

**CHINESE DECISION-MAKING IN RESPONSE TO
FOREIGN POLICY CRISES, 1949-1996:
A POLIHEURISTIC ANALYSIS**

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by
ENYU ZHANG

Dr. Patrick James and Dr. A. Cooper Drury, Dissertation Co-Supervisors

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

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FOREIGN POLICY CRISES, 1949-1996:
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presented by Enyu Zhang

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor A. Cooper Drury

Professor Patrick James

Professor Xinghe Wang

Professor Jonathan T. Krieckhaus

Professor L. Marvin Overby

To Mom and Dad

For their Endless Love and Inspiration

谨以此博士论文献给我最挚爱的父母

衷心感谢他们对我无尽的爱与启迪

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMC	Central Military Commission
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPC	Communist Party of China
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
GMD	Guomindang or Nationalist Party
KMT	Kuomintang or Nationalist Party
ICB	International Crisis Behavior
LEX	Lexicographic
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFTEC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation
NPC	National People's Congress
PC	Protracted Conflict
PH	Poliheuristic Theory
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	Politburo Standing Committee
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SO	Superpower Opponent
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Dr. Patrick James and Dr. A. Cooper Drury, Dissertation Co-Supervisors

ABSTRACT

China is seen widely as a distinctive power when dealing with international relations in general and foreign policy crises in particular. Given the concerns about whether the rise of China will be peaceful or belligerent, this dissertation aims to illuminate how Chinese decision-makers make key decisions in foreign policy crises and what lead to such decisions in a systematic and theoretically driven way. To achieve this goal, this dissertation tests the Poliheuristic Theory (PH), developed by Alex Mintz (1993, 2003a), which synthesizes the previously isolated psychological and rational theories of foreign policy decision-making.

The evidence from the structured, focused comparative analysis of the processes and outcomes of Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises, spanning from 1949 to 1996, clearly supports the core of PH in such a least-likely context. In a state as distinctive as China, crisis decision-making in the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is not significantly deviant from that in many other states; Chinese decision-makers also make policies against domestic politics. In non-democratic systems, foreign policy decision-makers do not necessarily seek for re-election; however, they tend to seek for legitimacy and public support. Chinese decision-makers put primacy on political

survivability at the onset of crisis decision-making. Their political survivability is closely associated with intra-CCP factional struggles, public legitimacy, and individual personalities. Following the initial elimination of politically unacceptable options, Chinese decision-makers do appear to switch to the compensatory rule of utility-maximizing to optimize the final choice with a comprehensive evaluation of the remaining options across all policy dimensions concerning national security.

All decision is a matter of compromise.

– Herbert A. Simon (1996)

[D]uring some confrontation of the future the destiny of mankind may depend upon the responses of a handful of leaders to the ambiguities, stresses, and dilemmas of an acute international crisis.

– Nomikos and North (1976)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

A POLIHEURISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE CRISIS DECISION-MAKING¹

The People's Republic of China (PRC) doubtlessly has made astonishing changes at all levels and in nearly all aspects over its course of more than five decades of existence. In the midst of the ups and downs of revolutions, political campaigns, economic reforms, and rapid growth since 1949, China now has emerged into a much better situation in terms of security environment than anytime before (Chen, 1993). The international, regional and domestic environments are all relatively peaceful and positive for China's further development. Remarkably, China has averaged a 9.4% of annual GDP growth since the opening up and economic reforms in 1978 (Zheng, 2005). China has surpassed the United Kingdom to become the fourth largest economy in the world. As the new engine of the "world factory," China has turned into a crucial exporter to many countries and regions around the globe. In addition, overall, Chinese people have enjoyed much wealthier lives than ever before; featuring, for instance, rapid growth in the ownership of mobile communication devices, Internet usage and automobiles. In the United Nations and other international organizations (e.g., the World Trade Organization, or WTO) and multilateral forums (e.g., Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC,

¹ This University of Missouri Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the use of human subject participants in this dissertation project (IRB Approval Project Number 1050676).

and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or SCO), China has gained growing clout in issues concerning world peace, prosperity and stability.

With the expansion of Chinese economy and national power, government officials and pundits from around the world are concerned about the future of China and its impact on the rest of the world. Indeed, the rise of China has attracted heated attention to the key issue: Will the rise of China be peaceful (and positive) or belligerent (and negative) to the world? From the US perspective, will China's rise pose any serious threat to the US national security and its strategic interests in East Asia? Bernstein and Munro (1997), Kaiser (2000), Ricks (2000), Rosecrance (2006), Lake (2006), among other scholars and political observers, all express strong concerns about the expansion and increasing importance of China in the international system from different perspectives. Bernstein and Munro are among the "China threat" school of thought, warning the US of an upcoming military conflict with China. Other scholars see this somewhat differently. For instance, Scobell (2000), Christensen (2001) and Kugler (2006), in their respective analyses, offer cautious predictions that China will not become a military threat to the US national security and strategic interests in East Asia in the coming 10-15 years. Moreover, echoed in Christensen (2001), Scobell (2000: 25) argues that a strong, centralized China is much easier to deal with than a weak, fragmented China that would pose more serious threats to the regional and global security.

By contrast, many scholars (most of them from China for apparent reasons) view China's rise as a peaceful (or at least unharmed) move that could be conducive to world peace and prosperity (e.g., Ruan, 2004; Yan, 2004; Zheng, 2005). Through government statements and scholarly articles, Beijing has reiterated and reassured that China would

never seek for regional (and global) hegemony and that the rise of China will be peaceful and mutually beneficial to other countries.

Still, many observers and analysts from overseas are seriously concerned about China's expansive appetite for energy supply and other natural resources. This is evident in the recent discussions in the western media (such as *Financial Times*) about Chinese leaders' unusually frequent high-profile contacts with African and Latin American countries that are rich in petroleum and mineral resources. In particular, China's expansive exchanges with a number of African countries stirred the criticism in the western media of China's "neocolonialism" in Africa.

The public perceptions of China, particularly in the US and China's neighboring countries, also send signals of concerns about China's potential threat. In Table 1-1, the most recent Gallup poll data on Americans' views concerning the rise of China show that although slightly more Americans hold positive opinion (48%), nearly half of Americans (46%) perceive China's economic growth as negative development for the US. More Americans perceive China as an economic threat (64%) than as a military threat (50%). Clearly, the number of people who indicated negative perceptions in regards to both the economic and military threats of China surpasses the number of people who held positive views.

Chinese foreign policy features a broad scope and complicated themes. Most notably, among other things, China is seen widely as a distinctive power when dealing with international relations in general and foreign policy crises in particular. This distinctive feature reflects many aspects of Chinese politics, from the political institutions and development strategy to the communist ideology, traditions, political culture and

strategic thinking. For these reasons, Chinese foreign policy and decision-making remain nearly mythical in spite of many scholarly attempts to unveil it.

In this context, the present project is intended to provide insights about Chinese decision-making in response to major crises with other countries. The research questions of this dissertation project are: How do Chinese leaders make decisions in response to foreign policy crises? Why do they make such choices? As will become more apparent, these queries possess practical and theoretical significance, given the rising status of China as a world power. The present study seeks to make substantive and theoretical contributions in the following areas: (1) to strengthen theoretical relevance of Chinese foreign policy-making and (2) to empirically test the Poliheuristic Theory (PH) of foreign policy decision-making in a distinctive Chinese context. The study aims to illuminate Chinese decision-making, particularly in the handling of foreign policy crises.

Specifically, this project uses PH, developed by Mintz (1993, 2003a), which incorporates both psychological and rational choice components in a synthesis of these previously isolated approaches, to explain decision-making in Chinese foreign policy crises. In the existing literature of foreign policy decision-making, PH has not yet been applied to the Chinese context to test its validity. Testing PH in a hard (least likely) case, such as China, would further strengthen the empirical validity of the theory. Taken from the authoritative compilation of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project, nine foreign policy crises (with available data) in which China is a crisis actor span the period from 1949 to 1996. A structured, focused comparative analysis of Chinese decision-making in times of crisis is used to test two primary hypotheses derived from PH.

The two primary hypotheses focus on how decisions are anticipated to occur over two stages of the decision-making process: During Stage I, decision-makers tend to rely on the noncompensatory rule, which places primacy on political considerations, to determine viable options and at the same time eliminate politically unacceptable options; during Stage II, decision-makers tend to make the final choice based on considerations along more diversified policy dimensions in line with rational calculations such as expected utility-maximization. In the following chapters, it will be argued that PH is a useful theory to facilitate better understanding of Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises because it allows for a comprehensive look at the process *and* outcome of decision-making. Moreover, some of the essential features in crisis settings, including protracted conflict and superpower opponent, are scrutinized to see whether any consistent patterns associate these attributes with the decision-making process.

The vast body of research on Chinese foreign policy is especially limited in the area of foreign policy decision-making. Part of the obstacle lies with the secretive tradition of Chinese policy-making, particularly in decisions directly concerning national security. Scholars from the outside, as a result, have a hard time obtaining reliable sources to unveil the decision-making process. Another reason for the limitations has to do with the gap between Chinese studies as an area study and social sciences in general. As an area study, studies of Chinese foreign policy are less theory-laden but more fact-based analyses. From the perspective of modern social sciences, this poses a disadvantage that calls for theoretically driven improvement. While the approaches to Chinese foreign policy decision-making are diversified, there is a lack of synthesis of these different approaches. Related to this, as will be explained in detail in Chapter 2,

there is a lack of an integrated macro-micro analysis of Chinese foreign policy-making. Many existing studies still emphasize single case studies featuring traditional descriptive analysis, which shed little light on the systemic understanding of Chinese decision-making. Therefore, the present investigation attempts to fill the gap in this regard by incorporating one of the most prominent theories of foreign policy decision-making with a structured, focused comparative analysis of Chinese foreign policy crises. This would illuminate how Chinese leaders make key decisions in crises and what lead to such decisions in a systematic and more theoretically driven way.

More broadly speaking, the present study contributes to further understanding of both *outcome* and *process* of foreign policy decision-making during crises and the dynamics of these decisions with the other parties involved in the crises. In international relations, leaders' decisions are extremely important to policy choice and its effect. Human history tells the importance of foreign policy decisions. This is particularly true in crises between/among states; ill handling of the crises by either/both side(s) could risk escalation of the crises to militarized disputes and even interstate wars. The appeasement of Adolf Hitler's Germany by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's administration in the late 1930s, one of the most well-known foreign policy failures, served as part of the direct causes of Germany's aggressive expansion in Europe, which led to the outbreak of World War II. Another case in point is the decision in favor of a blockade by John F. Kennedy's administration during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which saved the US and the USSR from a disastrous nuclear war. Richard Nixon and Mao Zedong's decisions to normalize the relations between the US and China fundamentally changed the balance of power in Asia at the peak of the Cold War. These decisions not

only proved to be critical to the parties involved in the crises; they also played a crucial role in shaping the structure and power distribution of international politics. Intrigued by the myths of foreign policy decisions in crisis, this dissertation focuses on foreign policy decision-making and its implications.

In the growing literature of PH, the theory has yet to be explicitly applied to Chinese decision-making. While PH is developed as a generalizable, social-science-type of theory, most of the empirical studies based on PH focus on decision-making in the US, among other advanced industrial democracies. This problem exists mostly because of the understandable difficulty in obtaining reliable sources in other underdeveloped or non-democratic countries. However, it is desirable to continue to make efforts in contributing PH-based empirical studies. The present study represents a step toward this direction.

This project bears both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study tests the external validity of PH in non-democratic countries, which has been evaluated so far in a primarily US context. Moreover, general, but falsifiable, hypotheses are proposed so that relatively rigorous testing is possible. The case analysis also leads to further discussions that link crisis decision-making with protracted conflict and superpower opponent.

Empirical study of Chinese decision-making in response to crises bears practical significance. Structured comparative analysis is most useful in untangling the key considerations of Chinese leaders who faced the past major crises. It allows further understanding of Chinese strategic thinking and political culture. Linkage between political culture and rational thinking based on national power, balance of power and strategic interactions would offer a fresh look at Chinese foreign policy. Such analysis

also links Chinese foreign policy study with Chinese domestic politics. This sets the foundation for forecasting current or future Chinese foreign policy choices. Furthermore, analysis of past Chinese foreign policy crises helps understand, assess and forecast Chinese foreign policy choices in future crises, which are likely to occur in the context of a heightened perception of threat on the US side and China's growing craving, not only for more natural resources to support its sustaining development, but also greater power status in the world. As an example, Taiwan still poses a likely spark point for more crises between China and the US, although Hu Jintao, the fourth generation leadership of China, has made substantial efforts to ease the tensions with Taiwan.²

The dissertation is composed of the following chapters. The present chapter serves as the introduction, including general descriptions of the research questions, the theoretical foundation, the methodology, and the theoretical and empirical implications of this study.

Chapter 2 follows with an investigation of existing studies on Chinese foreign policy through the significant but gradual transformation in Chinese politics since 1949, from Mao's personality cult and ideological mass campaigns in policy-making to the blend of pragmatism, nationalism, bureaucratic authoritarianism, and strategic thinking during Deng's and Jiang's eras. The transformation has had crucial implications on policy-making, particularly Chinese foreign policy-making. The various elements contributing to the nature of Chinese foreign policy-making all combine to emphasize the

² Most notable of these efforts included Beijing's high-profile, widely broadcast welcomes to the opposition party leaders from Taiwan, including the KMT's Lian Zhan (or Lien Zhan) and James Soong, during the multiple visits to the mainland since 2005.

fundamental importance of domestic politics in foreign affairs. Moreover, individuals, on the basis of factionalism, play crucial roles in Chinese decision-making.

Several specific issues exist in the studies of Chinese foreign policy: (1) little theoretical and/or empirically rigorous progress has been achieved as compared to studies on Chinese domestic politics; (2) the dilemma still exists that policy-making relies on party unity that has co-existed with factional politics (Huang, 2000); and (3) there is a lack of any theoretical framework that is able to capture the whole picture, explaining both the process (how) and outcome (why) of Chinese foreign policy-making.

I devote Chapter 3 to a thorough review of the PH literature in different domains of decision-making, along with a presentation of the primary and secondary hypotheses. The PH propositions derive from the discussion of rationality, which leads to further analysis of the false dichotomy between the cognitive and rational approaches. PH bridges the gap between the two approaches by contending that foreign policy decision-making takes place in two stages, which explains why neither cognitive nor rational approaches have had much success in providing a complete picture. As an option to the expected utility theory and other rational decision models (Mintz, 2004a), PH deserves further application to foreign policy decision-making, especially in areas that have been studied in more strictly traditional, descriptive ways. The primary hypotheses deal with the two stages of decision-making while the secondary hypotheses explore the linkages between decision-making and some of the key attributes of foreign policy crises – specifically, protracted conflict and superpower opponent. This represents another substantive contribution to the literature of crisis decision-making.

Chapter 4 introduces the structured, focused comparison used as the primary method for this study, presents the Chinese foreign policy crises identified in the ICB data set and elaborates the coding procedures for the crises. The design of the structured, focused comparative analysis follows George's (1979) four steps: (1) defining the variables; (2) selecting the cases; (3) formulating the questionnaire; and (4) collecting the data with the emphasis of inter-coder reliability. These are critical procedures to ensure the *structured* and *focused* nature of the comparative study. In spite of some limitations and practical difficulties during data collection, the research design as a whole is valid and useful to test PH and the related hypotheses.

Chapter 5 tests the two primary hypotheses, along with the two secondary hypotheses, in the context of crisis decision-making of Chinese leadership.³ Overall, the results for the primary hypotheses find strong empirical support. In the Chinese context, political leaders' decision-making suggests that their political survival is closely associated with intra-Party factional struggles, public legitimacy and individual leaders' personalities. In terms of the decision-making process, during the initial screening of all the available options, decision-makers tend to keep the options that they anticipate will do little political harm to themselves and throw away those they anticipate might be harmful politically. The evidence from Chinese crisis decision-making in this study clearly supports the core of PH.

Chapter 6 concludes with a balanced effort to evaluate the research design and results. More importantly, it highlights the theoretical and empirical significance of this

³ Given the limited number of cases that can be used to test the two secondary hypotheses, the testing of the linkages of the decision-making process with protracted conflict and superpower actor, respectively, is tentative in the present study.

study in the field of foreign policy analysis (FPA), in general, and Chinese foreign policy, in particular.

Table 1-1: Gallup Poll on Americans' Perceptions of China

Do you think the growth of China as a major economy is a positive or a negative development for the United States?

Positive development	Negative development	No opinion
48%	46%	6%

Do you consider China to be a military threat to the United States, or not?

Yes, a threat	No, not a threat	No opinion
50%	48%	2%

Do you consider China to be an economic threat to the United States, or not?

Yes, a threat	No, not a threat	No opinion
64%	33%	3%

Source: *China*, Gallup Poll News Service, conducted on December 9-11, 2005, released on February 16, 2006 at www.gallup.com.

CHAPTER TWO

OPENING THE BLACK BOX:

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING

Mao Zedong enabled Chinese to stand tall;
Deng Xiaoping let the people get rich;
the third generation leadership, with Jiang Zemin at its core,
will enable China to become a strong country.

– Zhang Wannian (1997)⁴

The PRC *is* a distinctive actor in international relations (e.g., Solomon, 1999). Henry A. Kissinger (1999), well known as the man who quietly opened the door to normal relations with the PRC in 1971, describes in various places in his memoirs the strikingly different ways of diplomacy and negotiation by his Chinese counterparts. During the Cold War, the PRC is the only state in the world that not only allied with, but also had direct military confrontations against, both the US and the USSR. China's strategic changes in its alliance policy during the bipolar confrontation played a key role in the balance of power and alliance formed between the Western capitalist camp and the Soviet communist camp. China's permanent membership in the UN Security Council

⁴ Cited in Lam (1999: 210) and Scobell (2000: 1). Zhang Wannian, one of the top People's Liberation Army (PLA) hawkish leaders, is Vice President of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Military Commission (CMC). Zhang, among other protégés of Jiang Zemin, led the missile tests off Taiwan in 1995-1996. One of his well-known quotes is, "Any form of 'Taiwan Independence' is absolutely unacceptable."

and recent accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), among its extensive participation in international and regional organizations, also mark its compliance with the international norms and regimes and growing influence at the global level.

