contributions, the findings and conceptual framing in chapter, also benefit the U.S.-Sino and U.S. Foreign Policy towards China literatures (herein, what do individual policy-researchers think and conceptualise about China – and what the constraints are), in addition to U.S. Politics through analysing a fixture, i.e. think tanks, in the American political system. In terms of the constructivist research-programme within IR – Bourdieu’s dialectical approach and the intersection between ideas/construction and materiality/physicality also takes stance with the mainstream constructivist idea that ideas precede macro-structures in the structure/agency debate.

This is different to Bourdieu’s view on dialecticality; the interplay between structure and agency never ends or perform detached from each other but always transforming. However, even in recent research revolving around culture from a constructivist perspective (for example, in *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations*, by Klotz and Lynch 2007),⁶⁶⁴ cultural research notwithstanding seems trapped in a relatively structuralist line, as was the case with Social and Cultural Anthropology – but three decades ago.⁶⁶⁵ Their statement concerning identity *guiding* behaviour reflects both a separable factor, a fixed entity, and a material persona which indeed resonates with a more positivist inclined social psychological behaviourist tradition.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ See Klotz and Lynch 2007, op.cit.

⁶⁶⁵ Chapman 1997, op.cit. 3-29.

⁶⁶⁶ Klotz and Lynch, ibid.

On a broader note, applicable to the social sciences in general, the application of Bourdieu contributes towards the structure/agency debate which primacy has heavily been dominated by the latter⁶⁶⁷ – and thus, consequently, neglected contextuality and cultural structures – a key facet of one of the most challenging issues across the social sciences.⁶⁶⁸ Furthermore, the increased focus on relationality between Bourdieu’s concepts also contributes towards the social sciences more broadly, which has tended to detach them and/or not having been deployed in conjunction.⁶⁶⁹

Lastly, this first analysis Chapter contributes with knowledge about U.S. think tanks as well as serving an important purpose of providing context to the two remaining analysis chapters. In the two latter chapters, a contextualised inquiry into the policy-researchers’ narratives on China (in addition to ‘American-ness’) – and the role of culture in this regard – will be conducted through Bourdieu’s social theoretical lenses. In the final Chapter, I shall synthesise and summarise findings and suggested contributions that have emerged in this chapter with those of the subsequent chapters. Overall, it has been shown and argued in the present Chapter, that the “China-narratives” (encompassing conceptualisation of policy-researchers’ thinking and associated work-practices in this regard) are intricate to the dynamics of the interplay within a sociological meso-level (macro-structure and microindividual, agency and structure). Consequently, the theoretical focus is redirected towards the Self/Other constellations (identity/culture) as far as constructing ‘China’ and ‘American-ness’ are concerned, and where Bourdieu’s practice theory will recur through deploying, predominantly, his embedded “thinking-tools” of doxa, interests,

⁶⁶⁷ King 2000 op.cit. 417-433.

⁶⁶⁸ Jackson 2008, op.cit. 155–181.

⁶⁶⁹ Swartz 2008, op.cit. 45-52.

strategising, and habitus. The focus on relationality and simultaneous employment of Bourdieu's concept is indeed very much placed at the forefront throughout this thesis due to the ability to interface the remaining chapters with the current chapters which strongly focuses on 'field' and 'capital'.⁶⁷⁰ As earlier mentioned, the links between action and habitus can only be explicated through taking into account the positioning within the 'field' and its internal structures.

⁶⁷⁰ Swartz 2008, *ibid.* 45-52.

CHAPTER 5

THE ‘EXCEPTIONAL’ VOID OF ‘INTERNATIONALITY’: NARRATIVES ON CHINA WITHIN U.S.-SINO RELATIONS

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This second analysis chapter investigates the role of culture embedded in identified China-narratives amongst policy-researchers in U.S. think tanks. This is achieved by the following approach. First, a multitude of narratives relating to U.S. relations with China will be presented as several cohesive clusters (of narratives). This consolidation will serve as the discursive frame for the ensuing analysis. In concert, this foundation effectively portrays the variation and ‘social realities’ existing “out-there” as far as China-narratives are concerned. Second, I will synthesise the above sense-making with established and pertinent bodies of literature in order to build theories bottom-up concerning what constitutes such China-narratives. Third, by synthesising the previous two assignments, I shall propound an overarching argument (as reflected in the chosen title of this chapter) surrounding the discursive frame. This proposition is employed as an explanatory source which signifies cultural influence in the way policy-researchers socially and dialectically construct their narratives on ‘China’ (with the context of the relationship between the two countries).⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷¹ This structure (analysis) is replicated in the final analysis Chapter Six, albeit examining auxiliary clusters of China-narratives. Thus, the “set-up” of the present Chapter also applies to Chapter Six and will therefore not be repeated.

The analysis draws heavily upon my conducted interviews and to some extent written material published by the policy-researchers themselves – in addition to context and observations made. Social theoretically, the analysis interfaces with the Bourdieu’s dialectic Self/Other constellation and conceptual “thinking tools” – in particularly ‘habitus’, ‘strategising’ and ‘interest’ – which are all part of his Theory of Practice more specifically.⁶⁷²

The preceding Chapter Four (which established the China policy-research community as a Bourdieusian ‘social field’) serves as a “bridging-chapter” between the theoretical framework and the three analysis chapters.⁶⁷³ Thus, the conducted analysis should be read through a particular set of epistemological lenses, herein that imparted China-narratives have materialised as integral to the established sociological meso-level. Thus, the diffused nature of individual policy-researchers’ agency are dialectic and enmeshed with macrostructures,⁶⁷⁴ and where ‘social reality’ amongst them are negotiated contingent on the given context.⁶⁷⁵

These interlinks are aligned with the Bourdieusian theoretical framework of this thesis: the more evident engagement with the particular conceptual “thinking tools” of ‘habitus’, ‘doxa’, ‘strategising’, and ‘interests’ – are not being discussed in isolation with the recognised performativity of ‘capital’ and ‘field’.⁶⁷⁶ For instance, the “China” (amongst several “Chinas”) which appear more prevalent on the horizon

⁶⁷² This constitutes the conceptual/theoretical framework of the thesis.

⁶⁷³ Part A: Chapters One – Three & Part B: Chapters Four-Six, respectively.

⁶⁷⁴ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; Richard 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit.

⁶⁷⁵ John G. Bruhn and Howard M. Rebach, “Problem Solving at the Mesolevel,” in *Sociological Practice: Intervention and Social Change*, 2nd ed, John G. Bruhn and Howard M. Rebach (New York: Springer, 2007), 115-145.

⁶⁷⁶ This was the case, predominantly in Chapter Four.

of a policy-researcher trained as an economist as opposed to, let us say, an international development scholar, can plausibly be linked to their educational background. Such influence often branches out to their engagement with specific work-tasks in a given policy-area.⁶⁷⁷

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will establish the premise of the investigatory scope of this particular chapter. Second, I shall outline the “methodological fit” with the main elements of the study’s research design.⁶⁷⁸ Third, a self-reflexive account is proffered. Fourth, the various clusters of China-narratives will be presented and elaborated on. Fifth, the empirical material and identified findings will be juxtaposed with pre-established bodies of literature. Sixth, I will articulate the overarching argument pertaining to the synthesis of the discursive frame and research findings.

5.1 The premise of this chapter and linkages to overarching research framework

In this sub-section, I shall briefly lay out the assumptions made in the investigatory scope pertaining to this chapter.⁶⁷⁹ This includes the rationale for the above-mentioned three-step analytical approach, i.e. the delimitation of a ‘cluster’; the scope concerning what constitutes a ‘China-narrative’; what topics this Chapter does not engage with, to reiterate the Bourdieusian dialectical and relational orientation

⁶⁷⁷ Some policy-researchers, though, work in a policy-area other than what their educational background would normally dictate.

⁶⁷⁸ See Edmondson, Amy C and Stacy E Mcmanus. "Methodological fit in management field research." *Academy of management review* 32, no. 4 (2007): 1246–1264; Zalan, T and Lewis, G 2004, "Writing About Methods in Qualitative Research: Towards a More Transparent Approach", in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in International Business*, ed. Rebecca Marschan-Piekkari and Catherine A. Welch (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar,) 507-528.

⁶⁷⁹ This also applies to the subsequent analysis Chapter Six.

concerning the dialectic Self/Other orientation; and finally, what can be understood as the *role* of culture in this investigation.

First, the three-step process as the chosen way to make sense of data as well as to produce and to present findings/arguments reflects a firm foothold in the ethnographic research strategy: granting primacy to the voices of those being studied (i.e. China policy-research experts), aligned with the ‘cyclic’ research process. The formulation of an overarching argument, appropriately and beneficially contributes to sense-making of nuances and complexity through synthesising narratives, findings, and theory/literature across such empirical multiplicity.

Second, cognate narratives are assumed to belong to each other (groupings), resulting in thematic clusters, which is in accordance with the interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis approach.⁶⁸⁰ I acknowledge that data and arguments might have been organised and delimited differently by other researchers due to subjectivity. Thus, in order to display the validity and reliability of the rational in this regard, a self-reflexive deliberation (aligned with Bourdieu’s sociology of sociology) is carried out.

Third, what constitutes a “China-narrative” can be delimited based on two factors: in relation to the U.S.-Sino contextuality, and the influence of subjectivity. For the former factor, alongside with acknowledging multiplicity (herein, multiple “Chinas”), I am not assuming that there is a *particular ‘China’ within* the context of the relationship between the U.S. and China. This links to the second factor – the

⁶⁸⁰ Such approach makes use of counting interpretations rather than the frequency of appearances, for example, of a word.

inevitable influence of subjectivity on my own part as the researcher. In this chapter, I am drawing the line as following: what belongs inside the boundary of the inquiry in the present chapter encompasses the nature of the bilateral relationship at the macro-level in addition to the mutual impact on each other within this purview. It needs to be recognised that any clustering of narratives is influenced by some pre-conceived notions of what constitutes similarity in what is deemed as cognate narratives.

For example, on a self-reflexive note, I might perceive narratives relating to the ‘(nation) state’ and those addressing ‘health’ as connected due to the strongly intervening state in a Norwegian context – and the focus on upholding the welfare state. Whereas, in the U.S., ‘health-narratives’ might be more pertinently associated with core values such as ‘individuality’, ‘freedom’, and the mantra of “getting the state out of our lives”. The influence of subjectivity extends to the delimitation of the narratives themselves. I am, however, treating this as a minor concern due to the argument that this study does not rest on a narrative analysis per se – but rather an exercise in making sense of the complexities relating to imparted meaning-constructions within narratives which are given significance regardless of contents. This enterprise serves as the basis of developing arguments of the cultural embeddedness in constructing the variety of “China-narratives” which flourish “out-there”.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁸¹ I am using the term ‘cultural embeddedness’ in its simplest form – hence not associated with the concept embeddedness proposed by sociologist Mark Granovetter (individuals and firms enmeshed in social networks in various degrees across social and economic ties) (see Mark Granovetter, “Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness.” *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (1985): 481-510), or Karl Polanyi’s notion of social relationship submerging a man’s economy (*The Great Transformation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1944). Rather, “China-narratives” are produced in a non-universal, cultural contextuality (‘American-ness’) which is infused with the social process underpinning the constructed reality (in regard to what constitutes ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’, which are particular relevant to the present study).

Fourth, the focus of this chapter is to examine the role of culture in the identified “China-narratives” amongst the interviewed China policy-research analysts. Consequently, the scope of inquiry does not encompass an analysis of the U.S.-Sino bilateral relationship per se or U.S. foreign policy towards China (or the cultural foundation), nor does it specifically address general American narratives on ‘China’ or China in general as an area study.

Fifth, the analysis of “China-narratives” is conducted in harmony with Bourdieu’s dialectical outlook concerning the Self/Other. For this reason, the analysis chapters do not divide the examination into narratives on ‘China’ and those involving ‘American-ness’ – but more appropriately marry them. Thus, ‘American-ness’ is infused into the aforesaid articulation of the overarching argument reflecting the analysis of the discursive frame.

Sixth, I am purposefully and consciously operating with the phrase “*role* of culture”. This signals that on ontological grounds, I would not necessarily assume an ever-present cultural component and thus in practice dismiss social theoretical strands proclaiming that culture can be analytically detached (such as structuralist and behaviourist orientations).

5.2 Aligning this chapter with the proposed contributions

The preceding sub-section has ensured “methodological fit” within the current Chapter with the methodological and research philosophical frameworks of the thesis as a whole, which coincides with elaborating the premise of this particular Chapter. This display also applies to the subsequent analysis chapter. It remains, though, to

link the endeavour of this chapter with main arguments and proposed contributions of the thesis as a whole – briefly highlighted below.

As far as the main arguments are concerned, this Chapter connects to the overarching research questions on two accounts. First, the chosen approach to developing an overarching argument is derived from the discursive frame. This thesis applies Chapter Four as a “bridge-chapter” – where the China policy-research community was established as a ‘social field’ – which is pertinent due to the relationality and dialectical interplay between Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking-tools”. Second, the enhanced explanatory power of identified “China-narratives” in the present Chapter is strongly related to the specific think tank contextuality which subsequently impacts on the manoeuvrability of “China-thinking” in addition to how work-tasks are carried out.

Furthermore, the main arguments offered in this Chapter coincide with previously outlined arguments relating to the various areas of literature which this thesis engages with. First, as far as Bourdieu in IR research is concerned, this Chapter showcases the relevance, necessity, as well as advantage of thinking relationally and to operate with the full range of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking-tools” embedded in this Theory of Practice – which is lacking in IR research.⁶⁸²

Second, in terms of the second strand of literature (think tanks), investigating policy-researchers is a fruitful avenue to investigate as a means to contribute towards areas featuring vacancy of polyphony of voices. I argue that such focus strengthens the

⁶⁸² See Emirbayer 1997, op.cit. Swartz 2008, op.cit.

need for, as well as relevance, for establishing a ‘third school of analyses’ as far as the specialised think tank literature is concerned.

As far as proposed contributions are concerned, this study, I argue, has the potential to contribute to original knowledge via the following three avenues:⁶⁸³ expanding the literature in the realm of the *Bourdiesuan* sociological ‘turn’ in IR research (novel theoretical synthesis); presenting new collected primary data specifically relating to the perceptions of ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ within the context of the U.S.-Sino relationship; and presenting additional propositions for future “testing” (which might not have been unveiled unless utilising a Bourdiesuan theoretical frame).

In terms of significance, novelty and originality, I argue that this particular Chapter responds to all six areas which have been proposed to make the study worthwhile: an in-depth field-study into the specific China-policy analysis community in U.S. think tanks, and as a Bourdiesuan ‘social field’); Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice contributes to the *Bourdiesuan* sociological inquiry in IR research as an epistemological vehicle for grappling with how and why the policy-experts perceive ‘American-ness’ and ‘China’ (and in essence exploring the relevance and degree of applicability of a Bourdiesuan analytical framework; making the policy-researchers the focal point of the study creates the foundation of the proposed ‘third school of analyses’ in the specific think tank literature; elevating the individual (aka policy-researcher hence non-state) level in IR research (where the state-system traditionally dominates the ontological research approaches as well as the unit and level of analyses), but also to address the intentionality IR discipline’s to marginalise the role

⁶⁸³ I am here making use of Professor Matthew Watson’s (University of Warwick) list of ten ways to make a contribution.

of culture⁶⁸⁴; elucidating how and why policy-researchers' socially construct 'American-ness' through 'China' as the Other,⁶⁸⁵ and how such boundary construction materialise⁶⁸⁶ contemplating on identities evolving out of that process⁶⁸⁷; by deploying Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the social constructionist epistemological underpinning, the study is ensured "methodological fit" with the overall research design – hence positioning the study well for enabling new collected data to inform me concerning the usage of the various "thinking tools" in the specific contexts of Self and Other in addition to also allow me to scrutinise those concepts themselves through engaging with the relationality between them.

5.3 Self-reflexive deliberations devised as a method and a helpful "thinking-tool" for both policy-researchers and the researcher

I have in previous chapters elucidated Bourdieu's emphasis on reflexivity and his particular promulgation for 'epistemic reflexivity'⁶⁸⁸ – where the "objectification of objectification" is deemed by Bourdieu as a crucial aspect of research.⁶⁸⁹ Reflexivity is arguably an area in contemporary social theory where Bourdieu stands out.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁴ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The constructivist turn in international relations theory," *World Politics* 50 (1998): 324-348; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "International norms and domestic politics: bridging the rationalist constructivist divide," *European Journal of International Relations* 3 (1997): 473-495; Peter J. Katzenstein, *The culture of national security: norms and identity in world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996a); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996b); Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995).

⁶⁸⁵ Such position is aligned with Bourdieu's emphasis on dialecticality as far as the Self/Other constellation is concerned.

⁶⁸⁶ Frederik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1971).

⁶⁸⁷ Such position is aligned with Bourdieu's emphasis on dialecticality as far as the Self/Other constellation is concerned.

⁶⁸⁸ See Leander 2008, *Thinking Tools*, op.cit.

⁶⁸⁹ Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 61.

⁶⁹⁰ Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 36. Bourdieu, however, was not the "inventor of the wheel". For example, Wacquant argues it is an intellectual practice which is an integral component of and a necessary condition of critical social theory, which distinguishes him from other social theorists.

Hence, my efforts in this regard are very much aligned in the spirit of Bourdieu's work, as expressed by Wacquant:

If there is a single feature that makes Bourdieu stand out in the landscape of contemporary social theory, it is his signature obsession with reflexivity.⁶⁹¹

In this sub-section, I shall continue the ongoing self-reflexive deliberation in relation to the particular principal conceptual/thematic components of the present chapter. In this instance, this encompasses a dialectical outlook on 'American-ness' and 'China' as a Self/Other constellation. Following suit, to appreciate how – and why – 'American-ness' and 'China' as social phenomena are taking form through American cultural lens(es), I argue for the need for researchers to undertake the integral processes of 'de-contextualisation' and 're-conceptualisation'. These processes, I argue, are necessary for achieving 'epistemic reflexivity' and to establish my 'theoretical posture' to the particular social world which I am scrutinising (i.e. community of policy-researchers' narratives on 'China' and 'American-ness').⁶⁹²

Inevitably, engagement with reflexivity is particularly pertinent in a study on policy-research experts which indeed are in the "business" of knowledge-production. Thus, my own self-reflexive exploration in this sub-section also serves as reminder of an emerging finding of this chapter, herein the lack of reflexive discourse in U.S. think tanks (practical contribution). It reminisces also how Bourdieu's advanced thinking can enhance my own analysis of policy-researchers (theoretical contribution – through devising reflexivity as a "thinking tool", and how to operationalise it).

⁶⁹¹ Loïc J.D. Wacquant, "Toward a social praxeology: The structure and logic of Bourdieu's sociology," in *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

⁶⁹² Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 47. See Karl Maton, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Epistemic Conditions of Social Scientific Knowledge", *Space and Culture* 6, no.1 (2003): 52-65) for an example of adopting reflexivity as an integrated element into research practice.

Furthermore, it serves as a reminder for emphasising the strong position of Bourdieu's practice theory contemplating on how Bourdieu's relationism assists in grasping the fundament of 'epistemic reflexivity' and how reflexive engagement might be played out, i.e. to think *relationally*.⁶⁹³

The process of 'de-contextualisation' encompasses my movements in a strict geographical sense (swapping my office desk in Coventry with a rented student room at the George Washington University (GWU) Foggy-Bottom campus. This inevitably results in changing material and physical surroundings – hence a dynamic 'Unit of Observation'.⁶⁹⁴ Indeed, I found myself being dwarfed by historicity and focal manifestations of American political culture and ideology:⁶⁹⁵ for me, in Coventry, the "American-stuff" would come from British "Americanist" scholars and being fed American *popular* culture through media. Having transported myself to down-town Washington, DC, I was much more contiguous to the personification of the underlying embedded *values*: when stepping out of my GWU Hall on Virginia Avenue, I could gaze the Washington Memorial in the horizon. Furthermore, I was in fact exiting the very notorious building which formerly housed the Howard Johnson Hotel. Room 723 (on my floor!) was used as the FBI "look-out" room during the break-in into the Democratic National Committee head-quarters in 1971 ("Watergate-scandal" of 1972).

⁶⁹³ Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit. 96. See Swartz, op.cit.

⁶⁹⁴ See Ghauri and Grønhaug, *Research Methods*, 2005, op.cit. 71. In the context of a qualitative study, the 'UoO' simply relates to the context/level within which the 'Unit of Analysis' (aka policy-research experts) are studied and drawn conclusions from.

⁶⁹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Erosion of American National Interests," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 29; H. Kohn, "Review: The American Idea", *The Review of Politics* 17, no. 3 (1955): 411; Lipset 1996, op.cit. 18.

Furthermore, this unaccustomed context of the location of my own body taps into a central area of Bourdieu's sociology, which also illustrates the importance of 'habitus' as a "thinking-tool" – as well as for self-reflexivity:⁶⁹⁶ the dispositions and generative classificatory schemes are embodied in real human beings. i.e. 'hexis'⁶⁹⁷ – the essence of the 'habitus'. Thus, the habitus can only exist in our bodies (our heads in particular): 'habitus' exists as part of our practices generated from interaction with others and our surroundings – an integral part of our manifested behaviours, and the generative schemes of the habitus ('practical taxonomies' – for example male/female) are rooted in the body.⁶⁹⁸ This highlights the imperative of contexts of research and situation of the researcher.

However, more important is the second aforesaid process concerning the 're-conceptualisation' of my thinking, thoughts, behaviour, upbringing, accumulated life-experiences, and identity – which reflects Lizardo's re-conceptualised and post-culturalist take on Bourdieu's understanding of 'culture': my mental structures as well as social structures as a system of action and perception are acquired in a tacit state through tacit mechanisms – where I as an actor/researcher executes practices in accordance to the tenants of such a system.⁶⁹⁹ It is an illogical and unachievable process of detaching my own habitus and body from my innate culture and personality.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ See Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 1992, op.cit. 263; see Jenkins 2002, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 37, 75 on culture being rooted in the necessary physical embodiment(s) of its producers (men and women).

⁶⁹⁷ Bourdieu 1990b, *Logic of Practice*, op.cit. 66-79; see Jenkins 2002, ibid. 75, for "how we conduct ourselves" (hexis).

⁶⁹⁸ Jenkins 2004, ibid. 74-75.

⁶⁹⁹ Lizardo, O 2011, op.cit.; Loïc Wacquant, *Body and Soul: Ethnographic Notebooks of An Apprentice-Boxer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷⁰⁰ According to Geertz, Man should be understood as a "summative upshot" of diffusing values, behaviour, biological, psychological processes, and social existence (Geertz 1973, op.cit.).

It becomes relevant to inquiry about my own ‘Norwegian-ness’ in relation to grasping how policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks perceive ‘China’ as the cultural Other and the contingent social construction of the American Self, i.e. ‘American-ness’. According to Bourdieu, the sociology of sociology is both the fundament for his epistemological sociology and subsequently the prerequisite for rigorous sociological practice, which scrutinised the “uncontrolled relation to the object which results in the projection of this relation onto the object”.⁷⁰¹ It serves as a reminder of the realisation that to objectivise the objectivising is necessary in order to avoid claiming scientific discourse about an object (e.g. policy-researchers), and on the flip-side of the coin, to neglect illuminating my own (as the researcher) relation to this same object. This does not end by pointing out my socio-biological traits and backgrounder – but also my position in the academic field as a cultural producer, and more so my intellectual posture within which my theoreticist or intellectualist biases evolve as a product of:

(...) forgetting to inscribe into the theory we build of the social world the fact that it is the product of a theoretical gaze, a ‘contemplative eye’.⁷⁰²

In sum, I need to ‘objectifying’ my scholarly gaze on the social phenomena I deploy to scrutinise the research subjects with, and thus acknowledging my innate biases when doing so – such as the scholar investigating the why and how, which is bequeathed little space in the policy-world where outputs, answers, and action points prevail.

⁷⁰¹ Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit. 68.

⁷⁰² Bourdieu & Wacquant, op.cit. 68-69.

The main point in this sub-section on reflexivity is not to elaborate my own ideas concerning the U.S. and China, but rather to showcase the processes of acknowledging that there are inherent intellectual biases when attempting to ‘objectify the objectification’ when claiming scientific knowledge about the social world.⁷⁰³ Although not being a main enterprise of this thesis, my engagement with reflexivity has three additional advantageous usages – in addition to accommodating for enhanced transparency, trustworthiness and credibility of my work through self-reflexive deliberations.⁷⁰⁴ First, as far as the latter point is concerned, it constitutes a methodological contribution (the importance of self-reflexive deliberation and inquisition).

Second, extending conceptually on the previous point, Bourdieu’s undertaking on reflexivity can be expanded upon. Maton supplicates the establishing of ‘epistemic capital’ as an additional relationship to scrutinise: between the researched (objective) and the knowledge-claim (by the researcher). This identification (of relationships) has the potential of “realizing the potential of Bourdieu’s enterprise” and to remedy shortcomings in Bourdieu’s conceded relationship through highlighting “a missing epistemic relation for research to become reflexive” (beyond merely exploring relations between the researcher and the researched).⁷⁰⁵ Returning to the previous point, a self-reflexive deliberation also increases my own self-awareness as a

⁷⁰³ Maton, “Reflexivity, Relationism and Research”, op.cit. 52.

⁷⁰⁴ I mentioned earlier about Geertz who is heavily drawn upon when it comes to cultural analysis in IR and Political Science and somewhat the social/cultural anthropology’s face outwards in this regard (see Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *The American Political Science Review* 96(4) (2002): 713-728). This interface also marks a cross-roads where the aforesaid disciplines advantageously could make good use of Bourdieu’s ‘epistemic reflexivity’ due to the epistemological – but tacit – assumption in Geertz naïve realism’s (originating with Malinowski) engagement with the subjective role of the researcher: the belief in the ability of the researcher to impart one truth which can be told in one way, and the researcher serving to be a mere conduit of uncontaminated and non-biased data, non-theoretical, non-reflexive, and detached from the text and research process (Brewer 2000, op.cit. 37-55; see Marsh, David and Gerry Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)).

⁷⁰⁵ Maton 2004, “Reflexivity, Relationism and Research”, op.cit. 53.

researcher, but also enhances internal validity of knowledge-claim that I purport throughout this thesis (aka ‘objective reflexivity’). The extended value relates to divulging the “collective scientific unconscious embedded in intellectual practices by the field’s objectifying relations” – hence, not only my own biases.⁷⁰⁶ Maton illuminates the importance of supplementing the scrutiny of relationships between the object of the study and any knowledge-claims in order to achieve a collective, procedural and epistemological reflexivity as opposed to individualist, narcissistic forms of reflexivity.⁷⁰⁷ This can be attained through pinpointing three integral but analytically distinct relations underlying Bourdieu’s objectifying relation of knowledge:

(...) the social relations between the subject or author and the knowledge claim, the epistemic relation between the knowledge claim and its object, and the objectifying relation between subject and object.⁷⁰⁸

A third usage resembles a claim that I proposed in Chapter Four: that Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice is “good to think with”,⁷⁰⁹ and also contributes towards unveiling data, findings and/or new lines of inquiries which may not be imminently observable to me as the researcher.⁷¹⁰ On the one hand, the previous point illustrates the potential for further nuancing and expanding Bourdieu’s work in this regard (i.e. reflexivity – moving onwards with Maton). What does this mean in practice in terms

⁷⁰⁶ Maton, *ibid.* 58.

⁷⁰⁷ According to Maton (*ibid.* 63), whereas traditional philosophical approaches of grasping knowledge have tended to focus on the epistemic linkage between knowledge (e.g. about ‘China’) and its object (see Karl Maton, “Languages of legitimization: The structuring significance of intellectual fields of strategic knowledge claims,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 21, no. 2 (2000): 147-167), Bourdieu incorporated the significance for knowledge claims through the neglected objectifying relation between subject and object aka knower and known where the objectifying relation itself become the object for analysis (serving as the epistemological foundation for social scientific knowledge) (Maton, *ibid.* 57).

⁷⁰⁸ Maton 2004, *op.cit.* 57.

⁷⁰⁹ See Jenkins 2000, *op.cit.* 176.

⁷¹⁰ For example, in the previous analysis-chapter (Chapter Four), data was used to highlight the relationship between the hierarchical layers of fields and the two-faceted aspects of ‘capital’, on the one hand, in addition to the relationship between individuals and groups as social actors in the ‘field’ as a second example.

of my research praxis? I am achieving ‘epistemic reflexivity’⁷¹¹ by turning the Thinker (Bourdieu) against myself.⁷¹² This subjecting of my practices as a researcher entails to scrutinise them with the same critical eye as I do with the researched⁷¹³ beyond merely “interpretation of interpretation”,⁷¹⁴ or solely dealing with the relationship between the researcher and subject of the research.⁷¹⁵

Thus, in terms of operationalisation, I would need to engage with “objectifying objectification” – referred to as ‘participant objectification’,⁷¹⁶ – collectively assessing three main sources of knowledge biases when making social scientific claims, herein my social background as the researcher, my position in the intellectual field, and the “intellectualist bias” itself, i.e. the lenses I gaze at the social through.⁷¹⁷ Evaluating myself, these three sources could correspond to being a Norwegian national with a strong sense of social-democratic values,⁷¹⁸ coming from a qualitative research stance focusing on process and thinking rather than output, universality and generalisability, in addition to theoretically coming from a more French-style post-structuralist orientation conducting research on a topic which heavily draws upon “quants” and political scientists, and in a country at the top of

⁷¹¹ Leander, *Thinking Tools*, op.cit. ‘Epistemic reflexivity’ is considered as Bourdieu’s “signature obsession” with the unleashed faculty of epistemological potential of reflexivity (Maton ibid. 53), and underpins the fundament of his enterprise of conducting relational sociology (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit.).

⁷¹² See Anthony King, “Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A ‘Practical’ Critique of the Habitus”, *Sociological Theory* 18, no. 3 (2000): 417-433.

⁷¹³ Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, ibid. 61.

⁷¹⁴ M. Alvesson and K. Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, op.cit.

⁷¹⁵ M. Easterby-Smith, R. Thorpe and P. Jackson, *Management Research*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 2008).

⁷¹⁶ Loic D.J. Wacquant, “Towards a reflexive sociology: a workshop with Pierre Bourdieu,” *Sociological Review*, 7 (1989): 33.

⁷¹⁷ See Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990b); and Bourdieu, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

⁷¹⁸ The political landscape in Norway covers the entire political continuum of political parties in national politics/Parliament from left to right (albeit generally eschewed to the left in comparison to the U.S.). However, as discovered in my international business research on expatriates (MPhil, Leeds) – there is a broadly shared sense of regardless of political colour, “we are all basically social democrats” (*Field-notes 2008-2009*).

the hierarchy concerning symbolic power within an international system with a stronger sense of power-balance in a unipolar architecture of world politics.

Furthermore, the ‘China’ that I encounter in my intercultural encounters with individuals, travels, my mind-set, thinking as well as academic literature and politics, is not the same ‘China’, due to vastly different intra-relationality and context in the case of the U.S. and Americans. That my own country and China are distant as opposed to two intertwined powers such as China and the U.S. warrants a completely different intricate relationship. When Norway can opt out from engaging with China, with small consequences, the U.S. does not nearly have the same space of manoeuvrability due to their relationship with China exercises much stronger influence on domestic politics and international interests. This dawned upon me during my field-work, and resulted in a somewhat more respect and appreciation of the U.S.’ space (or lack thereof) for manoeuvring in world politics.⁷¹⁹ This re-conceptualisation is thus possible to engage with, but can never be complete.