Since opening up and reforming its economy in 1978, China has enjoyed, more than ever before, a rapidly growing economy in a peaceful environment with an ascending status in the world. As many observers have started to observe, the country, with so much potential, is on course for reinstating its great power status in history. This position had been lost with the rise of, and interventions by, the Western powers since the 1840s. Meanwhile, Beijing has had to walk a fine line to maintain good relations with the major powers (e.g., the US, the EU, Russia, etc.) and its Asia-Pacific neighbors (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, the two Koreas, India, Vietnam, etc.). A brief reflection on the rapid ascent of Germany a century ago and the disaster that followed with World War I is enough to establish that point.

For the reasons mentioned above, along with its reputation as a state about which little is known in terms of foreign policy-making, China becomes a priority for application of PH. This chapter attempts to review and synthesize the theoretical approaches and empirical studies on Chinese decision-making in nine foreign policy crises. Several important issues are addressed: Who is the decision-maker in a given foreign policy crisis? What are the primary considerations that seem to be given serious attention and discussion prior to the initial response to a crisis? Are there major disagreements among the top decision-makers or factions about the final policy choice? How can we tell the process by which the decision is made?

Chinese foreign policy is particularly challenging to study not only because of the sheer size and long history of the country, but also given the complex range of relevant factors at the domestic and international levels.⁵ The limited space here only allows for a discussion on aspects with direct impact on Chinese leaders' decision-making in foreign affairs rather than a comprehensive review of the literature of Chinese foreign policy.

2.1. Chinese Foreign Policy – Toward an Integrated Understanding of Macro and Micro Factors

Concurrent with the historical course of the PRC, Chinese foreign policy features four major periods: (1) between 1949 and 1976, when Mao Zedong⁶ was the paramount leader, policies were mostly driven by ideology, revolution and class struggles; (2) between 1976 and the mid-1990s, when Deng Xiaoping was the paramount leader, the focus changed to economic reforms, opening up to other countries, national unification and world peace;⁷ (3) between the mid-1990s and 2004, when Jiang Zemin was the third-generation predominant leader, the emphasis shifted to deepening economic reforms and being a responsible member of the international community; and (4) since 2004, when Hu Jintao took the fourth-generation leadership, China is moving toward a peaceful ascent in

⁵ Like many other countries, China has had difficulty articulating its foreign policy on the international front.

⁶ The primary Romanization system used in this dissertation for Chinese characters is *Hanyu Pinyin*, which is commonly practiced in the PRC. Wade-Giles Romanization is commonly used in Taiwan, for instance, Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Chiang Kai-shek, Kuomintang (KMT), Lee Teng-hui, which are equivalent to Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Jiang Jieshi, Guomindang (GMD), Li Denghui, respectively.

⁷ Although he officially retired from the Chinese political stage in 1989, Deng Xiaoping remained the paramount leader, as many observers and pundits believe, from behind the scenes until his health severely deteriorated in the mid-1990s.

the international scene.⁸ The leadership transitions show that Chinese authoritarianism has grown from individual-centered instability toward a combination of continued focus on the predominant leader combined with institutional development.

By and large, the vast literature produced in China and the West on Chinese foreign policy can be categorized into two types – the macro approach and the micro approach. The macro approach, or the international-system-centered approach, treats the state as a ‘black box’ and assumes that Chinese foreign behavior follows the logic of national interests defined in *realpolitik* terms on national security, power and alliance (Zhao, 2004: 4). Proponents of this approach primarily look at Beijing’s view of the nature and structure of the international system, balance of power, alliance formation and strategic interactions with other actors in the international system. The micro, or state-centered, approach looks internally at China’s cultural and institutional influences on its foreign policy behavior (Zhao, 2004). Furthermore, this approach studies individual leaders’ idiosyncratic and cognitive characteristics, factional struggles among leaders (Nathan, 1973; MacFarquhar, 1974; Huang, 2000) and their implications for Chinese foreign policy decisions. Specifically, according to the state-centered perspective, Chinese foreign policy is mostly driven and characterized by communist ideology (Chen, 2001), nationalism (Shen, 2004; Zhao, 2004; Chen, 2005), pragmatism (Zhao, 2004), individual idiosyncrasy (Chen, 2001), factionalism (Pye, 1968; Solomon, 1999; Huang, 2000), civil-military relations (Cheng, 1966; Gittings, 1967; Joffe, 1967; Whitson, 1973; Godwin, 1976, 1978; Perlmutter and LeoGrande, 1982; Paltiel, 1995; Swaine, 1998),

⁸ Since coverage of foreign policy crises in this study ranges from Mao Zedong’s era to Deng Xiaoping’s and later to Jiang Zemin’s, the most recent Chinese leadership under Hu Jintao is beyond the scope of this project and therefore not discussed here. The implications of this project for the contemporary era under Hu’s leadership will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

strategic culture (Zhao, 2004)⁹, military thinking (Zhang and Yao, 2004), and bureaucratic politics (Lampton, 1987; Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988). Although shaped and heavily influenced by these factors, there is little consensus on which among these have the most significant effects.

In the last decade, a sustained theoretical trend in studies of Chinese foreign policy aims to link elements at the micro and macro levels (e.g. Robinson and Shambough, 1994; Zhao, 1996). This new approach attempts to integrate micro-level variables (e.g., individual characteristics, cognitive constraints and domestic political and socioeconomic contexts) with macro-level variables (e.g., international dynamics). The trend in research effectively responds to the need for more comprehensive efforts to interpret Chinese foreign policy behavior. Specifically, the macro-micro linkage incorporates system-level factors and constraints, dynamics within the domestic society, individual/collective decision-makers' policy preferences as well as the interactions of all these elements (Zhao, 1996). For instance, Zhao's analysis offers an insightful integration of social science and traditional area studies by looking into Chinese foreign policy with a theoretical model that combines both macro and micro variables. Zhao's theoretical framework appears powerful; however, his substantive analysis is weak and at places inadequate to solve some important puzzles concerning Chinese foreign policy (Hao, 1998). Moreover, his analysis starts from 1978, which falls short of offering a comprehensive explanation of Chinese foreign policy since 1949. It is difficult to tell whether his macro-micro integration is applicable and useful to Chinese foreign policy

⁹ The debate on China's strategic culture has shifted its focus from how China has different philosophical views on the moral and weaponry factors in conflict and war to "how to define China's national interests and how to reconcile the long-term and short-term interests of China." (Zhao, 2004: 10).

behavior prior to 1978.

Furthermore, systematic analysis of Chinese foreign policy decision-making, whether in international relations or Sinology, so far has achieved limited success, at least when compared to the study of Chinese domestic politics (Bobrow, Chan and Kringen, 1977: 27; Harding, 1994; Zhao, 1996: 7-8; Yang, 2002). In terms of quantity, studies specifically focusing on Chinese foreign policy take only a small proportion of all of the literature on Chinese politics. In terms of quality, the study of Chinese foreign policy is greatly constrained because of limited, unsystematic access to government archives and reliability of available sources. In addition, within academia in China, behavioralism and empiricism are still in their infancy; data collection and statistical skills used in international relations are underdeveloped as compared to the level of sophistication in the West.

Underdevelopment in Chinese foreign policy studies, if looked at from a different perspective, is understandable. To a certain degree, it is a reflection that foreign policy is never the top priority for Chinese leaders; instead, they have been preoccupied with domestic politics. To Beijing, foreign policy always is a means serving the ends of domestic politics.¹⁰ At the time of writing (April 19, 2006), Hu Jintao is visiting Seattle before going to the White House to meet with George W. Bush. Lanxin Xiang, in his commentary in the *Washington Post* a few days earlier, argues that it is impossible to understand Chinese foreign policy as something independent from its domestic politics:

Chinese leaders never separate the domestic from the external. When Mao Zedong met Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in 1972, Nixon made a somewhat flattering remark: “You have changed the world.” Nixon, of course, was referring to the Cold War bipolar system. But

¹⁰ The literature in FPA suggests that this holds true for other states.

Mao's answer reflected a different view. "No, I did not change the world, only the downtown or perhaps suburban Beijing." He was thinking of domestic politics, lamenting that his Cultural Revolution, as brutal as it was, failed to change the Chinese way of life.¹¹

2.2. Political Transformations and Chinese Foreign Policy

Communist ideology, i.e., Marxism-Leninism, has had significant influence on contemporary Chinese politics. Arguably, the most far-reaching impact is the party-state structure that still firmly controls the society, although, in some areas, there are sporadic flashes of change (e.g., the so-called grassroots democracy that allows local-level primary elections).¹² In addition to the ideology from the outside, Chinese leaders have developed their own. Mao Zedong Thought, or Maoism, adds elements that fit the Chinese context and, therefore, are recognized with a status equivalent to that of Marxism-Leninism.¹³

Apparently, in the aftermath of Mao's death and the disastrous Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping became the *de facto* second predominant leader in China, although he never held any formal top leadership titles such as head of state or head of government. Deng and his followers took a sharp turn by downgrading Mao's personality cult (*geren chongbai*) and ideological mass campaigns and adopted a flexible

¹¹ Xiang, Lanxin (April 16, 2006) "Why Washington Can't Speak Chinese," *Washington Post*. Lanxin Xiang is director of the China Center at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

¹² Grassroots democracy has evolved in China for a decade or so. Most of such local primary elections occur in village committee elections and the elections for the delegates to the local People's Congress (Shi, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). These phenomena certainly are encouraging signs that suggest China will move toward a democratic country. In the meantime, a sober second look reveals that the fundamental political structure remains the same, i.e., the CCP still controls many aspects of the society supported by a more open and free economy. In addition, even the 'democratic' elections are more or less under heavy influence of the CCP.

¹³ The CCP seems to prefer the term 'Mao Zedong Thought' to 'Maoism' in nearly all of its foreign-language publications except for use in a pejorative sense.

approach with a blend of significant ingredients – pragmatism, nationalism, bureaucratic authoritarianism and Chinese traditions. The blend of these ‘-isms’, along with traditions, has fundamentally transformed the social and political system as well as policy-making in China.

Pragmatism in Deng’s policy freed people’s minds so that Chinese economy and development could expand. Deng Xiaoping Theory highlights the idea of building a socialist society with Chinese characteristics (Deng, 1993). Deng’s most frequently quoted remark about his pragmatism is: “It doesn’t matter if it is a black or white cat as long as it can catch rats” (Zhao, 2004: 72). Moreover, Deng’s pragmatism went beyond the economic sphere. Chinese foreign policy under his leadership also turned pragmatic and flexible (Zhao, 2004). In the spirit of pragmatism, China has further opened its domestic market to foreign competition and embraced international norms and institutions.¹⁴ Such fundamental transformation did not occur randomly; instead, it was a well-thought out strategy to maintain the CCP legitimacy in China (Hamrin and Zhao, 1995; Zhao, 2004).

While still following the pragmatic principle after Deng’s death, it is notable that both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have tried to re-emphasize *dangxing*, or the CCP values, in their respective ideological campaigns centering on their own theories or ‘thoughts’. Jiang Zemin raised the theory of the “Three Represents” at the 16th CPC National Congress, which was enshrined in the newly amended Constitution as one of the ruling

¹⁴ For instance, since December 2001, China has been a formal member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

theories.¹⁵ Again, these campaigns were meant to serve the purpose of strengthening the Party's legitimacy in an era in which socialism and communism are no longer something in which many people truly believe. Jiang's new ideas, however, have not affected the pragmatic policy and China's rapid growth into an increasingly capitalist society with more prosperity (at least, in urban areas).

Since the late 1980s and 1990s, Chinese nationalism has arisen and obtained support from all levels, from the government to mainstream intellectuals and the general public, amid declining faith in the practice of communism. Thus, causing the legitimacy of the CCP to face a looming crisis, although the state still upholds Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as the official ideology (Hamrin and Zhao, 1995; Zhao, 2004; Chen, 2005). To the party-state, nationalism has turned out to be an effective instrument of unity by connecting the party-state and the masses, and, in particular, strengthening the CCP leadership in China by (1) linking the communist regime with Chinese traditions and history as a fresh driving force to renew the CCP's legitimacy; (2) explicitly resisting adopting Western-style democratic institutions to maintain political stability;¹⁶ (3) defending China's national interests (e.g., accession to the WTO) and territorial integrity (e.g., Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang); and (4) promoting China's national image (e.g., hosting the Olympic Games) and national unity among the Han and other ethnic minorities (Zhao, 2004). To intellectuals and the general public, given the vivid memory

¹⁵ The "Three Represents" refer to the theory that "the Party must always represent the requirements of the development of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China." (Jiang Zemin's speech at the 16th CPC National Congress)

¹⁶ For instance, on September 16, 2004, Hu Jintao in a nationwide televised speech said, "History indicates that indiscriminately copying Western political systems is a blind alley for China." He argued that the single-party state would be capable of fighting 'power abuse and corruption' by policing the CCP itself better.

of invasions and humiliation since the latter half of the 19th century by the Western powers (including Japan), nationalism and patriotism are sentiments that facilitate resistance toward the pressure from the outside (mainly the West) for any involuntary change. Many Chinese, regardless of their status as political elites or ordinary citizens, are loathe to be forced to change (e.g., adopting any kind of reform); they are only willing to change on their own terms.¹⁷ This is one of the main reasons why many Chinese people still recognize Mao as a ‘national hero’ and one of the greatest leaders; not necessarily because they truly believe his thought and doctrine but mainly because it was Mao who led China to stand up against those “*yang guizi*,” or “foreign devils.”¹⁸

Chinese nationalism and patriotism have proven to be particularly effective instruments for the government in situations of confrontation and hostility against foreign countries. For example, in Taiwan Strait IV (1995-1996), many nationalists – not Kuomintang (KMT), or the Nationalists¹⁹ – in the mainland openly proposed to take back Taiwan by whatever means, even with the use of force, which would run the risk of having a direct military confrontation with Taiwan and the US.²⁰ Two recent cases in point include the large-scale protests in Beijing and Chengdu against the US bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in May 1999 and similar large-scale anti-Japanese

¹⁷ Among many Chinese scholars, there seems to be a deep-rooted suspicion of the Western conspiracy that is designed to break up China and stall its economic development (e.g., Shi Zhong, 1994; Wang Jisi, 1995).

¹⁸ The term “*yang guizi*,” or “foreign devils,” has derogatory connotation and was used to refer to foreigners.

¹⁹ The Kuomintang (KMT) is used interchangeably with the Guomindang (GMD), which is more frequently used by scholars from the mainland.

²⁰ The most eye-catching example that verbalizes the growing nationalism in the public is the series of headline-making best sellers, including *The China that Can Say No* (Song, Zhang and Qiao, 1996), *The China That Still Can Say No* (Song, Zhang, Qiao, Tang and Gu, 1996), *How China Can Say No* (Zhang, 1996), *Renminbi Can Say No* (Tong, 1998).

demonstrations across China in April 2005 (mainly against Japan's quest for the UN Security Council Permanent membership, among other historical grudges). The latter demonstrations, the largest anti-Japanese incident since the end of World War II, were well-organized, and even utilizing Internet and mobile phone text messages. While quickly quieted down by the government, both events vividly suggest that public nationalistic and patriotic sentiment can be easily ignited against a foreign power. Beijing's handling of the protests was notably cautious, in contrast to its nationalistic rhetoric against the US and Japan. The CCP leaders clearly were trying to avoid any chance that the mass nationalist movement might backfire into wide-spread demonstrations against their own ruling status.

In the meantime, even in a fast changing era, China has by and large maintained two aspects in its political system – bureaucratic authoritarianism²¹ and Chinese traditional thinking and philosophy. China has managed to integrate the CCP's Marxist-Leninist organizational life and its millennial bureaucratic tradition into a bureaucratic authoritarianism of its own (Solomon, 1999). China had developed the largest and most sophisticated bureaucratic system in the world centuries prior to Marx Weber's classic discussions of bureaucracy.²² Bureaucracy always has been an important source of influence in policy-shaping and policy-making, although the decisions were ultimately made by the emperors in different dynasties. In the early years of the PRC, the

²¹ Guillermo A. O'Donnell (1979) uses 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' in *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California). Bureaucratic authoritarianism refers to authoritarian systems in which (1) bureaucracies and technocrats play a pivotal role in politics and policy-making and (2) social sectors have strong organizational strength.

²² Weber's concept of bureaucracy represents a more developed, mature model than the Chinese bureaucratic system that gradually evolved through different dynasties and emperors.

personality cult of Mao greatly shadowed the decision power of the bureaucracy.

Although Deng had a similar dominance over Chinese politics as Mao, Deng Xiaoping's era marked a gradual transition from Mao's totalitarian control toward more institution-bound, less idiosyncratic policy-making. Nonetheless, the transition in the political sphere was not significant, even with the force of extensive economic reforms.

Political authority, in a general consensus among China scholars, still flows from top down, although in the recent decades the central government's power has gradually declined with growing bargaining power for provincial and local governments (e.g., contributors in Hamrin and Zhao, 1995).²³ The CCP remains the sole, powerful, political party without Western-style electoral competition. Societal interests continue to be represented, articulated and aggregated from channels within the CCP. The same is true for resolutions to disputes or conflicts among different societal interests. Policy-making still heavily relies on the policy and/or political directives from the centralized, hierarchical bureaucratic institutions that are firmly controlled by the CCP without an independent legislature and judiciary.

Horizontally, the intra-Party political authority and decision-making rules have struggled between the individualistic principle and the institution principle (Sullivan, 1986). Since 1949 some of the CCP leaders (e.g., Liu Shaoqi) have committed to establishing "an impersonal, institutional structure with authority vested in party committees" and with procedurally rational collective decision-making (Sullivan, 1986: 607). Some scholars suggest that Mao Zedong, "only first among equals," in general,

²³ By contrast, literature on 'fragmented authoritarianism' "looks at the mid-level bureaucracy and focuses creatively on the shift from bureaucratic central command through the planning apparatus to interunit bargaining in economic governance" (Hamrin and Zhao, 1995: xxvii; also see Lampton, 1987; Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988)

followed the principle of collective leadership in the early 1950s (Solomon, 1971: 257-260; Sullivan, 1986).²⁴ The first session of the 8th CPC National Congress in 1956 downplayed arbitrary leadership and personal authority and strengthening the institutional collective leadership at all levels of the CCP, although Mao appeared to be the biggest obstacle in implementing the structural reforms (Sullivan, 1986).

The Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) of the CCP is the most important decision-making institution in the party-state.²⁵ The few political elites within the PSC – normally between five and nine – determine *fangzhen* (general principles) as well as issues of paramount importance (such as major foreign policy decisions). How decisions are made within the PSC is never clear to those outside. The mechanism is widely believed to be built on consensus among the PSC members. However, the PSC's decisions, to a great extent, ultimately have to follow the opinions of the predominant leader (i.e., Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao) given the hierarchical structure within the PSC.²⁶

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is a vital institutional organ that is responsible for most aspects of foreign affairs.²⁷ In general terms, the MFA serves three

²⁴ The exception of Mao's "consensus leadership" style was the decision to enter the Korean War, which was opposed by many senior leaders in the CCP and the PLA (Teiwes, 1984). Sullivan (1986) argues the opposite by showing how Mao ignored the collective leadership principle and purged colleagues who disagreed with him in the 1950s.

²⁵ Hermann and Hermann (1989, Table 2) specifically points out that the PSC was the ultimate decision unit in China between 1959 and August 1966, when the Cultural Revolution began. The Cultural Revolutionary Group was the ultimate decision unit during the Cultural Revolution.

²⁶ A good example is the CCP's decision to use force to end the 1989 Tiananmen protests. Although the majority of the PSC had opposed doing so, Deng Xiaoping, along with the minority of the hardliners (e.g., Li Peng), still managed to order the troops. After the crackdown, those who opposed the decision within the PSC (including Zhao Ziyang) were ousted from the top leadership.

²⁷ In addition, the Ministry of Commerce (previously known as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, or MOFTEC) shares responsibility with the MFA in foreign economic affairs, e.g.,

primary functions – routine information gathering, policy-making, and memory. It provides vital information channels to the decision-makers in the Politburo and other decision-making bodies (e.g., the People’s Congress). The MFA also is responsible for routine foreign-policy making and implementation of most foreign policy decisions. Many MFA officials particularly specialize in the foreign affairs in certain geographic regions where they are posted and seldom rotate to any of the other regions. Nonetheless, the nature and functions of the MFA determine some of its major weaknesses: (1) the MFA officers are mostly bureaucrats who are technically incompetent in many specific policy areas²⁸; and (2) the MFA has no domestic constituency and thus no accountability (Hill, 2003).²⁹ These problems potentially could create gaps and lags in their policy-making and implementation.

Solomon (1999: 162-170), among other scholars, emphasizes that fundamental differences exist between Chinese and American political cultures. The influence of political culture on the handling of domestic and/or foreign politics is profound, which, however, usually is subtly and even undetectably manifested through world outlooks, conceptions of social and international relations, approaches to political conflict, bureaucratic structure, informational management and decision-making.

negotiations on international trade and accession to the GATT/WTO. As far as national security and foreign policy crises are concerned, the Ministry of Commerce is not of particular importance; therefore I choose not to discuss its function and impact in detail here.

²⁸ The previous footnote serves as a good example. In terms of specific technical aspects of international trade, the Ministry of Commerce, rather than the MFA, played a more significant role in the negotiations on China’s accession to the WTO with the member states. Examples of other technical matters, which are beyond the MFA’s capability and thus require its coordination with other relevant agencies and organizations, include international environmental disputes, protection of intellectual property, international civil aviation administration, etc.

²⁹ Other institutional weaknesses of the MFA include overextension of mini-foreign offices and lack of resources (Hill, 2003).

Generally speaking, on the philosophical level, contemporary Chinese politics inherits and maintains traditions in Chinese political culture rooted in Confucianism and Taoism that emphasize hierarchy, loyalty and *guanxi* (or relations, connections, also known as patron-client relations or network-based clientelism). In the high time of the communist propaganda and the personality cult of Mao, Confucianism was completely denied as one of the feudal legacies from the past in numerous ideological campaigns (e.g., the “Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius” Campaign during the Cultural Revolution). Revolutionary campaigns destroyed not only historical artifacts from the imperial time but also attempted to eradicate Confucian way of thinking from people’s minds. In recent years, however, Beijing seems to have started quietly restoring the attachment of Confucian traditions to the current regime.³⁰ For instance, the Chinese government has sponsored the establishment of dozens of Confucius Institutes worldwide (e.g., South Korea, the US, the UK, Bangladesh, Kenya, among many others) via coordination of the MFA and the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the institutes is to promote Chinese culture and spread China’s influence in those countries through training in the Chinese language and traditions. From the constructivist perspective, this clearly demonstrates that an implicit restoration of Chinese traditional values and thinking have become another means for the CCP to legitimize its governing status and enhance the peaceful image of China’s rise, as well as its ‘soft power’ (Nye, 1990, 2004).

Guanxi is another crucial, widespread component in traditional Chinese culture,

³⁰ It is ‘quiet’ in the sense that it has not been actively promoted to the public; only the bureaucratic institutions (e.g., the MFA, the Ministry of Education, etc.) and some institutions of higher education are involved in the actual implementation.

developed through the influence of Confucian political tradition.³¹ Pye (1967, 1982), among other scholars, offers the earliest comprehensive look at *guanxi* and its implications for Chinese politics. Walder (1987) coins the term ‘neo-traditionalism’ to describe the resurgence of network-based clientelism in the CCP after the period of Mao’s personality cult and how the resurgence of clientelism shapes and manages society. Solomon (1999) also offers an insightful observation of Chinese negotiating practice featuring the games of *guanxi* (or relationship games). The traditional Confucian society is built on cultivation and management of interpersonal connections that often embody a sense of *friendship*; people do not trust impersonal legality. In the Chinese perception, terms such as “friendship” and “old friends” indicate a strong sense of obligation to provide support or help because Chinese society values collectivism and interdependence.

Moreover, western scholars find three distinctive unknowns associated with Chinese foreign policy decision-making (Bobrow, Chan and Kringen, 1977: 27): (1) elite perceptions and policy responses; (2) participants in decision-making and their interactions; and (3) the analytic-cognitive basis for decision-making. In particular, fundamental complexity is found in differences between Chinese and Western belief systems about the structure and dynamics of international *crises*. For instance, the term ‘*wei ji*’ (or ‘crisis’) embeds two layers of meaning in Chinese: danger as well as opportunity, reflecting the Chinese dialectic way of looking at a crisis situation.

Chinese leaders perceive the relative capability of actors and China’s domestic economic and political crises in a more nuanced fashion. Chinese doctrine stresses

³¹ The influence of Confucianism is far reaching in many other Asian countries, including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, etc.

dialectical reasoning, which is seen as part of the orthodox worldviews in Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought (Bobrow, Chan and Kringer, 1979). In dealing with international crises, four bimodal attitude pairs – (1) optimism-pessimism; (2) boldness-caution; (3) rigidity-flexibility; and (4) emotional arousal (subjectivity)-analytic distance (objectivity) – provide mental readiness and cognitive heuristics for management of long-term Chinese foreign policy “strategies,” as well as short-term decision “tactics,” for situations requiring immediate action (Bobrow, Chan and Kringen, 1979: 54-67).

Another example is the deliberate ambiguity, even covert or “secrecy,” demonstrated in Beijing’s handling of foreign (and military) affairs. From a cultural perspective, Gaenslen (1986) contends that the cultural differences between China (along with Japan and Russia) and the US have significant implications for their different patterns of collective and individual decision-making. In particular, laboratory experiments indicate that Chinese decision-makers prefer secrecy in decision-making compared to their American counterparts, because secrecy helps maintain not only decision-makers’ public persona but also psychological distance from the outsiders (Gaenslen, 1986: 96, 100). In the eyes of many American foreign-service officials, in diplomatic negotiations, their Chinese counterparts are skilled in not revealing their position until the other side’s position is fully exposed (Solomon, 1999: 5).³² In the eyes of Western observers and analysts who are accustomed to abstracting logical analyses with clear definitions, categorization and propositions, lack of transparency in China’s

³² Based on memoranda of conversation (or ‘memcons’), interviews and memoirs of a number of US foreign-service officials who have had first-hand experiences with their Chinese counterparts, Solomon (1999) provides a comprehensive account of Chinese negotiating strategies and tactics. Solomon (1999:4-5) argues that the distinctive Chinese negotiating style derives from a distinct combination of three major sources of influence: (1) the Western diplomatic practice; (2) the Marxist-Leninist tradition learned from the Soviet Union and the International Communist Movement; and (3) most importantly, China’s own cultural tradition and political practices.

defense research and development programs, military budget and expenditures is usually attributed to one of the fundamental institutional pathologies in the communist system. While this is true, another source deeply rooted in the traditional Chinese strategic thinking and military stratagem is frequently ignored. This tradition emphasizes ambiguity and secrecy as the kind of wisdom with which victory is possible even when the opponent has greater physical strength in the battlefield (Zhang and Yao, 2004). The spirit of this kind of strategic thinking is evident in Deng Xiaoping's 24-character principle for handling international affairs, as brought up in 1991 at a Politburo meeting: "Observe the development soberly, maintain our position, meet the challenge calmly, hide our capacities and bide our time, remain free of ambition, never claim leadership."

Furthermore, traditional Chinese military thinking holds a different view on the causes and aims of war from traditional Western thinking (Zhang and Yao, 2004). The philosophers and thinkers in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (770-221 B.C.), including Mo Zi, Guan Zi, Mencius and Xun Zi, all emphasize *yi* (or moral justice) of war and condemn pursuit of *li* (or interests) in a war.³³ Mao Zedong's military doctrine inherited from this tradition by upholding the *dao* (or moral justice). He firmly believes that the side that acquires *dao* can always win regardless of its power and physical strength.³⁴ Although contemporary Chinese foreign policy under the Western influence becomes more and more realist and interest-oriented, a traditional focus on the moral and ethical dimensions of peace and conflict still is influential in

³³ "Zi" in Mo Zi (or Micius), Guan Zi, Xun Zi, Kong Zi (or Confucius), and Meng Zi (or Mencius) is a respectful suffix (usually added after their surnames) for great thinkers and philosophers.

³⁴ Many scholars believe that Mao's beliefs and perceptions of this nature contributed to his decision to enter the Korean War (e.g., Chen, 2001).

China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the most recent Peaceful Rise theory. It was not until Deng Xiaoping's era that Beijing explicitly put forward national interests in its foreign policy rhetoric (Deng, 1993; from Zhao and Yao, 2004).

In summary, studies of Chinese foreign policy have traditionally emphasized factors pertinent to strategic culture and political psychology, along with their interactions with domestic institutions and interests, international factors and other system-level variables.³⁵ For these reasons, the rational choice approach is viewed as seriously limited when it comes to explaining and predicting Chinese foreign policy-making. Western rationality, with its emphasis on cost-benefit analysis, is considered to be especially incompatible with Eastern or Oriental (or simply Chinese) ways of thinking (Whiting, 1975; Chan, 1978; Bobrow, Chan and Kringen, 1979; Adelman and Shih, 1993; Shih, 1990, 1998; Yu, 1994; Johnston, 1998; Solomon, 1999; Huang, 2000).³⁶ Given the great power held among the small number of top political leaders, these elements are likely to play an even more important role in Chinese foreign policy decision-making.

2.3. Who Decides? – Political Authority, Political Survival and Decision-Making in Chinese Foreign Policy

As elaborated above, Chinese decision-making is deliberately ambiguous and secretive. As a result, it certainly is not easy to draw a clear picture of the process and

³⁵ A large body of literature focuses on the role of cognitive aspects, as well as ideological and cultural influences, on Chinese decision-making (e.g., Whiting, 1975; Chan 1978; Bobrow et al., 1979; Shih, 1990, 1992, 1998; Adelman and Shih, 1993; Johnston, 1995a, 1995b; Christensen, 1996).

³⁶ In addition to the different view on rationality, traditional Chinese culture also fosters a diverse notion of 'guo jia' or 'state', which is not centered on territorial sovereignty as in the Western concept. Pye (1990), for instance, calls China a civilization pretending to be a state; see also Chih-yu Shih (1998).

understand the outcome. By and large, studies of Chinese foreign policy focus on the following substantive areas: the paramount leader (also known as the predominant leader), bureaucratic institutions, and civil-military relations.³⁷ In particular, decision-making in Chinese foreign policy lies in the hands of only a few political elites at the top of the political hierarchy. While foreign policy decisions are not the sole result of any leader's or institution's decisions alone, many scholars concur that individual leaders in Beijing play a key role in shaping and making Chinese foreign policy (e.g., Hamrin and Zhao, 1995; Huang, 2000; Chen, 2001). For the most part, in contrast, the Chinese public plays a passive, compliant role. The public has few formal channels to directly participate in this process; public opinion in China lacks the ability to have the direct and quick impact on public policies seen in democratic states.³⁸

Aside from Chinese traditional thinking, the infamous level of ambiguity and secrecy in Chinese policy-making also results from the dominance of the CCP (Hill, 2003: 234).³⁹ The Chinese one-party system is characterized by (1) lack of a formal, institutionalized decision-making process; (2) the CCP monopoly over all of the

³⁷ The concept of the predominant leader is developed by Hermann, Hermann, and Hagan (1987) and further elaborated by Hermann and Hermann (1989). These scholars classify the ultimate decision unit into three types – predominant leader, single group, and multiple autonomous groups/actors. Salient examples of predominant leaders include Germany's Bismarck and Hitler, the Soviet Union's Stalin, Cuba's Castro, North Korea's Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-il, Iraq's Sadaam Hussein, Syria's Assad (Hagan, 1995: footnote 26).

³⁸ Arguably, the exception is what Mao proposed as the "mass line," which was designed as a way for public opinion about policies to be heard at the leadership levels in the CCP. This demonstrates what Lenin called "democratic centralism." It is fundamentally different from the Western concept of democratic representation given that it is purely within a party monitoring mechanism without any external oversight or pressure.

³⁹ Under the one-party dominance structure, the CCP operates based on the party delegation rather than democratic representation. Moreover, the CCP controls the mass media, the gatekeepers to the public, and thus makes the CCP-led government easily manipulative in terms of the content and timing of public information release. Lack of independence in the mass media adds to this kind of policy-making secrecy.

legitimate channels of interest articulation and aggregation – dissenting opinions are not tolerated; (3) political power centralized in a few leaders at the apex of the political hierarchy; and (4) the military often intervening in civilian policy-making (Swaine, 1998; Huang, 2000: 6). These characteristics all combine to create the myth and enigma of Chinese politics, including Chinese foreign policy.

2.3.1 Political Survival, Factionalism and Chinese Foreign Policy

Political survival is the most key consideration for decision-makers, regardless of the states, cultural backgrounds, or regime types to which they belong (Mintz, 1997). The leaders’ driving forces and patterns of behavior for political survival vary across democratic and autocratic states, but the ultimate goal is the same. Leaders are self-interested, but they are not necessarily “rational” in their decision-making.⁴⁰ Leaders from democratic regimes put political survival as their top priority. Good examples include John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson in dealing with the USSR and Vietnam, respectively. Both of them tried to avoid the kind of damage to their political careers experienced by their predecessor, Harry S. Truman, in the “loss of China” in the late 1940s (Neack, Hey and Haney, 1995).

Political power and, therefore, leaders’ political survivability in the PRC is also important, yet, in very different ways. Political authority in China was built on the fusion of three different traditions: (1) imperial hierarchy in which the emperor at the very top makes every decision, which is then compliantly followed by the mass; (2) the Leninist party-state system in which the communist party dominates almost every aspect of the

⁴⁰ See detailed discussion in Chapter 3.

political process; and (3) the Chinese-style revolution following Mao's strategy of "setting up base areas in the countryside and encircling cities from the rural areas" (Huang, 2000: 6). In order to reach and stay in the position that holds absolute political authority, political contenders must have a big, solid pool of subordinate proponents with whom the contenders share strong loyalty and personal ties (or *guanxi*). The ones who do not have loyal supporters or who seek different policy options are most likely to be the target of purging by those in the top leadership position. In summary, the leadership relationships within the CCP are characterized by hierarchy and factionalism.

Factionalism, closely associated with *guanxi* and the CCP's organizational tradition, is inseparable from the policy-making process. Different interests and preferences are inevitable, and, in case of a dispute, leaders need to seek support for their policy preferences even if they are given enormous political power at the top of the hierarchy since formal institutions of policy-making are lacking within the CCP. However, such differences cannot be openly discussed and debated in order to maintain the image of the Party's unity. In Huang's (2000: 411) observation, this indeed is a dilemma inherited in China's single-party authoritarian system due to the absence of a formal process that is designed to deal with leadership conflict. By contrast, Solomon (1999: 166-167) attributes this to a distinctive Chinese approach to political conflict – conflict is to be suppressed.