On the other hand, operating with Bourdieu’s reflexivity also begs the question – or places the spot-light on policy-analysts and experts themselves – how reflexive are policy-experts? There is hardly any discourse on this – let alone the widened and more sophisticated level as we are beckoned to immerse ourselves with from a Bourdieusian standpoint. This warrants a theoretical/empirical finding. A linked theoretical/empirical finding relates particularly to the intersecting points of narrative-clusters (subsequent sub-section) where narratives are understood based on intellectual positioning and not a fixed notion of Self. This is partly why Bourdieu’s

⁷¹⁹ This is regardless of what my own opinions and sentiments are about the actual actions and underlying values – but rather an appreciation of the nature of the architecture and power in the international system. Thus, my statements do not relate exclusively to this context, but in general, (that be assessing political strategising, a business negotiation, or coverage of international news – just to mention but a few).

relationism is imperative – and this foundation further supports the relevance of a *Bourdiesuan* ‘sociological turn’ in IR – by having approached the social backgrounds, positions in the intellectual field, and “intellectualist biases” (the lenses of policy-researchers which they gaze through when making social scientific knowledge claims about the researched/social world).⁷²⁰

In essence, this self-reflexive exercise pinpoints the pertinence of making ‘habitus’ the natural “level” of inquiry in this regard, rather than “American-ness” and “Norwegian-ness” as *Selves*. Bourdieu himself was less interested in the ‘Self, in fact opposed it, and instead relocated such faculties to a theory of ‘habitus’ as a model, albeit contradictory, of Self.⁷²¹ This directs the focus towards a decentralised Self as opposite to conscious action and will-power.⁷²² In sum, this further strengthens the applicability of Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”. His ‘epistemic reflexivity’ cannot be fully grasped without addressing ‘habitus’ – and aligned with relationality – the position and struggles in the multiple fields of which policy-researchers subscribe to, is pinpointed further. It is important to grasp this interface, because in a Bourdiesuan sense, the habitus in human beings makes me as the researcher “trapped (...) within the limits of his brain (...) within the limits of the system of categories he owes to his upbringing and training”.⁷²³

⁷²⁰ See Bourdieu 1990b, *The logic of practice*, op.cit.; and Bourdieu, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

⁷²¹ Skeggs 2004, op.cit. 83. Symptomatically, there is no entry of this term in his book on reflexive sociology (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, op.cit.).

⁷²² Sökefeld 1999, op.cit. 417; Erikson 1980, op.cit. 109. Erikson combined the two above depicted approaches.

⁷²³ Bourdieu & Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, ibid. 126. Here, Bourdieu draws upon Marx, but on the flipside of the coin, where he departed with Herbert Simon’s “bounded rationality” (see H. A. Simon, “Rationality in psychology and economics”, *Journal of Business* 59 (1986): 209–224; James G. March, “Bounded Rationality, Ambiguity, and the Engineering of Choice,” *The Bell Journal of Economics* 9(2) (1978): 587–608) due to rationality is also bounded as a result of being socially construed and socially structured – not only a question of available information being curtailed and that the human mind cannot process all information about everything.

Additionally, it also moves away from understanding “identity” as a product of sameness (sameness of Selves in Psychology) and is remaining fairly fixed after childhood. The above also creates some distance to Social Anthropology where identity was chiefly relating to ethnical identity and treated Self separately from “identity” where selfsameness also included sameness with Others (diffused with Self).⁷²⁴ “The term ‘identity’ expresses such mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (sameness) and a person sharing some kind of essential characteristic with others”.⁷²⁵ This also evinces the importance of understanding ‘intellectual bias’ as an impactful source needing to be unbundled when laying out the theoretical inquiry (depending on theoretical, intellectual, and disciplinary subscriptions).

5.4 “China-narratives” clusters – Analysing empirical data as the discursive frame

In the two previous sub-sections, I have justified the relevance of this chapter in alignment with the overarching conceptual/theoretical framework of this study.⁷²⁶ In addition, I have outlined the findings and contributions of the present chapter as part of a self-reflexive deliberation.⁷²⁷

In this Chapter, from this point forward, I shall engage with empirical data which have been collected and analysed in accordance to the methodological and conceptual/theoretical outlook of this thesis respectively, as follows: first, I shall organise the multitude of “China-narratives” imparted by the China policy-research

⁷²⁴ Sökefeld 1999, 417.

⁷²⁵ Erikson 1980, op.cit.109. Erikson combined the two above depicted approaches.

⁷²⁶ This effort contributes to ensuring “methodological fit” with the overarching research endeavour (see Edmondson & McManus 2007, op.cit.).

⁷²⁷ To reiterate, this set-up and the actual contents also apply to the subsequent Chapter Six.

experts into thematic clusters. The clusters are consolidated based on clustering cognate narratives (with similitudes of attributed meaning-construction) on multiple ‘Chinas’ within the overarching contextuality of the U.S.-China relationship. ‘Relationship’ relates to their interaction in general, hence not only delimited to their bilateral relationship. Second, the empirical data – which serves as interesting findings in its own right due to the novelty of studying policy-research experts at the individual level in IR – will be juxtaposed with various areas within four, broadly speaking, relevant bodies of literature, namely the nature of U.S.-Sino relations, power-transition/realist theory in IR, the specific think tank literature, and social theory.⁷²⁸

Third, I shall throughout this Chapter, highlight when further methodological efforts can assist in unveiling additional aspects of the thematic clusters of narratives.⁷²⁹ Fourth, I will develop this Chapter’s argument concerning what constitutes ‘American-ness’ – through policy-researchers’ “China-narratives”. Furthermore, this sub-section in particular, interfaces with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as a dialectic and diffused explanatory and investigatory frame⁷³⁰ – especially ‘habitus’ and ‘doxa’, and adjuvant, ‘interests’ and ‘strategising’. The discussion also interfaces with the “bridge” chapter (Chapter Four) which brings Bourdieu’s relationalism to

⁷²⁸ These findings have been established in addition to those identified in the preceding section; the role of self-reflexive engagement (or lack thereof) amongst think-tank policy-research experts, and the support of Bourdieu’s dialectic relationality between the conceptual “thinking tools”.

⁷²⁹ For example, data and method triangulation.

⁷³⁰ My term, here, reflects the dialectic nature of deploying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as the theoretical/conceptual framework: that the embedded conceptual “thinking tools” provides a conceptual vocabulary on the one hand, (but also!) a way of inquiry/entrance into the ‘total universe of data’ (see Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, op.cit.) on the other hand. The interplay between collected data and the ongoing analysis (theory as method, which was Bourdieu’s intention anyhow, see Bourdieu and Wacquant *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit. 224-235) has the potential of unveiling pathways otherwise hidden due to the particular properties of the operationalisation of Bourdieu’s practice theory. This argument is identical to the one I made in Chapter 4 where I argued for the potential to further expand/improve Bourdieu’s concepts based on relevance governed by the empirical data (for instance, the two facets of ‘capital’ and the “homology distance” between the layers of field in Bourdieu’s hierarchy of fields. Lastly, this is not to say that other theoretical framework could not locate the same or other or “better” investigatory avenues to explore.

the forefront.⁷³¹ Fifth, the Chapter conclusion will highlight research findings and proposed contributions. The above-depicted approach also reflects my subjectivity as a researcher and thus the need to engage with an ongoing self-reflexive deliberation.

In terms of consolidating the thematic clusters, collectively, the established clusters of narratives become tantamount to the discursive frame, which in effect serves as the empirical foundation of this particular Chapter as representations of the policy-researchers' construction of 'social realities' concerning 'China' in the context of U.S.-Sino relations. It makes sense, now, to continue with imparting the empirical data – aligned with the 'cyclic' research process and social constructionist epistemological underpinning of this study where new, collected field-data is placed at the focal point in the inquiry. I make use of particular strands of the collected data from the 'total universe of data', including data concerning U.S.-Sino relations.

5.4.1 'Non-foreign policy' narratives – Cluster 1

This cluster relates to narratives which are engaging with China but outside the conventional confined two-country relationship/bilateral-trajectory ontology in foreign-policy and IR realms. Louise Greve's (National Endowment of Democracy, NED) utterances encapsulate this particular type of narratives:

NED is not concerned with U.S-Sino relations, all we care about is – China – it's like a think tank but we could be anywhere. When we think about China in analysis,

⁷³¹ See Bourdieu and Wacquant, *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, op.cit. 15/179/224-235, regarding Bourdieu's emphasis on primacy of relations (dialecticality) and not opposing binary inquires ("endoxic propositions" constituted by social and political positions (see Pierre Bourdieu, *Lecon sur la lecon* (Paris Editions de la Minuit, 1982); Norbert Elias, *What is Sociology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978): 113) as opposed to dualistic notions such as ontological primacy to structure, system, the collective (as part of methodological monism) as taxonomic, binaries to agent, actor, or the individual respectively. We need to think relationally, which also was reiterated by orthodox Bourdieu scholar, Professor Didier Bigo (King's College London), in a seminar in Pals (hence also supporting the relevance, and the importance of, the "bridge" Chapter Four, which established the China policy-research expert community as a Bourdieusian 'social field'. Bourdieu effectively resolves, in part, theoretical duality and dichotomised binaries, postulating that: "the relation between the social agent and the world is not that between a subject (or a consciousness) and an object, but a relation of "ontological complicity – or mutual possession" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 20).

we don't have to think about America's approach to China, we only think about what happens in China, what we can do as a private actor. Our only mission is democracy. (002-B)⁷³²

She continues:

I am giving you the analysis (...) but if you want my analysis of U.S. foreign policy towards China, I can give you *that* in another interview...? (002-B).⁷³³

It is not an anti-foreign policy narrative, but rather reflects that the field of think tanks does not solely harbour *foreign policy* – or even political – policy institutions. I coin the term '*mission* think tank' (democracy, in this instance). Interestingly, Greve draws an equating boundary between being 'non-foreign policy' oriented with the notion of escaping the label of 'non-American'. This position is strongly related to NED's "non-think tank" identity – albeit NED arguably can be classified as one from Bourdieu's perspective of 'internalising the external' and 'externalising the internal' concerning identity-construction.⁷³⁴ Effectively, I dispute such disconnected boundaries. There are particularly two lessons to take from this. First, gazing from the outside/in – the bias relating to a fixed "American-ness" of U.S. think tanks should be questioned – there is a vast variation inside the U.S. think tank world. Second, on the flip side of the coin – as illustrated in the previous section – the silence of the extent of "American-ness" embeddedness amongst U.S. think tank policy-researchers illuminate the lack of self-reflexive inquisition on their own part.

⁷³² Interview Louisa Greve (NED) (002-B), 6 May 2011 (recording: 09.23).

⁷³³ Unfortunately, due to time constraints/changes in my diary (fieldwork in the U.S.), I was not able to act on her very kind offer to conduct a follow-up research interview. I did, however, had the pleasure of meeting her again, coincidentally, during a seminar at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), featuring a high-profile speaker, Prof Thomas J. Christensen (Princeton) – formerly serving on the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.

⁷³⁴ In Chapter Four, it is established that NED is perceived as a think tank by the wider policy-community.

From a NED perspective, the oppositional notion to the “typical” American think tank constitutes the boundary-marker of ‘non-foreign policy based’ *and* ‘non-advocacy’ – and in effect, ‘non-ideologised’. In the context of discussing narratives, it begs the question why NED is a relevant organisation to engage with contemplating on the diverging focus of narratives on China. It pinpoints that China is dealt with in American political and think tank discourses, but additionally in a non-foreign policy context. NED remains, nevertheless, *political* being influenced, and influencing, and indeed not operating in isolation, by the U.S. approach to China in the realm of democracy.

This particular type of engagement with China and the U.S. reflects this cluster’s void of suggested boundary-markers of their narratives – or narratives at all – because they do not exist.

Extending on the same issue explicated above, my interview with Xiaomei TAN from the World Resources Institute (WRI) was prematurely ended. Their “China-narratives” can also be labelled as ‘non-foreign policy’ due to engaging with China on a ‘mission’ herein environment. However, there is an important nuance when comparing with NED; the WRI does not share the boundary-marker of ‘non-advocacy’ due to investing time in influencing the environment-agenda in American domestic politics (and beyond).

The two above experiences with NED and the WRI reflect particularly three facets relating to sense-making of data and analysis. First, on a self-reflexive note, prior to entering the field with the aim to secure and conduct interviews, I had been oblivious to Bourdieu’s ‘objectification of objectification’: to inquisitively questioning the way

I make social scientific claims (social background, position in the intellectual field, and “intellectualist bias” – i.e. the lenses I gaze at the social through.⁷³⁵ It became clear to me, post-field work – that I had a preconceived understanding of all think tanks working with foreign-policy and international relations.

However, as pinpointed above with NED and WRI, many a think tank does not work within this ambit.⁷³⁶ It also reflects the importance of scrutinising the meaning-construction of the term ‘non-advocacy’ used above. Again, in Political Science, IR and the specific think tank literatures, ‘advocacy’ connotes to operate within *local, national and/or international political agendas*. However, with NED and WRI as an example, those think tanks are on a mission relating to creating change regarding a particular socio-political or environmental concern. Indeed, this elaboration shows how I, as the researcher, was gazing at my research subjects with an intellectual bias from having been educated, and conducted research, within the realm of IR. Such approach has a different focus than if having been a product of, for example, general cultural studies or area-studies in the humanities.⁷³⁷ It is an important reminder as self-reflexive deliberation unveils new nuances in the data – but also highlights implications on research design.⁷³⁸

⁷³⁵ Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 61; Maton 2004, op.cit. 52; Wacquant, “Towards a reflexive sociology: a workshop with Pierre Bourdieu,” 33. See Bourdieu 1990b, *The logic of practice*, op.cit., and Bourdieu, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

⁷³⁶ I coined the term ‘mission-based think tank’, in the preceding sub-section.

⁷³⁷ To add on to the complexities, as highlighted in Chapter Four, I conducted another interview at the WRI – however a policy-researcher with an IR educational background and research interests. This illustrates the nuances within one given think tank (also within the same office) where the background of the particular staff member has implications on grasping the think tank’s identity, dynamics as well as external outreach work.

⁷³⁸ For example, if I had not contested the tacit assumption in my ontological understanding, I might have devised a less empirically sound research design for future research endeavours, for example pursued only think tanks working in the foreign policy realm.

The boundary-marker of ‘non-advocacy’ also resonates in “China-narratives” from The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Wilson Center) and the US Institute for Peace (USIP). It further reflects the importance of meaning-construction – the ‘non-advocacy’ marker has evolved from different interests and strategies. The Wilson Center links this to the self-proclaimed label of *academic* research and partly due to receiving about one-third of their funding from Smithsonian and Congress sources. The “anti-thesis” between ‘academia’ on the hand and ‘advocacy’ and ‘lobbying’ on the other signals a binary between “good” and “bad” respectively.⁷³⁹ Bryce Wakefield (Wilson Center) also defines this as the Wilson Center’s organisational policy – and not to provide policy advice due to being funded by Congress (005-E).⁷⁴⁰

USIP does not find the latter boundary-marker (‘non-advocacy’) a problem as it is outside their remit as being fully funded by the Congress. Both the Wilson Center and USIP share the boundary-marker of ‘foreign policy’ – as they work with political agendas and analysis of foreign-policy as opposed to NED. An additional aspect of boundary-markers relates to the strength or salience, herein not all markers of a conceptual boundary can be assumed to be of equal definitional strength (of explaining what is socially and culturally construed as inside/outside the conceptual boundary).⁷⁴¹ Furthermore, the Wilson Center in terms of a Bourdieusian outlook on identity is less strongly externalising the internal creed, in comparison to what the external policy-environment does as far as internalising Wilson Center’s Self.

⁷³⁹ See LaLiberte, Andre. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 12, 2011 (004-D).

⁷⁴⁰ Wakefield, Bryce. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. May 19, 2011. (005-E) (recording: 32.20).

⁷⁴¹ See Fredrick Barth, “Introduction,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrick Barth (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969b). Extending on Barth’s work, cultural processes precede social ones, and that think tank identities cannot be taken as a given – but occurs through the negotiating of identity (social processes) in juxtaposition with the larger society/context (which shows the relevance of the sociological meso-level).

Thus, in sum, it is not the “difference” between the organisations that explains such importance nuances, but to also to comprehend the meaning of boundary-markers as well as the relationality and strengths between them. In fact, the “non-China narrative” which has been portrayed, problematised and elucidated in this subsection, constitutes a narrative on the very *forms* of “China-narratives” per se.

5.4.2 ‘Multiplicity, multi-layered narratives’ – Cluster 2

This grouping reflects the variation between and within narratives that transpire inside and amongst think tank organisations and individual policy-research experts – in addition to their own views of other existing narratives. Methodologically, I do not treat these two slightly different perspectives differently. The rationale relates to that a policy-researcher’s assessment of different narratives is indeed integral to their *own* narrative. Furthermore, this distinction is not insignificant – cross-tabulating of imparted narratives (data) and the degree of expertise/scope of experience illustrates a strong relationship between lower expertise/less experience, with higher degree of “narratives about narratives”.

Frost (Peterson) formulates this form of cluster-narratives as different types of narratives in American discourses:

I think there is a tendency for the United States in general to look at China in certain common ways, impressed by China’s economic performance, but a little bit wary of China’s rapid military capability. We need that in one layer below that so to speak, each individual policy researcher care about one issue more than other (...) mixture of views depending on the particular think tank in question (...) different views, we try to be objective, but there are *many Chinas and many truths* [my italicisation] (001-A).⁷⁴²

⁷⁴² Frost, interview (Peterson), May 3, 2011. (recording: 00:13 & 1:01 min).

Dan Blumenthal (American Enterprise Institute) surveys the myriad of narratives concerning positioning China within the context of her relationship with the U.S.:

Well, I think that it is always a mix of strategic competition, rivalry, and cooperation and engagement. But I think competition and rivalry aspects have grown (...) most security issues, larger conflicts of interests; North Korea's future, Taiwan's future, and types of operations and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. There is no resolution, disagreement over Iran. I think probably broader disagreements are around conflicts of interests of the way China will behave unilaterally at times and on the world stage. On the cooperative side, we are deeply intertwined, lots to talk about regarding financial relations, or global balancing. (008-H).⁷⁴³

Adam Hersh (Center for American Progress) follows suit:

The relationship is somewhat schizophrenic. We have many different goals on national security, military, on global institutions, on economic issues, environmental human rights issues, there are lots of balls in the air being juggled, often with conflicting goals and strategies, often without clear, at least from the outside, a clear strategic approach concerning how to achieve these goals.⁷⁴⁴

Banning Garrett (Atlantic Council) warns against what narratives to take notice of:

If you talk to senior people in the admin – on both sides – they believe in the need for cooperation, they believe that our common interests are greater than the differences (...) if talking to Obama he would nod his head, he would not say that “you don't know shit”. I have talked to very senior people who work on China stuff, we are on the same page on this. But that's not what you hear, so be careful of the narrative – who is making the narrative, lots of people are making a lot of noise; the media, pundits, the think tanks (...) those who focus on U.S.-Sino relations, they have a view, I don't think they get it right, they don't get it the way it is seen on either sides (...) but nobody really sets out a long terms strategic picture. (025-Y).⁷⁴⁵

The boundary-markers of such narrative form include ‘multi-layered’ (multiplicity of narratives between different policy-areas, as well as between policy-areas and underlying interests), ‘cooperation-competitive relationship’, ‘short-term focus’, ‘interests’, and ‘issue-topic’.

⁷⁴³ Blumenthal, Dan. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. AIE, May, 25, 2011. (008-H) (recording: 0:58 min).

⁷⁴⁴ Hersh, Adam. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (CAP) (010-J), May 26, 2011. (recording: 1 min).

⁷⁴⁵ Banning, Garrett. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. Atlantic Council, June 28, 2011. (025-Y) (recording: 57:56).

5.4.3 ‘GDP/economy hype’ narratives – Cluster 3

Frost (Peterson) highlights the “Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/economy-fetish”⁷⁴⁶ in Washington (001-A). Underlying this critique is another narrative about the “China-narratives”, which can be formulated ontologically and epistemologically. For the former, as the purpose of GDP is to capture a state economy’s market value of goods and services with one figure, the arguable over-emphasis on such a measurement divert the ontological focus away from internal, domestic variables including human/national/societal well-being within China. Epistemologically, based on the above ontological-lens from which so-called objective analysis and subsequently derived policy recommendations are derived from, there is a risk of a too narrow focus when producing knowledge and claim about whatever ‘reality’ which is being scrutinised.⁷⁴⁷ Sherraden’s (New America Foundation) utterance below reflects the relevance of non-bilateral factors – and serves as an example of how most narratives are also being multi-layered:

(...) so if it is on substance or on politics? I think it is both. I do not think that the American public is wrong necessarily on this issue. I think that the media obviously exploits some of the... and exaggerates, kind of, the U.S.-China bilateral relationship as the cause of all the economic decline in the United States over the past decade [laughter]. But there is some truth to what they are feeling in their lives – and the impact on local economies, and that’s not all due to China. But there are some things that the U.S. that can do that I think is reflected in the U.S.-China relationship. So, dealing with the value of the dollar and taking that head on – that is not a U.S.-China relationship issue, but it is definitely related (...) I think the way to manage it is to be, kind of, forthright about issues that will be confronting these two countries. And right now – I think there is a little bit of, kind of, hoping that the

⁷⁴⁶ As expressed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy (see Judith D. Schwartz, "Is GDP An Obsolete Measure of Progress?", *Times CNN*, 30 Jan. Available: <http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1957746,00.html> (2010)).

⁷⁴⁷ This is not to criticise GDP as a specialised tool per se, as it was not designed to accommodate for the lacking properties which I have just described. The criticism is on the overly *focus* and *usage* of the GDP in debates that involve important aspects far beyond the parameter of the GDP figure. As will be discussed later, the “China-threat” notion might for many feel more imminent when exposed to GDP figures showing comparable economies (the U.S. and China) as opposed to if having utilised the more appropriate Purchasing-Power-Parity (PPP) which reflects differences in income at the individual level.

recovery will take hold well enough in both countries – and not dealing with these issues. But there are issues that are coming. (003-C).⁷⁴⁸

Sherraden also points out that regardless of how important human rights are, that China's compliance with fair labour policies will always lose out for the average American who focuses on own livelihood and to place food on the table (003-C).⁷⁴⁹ The above illustrate several multiple layers in narratives – for example: between different policy-interests, between normativity and assessment of ‘reality’, and between the ‘analytical scope’ and influencing contextuality.

An absolute decline of the U.S. economy is outright dismissed across the respondents. However, there is a supporting consensus of a relative decline: “there is a relative decline, but not military – we have more of that than everybody else put together” (Frost 001-A).⁷⁵⁰ GDP is implicitly equated to power. Levy (AEI) finds that narratives on economics take a big role (007-G).⁷⁵¹ Economics is also evident in Sherraden’s (New America Foundation) assessments where he points out that there are “tensions” when it comes to changes in America’s stance on trade towards China, but also the principal role it plays in the U.S.-Sino relationship dictated by what matters to Americans:⁷⁵²

My general impression is that the United States and China were kind of caught in this, kind of, unsustainable economic... you know, I would say economic integration. And that, as China develops more, the problems with that integration is becoming more and more obvious. So there is going to be a lot more to work through in the next decade than it has been in the past decade. The honeymoon is

⁷⁴⁸ Sherraden, interview (New America Foundation), May 11, 2011. (003-C) (recording: 16:05 min).

⁷⁴⁹ And understandably so. See also interview with Malou Innocent (043-DDW).

⁷⁵⁰ Frost, interview, recording: 11 min.

⁷⁵¹ Levy, interview (AEI), May 25, 2011 (recording: 13 min).

⁷⁵² Put forward as a humble criticism, the intertwined and dominant nature of economic aspects relating to U.S. foreign policy in general, and towards China in particular, degree programmes not adopting this is in my opinion disadvantaging their students (for example. *MA in US Foreign Policy* (2013), see <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/studymasters/usfp/> – as opposed to U.S. Foreign Policy (n.d.), see: <http://elliott.gwu.edu/academics/grad/ia/policy.cfm>).

over, so to speak. You know, as China becomes... there is a lot of kind of contradictory, I would say, patterns of growth in China right now. Things that had been propelling them forward, are going to be perhaps... in order to get to next stage of growth, those same things might be pulling them back from taking the next leap – and the U.S. is definitely caught in the middle of that. So, one example is; China moving up in the value chain, in production, increasingly coming up in competition with U.S. companies and U.S. export. It used to be China exporting socks and watches. But if they are exporting high value added, wind turbines, machinery, you seeing that now in commercial chambers in Asia – Shanghai, I think, and Hong Kong in a letter last year, expressing quite a bit of discontent about U.S. companies' access to the Chinese market. But a lot about it is China trying to move up in the value chain – that is going to be one sort of tension. The other sort of obvious tension is the post-bubble economy – is just a much more difficult stream or river to navigate. In a situation where you have, in my opinion, Chinese growth will definitely going to slow in the next decade when making transition to consumption, which I think will happen – it has to happen. But it is not going to be the 10% growth that we see today (...) Troubled waters [laughter] are ahead essentially, definitely get through it because so there is so much invested interests on both sides, and a lot of people have documented that. And it is a huge outflow of Chinese capital right now into the U.S. One is, kind of, managing this increased competition in production. Another one is going to be how do we deal with cross-border investments? I think the U.S. and China need to sit down. One of the things I think they should put on the agenda is – what are the guidelines for neutral investment, and lay them on the table so that we know what is possible – and what's not. Because at the moment we kind of have this... we have a situation where neither sides really feel what the rules are, the rules are probably unfair on both sides, and there's more capital coming from China than it ever has been, probably north of \$100 billion, it is a huge amount. (003-C).⁷⁵³

Additionally, the above quote also reflects the relevance for taking into account the background and work-area of the policy-researcher (in this instance, economists).⁷⁵⁴ Their ‘policy’ or ‘professional habitus’ very much places them in the economic Bourdieusian ‘field of power’, which arguably results in predominantly focusing on economic facets. There is nothing wrong with that, but in terms of aforesaid epistemological and ontological lenses, it is important for outsiders to be aware of

⁷⁵³ Sherraden Samuel (New America Foundation). Interview by David S. A. Guttermann. May 11, 2011 (003-C) (recording: 00:27 & 03:59 min).

⁷⁵⁴ At a first glance, this might be uninterestingly obvious. However, as discussed in Chapter Four (China policy-research community as a Bourdieusian ‘field’), it is imperative to consider as far as knowledge-production is concerned: why and how people think in the ways they do, and what possible implications this might have on their focus in policy-analysis and recommendations.

such underlying dynamics as far as knowledge-production is concerned, hence why some narratives and policy-areas tend to trump others. Thus, the preceding Chapter highlights – and serves as a vehicle – for problematising the portrayed ‘reality’ through policy-researchers utterances, writings, and agendas. The specialist focus is also evident with Levy (AEI):

Oh, that is a big question (...) Ah, I think there are some important tensions between the two countries right now, and some forces that are working to perhaps heighten them rather than diminishes them (...) Sure, I am an economists so my principal focus is on economic matters. There are some economic imbalances (...) I think both countries have big economic imbalances that they worry about, but done little to address those imbalances. Each holds the other to somewhat blame for some of the problems going on in the world. But yet China at least has not been seen to use multilateral fora like the G20 to address some of those questions, which could be mutually beneficial (007-G).⁷⁵⁵

Another facet of this narrative-cluster relates to the politicisation of economic issues between the U.S. and China. This can be linked to Bourdieu’s less known “thinking-tools” of ‘interests’ and subsequently ‘strategising’, which are socially construed with the given ‘field’.⁷⁵⁶ This is particularly relevant contemplating on last U.S. 2010 mid-term election where the Chinese reportedly became subject to what national media referred to as “China-bashing”.⁷⁵⁷ U.S. domestic economy was facing scrutinising and unprecedeted challenges – and politicians would often find themselves disempowered, marginalised, and “un-American” if opponents would manage to label them as soft on “the juggernaut” China (panda bear)⁷⁵⁸ and “sending

⁷⁵⁵ Levy, interview (AEI), May 25, 2011 (recording: 1 min).

⁷⁵⁶ Bourdieu, 1990a, 88, op.cit.; Williams 2007, *Culture and Security*, op.cit.

⁷⁵⁷ Also mentioned in several of the interviews with the policy-researchers. See Wei, R “U.S. politicians to compete to bash China for gains in midterm elections,” *Xinhuanet English News*. Available: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-10/14/c_13557438.htm (2010). *Citizens Against Government Waste* (2010) used in their advertisement the “horror scenario” of China owning U.S. (and all Americans working for China) if not ending perceived government waste which is bankrupting America – in their eyes (see http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JlkLhVo3PbY).

⁷⁵⁸ Garrett (Atlantic Council) points out that you easily get labelled as ‘panda-hugger’ (025-Y (recording: 19:56 min).

(manufacturing) jobs to China”, which would resonate very negatively with the populace deprived from income and jobs.⁷⁵⁹ In fact, as none of the interviewees contested – very few jobs were actually lost to China and secondly, many of these jobs would have disappeared regardless due to the decline in the global economy.⁷⁶⁰

As formulated by Levy (AEI):

I think the U.S. has political forces at work which offers great rewards to anyone who demonise China. China has political forces at work which offers rewards to take nationalistic stances, and show themselves not to give in under pressure from the U.S. Both countries have big economic imbalances they worry about – but both have done little to address them. (007-G).⁷⁶¹

Levy also agrees with the hyphenated China-threat relating to economic matters:⁷⁶²

I think there are those who believe that China is responsible for many job losses, look at the Alliance for American Manufacturing for example – “that’s where the jobs went, they went to China”. I think that is a misguided analysis, I think it tends to pretend it is only two countries in the world – U.S. and China. Every now and then, you often get media to play into that (...) A story I was pleased to see, I think it was in Washington Post, these bilateral measurements have not been very effective, when you block furniture from China you don’t get Carolina furniture production, but you end up with furniture production from Vietnam! (...) there is a multi-country world. (007-G).⁷⁶³

Hersh (CAP) points out the combined media *and* political hype:

For about the past, I guess, it is about 15 years or so, since the post-Tiananmen when China started coming back in 1983 moving even more rapidly on economic reforms, there has been a, let’s call it a... I guess naïve free trade slash corporatist view of how to best engage China for U.S. national benefit and also for the goal of facilitating changes within China. This was the, you know, trade with them, encouraging trade and investment and this would help China grow (...) the view of how to engage China, the naïve trade view is starting to crumble, as business in

⁷⁵⁹ See J. FlorCruz "China's rising status makes it potential friend or foe," CNN Beijing. Available: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/11/11/florcruz.china.g20.us.europe/index.html> (2011).

⁷⁶⁰ According to the EastWest Center, the percentage of jobs created within the U.S. due to export to Asia, has risen with more than 30% since 2002 (see *Asia Matters for America* <http://asiamattersforamerica.org/Jobs-from-exports-2012>).

⁷⁶¹ Levy, interview, recording: 1.30 min.

⁷⁶² See also Hersh, interview (010-J).

⁷⁶³ Levy, interview (recording: 09.18 min).

particular is realising that the relationship is, the structure this way is not working for *them* anymore, that China is playing a different game than they realised or that the game China was playing was once beneficial to them, but now is at odd because they have developed enough to compete, not happy with the arrangements (...) the perspective on U.S.' China policy is crumbling somewhat. (010-J).⁷⁶⁴

This narrative clusters reflects perceptions of 'China' with boundary-markers including 'economics', 'politicised', 'managing new environment', 'competition', 'bilateral' – and for China specifically – 'scape-goat' and 'free-rider'.⁷⁶⁵ The overlapping nature of the cluster is evident in Levy's utterances on China-threat, and the separate cluster on that very topic (below). I argue that this Othering reflects, and re-reproduces, 'American-ness' in terms of upholding the Self and own identity⁷⁶⁶ of an 'exceptionally different' country in addition to a source of deflecting domestic problems.⁷⁶⁷ This is made possibly due to the dire economic situation and thus shows the relevance of thinking about the economy as a Bourdieusian overarching 'field of power'.⁷⁶⁸

5.4.4 'Accommodating narratives' – Cluster 4

This form of narratives moves beyond power-balance, and scrutinises the necessity of giving China "space" in the international system for her uprising and growth.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁴ Hersh, interview, (CAP) (010-J), May 26, 2011 (recording: 3:02 min & 04:15).

⁷⁶⁵ Importantly, though, I am here alluding to China becoming the 'scapegoat' *in terms* of U.S. economic and political deficiencies (for example job-losses and the humongous trade deficit with China – regardless of who is to blame) – herein China being a target for passing on the blame and hence deflecting own short-comings ('within the U.S.). I am *not* proposing that China is a "scapegoat" in general – coinciding with Malou Innocent's (043-DDW) utterance (Cato Institute) (interview 26 July 2011) who expressed that China is not an innocent player which the term "scapegoat" implies.

⁷⁶⁶ See Jenkins, *Social Identity*, op.cit.

⁷⁶⁷ See Barry Buzan, "American exceptionalism, unipolarity and September 11: understanding the behaviour of the sole superpower," *Guoji Guancha (International Review)* 38 (2005); Joseph Lepgold and Timothy McKeown, "Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional? An Empirical Analysis," *Political Science Quarterly* 110(3) (1995): 369-384; Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, op.cit.

⁷⁶⁸ See Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, op.cit. 84-85; Wacquant, "Toward a Reflexive Sociology", op.cit. 39.

⁷⁶⁹ See Frost, interview, recording: 11 min.

Frost (Peterson) paints the U.S.-Sino relationship as a continuum between win-lose (for China concerning the latter) or win-win (both countries).⁷⁷⁰

Sherraden (New America Foundation) also points out accommodation as a key element in the understanding between the countries:

No, I think they do understand each other. I do not think that there is, really.... You get these kinds of comments even out of the communist party members, the senior leadership, that reflected that they were trying to communicate even publically, that they are dealing with a very difficult political situation at home. And I think that reflects, and I think that those are being translated into, definitely being discussed at meetings at the STD. I think there is a very good understanding of each other basically. I don't have any, I guess, I have no reason to think there isn't. It is very clear what the Chinese interests are and what the trying to do, and I think the U.S. has understood that China's economy is developing and a lot of people have not been integrated. Perhaps to a fault, but the United States has been very accommodative for China's rise, and I think that reflects our understanding of what that country is going through, and the need to develop – I would say, the need to get rich before old. The U.S. understands that. (003-C).⁷⁷¹

He continues with exhibiting acknowledgement of a changing environment due to China's growth – and links this to, again, the influencing and impinging economic hardship and political contextuality:

Again, the U.S. is not... it is a symbiotic relationship, it is not like policy makers are trying to avoid it all, right, it's not that I am blaming that China has done something wrong, taking advantage of a market that *exist*, a market place where people are willing go into debt beyond their incomes, willing to borrow more than they earn in a year on goods made in China! So, it is not a China problem, it is a symbiotic relationship (003-C).⁷⁷²

Hersh (CAP) finds sympathy amongst the American people and understanding for China wanting to pursue economic progress (010-J):

⁷⁷⁰ Frost, interview, recording: 26.27 min.

⁷⁷¹ Sherraden (003-C), interview, recording: 5.38 min.

⁷⁷² Ibid. recording 09:19.

(...) even the old industrial manufacturing unions who at first would say let's shut out China or let's have large protective trade barriers against them – are now starting to recognise that this is not a viable position or policy option. One, because they are up against too much resistance from the free trade corporate lobby and not going to achieve the goals that *they* want which is to have a level playing field of workers to compete, even if Chinese wages came up 30%, still fractions of U.S. wages, not business it can repeat, and see they can build cross border solidarity working with Chinese workers, helping them to have democratic participation within a not very democratic labour relation system in China. (010-J).⁷⁷³

Metzl (Asia Society)⁷⁷⁴ is focusing on the accommodation efforts which also come with specific demands towards Beijing's behaviour – within a relationship he characterises as “increasingly interdependent”:

How I see it China is rising very rapidly. They have enormous domestic needs and they are willing to be a free-rider on the international system, and in my view take advantage of the international system until, their countries tell them to support or make them support. We see this across the board, whether it is on currency policies or indigenous innovation, or intellectual property protection, or investment in Africa which has many positive aspects as well, China is taking advantage of the international system. And if everybody did what China does, the entire international system would collapse overnight, so I think as China rises, China must assume far great responsibility in international affairs, or risk destroying the very systems that has facilitated its rise. (039-YZ).⁷⁷⁵

The degree of accommodation, though, is not always assumed to be limitless. When Glaser (Center for Strategic and International Studies) is asked about her perceptions concerning the premise of China's peaceful rise, she replies: “OK to give China space but only in areas where we don't have clashing interests” (035-QR).⁷⁷⁶

I suggest the following boundary-markers: ‘free-rider’, ‘managing China's rise’, ‘accommodating China's rise’, and ‘stakeholder view’. The notion of little variance

⁷⁷³ Hersh, interview recording: 11:24 min.

⁷⁷⁴ In New York, where Asia Society's head-quarter is located, but deemed relevant for my study because it has a branch in Washington, DC, where I also attended a seminar. The interview itself was conducted in New York.

⁷⁷⁵ Metzl, Jamie. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Asia Society, New York), July, 2011 (039-YZ) (recording: 6 min).

⁷⁷⁶ Glaser, Bonnie. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (CSIS), July 8, 2011(035-QR) (recording: 06:19).

across the political spectrum in American think tanks remains credible (after cross-tabulation), as well as the more sober attitudes amongst policy-researchers compared to the media and certain streams of politicians.

5.4.5 ‘The dualism non-China threat & non-zero sum game’ narrative – Cluster 5

This cluster of narratives reflects the interrelatedness of the two above social phenomena – and eventually the dismissal of the latter.⁷⁷⁷

Frost points out:

It is not a zero-sum mentality due to the countries influence each other (...) the basic question is what trajectory they will follow, with India we now see as a messy democracy becoming a bit richer. With China in 20 years – we don't know (...) this is fairly mainstream in the respected think tanks, mine opinions are fairly consistent. (001-A).⁷⁷⁸

IR theories are shown little interest, and Frost (Peterson) subsequently makes a notice of mainstream policy-research experts and China-hands, David Shambaugh⁷⁷⁹ and Kenneth Lieberthal – labelled as area specialists and not academics with theories “probably like yours” (and she is right!),⁷⁸⁰ all that “functional theories” etc. (001-A).⁷⁸¹ Frost cannot see any China-threat, but rather a positive development about cultural learning (001-A).⁷⁸² Intercultural exchanges at the individual levels (for example, Chinese immigrants, students, food, more sophisticated and outward-

⁷⁷⁷ In the previous sub-section, I established the wide-spread understanding of the “China-threat” being exaggerated and intensified by politicisation, ideologisation and election tactics politics.

⁷⁷⁸ Frost, interview, ibid., (recording: 18:45 min).

⁷⁷⁹ Prof David Shambaugh very kindly offered to be interviewed, but this did not materialise due to incompatible diaries.

⁷⁸⁰ It relates to what Bryce Wakefield (Wilson) refers to as “European”, which I have later jokingly, but probably succinctly, expressed is the worst word you can use in this context in the U.S. – second only to “French”!

⁷⁸¹ Frost, interview, op.cit. (recording: 19:44).

⁷⁸² Frost recording, ibid. 28 min.

looking younger diplomats working at the Chinese Embassy) are highlighted by many as a source of better understanding between the two countries.⁷⁸³

Sherradan (New America Foundation) also does not identify any threat from China and rather emphasises learning:

No, not at all, too much to lose at both sides. Maybe that is one of those reasons if you have not spent time in China, you don't, you have not talked to people there, not kind of figured out what their interests are or what their leadership want even. Maybe easier to get a sense that of major conflicts or crisis coming. But I don't think there is, the party I mean, Jiabo has clearly demonstrated that elements in the party is interested in democratic reforms, how that happens is unclear whether CCP divides or splits and becomes two parties. It could happen in the next 30 years in trying to become a democratic nation. So, in the meantime commercial interests are too strong, the Chinese have benefited too much, and the U.S. obviously has enormous commercial interests in China and for a stable China. Too much demand in Chinese economy and too much risk over Taiwan, or South China Sea. I do not see any areas that would be inflammatory, or benefit for the U.S. to go to war over Taiwan (...) will pass with generation of leaders which had a commitment to Taiwan, but it is a hard bargaining chip." (003-C2).⁷⁸⁴

Laliberte (Wilson Center) echoes the dismay with the power-transition analytical frame, which innately dictates a threatening China by default (004-D):

Well, no no. I don't buy it, I don't buy it. The idea that China's rise is going of course to be peaceful because they are peace loving country, that's nonsense. There is no country which is inherently peaceful or inherently warlike. All countries think about their national interests, their government gets carried away with what that means. China is no saint as nowhere else, when they see that their national interests include Taiwan and the Taiwanese – Taiwan is a tiny part of East-Asia – prefer not to be part of PRC, and if they decided to say it loudly, well the Chinese will become warlike like any country and they are clear about that, there is no doubt about it, if there is referendum on Taiwan independence, China will intervene as any other country. (004-D).⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸³ See interviews: Limaye (EastWest Center), Levenstein (Wilson), Frost (Peterson), Pho (Wilson), Sherraden (New America Foundation), Anonymous (World Resources Institute), Swartz (AEI), Ahrens (Independent).

⁷⁸⁴ Sherradan, interview, ibid., (recording: 8:17 min).

⁷⁸⁵ LaLiberte, Andre. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 12, 2011 (004-D) (recording: 46:03 min).

His colleague, Wakefield (Wilson Center) points out the American perceptions of successful nations – the latter often being considered as a threat to the U.S. (but unwarrantedly). He draws lines to Japan in the 1980s (005-E).⁷⁸⁶ Another Wilson Center colleague, Sue Levenstein, concurs and also emphasises learning. This perspective also coincides with notions of upholding an American Self through radicalisation of China as an Other through Othering:

I think that they have an alarmist theory, only because for the U.S. to tell themselves they should start getting their act together, more competent, and competitive on the world market. I mean the U.S. standard of excellence are really, you know, plunging, in a way that, if you look at for education instance, it is dropping, you know, not only is it dropping I seem to think that back in the 80s maybe because I was just a little kid back then, I just felt like you know we were striving the standard of excellence, I feel that does not exist today (...) a perception that I felt we were like, I hate to say, that it was the Reagan area, it was I think associated with the Cold War that we won, and therefore we were the only mighty superpower, and I think this made us feel like we were the role model of the world and were sort of setting the standard. I think that is no longer the case for the U.S., China has come, we have to like pass the torch on to someone else (...) I tend to agree with the constructivists... (006-F).⁷⁸⁷

Swartz (AEI) points out the bipolar (threat/no threat) approach in understanding China, finding the China-threat school to be overblown due to China being welded more together with the U.S. through enticing China to become a more responsible stakeholder – a belief founded in the primacy of American power (017-Q).⁷⁸⁸

Blumenthal reacted with negative body language to the China-threat thesis:

I think that is nonsense, I am not an academic and I think that these ... lots of these academic theories make no sense, nothing is predetermined (...) certain ideas and terms came from academia into the policy sphere like strategic reassurance. Often

⁷⁸⁶ Wakefield, Bryce. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 19, 2011 (005-E) (recording: 22:30 min).

⁷⁸⁷ Levenstein, Sue. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 24, 2011 (006-F) (recording: 45:56 min & 51:36 min).

⁷⁸⁸ Swartz, Dale. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (AEI), June 15, 2011 (017-Q) (recording: 5 min).

realism, but nothing is predefined – the UK and the U.S. are prime examples, there were so many factors why the U.S. was rising. (008-H).⁷⁸⁹

Hersh (CAP) plays down the China-threat picture – pointing at the politicisation of the issue in political campaigns like in the 2010-mid-term election, which was playing on the fear of China, and calls for placing individuals at the core and how it should be managed (010-J).⁷⁹⁰ Limaye (EastWest Center) agrees:

You know, there are extreme views, that China will be the most powerful, and the U.S. will fade into the background. I simply don't buy it, I simply don't analytically believe the trend of power-transition. Do I believe that China will become stronger, yes considerably stronger, will develop into leadership, material power into soft power and ideational power and ability to set rules of game? I don't think so for a *very* very long time. So, there is a power transition occurring. I think the nature of that power-transition is highly conditional, highly uncertain, highly contested within China, (...) I personally don't anticipate a war, I simply refuse to except that – that war is inevitable out of power transition.⁷⁹¹

Peter Masters (Wilson) believes that peaceful rise is possible and does not see any practical reasons why China would pose a threat for going to war on any scale (011-K).⁷⁹² An anonymous policy-researcher at the World Resources Institute finds resemblance in terms of the fear-mongering relating to China where Japan was positioned in the American imagination one-two decades ago; concerning the economic sphere – for buy-ups and increasing Foreign Direct Investments, and thus the China-threat being exaggerated both economically and even less so when it comes to challenging U.S. culture and global leadership (028-CD).⁷⁹³ Keith Crane (RAND) finds the power-transition outlook a:

⁷⁸⁹ Blumenthal, interview, op.cit. (recording: 09:48 min and 11:05).

⁷⁹⁰ Hersh, interview, op.cit. (recording: 7:50).

⁷⁹¹ Limaye, interview, op.cit. (recording: 08:13).

⁷⁹² Marsters, Peter. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), May 24, 2011 (011-K) (recording: 07:00).

⁷⁹³ Anonymous policy-researcher. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (WRI), June 29. 2011 (recording: 13:16).

(...) kind of dumb way to look at it and the world, it is not like power goes around. We have a very dynamic society and in China, so it generates lots of ideas and culture and people and they are going to contribute to the world globally just like other countries do. But to argue that because someone from China has made an intervention or read a book – making the U.S. diminish is bizarre (...) we are a large country, we have a large military which is quite effective. (029-EF).⁷⁹⁴

As a minority, Seth Cropsey (Hudson Institute) paints a somewhat darker/sceptical, non-deterministic picture:

Well, at this point I am not a diplomat, so I don't have to speak in diplomat language (long pause). I think there is an extended period extremely important for both countries (...) the U.S. and China goes back a long time, and is likely to continue for years into the future. And I would not rule out any outcomes, everything is possible from sort of (pause), controllable economic and strategic competition – to maybe something is better than that, less tense – to war itself. I don't predict any of them that's, not my job, my job is to see it as far as U.S.-China relationships to understand what it is and what possibilities are for future and what possibility are the most likely. (012-K).⁷⁹⁵

Robert Hathaway (Wilson) assesses the situation:

As an American analyst, when I look 20-30 years out, I conclude that all the possible country based-threat to the U.S., like traditional national security threat, China poses greater threat than any other nation-state. Having been said, I think we are in a world where nation-states are not necessarily even the only principal threat. So, I for instance think that environmental degradation is a greater threat to American security than China is, but only the level of the nation-state. However, I am also impressed by China's growing strength but by also by its vulnerability (...) but a fragile China which is facing huge challenges domestically, and I think it is at least possible that an unstable, big weak fragile China is more of a threat to important U.S. interests than a strong assertive China, threat can come from a weak China as well (...) does not mean I am predicting an adversarial relationship (...) both would suffer greatly if they allowed their relationship to get out of control, power constituencies in both countries keeps the on differences and continues to build a decent relationship, I use the word workman like, decent or working relationship, not good, cordial, or partnership. (016-P).⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁴ Crane, Keith. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (RAND) (029-EF), (recording: 14:35 and 20:32).

⁷⁹⁵ Cropsey, Seth. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Hudson Institute), May 24, 2011 (012-L) (recording: 01:28).

⁷⁹⁶ Hathaway, Robert. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Wilson Center), June 14, 2011 (016-P) (recording: 16:00 min).

Hathaway redirects the focus slightly towards non-bilateral explanatory sources:

I don't totally rule it out, history is replete with examples of calculations or ignorance that has resulted in war. But I think the pressures for solving differences short of armed conflicts are far greater than forces that would propel them into war, Taiwan always a joker, whether or not U.S. and China goes to war over Taiwan will be determined not only in the U.S. and China, but also in Taipei. Neither the U.S. and China have control over Taiwanese actions, always a possible a third actor would be a sophisticated hacker based in Malaysia or Russia that convince the U.S. or China that either was engaged in full scale cyber war fare, I don't lose sleep, but a theoretical possibility where a third force could push the other into armed conflicts, but I don't expect serious armed conflicts. (016-P).⁷⁹⁷

Garrett (Atlantic Council) follows suit with Hathaway's non-bilateral and historical focus in relation to U.S.-Sino relations, and continues the attack on academics!:

(...) China and the U.S. are both not only extraordinary interdependent with their two economies but both interdependent with the global economy, they are the key players. This is a different world than the past competitive strategic world, which is not always appreciated by all the realists around town. They always want to compare with WWI: "see greater percentage of GDP and global trade at the time". Maybe, but that does not tell you much, we have had WWI and that did not work out very well. Secondly, we have nuclear weapon today and very difficult to envisage any conflicts with China regardless of how trivial that does not risk escalate with nuclear weapon (...) no good outcome with nuclear war, word differ from 1914, nuclear weapon did not exist, and I think global interdependence is far greater and more depth (...) in terms of risks, I find we are stuck on the interdependence side, whether we like it or not. And I think realist fails to look at bigger picture; they focus on the old paradigm, rising power and conflicts with an established hegemon. There is an element of that no doubt about it- an element of this sure, but so what, is this an endgame? But where does that leave us, better to get the war over with now and just start reconstruction, what is the point here?! I don't thing sober leaders in both country think about the world like that probably." (025-Y).⁷⁹⁸

Dan Rosen (Peterson) shares the sentiment of a decline, but also points out the China-threat exaggeration. He refers to the questionable assumptions concerning claims of expecting political leverage when it comes to Chinese outward foreign direct investments (ODI) into the U.S. (041-BBY).⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁷ Hathaway, interview, op.cit. (recording: 20:00 min).

⁷⁹⁸ Garrett, interview, op.cit. (recording: 05:45 & 12.31 min).

⁷⁹⁹ Rosen, Dan. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. IIIE, New York, July 20, 2011 (041-BBY).

Boundary-markers for this group of narratives entail ‘no-threat’, ‘post-Cold War’, ‘no-zero sum game’, ‘anti-IR realists’, ‘non-state level’, ‘risk’, ‘stakeholder-view’, ‘competition’, ‘non-bilateral’, and ‘interdependence’.

5.4.6 ‘Non-containment’ narrative – Cluster 6

Frost (Peterson) dismisses the widespread allegations in China of the U.S. exercising a containment strategy through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) (001-A):⁸⁰⁰ “they are trying to project a Cold War mentality on us, we don’t have it, THEY have it” (001-A).⁸⁰¹ Garrett (Atlantic Council) simply uttered that Chinese perceptions of an American grand strategy of containment were “simply nonsense” pointing to history – where would China be today if the U.S. had not opened up to them?!” (025-Y).⁸⁰²

Such stances, though, are touching upon the significant issue of misunderstandings in the relationship, as well as the potential issue of operating with different understandings of the key concepts in question. For example, the renowned analyst Bonnie Glaser, Senior Fellow in China Studies at the Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS), discounts the argument that the U.S. is exercising a containment-strategy towards China. Her stance is based on her interpretation of what constitutes ‘containment’ – and what would not.⁸⁰³ This also illustrates the importance of relationality (i.e. relational to what she perceives to be the currently executed in terms of U.S. foreign policy towards China).

⁸⁰⁰ Frost, interview, recording 12.30. The TPP is a proposed free-trade zone for countries with a Pacific coast (which excludes China) – with alleged claims to address the issue of China being a perceived ‘free-rider in the international (economic) system.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid. recording: 40 min. A colleague of mine, Mr Michiel Foulon (Warwick), who is conducting doctoral research into U.S.-Sino economic relations, also found in his research interviews that policy-researchers outright rejected any credibility to the concept and existence of containment (for instance, Shambaugh).

⁸⁰² Garrett, interview, recording 9 min & 15 min.

⁸⁰³ Interview Bonnie Glaser (CSIS), 8 July 2011 (035-QR).

For example, Frost (Peterson) reflected on an encounter with a Chinese counterpart who had quoted President Obama by actually having used a statement by a Peterson Institute staff-member. The latter had used the term ‘balancing’ in a policy-paper, which Frost’ counterpart interpreted as President Obama exercising containment. This example reflects both the failure to understand the division between government and civil society,⁸⁰⁴ but also (possibly) language translation issues (001-A).⁸⁰⁵ Alan D. Romberg (Henry L. Stimson Center) follows suit: “I think there is a common belief, at the top of government, and senior policy bureaucracies, that we NEED to work better (...) The U.S. contained Soviet, but China did not spread, not like the Cold War: if we are containing China, than we do it in a strange way!” (026-Z).⁸⁰⁶

Iskander Rehman (German-Marshall Fund) also diverts from U.S. non-containment strategies illustrating that the post-Cold War word is too complex and multifaceted for an either/or bipolar thinking – but rather calls for hedging in areas of uncertainty (026-W).⁸⁰⁷ Nat Ahrens also prescribes the requirement for avoiding to fall into the pitfall of containment by establishing mutual interests/threats between the two countries (020-T).⁸⁰⁸ Douglas H. Paal (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) compliments the current Obama administration for “basically, you have to understand that you need to have a combination of hedging and engagement” (022-V).⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁴ Frost, interview, recording 60 min).

⁸⁰⁵ Understanding in the bilateral relationship will be a core element in the final analysis chapter.

⁸⁰⁶ Romberg, Alan D. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Henry L. Stimson Center) (026-Z), June 28, 2011 (recording: 26 min).

⁸⁰⁷ Rehman, Iskander. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (GMF), June, 23 2011 (023-W).

⁸⁰⁸ Ahrens, Nat. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. June 17, 2011 (020-T) (recording: 05:24).

⁸⁰⁹ Paal, Douglas H. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Carnegie), June 22, 2011 (022-V) (recording: 11:40).

The boundary-markers of this narrative-cluster encompass ‘non-containment’, ‘non-threat’ (shared with previous cluster), ‘non-linear’, ‘stakeholder-view’, ‘burden-sharing expectations’, ‘interdependency’, and ‘cooperation’. Overall, there is a shared understanding of the U.S. being accommodating towards China, with expectation for China to become an increasingly invested player in the system.⁸¹⁰

5.4.7 ‘Washington consensus’ narratives⁸¹¹ (and its shortfall) – Cluster 7

The utterance of China-hand Kenneth Lieberthal (Brookings) captures the essence of the narratives in this cluster concerning U.S. relationship with China; “good and deeply interdependent (032-KL).⁸¹² The other consolidated cluster-narratives reflect different viewpoints on the relationship at the macro level, whereas the “Washington consensus” cluster also showcases the *dynamics* within such consensus. This harmonises with Charles Horner (Hudson),⁸¹³ who explices the necessity of engagement, but also pinpoints that it is difficult to paint *one* view on China in the U.S.⁸¹⁴

This cluster is divided into two sub-groups: (strategic) competition, and continuation – with the commonality of being a steady relationship moving forward where China’s development and U.S. relations/challenges with the country, are understood within the parameter of her inexorable rise. Although this cluster cannot offer hugely

⁸¹⁰ Paisly, Ed. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. (Center for American Progress), July 7, 2011 (034-OP) (recording: 31 min).

⁸¹¹ The title should not be equated to the term coined in 1989 (developed to deal with the constraints relating to the traditional classical liberal policy package in U.S. economic policies for creating growth in developing countries, specifically Latin America (see John Williamson, “A Short History of the Washington Consensus,” *Institute for International Economics Paper*, Barcelona, September 24–25 (2004); Deepak Lal, “Is the Washington Consensus Dead?”, *Cato Journal* 32(3) (2012): 493-512.

⁸¹² Lieberthal, Kenneth. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. Tape recording. Brookings Institution, July 6, 2011 (032-KL) – not recorded on request.

⁸¹³ Horner, Charles. Interview by David S. A. Guttormsen. Tape recording. Hudson, June 16 (019-S) – not recorded on request.

⁸¹⁴ Horner, interview, *ibid.*

controversial opinions imparted by the policy-researchers – for the same reason – it is nevertheless an important aspect of the overall and holistic “China-narrative” corpus. Such rationale relates to the American populace being frequently presented with exaggerated China-stories by the media – but often unwarrantedly intensified:⁸¹⁵ “media tends to focus on negatives” (006-F).⁸¹⁶

In terms of ‘(strategic) competition’, traditional IR realists have operated with ‘the state’ and ‘anarchy’ as ontological tools, with the expectation of containing China due to posing a security threat to the U.S. deadlocked in inherent competition.⁸¹⁷ Levenstein’s utterance (Wilson Center) that the U.S. and China are constantly competing – and doing so about everything – is also a reminder about the limited explanatory source that an IR paradigm can offer to the policy-world. Furthermore, “we also owe much foreign debit already. I don’t think the U.S. has a choice to treat China other than the emerging rival superpower, and to give it a lot of, you know, the status it deserves” (006-F).⁸¹⁸

As Limaye (East-West Center) eloquently promulgated “international relations between countries can at times be better grasped when the spot-light is placed on interactions between the countries’ non-state players, for example business-groups, universities, and research institutes”,⁸¹⁹ and propagates to move beyond the government-to-government as the ontological focal point” (015-O2a/b).⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁵ I am here, of course, not intending to act as a sole judge of which realm tends to impart a more “accurate” narrative on China within the U.S.-Sino relationship context.

⁸¹⁶ Levenstein, interview, ibid. (recording: 40 min). See also interviews with Sherraden, Paisley, Innocent, Frost, Barrett, Levenstein, Pho, Lohman, Blumenthal, and Hersh.

⁸¹⁷ See Stephen G. Brooks, “Dueling Realisms (Realism in International Relations),” *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997); Kenneth, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

⁸¹⁸ Interview Sue Levenstein (Wilson Center), 24 May 2011 (006-F).

⁸¹⁹ David S. A. Guttormsen & Carina van de Wetering, “Non-State Actors in World Politics and International Relations research – an Introduction,” *Political Perspectives* 7(1) (2013): 2.

⁸²⁰ Interview Limaye (EastWest Center), 10 June (015-O2a/b) (recording: 10:15).

Tu (Carnegie) highlights that "China has certainly provided an example for a competing model for developing countries, and has certainly in this process undermined the attractiveness of the U.S. model" (033-MN).⁸²¹ This reflects the competition also at the strategic level. As a metaphor, the two countries are interlocked as an older (aka the U.S.) and younger (aka China) brother – who needs to constantly renegotiate their relationship as they move between age-groups and life-phases, which transpires in unknown terrain (aka the China's unprecedented rise) – contemplating on one of the five key relationships in Confucianism.

Bonnie Glaser (CSIS) echoes such a sentiment and warns about prospective strategic clashes:

I think that the U.S. and China have a set of interests that we share, and we have another set that potentially clash, and there is a potential relationship to drift towards greater strategic competition, especially in the Asia Pacific region. And I think that leaders in both countries recognise this and there are efforts to divert that outcome. But there are areas where we do share common interests and seeking together. And there are areas with common interests but where our approaches are different. (035-QR).⁸²²

The above reflects that the end-points on the various continuums vary.

As far as the 'continuation (of interdependency)' sub-group, Garrett (Atlantic Council) warns that the end point might be a zero-sum game if cooperation cannot be achieved at the strategic level (025-Y).⁸²³ Romberg (Stimson Center) draws attention towards continuation in U.S. foreign relations towards China since Nixon (026-Z).⁸²⁴

Sherraden (New America Foundation) utters that: "there is no epic debate, but issue driven; I don't see a big ideological divide, compared to foreign policies in the

⁸²¹ Interview Kevin Tu (Carnegie), 6 July 2011 (033-MN) (recording: 42 min).

⁸²² Interview Glaser (recording: 00:55).

⁸²³ Interview Lohman, and Garrett (recordings: 2 min & 57:03 min respectively).

⁸²⁴ Interview Romberg (recording: 16 min).

Middle-East which is more controversial. There are disagreements with handling the relationship and the economy and what policies are working, but not as polarised“ (003-C).⁸²⁵

Levy (AEI) points out that there has been remarkable amount of continuity between the Bush and Obama administrations as opposed to popular belief and/or expectations:

I think they tried to distinguish themselves a little bit early on, and did not work very well – to deemphasising human rights, which got a backlash. I think a lot of this policy, because we *are* a democracy with different branches of government, this policy get shaped by political forces in the U.S. For example, if you say we are not going to care that much about human rights it *seemed* Clinton tried to say in the beginning, you will have backlash from important groups who would be quite unhappy with that statement (007-G).⁸²⁶

He continues by explicating the constraints on continuation dialectic to the domestic political situation:

But in the same way, you also when got a shift in the political scene, there are differences in behaviour. For example we have seen in the last 5-6 months in the last congress with a democrat majority there was much more openness to do anti-China currency legislation. With the new leadership, especially the new Mean committee it did not want to push legislation like that. What that meant, Obama was free to pursue a more sensible line of diplomacy which I think the Bush administration very much would like to pursue, by which I mean a line of diplomacy important to the business community, i.e. commercial diplomacy, where you have a reasonable chance of success as opposed to slamming your shoe in the table and say you must care about the currency issue, it did not work very well. The trick was, they *had* to do this, both Bush and Obama – the only way to hold off people in Congress who otherwise would do something even more damaging. What did you see, in January, Presidents Hu and Obama could focus on things like indigenous policy in China, and you saw that actually, at least in terms of verbal commitments, much more successful than we saw under currency issues. Sure, you could say that was a dramatic change of Obama administration has made, yes, but Bush would have done

⁸²⁵ Interview Sherridan, recording: 24 min.

⁸²⁶ Interview Lohman (Heritage), recording: 32 min.

so too if they felt they had the political situation under control and could do it. (007-G).⁸²⁷

Hersh (CAP) agrees with the continuity thesis, but points out that Bush walked away from openness processes such as the strategic economic dialogue and the Joint Committee on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) (010-J).⁸²⁸ Lohman (Heritage) concurs also with the continuation nature of the relationship – which he perceives as ‘artificial’ (due to American policy makers confusing dialogue with being a relationship) – but not only construed on similarities and agreements (021-U):⁸²⁹

(...) it is important to note, first of all that is OK, it is OK to have a relationship defined by more differences than agreement. You just have to be honest about it, means that the relationship is bumpy and that is OK. It is how you got to work thought it, we cannot agree on everything, we are *not going to* agree on everything. We cannot, like Taiwan we are not going to agree, you know like Tibet, we already accept in the U.S. Tibet as part of China, but that is as far as we get; we are not going to agree that Dalai Lama is an evil Buddhist and all of that sort of stuff – South China Sea; we are not going to accept that claims in the South China Sea, we are not going to accept its assurance American naval forces, just like that. Also worth noting that there is a continuity in U.S.’ China policy that is still operable for 40 years basically a continuous evolution and definitely held between the Bush administration and the Obama administration (...) it does not need to be that better, under the circumstances it is as good as it can be. (021-U).⁸³⁰

Levy continues by identifying that China cannot be seen to give in on – and why would they.⁸³¹ Hathaway (Wilson Center) contextualises the notion of continuity – it is not a rocky train-ride that necessarily can ensue without implication or indefinitely (016-P):

Well, I start out by saying that for the next 50 years or so it will be the single most important bilateral relationship in the world. So I start out from the presupposition

⁸²⁷ Interview Lohman (Heritage), recording: 32 min.