Furthermore, Solomon (1999) demonstrates with specific examples how factional struggles within the CCP affected Chinese foreign policy-making, although, in most cases, the CCP took every effort to deny the existence of internal conflict or feuding among leaders. For instance, it took as long as eight years to establish normal relations

between the US and China, partially because Lin Biao, Mao's then designated successor, opposed the normalization which the Mao Zedong-Zhou Enlai leadership supported. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, internal struggles between Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng also delayed concrete negotiations about the normalization until Deng further consolidated his power within the Party.

Leaders in authoritarian regimes might seem to be less concerned about their political survival given that their power is more formidable, and thus appears more secure, than those in democratic systems who are constantly subject to oversight from the opposition and the public. On the contrary, many studies point out that this is not true. In fact, as with democratically elected leaders, they cannot afford to ignore potential threats or instability from within (e.g., Lebow, 1981; Lamborn, 1991). In Communist countries, like the Soviet Union and China, "constant uncertainty over power sharing in the Politburo means that any leader could 'suddenly find himself removed from office by a political conspiracy of his former political associates'" (Schwartz, 1975: 177; cited from Hagan, 1995: 126).

Factionalism adopts the conflict-centered approach, essentially drawing on the rational choice assumptions, and views three variations: (1) the power-struggle model (e.g., Nathan, 1973; MacFarquhar, 1974; Solomon, 1999; Huang, 2000)⁴¹; (2) the policy-choice model (e.g., Barnett, 1974); and (3) the structure or bureaucratic politics model (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988). All three models share the common argument that the nature of Chinese politics is conflict-oriented at the top-level leadership, i.e., the differences among top leaders eventually lead to conflicts in policy-making. Due to such

⁴¹ Nathan (1973) and Huang (2000) both focus on the analysis of factionalism and its effect on Chinese politics.

conflicts and the attachment to those who are in the leadership, policy-making in China has gone through extreme changes and inconsistent patterns over the course of more than five decades. In particular, major policy inconsistency occurred during the early half of the PRC history, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

The key difference among the three models, on the other hand, is the underlying causes and consequences of conflict among top leaders. The power-struggle model and the policy-choice model both suggest that conflicts can be triggered by either disagreement over policy preferences or personality clashes. However, the two models differ on the consequences of the conflicts. The former argues that such conflicts eventually lead to power struggles among leaders, which in turn have serious implications for future policy-making, while the latter only focuses on resolving the policy disputes without further search for other implications.⁴² By contrast, the structure model looks at the conflicts between and/or among leaders primarily as reflections of the institutional differences in policy preferences given the different positions the leaders hold at different institutions.

Chinese factional politics vividly portrays the intense political struggles for domestic legitimacy in the context of extreme political instability and weak institutionalized policy-making procedures in China (Huang, 2000). Policy-making in the CCP-dominated system relies on policy consensus built between and/or among factions within the Party, usually the kind of consensus favored by the predominant leader (Huang, 2000). A few examples from different periods are given here in chronological order.

⁴² Huang (2000) offers a comprehensive review of the literature using the conflict-centered approach.

It is widely agreed that Mao had the ultimate political authority in his time.⁴³ He not only controlled information flow within the CCP and PLA leadership but also managed to manipulate the propaganda in the mass media. His strong connections both within the CCP and PLA, along with the supreme status of Mao Zedong Thought, secured his supreme leadership in China. Therefore, Mao was the key decision-maker in the policy-making process.⁴⁴ Any foreign policy decisions in his era required Mao's "green light" before being implemented.

Mao's predominant leadership in China virtually began during the Yan'an Round Table, the first generation of CCP leaders "whose comradeship had been forged by the Long March, Japanese aggression, and civil war." (MacFarquhar, 1974: 1) During 1937-1945, Mao quickly won the leadership in Yan'an in the intra-Party struggle against Zhang Guotao and Wang Ming.⁴⁵ In the meantime, the establishment of Mao Zedong Thought, along with Marxism-Leninism, as the CCP's "guiding principle" and official ideology further consolidated Mao's predominant leadership. Anyone who disagreed with Mao's *fangzhen* (general principles) and *zhengce* (specific policies) would be understood as a direct challenge to the CCP's ideological legitimacy and an action of disloyalty to the Party and in violation to the Party unity (Huang, 2000: 8-12). Mao's personality cult was interpreted as a way of keeping himself in absolute control of both the CCP and PLA

⁴³ Zhou Enlai was the only top leader who had not been purged during the factional struggles during Mao's era. Zhou also played a significant role in shaping pragmatism and flexibility in contemporary Chinese foreign policy-making. As the PRC's first premier, Zhou was very skilled in handling foreign affairs. His personality, views on international relations and foreign policy, and his vital political role in contemporary China have had far-reaching influence on Chinese foreign policy objectives and behavior. See Shao (1996) for more details.

⁴⁴ Here, policy-making refers to both domestic and foreign policies.

⁴⁵ Zhang Guotao was commander of the army. Wang Ming was the then CCP Chief.

because he was the only leader then who had had strong support bases in both circles (Huang, 2000). Given that his political support bases were formed during the revolution years when Mao and his fellow comrades fought together, the support for Mao was mostly manifested through personal loyalty and trust.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping returned to the leadership and eventually regained the predominant power. Deng, in a striking resemblance, was the only CCP leader at that time who had an equally strong support base and connections among the commanders of the military. As a result, he easily gained status similar to Mao, both within the Party and the PLA. Nevertheless, Deng never was as powerful as Mao, primarily because he never pursued his own personality cult through mass campaigns as Mao had done (Sullivan, 1986). Although also included in the CCP's official doctrine, the Deng Xiaoping Theory was not equal in status in the CCP ideology with Mao Zedong Thought. Partially because of this, the relations among leaders, and thus the decision-making power, in his time changed. While his decision-making power remained predominant, Deng frequently had to rely on consensus-building and compromises to get his policy preferences across (Hamrin and Zhao, 1995; Huang, 2000). Another part of the reason for change is that in the post-Mao era, supporters and followers of Deng, Jiang and now Hu no longer have shared the kind of comradeship and fighting-together bond as those in Mao's time (Huang, 2000). In fact, most of the political elites nowadays are promoted from ministerial or local leadership positions; many of them have barely known each other previously. In this sense, it is nearly impossible to develop the kind of personal loyalty and support as in the old days. Instead, intra-Party support derives from the elites who share similar policy preferences, i.e., the reform-oriented (the liberals) vs.

the hardliners (the conservatives). After the deaths of most old elites from the revolutionary years, including Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, among others, more than ever before political contenders must seek political support and connections based on policy preferences and policy interests they represent or favor.⁴⁶

When Jiang Zemin became the predominant leader after Deng's death, it was obvious that factional struggles had shifted the basis to policy preferences and local interests.⁴⁷ Jiang Zemin and his successor, Hu Jintao, have had a very different path to the top leadership from their predecessors from the revolutionary age. They both are so-called technocrats, having risen to power from their respective regional leaderships. Having occupied the top leadership positions in Shanghai from 1984 to 1989, Jiang had developed very strong base in the Shanghai area.⁴⁸ Jiang and his followers, known as Jiang's Shanghai Clique (Shanghai *bang*), allegedly have had intense struggles against the others in the PSC. Even since his retirement in 2003-2004, Jiang has been widely believed to continue to be influential and powerful in the CCP, given that six out of the nine newly selected PSC members allegedly belong to Jiang's Shanghai Clique, leaving the current predominant leader Hu Jintao in the minority.⁴⁹ Such factional struggles,

⁴⁶ Apparently, the interest representation in this context is fundamentally different from the interest representation in Western democratic countries. Politicians in democracies are accountable to the representation of interests of ordinary citizens. By contrast, accountability is reversed in China; subordinates are always accountable to their superiors.

⁴⁷ Jiang Zemin rose to power right after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, when Deng Xiaoping voluntarily retired from the top leadership. However, it is widely held that Deng still was the real predominant decision-maker of all major *fangzhen* and *zhengce* from the backstage. Jiang did not gain predominant power until Deng's weakening health in the mid 1990s.

⁴⁸ Jiang Zemin served as Mayor of Shanghai from 1984 to 1987. In the subsequent two years, he was Shanghai Party Chief while starting to rise on the national political scene.

⁴⁹ The six new members in the PSC, who are alleged to have close ties with Jiang, are Wu Bangguo, Jia Qinglin, Zeng Qinghong, Huang Ju, Wu Guanzheng and Li Changchu. Some of them rose to power on the

needless to say, never surface to any media outlet in the PRC. However, the media based in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore always watch very closely Beijing's every move and report insiders' views and speculative analyses on the factional fights within the CCP. In summary, Chinese foreign policy decision-making, naturally as the extension of Chinese domestic policy, is greatly confined by these idiosyncratic and factional factors.

2.3.2 Civil-Military Relations and Chinese Foreign Policy

Civil-military relations, or the military's role in domestic and foreign affairs, are another crucial dynamic in Chinese foreign policy-making (e.g., Cheng, 1966; Gittings, 1967; Joffe, 1967; Whitson, 1973; Godwin, 1976, 1978; Segal, 1981; Perlmutter and LeoGrande, 1982; Paltiel, 1995; Swaine, 1998). In different historical contexts, the relations demonstrate various characteristics. For instance, during the Cultural Revolution, the PLA was a radical and primary force in destroying the existing social order. Studies on Chinese foreign policy and security policy have a general consensus that the PLA have a major impact on policy-making, particularly when national security is threatened in international crises.

In addition, the PLA is a salient force that is active in issues related to nuclear and missile proliferation and weaponry sales. It was the PLA that fought against the KMT army in the civil war and the Japanese invaders, which paved the way for the establishment of CCP dominance in the mainland. It was the PLA that supported the many domestic campaigns, reforms and rectifications under Mao's command. Yet, the PLA must be in the CCP's command, as Mao's well-known maxim declares, "Political

national political scene from their leadership positions in the government of Shanghai Municipality. Others were the former subordinates of Jiang Zemin.

power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” To do so, according to Mao and his successors, the supreme civilian leader must command the military as well. Thus, there has been a consistent pattern in the four generations of leaders holding the supreme leadership positions in both the CCP and the PLA. On the civilian side, the only exception is Deng Xiaoping, who never officially took the top leadership in his time, although nobody doubted his supreme status within the CCP. On the military side, the pattern is consistent without any exception, which means that the Party indeed has been in complete control of the military.

By contrast, other scholars, like Segal (1981), only see that the PLA has minimal importance in Chinese foreign policy-making and a marginal role in policy implementation. Segal (1981: 455) argues that there is no identifiable, independent role or position for the PLA in foreign policy-making due to apparent lack of “a coherent military tradition in strategic thought.”

In Jiang’s era, the civil-military relations have fundamentally changed, or “clearly differentiated” (Scobell, 2000: 15), due to Jiang’s lack of significant military experience. For instance, Taiwan Strait IV (1995-1996) marked the growing influence of the PLA in Chinese foreign policy-making. Unlike before, the PLA not only expressed their concerns of the crisis through informal discussions at the top decision-making level but also lobbied for public support by echoing them more publicly in the mass media and through the forum of the NPC (Scobell, 2000: 16).

Overall, Perlmutter and LeoGrande (1982) characterize Chinese civil-military relations as “symbiotic” and “organic,” meaning a partnership “associated with the

survival of each institutional structure.”⁵⁰ In communist regimes, they argue, “[t]he role of the military in politics is complex and variegated: on ideological issues, there is usually little conflict between party and army; on issues of ‘normal politics,’ the military acts as a functionally specific elite engaged in bargaining to defend its perceived institutional interests; and in crisis politics, the military is a political resource that various party factions seek to enlist against their opponents.” (Perlmutter and LeoGrande, 1982: 778)

2.4. Conclusion

The review in the present chapter sketches the significant and yet gradual transformation in Chinese politics since 1949, from Mao’s personality cult and ideological mass campaigns in policy-making to the blend of pragmatism, nationalism, bureaucratic authoritarianism and traditional thinking during Deng’s and Jiang’s eras. The transformation has had crucial implications on policy-making, particularly Chinese foreign policy-making. The various elements contributing to the nature of Chinese foreign policy-making all combine to emphasize the fundamental importance of domestic politics in foreign affairs.

Several issues exist in the studies of Chinese foreign policy: (1) debate is ongoing about whether Chinese foreign policy is unique, distinguished from, or similar to foreign policy of other states (in other words, whether the Western international relations theories

⁵⁰ Perlmutter and LeoGrande (1982: 778) argue that civil-military relations, as one of the fundamental dynamics of communist systems, “derive from the structural relationship between a hegemonic Leninist party and the other institutions of the polity although the party directs and supervises all other institutions. The relative autonomy of the military and its relations with the party vary from one country to another and can be described as coalitional, symbiotic, or fused. These relations are dynamic, changing over time in each country in response to contextual circumstances.”

are applicable to China) (Zhao, 2004); (2) little theoretical and/or empirically rigorous progress has been achieved as compared to studies on Chinese domestic politics; (3) the dilemma still exists that policy-making relies on party unity that has co-existed with factional politics (Huang, 2000); and (4) there seems to lack a theoretical framework that is able to capture the whole picture, explaining both the process (how) and outcome (why) of Chinese foreign policy-making.

In the next chapter, PH will directly address this problem. China, at least so far, is frequently understood on the basis of research guided by ideological or psychological approaches that stress distinctiveness (not necessarily uniqueness). Chinese foreign policy behavior also features rational calculations, which makes it nothing different from the other international actors. Therefore, China is an especially exciting case for PH in terms of generalizability and scientific progress. The ability to confirm propositions about crisis decision-making in the Chinese context that have obtained support from cross-national testing would constitute an especially dramatic step forward. China would be an optimal choice for further application of PH to crisis decision-making as the presumed two-stage PH model of decision-making can build in all of the preceding and potentially necessary elements at one point or another.

CHAPTER THREE

DECISION-MAKING IN FOREIGN POLICY CRISES:

POLIHEURISTIC THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

After nearly 50 years of development, the relatively focused field of FPA that is nested within international relations but closely linked to comparative politics has entered into an era of diversity and multiplicity. Recent studies feature multiple causal explanations/linkages of foreign policy behavior on multiple levels of analysis, drawing from diverse theoretical approaches and methodologies (Neack, Hey and Haney, 1995).⁵¹ Vertzberger (2002: 479) offers a balanced definition: FPA “describes and investigates the structures, processes, and outcomes of the purposeful policy initiatives and responses that are conceived by sovereign political entities and directed toward other political units (not necessarily sovereign states) beyond their borders.” This is a vast and interesting agenda within which the present study finds its places.

Foreign policy decision-making is a complicated matter, which makes the accurate explanation of the motivations, goals and dynamics of this process very challenging (Walker, 1998). Studies of foreign policy decision-making enquire how and/or why people make foreign policy decisions. In more specific terms, Hill (2003: 10) provides a behavioralist, process-oriented perspective with an emphasis on foreign policy decision-making:

⁵¹ For instance, many studies now focus on agent-structure, process-outcome, or motivation-outcome interactions and their effect on foreign policy-making.

FPA enquires into the motives and other sources of the behaviour of international actors, particularly states. It does this by giving a good deal of attention to decision-making, initially so as to probe behind of the formal self-descriptions (and fictions) of the processes of government and public administration. In so doing it tests the plausible hypothesis that the outputs of foreign policy are to some degree determined by the nature of the decision-making process.

Decision-making is a significant component of the studies of FPA, reaching across many social science disciplines, including economics (e.g., Friedman and Thaler; Simon, 1959, 1985), sociology (e.g., Etzioni and Coleman), psychology (e.g., Tversky and Kahneman), and political science (e.g., Allison, 1971; Bueno de Mesquita; Steinbruner, 1974; Grofman, and Green and Shapiro).⁵²

In the context of FPA and one of the important debates between the psychological and rational choice approaches, this chapter specifically focuses on PH decision-making, linking the literature on foreign policy decision-making and international crises.⁵³ The discussion is followed by elaboration of the PH-derived hypotheses; this represents one of the original contributions of the dissertation.

3.1. Levels of Analysis and Foreign Policy Analysis

Waltz's (1979) pioneering work differentiates studies of international relations at three levels of analysis: international system level, state level and individual level. Foreign policy, traditionally treated as operating at the state, collective and/or individual levels of analysis, juxtaposes domestic politics and international politics (Gerner, 1995). System-level variables have proven to be useful in explaining foreign policy decisions. A

⁵² See Mintz (2003b: 2).

⁵³ See Holsti (1979) and Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997, 2000) for discussions on the definitions of international crises. A more detailed discussion follows in Chapter 4.

prominent example is the system-level treatment of international crisis behavior in Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997, 2000). Although explicitly seen as “reductionist” approaches and, therefore, ignored in Waltz’s neo-realism, studies of foreign policy at the state, collective and individual levels have shown equally powerful advancement that furthers and deepens our understanding of foreign policy behavior.⁵⁴ The nature of foreign policy decides that middle-range theories are most suitable for FPA.⁵⁵ Hagan (2001) and Rosati (2001) both point out that the state should be ignored simply as a ‘black box;’ instead, it is equally important to look into state actions as “a function of the human cognition of their leaders” (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004: 56).⁵⁶ Areas within FPA range from system attributes and domestic politics to the “two-level bargaining,” from institutions and organizational behavior to individual beliefs and personalities, from game theory to cognitive mapping, from bureaucratic politics to public opinion and from use of military force to economic sanctions. It has become clear that these multiple levels of analysis are complementary to one another; one should not dominate or overshadow the others in terms of explanatory and/or predictive powers of FPA. Moreover, as a comprehensive field, diversity in methodology should be encouraged and tolerated to further advance FPA.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Examples appear at various places throughout this chapter.

⁵⁵ Hill (2003: 3, 23) defines foreign policy as “the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations,” which is “at the hinge of domestic politics and international relations.” Gerner (1995: 18) argues that foreign policy focuses on “the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor – often, but not always, a state – directed toward the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statement, and actions.”