⁸²⁸ Interview Hersh, recording: 34:25 min. Brookings Kenneth Lieberthal championed, albeit unsuccessfully, for two meetings per year.

⁸²⁹ Interview with Walter Lohman (Heritage), 21 June 2011 (021-U) (recording: 2:31).

⁸³⁰ Interview Lohman, recording: 05:08.

⁸³¹ Interview Levy.

that this assumption is very important. Not an easy relationship, we will continue to disagree with the Chinese on *fundamental* questions; basic values divide, the two countries, and to a lesser extent the two peoples, the challenges on both sides I think is, finding a way despite our many differences, finding a way to get this relationship to work, to keep disagreements and differences from spilling into contaminating the entire relationship, challenge for statesmen on both side is to compartmentalise differences, so that in other areas we can forge working relationships. Won't be close as long as I am alive, not close, not partnership, won't be an alliance, but neither is it destined to be hostile. At this point, differences and disagreements get more attention than the places where our interests convergence. But I think on the many issues of global communities have to deal with in the coming century: if the U.S. and China cannot find a way to work together, then the entire world will suffer.⁸³²

Limaye (EastWest Center) expresses that the relationship has been difficult but now experiencing “calmer waters”⁸³³ Garrett (Atlantic Council) follows the maritime analogy, and reiterates his stances from his own policy-articles (025-Y):

(...) government to government – I think there is actually a great deal of cooperation on a lot of issues; environment energy issues, huge amount of ties, probably nobody knows in the U.S. government who knows in one place all the different ties that are going on. I know there have been efforts to find the number of agreements with China, but you get different numbers where no one could actually figure it out, tremendous amount of cooperation, even on things like terrorism and proliferation but quiet and not publicised, economic environment, energy those kinds of issues. What gets all the attention is differences; Clinton and Gates being nervous of China's activities in the South China Sea and if any differences over human rights, China's intentions of dissidents – the usual set of bilateral issues that normal becomes public issues. There are a lot of differences on a lot of questions, certainly on indigenous innovation, economic realm, business realm, RMB issue albeit fading because appreciating it was not as important to our economic future as portrayed of those people making a deal of it. What I am saying there is a narrative of an intensive relationship on rising power, established hegemon, inevitable conflict, you hear this over and over again, a recognised industry of strategists on China threat, military build-up, cyber war all these other things but not necessarily giving you whole picture of what this relationship is. (025-Y).⁸³⁴

Cropsey (Hudson) highlights that what *comes across* as what Croft refers to as the meta-narrative, of strategic competition,⁸³⁵ is inversely held by a few (012-L):

⁸³² Interview Hathaway, op.cit. (recording: 5 min).

⁸³³ Interview Limaye, op.cit.

⁸³⁴ Interview Garrett (Atlantic Council), op.cit. (recording: 01:05).

⁸³⁵ See Croft 2006, *Culture, Crisis and America's War on Terror*, op.cit. 73.

(...) ultimately what matters, is maintaining stability in the economic relations. I think the Chinese see all of that, and I think they see something else too – strategic competition. That is not seen here. Talk to a Congressman, you find only a handful of them thinking about strategic elements of the relationship between the two countries, the rest of them don't think about China. Or if they do, they'd come up with the economic notion. And, I don't, it would be very hard press to find an American policy maker at senior level or an elected official who has given a lot of thought to economic relations that we count on for borrowing and buying cheap goods, could collapse because China could collapse. Again nothing I predict, not even sure I think it will happen, but an opportunity, but not part of our policy makers' calculations what will happen, what it would do with the region, the U.S. economically, to the world economically, not part of the way we think.⁸³⁶

In other words, as exemplified above, there is a “narrative about the meta-narrative”, which is that the manifestation of the “grand-thinking” into common-sense has not been collectively adopted – but rather an internalisation by the majority of a narrative of the few. Building on Croft’s conceptualisation juxtaposed with the empirical discovery above – I coin the term of ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’.⁸³⁷ As policy-researchers across the ideological spectrum expressed in preceding paragraphs, the mechanisms (i.e. deflection) relate to sensationalist media and intensified political campaigns.⁸³⁸ As Keith Crane (RAND) soberly puts it: “US-Sino relations are overblown with critical junctures. It is just a bit fractured” (029-EF).⁸³⁹

The above has a resemblance with Bourdieu’s symbolic power⁸⁴⁰ – therein a disproportional amount of symbolic power is held by what several interviewees refer

⁸³⁶ Interview Cropsey, recording: 11:10 min.

⁸³⁷ The notion of “internalisation by the majority of a narrative of the few” (i.e. ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’) can be exemplified by the performativity of the type of a meta-narrative as described by Croft. However, in terms of the ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’, its subscription, however, is weak. Thus, in simple terms, something (‘*descriptive*’) has led to a particular narrative being perceived unwarrantedly as a mainstream narrative that the majority would have adopted.

⁸³⁸ See interviews with Levy (AEI), Garrett (Atlantic Council), and Hersh (CAP).

⁸³⁹ Interview Keith Crane (RAND), 29 June 2011 (029-F) (recording: 20:32).

⁸⁴⁰ See Sallaz, JJ & Zavisca, J 2007, op.cit.; Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990a), 111.

to as the hawkish strategic realists around town.⁸⁴¹ Methodologically speaking, cross-tabulation shows that the different analyses and predictions are varying diminutively when it comes to previous government experience or not. I argue that pertinent boundary-markers for this cluster are: ‘holistic competition’ (as opposed to strategic competition), ‘stable’, ‘free-rider’, ‘non-state level’ (IR), and ‘continuation’.

5.4.8 The triangular ‘decline-rise consensus’ – Cluster 8

This collection of narratives interfaces with the debate concerning the notion of a declining America.⁸⁴² Swartz (AEI) paints the strong belief in the primacy of American power as a conservative ontological (fixed) notion and acknowledged China’s rise, but “I don’t necessarily take it to the next step being paranoid concerning what is China going to do” as his response to an overblown China-threat school (017-Q).⁸⁴³ Pieter Bottelier (Carnegie)⁸⁴⁴, states that the U.S.-model is experiencing a “kick in the side”:

(...) there is no question, in every way you look at it, U.S. power is in relative decline, no question, and China’s power is in relative ascendency. We don’t have to wait for China to become the largest economy for that reality to sink in. In many ways, China is already the largest player in the global economy. Not because it is the largest economy – it is not – but because it is the most rapidly growing large economy, and therefore on the margins in terms of incremental purchases by China in the commodity markets, it completely outclass the U.S. China is by far the biggest player in the commodity market, even though the U.S. has a larger economy but not growing much. If you get an economy of 5 trillion, China is almost 6, growing at 7,8-9% you see on the margin, it is a much greater factor for change (...) The U.S. is

⁸⁴¹ For example, Garrett, op.cit.; Levenstein, op.cit.

⁸⁴² And interfaces with earlier clusters of narratives; Washington consensus and non-zero sum.

⁸⁴³ Interview Swartz, op.cit. (recording: 5 min).

⁸⁴⁴ He works full-time at John Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), which is also recognised as a think tank in addition to being part of a leading University with an international reputation of excellence.

not declining, not in absolute sense, might happen at some stage, but relatively, unquestionably the case. (038-WX).⁸⁴⁵

Ed Paisly (Center for American Progress), a former finance journalist, has a different and intriguing reading of ‘decline’ – to appreciate *both* the American *and* the Chinese decline, as the bigger threat to the former in relation to China (034-OP):⁸⁴⁶

(...) talking about my concept of managing China’s decline over the next 30 years is predicated on: one, the U.S. is not in decline, U.S. is innovative, powerful, we always have problems, but our system and economy is huge; we have 50 different regional economies, we are so above everybody else in the matter which we evolve. The idea that China is a threat to us?! Over the long term, nonsense, that is an important, that is something I have realised when coming back to Asia. I covered finance here before I left for Asia, only briefly, when coming back I discovered this place is power. Two, China, the reason I say we have to manage their decline, is because sure China has demographic problems, economic growth, environmental, health problems and they are all huge, they don’t really have a system to manage those problems. America can do worse, or can cause more problems if pushing them on all these stuff when they cannot solve it. Politically you do it in the U.S., to make noise, so it does not look like you have given up on American workers or the plants. That’s what I mean by managing expectations, here pushing China to what they have to do and helping them. You don’t want China to have a hard landing; you want China to have a soft, gradual landing where all things get resolved to the extent they can have democratic changes, that is what ultimately will happen. And I mean it. (034-OP).⁸⁴⁷

Lohman (Heritage) does not dismiss that there might be some substance in the “China-threat” notion relating to uncertainties in what American policy-makers really know about what China’s rise really entails, and that misunderstandings of U.S. decline (which he contest) and miscalculations result in a real potential for conflicts (but not inevitably) (021-U).⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁵ Interview Pieter Bottelier (JHU and Carnegie), 13 July 2011 (038-WX) (recording: 26 min and 33.40).

⁸⁴⁶ Interview Ed Paisly (CAP), 7 July 2011 (recording: 37 min).

⁸⁴⁷ Interview Paisly, *ibid.* (recording: 42:49).

⁸⁴⁸ Interview Lohman, *op.cit.* (recording: 28:30 & 33:00 min).

Further denunciation of a declining America can be found with Rehman (GMF) who points out the keenness in the Asian region for keeping U.S. military presence and commitment. He identifies the rationale to relate to increasing concerns with a rising China and the prospect of a power-vacuum if the U.S. was to withdraw or continue to decline. Rehman does not trace any Cold-War style containment (yet) but does not dismiss the notion of a regional containment / a balancing U.S., which may lead to a more traditional 19th century state-to-state relations (023-W).⁸⁴⁹ Romberg (Stimson Center) finds, however, that the U.S. is not being in decline despite facing many problems. He does not see the transition of China overtaking the U.S. on the world-stage, and signals clearly that keeping American forces in the South-China Sea (which China otherwise endeavours to push them out from) – and possibly partly a hedging strategy – indeed serves China's own interests in terms of avoiding undesirable consequences if the U.S. pulled out (for example, what would ensue with Taiwan, or instability on the Korean peninsula). He draws attention towards the need for cooperation (026-Z).⁸⁵⁰

Across the interviews, there is no belief in an absolute decline of America – for example Crane (RAND), Romberg (Stimson Center), and Rehman (GMF) who point out the U.S.' comeback after recession and an effective military⁸⁵¹ – but a relative decline of various degrees, is in general agreed on across the policy-researchers. Not surprisingly, there is no denial of Chinese growth and a rising China. The conceptualisation of what the latter notion entails, however, is associated with different predictions, and tends to be discussed in a short-term perspective and not in

⁸⁴⁹ Interview Iskander Rehman (GMF) (023-W) (recording: 18:24).

⁸⁵⁰ Interview Romberg, op.cit. (recording: 16 min).

⁸⁵¹ Interview with Keith Crane (RAND) 029-EF (recording: 14:35); Interview Romberg, ibid., (recording: 28 min); Interview Rehman (023-W) (recording) 29 min).

much depth. In concert, there is an overall concern with *managing* the relationship regardless. Furthermore, collectively, the policy-researchers seem to paint a strategic landscape in Asia/South-China Sea of a free-riding, sought-after stakeholder China who perceives the U.S. to employ a “containment-grand strategy”, which Beijing also appreciates for serving their own national interests in the region. This potential advantage for China resemble what I pinpointed earlier in this chapter: the hard-line on China might be an expression of the politicisation and strategising in US domestic politics, just as it gives political capital in China to show capabilities and attitudes to not give in under American pressure.⁸⁵²

Boundary-markers for this cluster are comprised of: ‘China rise’, ‘U.S. relative decline’, ‘free-rider’ (China), ‘short-term’, ‘managing uncertainties’, ‘interdependency’ – and secondary ‘managing China’s decline’.⁸⁵³

5.4.9 ‘Post-bilateral (ontological/epistemological) narratives’ – Cluster 9

The final cluster deals with narratives which move beyond the bilateral trajectory of U.S. relationship with China. *Post-bilateral*, in this context, is not an ontological statement of the demise and repudiation of bilateralism in the international system – but rather that explanatory sources and impact on a relationship between two countries cannot be understood within the *bilateral* trajectory only. This finding is relational to the sensemaking of the preceding cluster-narratives, herein the detection of a predominant notion of constraining the ontological lenses during analysis to bilateralism.

⁸⁵² Similar thoughts were relayed in the interview with Levy, op.cit. (recording: 02:31 min).

⁸⁵³ See discussion-section (this Chapter) in regard to different strengths/salience of boundary-markers.

Paal (Carnegie) elucidates, as a rare type of narrative in my ‘total universe of data’, that the status-quo status between the U.S. and China will depend on “interaction with other states” which excludes the conventional realist view on classical power-transition theory (022-V).⁸⁵⁴ Tønnesson (USIP) represents a view taking into account Chinese domestic variables, personalities, and problem-agenda. He also points out the unused opportunities for China to talk frankly with President Obama, as he is approachable and willing to listen (009-I).⁸⁵⁵ Feffer (IPS) moves beyond the bilateral trajectory to look within the U.S. in relation the notion of China-threat, which is also one of the few accounts of scrutinising and critical self-reflections:

Well, my own perspective is that the U.S. challenges U.S. core values more frequently than what China challenge U.S. core values [long laughter]. We undermine our own state of values when we, you know, occupy other countries and we support autocrats in the Middle-East. And *then* we complain when about China does the same thing, we say “they don’t respect democracy by standing with Mugabe in Zimbabwe”. Well that is true. I mean it is absolutely true. But what about us?! We stand with autocrats. But China makes no bones about it, at least China is not hypocritical. China never not says that standing with democrats [laughter]. So, I don’t really see a future where China challenges our core values. What I see that the U.S. actually, unless changes foreign policy significantly, the U.S. will more and more challenges own values overseas because of an inability to (long pause) prepare for what will be a profound transformation of the international scene; structurally, economically, and because we’re kind of behind, we’re not in front of change, not along but behind this change, we will be forced into positions that we will support things for pragmatic reasons, but they will be anti-ethical to our stated values, and that’s going to be too bad. (013-M).⁸⁵⁶

Feffer continues on specific military threats from China – also beyond a bilateral-only perspective:

I don’t see them challenging the U.S. military. The major challenge for China rather is what a multipolar system means for China. Generally speaking, China has preferred bilateral relations. If you look at the South China Sea, it does not want to do things in a regional framework, realised it has a better chance to secure own

⁸⁵⁴ Interview Douglas Paal (Carnegie), (022-V) (recording: 09:59).

⁸⁵⁵ Interview Stein Tønnesson (USIP/PRIO), 25 May 2011 (009-I) (recording: 01.17.0).

⁸⁵⁶ Interview Feffer (IPS), op.cit. (recording: 47:24).

national interests within bilateral relations. How China will deal with that internationally is another question – it won't be able to do, it can't apply that model from the South China Sea globally, it simply can't guarantee the stability on a global level, that *it needs* for its own economic growth, simply through bilateral relations. So China have to, I think they are already rethinking about this, China has to change how it looks at regional institutions and international institutions – and *that* will be the fundamental change for China. Not so much for the United States, in some ways the U.S. has been a blessing for China, to the extent it has provided a degree of stability for China and (...) an advantage to China, to the extent that the U.S. dealt with Afghanistan, meddling in Pakistan, meddling in south China, meddling in the Middle-East (...) when the U.S. is no longer able to do that, not economically able to do that. China needs to ask a major question if absence of the U.S. what can China do for stability, required a re-think of relationship with institutions. (013-M).⁸⁵⁷

Tu (Carnegie) talked earlier about the declining credibility of the U.S. model, and the above, also indicates that there are actually two models being revised – including that of China regional versus national level of engagement.⁸⁵⁸ Garrett (Atlantic Council) flips the debate about decline and threat on its head⁸⁵⁹ towards U.S. managing its own decline. He points out that although China's rise poses problems for the U.S., the need for cooperation (making use of the conflict situation in 2008 as an example) and interdependence (global recession where both countries suffer) prevail. "...if we fail, that the biggest threat to China, the biggest challenge is if *we* fail", and further points out that realists in town do not always appreciate that it is a different type of environment than bipolarity with Soviet Union during the Cold War (025-Y).⁸⁶⁰

Garrett redirects focus to global trends beyond the bilateral trajectory:

(...) change happens. What China experts don't know diddle about and strategist pay no attention to is technology? Technology totally transforms the world. Just look what has happened the last 20 years, and the pace it has accelerated. You want

⁸⁵⁷ Interview Feffer (IPS) ibid. (recording: 51:05).

⁸⁵⁸ Interview Tu (Carnegie), op.cit.

⁸⁵⁹ Similar to Paisley's (Center for American Progress) highlighting of the necessity of managing China's decline (see cluster 8; 'Triangular decline-rise consensus' narrative).

⁸⁶⁰ Interview, Garrett, op.cit. (recordings: 05:23 and 04:00).

to predict what 20 years from now will look like and what that means for economy and geopolitics and all of that? That's a pretty tough ting. Like 3-D printing, how many in foreign policy have a clue about that, it can transform the world dramatically, it can undermine supply chains, it can undermine China as an export platform. You can print out an iPhone in DC instead of making 10 million in China and shipped here. Had a workshop on this but foreign policy people had never heard of it, it can be to the material word what the PC has been for the information word (...) China experts don't look at that or strategists don't bring this into their calculus, we need much broader foreign policy. Look at internet in 1995, unimaginable that we would all operate on platforms. But, it has only been 15 years (...) what matters is not to predict, but have foresight about the world and how U.S.-Sino relationships will have to deal with inevitable changes" (025-Y).⁸⁶¹

Garrett also illuminates that real threats (as opposed to conventional bilateral issues) relates to climate change, which tends to be overlooked by strategists in discourses on conventional U.S.-Sino relationship (025-Y).⁸⁶² His vigorous critique also extends to IR realists as explanatory framework – as an ontological and paradigmatic “tunnel-vision” (025-Y).⁸⁶³

Suggested boundary-markers for this cluster of narratives are ‘non-military China-threat’, ‘free-rider’, ‘interdependent’, ‘cooperation’, ‘long-term’, and ‘non-bilateral’. The post-bilateral lenses are also inherently a critique of assumptions of the primacy of strategic competition, state-to-state relations, in addition to the limits of knowledge-production and worldviews which are materialising within the parameters of bilateralism and paradigmatic ‘school of thoughts’.

5.5 Discussion of key findings, overarching argument, and proposed contributions

In the previous section, I presented selected empirical data (narratives) as thematic clusters relating to perceptions of ‘China’ within the context of U.S.-Sino relations,

⁸⁶¹ Garrett, ibid. (recording: 01:03:34).

⁸⁶² Garrett, op.cit (recording: 55 min).

⁸⁶³ Garrett, op.cit. (recording: 33.33 min).

which serves as the discursive frame of the chapter. In the present section, the analysis of the empirical foundation seeks to achieve the following tasks: to identify and summarise key findings through juxtaposing this aforesaid discursive frame with subjectively selected literatures. Additionally, I will develop an overarching main argument (i.e. void of ‘internationality’): encompassing the investigatory scope of this chapter in its entirety, making sense of linkages to the Bourdieusian theoretical framework of this thesis. Finally, proposed contributions, originality, and novelty, will be outlined.

5.5.1 Discussion of key findings

I will be identifying ten key findings pertinent to the current chapter (derived from the analysis). The findings have been established on the basis of juxtapositioning data with various bodies of subjectively selected literatures. As far as key findings are concerned, I shall commence with the two identified in the section regarding self-reflexivity. First, in relation to self-reflexivity, one finding shows the importance of carrying out a self-reflexive deliberation in order to enhance transparency, internal validity, and reliability of the research process as well as credibility and trustworthiness of the research product.⁸⁶⁴ In practical terms, it becomes a triangulation method,⁸⁶⁵ which accommodates for scrutinising the analysis and arguments made on my part as part of a subjective and interpretivist research undertaking. Second, I identified a somewhat lack of self-reflexive thinking amongst the policy-researchers in their imparted narratives: to question their own assumptions

⁸⁶⁴ See Rudolf R. Sinkovics, Elfriede Penz & Pervez N. Ghauri, "Enhancing the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research in International Business," *Management International Review* 48:6 (2008): 689-714.

⁸⁶⁵ See Brewer 2000, op.cit.; Julie Wolfram Cox, "Triangulation," in *The Sage dictionary of qualitative management research*, eds. Richard Thorpe & Robin Holt (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 222-224; Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London: Sage, 2003).

was, generally speaking, not evidently part of their narratives.⁸⁶⁶ In effect, it shows the high relevance of engaging with a Bourdieusian outlook on reflexivity in this regard, as a possible vehicle for exploring new avenues of intellectual inquiry into tacit boundaries of knowledge-production and the American Self as identity-construction.⁸⁶⁷

The ensuing key findings relate to narratives as a method.⁸⁶⁸ In my study, nonetheless, I have utilised the imparted narratives as the empirical foundation, herein as ‘cultural sites’ for sensemaking of ‘social reality’ as well as ‘discursive speech acts’.⁸⁶⁹ Thus, third, based on my interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis of the narratives,⁸⁷⁰ it was also revealed the necessity, and relevance, to engage with narratives as conceptual boundary-production in two layers. This structure of narrative (as interviewing and method) is hardly addressed in the methodology literature – which focuses more on the processes of understanding, conceptualising, structuring, and analysing narratives (as well as conducting them).⁸⁷¹ When approaching narratives as/with conceptual boundaries (of the aforementioned ‘cultural site’) presents an opportunity, additionally, to also direct focus towards the

⁸⁶⁶ I cannot with certainty, of course, claim if this is always the case (for example, outside the interview-situation). However, I detected the same trend at think tank seminars and publications produced by policy-researchers.

⁸⁶⁷ See particularly the finding relating to the void of ‘internationality’ (subsequent sub-section). See Elliot G. Mishler, *Storylines: Craftartists’ narratives of identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁸⁶⁸ See Barbara Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004); Catherine K. Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications 2007).

⁸⁶⁹ Molly Patterson & Kristen R. Monroe, "Narrative in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1(1) (1998): 315-331.

⁸⁷⁰ See Aaron C. Ahuvia, "Traditional, Interpretive, and Reception based Content Analyses: Improving the Ability of Content Analysis to Address Issues of Pragmatic and Theoretical Concern," *Social Indicators Research* 54:2 (2001): 139-172.

⁸⁷¹ See Czarniawska 2004, op.cit., for an example.

boundary-markers rather than only the actual contents and/or the mere difference between the narrative accounts.⁸⁷²

In the context of the policy-researchers, it became evident that the uttered contents can be placed in one layer as far as the “grammatical structure” of narratives is concerned, but that it exists as an intersectional layer of motivation inherent in the narrative. One the one hand, there is the actual content, and on the other – the form of narrative due to the nature of the boundary-markers. More specifically to this research study, the identified thematic clusters (one and two) of ‘non-foreign policy’, and ‘multi-layered’ do not only relate to the contents of the imparted narratives – but also to specific *forms* of narratives, as dictated by the nature of boundary-markers.

The *form*, I am arguing, relates to Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools” of ‘interests’ and ‘strategising’,⁸⁷³ where the *form* of narratives is intricately linked to their sense of Self and constructed identity as an organisation and as experts.⁸⁷⁴ This illustrates the importance of also grasping the ‘social field’ they are strategising from/within. This elucidates the importance of the dialectic engagement with the ‘social field’ (established in the preceding Chapter 4), as well as the relevance for employing a sociological meso-level inquiry⁸⁷⁵ and the relationality between Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷² See Lamont & Molnar 2002, op.cit. 167-195. I am also borrowing from (culture) Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1971); Lauring & Guttormsen 2012, op.cit.

⁸⁷³ See Williams 2007, op.cit.

⁸⁷⁴ See Mishler 2004, op.cit.; Martine C. Gertsen & Anne-Marie Søderberg, “Expatriate stories about cultural encounters – A narrative approach to cultural learning processes in multinational companies,” *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 26:3 (2010): 248–257.

⁸⁷⁵ See John G. Bruhn & Howard M. Rebach 2007, op.cit. 115-145.

⁸⁷⁶ David L. Swartz 2008, op.cit. 45-52.

For example, NED, WRI, USIP, and the Wilson Center all share the boundary-marker of having China as a theme and the ‘non-ideologised’ marker. Furthermore, NED and WRI also share the boundary-markers of ‘non-foreign policy’ but being active in advocacy work. USIP shares the latter with the other above-mentioned think tanks but not the former, whereas Wilson does foreign policy (academic analysis) but not advocacy. These boundary-markers reflect the identity of the think tanks, and are derived from interests and strategies in this regard. This, again, highlights the importance of relationality (being ‘non-ideologised’ depends on other think tanks being ideologised – for example, The Heritage Foundation or Cato Institute), in addition to grasping meaning-construction due to ‘advocacy’ and ‘ideologised’ takes on different meanings (such as creating change on the ground in other countries (USIP) versus the Wilson Center which is not exercising advocacy because they are involved in foreign *academic* policy analysis (self-perception). The latter also showcases how a continuum between ‘non-advocacy’ to ‘advocacy’ is not empirically credible, as well as the role of underlying interests and strategies are either self-constructed (Wilson – not being a think tank due to the label of ‘academic’) or dictated to them (for example, USIP due to being funded and mandated by the U.S. Congress). The ‘non-ideologised’ marker can also, of course, be debated: for example, some might argue that efforts in democratising other geographical areas abroad reflect an American “ideologically biased” fundamentalism within the NED or USIP (which, if the case, not necessarily is less valuable for the recipient!).⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷⁷ I have in the preceding chapter noted that the prevailing boundary-marker for Norwegian think tanks is ‘academic research’ – which is also strongly echoed in other Nordic countries (I am less familiar with Iceland, I should mention). It would be pertinent to conduct further research into identity-construction of think tanks based on deploying boundary-construction as a theoretical framework, especially in a cross-national comparison.

Another facet relating to narratives as a method constitutes the fourth key finding. The discursive frame illuminates that narratives of particular policy-researchers can be placed in various thematic clusters. This reflects the empirical, ontological, and epistemological appropriateness to assume that narratives are ‘multi-layered’ due to intersectionality between the thematic clusters (connected thematically and/or by sharing boundary-markers). The usage of the latter shows how boundary-markers, I argue, can serve as a particular helpful operationalised tool beyond as a mere heuristic device, in order to discuss and illustrate relationships between different boundaries.⁸⁷⁸

The fifth key finding relates to my coined term; the ‘post-Cold War generation’ of policy-researchers.⁸⁷⁹ It denotes the division often highlighted by the younger interviewees themselves relating to, in their eyes, two interrelated aspects: being younger (the approximate 20-32 years age bracket) than the more established generation of scholars whose formative years in terms of academic education and professional development did not transpire until after the demise of the Cold-War strategic environment. In addition, the majority of the younger generation has studied and lived in China, speaks Mandarin – and collectively articulates a “generation-gap” with the older generation (45 years and above age bracket). This division is further substantiated when cross-tabulating the relevant policy-researchers’ background information with relayed narratives.⁸⁸⁰ I argue this division

⁸⁷⁸ Again, I am borrowing here from Lamont and Molnar 2002, op. cit.; Barth 1971, op.cit.; and Lauring and Guttormsen 2010, op.cit.

⁸⁷⁹ This is applicable to the context of U.S. think tanks and American politics.

⁸⁸⁰ I am not presenting this in a deterministic sense, but as anecdotal evidence at the least. There are noticeable exceptions such as area specialists and speakers of Mandarin – for example, David Shambaugh, those with extensive travel experience Garrett Banning (Atlantic Council), and conversational skills (Dan Blumenthal, AEI). On a self-reflexive, and personal, note, the concern with language and cultural proximity became much clearer to me during my stay in DC, which included experiencing 22 July 2011 – when 77 people were killed in the 2011 terrorist bombing in Oslo down-town and subsequent shooting rampage on Utøya island. As a Norwegian,

is significant and I envisage major implications on the policy-analysis – and thus policy-advice – in future.⁸⁸¹ This key-finding further supports my announcement of a third ‘school of analyses in the specialised think tank literature (elevating and focusing on the thinking and conceptualising of policy-researchers).

With the next set of key findings, I am focusing on the IR and Political Science disciplines. Sixth, albeit the narratives are dynamic, multifaceted, multi-layered, and featuring somewhat different outlooks on the status-quo as far as U.S.-Sino relationship is concerned, overall the imparted narratives reflects a fairly unison and non-contradictory view on the relationship dynamics between the two countries. Such perspective remains intact although after turbulent periods with high-level clashes in 2001 and 2010 on a number of national security issues. However, these events are taken as smaller cycles within the overall notion of ‘stability’ and ‘continuity’.⁸⁸² This supports the argued similar approach to China traversing the three recent presidencies from the mid-1990s – the internationalist Bill Clinton (strategic engagement)⁸⁸³ with a precursor back to President Nixon’s “engagement policies”,⁸⁸⁴ the isolationist George W. Bush, and the incumbent Barack Obama – who proclaimed a stronger focus on international cooperation and addressed China

gripped to my laptop desperately hounding for updates in national and international media – it was perturbing to experience that only after approx. 2-3 min, international media was clearly surpassed in the analysis and comprehending of the situation and/or context, compared to Norwegian media. I believe that Fox News reported about an “Islamic terrorist” long after it had been established that was not the case. This is also a start and important reminder to myself relating to “what do I *really* understand” when watching international media coverage of, for example, a conflict in a country that I do not know well and/or do not speak their language.

⁸⁸¹ Romberg (Stimson) is impressed with the young generation of policy-researchers, op.cit. (recording: 47 min).

⁸⁸² See interviews.

⁸⁸³ Jing-Dong Yuan, “Friend or Foe? The Bush administration and U.S. China Policy in Transition,” *East Asian Review* 15:3 (2003): 39-64; see J.T. Mathews and D.H. Paal, “U.S.-China Relationship After Bush,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (available: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2008/11/10/u.s.-china-relationship-after-bush/3jqi>).

⁸⁸⁴ Alastair I. Johnston & Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: the management of an emerging power* (London: Routledge, 1999).

as “not a friend, but a strategic ally”.⁸⁸⁵ Paradoxically, President Bush Jr. and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice were recognised with “getting China right” and their engagement-policies accordingly⁸⁸⁶ – what Roy described as a “late honeymoon”.⁸⁸⁷

Many an eminent scholar has analysed and depicted the U.S.-Sino relationship by devising a metaphor⁸⁸⁸ as well as typologised the relationship with introducing a new term or phrase.⁸⁸⁹ My epistemological commitment lies with showcasing the empirical foundation of policy-researchers’ utterances rather than becoming “yet another U.S.-Sino scholar” – a label which recently has been negatively associated with “something everybody does”.⁸⁹⁰ The finding, however, relates more to the support of both political and academic analysis – which is easily dwarfed by the more negative impressions on ‘China’ and her relationship with the U.S., for example in the 2010 U.S. mid-election time and in the media.⁸⁹¹

My initial aim was to propose my own metaphor. However, the focus on elucidating the think tank narrative in their own right leads me to focus on imparting such ‘social

⁸⁸⁵ Bloomberg Television Hong Kong, 2008.

⁸⁸⁶ For example, interview Hathaway, op.cit.

⁸⁸⁷ Dennis Roy, “A Late Honeymoon for Bush and China: Enjoy It while It Lasts,” *Asian Affairs* 30:2 (2003): 79.

⁸⁸⁸ Roy’s ‘honeymoon’ has been mentioned – others include Lampton’s “in same bed, different dreams” (David Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing United States–China Relations 1989–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press). See Oliver Turner for review of images (Oliver Turner, “Sino-US relations then and now: Discourse, images, policy,” *Political Perspectives* 5:3 (2011): 27–45).

⁸⁸⁹ Kissinger’s “Positive, cooperative, and comprehensive U.S.-China relationship” (Henry A. Kissinger, “The Future of U.S.-Chinese Relations Conflict Is a Choice, Not a Necessity,” *Foreign Affairs* March/April (2012b); Sutter’s (2010) “Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present” (Robert Sutter, U.S.-Chinese relations: Perilous Pas, Pragmatic Present (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); Shambaugh’s “rocky Foreign Policy” (David Shambaugh, “The Rocky Road Ahead in U.S.-China Relations,” October 23, 2012. <http://www.chinausfocus.com/>). According to Ross 2008, ibid, however, U.S.’ approach to China is expressed in the dichotomy of ‘containment’ versus ‘engagement’. The former reflects preventing China’s growth to materialise into assuming power, whereas the latter relates to the U.S. making strategic adjustments in order to achieve a peaceful solution over conflicting interest, and to maintain a mutually beneficial East Asian order.

⁸⁹⁰ Email correspondence 23 Sep 2011, Prof Shaun Breslin, University of Warwick.

⁸⁹¹ I shall discuss this more in detail in the following sub-section, where the overall thesis of ‘lacking internationality’ is developed.

reality’ and to avoid subjugating to the above tradition due to the essentialist and hypo-deductive nature of metaphors when utilised to reflect dynamic complexities. To understand the myriad of think tank perspectives are crucial, due to relations between the two countries are arguably the most significant bilateral relationship in the international system in the 21st century, and exercises tremendous impact on world politics.⁸⁹² Thus, in order to grasp future developments of the international system and how to achieve a peaceful coexistence between the current and the rising global power, it becomes paramount to obtain a rich, deep, and contextualised understanding of the nature of this transformation and fluid relationship.

If I had to coin a metaphor, it would be a relationship of an ‘arranged marriage’⁸⁹³ – currently in couple counselling – or the earlier mentioned ‘older and younger brother’.⁸⁹⁴ I would rather list characteristics; continuation, interdependent, stable, lacking understanding (“growing pains”!), rising China/free-rider, managing uncertainty, and overall, identity-formation. This string of descriptors harmonises with Ross’ assessment:⁸⁹⁵

U.S.’ relationship with China as a complex, interdependent, tapestry of short-and long-term interests and numerous trade-offs where Washington’s response depends on the perceived impact from China on U.S.’ immediate and long-term interests.

The discursive frame devised in this Chapter also elucidates the issue with the tradition of operating with continuums as far as describing the nature of bilateral relationships. For example, Zhu noted that after the end of the Cold War, the U.S.-

⁸⁹² Alastair I. Johnston & Robert R. Ross 2007, op.cit.; Zhu 2006, op.cit.

⁸⁹³ I am including ‘forced’ in order to acknowledge that many arranged marriages are indeed voluntary.

⁸⁹⁴ I am not making any gender associations by using this metaphor.

⁸⁹⁵ Robert R. Ross 2008, ‘Engagement in US China policy’, op.cit. 177.

Sino relationship has featured both ‘contention’ and ‘cooperation’.⁸⁹⁶ Walter Lohman (Heritage) expressed that he did not see the potential for retention although he saw looming dark skies ahead – simply because the “opposite” is not necessarily a valid option due to the arguably interdependence.⁸⁹⁷ I agree with such a notion, and I further argue that the “continuum-hype” reflects an empirically unsound and (too) structuralist thinking when it comes to dichotomised binaries and typologisation of a taxonomical nature. It is human nature to think in this way – oppositional binaries such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’. In U.S. strategic discourse (for example the 2006 *National Security Strategy*), the alleged mixture of containment and balancing and those being deployed differently in different policy-areas, there is a need for operating with multiple non-dichotomised binaries and continuums. It should also be highlighted that the interviewed policy-researchers, including those in conservative think tanks, are overall exhibiting a much more sober representation of aforesaid relationship, in comparison with the “hawkish” camps in Washington’s strategic discourses.

Seventh, the notion of America being in decline is rejected outright. However, that American hegemony might not sustain its status as superpower for centuries to come and/or that there is a relative decline (as opposed to absolute, but then a natural consequence of the “natural demise” of a superpower) is widely shared.⁸⁹⁸ Simultaneously, there is neither a prevailing disbelief that China is able to nor desires to compete for world hegemony and superpower status. Secretary Clinton’s notion of a ‘critical juncture’ in the relationship is not given much attention by the policy-researchers – rather some amusement because there is always *a* juncture and

⁸⁹⁶ A continuum purported by Zhu (2006:90), *ibid.*

⁸⁹⁷ Interview with Lohman, *op.cit.*

⁸⁹⁸ See “Debate: Is the United States of America in Decline?,” Institute for Americas Studies, <http://www.sas.ac.uk/videos-and-podcasts/politics-development-human-rights/debate-united-states-america-decline>.

it is “politics talk” due to “starting the relationship” every time when somebody entering office.⁸⁹⁹ I expected a much more aggressive line from the defence, military, and international security scholars, and from the conservative think tanks – however, after cross-tabulating data with the profiles of my respondents, this preconception is not credible.

Eight, a blow to the IR realist camp relates to the elevated power-balance and power-transition theories. There are few vastly contradictory narratives, such as China being a major threat⁹⁰⁰ and there will be a war – or not – or that the U.S.-Sino relationship is perfect or devastating. This reflects that across ideological/value bases, think tanks, professional affiliations, political convictions, gender, education and other socio-biological and background profiles – the viewpoints on China within the bilateral trajectory of U.S.-Sino relations are stable. Albeit being at times hyped of serious concerns with ramifications beyond the bilateral relationship more so than any other in the world (for any nation) – Samuel Sherraden (New America Foundation) points out that the relationship is not as polarised as in other domestic political issues such as universal health care, increasing levels of tax, or international conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian issue.⁹⁰¹ The think tank narratives vary the

⁸⁹⁹ Interview with Paragh Khanna (New America Foundation), June 29, 2011 (027-AB).

⁹⁰⁰ This is also frequently conceptualised as “China-threat”. The ‘China-threat’ is indeed a phenomenon where perception and identities are in the crossfire linked to China’s growing economic and military powers. Segal’s (1999) argument that the ‘China threat’ is exaggerated is a good example of how threat is equated with a static view on the distribution of military capabilities (Gerald Segal, “Does China Matter?,” *Foreign Affairs* 78:5 (1999): 24-36). Furthermore, the ‘China-threat’ in the U.S. has been lurking from the end of the Cold-War, often as a “substitute” for not having the former Soviet Union as the “polarized enemy” (Zhu 2008, op.cit.). Only when the complexity of the U.S.-Sino relationship is understood, it can be effectively managed. Contemporary versions relate particularly to jobs manufacturing losses (last mid-term election) (interviews with Sherradan, op.cit.; Levy, op.cit.) and exaggerations (own admission) of China-threat itself (see Thomas Friedman on Fox News admits the overhyping of China, <http://www.mrctv.org/public/checker.aspx?v=hdSUSU6U6U> (n.d.). – recording: from 00:50 min).

⁹⁰¹ Interview with Sherraden, op.cit.

most due to the focus of the individual expert – which is an important aspect, contemplating on the inevitable important issue of how influence is exercised.

The U.S. has four principal contending policies for addressing the rise of China where the two extremes range from thwarting China's pursuit of full power status and to bandwagon with China's inevitable hegemony in East-Asia.⁹⁰² The research agenda is deeply embedded with the realist school of thought, for example, ontology of realism such as anarchy, power balance, power, and the state as the main key player in the international system. Consistent with such notions, Zhu presents a new model of understanding power transition from the U.S. to China and securing a peaceful coexistence, and to better explain and predict such shift between global powers at regional and global levels.⁹⁰³ The development of power transition theories originated with Organski and Kugler, but the new model, however, is a multilevel analysis incorporating individual, societal, international and domestic levels.⁹⁰⁴ Johnston and Ross conclude that states' reaction to a rising power and the extent of how a rising power seeks engagement are the two dimensions which explain the choice of state strategies.⁹⁰⁵ But the mechanisms related to this decision-making and actual policy-making and implementation, as well as the “why’s”, appear to be little explored.

With all the talk about the “U.S. model” and the “China model” an underlying criticism of mainstream realist power-theory, I would argue, relates also to the following: there is no model which can encapsulate or prescribe state’s behavior –

⁹⁰² Ross, R.S. 1999, ‘Engagement in US China policy’, in A. Johnston & R.S. (eds), *Engaging China: the management of an emerging power*, Routledge, London, 181.

⁹⁰³ Zhu, ibid. 167.

⁹⁰⁴ A. F. K. Organski & Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University Press, 1980).

⁹⁰⁵ Johnston and Ross 2008, op.cit. 273.

due to the dynamics of the U.S.-Sino relations in this given contexts, is unprecedented. Marginalised “ontological-tools” in realist thinking, such as learning, identity-formation, and intersubjectivity, are type of sources where richer explanations can be discovered.

Furthermore, the analysis of Johnston and Ross,⁹⁰⁶ can also be linked to the disbelief in a declining America and China’s search for her international identity(ies), just as much they agree on the rising China. The IR realist camp has in decades promulgated the inevitable outcome of war.⁹⁰⁷ The empirical data presented here does not only discount such beliefs in it entirely – as with armchair academics as a whole – also when including the hot-spot Taiwan Strait issue, it also challenges the very premise of power shifts. The notion of an inevitable war of a demising and elevating power is aggressively discounted by the policy-researchers.⁹⁰⁸ In other words, the “China-threat” thesis is given little, if no credibility.

5.5.2 Introducing the overarching ‘internationality’ thesis: Bourdieu and exceptionalism

The ninth key finding relates to formulating an empirical sound overarching thesis/main argument pertinent to the objectives of this chapter. The foundation of such venture combines the discursive frame and the established key findings. Additionally, I shall revisit the conceptual/theoretical framework of Bourdieu and connect the overarching thesis of lacking ‘internationality’ with a specific part of the core idea of American exceptionalism.

⁹⁰⁶ Johnston and Ross 2008, *ibid.* 273.

⁹⁰⁷ Ramon Pacheco-Pardo, "Review article - Beyond Power Transition: Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century," *op.cit.* 5.

⁹⁰⁸ A healthy dosage of ‘anti-theoreticians’ was evident across several interviews. See also interviews with Blumenthal (AEI) *op.cit.*, and Frost (Peterson), *op.cit.*

If arguing for a *lack* of ‘internationality’ – it becomes necessary to establish what constitutes the latter term. I approach ‘internationality’, heuristically, as the mode of thinking where additional actors (for example other countries, Non-Governmental Organisations/Intergovernmental Organisations, other groups, influential individuals/social phenomena/trends) are brought into the investigatory scope – in this instance, China and the U.S.

I am arguing that the lack of ‘internationality’ emerges from two accounts. First, there is a demonstrated strong propensity, as an ontological “awareness-span”, to depict *and* analyse *and* assess implications concerning U.S.’ relationship with China through the bilateral trajectory almost isolated from other international players (to a high extent other countries, and indeed the case when it comes to IGOs).⁹⁰⁹ Second, there is also a tendency to keep the division between the national and international sphere, and not to diffuse non-state level aspects (such as internal variables within China or the U.S.) into the analysis beyond the description. For example, several policy-researchers acknowledge internal issues within China (often part of the normative argument of how China needs to change). However, when it comes to the analysis, many prescribe what China needs to do as if she as a state (and Communist Party) exercises full degree of free manoeuvrability.⁹¹⁰

For example, Frost (Peterson) cannot remember a time “... when we were not the world leader.”⁹¹¹ She continues: “we have more military than the rest of the world,

⁹⁰⁹ See interviews with Innocent and Logan (Cato), op.cit., and Paal (Carnegie) op.cit.

⁹¹⁰ This is aligned with Bourdieu’s dialectical and relational thinking – that states do not have fixed and innate state identities (see Campbell 1998, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (revised edition), Manchester University Press, 10), nor pre-given national interests.

⁹¹¹ Interview Frost recording: 49 min.

look beyond GDP”.⁹¹² On a similar note, Scobell (RAND Corporation) uttered “we go everywhere!”⁹¹³ Tønnesson expresses that in other countries, there are more mentioning of interacting with other states amongst foreign policy researchers, and that for the U.S. there is only one country that counts (China) and somewhat Israel (which is trapped in a bilateral trajectory).⁹¹⁴ Furthermore, Feffer (IPS) says that his country “does not know how it is to be overtaken by another country”.⁹¹⁵

On a self-reflexive note regarding my researcher ‘habitus’, I am most likely predisposed to identify the above facet due to coming from a small and a “mere” regional middle-power country (Norway)⁹¹⁶ where international relations and activities in the international sphere not only are predominantly taking place, and highly influenced by, collaboration with other states and indeed IGOs.⁹¹⁷ This does not mean that my perceptions are superior or qualitatively better/distinguished, but nevertheless showcases how a self-reflexive deliberation can open up interesting avenues of inquiry.

From the perspective of the American Self and identities, the “from a country-border, to another country-border” analogy is resembling the precultural given in western cultures due to the belief that Self is placed within the body:⁹¹⁸ that Man’s perception of ‘space’ is dynamic, something we often fail to comprehend due to the conviction that for “every effect there is a signal and identifiable cause and that it

⁹¹² Interview Frost.

⁹¹³ Interview Andrew Scobell (014-N) (RAND), 10 June 2011, (recording 9 min).

⁹¹⁴ Interview Tønnesson, recording: 1hr 10 min & 01:17:00.

⁹¹⁵ Interview Feffer, recording: 47.14 min.

⁹¹⁶ See John Langmore & Jan Egeland, "Learning from Norway: Independent Middle-power Foreign Policy," *Griffith REVIEW* 32 (2011): 97-110.

⁹¹⁷ See Leira et al. 2007 about Norwegian influence through international aid (Leira et al., *Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2007), <http://www.nupi.no/content/download/1331/37033/>.

⁹¹⁸ Nancy Scheper-Hughes & Margaret M. Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1:1 (1987): 6-41.

begins and ends with the skin".⁹¹⁹ In Bourdieu's terms, the internal has not been externalised, and the external has not been internalised (identity).⁹²⁰

The notion that 'international relations' with China stops at the country-border echoes Ross' statement that the debate concerning the U.S.-China relationship is lacking a debate addressing in more depth how internal variables may influence foreign policy behaviour.⁹²¹ The ineffectuality of incorporating domestic contextualities, politics and societal developments – and diffusing with the international sphere – somewhat contaminates the efforts of a more empirically sound "reading" of international politics, foreign policy, as well as state relations per se.⁹²²

On the one hand, the U.S. faces sensitivity of constrained manoeuvrability. On the other, the U.S. is also exposed to a concurrent, albeit contradictory, acknowledgement of China's internal problems in utterances offered across the policy-researchers' analysis. Conjunctionally, however, the interview accounts also reflect assumptions about a State and Party which are exercising almost full agency. This two-folded facet can be coupled further to dialectic Self/Other constellations: a fixed, less dynamic Self, and a detached two-sided China as the Other. For example,

⁹¹⁹ Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension: Man's Use of Space in Public and Private* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 109. Hall invented proxemics distances, and I am borrowing this notion to comprehend *ontological* space between countries. Also, between an individual and proximity to his or her own country and the Other country – across individual and national levels.

⁹²⁰ Bourdieu, P 1990b, *Logic of Practice*, op.cit.; Bourdieu, P 1984, *Distinction*, op.cit.; Bourdieu, 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit. See Didier Bigo & Mikael R. Madsen, "Introduction to Symposium "A Different Reading of the International": Pierre Bourdieu and International Studies," *International Political Sociology* 5:3 (2011): 219; Anna Leander, "The Promises, Problems, and Potentials of a Bourdieu-Inspired Staging of International Relations," *International Political Sociology* 5:3 (2011): 294-295; Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "On a Field Trip with Bourdieu," *International Political Sociology* 5:3 (2011): 327-330. – for a Bourdieusian reading of the 'international' and transnational field overcoming international and domestic field.

⁹²¹ Ross, R.S. 2008, 'Engagement in US China policy', op.cit. 176-206.

⁹²² Simplistically described in most IR textbooks, for example John Baylis, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: University Press, 2008).

very few policy-researchers deliberate on how the American economy would look like in, for example, 2020 or 2050 – but readily prepared to comment on China’s trajectory (as if she is the mistress of her own destiny). This ought to serve as a call for (and encouragement) diffusing boundary-markers of domestic aspects of the Other into that twin-Other which encapsulates the external behaviour of China. Limaye (EastWest Center) does indeed that by highlighting domestic impulses also within a ‘non-fixed’ U.S.⁹²³ It follows, I would argue, this predisposition for being ‘fixed’, also places an unhelpful short-term focus-span on U.S.’ relationship with China – which relates to Barrett’s (Atlantic Council) key criticism in his analysis, when pointing out the need for incorporating global trends.

This “twin-Other”, I argue warrants the tenth key findings of the present Chapter. It departs from Campbell’s poststructuralist reading of a non-dynamic and ontologically fixed, dichotomised Other,⁹²⁴ which diverts from Hansen’s advancements who recognises there can be multiple Others (and different degrees and forms of Others).⁹²⁵ Thus, the established finding in my study supports Hansen’s departure from Campbell. Concurrently, though, the finding also further nuances Hansen’s work on the temporal (making Self advanced and the Other backward), spatial (removing the Other from its territory), and ethical (assuming the role as responsible) dimensions of constituting the Other. My coined term of the “twin-Other” is not fully covered by Hansen’s aforesaid typologies nor Campbell’s poststructural readings of the Self/Other constellation.

⁹²³ Interview Limaye, op.cit. (recording: 04:30).

⁹²⁴ See Campbell, 1998, op.cit.

⁹²⁵ See Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006): 42, 46-51.

My term relates to *one/single* Other – the same country and the same level (state). Furthermore, the “twin-Other” notion takes its names from being one such Other (aka China) but where perceptions of behaviour is detached from that Other’s (aka China’s) motivation, intentionality, and intentions (hence, a failure to diffuse the domestic and international political sphere). In Bourdieusian terms, this particular thinking amongst interviewees reflects that social fields composed across such national/international division do not perform as heuristic devices in grasping the Other.

In practice, the detachment of the behavioural Other (what China does without consulting the scope of her manoeuvrability – for example, constraining internal variables and domestic politics) from a more holistic Other (which incorporates motivation, internationality, and intentions), is a process of not just advancing the Other – but also a *justification* of the Self. This resemblance Erikson’s finding relating to boundary-markers evolving in earlier imagination of new nations.⁹²⁶ (Tønnesson (USIP and PRIO) uttered that “China is too busy with domestic issues (...) but you can talk to China”⁹²⁷ For example, when stating that China can/should do such and such (without acknowledging the constraints) on the one hand, but simultaneously giving the American Self the benefit of the doubt (which has been denied for the Other country), a relational and dialectical “good guy” image can be built – but without creating this distinction with another Other country (aka China).⁹²⁸

⁹²⁶ Thomas H. Erikson, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto, 1993).

⁹²⁷ Interview Tønnesson, op.cit., (recording: 01.14.00).

⁹²⁸ I would like to stress that such thinking did not apply to all interviewed policy-researchers, but as a group (non-representational) warranted developing such newish concepts – based on the thinking avenues unveiled during my analysis.

It is this social phenomenon which leads me to interface the above line of inquiry with the core American idea of ‘exceptionalism’ – both in terms of the lack of ‘internationality’, but also the arguably tendency to elevate and justify Self through denying an *attached/merged* behavioural and holistic Other (China). McCrisken explains exceptionalism the “belief that the United States is an extraordinary nation with a special role to play in human history; a nation that is not only unique but also superior”.⁹²⁹ I am interpreting this as a two-edged concept, i.e. ‘unique’ but also ‘superior’ which are not interchangeable terms. Innocent (Cato Institute) illustrated the quantitative and qualitative side of ‘exceptionalism’ as two properties – the notion of America being unique/exceptionally different (for example, comprable size of GDP and the size of military) – or unique/exceptionally different *and qualitatively better*.⁹³⁰ This Chapter engages with the former.⁹³¹

The *linkage* between the idea of exceptionalism and the overarching thesis of lacking ‘internationality’, is my argument for that these two social phenomena accommodates, enables, and makes it possible for the way ‘American-ness’ is understood through China as the Other; they are dialectical and relational because they are mutually contingent upon each other and the effect/outcome would not have evolved without their diffusive, interlocking engagement. And it is the performativity of the above-mentioned “twin-Other”⁹³² which makes this possible to uphold the “purity” of the Self, through the mechanisms of applying narratives/perceptions of *one* Other as mirroring the self-image of Self. Such

⁹²⁹ Trevor McCrisken, “Exceptionalism,” in *Encyclopaedia of American Foreign Policy*, eds. Alexander DeConde, Richard D. Burns & Frederik Logevall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2002). 63-80.

⁹³⁰ See Buzan 2005, op.cit.; Leppold & McKeown 1995, op.cit. 369-84; Lipset 1996, op.cit; McCrisken 2002, op.cit.

⁹³¹ Whereas the subsequent, third analysis chapter makes use of the second property of the concept.

⁹³² See the two preceding paragraphs.

reflection of Self is achieved due to the idea of ‘exceptionalism’ performing as a mediating conduit. As purported in the ontology of Blumenthal: “U.S. does not change, the world will be the same”.⁹³³ Bourdieu’s dialectical approach, here, assists in unveiling the existence of a “fixation” of Self – as it could be detached from any form of Other and Othering.

The proposition is further demonstrated by the sociological meso-level set-up of this study, where agency (microindividual) and *structure* (macrostructural) always operate dialectically in an inseparable fashion.⁹³⁴ This outlook is aligned with Bourdieu’s ‘constructivist structuralism’, or ‘structuralist constructivism’. Furthermore, policy-researchers/human beings are influenced by interaction and negotiation concerning ‘social reality’ amongst the individuals, but depending on a situational *context/structure*.⁹³⁵

To summarise, and in effect conclude, I argue that reading ‘China’ through a bilateral trajectory, reflects ‘American-ness’ itself. Concurrently, the trajectory also contributes to uphold the American (“good”) Self as fixed or static by reflecting itself only partially through *selected aspects* of the Other (see ‘twin-Other). From a Bourdieusian perspective, the above reflects an American Self as a cultural identity which materialises through the production and reproduction of dispositions from a ‘national habitus’.⁹³⁶ There is currency of such manifestation (identity-construction). Barth demonstrated how the Self/Other constellation can be examined by focusing

⁹³³ Interview Blumenthal, recording: 27.30.

⁹³⁴ Bourdieu, P 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; Richard Jenkins, op.cit.

⁹³⁵ John G. Bruhn and Howard M. Rebach, op.cit. 115-145.

⁹³⁶ See Bourdieu, P 1990a, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge; Bourdieu, P 1990b, *The Logic of Practice*, trans R. Nice, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

on boundary-markers of collective identity,⁹³⁷ and Friedman pointed out the impact of socialisation processes in early years as foundation of Otherness, becoming egos through the internalising of the objectification of ourselves by significant Others.⁹³⁸ Collectively, the two latter points are aligned with the ethnographic path as far as Self/Other constellation in IR is concerned.⁹³⁹

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the policy-research experts' narratives on 'China' from the viewpoints of being Americans and their country's relations with the former. The empirical data served as a discursive frame from which ten key findings have been identified through being juxtaposed with subjectively selected bodies of literature, such as Bourdieu's take on self-reflexivity, narratives as methodology, U.S.-Sino relations, the specified think tank literature, IR's constructivist research programme and realist standpoints, U.S. Politics, social theory relating to the Self/Other constellations – in addition to the overarching thesis concerning lack of 'internationality' where the core American political idea of 'exceptionalism' is argued to play a role in the understanding of policy-researchers' constructions of Self through 'China' as the Other. Thus, the key findings have been established aligned with the 'cyclic' research process (and the ethnographic methodological framework) in addition to the social constructionist research philosophical underpinning of this study.

⁹³⁷ Barth, F 1971, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, op.cit.

⁹³⁸ Jonathan Friedman, "Further Notes on the Advents of Phallus in Blunder-land," in *Constructing Knowledge. Authority and Critique in Social Sciences*, eds. L. Nencel & P. Pes (London: Sage, 1991), 95-113.

⁹³⁹ Iver B. Neumann, "Self and Other in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 2 (1996): 139.

In concert, the key findings also serve as contributions to the conjoined areas of literatures in accordance to the purpose of this study: potentially support (importance of self-reflexive deliberations), confirm (stable, continuous, interdependent U.S.-Sino relationship – and the emergent importance of *learning and understanding beyond the bilateral, ontological lenses*), modify (Self/Other constellations, rejection of IR realist power-transition theory and about an America in decline), and build new theories (younger generation of policy-researchers, ‘internationality’ coupled with ‘exceptionalism’, introducing the “twin-Other” concept, as well as the ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’ and ‘mission think tank’ terms) through verification and validating of findings.⁹⁴⁰

Again, it should be stressed that the findings and proposed contributions relate to generated empirical foundation of the particular Unit of Analysis, i.e. policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks, hence not my own assessment on these phenomena.

This Chapter further showcases the main arguments of this thesis in its entirety – the relevance of ethnographic research where primacy is given to field-research and research subjects, in addition to relationality between Bourdieu’s embedded conceptual “thinking-tools”. For example, if having asked questions specifically about the countries *bilateral* relations, the research subjects would most likely not feel prompted to discuss more broadly. Subsequently, findings relating to an America in decline and their opposite take on IR realist power-theories might not have been unveiled in interviews. Furthermore, the understanding of the policy-

⁹⁴⁰ John D. Brewer, *Ethnography* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 107; Giampietro Gobo, *Doing Ethnography* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008), 227; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, op.cit. 21, 159; Mehmetoglu, M 2004, *Kvalitativ metode for merkantile fag*, Fagbokforlaget, 38, 119, 126; Alan B. Thomas, *Research Skills for Management Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), 26. See Roger M. Keesing & Andrew J. Strathern, *Cultural anthropology: A contemporary perspective* (London: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998); J. van Maanen, ed., *Qualitative Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983).

researchers' analyses is, in my opinion, strongly related to understanding the parameters they are working within, herein China-policy research community as a Bourdieusian 'social field' (and as part of a hierarchy of fields). As Frost (Peterson) uttered about non-value-free complexities:

Views differ both in terms of ideology and which think tank. Most think tanks are independent and individually funded which does not reflect government philosophy or a political party. That's very different from China. Specialisation, too, is a factor, like ideology.⁹⁴¹

And as uttered by Masters (Wilson Center): "depends on where you stand and field of study" (011-K).⁹⁴² In other words, we have multiple 'habitus' – and I have argued that the 'national habitus' is highly socially conditioned of the social field of the China policy-research community and the broader political field.⁹⁴³

This Chapter also provides originality and novelty through being the first (to the best of my knowledge) interview-based study of *inside* a think tank community, and of a larger scale, in addition to providing self-reflexive deliberation and offering a Bourdieusian reading in this regard.

In the third and final analysis chapter, what will ensue are further narratives as the discursive frame (and empirical foundation) concerning the policy-researchers analysis on 'China'. The particular focus covers perceptions on her motivations, intentions, and behaviour – also beyond the bilateral trajectory – portrayed through "American-lenses", by drawing on Bourdieu's concept of 'doxa' and the aforesaid 'qualitative' facet of 'exceptionalism'.

⁹⁴¹ Interview Frost.

⁹⁴² Interview Peter Marsters (Wilson Center), 25 May 2011 (011-K) (recording: 32 min).

⁹⁴³ See Pierre Bourdieu (1990a), op.cit.

CHAPTER 6

THE ‘EXCEPTIONAL’ AMERICAN

‘ONTOLOGICAL LENS’: IMAGINING THE

‘DEFLECTIVE OTHER’ AS SELF-REFLECTING

‘AMERICAN-NESS’

6.0 Chapter Introduction

This third, and final, analysis chapter follows suit from the preceding Chapter Five; to investigate the role of culture, examining how policy-research experts socially construct ‘American-ness’ through ‘China’ as the Other. The present Chapter redirects the focus on ‘China’ and ‘American-ness’ beyond the investigatory scope of U.S.-Sino bilateral relations. The latter constellation was the enterprise of the foregoing chapter and also served as the overall label of the thematic cluster-narratives. In the current Chapter, however, the particular focus surrounds comprehending another facet of the empirical data relating to ‘American-ness’; to engage with policy-researchers’ narratives concerning China’s motivations, intentions, and behaviour coupled with the international politics and foreign policy realms. Empirically, this demarcation has been informed by a “bottom-up” research process, as well as rolling-over relevant findings from the preceding analysis chapters founded on the basis of the ‘total universe of data’.⁹⁴⁴ Established findings and proposed contributions will be derived from such empirical foundation as the

⁹⁴⁴Miles and Huberman 1994, op.cit.

discursive frame – based on juxtapositioning data with relevant, and subjectively selected, bodies of literature.

This ‘cyclic’ research process is aligned with the ethnographic methodological approach and social constructionist epistemological underpinning devised for this study. Integral to the analysis, I shall also propose an overarching argument/thesis pertinent to this particular Chapter (regarding “China-narratives” and the role of culture) – specifically the core American idea of ‘exceptionalism’ and what I argue to reflect a *qualitative* aspect of this social phenomenon.⁹⁴⁵ Social theoretically, I shall particularly draw upon Bourdieu’s concept of ‘doxa’,⁹⁴⁶ which ought to be problematised relationally with other conceptual “thinking tools” integral to Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice.⁹⁴⁷

The deliberation relating to setting-up the previous Chapter Five in terms of structure, premise, linkages to overarching research framework, theorising about self-reflexive deliberation, as well as claims for “methodological fit” across the

⁹⁴⁵ In the preceding chapter, I developed an overall argument/thesis relating to ‘exceptionalism’ developed from the empirical data – but focusing particularly on what I argued to constitute a *quantitative* aspect of the concept (see ‘American Exceptionalism’ for a conservative think tank and sober approach to exploring the theory of ‘exceptionalism’. Available: <http://www.aei.org/module/1/american-exceptionalism>). The author promulgates the centrality of aforesaid theory: “Understanding the meaning of American exceptionalism is indispensable for anyone who wants to understand what it has meant to be an American”. I engage with ‘American exceptionalism’ (see Lipset 1998, “American exceptionalism reaffirmed,” op.cit. 25) in terms of the idea of own position in the world, and not the original question relating to why the U.S was the only industrialised nation without the presence of “leftist” influence in the 19th century (see Karen Tumulty 2013, “American exceptionalism, explained”, *The Washington Post* (2013). Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2013/09/12/american-exceptionalism-explained/>; Trevor B. McCrisken, *American exceptionalism and the legacy of Vietnam: US foreign policy since 1974* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁹⁴⁶ See Vincent Pouliot & Frédéric Mérard, “Bourdieu’s concept: Political sociology in international relations” in *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking key concepts in IR*, ed. Rebecca Adler-Nissen (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 27; Didier Bigo, “Security: Analysing transnational professionals of (in)security in Europe” in *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking key concepts in IR*, ed. Rebecca Adler-Nissen (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 125; Jackson 2008, op.cit; Leander 2010, op.cit.; Leander 2009, op.cit. 4; Jenkins 2002, op.cit. 70.

⁹⁴⁷ This theory serves as the theoretical framework of this study. See Rebecca Adler-Nissen (ed.) 2013, *ibid.*; Emirbayer 1997, op.cit.; Swartz 2008 op.cit.; Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit.; Leander 2010, *ibid.*; Leander 2009, *ibid.*; Leander 2008, “Thinking Tools”, op.cit.

thesis, also applies to the present Chapter.⁹⁴⁸ For this reason, the length of the Chapter is shorter. Points of departures in the current chapter encompass making use of other strands of the ‘total universe of data’,⁹⁴⁹ organising new narrative clusters as the discursive frame, as well as establishing additional key findings and proposing additional areas of contribution.