⁵⁶ I borrow the term ‘black box’ from the title of Powell, Purkitt and Dyson (1987), “Opening the Black Box: Cognitive Processing and Optimal Choice in Foreign Policy Decision-Making.”

⁵⁷ Examples include historically-oriented cases studies (e.g., Elman and Elman, 2001; Larson, 1985, 1988, 2001), to small-n case comparisons (e.g., Lebow, 1981) and large-N quantitative analyses (e.g., Herrmann, 1986; Hermann and Hermann, 1989).

3.2. Rationality and Foreign Policy Decision-Making

In the ancient times, emperors or kings sometimes allowed destiny or heaven's will to determine whether to go to war or make peace with a neighboring empire. Since the modern age, policy-makers (including foreign policy decision-makers) and institutions, in whatever political systems, have learned to rationalize their decisions so that they are justified and persuasive to the domestic and/or international audiences. In one way or another, leaders at least try to be rational. How rational are they or their decisions, in fact, is subject to further questioning. Moreover, do people assume the same meaning when they think of rationality? For instance, when we look at Kim Jong-il's relentless resistance to give up North Korea's nuclear programs in spite of the multilateral pressures from the international community (most notably from the US), can we really conclude that his decisions are irrational given Kim's goals? The answer could be "yes" or "no." By saying "yes," one could argue that the course through, which Kim is trying to acquire nuclear weapons and thus to be able to protect North Korea from the perceived threat from the US, has been completely irrational because this would never increase the level of security for the country. By saying "no," on the other hand, one could argue that Kim is a strategically rational actor because he tries to utilize seemingly irrational means (at least to the US and other countries) to achieve the goals that are rational for him. In Schelling's (1960) terms, this is the 'rationality of irrationality' (Hill, 2003: 102). In fact, many analysts would argue that his behavior is rational even though the course (or procedure) North Korea has chosen is far from being acceptable or conventionally rational behavior to the majority of the international community. Both

answers are correct, in a sense. The fundamental issue at stake here, however, is the *meaning* of rationality, one of the most intriguing problems of social science, in general, and FPA, in particular.

The concept of rationality, with particular reference to foreign policy decision-making, centers on two issues: (1) substantive (or outcome) rationality vs. procedural (or process) rationality⁵⁸ and (2) individual rationality vs. collective rationality (Hill, 2003: 97-126).⁵⁹ Rationality is contingent on the historical and social context, especially the time and place of a decision in history (Hill, 2003). Furthermore, Vertzberger (1990: 270) points out another important aspect in regard to the concept of rationality: “the norms of rationality are culture-bound.” Chapter 2 in this study has elaborated this point by contrasting a number of examples in Chinese foreign policy with Western thinking.

3.2.1 Procedural Rationality vs. Substantive Rationality

Procedural rationality, or process rationality, refers to the systematic process in which an actor uses his/her reasoning and seeks for the best means possible to achieve his/her pre-set goals (Hill, 2003: 99). For example, using political criteria to disregard information known to be relevant to a case would violate procedural rationality. The emphasis here is the process, or means, through which the outcomes are optimized for the pre-set goals.

⁵⁸ By the same token, Vertzberger (1990) uses “process rationality” and “outcome rationality” to differentiate procedural rationality and substantive rationality.

⁵⁹ In addition, Hill (2003) also makes two sets of distinction on the concept of rationality: normative rationality vs. positive rationality; and rationality for efficiency vs. rationality for democracy. As far as this study is concerned, however, they are not very relevant to Chinese foreign policy making and thus are not discussed in detail here.

Substantive rationality, also known as outcome rationality, refers to the “right” – sometimes the only “right” – outcome as related to a cost/benefit calculation of achieving the original goals (Hill, 2003: 99). For instance, selecting a policy that is known to be inferior to other available options would violate substantive rationality. It is not difficult to tell that statements of substantive rationality are usually loaded with normative values or judgment.

The question regarding the distinction between procedural and substantive rationality is whether substantively rational ends can be met without procedural rational means. The answer is “no,” barring the extreme (and rare) cases of good fortune happening as a matter of randomness – the “Forrest Gump” phenomenon. In spite of their distinction, it is impossible to achieve substantive rationality without procedural rationality; it is practically meaningless to call a process “rational” if substantively rational goals cannot be reached. As noted earlier, North Korea’s Kim Jong-il and his nuclear policy have made a clear case for this point.

The classic rational choice model assumes that the actor is a unitary utility-maximizer, in the sense that the actor always employs rational procedure and action in order to optimize the gains and benefits in his/her goals.⁶⁰ The optimal outcome, as a result, reaches substantive rationality. Allison’s (1971: 10-38) rational actor model is an example of substantive rationality treating the state as a unitary decision-maker.

3.2.2 Individual Rationality vs. Collective Rationality

⁶⁰ Schelling (1960), Allison (1971: 10-38) and Steinbruner (1974: 25-47) all provide a classic definition and summaries of the rational actor model with specific reference to foreign policy decision-making. For a review of the contributions of game theory, see Bueno de Mesquita (2002) and Brams (2002).

Decision-making by individuals, most notably, feature psycho-biographical analysis of key decision-makers (e.g., George and George, 1965) and the operational code analysis of leaders (e.g., Walker, 1977, 1983; Walker and Shafer, 1998). If any decision is thought to be rational, then to whom – to the individual decision-maker or to the group (in Hermann’s term, decision unit) who includes the decision-maker(s) as a member and usually entrust the power of decision-making to this(these) particular individual(s)? In other words, who decides? In what sense is the decision-maker’s decision rational? Is the individual’s rational reasoning equal to that of the group to which he/she belong (Hill, 2003)? While individual opinions matter in state decision-making, what are the mechanisms that allow individual decisions to be aggregated into collective ones?⁶¹

For the individual decision-maker, the kind of rational behavior for his/her own personal interests and gains does not necessarily correspond to that for the group/collective’s optimal benefits and well-being. As will be elaborated later, such inconsistency sometimes poses serious challenges to a comprehensive understanding of rational choice in foreign policy decisions.

Collective decision-making, on the other hand, focuses on groupthink, a ramification of the psychological approach, (e.g., Janis, 1972, 1982, 1989); Hart, Stern and Sundelius, 1977), decision unit (e.g., Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Maoz, 1990) and advisory systems (e.g., George, 1980).

3.2.3 Classical Rationality vs. Bounded Rationality

⁶¹ Farkas’ (1996) evolutionary models, for instance, demonstrate how a state can act rationally even though the individual decision-makers are not necessarily rational themselves.

In the classical rational model, rationality works on the basic assumption that (1) an actor's preferences can be ordered and they are transitive and (2) the actor has complete information, based on which he/she is able to carefully consider all the preferences and options for action.⁶² Decision-makers are assumed to be self-interested rational participants of policy formulation who seek to maximize the expected utility and minimize the cost for doing so (Booth, James and Meadwell, 1993). Scholars in the classical rational approach have made enormous contributions to FPA and studies of domestic politics. The most well-known examples include game theory (e.g., Schelling, 1960; Allison, 1971; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, 1992).

In the meantime, scholars and practitioners became frustrated that pure rational decision-making often fails or does not exist in the real world. In fact, one of the biggest critiques is that the classical rational model does not address strategic interaction; beliefs and perceptions, along with incomplete information and uncertainty, are excluded from consideration (Gerner, 1995).⁶³

It was Herbert A. Simon who first systematically introduced the notion of bounded rationality to solve the puzzle related to uncertainty, incomplete information and complex contexts for decisions (Simon, 1959, 1985). Bounded rationality essentially rejects the kind of maximizing behavior held by the classical rational model because such behavior is too costly or impossible to reach. Instead, due to all of the above-listed limitations and uncertainty in the environment, bounded rationality assumes that the actor

⁶² This assumption, however, is explicitly rejected by Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963). See a detailed discussion in Gerner (1995).

⁶³ Morrow (1997) points out that perfect Bayesian equilibrium offers a key solution to games of incomplete information by unifying players' beliefs, perceptions and actions.

only “satisfices” his/her preferences, that is, choosing the first acceptable action leading to the outcome that approximates one’s ideal preferences. In other words, just being “good enough” is sufficient given the circumstances rather than being “perfect” but unattainable.⁶⁴ Thus, the outcome of satisficing is suboptimal in the actor’s preference ranking in this sense: “It is sufficient that members of the policy-making group may agree only on *what* to do without having to agree on *why* to do it.” (George and Bennett, 2005: 98) Decision-makers’ perception of hostility and threat in times of crisis falls into the so-called bounded rationality (Simon, 1959, 1985).

3.2.4 Cognitive Approach vs. Rational Choice Approach: A False

Dichotomy

Foreign policy decision-making research invariably focuses either on the *process* or *outcome* of decision-making.⁶⁵ The first type of study mainly employs a cognitive or psychological approach to trace the process of how decisions are made inside the ‘black box’ of the state (e.g., cognitive-institutionalism, problem representation, and decision unit).⁶⁶ The second type of study, in contrast, centers on why the final choice is made with an emphasis on rational calculation (e.g. the expected utility theory, game theory). Few studies take *both* aspects into consideration. FPA thus appears incomplete and

⁶⁴ Also see disjointed incrementalism (e.g., Lustick, 1980) and muddling through theory (Lindblom, 1959, 1979).

⁶⁵ As defined by Vertzberger (2002: 479), FPA is “a field of study that describes and investigates the structures, processes, and outcomes of the purposeful policy initiatives and responses that are conceived by sovereign political entities and directed toward other political units (not necessarily sovereign states) *beyond* their borders.”

⁶⁶ See Stern (2004: 111-119) for a detailed review of these theoretical approaches.

seriously divided between the cognitive psychology and rational choice schools of decision-making (Brecher, 1999; Hagan, 2001; Hill, 2003).

The cognitive approach to foreign policy decision-making focuses on the information processing, with an intensive analysis of the cognitive aspects, including intellectual functions and idiosyncratic/emotional attributes, of the human mind.⁶⁷ The cognitive approach, collectively speaking, suggests that the human mind employs various cognitive tools to process information from others and the objective world, including belief systems (Holsti, 1962; George, 1969; Walker, 1977), personality and context (George and George, 1965; Greenstein, 1967, 1975, 1982; Shapiro and Bonham, 1973; Kearns, 1976; Abse, 1989; Glad, 1989), perception and misperception (Jervis, 1976), images (Jervis, 1970, 1989), historical analogies (Khong, 1992; Houghton, 1996, 2001), framing effect (George, 1980; Redd, 2000; Mintz and Redd, 2003), etc. Information processing plays a significant role by shaping and/or changing decision-makers' ideas and thoughts about the objective world, which affects the decision-making process and outcome (Larson, 1985: 24-65; Rosati, 1995, 2001).

Moreover, decision-makers seek to rely on their preexisting beliefs, simple schema and cognitive heuristics to process the information from the environment in order to interpret or make sense of the situation and the decisions as a result of their analysis. Lau (2003: 31) defines heuristics as “cognitive shortcuts, rules of thumb for making certain judgments or inferences that are useful in decision-making with considerably less than the complete search for options and the consequences associated with options dictated by rational choice.” Cognitive heuristics are a consequence of psychological and

⁶⁷ For a complete survey of the cognitive or psychological approach and its contribution to FPA, see Larson (1985: 24-65) and Rosati (1995, 2001).

ideological constraints, different beliefs and values, misperceptions, emotions, framing effects, loss aversion and the like (Vertzberger, 1990; Levy, 2003). Therefore, cognitive heuristics serve as “problem solving strategies (often employed automatically or unconsciously)” (Lau, 2003: 31) to “keep the information processing demands of the task within bounds” (Abelson and Levi, 1985: 255). The social cognition theory and schema theory (e.g., Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Lau and Sears, 1986; Milburn, 1991) are two good examples. In essence, advocates of this approach suggest that an individual belief system is internally fragmented, rather than generally consistent as the earlier cognitive consistency theorists contend (Larson, 1985: 24-65; Rosati, 1995, 2001). Such fragmentation allows the individual to employ different beliefs, schema or heuristics under different circumstances in order to process the externally generated information.

Literature on cognitive approaches, in particular that of perception and misperception, shrewdly distinguishes “decision-makers’ *psychological environment* (how they perceive the world) and their *operational environment* (events as they happen independent of any one person’s perception)” (Hill, 2003: 111, with original emphasis). Perception is formulated on the basis of decision-makers’ embedded cultural and political background, world views and the objective world. Once formulated, it is difficult to change one’s perceptions and the change, as a result of outside influences, takes place very slowly. Perceptions also can turn into stereotypes that are even more resistant to change. Misperception is a serious but common pathology as far as foreign policy decision-making is concerned.⁶⁸ Misperception leads to inaccurate assessment of the

⁶⁸ As an exemplar of the first generation scholarship of FPA at the individual level, Jervis (1976) provides a thorough treatment of the cognitive approach in terms of cognitive consistency, historical analogy, attitudinal change as well as a generalization of patterns of misperceptions among decision-makers.

operational context in which the decision must be made by exaggerating or underestimating the capabilities of the ally or the adversary, distorting the information useful for making a 'rational' decision, etc. A potentially fatal misperception often occurs when assuming decision-making of the other side is based on the same assumptions, rationality and universal code of conduct – in other words, failure to understand the different culture and political thinking of the other side.⁶⁹ Cognitive limitations, personal affections or disaffections, and organizational factors (e.g., standard operating procedures) can lead to misperceptions. A case in point is Lebow's (1981) analysis of 26 crises with a particular focus on decision-makers' cognitive processes and misperceptions.

The above discussion is by no means exhaustive on the cognitive literature. The point of this discussion is to show that there are indeed various limitations on classical rationality. One of the major limitations of the classical rational choice approach is concerned with the explanatory validity, that is, pure rationality offers little insights to the real world foreign policy decision-making. In spite of the best effort to make purely rational judgment by decision-makers, the human mind inevitably is subject to psychological pressures from different sources, particularly in times of uncertainty and complexity (or crisis). Another problem in the extant literature on foreign policy decision-making is concerned with the basic assumption of the rationality of decision-makers. Many seem to over-rationalize decision-making and tend to discount the possibility that other factors, rational or not rational in the context, may motivate certain

Steinbruner's (1974) work also sets the theoretical foundation and makes significant advancement in the cognitive study of foreign policy.

⁶⁹ Chapter 2 offers a few illustrations of this point.

decisions or actions that would have not be chosen otherwise (George and Bennett, 2005: 98-99).

On the other hand, the cognitive school is not problem-free. According to its critiques, the cognitive school suffers from a number of weaknesses: (1) external validity of the experimental results of some theories of bounded rationality (e.g., prospect theory and PH); (2) exclusion of strategic interactions (Morrow, 1997); and (3) lack of predictive power. Lau and Redlawsk (2001) also point out some disadvantage of using cognitive heuristics in a relatively balanced assessment of the cognitive approach. They argue that cognitive heuristics (e.g., in voting, partisan schema, ideological schema, endorsement heuristic, viability heuristic in public polls, and candidate appearance heuristic) do not always work effectively in processing information during decision-making; it depends on who employs heuristics, what type of heuristics are employed, and under what circumstances. In particular, political heuristics are less helpful for decision-makers with less sophistication and political awareness to make correct decisions; only relative experts find those heuristics to be effective (Bartels, 1996; Lau and Redlawsk, 2001: 966).

Perhaps a more serious problem with the psychological approach, according to Morrow (1997: 23), is that cognitive factors “are easier to study *ex post* than *ex ante* [emphasis added later]” because the direct historical record or evidence associated with those factors is too scant to fully understand and predict the activities of cognition within the human brain. Moreover, the psychological approach, sharing the same problem as the classical rational choice approach, does not address strategic interaction, which is most

frequently observed in international politics.⁷⁰ Thus, as one of the frustrations of social scientists, the cognitive approaches can easily fall into pitfalls of the traditional area studies by lacking theoretical focus and generalizable rigor.

In a shrewd observation, Walker (1998) points out that the strengths of the former school often reflect the weaknesses of the latter school. Houghton (2001: 190-191) further points out that the dichotomy between the rational choice approach and the cognitive approach is inadequate because “the former takes actors’ preferences as given” while “the later seeks to uncover the sources of these preferences.” Indeed, before analytical reasoning (expected utility calculation or cost-benefit analysis) is employed to evaluate decision-makers’ choice among the options, it is imperative to search for the reasons *why* the content of the options comes into being. It becomes increasingly clear that the two approaches focus on different aspects of foreign policy decision-making and that neither approach alone can provide a complete explanation for how and why foreign policy decisions are made, which creates the need for a unified model of decision processes and outcomes (Mintz and Geva, 1997; Hill, 2003; Levy, 2003; Mintz, 2003a, 2004a).⁷¹

3.3. Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises

⁷⁰ The most recent development in the studies of the operational code of decision-makers, based on interactions between philosophical and instrumental beliefs in the self and the other in sequential games, has attempted to address the strategic interaction effects to the cognitive analysis of foreign policy-making (Walker, 2003, 2005; Feng, 2005). The operational code literature is built on the contributions by George, 1969, 1979; Holsti, 1977; Walker, 1977, 1983.

⁷¹ The insistence that either the psychological or rational choice approach must be chosen exclusively is identified by Brecher (1999) as a “flawed dichotomy,” with destructive arguments between advocates of each school taking the place of efforts toward synthesis.