This Chapter interfaces with substantive aspects of the previous “twin-chapter” on four accounts. First, to present “China-narratives” beyond the bilateral trajectory when it comes to the U.S.-Sino relationship is not only warranted by the collected data – but also through the cumulating analysis. Second, I will in the analysis harness some of the key findings established in Chapter Five – including the interrelated new coined terms of ‘twin-Other’ and the ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’. In terms of the latter, this is further expanded as ‘deflective Other’, ‘deflective Othering’ and ‘deflective Otherness’. Third, whereas Chapter Five proposed the influence of a *quantitative* aspect of ‘exceptionalism’, this Chapter will formulate a corresponding overarching argument/thesis, but as a *qualitative* aspect of this core American concept.⁹⁵⁰ Furthermore, fourth, the current Chapter is also informed by the particular key finding (Chapter Five) concerning bilateralism as the ontological vehicle in the production of (some) narratives. There, I argued that such occurrence performs as a representation of ‘American-ness’ itself.

Consequently, I further argue that the employment of the four above-mentioned aspects in delineating, analysing, and imparting new narrative-clusters indeed

⁹⁴⁸ See Edmondson & McManus 2007, op.cit; Zalan & Lewis 2004, op.cit. 507-528.

⁹⁴⁹ Miles and Huberman 1994, op.cit.

⁹⁵⁰ ‘Qualitative’, here, indicates a non-numerical aspect (thus, nothing to do with the ‘quality’ of neither exceptionalism nor my own argument).

corroborates the applicability and robustness of those findings (Chapter Five). The title of the current chapter reflects such application of the introduced concepts: the concept of an American ‘exceptionalism’ influences how ‘China’ is being “read” by the policy-research experts, and that the social construction of ‘American-ness’ is upheld based on strategising involving the notions of an ‘twin-Other’⁹⁵¹ and an ‘*deflective* meta-narrative’⁹⁵² in terms of Othering ‘China’.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will briefly highlight proposed areas of contributions. Second, I will briefly highlight influential self-reflexive aspects. Collectively, these two sections build upon linkages to the overarching research framework already explicated in Chapter Five, and thus not repeated in the present Chapter. Third, empirical data will be analysed as the discursive frame through establishing thematic cluster-narratives. Fourth, I shall discuss key findings – which are identified based on juxtapositioning data (aforesaid cluster-narratives) with subjectively selected bodies of literature. This effort includes the fifth section, herein developing the overarching argument/thesis of this particular chapter. Sixth, in my concluding marks, I will summarise the key elements of the Chapter and link its undertakings with the Conclusion chapter.

⁹⁵¹ This coined term relates to that Othering and multiple Others can be traced within one country where different representations of that country are granted different values of Otherness, which differ from Hansen (2006, op.cit. 42, 46-51) and an ontologically fixed Other (Campbell 1998, op.cit) – as opposed to my argument that such processes can also involve between different countries.

⁹⁵² I relate this notion to the phenomenon where a ‘meta-narrative’ (in a Croftesian sense (see Croft 2006, op.cit. 73)) becomes assumed (through Bourdieusian ‘symbolic power’) to be a mainstream/dominant narrative, but conversely, in fact only held by a minority.

6.1 Aligning this chapter with the proposed contributions

The linkages to the overarching framework of the study in its entirety (i.e. premise, main arguments and contributions, as well as the significance, novelty, and originality), have been explicated in Chapter Five. In this particular sub-section, I will briefly highlight additional areas of contributions specific to the inquiry in the present Chapter: collecting new primary data (policy-researchers' perceptions of 'American-ness' and 'China' – but focusing on narratives beyond the U.S.-Sino relationship); developing new propositions based on findings of purported narratives; and policy-researchers' contrasting views concerning 'national interests', learning/understanding, meaning-construction of what 'power' China is pursuing, as well as aspects relating to comprehend 'American-ness' by making use of other strands of the collected data.

6.2 Self-reflexive deliberation devised as a method for the researcher

The previous Chapter Five provided an in-depth elaboration on reflexivity as a theory, and the operationalisation of the concept aligned with Bourdieu's 'epistemic reflexivity'.⁹⁵³ Specific for the present Chapter, I shall briefly expound on additional self-reflexive aspects which have transpired through "objectifying objectification" (i.e. 'participant objectification')⁹⁵⁴ – which entails to collectively evaluating three facets of principal knowledge biases when purporting claims of a social scientific nature: the social background of the researcher, position in the intellectual field where I as the researcher operate within, and "intellectualist bias" itself.⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵³ See Leander 2008, "Thinking Tools", op.cit.

⁹⁵⁴ Wacquant 1989, "Towards a reflexive sociology: a workshop with Pierre Bourdieu", op.cit.

⁹⁵⁵ See Bourdieu 1990b, *The logic of practice*, op.cit.; and Bourdieu 2000, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

I find it highly pertinent and important to interface my ‘researcher habitus’ with the role of cultural values in regard to a country’s dealings with other countries. This is not presented in a deterministic manner as I am discounting the notion of “national culture” on the basis of existing sub-cultures and ‘ecological fallacy’.⁹⁵⁶ Without denying such existence in Norwegian foreign affairs,⁹⁵⁷ I ought to bring attention to the following mechanisms considering the possibility for me influencing the data-analysis: coming from Norway – a country which in my subjective (and thus biased) assessment does not have the motivation or desired mission to project its “Norwegian-ness” (herein, political values or world-views) onto the wider international system in the same grandeur style and extent as can be argued is the case with the U.S. Hence, it might very well be the case that I more easily become observant on such endeavours when executed by other countries – because it is different from the political culture surrounding the nurturing and developing of my aforesaid ‘researcher habitus’.

A bipolar foreign policy-tradition (that of the U.S.) has been described by former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger:

⁹⁵⁶ See Gerald H. Kramer, “The Ecological Fallacy Revisited: Aggregate- versus Individual-level Findings on Economics and Elections, and Sociotropic Voting”, *The American Political Science Review*, 77(1) (1983): 92-111; Glen Firebaugh, “A Rule for Inferring Individual-Level Relationships from Aggregate Data”, *American Sociological Review*, 43(4) (1978): 557-572; Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational culture and leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992); Björn Bjerke, *Business Leadership and Culture* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1999); Landis and Wasilevski 1999, op.cit.; Brendan McSweeney, “Hofstede’s model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – a failure of analysis”, *Human Relations*, 55(1) (2002a): 89-118; and Brendan McSweeney, “The essentials of scholarship: A reply to Geert Hofstede”, *Human Relations*, 55(1) (2002b): 1363-1372; Henriett Primecz (eds) et al., *Cross-Cultural Management in Practice: Culture and Negotiated Meanings* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).

⁹⁵⁷ I have earlier (Chapter Five) alluded to Norway’s international aid activity as a form of “Norwegian exceptionalism” and/or grand-strategy (see Halvard Leira et al. 2007, op.cit. about Norwegian influence through international aid. Available: <http://www.nupi.no/content/download/1331/37033/>). Recently, the Norwegian Doctors without Borders criticised international aid distribution based on follow governmental political interest rather than humanitarian needs (see Frank Haugsbø and Eirik Linaker Berglund, “Leger uten grenser: Norsk bistand styres av politiske interesser - ikke behov”, *Verdens Gang* (2013). Available: <http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=10141166>).

The singularities that America has ascribed to itself throughout its history have produced two contradictory attitudes toward foreign policy. The first is that America serves its values best by perfecting democracy at home, thereby acting as a beacon for the rest of mankind; the second, that America's values impose on its obligations to crusade for them around the world. Torn between nostalgia for a pristine past and yearning for a perfect future, American thought has oscillated between isolation and commitment.⁹⁵⁸

Indeed, spreading democracy around the world also became a main pillar during President George W. Bush' administration.⁹⁵⁹ I find my 'scholarly gaze' to positively influence the analysis.⁹⁶⁰ As indicated in both the title and the articulation of the overarching argument/thesis relating to this Chapter, the prevalence of what I argue to be a particular American 'ontological lens' (integral to as well as structured, and structuring, 'American-ness' as a representation of American values) would have been less perceptible to me if not coming from a country such as Norway. Turning the tables, the potential area of criticism following the above should be acknowledged; if I levy more importance (hence assigning more validity to the findings) regarding this particular aspect. Based on the collected data, which itself offers avenues for exploring various "American" ways in as much as thinking and foreign policy behaviour towards China, in my opinion justifies to proceed with my inquiry albeit entrenched with aforesaid 'theoretical gaze'.⁹⁶¹

⁹⁵⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). 18.

⁹⁵⁹ Michael Mandelbaum, "Democracy without America: The Spontaneous Spread of Freedom", *Foreign Affairs*, 86(5) (2007): 119.

⁹⁶⁰ Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 68-69.

⁹⁶¹ See Bourdieu 1990b, *The logic of practice*, op.cit.; and Bourdieu 2000, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

6.3 “China-narratives” clusters – Analysing empirical data as the discursive frame

The previous sub-sections have briefly established the positioning of the present Chapter within the investigatory scope of the study as a whole,⁹⁶² in addition to engaging with self-reflexivity deliberations. What follows is to impart, analyse, and discuss empirical data as “China-narratives” organised into thematic clusters – which in concert serves as this Chapter’s discursive frame.

The demarcation of narratives is also informed by, and thus extends, the analysis, key findings, and contributions postulated in the foregoing Chapter – in particular the enterprise of presenting “China-narratives” beyond the bilateral trajectory.⁹⁶³ Such an approach is aligned with the “bottom-up” approach associated with a social constructionist embedded ethnographic study. The interlinked nature of these two “twin-chapters”⁹⁶⁴ is not dichotomous, and thus does not signal that bilateral aspects can be completely removed from analysing “China-narratives” outside the bilateral realm.

6.3.1 ‘Asymmetric understanding’ narrative – Cluster 1

This cluster highlights lack of mutual understanding between the two countries, as perceived by the policy-researchers,⁹⁶⁵ as an issue – and thus the need for learning.

⁹⁶² This effort contributes to ensure “methodological fit” with the overarching research endeavour (see Edmondson and McManus 2007, op.cit.).

⁹⁶³ See introduction (this chapter): the two other points of interface between Chapters Five and Six are as follows: the influence of a quantitative aspect of ‘exceptionalism’ formulated as an overarching argument/thesis, herein the ‘qualitative aspect’ of this core American idea, and the inter-related new coined terms of the ‘twin-Other’ and a ‘deflective meta-narrative’.

⁹⁶⁴ I.e. the present (Chapter Six) and previous (Chapter Five) chapters.

⁹⁶⁵ I established in the foregoing chapter – as methodological justification – that narratives about other people’s narratives plausibly counts as a narrative of the policy-researcher. This decision is justifiable on the grounds of perceptions and meaning-attribution relating to other narratives cannot be detached from the subjectivity and perceptions diffusing own narratives. This is aligned with the non-objectivist and social constructionist

Douglas Paal (Carnegie) underscores the impact of culture in regard to misunderstandings between Beijing and Washington, by highlighting the nucleus of Kissinger's book *On China*,⁹⁶⁶ due to:

We talk past each other so often, because we are underestimating the power of the depth of Chinese culture and how they look down at us. And to get effective policies we need to understand the other party's need. If we ignore their needs, we cause problems. (022-V).⁹⁶⁷

Banning Garrett (Atlantic Council) illustrates how context dictates a higher degree of 'understanding' – not necessarily based on actual comprehension, but how it may rather subjugate any lack of understanding because of the dire economic climate overshadowing other areas of conflicts. Common comprehension has been bridged over the threat (down-scaling of their economies) (025-Y).⁹⁶⁸ This reflects the primacy of a Bourdieusian economic 'field of power' and consequently being more influential than other fields lower down in the hierarchy.

Peter Marsters (Wilson Centre) expresses that the general American public perceives China as a monolith due to limited cross-cultural contact and having very different cultures. Furthermore, he finds that language barriers result in somewhat more suspicious attitudes against China where the general public has not quite caught up with the relatively new relationship – albeit the countries' business and finance

philosophical underpinning of the study; there is no observable, detached, objective world "out there" that exist independently of the human mind and cognitive processes (Crotty 2003, op.cit.).

⁹⁶⁶ Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012a). The reception has varied from the modest celebratory (for example; Michiko Kakutani, "An Insider Views China, Past and Future" (2011. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/10/books/on-china-by-henry-kissinger-review.html?pagewanted=all>) to firm disappointment with the underlying motives and failure to address key foreign policy issues (for example; Jasper Becker, "On China by Henry Kissinger – review" (2011). Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/may/21/on-china-henry-kissinger-review>).

⁹⁶⁷ Paal (Carnegie), recording 29.56 (022-V).

⁹⁶⁸ Interview Garrett (Atlantic Council), recording: 01.05.

spheres are more interconnected (011-K).⁹⁶⁹ His colleague, Sue Levenstein (Wilson Centre), finds that the average Chinese is much more informed than their American counter-parts (006-F).⁹⁷⁰

(...) appalling to me, how little average Americans know about world affairs, we are the one superpower. I feel so many people in this country who just prefer to condense everything into black and white, as opposed to the grey areas – and to me that is very frustrating. Especially when looking at China, what is frustrating, my opinion, lots of think tanks like to talk about China in terms of military expansion – they would focus more on security because it is the sexy issue, like movie studios selling movies of low quality, same concept! (006-F).⁹⁷¹

Dan Blumenthal (AEI) utters that he finds the American system to appreciate the Chinese one “ (...) a little bit better, not particular about strategic tradition and how that affects their behaviour, but enough about what they seem wanting to do in the military sphere in Taiwan” (008-H).⁹⁷² He continues by pointing out how values support policy, for example in regard to why NATO operates in Libya (and thus the U.S. and ‘west’ in general), and how misunderstandings can erupt concerning the rationale why countries may operate on principles and not only interests (008-H).⁹⁷³ Regardless of the accuracy of such perceptions, the statements above also depict the importance of meaning-construction in terms of those assumptions we make about other countries’ behaviour and intentions. On the other hand, it is problematic to distinguish ‘principles’ from ‘interests’ as binary/dichotomised phenomena i.e. that ‘interests’ are innately given as a fixed, non-contestable or construable entity, and thus evolved in isolation from principles or values, but entwined with power at the

⁹⁶⁹ Marsters (Wilson Centre), recording: 03.49. He also points out that it is, naturally, difficult to pinpoint one American public (011-K).

⁹⁷⁰ Levenstein (Wilson Centre), recording: 14.09 (006-F).

⁹⁷¹ Levenstein, recording: 17.13.

⁹⁷² Blumenthal (AEI), recording: 2.54 (008-H).

⁹⁷³ Blumenthal, recording: 04.10.

core of American foreign policy analysis, as formulated by Morgenthau's realist camp.⁹⁷⁴

Blumenthal continues his analysis, showcasing the impact of culture:

I think their system is prone to being a closed system, there is a deep paranoia about U.S. intention, referential conclusions about why U.S. does particular things. They think every action is an attack on China? (008-H).⁹⁷⁵

Bonnie Glaser (CSIS) also finds suspiciousness towards the U.S. from China (035-QR).⁹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Blumenthal's account begs the question if a more negative picture is painted by 'China' as the Other (where 'paranoia' reflects Otherness as one of the boundary-markers) – thus, a 'deflective Other' (based on 'deflective narratives') as the negative Othering allows for maintaining a positive self-reflecting (American) Self.

Robert Hathaway (Wilson Center) also signals an imbalance in understanding – but rather gives the benefit to the Chinese side:

(...) understanding is incomplete; at the one side of the coin China has a much more sophisticated understanding and operations at their Embassy here in DC. And I assume that the calibre of diplomats they send to DC are vastly superior for just a decade ago, presumably smarter, more informed, more sophisticated diplomats, who are conveying back to the political leadership in Beijing. They are more political nuanced of the Washington decision making process, the interplay between politics and interests, role of public opinion. There are reasons to think that understanding is better. Having said that, there is a vast gulf on both sides (016-P).⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951); Morgenthau 1948, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, op.cit. See Hans J. Morgenthau, "Another 'Great Debate': The National Interest of the United States," *American Political Science Review*, 46(4) (1952): 961–962.

⁹⁷⁵ Blumenthal (AEI), recording: 03:20 (008-H).

⁹⁷⁶ Interview Bonnie Glaser (CSIS), 8 July 2011. Recording: 0.55 (035-QR).

⁹⁷⁷ Robert Hathaway (Wilson Center), recording: 10:23 (016-P).

On the non-state level, however, Levy (AEI) maintains that there is less understanding in Beijing when it comes to other forces which drives the U.S. (for example in 2003, during periods of bilateral tensions between the two countries) – where China became fixated in understanding U.S. perceptions of China, but relying on predominant societal forces at that point of time such as manufacturing job losses and trade imbalances (007-G).⁹⁷⁸ Levy's (AEI) statement reflects, I argue, a *Chinese* ‘deflective narrative’, i.e. if wanting to find traces of U.S. hostility towards China, Beijing could easily find that in American discourse such as the above societal forces (allowing Beijing polity to uphold a meta-narrative serving their own interests – if they wanted to).

The imbalance of mutual understanding is increasing due to (dynamics of) media coverage. Effectively, this signals the relevance of heuristically placing the media field in Bourdieu’s hierarchy at the top along with other larger ‘fields of powers’. Levenstein (Wilson Center) states:

It is appalling what the average Joe on the street knows about China (...) how bureaucracy works, not largely understood; foreign countries. We are moving in news cycles, not very analytical [laughter]. It leads to surface level analysis – or not even analysis (006-F).⁹⁷⁹

Banning Garrett (Atlantic Council) also points out the impending intentions being placed on the behaviour of Washington and Beijing. But foremost he takes a radical stance with assumed applied universal understanding by those who are placing intentions on others but without necessarily grasping what they are – for example a

⁹⁷⁸ Levy, recording 04.30 (007-G).

⁹⁷⁹ Interview Levenstein, recording: 16.30 & 12.30 (006-F).

paper authored by Robert Kagan and Blumenthal (AEI).⁹⁸⁰ Garrett formulates in his policy-paper:⁹⁸¹

(...) problem is universal, where people are imputing intentions to others when they don't know what they are (...) they just stated as fact what China's strategic intentions were – and they listed in their article to do this and that – my response was 'how do they know that?' There is no humility, at least say 'based on China's actions made me to include their intentions were x or y', or 'based on what the Chinese told me', or a conclusion based on what they have seen (...) Gee, I have talked about North-Korea with the Chinese for twenty-years and it does not ring through with what I have heard, or surmise. I am not sure if I know what their intentions are, so if you are making false statements of what their intentions are; you better know what you are talking about or have evidence (...) but don't pretend you actually know if you don't know. You might be wrong. (025-Y).⁹⁸²

Garrett (Atlantic Council) continues with illustrating misunderstandings also across the aisle:

I have spent plenty of times with the Chinese and they misinterpret American actions and apply and attribute intentions we did not have, on very critical issues where I knew what U.S. was thinking – or not thinking – 'oh grand strategic plans'. That is nonsense! (...) I have pounded on the Chinese on the other side to be careful with drawing conclusions based on series of facts or actions. There are problems on both sides; conspiratorial in their views, they [China] draw up a great theory why we are doing something, it is a fantasy – so we need to be careful so we don't do same things. (029-Y).⁹⁸³

Interestingly, that Self and the Other are treated differently also surfaces in the interview with Garrett (Atlantic Council). For example, where he above warns the Chinese not to make interpretations based on a series of actions – that is the same as action he stated earlier in the interview to be a normal thing and what all policy-researchers try to do (U.S. think tanks). His argument, however, is nevertheless consistent: not to move from observations to assume intentions.

⁹⁸⁰ See Daniel Blumenthal and Robert Kagan, "How Obama Should Approach North Korea", *The Washington Post* (2009). Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/25/AR2009052501391.html>.

⁹⁸¹ In his essay, Garrett writes in the *The New Atlanticist*: "there is an all-too-common practice in Washington punditry of attributing strategic intentions to other countries without any apparent evidence" (Available: http://192.254.129.212/new_atlanticist/how-do-they-know).

⁹⁸² Banning Garrett (Atlantic Council), recording: 13 min (025-Y).

⁹⁸³ Barrett, recording: 9.00 and 01.21.00. Barrett made this statement relating to some of the thinking in Beijing and not as a general statement.

On the prompt if the above reflects lack of self-reflections, Garrett (Atlantic Council) finds such evaluation plausible relating to both sides. During a speech (June 8) at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), he pleaded to look at broader contexts and outside the bilateral box:

(...) our experts they know a lot about the U.S., but less about China and the strategic environment, mirrored on the other side which focuses on bilateral aspects (Taiwan IPR, Tibet, the usual) and now military competition. That is the lens of the world but not useful in 5, or 10-30 years from now (...) experts do only thing they know about, actual relations take place in global strategic environment; rising energy and food prices, not a bilateral issue but more important than most bilateral issues, especially beyond 10 years (029-Y).⁹⁸⁴

From the above, which reflects the argument in the preceding chapter regarding the bilateral ontological lens as ‘American-ness’, I induce that learning beyond the bilateral horizon is a key issue. Garrett (Atlantic Council) carries on by illuminating the above as a disciplinary/paradigmatic issue:

(...) hear a lot about China threat, rising China – mostly from strategists? Great strategists don’t know diddle about China but have little paradigms from where they learn from Mearsheimer and others realists and just impose that on China without talking to the Chinese, not understanding anything on China nuances or debates or interest groups within China (029-Y).⁹⁸⁵

Walther Lohman (Heritage) assesses the level of mutual understanding as “artificial” although he finds dialogue useful as opposed to the myriad of 84 working level talks affiliated with the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (SED),⁹⁸⁶ and finds the operationalisation a waste of time and resources. He argues that areas of shared understanding tend to be where the countries have shared interest (economics more

⁹⁸⁴ Barrett, recording: 34.55.

⁹⁸⁵ Barrett, recording: 47.05.

⁹⁸⁶ The Fifth Round of the SED was held in Washington, DC, whilst conducting my field-work (see <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/07/211861.htm>). Kenneth Lieberthal (Brookings) was a proponent for conducting two meetings a year for working-groups in order to facilitate discussion on the upcoming meeting (but was not entertained) (032-KL, recording: 01.52).

so than political and security ones), which he warns against to be taken as having a relationship (policy-makers).⁹⁸⁷ Again, here, to think in Bourdieusian hierarchy of fields is helpful; it is evident that the economic field is elevated from other large ‘fields of power’ at the top of the hierarchy and thus more impactful (downwards) in other fields. It also reflects the importance of context – for example U.S.-UK relations would have a more balanced homology between fields vertically and horizontally in the hierarchy – due to a closer bilateral relationship and more cultural proximity.

Lohman (Heritage) also illuminates China’s politicisation of the imbalance as far as mutual understanding is concerned as: “ (...) opposite end of the spectrum, they think we don’t understand their development, but they are underdeveloped when we ask them [to contribute]” (021-U).⁹⁸⁸ He also links misunderstandings – especially from the Chinese side, to creating real conflicts – in interplay with key American ideas:

(...) potential for real conflicts, mostly based on Chinese misunderstandings and miscalculations of the U.S. And misunderstanding of a U.S. decline (...) not in absolute decline, unfortunately except for policy here, ultimately U.S. makes the right policy choices, not a mystique force out there when powers decline. U.S remains expanding its population, rich in natural resources, stable political systems despite debts, not inevitable decline, don’t think the Chinese know that sometimes. (021-U).⁹⁸⁹

However, imbalances in understanding is not necessarily fixed, but also a product of the dynamics of the Bourdieusian ‘social field’ (i.e. China policy research

⁹⁸⁷ Walter Lohman (Heritage Foundation), recording: 2 min (021-U).

⁹⁸⁸ Lohman, recording 08:00 (021-U).

⁹⁸⁹ Lohman, 33 min).

community) – for example in regard to age and the generation gap.⁹⁹⁰ Swartz (AEI) postulates:

(...) on the whole, not nearly as much understanding as it should be but will change over time; student exchanges, studying in each other countries – almost no other generation above me who have had the experience like I had; study and go to China. If they did, it is often a very niche field like intelligence. True on Chinese side as well (017-Q).⁹⁹¹

Boundary-markers for this particular cluster are ‘meaning-attribution’, ‘imbalanced/asymmetric understanding’, and ‘generation-dependent’.

6.3.2 ‘Meaning of China’s rising power’ narratives – Cluster 2

The type of power which China aspires to develop into and/or exhibit – presently and more so in the future – reflects the crux of this narrative-cluster. This discovery is warranted by the dynamics of empirical data and the iterative, hermeneutical analysis process. On the other hand, the impact of China’s rise (and, thus, potentially the perceived severity relating to such phenomenon being augmented) also intensifies the apprehension of her rise due to the existing imbalanced/asymmetric understanding of ‘China’ in general as elaborated in the preceding cluster-narrative.⁹⁹² As exemplified by Garrett (Atlantic Council):

(...) right now, there are huge suspicions. An irony because China has become more and more pluralistic, and more and more lacking in real vision – and does not have a real long-term strategy of any kind other than the most general thing; they want to be a strong prosperous, secure nation. OK, who does not – I have never heard about any country wanting to be weak, poor, and insecure (...) but in terms of long-term, coherent strategy aligned with dominate the world, get rid of the United States and push us out from Asia – may be aspirations for some people, sure – but a strategic

⁹⁹⁰ Established in Chapter 5 (for example interviews with Samuel Sherraden (New America Foundation) (003-C & 003-C2).

⁹⁹¹ Interview Dale Swartz (AEI), recording 11.45 (017-Q).

⁹⁹² This was identified in the previous cluster-narrative.

motivational factor behind all their policy, how they can weaken the U.S. and strengthen China, dominate the region, I don't think so. If you talk with the Chinese they would laugh about it; 'we don't think long term, it is the Americans that think long-term!' So, we need to be careful to think about them as juggernaut. (025-Y).⁹⁹³

The above signals the intriguing point that if China does not have a 'grand strategy' or 'long-term vision' as far as the international system is concerned, how privy or capable, then, are bystanders and stakeholders outside the China polity and national boundaries to construe these focal representations of national identity on behalf another country?⁹⁹⁴ Ahrens links China's power projection with the importance of understanding domestic variables and thus agrees to China's uncertainty of its own future: that they do not themselves have a clear vision concerning what direction they want to pursue as a country, which is part of a robust discussion in China otherwise occupied with domestic issues (020-T).⁹⁹⁵

Feffer (IPS) points out that "China says we are growing, we are cool with it" and indicates that the landing of her steep upward power projection as an end-goal is not necessarily prioritised by Beijing in terms of what to communicate to the external world as a status-quo – and facing important junctions without knowing how to address them (013-M).⁹⁹⁶ National-interest, however, is evident in China's approach and positioning in the international system, as promulgated by Sherraden (New America Foundation). He assesses China wanting to evolve into an economic power but not a military one, which he argues takes place through leveraging capital of

⁹⁹³ Interview Garrett, recording: 01.12.42 (025-Y).

⁹⁹⁴ This practice does not relate to the U.S., only, but most likely any country. Moreover, it is beyond the purview of this study to assess the existence of a Chinese grand-strategy and so forth.

⁹⁹⁵ Interview Nat Ahrens, recording: 20.57 (020-T).

⁹⁹⁶ Feffer, recording: 47:15) (013-M). Following Ganning Barrett's (Atlantic Council) advice, I should also refrain from attributing meaning to something.

political and financial investments (003-C2).⁹⁹⁷ Ellen Frost (Peterson Institute) brings forward *which* trajectory China will be following as the core question: “look at India, we know they will remain democratic, but with China we don’t know” (001-A).⁹⁹⁸ Philip Levy (AEI) concurs: “I think China faces some really difficult choices. Don’t see as clear path, I think you got an intelligent industrious nation that has tremendous potential but huge contradictions” (007-G).⁹⁹⁹

Stein Tønnesson (USIP) highlights how Beijing is wary about not exhibiting aggressive values, for example changing own slogan from ‘peaceful rise’ to ‘peaceful development’ – where the former resemblances dominations over other countries similar to Japan’s rise.¹⁰⁰⁰ Blumenthal (AEI) also rest assured on China’s peaceful intention: “there is structural similarity in terms of what China wants to do in the international system (...) regional architecture that China cannot change (...) I think Chinese elites want to rise peacefully, they don’t want war, but that don’t mean it is consummated with the western interest. Number one goal is economic development, power politics, territory, questions about dignity, restoration, sense of hierarchy, and international politics about goals, justice, restored” (008-H).¹⁰⁰¹ Hersh (CAP) highlights China’s rise as a pursuit for purchasing soft power through Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in developing countries (African and Latin-American regions) – and to be speaking on the behalf of the developing world:¹⁰⁰² “I do not

⁹⁹⁷ Interview, Sherraden, (recording 13.01) (003-C2).

⁹⁹⁸ Ellen Frost (Peterson), recording 13:40 (001-A).

⁹⁹⁹ Philip Levy (AEI), recording 18:44 (007-G).

¹⁰⁰⁰ See also Stein Tønnesson, recording 1.22.00 (009-I).

¹⁰⁰¹ Dan Blumenthal (AEI), recording: 08.10 (008-H).

¹⁰⁰² Interview Adam Hersh (CAP), recording: 20.32 (010-J). It is also common to talk about China’s power trajectory as wanting to act as the Leader of the Third World (see *The New York Times* (2005). Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/08/world/asia/08iht-beijing.html?_r=0.

know if Chinese leadership know what type of role they want to take on" (010-J).¹⁰⁰³

Swartz (AEI) expresses that "China is moving higher up in the region" (017-Q).¹⁰⁰⁴

However, Hersh also points out the limitations:

I think they [China] are very clumsy about how to accumulate and use the soft power – partly because the country has been isolated for so long and partly because of cultural barriers that are difficult to transcend, and partly because, like you know, the U.S. has a very inward looking culture; 'China' is the middle-kingdom and the world revolves around it'. And the U.S. is the middle-kingdom of the west and all revolve around them (010-J).¹⁰⁰⁵

Jamie Metzl (Asia Society), who doubts that China can exercise international leadership,¹⁰⁰⁶ reflects on China's alleged 'free-rider' behaviour in the international system:

With China, there is an increasingly interdependency between the U.S. and China and there is a growing mistrust between the two countries. From the Chinese perspectives, the U.S. is in some ways trying to keep them down. Which I think, I don't believe, I think that the U.S. has done more than any other countries to help China rise. There are many other people in the U.S. who believe that China is rising as a power irresponsibly and not making the kind of commitments to maintain the international system that has facilitated China's rise (039-YZ).¹⁰⁰⁷

Similarly, Levy (AEI) expresses concerns with China not taking enough responsibility as her position and size in the international system would dictate:

(...) one of the things that has been so much frustrating for the U.S. with China; China is not trying to shape the U.S. manoeuvrability. In some ways China is still trying to pretend it is a small player in international system; it puts forward principles of non-interference – for its own reasons does not want to be criticised for what is done internally (...) the U.S. would be glad to have China shaping things. More commonly, the Chinese approach seems to be 'that is not our business', but

¹⁰⁰³ Hersh, 42.48 (010-J).

¹⁰⁰⁴ Interview Dale Swartz (AEI), recording 08.30 (017-Q).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Hersh, interview, recording: 22.19.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See Jamie, F. Metzl, "Can China be an international leader?", *The Guardian* (2010). Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/apr/09/china-economic-international-leader>.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Interview Metzl, recording 4.53 (039-YZ).

sometimes that U.S. would have liked that. Other times when it comes to Iran, or nuclear proliferation or other things the U.S. says ‘this IS your business’, you are going to help with this, you are a big country (...) U.S. frustration has been that China is not proposing alternate solutions (007-G).¹⁰⁰⁸

Boundary-markers can be argued to encompass ‘free-rider’, ‘non-global power’, ‘multiple identities’, ‘meaning of rise and power’, and ‘economic power’.