Decision-making of daily routine policy-making is not the focus of this project. Instead, the goal is to assess decision-making by officials in top leadership positions during a given *crisis* of a national security (and usually militarized) nature involving an issue or a region concerning another actor (usually a state). A foreign policy crisis, more often than not, is complex, ambiguous and time sensitive.⁷² The actions chosen in response to the crisis are usually judged by qualitative rather than quantitative criteria (Holsti, 1979).⁷³ Therefore, the crisis situation often induces higher levels of stress and anxiety for the decision-makers,⁷⁴ thus posing more cognitive constraints that could potentially impair their rational calculations and ability to make the optimal choice.⁷⁵ Experimental findings and observational evidence both suggest that a moderate level of stress and anxiety tends to be conducive to positive performance relying on rationality (Holsti, 1979: 107). As the level of anxiety increases, however, the intensified stress tends to weaken rather than boost decision-makers' ability to rationally cope with the complex situation.⁷⁶ In a time of high levels of stress and anxiety like in an international crisis, Korchin (1964: 63) argues that "there is a narrowing of the cognitive organization

⁷² A clarification of these related concepts, foreign policy crisis and international crisis, will appear in Chapter 4.

⁷³ See Holsti (1979) for a complete review of the theoretical approaches to the study of international crisis, including several distinctive approaches to crisis decision-making: the organizational response model, the hostile interaction model, the cost calculation model, the individual stress model, theories of crisis consequences and prescriptive theories.

⁷⁴ Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997: 839) defines stress as "a state of mind among decision makers brought on by an environmental challenge requiring a response within a limited time; that is, stress is a psychological condition usually associated with anxiety and/or frustration produced by crisis and threat."

⁷⁵ With some exceptions in which scholars argue that organizational processes and bureaucratic politics may be obstacles for rational choice (e.g., Allison, 1969, 1971; Sigal, 1970), the organizational response model assumes that decision-makers tend to show greater substantive rationality in a crisis situation than in normal circumstances.

⁷⁶ Footnotes 36 through 39 in Holsti (1979) offer some prominent examples of these experimental and observational findings.

at the moment; the individual loses broader perspective, he is no longer able to ‘see’ essential aspects of the situation and his behavior becomes, consequently, less adaptive.” Studies (e.g., Holsti and George, 1975; Brecher, 1980; Haney, 1994) have shown that the situational factors related to a crisis, including intensified stress, time pressure and uncertainty, tend to induce “simplified and nonnormative” decision-making (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003: 29).⁷⁷ In short, for individual decision-makers, sharpened stress and anxiety in a crisis most notably leads to cognitive rigidity, span of attention, and time limits (Holsti, 1979). For these reasons, in crisis situations, decision-makers tend to find themselves in greater need of seeking cognitive heuristics or shortcuts to ease their burdens as a result of the high levels of stress, anxiety and time pressure.

Significant scientific progress has been made in studies of crisis, particularly decision-making in crisis (by individuals, small groups, or different institutions). This perhaps is one of the most salient areas of FPA over the past decades (e.g., Allison, 1971; Brecher, 1975, 1980, 1993; Lebow, 1981; James, 1988; Janis, 1989; Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997, 2000; James and Rioux, 1998). George’s (1979, 1980) advisory process and Janis’s (1982) groupthink, among others, also contributed to the large body of literature on decision-making process in crisis.

Yet, in this domain, more needs to be expanded beyond the context of the US to crises in non-Western countries (Gerner, 1995: footnote 20; Haney, 1995). It is easy to see that the literature is heavily dominated by the US and other advanced countries.

⁷⁷ Uncertainty includes uncertain reactions from the opponent in terms of strategies or specific tactics. Between enduring rivals, the degree of uncertainty with regard to the opponent’s strategies may lessen as the dyad has had repeated interactions centering on the same conflict of interests. This, however, does not indicate that the degree of uncertainty regarding the opponent’s tactics employed in the response may reduce accordingly (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003: 33).

Without further efforts to include other countries in the PH-related studies, it would be less convincing to claim PH as a generalizable theory of foreign policy decision-making.

Furthermore, with particular reference to crisis, more work is needed to clearly link foreign policy *structure*, or organizational configurations, *process* of foreign policy decision-making and foreign policy *outcome* (Haney, 1995). Hermann, Hermann and Hagan (1987), Hermann and Hermann (1989), and Kaarbo, Beasley and Hermann (1990) share a similar line of inquiry about the effect of decision unit structure on the decision-making process and, thus, foreign policy behavior.

Overall, studies of crisis decision-making are closely related to institutional/organizational attributes and cognitive and analytical factors of decision-makers. Allison (1971) is one of the best examples of crisis decision-making studies with three distinctive models of a single case study focusing on these factors respectively. Also, Snyder and Diesing (1977) offer three decision-making models of 21 case studies. They conclude that the classical rationality based on utility-maximization, and Simon's bounded rationality model, based on satisficing, are complementary rather than competing (Gerner, 1995). Snyder and Diesing (1977: 405-407) reject the basic assumptions of utility-maximization in crisis situations. Instead, they assert that bounded rationality fits the situations of crisis bargaining decisions, "especially in the area of strategy revision." The bureaucratic politics model, according to Snyder and Diesing (1977), is complementary to, instead of a rival against, both classical rational theory and the model of bounded rationality. In fact, the bureaucratic politics model applies best in situations where decisions are made as a result of interactions among a large number of

actors/institutions/coalitions (Gerner, 1977). In contrast, bounded rationality is best applicable to decision-making by a limited number of individuals.

3.4. Poliheuristic Theory: Bridging the Cognitive-Rational Gap

The theoretical pillar of this project, poliheuristic theory, integrates the cognitive and rational choice approaches to decision-making and therefore represents a major step forward for the field of FPA (Mintz, 2003b: 1-2). The term “poliheuristic” has two roots – ‘poly’ and ‘heuristic’ (Mintz, 2004a). The former has two layers of meanings: one means many and the other refers to the first and foremost state of politics in policy consideration. The latter root refers to shortcuts – the cognitive shortcuts employed by decision-makers to simplify decision-making.

The primary assumption of the poliheuristic theory is “decision-makers use a mixture of decision strategies en route to a choice. Specifically, decision-makers employ a two-stage process en route to a single choice.” (Mintz et al., 1997; Redd, 2003: 103) The decision rules or strategies during the two stages vary according to “the changing conditions of the problem and the environment and on the cognitive and personal characteristics of the decision maker.” (Sathasivam, 2003: 58; also see Mintz and Geva, 1997; Mintz et al., 1997; Hermann, 1986; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Walker, 1987a, 1987b) PH “specifically states that decision procedures and rules are not ‘fixed’ but instead vary depending on intervening variables such as one’s goals, the domain in which a decision-maker operates, and other situational constraints.” (Redd, 2003: 103; also see Mintz et al., 1997)

PH contends that foreign policy decision-making takes place in two stages, which effectively explains why neither cognitive nor rational choice models have had much success in providing a complete picture. Specifically, the cognitive process, including individual idiosyncrasies and belief systems, initially helps to simplify the decision task for decision-makers. Afterward, decision-makers analyze domestic factors, system structures (e.g., as a possible constraint on action due to the distribution of capabilities) and other concerns according to a rational calculus (e.g., expected utility-maximizing) to identify the best choice of the remaining options.

Figure 3-4-1 illustrates the PH model of decision-making, with specific application to the crisis domain. It shows that options a_1 through a_{n^*} are viable politically and a_{n^*+1} through a_x are not.⁷⁸ At Stage I, decision-makers implement a dimension-based, noncompensatory decision rule, with the emphasis not on the final choice, but instead on identifying options that are deemed viable for further consideration or assessment.⁷⁹ Options with low or negative values on one crucial contextual dimension (political, economic, diplomatic, military and so forth) to decision-makers that *cannot* be compensated for, or replaced by, positive values on one or more of the other dimensions, are eliminated. In this sense, as an option to other decision-making theories (e.g., the rational expected utility theory and the cybernetic theory), PH features the noncompensatory principle with particular emphasis on political considerations

⁷⁸ Options not shown due to constraints on space, between those listed explicitly in Figure 3-4 (e.g., a_2 , a_3 , etc.), are acknowledged by broken lines leading downward from 'Onset of crisis.'

⁷⁹ A dimension can be understood in different ways. It can be seen as an organizing theme for related information and variables (Ostrom et al., 1980). It can be seen as evaluations presented by advisors about the utility of choosing a particular alternative (Redd, 2003: 104-105). See detailed discussions about the contextual dimensions in Chapter 4.

(DeRouen, 2003).⁸⁰ In Stage II, decision-makers choose from among options a_1 through a_n^* on the basis of one of two types of option-based strategy: (1) an expected utility calculus or (2) optimization along the most important dimension (i.e., LEX ordering) (Mintz and Geva, 1997; Mintz, 2003b).⁸¹ Thus, the option perceived as best – a_0 – is the final choice. This is not the result of a comprehensive or exhaustive search for holistic, compensatory trade-offs (Mintz, 1993). With this kind of two-stage decision-making, the poliheuristic perspective addresses not only the *outcomes*, but also the *processes*, of decision-making.

During Stage I of decision-making, policy formulation (including foreign policy) is assumed to be subject to decision-makers' considerations of internal and external interests along a variety of (and sometimes competing) dimensions. In other words, considerations are not issue specific or alternative-based, but dimension-based. No matter how high its overall utility scores along other dimensions, as long as the option under scrutiny scores low on political survivability, it will be removed immediately from further consideration. This is an example of the core of PH – the noncompensatory and nonholistic rule. There is strong evidence in favor of a noncompensatory model that is capable of tapping the motivations and constraints of leaders' decision-making in times of crises. Analysis of the decision-making by American presidents, including Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush and

⁸⁰ Lau (2003: 33-42) offers a complete discussion of decision strategies, including a variety of compensatory and noncompensatory rules.

⁸¹ The former aims to calculate and balance the costs and benefits for each alternative, while the latter requires that the final decision achieve the utility-maximizing goal along the dimension regarded as most vital for decision-makers. In other words, the dimensions in the lexicographic scenario are *not* equally weighted—the most vital dimension will be evaluated carefully for each option and the final choice needs to be best in this way but does not have to be optimal in an overall sense. This represents maximizing on a limited, rather than a grand, scale.

Bill Clinton, confirms the use of the noncompensatory decision rule (Mintz, 1993; DeRouen, 2001, 2003; Taylor-Robinson and Redd, 2003).

Equally important, politics is the first and foremost to decision-makers at Stage I of decision-making: “politicians rarely will choose an option that will hurt them politically” (Mintz, 2003b: 3).⁸² PH sees domestic politics as “*the essence of decision*” (Mintz, 2004a: 7). While caring about policy, political leaders essentially care about the political implications of their policies and/or actions (Morton, 1991: 772; Mintz, 1993: 601). Decision-makers almost always try to avoid choices that could bring political damage to themselves or reduce survivability of their political life (Wilkenfeld, 1973; Salmore and Salmore, 1978; Lebow, 1981; James, 1988; Levy, 1989, 1992, 2003; Nincic, 1997; Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow, 2003). Political survival is of paramount concerns of most, if not all, political leaders for two reasons: (1) significant political opposition groups’ challenge to the incumbent leadership and government policy and (2) the public perception of foreign policy that often sways the public support to the incumbent government (Hagan, 1995: 124-125). In the two-level games (Putnam, 1988), decision-makers must always try to strike a delicate balance between building coalitions supporting foreign policy and maintaining domestic political power (Hagan, 1995: 126). In spite of the desire to believe otherwise, domestic political considerations do enter into even the highest levels of decision-making in crisis situations (e.g., Wilkenfeld, 1973; James, 1988; Brecher, 1993).

Other theories of FPA also support the paramount importance of domestic politics. Diversionary theory, for instance, contends that leaders tend to engage in an

⁸² Hagan (1995) argues that domestic politics determines the way leaders manage international disputes although domestic politics has no deciding effect on the patterns of international conflicts.

international crisis or interstate war as an external diversion of the domestic public attention when in trouble at home, particularly in time of weak domestic economy and/or low public support (Ostrom and Simon, 1985; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Levy, 1989; Russett, 1990; James and Oneal, 1991; James and Rioux, 1998; DeRouen, 2000; Li, Drury and James, 2006). These studies, in general, find support that domestic political factors are most consequential in the president's decision to use military force, or other means, than international factors.

PH represents a unique theoretical model of decision-making. Although domestic politics is at the core of all the above-mentioned theoretical models, only PH places domestic politics as a *sine qua non* to political leaders (DeRouen, 2001; 2003), rather than of ancillary relevance as prescribed in the rational expected utility (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, 1992) or the cybernetic models (Ostrom and Job, 1986; James and Oneal, 1991).⁸³ Political power and survival lies at the center of a decision-maker's choice, regardless of regime types and how the decision-maker moves up the leadership ladder. For instance, level of public support and challenges or criticism of leadership impact the prospects of political survival. In the framework of PH, Mintz et al. (1997: 554) contend, "political leaders measure success and failure, costs and benefits, gains and losses, and risks and rewards using *political terms*." To achieve the ends, decision-makers are loss-averse (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Levy, 1992a, 1992b; Nincic, 1997; DeRouen, 2003). Other case studies produce supporting evidence of the noncompensatory principle in non-democratic regimes, with the politically salient aspects

⁸³ The difference between the cybernetic model and the PH model is that the former selects an alternative that "satisfices" a certain criterion (Mintz, 1993).

varying accordingly (e.g. Astorino and Trusty, 2003; Mintz, 2003b; Sathasivam, 2003; James and Zhang, 2005; Kinne, 2005).

Furthermore, PH is order sensitive. Information processing and choice are order sensitive; different orders lead to different weighting of the available options and, therefore, different choice outcomes. Dimension/attribute-based strategies (as opposed to alternative-based) and the noncompensatory rule (Ford et al., 1989; Billings and Marcus, 1983; Billings and Scherer, 1988; Hogarth, 1987; Payne et al., 1988, 1993) (as opposed to the compensatory rule) are the two processing characteristics postulated in PH that feature Stage I of decision-making in order to reduce cognitive strain and complexity.

In terms of the levels of analysis, PH reaches across the individual, state and international levels, linking agent-structure variables. As Astorino-Courtois and Trusty (2003: 31) put it, PH “rests on the proposition that foreign policy decision makers use different strategies depending on the properties of the decision.” While Beijing has been trying to further institutionalize the decision-making process in both domestic and foreign affairs, it is clear that there still is a long way to go; decisions still are made in a hierarchical fashion, with very restricted access to only a few top leaders. In this sense, PH is an ideal theoretical framework to employ in the present study.

Only with a decade of existence, PH has been applied to and tested in a wide range of decision-making areas, e.g., the use of force (Mintz, 1993; DeRouen, 2000), coalition formation (Mintz, 1995), war termination (Mintz and Geva, 1998), conflict resolution (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003; Mintz and Mishal, 2003), non-use of force (DeRouen, 2003), influence of advisors (Redd, 2003, 2005), framing (Taylor-Robinson and Redd, 2003), crisis escalation (Clare, 2003; DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004),

the influence of the mass media on foreign policy (Van Belle, 2003), initial crisis reaction (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004; James and Zhang, 2005), trade disputes (Long, 2006) and so on (see Mintz, 2004a: 4, Table 1; Mintz, 2005). These studies test the PH model of decision-making via a range of methods, from controlled experiments, through case studies, to aggregate data analysis. Accumulated evidence from formal modeling, experimental analyses, case studies and cross-national, large-N data analyses (e.g., Dacey and Carlson, 2004; DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004) strongly confirms propositions from PH.⁸⁴ In sum, explanations derived from PH appear both scientifically valuable and robust. As an alternative to the expected utility theory and other rational decision models (Mintz, 2004a), PH deserves further application to foreign policy decision-making, especially in areas that have been studied in more strictly traditional, descriptive ways.⁸⁵

In the meantime, a few areas exist in which more should be done to further theorize and test PH. First, extant PH-related research heavily focuses on democratic regimes and advanced industrial states.⁸⁶ To expand PH to the global perspective, more efforts are necessary to apply PH to a wider range of states and actors. Testing PH in Chinese decision-making is a useful effort in this area.

Second, in spite of the empirical support for PH, experimental research is unable to further explain under what circumstances the decision-making moves from Stage I to

⁸⁴ The most recent impressive evidence in favor of PH appears in the special issue of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (February 2004) and the symposium in the *International Studies Perspectives* (February 2005).

⁸⁵ Liu (2003) and Stern (2004) offer two insightful comparisons between PH and other decision-making models that also feature the cognitive aspects. Their studies explicitly suggest the key areas in which PH is different from the other theories. In some areas, as will be detailed below, PH has explanatory advantages. Liu (2003) compares PH with the cybernetic theory. Stern (2004) compares PH with a wider range of decision theories, including cognitive-institutionalism, problem representation and decision unit.

⁸⁶ A few exceptions are Sathasivam (2003) and James and Zhang (2005).

Stage II. Stern (2004) criticizes PH's lack of sufficient explanation as to how decision-makers are activated in the two-stage process and how they form the decision matrices that await elimination or selection. It is not clear "why policy makers frame a given problem as a crisis or noncrisis situation" or in terms of gains or losses (Stern, 2004: 110). The comparative case studies here should provide more insights.

Third, PH seems to explain "how" better than "why" leaders make critical foreign policy decisions. If decision-makers generally tend to avert major political loss regardless of the overall expected utility of the options, as most empirical studies have suggested, then it is imperative to find out: (1) what has made the leaders perceive certain options, as opposed to the others, as more significantly politically-damaging; (2) what causes "the multiple constraints" operating on foreign policy decision-makers (Stern, 2004: 110); (3) how cognitive heuristics or shortcuts help them overcome these constraints; and (4) why leaders demonstrate different degrees of sensitivity to the domestic political context.⁸⁷

Fourth, PH faces another challenge of how to specify the different dimensions along which leaders base their decisions (Mintz, 2004a). The fundamental problem is that defining the dimensions heavily depends on the situation or context in which a foreign policy issue/problem takes place.⁸⁸ For instance, James and Zhang (2005) suggest that which policies can be viewed along the political, economic, diplomatic or

⁸⁷ Stern's attempt to contextualize PH with pieces from the other theories points to the direction of a possible synthesis, but his attempt is inconclusive with regard to what substantive progress can be made.