6.3.3 ‘Multi-level learning’ narratives – Cluster Three

The established asymmetric understanding and imbalanced understanding between the two countries, which plausibly increases in line with China’s continuing rise in the international system, warrants further focus on learning.

Similarly, relating to Bourdieu’s ‘social field’, Ellen Frost (Peterson) alludes to the nature of thinking within the conceptual space and physical locality presented within and around the DC think tank environment:¹⁰⁰⁹

For example, there are many Chinas, and what is said generally, is that what centrally government decide as of policy matters is not necessarily carried out locally, that is one dimension that is missing in most think tanks; provinces and localities in China and how different they are (...) you tend not to get that here because this is the head-quarter of the national government, so that is what we tend to look at. We know there are layers and layers of powers which are not always in harmony with each other – there tend not to be paid attention to local levels. And because this community is interested in security, foreign policy and economic issues, there is less focus on cultural issues, people to people issues and that kind of things. We had one talking about soft power and Confucianism and so forth, but she was from Singapore – not from here. (001-A).¹⁰¹⁰

Banning Garrett (Atlantic Council) concurs that culture and history have significant influence on the misunderstanding between the two countries because “we are from

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview Levy (AEI), recording: 29.45 (007-G).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Interview Frost (Peterson), recording: 14.25 (001-A).

¹⁰¹⁰ Frost, 06.56 (001-A).

different places”. He points out binaries such as being developed or developing, but also internal dynamics relating to China having experienced the Cultural Revolution, being poor, and enduring social instability. Garrett does not, however, place culture as the primary factor; “ (...) not one cultural lens, we have real issues to deal with (...) keeping the economy growing and security issues (...) so I think it is a little more pragmatic and more common for all leaders and meet the same problem as we do on the ground” (025-Y).¹⁰¹¹ I would argue that Garrett’s utterances also effectively strengthens the proposal stipulating that such cultural influence is an enduring trait of the American Self as himself is arguing for the commonality across bilateral contexts:

Not the greatest understanding between Americans and Indians, or Americans and Brazilians either – a whole lot of suspicion everywhere we go in the world, about U.S. intentions and imperialism, so the Chinese are not unique. Our failure to understand other cultures is legendary, that is a huge problem. (025-Y).¹⁰¹²

Levenstein (Wilson Center) highlights that learning materialises beyond the ontological lens of IR’s state-to-state paradigm and at different levels, for example the very high rate of Chinese and international students pursuing higher education in the America, and marriages (006-F).¹⁰¹³ As a result, Levenstein find tensions between the two countries to be exaggerated which supports my proposed concept of the ‘deflective-narrative’. Furthermore, this resemblance Satu Limaye’s (EastWest Center) promulgation that individual and group levels must be taken into account (for example business-groups), as discussed in the foregoing chapter.¹⁰¹⁴ Appreciating that understanding varies depending on levels is also reflected in

¹⁰¹¹ Interview Garrett, recording: 01.15.18 (025-Y).

¹⁰¹² Garrett, 01.15.51.

¹⁰¹³ Interview Sue Levenstein (Wilson Center), recording 40 min (006-F).

¹⁰¹⁴ See David S. A. Guttormsen and Carina van de Wetering 2013, op.cit. 2.

Levy's (AEI) argument warning Washington and Beijing to treat each other as monoliths:

(...) if you look at the more astute China hands in the State Department like David Levander – they understand China quite well, but that is not the whole U.S. political body, lots of misunderstandings (007-G).¹⁰¹⁵

Douglas Paal (Carnegie) also elucidates the need for scrutinising different levels of understanding – which supports the importance of media as an impactful 'field of power' at the top in Bourdieu's hierarchy of fields:

No, the American press has been relatively inflammatory over the last couple of years. Quality of journalism has declined, and people are only good as the journalism – but Congress is not going to do independent research, so lots of problems in understanding. I think that the top few people in the White House and top people Beijing have very good understanding, take points, understand conversations – but most people don't (...) general public is confused, conflicted, almost every headlines in the paper is about China either takes the jobs or taking over the country. (022-V).¹⁰¹⁶

Peter Marsters (Wilson Center) points out the Othering which occurs at the individual level:

Suspicious on the ground, it is kind of a new bilateral relation. The culture is very different, language different – not much cross-cultural context [inaudible]. China seems like a monolith, and I think you know financially and business wise the countries are much more intertwined. General understanding in the public has not caught up with the level of interaction.¹⁰¹⁷

Boundary-markers would entail 'non-state level', 'multi-level learning', 'impeding cultural influence', and 'individuals lacking knowledge'.

¹⁰¹⁵ Interview Levy, recording 1.30 (007-G).

¹⁰¹⁶ Interview Douglas Paal, recording: 16.58 (022-V).

¹⁰¹⁷ Interview Peter Masters (Wilson Center), recording 04.00 (011-K).

6.3.4 'The American Self as national habitus' narratives – Cluster 4

This cluster centres on different admissions into making sense of ‘American-ness’ as particular ways of thinking – traceable at the national level – through shared meaning-construction and thus framed as a ‘national habitus’. With this term, I am not implying that such processes transpire only at the non-state level (as purported by Norbert Elias’ non-state led representations)¹⁰¹⁸ but a ‘structuring structure’ serving as a system of deeply held beliefs socialised as internalised dispositions which dictates what constitutes “common-sense” practices.¹⁰¹⁹

Seth Cropsey (Hudson Institute) articulates that “American academic ideology is about collaboration and good faith demonstrating being joint together with other nations, somehow a substitute for real identifiable national interest” (012-L).¹⁰²⁰ Furthermore, Cropsey argues for particular ‘American-lens’ that again positions the economy as a Bourdieusian ‘field of power’:

We are more likely to watch China through an economic filter, to say they own so much of our debt, we rely so much on importing their goods, such that we are able to finance our borrowing. And at the same time, the Chinese own increasing stake in the economic future of the U.S. is increasing, and Americans are depending on low cost goods. (012-L).¹⁰²¹

Swartz (AEI) illustrates the importance of power as being relational to China’s rise:

For me, interesting watching from the AEI, I believe pretty strongly of the importance of primacy American power. When we do good, I don’t necessarily take it to the next step being paranoid about what is China going to do. (017-Q).¹⁰²²

¹⁰¹⁸ See Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Locating Bourdieu* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 104; Giselinde Kuipers, “The rise and decline of national habitus: Dutch cycling culture and the shaping of national similarity,” *European Journal of Social Theory*, 16(1) (2013): 17-35.

¹⁰¹⁹ Bourdieu 1984, op.cit.

¹⁰²⁰ Interview Seth Crospey (Hudson Institute), recording: 22 min (012-L).

¹⁰²¹ Cropsey, recording: 10 min.

¹⁰²² Interview Swartz (AEI), recording: (017-Q).

Levy (AEI) relates the term ('ideology') to the 'American Conscious'.¹⁰²³ I argue this justifies the operationalisation of 'habitus' as an American Self – as Richard Hofstadter promulgated: "It has been our fate as a nation, not to have ideologies but to be one".¹⁰²⁴ In my opinion, it is nevertheless an ideology. But rather than subscribing to any other nation's ideology, it is an exercise in offering a uniquely different (a system of lasting transposable dispositions)¹⁰²⁵ *practicing* of a belief-system.¹⁰²⁶ This particular take on the American Self diffuses with the concept of American exceptionalism – signalling the American difference¹⁰²⁷ necessitated for demarcating the Self from the Other in terms of identity-formation¹⁰²⁸ – which can be argued to be aligned with Huntington's view on American universal principles: liberty, equality, democracy, constitutionalism, liberalism, limited government.¹⁰²⁹ In concert, this realisation connects the present line of inquiry with the very starting point of this study; un-packing 'American-ness'.

The term 'ideology' is generally frowned upon in American political discourse¹⁰³⁰ – as expressed by Ellen Frost (Peterson): "when you say ideology, yes, not quite sure how to answer then, we think about that as something communists have, *we* have values" (001-A).¹⁰³¹ The term 'ideology' is frequently used however in discourses relating to China. Frost continues by relating 'American-ness' (aka individualism)

¹⁰²³ Interview Levy (AEI), recording: 29 min (007-G).

¹⁰²⁴ Kohn 1955, op.cit. 411; Lipset 1996, op.cit. 18.

¹⁰²⁵ Bourdieu 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, op.cit. 82-83.

¹⁰²⁶ As established in Chapter Two (theoretical framework), habitus becomes culture, herein consisting of durable transposable dispositions or organising actions (see Bourdieu, P 1977, *ibid.*).

¹⁰²⁷ Lipset 1996, *ibid.* 19; Alexis de Tocqueville, op.cit. 36.

¹⁰²⁸ See Eriksen 1992, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, op.cit.

¹⁰²⁹ Huntington 1997, *The Erosion of American National Interests*, op.cit. 29.

¹⁰³⁰ For example, see Frost (Peterson) (001-A) interview. There are exceptions, but then often relating to something inherently positive (in an American context) – such as John Locke's foundation principles for liberalism (see Dominic Tierney, "Why Are Americans So Ideologically United?", *The Atlantic* (2011). Available: <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/08/why-are-americans-so-ideologically-united/243951/>).

¹⁰³¹ Interview Frost (Peterson), recording 06.33 (001-A). These two-fold narratives are also discussed in her Kissinger paper.

and being outspoken/candid as a focal American value/thinking – in opposition to China (001-A).¹⁰³² This stance exemplifies the coined “twin-Other” concept; an ‘enemy Othering’ of China creates and justifies a stronger self-congratulatory attitudes to what is perceived to be embodied within the ‘American Self’. Furthermore, this type of Othering also showcases my proposed nuancing of Hansen’s work – due to the good (‘values’)/bad (‘ideology’) binary as far as Othering is concerned, is transpiring across different countries – in this case ‘India good’, ‘China bad’.

Bryan Wakefield (Wilson Center) points out an American cultural lens regarding China’s rise:

Certainly the case with the U.S. is that Americans tend to see other countries that look like successful as a threat, same with the Japanese in the 1980s. Perhaps not people at the official executive level (...) still people see China in that way, but Chinese behaviour last year did not dispel that notion. (005-E).¹⁰³³

Pieter Bottelier (JHU and Carnegie) follows suit by pointing out the embedded mistrust against Japan in American culture – as was the case with the Soviet Union during the Cold-War era. He describes why suspiciousness against China evolves is plausibly due to the closed nature of China as opposed to India where society is much more open, transparent, and accountable (what matters to the U.S.) which manifests itself with a better negotiation climate at the individual level: “Very hard for Americans to look at China as a normal country – China is dubious (,,,)” (038-WX).¹⁰³⁴

A policy-researcher at the WRI supports the above:

¹⁰³² Frost, recording 26.00 (001-A).

¹⁰³³ Bryan Wakefield (Wilson Center), recording 22.02 & 18.47 (005-E).

¹⁰³⁴ Interview Pieter Bottelier (JHU and Carnegie) (038-WX).

Personally I feel like many people in this country try to pain China into a Soviet Union during the Cold War – looking for an Other to fill the adversary role. Too bad for cooperation. More and more but in the private sector not the case; business is business and corporations have to work together across boundaries. The general public outburst mentality we saw last election cyclic, scare tactics from both sides that if China rules the world they would outpace our jobs outpace our military, job losses going to China – “my opponent is sending jobs to China” (...) China is now positioned where Japan was 1-2 decades ago. (028-CD).¹⁰³⁵

Dan Blumenthal (AEI) expresses:

(...) why do we know more about India, because they are open! I mean China is closed in many ways, hard to control perceptions, quite natural. Columnists who go to China don't go to Sanshui, they go to the Dallas equivalent and say they are like us. (008-H).¹⁰³⁶

On a similar note, Levenstein (Wilson Center) addresses the American self-image – which is intensified due to asymmetric understanding between the two peoples:¹⁰³⁷

(...) in terms of self-image, I think that, dominance of global seas has always been closely tied with U.S. military excellence. I think that part of this country's [USA] self-image comes from how we have the most power military in the world, and that we use it to do good things all over the world. That is how we get the image to paint ourselves as a benevolent superpower. And I think that China has the next powerful military (...) the U.S. military is viewed upon as an overpowering giant and knowing so little about the Chinese military sort of motivates the U.S. to look within and try to refine the military (...) there is a military industrial complex here in the U.S. and it's one of powerful industry in this country. To keep that working we need to maintain their standards of excellence that the U.S. military has and I think they are threatened by the rise and size of the Chinese military because first of all they know so little about the Chinese military – I think every year the Department of Defense report about the Chinese military. I think that, they have to take a more exaggerated, alarmist tone, that is one way to scare the military into improving and innovating themselves, stay in top form – serves the purpose (006-F).¹⁰³⁸

¹⁰³⁵ Interview, WRI, recording: 08.43 (028-CD).

¹⁰³⁶ Interview Blumenthal (AEI), recording: 25.27 (008-H).

¹⁰³⁷ As established in an earlier narrative-cluster (this chapter).

¹⁰³⁸ Interview Levenstein (Wilson Center), recording: 52.27 (006-F).

Peter Marsters (Wilson Center) affirms the prevalence of religion in U.S. politics, pointing out that morality is¹⁰³⁹ often attached to U.S.' actions in larger conflicts allowing righteousness to serve as guiding principles – as an inherent aspect of American culture (011-K).¹⁰⁴⁰

The boundary-markers for this cluster include ‘meaning-construction’, ‘multilevel and multi-faceted influence of culture’, ‘enemy-Othering’, ‘practice of ideology’, and ‘fear’.

6.4 Discussion of key findings, overarching argument/thesis, and proposed contributions

In the previous sub-section, selected empirical data (aka policy-researchers' narratives) were presented in four narrative-clusters. The present sub-section will highlight key findings (interfacing with self-reflexivity, the role of culture, as well as IR's realist 'school of thought' and the constructivist research programme), articulate the overarching argument (i.e. a particular political lens linked with Bourdieu's doxa and a *qualitative* outlook on exceptionalism) – in addition to establish proposed contributions. Key findings, new coined terms, and proposed contributions from the other analysis chapters will be drawn upon.¹⁰⁴¹ In the analysis section below, I will

¹⁰³⁹ For substantiated support for this notion, see Lee Marsden, "Faith-based Diplomacy: Conservative Evangelicals and the United States Military," *Politics and Religion* (2013): 1-24; Lee Marsden, "Bush, Obama and a faith-based US foreign policy," *International Affairs*, 88(5) (2012): 953–974;; Lee Marsden, "Religion, Identity and American Power in the age of Obama," *International Politics*, 48 (2011): 326-343.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Interview Peter Marsters (Wilson Center), recording: 12.31 (011-K).

¹⁰⁴¹ These type of key findings have a two-fold purpose; a finding in its own right in the present Chapter, but also the added value to support (or otherwise) findings in previous chapters. Hence, in effect, this increases the plausibility and internal validity of corresponding findings purported in other chapters.

also make use of empirical data from interviews with relevant academic experts as a means to strengthen the credibility of the analysis.¹⁰⁴²

6.4.1 Discussion of key findings

I shall be highlighting five key findings, which have been derived, based on the inductive, iterative, hermeneutical analysis process where selected bodies of literature have been subjectively chosen to be juxtaposed with the empirical data.

The first key finding builds on the identical discovery in the previous chapter – the importance of self-reflexive deliberation as part of the investigation but lacking in such engagement amongst the majority of the interviewed policy researchers. In effect, this finding also expands Bourdieu's 'epistemic reflexivity' towards a stronger epistemological foundation. Such an approach is aligned with Maton's argument that the objectifying should also scrutinise the relationship between the objectified and the social scientific claim that I would present as the researcher.¹⁰⁴³

This illustrates how my intellectual biases not only influence how I gaze at my interviewees, but also the knowledge-production, and thus making the self-reflexive deliberation efforts as an epistemological driver.

For example my 'researcher habitus' as 'Norwegian-ness' is not only about appreciating that my ontological lens might make me disposed to detect particular things in the imparted narratives, but also why I think policy-researchers think and act as they do. This constitutes Maton's 'epistemic capital',¹⁰⁴⁴ which moves beyond

¹⁰⁴² I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Carina van de Wetering (University of Bristol, United Kingdom/Leiden University, the Netherlands), whom I interviewed these experts with, for the transcribed quotes. The quotes are used with her permission.

¹⁰⁴³ See Maton 2004, op.cit. 53, 57.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Reflecting the additional relationship to scrutinise, herein between the researched (objective) and the knowledge-claim (by the researcher) (see Maton 2004, op.cit. 53.)

the product of “objectifying objectification”, i.e. own social background, position in the intellectual field, and intellectual bias.¹⁰⁴⁵ I agree with Maton that aforesaid capital assists in further enhancing the epistemological potential of Bourdieu’s ‘epistemic reflexivity’.¹⁰⁴⁶ The relevance and application of this finding applies beyond the think tank environment – including any activities related to making social scientific claims. This outlook is pertinent to highlight if aiming to understand international relations also at the individual level where analysis of decision-makers should be taken into account due to the ‘objectification’ transpiring in their work integral to a multitude of different Bourdieusian ‘social fields’.

The following findings relate to the dynamics and the substantive spread of analysed narratives. The second key finding centres specifically on issues tied in with lack of understanding and learning between the U.S. and China. The policy-researchers identify a big gap in mutual understanding and thus a need for enhanced learning between the countries and peoples, especially when moving away from top-experts in government.¹⁰⁴⁷ Chapter Four (‘social field’) evinces its relevance – as understanding the sociological meso-level set-up of the field signals an important reminder about the contextual influence. This relates particularly to the more influential ‘field of powers’ (i.e. economy and media meta-fields) as a means to appreciate how agency (microindividual) and structure (macrostructural) are interfacing with the observable practice; for example superficial media coverage in relation to insufficient public awareness and enlightenment.¹⁰⁴⁸ In essence, this line

¹⁰⁴⁵ See Bourdieu 1990b, *The logic of practice*, op.cit; and Bourdieu 2000, *Pascalian mediations*, op.cit.

¹⁰⁴⁶ See Maton, ibid. 53.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, “Stability and Instability in Sino-US Relations: A Response to Yan Xuetong’s Superficial Friendship Theory”, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 4(1) (2011): 28.

¹⁰⁴⁸ I stress, this is not my opinion or drawing upon stereotyping or generalisations – but merely imparting (my perceptions of) viewpoints of policy-researchers themselves.

of inquiry further substantiates my argument in the foregoing chapter; that the limitations from relying on the bilateral trajectory,¹⁰⁴⁹ and the importance of meaning-construction.

Steven Balla (George Washington University) supports this notion by pointing out how the Chinese psyche further increases misunderstandings due to deep misconceptions about the ‘West’ is “out to get them” – a persuasive attitude in Chinese society and government whose ordeal to recover after 100 years of humiliation remain not well understood in the ‘West’. Balla points out the major disabling factor for achieving good understanding is the failure of the ‘West’ to read and understand Mandarin (018-R).¹⁰⁵⁰ The elevation of non-state levels further support findings in the previous chapter, as IR is predominantly ontologically focused on the state-to-state level.¹⁰⁵¹

The above facet of learning across levels interfaces with the proposed third key finding, i.e. national interest and multiplicity of identity. The narrative accounts signal the impressions of China’s national interest (*raison d’État*) to currently being forming, and subsequently highly intersubjective in nature – and thus not innately given or fixed. This was evident in answers which related to what type of power China wants to pursue and their search for identity and role to embody in the international system. Aspects such as identity-formation (and to some extent internal domestic variables) are hardly mentioned in regard to sensemaking of China’s

¹⁰⁴⁹ These type of key findings have a two-fold purpose; a finding in its own right in the present chapter, but also having the added value through its property of supporting (or otherwise) findings in previous chapters in this thesis – hence, in effect, increases the plausibility and internal validity of corresponding findings purported in other chapters.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Interview Steven Balla, Associate Professor of Political Science, Public Policy and Public Administration, and International Affairs (Elliott School of International Affairs, GWU), recording: 17.57 (018-R).

¹⁰⁵¹ See Waltz 1979, *Theory of International Politics*, op.cit.

behaviour and intentions. This contradicts two established theoretical bodies of literature in IR research.

One the one hand, realists' notions of a primary and inherent national interest cannot be assumed to be fully valid in light of the above.¹⁰⁵² For example, if 'national interest' is taken to be a representation of exercised power (such as 'influence' or 'control')¹⁰⁵³ – if the latter is not known, the very remit of the realist's inherent 'national interest' is weakened as an explanatory frame.¹⁰⁵⁴ Furthermore, the realist notion of approaching power chiefly as material resources is evidently less plausible – contemplating on the above narrative accounts. In fact, the narrative accounts grant more capital to other forms of conceptualisation of 'power'.¹⁰⁵⁵ If Morgenthau's notion of power-struggle is assumed as the ontological lens,¹⁰⁵⁶ then it can be argued that China's rise and trajectory (partly) transpires beyond the realist paradigmatic lens and thus not engaged with; as I have previously argued, as explanatory-frames, paradigms in IR ought not to be considered as one binary but multiple binaries depending on the different policy-areas – and that, for example, realist and constructivist paradigms should be thought of as diffusing with varying strengths depending on context/policy-areas.¹⁰⁵⁷ The realist-thinking is noticeable in many of the policy-researchers' narratives on the "China-thinking" in general as well as within American society. Barrett (Atlantic Council) is particularly highlighting

¹⁰⁵² I acknowledge that classical realists do not discard moral judgement, however, my argument here relates more to the innate nature of 'interests' per se for a nation.

¹⁰⁵³ See Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power", *Behavioral Science*, 2 (1957): 201-15.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Interviewee Douglas Paal (Carnegie) recently discusses the issue: 'Contradictions in China's Foreign Policy', 13 Dec, 2013 (Available: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/12/13/contradictions-in-china-s-foreign-policy/gw4w>).

¹⁰⁵⁵ See Stefano Guzzini, "The Use and Misuse of Power Analysis in International Theory", in Ronen Palan (ed.), *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories* (London: Routledge, 2000), 53-66.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Morgenthau [1948] 1960, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, op.cit.

¹⁰⁵⁷ David Guttormsen & Ben Jacoby, "Bridging a 'Gap'? Academia and the Realist – Constructivism Debate", op.cit.

Mearsheimer (029-Y)¹⁰⁵⁸ – where thinking would lean towards a zero-sum game where power would be distributed amongst Great Powers, hence China's rise becoming deadlock into the mirror-question “what, then, about American power”.¹⁰⁵⁹ Such an unhealthy approach is evident in much of American political and media discourse – as Levy (AEI) showcased;¹⁰⁶⁰ job gains for China is not necessarily at the direct expense of American job-losses.

On the other hand, the constructivist research programme in IR has assumed primacy to construction/ideas, thus inherently always proceeding structures/materiality.¹⁰⁶¹ Likewise, traditionally, the intentionality of constructivists (such as Adler and Wendt) has been to prioritise ontology over epistemology. However, the nature of the empirical data and the social constructionist outlook of the ethnographic research process, demonstrates how the above research philosophical conceptions, rather, are “two sides of the same coin”.¹⁰⁶² The conceptualising and thinking carried out by the policy-researchers represent where worldviews and the knowledge-production is dialectically materialising, and subsequently, unfolding. This method of understanding ‘reality’ of international relations would ultimately depend on the

¹⁰⁵⁸ Barrett, recording: 47.05. See Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979), op.cit., and Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

¹⁰⁵⁹ In fact, the above reflects recently proposed fruitful avenues for future research (see David A. Baldwin, “Power and International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons. 2nd Ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013): 273-297), such as forms of power, exercising power through institutions, how domestic politics influence ‘national power’, and distribution of Dahl's relational power.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Previous Chapter (see Interview Levy, recording: 09.18 min (007-G)).

¹⁰⁶¹ See S.J. Barkin, “Realist Constructivism and Realist-Constructivism,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 348-352; J.T. Checkel, “The constructivist turn in international relations theory,” *World Politics* 50 (1998): 324-348; R.N. Lebow, “Constructive Realism,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 346-348; J.B. Mattern, “Power in Realist-Constructivist Research,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 343-346; J. Sterling-Folker, “Realist-Constructivism and Morality,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 341-343; P. Jackson Thaddeus (ed.), “Bridging the Gap: Towards a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue,” *International Studies Review* 6 (2004): 337-352; P. Jackson Thaddeus & D.H. Nexon, “Constructivist Realism or Realist-Constructivism?,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 337-341; M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002) – for review texts of constructivist research in IR, as well as Guzzini and Leander (eds.), *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) for an evaluation of Wendt and social theory in IR.

¹⁰⁶² See Pouliot & Mérard, “Bourdieu's concept: Political sociology in international relations,” op.cit. 30.

surrounding political/policy-issues as well as contexts in a dialectical and relational manner.¹⁰⁶³ For example, materiality might at times prevail over ideas/immateriality; there are many ways to perceive the world, but not one where China has procured its first aircraft carrier, and another psychically distinct world, where they have not.¹⁰⁶⁴ Pacheco-Pardo argues that the U.S.-Sino relationship is one of, predominantly, cooperation; ‘materialistic terms seem incomplete’ and that ideas matter (for example, self-image being a driver for ‘interests’).¹⁰⁶⁵ Ikenberry further establishes that China remains a status-quo power not showing attempts of challenging the U.S. or the order in the international system.¹⁰⁶⁶ Indeed, the “real world” is being played out in the nexus of physicality and ideas.¹⁰⁶⁷

The fourth key finding relate to the empirically soundness and relevance for placing meaning-construction at the forefront of this inquiry – integral to social constructionism as the driver of knowledge-production – in order to obtained deeper and more contextualised understanding. Placing Waltz’ neorealist structural theory and the accompanying level-of-analysis debate to the side momentarily,¹⁰⁶⁸ I would argue that the narratives presented in this Chapter also shows the pertinence of the claims of some IR constructivists; that state-behaviour is determined by identity (as earlier stated, contextualisation is needed for allowing a peaceful co-existence

¹⁰⁶³ See Jutta Welses, “Constructing national interests,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 2(3) (1996): 275-318, for a critique of the realist notion of national interests.

¹⁰⁶⁴ See Kathrin Hille Aug 10 2011, ‘China’s first aircraft carrier takes to sea’, *Financial Times*. Available: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/6b20cdce-c300-11e0-8cc7-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1chVGGqPy>. Co-existence between materiality and construction ought to be unproblematic research philosophically, as the co-existence of realist ontology and constructionist epistemology is not a contradiction. There was a physical world (dinosaurs) before humans, but not a *social* world (see Crotty 2003, op.cit).

¹⁰⁶⁵ See Ramon Pacheco-Pardo, “Review article – Beyond Power Transition: Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century,” op.cit. p. 154-160. See Rudra Sil & Peter J. Katzenstein, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytical Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics* (Basingstoke: Routledge, 2010), 3, 93.

¹⁰⁶⁶ G. John Ikenberry, “The Liberal International Order and its Discontents,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38(3) (2010).

¹⁰⁶⁷ See Guttormsen & Jacoby (2011), op.cit. This intersectional point represents one of the social sciences’ achilles heels.

¹⁰⁶⁸ See Waltz 1979, *Theory of International Politics*, op.cit.

between realist and constructivist paradigmatic dialogues – depending on the event and context),¹⁰⁶⁹ and thus that behaviourism (from Social Psychology) and Behaviouralism (from Political Science) offer limited explanatory frames. Such a stance is especially evident when such identities have not been fully formed (in this case, China as the rising power).

However, I would argue that further expansion on the above constructivist thinking within IR is both warranted and needed. On the one hand, critiquing what I find to be a streak of structuralism in Klotz' and Lynch' perspective on IR constructivism:¹⁰⁷⁰ identity should not be considered as an isolated entity *guiding* behaviour – but rather performs in symbiosis (observable behaviour is part of identity too). From Cultural Anthropology, we should be reminded by Geertz' stance on the inseparable nature of Man, which I interface with the discussion of state-behaviour: “Man should be understood as a “summative upshot” of diffusing values, behaviour, biological, psychological processes, and social existence”.¹⁰⁷¹ The deterministic nature above (lack of macrostructural facets which is supposed to be present in the sociological meso-level set-up) could draw upon the discussion why Bourdieu’s ‘social fields’ are not fixed'.¹⁰⁷² Furthermore, to operate with static signs for observable and measureable behaviour (of the State) I argue becomes overly focused on *differences*

¹⁰⁶⁹ See Guttormsen & Jacoby 2011, op.cit; S.J. Barkin, “Realist Constructivism and Realist-Constructivisms,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 348-352; J.T. Checkel, “The constructivist turn in international relations theory,” *World Politics* 50 (1998): 324-348; R.N. Lebow, “Constructive Realism,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 346-348; J.B. Mattern, “Power in Realist-Constructivist Research,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 343-346; J. Sterling-Folker, “Realist-Constructivism and Morality,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 341-343; P. Jackson Thaddeus (ed.), “Bridging the Gap: Towards a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue,” *International Studies Review* 6 (2004): 337-352; P. Jackson Thaddeus & D.H. Nexon, “Constructivist Realism or Realist-Constructivism?,” *International Studies Review* (2004): 337-341.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Klotz & Lynch 2007, op.cit.

¹⁰⁷¹ Geertz 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, op.cit.

¹⁰⁷² It should here be recognised that Bourdieu's concept of 'social field' has been criticised for being deterministic in nature as well.

– what Barth referred to as “cultural stuff”¹⁰⁷³ – rather than viewing boundaries as “continuous inclusion and exclusion through socialisation and categorisation of differences”.¹⁰⁷⁴ Thus, the inquiry should focus on how relations between the different countries are performing and the Whys and Hows relating to boundary-markers during constructions of identities (“we” and “them”).¹⁰⁷⁵ The core of the above critique has an applied relevance, contemplating on Garrett’s (Atlantic Council) critique against attributing intentions without evidence.¹⁰⁷⁶

How “enemy-Othering” is exaggerated plausibly as a result of asymmetric and imbalanced understanding, is expressed by Deepa Ollapally (George Washington University):

(...) India has it good, because no one sees it as a threat in the West. But it is rising just like China, so what is the difference. Here I bring back identity. India is seen as a democratic, open society. China is seen as an authoritarian government with a government that has got its iron-grip. The idea of the democratic-peace theory is not entirely true but it helps India as it is rising (031-IJ).¹⁰⁷⁷

As Garrett boldly expressed: “easier to hate them [China]”, and also points out the dangers of self-prophecies: “treat it as enemy, and you create one. There are some benefits, if selling bombs you need a threat. This dynamics pushes the arms race. Hence, there are political forces on both sides” (025-Y).¹⁰⁷⁸ This also provides the

¹⁰⁷³ Barth 1971, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, op.cit. See David S. A. Guttormsen “Looking Forward by Looking Back: a Self/Other Perspective on Intercultural Expatriate Research,” in *Routledge Companion to Cross-Cultural Management*, eds. Nigel Holden et al. (Routledge: London, 2015).

¹⁰⁷⁴ See Lauring & Guttormsen 2010, op.cit.

¹⁰⁷⁵ See Bourdieu 2004, *Distinction*, op.cit; and Eugeen E. Roosens, *Creating ethnicity*, (London: Sage, 1989).

¹⁰⁷⁶ Garrett writes in the The New Atlanticist: “There is an all-too-common practice in Washington punditry of attributing strategic intentions to other countries without any apparent evidence” (Available: http://192.254.129.212/new_atlanticist/how-do-they-know).