⁸⁸ A good illustration is Beijing's disputes over the South China Sea with the neighboring countries, including Vietnam and the Philippines. Given the potentially huge oil reserve in this area, it is difficult to delineate during the policy analysis of these disputes the lines between the political dimension (about territory), the military dimension (about sources of strategic energy) and the economic dimension (about future profitable oil export).

military dimension depends on the context of the foreign policy making and perhaps the nature of the regime and its counterpart (Mintz, 2003a). Even the same issue/problem is likely to be viewed and approached very differently by the same leadership facing different counterparts (e.g., China vs. the US rather than China vs. the Philippines), for various substantive disputes (e.g., China vs. the US for ideological confrontation rather than for strategic interests in East Asia), or in a different temporal domain (e.g., China vs. Taiwan in the 1950s rather than in 1995-1996). Many recent attempts to specify the operational procedure of different dimensions are subject to contextual interpretations, which thus seem to be *ad hoc* and lacking consensus (e.g., Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003). Therefore, it is imperative to keep searching for and improve empirical rules or criteria that can rigorously “identify (1) ‘key’ decision dimensions, (2) the cutoff point for when the noncompensatory (avoid major loss) principle applies, and (3) the conditions under which decision makers switch from the first stage of decision making to the second stage in the PH decision calculus” (Mintz, 2004a: 10).

Lastly, Stern (2004) also points out that PH has difficulty in explaining the cases in which leaders make decisions that turn out to bring severe political damage to themselves. The Vietnam War proved to be such a case for Lyndon B. Johnson. Many analysts would argue in the same way that the ongoing war in Iraq has turned out to damage the presidency of George W. Bush.⁸⁹ Moreover, Morrow (1997) points out that PH (along with prospect theory) does not explicitly address assumptions of strategic

⁸⁹ In March 2006, the Gallup and CNN Polls showed that more than three years after sending the American troops to Iraq, President Bush’s public job approval rating had dropped to 36%, an all-time low during his presidency, with 59% disapproval. See details at <http://poll.gallup.com>. The Fox News Poll in the following month found only 32% of public support for President Bush with 60% disapproval (http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060424/ts_nm/bush_poll_dc).

interaction as game theory is able to do. The preceding comparative case analysis will try to seek solutions or alternative to these problems.

3.5. Poliheuristic Hypotheses

This section develops a pair of primary hypotheses, along with two secondary hypotheses. The primary hypotheses arise from the two-stage model of PH. The two secondary hypotheses of PH are linked with the literature of protracted conflict, also known as enduring rivalry, and that of the Cold War between the two ideological camps. Each is put forward in the crisis domain.⁹⁰ These hypotheses will be tested in Chapter 5 based on Chinese decision-making in response to foreign policy crises.

3.5.1 Primary Hypotheses

Primary Hypothesis (I):

During Stage I of crisis decision-making, leaders tend to avert political loss by using the noncompensatory rule with an emphasis on the political dimension.

As discussed earlier, in times of foreign policy crises, the degree of complexity⁹¹ in decision-making increases when decision-makers perceive “multiple, competing values and interests...imbedded in a single issue” (George, 1980: 26). “Decision researchers have tended to gauge the complexity of a decision task in terms of the amount

⁹⁰ The hypotheses put forward below also should hold in other types of decision-making, e.g., non-crisis decision-making. However, this must await further testing in those contexts.

⁹¹ The meaning of complexity has two folds: one is concerned with decision-maker’s cognitive complexity (i.e., the way the decision-maker approaches the decision problem, or more specifically, the degree to which the decision-maker differentiates and integrates various pieces of information in making a choice) and the other is concerned with the attributes of the decision problem itself (e.g., the number of dimensions and alternatives in the decision matrix). See footnote 3 in Astorino-Courtois and Trusty (2003).

of information available about actor preferences and actions (e.g., Vertzberger, 1995; Beuno de Mesquita and Kim, 1995), and/or, relative to the size and scope of the choice set (e.g., Paquette and Kida, 1988; Hadari, 1988; Maoz and Astorino, 1992; Payne, Bettman and Johnson, 1992, 1993).” (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003: 31)

Biological limitations in the human brain on the ability to process complex information, individual idiosyncratic beliefs, values and preferences all combine to inhibit rational-analytical choice at the initial stage of decision-making in crises (Vertzberger, 1990; Geva and Mintz, 1997; Levy, 1992, 2003; Mintz, 2003b, 2003c). Thus the salient political considerations are put into bold relief on the menu for choice at the outset of a crisis.

In time of a foreign policy crisis, complexity, time pressure and near impossibility of obtaining complete information all combine to force decision-makers to strive for heuristics or short-cuts in order to reduce pressure and simplify decision matrices so that they can decide in a timely fashion. Therefore, cognitive heuristics are more important than rational utility-maximizing in the initial stage of decision-making and relatively straightforward political considerations come to the fore.

Serious political loss – the kind that naturally is at risk of happening in a crisis situation – is unacceptable to decision-makers. Political loss can be manifested in any or all of the following aspects⁹²: threat to a leader’s survival, significant drop in public approval for a policy, significant drop in popularity, lack of support for a particular policy (e.g., use of force or sanctions or peace), the prospect of an electoral defeat, domestic opposition, threat to regime survival, intra-party rivalry and competition, internal or

⁹² Note that many of these manifestations are absent in non-democratic countries.

external challenge to the regime, potential collapse of regime or governmental coalition, threat to political power, dignity, honor or legitimacy of a leader, demonstrations and riots, and the existence of veto players (e.g., pivotal parties in parliamentary government) (Mintz, 2004a). Decision-makers try to avert political loss by removing options that are likely to cause such damage.⁹³ A number of studies suggest that decision-makers tend to avert political loss (e.g., Levy, 1992a, 1992b, 1997a, 1997b, 2003); “people rank the prospect of avoiding a loss above that of securing a gain” (Nincic, 1997: 115). The noncompensatory principle reflects the political-loss-aversion tendency in leaders’ thinking. Consequently, it is important to note that during this initial stage of screening, the use of the noncompensatory strategy is closely related to the emphasis on the *political* dimension. In summary, Stage I of crisis decision-making is cognitively satisficing along the lines of domestic politics rather than rational or utility-maximizing in other aspects.

Primary Hypothesis (II):

During Stage II of crisis decision-making, leaders tend to make the final choice among the remaining options by rational choice-based, utility-maximizing calculation along a more *diverse* set of dimensions, which includes the political but also military, economic and diplomatic dimensions.

At Stage II of decision-making, the logic of rational choice is more important to leaders than the cognitive processing purely about politics. The process of decision-making, therefore, is altered accordingly. After they have simplified decision matrices by

⁹³ Loss aversion among decision-makers is essentially consistent with the basic logic behind the diversionary theory, namely, internal conflict at times may be displaced outward, which therefore would minimize domestic political damage absorbed by decision-makers (DeRouen, 2000; see also DeRouen, 2001: 70).

eliminating options that may cause political damage, decision-makers will choose among the remaining options in a more rational way that maximizes utility and minimizes risks/costs. Thus, at this stage, either (1) the option with the highest overall expected value (i.e., using the utility-maximizing strategy), or (2) the option with the highest utility along the most important policy dimension (i.e., using the LEX strategy), is chosen. As previous research suggests, the actual selection of either strategy, to a large extent, depends on the varying conditions of the problem (Mintz and Geva, 1997; Mintz et al., 1997; Sathasivam, 2003; Taylor-Robinson and Redd, 2003).⁹⁴

In particular, the second-stage choice rule is affected by both the interrelations of the value dimensions and the number of options remaining after the first stage eliminations. This research anticipates that normative decision-making should be most common if the politically based noncompensatory calculus of the first stage yields a much reduced decision matrix containing minimal value conflict. However, if the choice set is not significantly reduced during Stage I (e.g., if most options exceeded the cut-off value and are tied or very close in value), and trade-offs between values are extreme, the Stage-II decision task can remain relatively complex. Again, decision research demonstrates that the use of nonnormative decision strategies typically increases with the complexity of the task.

⁹⁴ For instance, that may include “the interrelations of the value dimensions and the number of alternatives remaining after the first stage eliminations” (Astorino-Courtios and Trusty 2003: 32) and other situational and environmental constraints (Taylor-Robinson and Redd: 2003: 81). PH does not specify the conditions under which the utility-based rational analysis or lexicographic decision-making is to be expected at this stage. Studies in cognitive psychology suggests that the decision strategy is related to the structural complexity of the (remaining) choice set as well as the cognitive and personal characteristics of the decision-maker(s) (e.g., Jacoby, 1975; Payne, 1976; Paquette and Kida, 1988; Payne et al., 1990; Hansen and Helgeson, 1996; Payne, Bettman and Luce, 1996).

3.5.2 Secondary Hypotheses

Crisis decision-making is unique in that it could potentially end the ongoing crisis or lead to subsequent crises over the same issue(s) at stake, and even escalating the ongoing crisis to interstate wars. Crisis actors and their absolute and relative powers or capabilities often have significant impact on the perception of the other actor's decision-making in the crisis. This, in turn, could lead to different outcomes of decision-making in response to the crisis. Moreover, properties of a crisis could be associated with the process and outcome of decision-making in times of crisis. The two secondary hypotheses are in order below, specifically aiming to link the literature of crisis decision-making with crucial attributes of the crisis – placement of the crisis in a series of crises in a protracted conflict and the presence of a superpower opponent, respectively.

Existing literature on PH conveys favorable evidence in many crisis decisions (e.g., DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004; James and Zhang, 2005; among other works cited in Chapter 3) or non-decisions (e.g., DeRouen, 2003). In addition, Oneal's (1982: 57) independently derived foreign policy decision-making model implicitly shows consistency with the PH two-stage model. However, so far, PH has yet to tap into the linkage between crisis decision-making and some of the crucial components/attributes of crisis at both the actor level (e.g., in the context of Chinese decision-making) and the international system level (e.g., the impact of a protracted conflict or a superpower opponent), which could further widen or narrow the scope or contextual conditions of PH's explanatory power. These crisis attributes are directly linked with the level of threat in decision-makers' perceptions when evaluation of the options is under way. In other words, the cognitive heuristic employed at the initial information processing and

options screening is likely to first address the information associated with the political dimension of policy consideration, that is, how serious would the consequences of the crisis be to decision-makers' political survival in the aftermath of the crisis. Inevitably, such considerations must at least roughly assess the hostile history against the triggering entity.

Protracted Conflict (PC) Hypothesis:

In an *initial* crisis in a series of crises within a protracted conflict, decision-makers are more likely to put politics as the top priority at the onset of decision-making. Conversely, in a *successive* crisis in a series of crises within a protracted conflict, decision-makers are less likely to do so.

The ICB Project defines a protracted conflict as a sustained conflict between actors that has a level of conflict within a relatively high range, with some peaks as well, such as crises or wars (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997; 2000). Protracted conflict is singled out as a distinctive type of interstate conflict; they encompass about 60% of all international crises in the ICB data set. Nonetheless, no explicit link has been established between crisis decision-making and protracted conflict in the literature of PH. To fill this blank, this secondary hypothesis aims to study the relationship between the sequence of the crisis within a given protracted conflict and the decision-making process and outcome in response to this particular crisis. The idea simply is to find out whether a protracted conflict has anything to do with the importance of decision-making in response to a crisis.

Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997: 822, with original emphasis) argue that crises within a protracted conflict “*differ from those outside a PC along a number of dimensions,*

from type of trigger and values at stake, through the role of violence in crisis management, the extent of involvement by the major powers and global organizations, and their effectiveness in crisis abatement, to the substance and form of outcome.” In contrast to isolated crises, actors in crises within a protracted conflict tend to have the following characteristics: (1) higher likelihood of a (direct or indirect) pronounced violent triggering act; (2) greater perception of a value threat (i.e., threat to influence when a major power is the actor and threat to existence for all actors); and (3) higher frequency of usually severe violence as the primary crisis management technique and a central means for achieving foreign policy objectives (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 826-827).⁹⁵

At the actor level, we found considerable evidence to support the contention that these actors find themselves in quite different situations from the corresponding non-protracted conflict actors, and that these differences are reflected in the manner in which their crises are triggered, the gravity of the perceived threat, and the types of crisis management techniques that are employed.

– Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997: 833)

For these reasons, decision-makers would tend to give less serious consideration along the political dimension if their states have had history of protracted conflict against the same opponent, as compared to the very first conflict with the same opponent.

This dissertation contends that placement of the crisis under investigation within a protracted conflict may have significant effect on the process of decision-making regarding the major response to the threat from a long-time adversary perceived by the actor. Decision-makers might approach the decision for the *initial* crisis in a fundamentally different way from the decision for the *successive* crisis within the same

⁹⁵ It should be noted that crises within protracted conflicts seem to strongly support these propositions at the actor level (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 832).

protracted conflict. Specifically, whether it is the *initial* crisis or a *successive* one is closely related to whether decision-makers are more likely to put primacy on politics at the onset of decision-making. If their states previously have had repeated interstate crises against the same opponent(s), decision-makers might put primacy over the non-political factors and give less serious consideration along the political dimension at the initial screening of decision options. By contrast, if the crisis involves a new opponent but with long-term, low-level hostility, decision-makers might put primacy over politics at the initial screening of options. For instance, Beijing might treat the first crisis against Vietnam differently from the three subsequent crises. In the first crisis, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the Deng-led leadership apparently put political considerations as top priority during their initial deliberation of the options. In the other subsequent crises, for the same old opponent, there might be less necessity and fewer incentives for decision-makers to put primacy on politics.

Superpower Opponent (SO) Hypothesis:

In a foreign policy crisis involving a superpower opponent, decision-makers of the non-superpower actor are more likely to put politics as the top priority at the onset of decision-making. Conversely, in a crisis without a superpower opponent, decision-makers of the non-superpower actor are less likely to do so.

The crises involving a superpower opponent supposedly are fundamentally different from the ones without a superpower opponent. From the system level, the ICB data set differentiates various types of involvement by a superpower in an international crisis, including directive military intervention, semi-military involvement, covert

involvement, political involvement and no involvement (or inactivity). In terms of foreign policy crisis (i.e., at the actor level), this hypothesis aims to study the linkage between the impact of a superpower opponent (i.e., the nature of power relationship between/among crisis actors) and the decision-making process of the non-superpower actor in response to the crisis. This, of course, primarily applies to the Cold War era.⁹⁶ For two important reasons, this hypothesis still bears theoretical and practical significance even in the post-Cold War era: (1) approximately close to half of the crises in the ICB data set occurred during the Cold War and (2) no one can be certain that another era of Cold-War type, bipolar confrontation will never come again.

Direct involvement of a superpower opponent in the crisis, inevitably increases decision-makers' perceived severity of threat and the level of risk in terms of the consequences of the initial response (e.g., more difficulty in ending the crisis, or greater intensity of potential violence in case of escalation to an interstate war).⁹⁷ The primary reason is the power discrepancy between the superpower opponent and the non-superpower actor.⁹⁸ Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997) examine trigger-response mechanism by searching for the matching behavior patterns between the trigger and the respondent and other factors such as decision-makers' perceived level of stress, domestic

⁹⁶ Technically, Taiwan Strait IV (1995-1996) should be excluded from this particular test because it occurred after the Cold War came to an end. However, given that the USSR (later Russia) has never been one of the actors in the protracted conflict over the Taiwan Strait whereas the US was not involved in Taiwan Strait IV as an actor, this crisis can be used to test the SO Hypothesis.

⁹⁷ Here, the decision-makers refer to those of the non-superpower actor in the crisis.

⁹⁸ Note that this has to do with power transition theory (Organski, 1968; Organski and Kugler, 1980; Kugler and Organski, 1989).

sociopolitical conditions within the crisis actor and the power discrepancy between the actor (usually the respondent) and its principal adversary (usually its triggering entity).⁹⁹

Relations and interactions with superpowers are vital to any non-superpower actor in the crisis, because this sets the foundation for its foreign policy and position in international relations. Even at the beginning of the crisis, the most immediate consideration for decision-makers in the non-superpowers would be how to avoid these severe consequences. The presence of a superpower opponent, along with the relative power discrepancy between the superpower and the non-superpower, is a crucial component of the available information to be considered by the non-superpower decision-makers when they try to make a decision in response to the crisis. This kind of information is likely to be processed in the minds of decision-makers as one of the factors that are not directly associated with the personal political stakes of the decision-makers during the initial screening of the response options. In other words, the other aspects, the military dimension in particular, will rise as important, if not more than domestic politics, in their initial consideration. Under such circumstances, therefore, decision-makers tend to rely less on the use of the cognitive heuristics with emphasis on noncompensatory political loss during the initial screening of the options. In this sense, in a crisis with a superpower opponent, decision-makers' own political gains or losses are less likely to be given sufficient attention because of the immediate concerns over the situation along the other dimensions. Contrary to what the PH model predicts, this would discourage the use of cognitive heuristics to simplify decision-making.

⁹⁹ They find that “while the three factors of stress, sociopolitical conditions, and power relations help substantially in explaining deviations from the non-violent trigger to non-violent response dynamic, we will need to identify other factors to explain deviations from violence to violence matching.” (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 846)

In contrast, in a foreign policy crisis without a superpower opponent, decision-makers do not perceive the similar degree of threat and level of risk since the other non-superpower actors have more comparable capabilities. Hence, concerns over the military dimension by the decision-makers, for instance, are never as intense as when the opponent is a superpower. Instead, decision-makers may attach greater concerns about their political survivability, for instance, in terms of how their handling of the crisis will bring them personal success in domestic politics. Those who fail to handle the crisis well are bound to hurt their own political well-being domestically.