¹⁰⁷⁷ Interview with Deepa Ollapally, Research Professor of International Affairs (Elliott School of International Affairs, GWU), recording: 47.56 (031-IJ).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Interview Banning (Atlantic Council), recording: 57.55 (025-Y).

opportunity for introducing a new, third concept:¹⁰⁷⁹ *reversed ‘deflective-Othering’*. This coined term extends ‘deflective Othering’ (the underlying process of a ‘deflecting meta-narrative’), in the sense of a meta-narrative is not only internalised by the majority (but applying to only a few) – but also transpires as a result of the (un)conscious purpose of upholding a desirable (American) Self which develops into some sort of ‘universal truth’ by the sheer volume of the populace. Particular non-desirable behaviours, consequently, are detached from the projected (and desirable) American Self. In concert, the above substantiates my argument, warranted by my empirical data, in regard to the work on Othering by Hansen and Campbell.¹⁰⁸⁰

6.4.2 Introducing the overarching ‘political ontological lens’ argument/thesis (as ‘deflective Other’): Bourdieu and exceptionalism

The overarching thesis identified for the present Chapter constitutes the fifth key finding. This overall argument/thesis is founded on established key findings and the discursive frame delineated from (my subjective interpretation of) the empirical data included in the investigatory scope of this particular Chapter. My sense-making is aided by the theoretical framework of the study (Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice), and I shall interlink the above with a particular facet of the ‘American exceptionalism’ theory. Furthermore, the overarching thesis encompasses the focal theoretical ideas integral to the theoretical framework (alongside Bourdieu) and findings in the preceding analysis chapters.

I am arguing that the primacy of political values, and thus prevalent in the “political lexis” and relayed narratives, in the “China-narratives”, plausibly constitute the

¹⁰⁷⁹ The first two were introduced in the foregoing Chapter Five; “twin-Other” and “deflective-narrative” (and deflective Other – derived from the latter).

¹⁰⁸⁰ See Hansen 2006, op.cit. 42, 46-51; and Campbell 1998, op.cit.

‘ontological lens’ within which ‘China’ is being “read” and from where ‘American-ness’ as Self is constructed through. This is evident, both in the policy-researchers’ own conceptualisations as well as when narrating and assessing beyond own personal opinions. This argument further underscores that this ‘political lens’ serves as the reference points in terms of the Otherness of China (boundary-markers through the process of Othering) are saliently *political* characteristics. As Nat Ahrens promulgates about what constitutes ‘America’:

(...) projection of values, beliefs that our value system is the only value system in the world, and should be pushed on other countries, there is some arrogance perceived about that. The other is intervention for commercial reasons. (020-T).¹⁰⁸¹

Feffer (IPS) finds the following particularly ‘American’ – which he relates to political values:

(...) well, we tend to think of all other countries as democracies in the making, you know, that is very American of us. And so, a country like China – China is now but fundamentally a democracy in making. All countries are democracies in making. In other words we have a theologically understanding where democracy is the endpoint in political evolution. Therefore questions where countries might backslide a little bit, but ultimately heading in that direction. We cannot allow for the possibility that the country is not heading in the direction of democracy, nor have a very different understanding of political order (...) and then the questions become which policies, either accelerate the country towards the goal we are thinking they are heading towards, or prevent/allow them to not head towards that goal. I think that is very American – the notion of progress. We are a progressive Institute (...) not peculiar to the Obama Administration, or conservatives, or China haters or nothing like that. I think they are, a certain set of assumptions we have as Americans when we look at other countries. (013-M).¹⁰⁸²

Frost (Peterson) further illuminates that some perceive China as non-transparent which becomes constructed as a binary to the American value-system – and also reflecting broader shared opinions amongst the policy-researchers themselves (in their narratives):

¹⁰⁸¹ Interview Nat Ahrens, 17 June 2011 (020-T) (recording: 23.25).

¹⁰⁸² Interview Feffer (IPS), recording: 01.01.46 (013-M).

(...) white papers every two year analysed in depth here enormously, not transparent by our measure – not systems, capabilities and intentions, secrecy, inner circle, and notion of accountability to the public lacks. We are simple people because we are open (...) what we say in private we say in public. We are one extreme on the transparency spectrum, a core value in the U.S., but traditionally not normal to be open in China. (001-A).¹⁰⁸³

China, as is the case with all other countries, does not have a political facet only. By deploying the ‘ontological political lens’ onto China, it somewhat denies agency to the holistic dynamism of that country, for example social aspects and to some extent internal variables within China’s domestic political sphere. Paal (Carnegie) identified the “lifted out of poverty story” as a forgotten narrative in relation to China, and that China’s rise pertinently was the same old story as with Japan in the 1980s (022-V).¹⁰⁸⁴ In my opinion, substantiating my argument, it is rather astonishing that gargantuan aspects such as nearly 130 million are considered as poor,¹⁰⁸⁵ and 800 million remain living in rural area (“out of sight, out of mind” – including a staggering 500 million who lives for less than \$2/£1.40 day according to the World Bank).¹⁰⁸⁶ I am not arguing that the above ‘deflective’ processes and Othering is unexpected or abnormal – reconnecting with self-reflexivity (of policy-researchers interviewed) and Bourdieu’s ‘social field’ – the ‘ontological political lens’ is a natural mechanism.

The above is the backdrop of my argument for deploying the concepts of a ‘deflective Other’. The Other (aka China) is being upheld in order to strengthen the (American) Self, herein political facets due to the binary relations with an “enemy-

¹⁰⁸³ Frost (Peterson), recording: 20 min.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Interview Douglas Paal, recording: 16.58 & 30.36 (022-V).

¹⁰⁸⁵ See ‘China’s poor: World-class poverty’, The Economist 2013. Available: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2013/02/chinas-poor>.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Mukul Devichand 2010, ‘Millions ‘left behind’ in rural China’, BBC Radio 4. Available: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/8668086.stm>.

Other”: for example, China being ‘red’ and ‘communist’ – whereas the U.S. is the beacon of ‘democracy’, ‘capitalism’, and ‘free market enterprise’. More focus on, let us say, social inadequacies in China would open up for more scrutiny on the same aspects in U.S. society. This might conflict and subsequently weaken the sensation of the desired American Self, and thus potentially devalue core aspects of that Self, for example American leadership of the ‘free world’. Ollapally suggests:

I think the U.S., in the past, has needed an enemy threat. That was the way in which the military state was able to get resources, an activist policy. During the Cold war, there was an activist policy. In order to get people along with it, you needed an enemy. So you inflate the threat and that is what you did. So conflating threats where there were no real core interests. How do you manage to do that: send troops and money! Beyond your means militarily, when you cannot show a clear threat to you. U.S. was good at that because of the anti-communist drive. (031-IJ).¹⁰⁸⁷

Dickson (GWU) also supports the notion of relics from the Cold War as a typical American search for an external threat:

(...) lost enemy in Cold War and had to find a new one (...) always people out there looking for rising threats, wanting to exaggerate threat of a country, but equal numbers who say not that simplistic. Policy towards China has reflected a threat or not to U.S. interest, structuralist realist position rising power inherently threat to status quo and incumbent power (030-GH).¹⁰⁸⁸

I am also arguing that this typical reading and key finding (‘ontological political lens’) is further substantiated and validated by contemplating on that bilateralism¹⁰⁸⁹ is by default a primarily *political* realm. These two facets of ‘American-ness’ are dialectic; the ‘political’ increases due to the tendency to think bilaterally, and the focus on the ‘bilateral’ increases because of principal focus on the ‘political’. I have phrased this as ‘ontological’ due to arguing that it is relating to how world-views are

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ollapally, recording: 42.50 (031-IJ).

¹⁰⁸⁸ Interview with Bruce Dickson (GWU), recording: 22.08 (030-GH).

¹⁰⁸⁹ In the preceding Chapter Five, I argued that the bilateral trajectory represented ‘American-ness’.

organised. Furthermore, it is *deflective* in terms of Othering as the interests and strategising for maintaining the “pure” or “good” (American) Self, indeed is entwined with a particular reading of China.

The above argument further exemplifies the relevance for operating with a dialectical and relational Self/Other constellation – and furthermore – the nuances between Otherness (boundary-markers) and Othering (process). Issues relating to mutual understanding become more convoluted when there is no opposite and equivalent boundary-marker (applicable to the other country), as articulated by Ollapally (GWU):

India and China see themselves as civilizational powers, not normal states. I think the U.S. sees them both as normal states. The U.S. does not really understand this notion of civilizational states. That is a common assumption about India and China. They are difficult to deal with, who are these guys: get off. These upstarts, who do they think they are. But in the region, you may not like it, but you do understand, in some sense, where these countries are coming from. It may be that over time the U.S. will understand this notion of civilizational power and the way the Chinese see themselves, the U.S. might have to adjust, but I doubt it, it is very difficult for countries who do not have the same sort of historical background to put themselves in the other countries’ shoes. (031-IJ).¹⁰⁹⁰

As already announced, I am arguing that the ‘ontological political lens’, as ‘American-ness’ constitutes a qualitative aspect of American exceptionalism – opposed to the quantitative outlook which was highlighted in Chapter Five; the sentiment that America (identity) is being quantifiably unique/exceptionally different, for example, in terms of comparable size of GDP and the military.¹⁰⁹¹ In the present Chapter, however, I am proposing that the ‘ontological political lens’ signifies the flipside of the coin; the notion of America (identity) is being

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ollapally (GWU), recording: 14.45 (031-IJ).

¹⁰⁹¹ See Buzan 2005, op.cit; Lepgold & McKeown 1995, op.cit. 369-84; Lipset 1996, op.cit; McCrisken 2002, op.cit.

unique/exceptionally different *and qualitatively better*. In effect, I am painting a conscious and unconscious, respectively, aspect of American exceptionalism, where the *political* reading, unconsciously, makes the performativity of ‘American-ness’ a normative one – in crude terms saying to other countries; “you ought to become what we are” – both in terms of end point, pace, and scope. In concert, this showcases why self-reflexivity, and thus Bourdieu’s epistemic outlook (and Maton’s extensions) is important; policy-researchers also need to investigate the relationships between themselves (and organisations) and their study subjects and themes, as well as scientific knowledge-claims and own intellectual biases.

Feffer concurs with relating the above normative aspect (‘American as the ultimate democracy’) as an epitome of ‘American-ness’:

(...) absolutely, absolutely and you know, we are suspicious of models which don’t look like ours, we speak [inaudible: negatively] of Italy for instance – we say that they practically don’t have a government, because so much changes in the parliament system there. But yes, we believe, I mean it cuts across not just politically but understanding of American economy as well, the way their economies should be (...) And culturally, there are expectations in American culture of being the ultimate achievement through globalisation of culture where other countries become more like the America whether it is they are eating McDonald’s, listening to our rock music – or their rock music sounding as ours, whatever it is, it is heading towards our system, and if pointing out that in many ways our system is deficient – that falls on death ears (...) naval gazing is similarly to what we do, we don’t think of us as that as we always look outwards, engaged in the world, active. But our exceptionalism does essentially make us parochial not perspectives. So few examples from outside this country that enrich ours. Mind you many do as immigrants [laughter], but they basically have to leave their country at the border when they come here: “yeah language but get rid of”. I’ll, give you an example in our legal system, perennial supreme court discussion, just to use a foreign law as an argument – not to follow that law – God forbid – only if another country does have this law and if we should think about that and the argument used when taking about a similar issue NO, very strong legal tradition here, cannot even use those foreign laws in our argument. That is telling about our refusal of other examples that might enrich us or push us in a better direction. (013-M).¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁹² Feffer, recording: 01.04.19.

It is at this juncture where I link Bourdieu’s social theory with the qualitative aspect of exceptionalism, which can be explained by Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tool” of ‘doxa’. My presupposition entails that policy-researchers are taking this ontological posture to the international system and what constitutes ‘American-ness’ as taken-for-granted knowledge as well as axiomatic norms and beliefs.¹⁰⁹³ Such stance harmonises with Dickson’s (GWU) modern version of unconscious exceptionalism: “most not thought it through, instinct notion. More evident outside than within the country [laughter]” (030-GH).¹⁰⁹⁴

6.5 Chapter conclusion

In this Chapter, four narrative-clusters served as the discursive frame. Five key findings were delineated through juxtaposing empirical data with relevant bodies of literatures, including Bourdieu’s ‘epistemic reflexivity’, understanding and learning imbalances relating to China’s rise, perspectives on ‘national interest’ and ‘power’ – traversing IR realist and constructivist paradigms, and the importance of meaning-construction. In addition, the overarching argument as the final key finding, related to how ‘China’ is being “read” through particular ontological ‘political lenses’. Collectively, the inquiry also showcases the relevance of culture, the dialectical and relational Self/Other constellation, as well as Bourdieu’s doxa. This ‘doxa’ (unconsciousness), I argue is the “mechanism” which enables making sense of the *qualitative* aspect of ‘American exceptionalism’: as a social construction, ‘American-ness’ is expressed, unconsciously, as what is deemed to be the “better country”. The present Chapter also has incorporated key findings and arguments

¹⁰⁹³ See Pouliot and Mérand 2013, op.cit. 30.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Dickson, recording: 44.00.

from the two foregoing analysis chapters, and also coined new terms derived from ‘deflective meta-narrative’, i.e. deflective Other and reversed deflective Othering.

As with the previous chapter, the current one ensues with highlighting the relevance of ethnographic research where primacy is given to the policy-researchers and their narratives, in addition to the explanatory-power of Bourdieu’s embedded “thinking-tools”. For example, the “bottom-up” approach discovered the ontological ‘political-lenses’, and the pertinence to include ‘*epistemic* reflexive’¹⁰⁹⁵ deliberation for both myself as the researcher as well as for policymakers.

This final paragraph concludes the analytical and empirical Section B. The remaining Conclusion chapter will briefly (due to each separate chapter containing a conclusion) reiterate the main elements of the thesis: main purpose and overarching research question, structure of the thesis and components, key findings, main contributions, main arguments, limitations, proposed future research avenues, and some last self-reflexive remarks concerning the undertaken journey of completing this study, metaphorically speaking.

¹⁰⁹⁵ My italicisation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Writing the final words for the Conclusion chapter does not only mark the end of the PhD thesis as a document, but also – contemplating on Bruno Latour’s notion of ‘movement within movement’¹⁰⁹⁶ – the experiences of being part of several metaphorical journeys coming to an end: for example personal development, intellectual challenges, socialisation into professional life within the academe, as well as the physical journey of travelling to the U.S. where I spent three exciting months in Washington, DC, and New York, NY. And from a Bourdieusian ‘epistemic reflexivity’ perspective – how do my ‘researcher habitus’ and ‘Norwegian-ness’ influence the research process and my analysis? The contents of this Conclusion reflect the above. As a chapter, I will focus on summarising the main components of the doctoral research project – rather than elaborating about the holistic enterprise of the study in its entirety. I argue that such an approach is justifiable due to each chapter has featured a conclusion section where linkages have been made between empirical data and main arguments as well as proposed contributions.

I have structured this Chapter into the following sub-sections: summarising of the scope of the study and the overarching research question, depicting the crux of the thesis chapters, listing key findings, elucidating main arguments and proposed contributions, highlighting limitations of the study and presenting fruitful avenues

¹⁰⁹⁶ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: University Press, 2005).

for future research, and finally, I shall offer some self-reflexive deliberative thoughts.

7.1 Scope of the study and research question

The study examines the role of culture, investigating how China policy-research experts in U.S. think tanks socially construct ‘American-ness’ through ‘China’ as the Other. Empirical data comprises in-depth interviews across 26 internationally leading think tanks. Data was collected as part of a multi-method, social constructionist embedded ethnographic research strategy, and analysed by utilising interpretive/ethnographic contents analysis conducted in an inductive, iterative, hermeneutical fashion. The transdisciplinary investigation utilises Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as the theoretical framework. The thesis argues that ‘American-ness’ is socially constructed and ought to be understood within a Self/Other dialectic; suggests the need for establishing a third ‘school of analysis’ in the think tank literature focusing on policy-researchers’ conceptualisations; and proposes that meaning and context-based explorations can profit from deploying Bourdieu’s conceptual “thinking tools”. Contributions include expanding the *Bourdiesuan* sociological ‘turn’ in IR research with new empirical data from the think tank realm, and providing an important perspective on a significant bilateral relationship (U.S.-Sino relations) and think tanks as a key player in U.S. Foreign Policy and Politics.

In my study, I have addressed the following overarching research question:

How and why are cultural and social boundaries of ‘American-ness(es)’ dialectically drawn by policy-research experts in China-related areas within U.S. think tanks through their social construction of narratives on ‘China’ as the Other?

7.2 Focal aspects of the chapters

In Chapter One (Introduction), the elements of the overarching research question were “unpacked”. The premise of the investigatory scope of the study, and the delimitation of the transdisciplinary social theoretical application, were signposted. The chapter emphasised the Bourdieu’s dialectical outlook relating to how policy-researchers socially construct ‘American-ness’ as *Self through China* as the cultural Other – as two inseparable social phenomena. To the best of my knowledge, the conducted research study is the first ethnographic study (drawing especially upon the aspects of the ‘cyclic’ research process as well as the social anthropological and social constructionist heritage related to this methodology) of a particular think tank community and of its policy-researchers regardless of geographical location and policy-area. With the added, principal, endeavours of deploying Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as the theoretical framework, I argue that the study offers both originality and novelty.

Chapter Two elaborated on the theoretical framework devised for this particular investigation. The framework merged, predominantly, traditional social anthropological approaches, such as a social constructionist embedded ethnographic methodology and meaning-based approaches to understanding ‘culture’ on the one hand – with Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (especially the conceptual “thinking-tools” of habitus, doxa, field, capital, interests and strategising) and sociological relationalism on the other. In addition, I have also engaged in self-reflexive interrogation by offering my own viewpoints as well as having questioned my own assumptions. Arguably, to achieve transparency and credibility during interpretive, qualitative research endeavours is likely to be enhanced when evaluating the role of

my own social background, social positions in the intellectual field of knowledge production, and intellectual biases.¹⁰⁹⁷

Chapter Three provided an explorative literature review. The first part surveyed the application of Bourdieu's social theory in IR research. This undertaking established the ongoing exploration of coupling Bourdieu's sociology of sociology with IR, via the *Bourdiesuan* ‘sociological turn’ in IR research – which is experiencing an expanding research focus and agenda within the discipline. The other part of the review related to the specific think literature – and secondary, the role of think tanks in U.S. Foreign Policy (specifically, towards China) and in IR research. When examining cross-overs in the literature, Medvetz' work on think tanks emerged as having a foothold in Bourdiesuan social theory.¹⁰⁹⁸ Thus, it made sense to juxtapose the present study with his lines of inquiries and findings. The review identified the relevance of applying Bourdieu's sociology of sociology as a methodological vocabulary – and consequently broadening the empirical contexts within the above-mentioned ‘turn’ (i.e. think tanks). Bourdieu's emphasis on relationalism also facilitated for proposing contributions beyond the IR discipline – as the conceptual “thinking tools” are often employed separately in the wider social sciences.¹⁰⁹⁹

Chapter Four serves as a bridge chapter between the three theory chapters and the three empirical ones. Think tanks and the China policy-research experts were construed as a Bourdiesuan ‘social field’, which offered opportunities for richer and

¹⁰⁹⁷ See Maton, “Reflexivity, Relationism and Research”, op.cit. 52; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, op.cit. 39.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See Medvetz 2012, op.cit.

¹⁰⁹⁹ See Schwartz 2008, op.cit.

contextualised explanations, partly due to incorporating impinging macrostructures as part of the sociological meso-level set-up of the current study.

In Chapter Five, the first part of “China-Narratives” relayed by the policy-researchers was presented, with a particular focus on the U.S.-Sino bilateral relationship. I organised the empirical data into cohesive clusters of narratives and proposed boundary-markers, which served as the discursive frame. By juxtaposing the narratives with subjectively selected relevant bodies of literature, I identified ten key findings, including an overarching argument linked to the lack of ‘internationality’, in addition to a *quantitative* facet of the theory of ‘American exceptionalism’.

Chapter Six presented additional narratives relating to China, but moving beyond the bilateral trajectory – and rather focusing on China’s motivations, intentions, and behaviours. I identified five additional key findings, including an overarching argument which addressed a *qualitative* facet of ‘American exceptionalism’.

7.2 Summary of key findings

Aligned with ‘cyclic’ research process integral to ethnographic research, I have identified the key findings as a result of interfacing data with subjectively selected, relevant bodies of literature in a “bottom-up” fashion. Thus, the key findings are also contributions in their own right – and I have established them in relation to the proposed main areas of contributions. Collectively, the key findings are related to empirical, conceptual, methodological, and theoretical forms of contributions.

Inspired by Bourdieu, I have also explored modifications of Bourdieu's own concepts – when warranted by the empirical data.

In chapter Four, the key findings expand on Medvetz' work by establishing a cross-over ‘social field’ with think tanks and China policy-researchers as the main actors and both featuring hybridity. The field is multi-directional, non-linear, and asymmetric constructed, and I identified multidimensionality due to the multitude of fields in both horizontal and vertical directions contemplating on Bourdieu’s hierarchy of fields. The most influential think tanks exercise ‘symbolic power’ due to the elevated importance of “consolidated capital”. In terms of ‘influence’ – central in the specific think tank literature – I proposed ‘positioning’ as a more relevant construct for comprehending think tanks’ and policy researchers’ abilities to exercise influence. The inquiry strengthened the proposal for establishing a ‘third ‘school of analyses’ in the above area. I also identified the need and relevance for grasping that Bourdieu’s capital has an ‘imaginary’ facet; actual capital versus *imagined* capital which is not in the possession of a policy-researcher or think tank, but rather *portrayed* as controlling such capital.

In Chapter Five, empirical data supported the relevance for incorporating self-reflexive interrogation, in order to become more aware of the influence of own subjectivity during the analysis process (and designing the research project in general). I argued that policy researchers tend to engage less with self-reflexive

thinking.¹¹⁰⁰ I found narratives to be performing in two layers, which is contrary to the mainstream approach for understanding the processes of comprehension, conceptualising, structuring, and analysing narratives; conceptual boundary-production reflects the motivation for uttering a particular *form* of narrative beyond the actual contents. Furthermore, a focus on boundary-markers of narratives moves beyond what “merely” is ‘different’. These markers are dictated by interests and strategies within the field – and subsequently become part of the identity construction (policy-researchers as individuals and think tanks at the organisational level). Moreover, this line of inquiry also illustrated the importance of appreciating the meaning-attribution to boundary-markers, and the varied strength, salience, and relationality between them.

I also identified a “post-Cold War” generation of policy-researchers, in their 30s and with more long-term exposure to China (its people and culture) and abilities to converse in Mandarin. This may have policy implications, as their more diverse backgrounds plausibly would influence the nature of their policy-advice and reactions against ‘China threat’ notions and interaction with the Chinese socio-political system.

In terms of bilateral relations, the narratives reflected a fairly unison and non-contradictory views on the relationship between the two countries. No credit is given to the notion of America in decline, and somewhat surprisingly, policy researchers are predominantly taking radical stance against IR realist power-balance theory. The

¹¹⁰⁰ Ann Cunliffe uses the notion of an ‘unquestioning culture’ (“Assessing Reflexivity in Professional Doctorate Practice and Research” (paper presented at a The Higher Education Academy event, University of Bedfordshire, Luton, 14 March, 2014)).

overarching argument related to lack of internationality, and that ‘American-ness’ is constructed through China principally from a bilateral perspective. I argue for a quantitative facet of American exceptionalism – as a theory which explains the argument of the dominant bilateral trajectory as the “ontological lens”.

When establishing key findings applicable to Chapter Six, I was building upon discoveries in previous chapters. The relevance of Bourdieu’s ‘epistemic reflexivity’ is strengthened, and I proposed expansion of such enterprise by also focusing on the relationship between the researched and the social scientific knowledge claim itself.¹¹⁰¹

I identified narratives concerning the lack of understanding between the two countries and their populations, as well as the evident role of meaning-attribution which operates in symbiosis with Bourdieu’s media, political, and economic ‘field of powers’. The narratives also assumed that a clear strategy have been developed by Beijing, and exhibited a somewhat lack in appreciating that China’s development trajectory does not necessarily correspond to conventional historical pathways (for example, having multiple identities, and not a fixed, innate, national-interest). In essence, the narratives take a critical stance with IR realist thinking within the above area – but also IR’s constructivists who assume the primacy of ideas/constructions over physicality/materiality/structure. I argued for a qualitative facet of American exceptionalism as an overarching argument, herein how China is being evaluated on a basis essentially restricted to those political values permeating the American political culture and society: an ontological “political lens” wherein the world is

¹¹⁰¹ In accordance with Maton 2003, op.cit. 52-65.

gazed though, as an element of ‘American-ness’ (normatively; how the world should evolve).

Across Chapters Five and Six, I developed new concepts relating to Othering. Specifically, in terms of “enemy-Othering”, I have made a case for expanding the frontier in this regard within IR research; traversing multiple countries and beyond the notion of a fixed, dichotomous Other – hence expanding on the work of Hansen and Campbell.¹¹⁰² I coined the term “twin-Other”, which relates to good/bad Othering beyond one/single country (for example India is good, China is bad) where behaviour is detached from that Other’s (aka Beijing’s) behaviour and reasoning, and thus justifying the Self. The ‘deflective meta-narrative’ entails the internalisation by the majority of a narrative which is actually only hold of the few. This results in the ‘deflective Other’, and the ‘deflecting Othering’ as the underlying process. ‘Reversed deflective-Othering’ extends the concept of ‘deflective Othering’, in this that the meta-narrative is upheld due to the pursuit of maintaining a desirable Self – in addition to that same narrative being internalised by the majority but applying to only a few.

7.3 Main arguments and proposed contributions

Proposed arguments and contributions are intertwined, and based on the various key findings across the analysis/empirical chapters – serving as evidence-based sources for formulating an argument, and subsequently claiming a contribution.

¹¹⁰² See Hansen 2006, op.cit. 42, 46-51; and Campbell 1998, op.cit.

As far as the overarching research question is concerned, the main argument consists of three elements. First, ‘American-ness’ is constituted through a Self/Other dialect, therefore, comprising multiple Selves, Othering, and boundary-markers as Otherness. Furthermore, the cultural influence plays an evident role, relating to how the boundaries and meaning-attributions are socially and culturally constructed. Second, ‘American-ness’ is a contested socially constructed phenomenon where some boundary-markers are shared whereas others are distinct for a particular produced conceptual boundary. Third, the contested nature of ‘American-ness’ depends on the think tank’s (including the individuals working within them) association on the domestic political and ideological spectrum in the U.S. (and/or other dynamisms). Subsequently, in essence, this is the basis for identity-formation, and can thus provide improved contextualised understanding of work-activities, positions and behaviour in the ‘field’, in addition to developed perspectives in the policy-area amongst policy-researchers and think tanks.

I argue that Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice is highly relevant for achieving deeper and richer understanding of social phenomena. Its application therefore enriches the conceptual and methodological vocabulary in IR research and achieves more rigorous meaning- and context-based studies. Culture plays a profound role in these processes. The study also facilitates for a more empirically sound exploration where the field-research informs the relevance for the various “thinking tools” through deploying Bourdieu’s social theory in conjunction with ethnography. The study elucidates the interplay and relationality between his various conceptual “thinking tools”, which is shown to be much underexplored – not only within IR but in the

wider social sciences in general.¹¹⁰³ Thus, the relational aspect of the present study contributes with a new empirical case of such application, which is relevant also beyond the IR discipline.

I am further arguing for the relevance of establishing a third ‘analytical school’ within the specific think tank literature, which makes conceptualisations of the *thinkers* (aka policy-research experts) its focal point. Moreover, in terms of think tanks in the IR literature, I argue that the study has the potential to widen the platform of non-state key players in the international system, including the organisational and individual levels (think tanks and think tank policy-researchers as individuals respectively). Similarly, positioning think tanks as non-state actors within the context of U.S.’ relations with China links the think tank literature with the constructivist research programme in IR. Furthermore, it also marries the perspectives of policy-researchers with U.S.-Sino relations – and in particularly U.S.’ foreign policies towards China. This has shown, from the policy-researchers’ perspectives, that the empirical soundness of IR’ realist embedded China-threat notions and power-balance theories, are assigned little credibility.

I find that the empirical data facilities for claiming the following contributions.¹¹⁰⁴ First, the study contributes with novel theoretical synthesis. Employing Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice, and additional social theory from Sociology and Social Anthropology, combines different bodies of literature in a rather unconventional way in IR research. It further explores the *Bourdieuian* sociological ‘turn’ in IR as well

¹¹⁰³ Swartz 2008, “Bringing Bourdieu’s master concepts into organizational analysis,” op.cit.

¹¹⁰⁴ I am here making use of Professor Matthew Watson’s (University of Warwick) ‘list of ten’ ways to make a contribution.

as increasing transdisciplinary IR research. Simultaneously, though, it facilitates for examining the relevance of the Bourdieu's social theory as method (theoretical framework). Synthesis is also made between the specific think tank and IR literatures as well as methodologically by employing in-depth field-research drawing upon ethnographic research traditions.

Second, the research has also elicited new primary data collection (in-depth interviews), which cannot be replicated due to changing contextuality and intersubjectivity. To the best of my knowledge, my research project is the first ethnographic study of think tanks and policy-research experts – and thus offers novelty. Third, the research endeavour also facilitates for developing propositions which can be investigated in future research ventures, interlinked with identified key findings (see below).

7.5 Limitations and future research

Every study comes with limitations and trade-offs in terms of its research design, or methodological or theoretical frameworks. The claims relating to 'American-ness' could have been strengthened if drawing upon comparative studies of policy researchers who work in other policy-areas. As an ethnography, my research endeavour is heavily depending on in-depth interviews – and more insights, observations, nuances, and contextualisation might have been captured if having observed interviewees over longer time within their organisations – and other arenas. As already discussed at length, my own cultural background might have made me more predisposed for noticing particular elements when collecting and analysing data, as well as developing and formulating findings.

In terms of fruitful future research avenues, some suggestions correspond with the above identified limitations – for example to replicate the study but within another policy context, such as the Middle East or universal health care, which could assist in contesting and expanding the notion of ‘American-ness’ further. Replication, and comparing, with think tanks in other countries regarding perceptions of China would be fruitful. Furthermore, the “Self-ness” and its boundary-markers could be compared – in the same vein that boundary-construction could be scrutinised in terms of how think tanks in different cultures construct their own identity, and exercise influence.

It would particularly be interesting to carry out a study of Chinese think tanks’ narratives on the U.S., and their responses to the established narratives identified in the present study. Other potential investigations could address the eschewed gender balance and knowledge-transfer between staff members and interns – especially across country borders (for example, overseas offices). The nature of funding (especially from private and corporate donors) would be worthwhile research for further examining possible influence on ‘independent advice’, which think tanks and policy-researchers often promulgate being a core capability and activity in their work. Furthermore, it would be interesting to interface the specific think tank literature with Strategic Management literature (for example, in relation to organisational and management aspects of think tanks).

7.6 Self-reflexive concluding remarks

In addition to learning from key components from the undertaken academic study, my experiences with conducting a self-reflexive deliberation throughout the thesis,

have made me more alert to why I have interpreted data in a particular way – including the knowledge-production linkages between policy-researchers and the scientific claims that I make about their analysis. This endeavour also, I find, is having a value for achieving personal development and research skills, as well as enticing to challenge “common-sense”, tacit boundaries, power in terms of definitions, politicisation, monopolisation of meaning-construction, and compartmentalised disciplinary boundaries, through transdisciplinary inquiry. To constantly questioning myself is healthy from a methodological point of view, but such efforts also tends to unveil further nuances in the data – which I argue rings true also beyond the academe and into the world of policy-making processes, policy-researchers knowledge-production, academics, as well as developing methodological curriculum in Higher Education.

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