In summary, the two secondary hypotheses are not inconsistent with the primary hypotheses. More importantly, they support the primary hypotheses by specifying two of the most crucial contextual conditions of crisis decision-making (i.e., protracted conflict and superpower opponent) and by narrowing the crisis scope for further testing PH-related decision-making. In fact, the secondary hypotheses depict two scenarios in which it presumably would be the hardest to find support for PH. In addition, the secondary hypotheses help link the PH model to the broader literature on international crisis. This would facilitate a typological analysis of PH-related decision-making in the crisis domain.

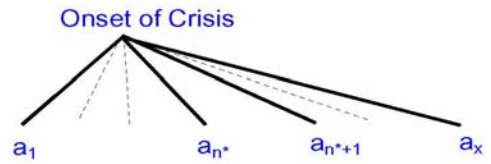
3.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviews the literature of foreign policy decision-making with emphasis on one of the key debates in the field of FPA – the debate between the psychological and rational choice approaches. The goal is to set up a theoretical framework within which the dissertation unfolds.

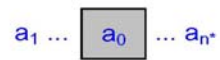
In the vast literature of foreign policy decision-making, PH presents an innovative theory that bridges the gaps between rational choice and cognitive psychology, two previously isolated approaches. Compared with the other theoretical frameworks, PH has theoretical advantages and weaknesses. The validity of PH will be further tested in Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises. The next chapter moves to a detailed discussion of the data and methodology of this study.

Figure 3-4-1.
Poliheuristic Decision-Making in Crisis

Stage I: Identify politically viable alternatives a_1, \dots, a_{n^*} from among $a_1, \dots, a_{n^*}, \dots, a_x$



Stage II: Select optimal alternative, a_0 , from among viable set, a_1, \dots, a_{n^*}



CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION:

A STRUCTURED, FOCUSED COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

“Case studies permit an intensive examination of particular historical sequences, and in doing so they can contribute to the process of theory development by helping to clarify the meaning of key variables and the validity of empirical indicators used to measure them, and by suggesting additional causal mechanisms, causal variables, and interaction effects. They can also help to identify the contextual variables that affect hypothesized causal processes and to identify the scope conditions under which particular theories are valid. These are all important steps in the theory-building process.... The role of case studies in generating hypotheses, or at least in refining and sharpening them, is enhanced by the close interaction of theory and data in case study analysis.... The interplay between theory and evidence is also explicit in “analytic narratives” in which formal rational choice theory guides analytic histories, the anomalies of which are then used to refine the theory. Although hypothesis-generating case studies can sometimes contribute to the development of entirely new hypotheses, through unexpected discoveries in the process of investigating other phenomena, case studies are often more useful in helping the research to refine existing hypotheses, as in George’s method of structured, focused comparison.”

– Jack S. Levy (2002: 436)

One of the basic goals of political scientists is to search for explanatory generalizations or covering laws that illuminate and hold up across other cases of a particular type or similar cases in different political systems (George, 1979: 46). The search for the best way to achieve this goal often stimulates debate between advocates of

qualitative and quantitative approaches.¹⁰⁰ In recent years, the debate has moved from the ultimately futile argument of which is superior to an emerging consensus in both theoretical debate and empirical studies that the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches should be regarded as “tradeoffs” rather than “dichotomies” and both can be useful but in different aspects (Gerring, 2004: 341; King, Keohane and Verba, 1994).¹⁰¹ Moreover, scholars seem to agree that both approaches share the same logic of inference (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994; Adcock and Collier, 2001; Gerring, 2004; George and Bennett, 2005).¹⁰² Therefore, conscious choice and complementary

¹⁰⁰ As commonly recognized, “N” or “n” both represent number of observations. Qualitative research, for the current purpose, is narrowly defined as case studies and small-n studies, in general relying on philosophical judgment and historical reasoning. For a broader definition of qualitative analysis, see Levy (2002). Similarly, here quantitative research is narrowly defined as large-N studies employing statistical techniques. Broadly speaking, however, within quantitative research in international relations, mathematical or formal modeling has been another pillar that should link the statistical analysis and the theory (e.g., the collections of articles in Brecher and Harvey’s edited volume (2002) by Bram, Bueno de Masquita, Nicholson, and Zinnes). The most iconoclastic and skeptical critiques of the rising behaviorism (or the scientific approach) from the 1960s include Bull (1966) (vs. Kaplan, Singer) and Young (1969) (vs. Russett). More recent discussions or reflections about the ongoing methodological debates, to name a few, include George, 1979: 60-61; Hermann’s ISA Presidential Address (1998); Elman and Elman’s edited volume (2001); the collections of articles on methodology in Brecher and Harvey’s edited volume (2002) by Leng, Levy and Zinnes.

¹⁰¹ Collectively speaking, qualitative studies show a greater affinity for detail-oriented, in-depth investigation and tend to excel in theoretical conceptualization and identifying generalizable units, the causal mechanism that links two variables, and the crucial cases that potentially confirm or falsify the theory (Eckstein, 1975; Gerring, 2004). In contrast, quantitative studies favor rigorous, statistical-correlational analysis and thus tend to do well in hypothesis testing and systematic assessment of causal effect (across units and/or over time).

¹⁰² Among the advocates, for instance, Gerring (2004) argues that case studies and non-case studies share the same logic of causal inquiry by relying on the same sort of covariational evidence. Adcock and Collier (2001) suggest another shared standard of qualitative and quantitative research in terms of measurement validity that pays more attention to context. George and Bennett (2005) offer a critical evaluation of the controlled comparative method in terms of the logic of causal inference and equifinality. In the meantime, the dissident voices have emerged to defend traditional qualitative research. A case in point is McKeown’s (1999) strong criticism that it is inadequate and erroneous to use the epistemological views of Carl Hempel and Karl Popper and the statistical worldview of King, Keohane and Verba as the foundation to evaluate social sciences in general and case studies in particular. He opposes the idea that case studies can be designed in a way to test hypotheses and theories by explicitly laying out the advantage of case studies in terms of theory construction (Walton, 1992). Laitin (1995) echoes this view by soliciting a counter-hegemonic project that uses the qualitative language to standardize quantitative research.

use of both according to the nature of the study will further advance research in political science.

While it is far beyond of the purpose and scope of the current study to try to sort out the pros and cons of both types of research in various substantive areas or to search for ways to use both productively¹⁰³, it is certainly helpful to put the selection of an appropriate method for this study against such ongoing methodological debate as the backdrop. From a theoretical, rigorous point of view, more noticeable advancement has taken place in order to further discipline qualitative research, mostly along two prominent dimensions: (1) more rigorous design of qualitative studies and (2) more attempts to draw reliable, generalizable and testable inferences from observations.¹⁰⁴ Careful consideration and selection of the methodology, regardless whether it is qualitative, quantitative or a combination of some sort, serve the fundamental purpose of political science to build and test theories (Pzresworski and Tenue, 1971).

Furthermore, it should be reiterated, as noted in Chapter 2, that studies of foreign policy decision-making still face several challenges: (1) objective accounts of how decisions were made rarely exist; and (2) it is impossible to virtually repeat history in

¹⁰³ King, Keohane and Verba (1994) attempt to bridge the methodological gap in a coherent fashion, but they evidently favor the quantitative approach as the standard practice by trying to disciplining the practice of qualitative research up to the rigorous 'standard.' In addition, Tarrow (1995) suggests several useful means to bridging the gap, including tracing processes to interpret decisions, systematic and nonsystematic variable discrimination, framing qualitative research within quantitative profiles, putting qualitative flesh on quantitative bones, and sequencing quantitative & qualitative research and triangulation (combination of the two).

¹⁰⁴ The classical works on this development include Verba's (1967) call for the 'disciplined configurative approach,' Przeworski & Tenue's (1970) suggestion of the most different system design (in accordance to John Stuart Mill's logic of agreement) and replacement of 'proper names' with 'variables,' Lijphart's (1971, 1975) typology of case studies and the most similar system design (in accordance to John Stuart Mill's logic of difference), Eckstein's (1979) proposal of crucial-case studies, George's (1979) 'structured, focused comparison' and the 'process tracing' method elaborated by George and McKeown (1985) and George and Bennett (2005).

order to verify or falsify the decision-making rationale and process.¹⁰⁵ Keeping these points in mind, in the following three sections, this chapter details the primary method used in this project and the procedures for data collection on which theory testing and case analysis are based.

4.1. Structured, Focused Comparison

Chinese foreign policy crises since 1949 are too few in number to render a large-N statistical analysis.¹⁰⁶ Rather, it is most appropriate to resort to an option, the method coined by George (1979, 2005) as a “structured, focused comparison.” This is an analytical approach making use of an inductive, qualitative procedure to “formulate the idiosyncratic aspects of the explanations for each case in terms of general variables” (George, 1979: 46). It is *structured* in the sense that it uses standardized, general questions to guide the data collection and analysis in each of the historical cases under scrutiny, allowing for systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases (George, 1979: 62; George and Bennett, 2005: 67). In this study, the standardized, general questions are rooted in the hypotheses derived from the poliheuristic perspective. They also reflect the research objectives of the study, as elaborated in Chapter 1. Hence, these questions form a frame that holds various historical cases within the theoretical relevance of the current study. Such guidance by theoretically informed, generalizable

¹⁰⁵ As King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 91) argue, “we cannot rerun history at the same time and the same place with different values of our explanatory variable each time – as a true solution to the fundamental problem of causal inference would require.”

¹⁰⁶ The fundamental difference between the controlled comparison method and the statistical method, according to Lijphart (1971: 684), is that “the number of cases it [the controlled comparison method] deals with is too small to permit systematic control by means of partial correlations.” A detailed discussion of the data source is presented later on in this chapter.

questions provides rigorous study of even just a handful of cases. The method is *focused* in the sense that it selectively focuses on only certain aspects of the historical cases in accordance to the research objectives and the corresponding theory (George, 1979: 61). In contrast to the “configurative-idiographic” case study that deals with almost every aspect of the case and hence loses comparable focus, the “disciplined-configurative” type of research (Verba, 1967; Eckstein, 1975; George, 1979) or what Lijphart (1971) calls the “interpretative case study,” uses general variables for descriptive and explanatory purposes, a practice conducive to analytical comparison and accumulation of findings in Chapter 5.

The method is also known as “structured empiricism” (Brecher, 1975) or “controlled comparison” (Eggen, 1954; George and Bennett, 2005)¹⁰⁷. Starting with formation and testing of general hypotheses in rigorous terms, controlled comparison allows description and analysis of individual cases in more general terms (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). The goal is to assess the “uniqueness” of each case in general terms or a theoretical framework aiming to discover the correlation or covariance among independent, intervening, and dependent variables in a rigorous, statistical sense (George, 1979: 46-47).¹⁰⁸ With this approach, the cases and observations are theoretically constructed (Levy, 2002: 434). In this sense, structured, focused comparison has the respectable qualities of social science, permitting an orderly, empirical accumulation of knowledge.

¹⁰⁷ The term “controlled comparison,” originated in Eggen (1954), is consistent with what Lijphart (1971, 1975) calls the “comparable-cases strategy.”

¹⁰⁸ See Sartori (1970) for a detailed discussion on the use of the word “variable.”

For the purposes and scope of the current study, the structured, focused comparison of a few cases is the most appropriate choice of methodology (Lijphart, 1971: 685). In terms of theory development, its particular advantage is complementary to statistical-correlative studies (George, 1979: 60-61). The structured, focused comparison facilitates theoretically-oriented, case-based examination of “how the value of a particular variable varies in many different cases” by developing the categories “for describing the variance in each of their variables” (George, 1979: 47). In other words, it aims to make conditional comparison and generalizations and hence identify different causal patterns. The approach is selectively focused on the theoretical relevance and practical interest of the project (George, 1979: 50-51; 60). This type of study contributes not only to hypothesis formation but also testing in a rigorous, scientific fashion (Eckstein, 1975). Moreover, structured, focused comparison shares similarity with statistical-correlative analysis with regard to research design.¹⁰⁹ The key differences, however, include: (1) how to carry out the research design; (2) how to collect and handle the data; and (3) how to understand the results. For instance, this study is not set to test frequency distribution of, and causal correlation in, the Chinese decision-making cases that verify or falsify PH. That would make it a statistical analysis. Rather, it is designed to investigate the various causal patterns in which decisions were made in those crises under the theoretical guidance of PH.

Meanwhile, structured, focused comparison tends to overcome some problems in single case studies from the social science standpoint (George, 1979: 62). Structured comparison with a theoretical focus inevitably leads to loss of richness in details and

¹⁰⁹ A discussion of the five essential tasks in research design is presented later in the present chapter.

simplification of the cases; nevertheless, it does avoid drowning in a sea of historical descriptions and losing sight of theory and scientific rigor as typical case studies sometimes do. Therefore, structured, focused comparison offers unique values to the advancement of theory development and empirical analysis.

On the other hand, it is helpful to be aware of one of the critiques of structured, focused comparison: many variables, small-n problem (Lijphart, 1971; King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994).¹¹⁰ The “many variable, small-n” problem affects the use of case studies for theory testing, although not for idiographic description and explanation or for hypothesis generation or refinement (Levy, 2002: note 41). However, George and Bennett (2005) dismiss the “many variables, small-n” problem as a potential pitfall of the structured, focused comparison. Given the number of dependent and independent variables, the structured, focused comparison in this study does not pose too many variables in too few cases (Lijphart, 1971, 1975; King, Keohane and Verba, 1994; George and Bennett, 2005).

4.2. Designing the Structured, Focused Comparison

A good design of the structured, focused comparative study requires faithful execution of five essential tasks (George, 1979: 54-57): (1) specification of the research problem and objectives of the study, which is completed in Chapter 1; (2) specification of conditions and general variables; (3) selection of *appropriate* cases in the light of the first two tasks; (4) variance in the variables identified in the second task in order to increase

¹¹⁰ The critiques of this method include (1) the logic of (causal) inference (Levy, 2002; George and Bennett, 2005: 153-162) and (2) generalizability (and replicability/reliability) (Levy, 2002). George and Bennett (2005) offer a few remedies to deal with the imperfection of structured, focused comparison.

the likelihood of discovering causal patterns in various outcomes of the dependent variables and various configurations of the independent variables and intervening variables; and (5) formulation of the general questions to be asked of each case. These tasks, carried out in detail in the remainder of the chapter, are necessary to ensure that the case analysis, based on the answers to the general questions, are structured and focused.

4.2.1 Defining the Variables

In light of the research problem and objectives of the study elaborated in Chapter 1, it is essential to specify the variables for the cases under scrutiny loosely in the language of the statistical method (George, 1979: 54-55). While borrowing statistical expressions effectively will convey the ideas in a rigorous sense, it should be noted that the results are not meant to be understood or interpreted as those in a large-N, statistical study. Having said so, according to George's (1979) research design guidelines, I put forward the dependent and independent variables in the following operational terms. I categorize them by hypothesis:

Primary Hypotheses:

As far as the two primary hypotheses are concerned, one dependent variable is the number of stages observed in the decision-making process in response to the initiation of the crisis. In line with the theoretical propositions of PH, this study focuses on two potential outcomes of this variable, i.e., one stage or two stages.¹¹¹ Specifically, a "stage" is differentiated by the change of decision rules from the noncompensatory to

¹¹¹ Hypothetically, the number of stages in decision-making can range from one, two and more, depending on the definition of 'stage' which may or may not involve qualitative changes.

compensatory principle from Stage I to Stage II.¹¹² In order to test this, this dependent variable thus only has two possible outcomes: one stage or two stages.

The other dependent variable in the primary hypotheses is the content of deliberations: in the first cut of the decision-making process, decision-makers place primacy on political survivability by using the noncompensatory principle; in the second cut of the decision-making process, decision-makers focus on the tradeoffs of the more conventionally rational decision-making, with aspects weighted in various ways.¹¹³

The independent variable with regard to the primary hypotheses is foreign policy decision-making about issues of importance. PH-style decision-making is not something we anticipate observing in the routine, mundane decision-making because it is unnecessary to be concerned about political survival.¹¹⁴ The condition of crisis itself is taken as a proxy of the importance of decision-making, not only for individual decision-makers but also for the state and even the international system. Theoretically, all decisions in crisis should conform to PH propositions precisely because of the importance of what is involved: a threat to basic values, beliefs, political outlooks, economic development, or military power, etc. In other words, PH must succeed in the crisis domain or face a serious challenge to its credibility.

Secondary Hypotheses:

¹¹² See a more elaborated explanation on this point in Chapter 3.

¹¹³ See a more elaborated explanation on this point in Chapter 3.

¹¹⁴ A simple example can make the point: every day after getting off from work, in order to minimize the traffic congestion on your way home, you must make the routine decision whether to take the freeway or the local route. Your choice simply would rely on the traffic update on the radio, a glance at the traffic conditions on the internet, or a pure guess. There is nothing political about your decision; therefore, PH is not suitable for decision-making of this kind.

Only one dependent variable is relevant to the PC Hypothesis, which is consistent with one of the dependent variables in the primary hypotheses. Again, this variable is whether decision-makers put primacy on political survival at the onset of the decision-making process. Correspondingly, the independent variable for this hypothesis is the sequence of the crisis in a protracted conflict, i.e., whether it is the initial crisis or a successive one in a series of crises in a protracted conflict.

For the SO Hypothesis, similarly, the dependent variable is consistent with the other one as identified in the primary hypotheses – the content of deliberations, that is, whether political primacy comes forward as a cognitive heuristic to simplify the initial decision-making. The independent variable is the involvement of a superpower opponent in the crisis. The theoretical linkage between the presence of a superpower opponent in the crisis and political primacy in the initial decision-making of the non-superpower actor marks another auxiliary explanation of why and how decisions are made in times of crisis.

4.2.2 Selecting the Cases

The ICB Project (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997, 2000), the authoritative compilation of crises spanning from the end of World War I in 1918 to 2003¹¹⁵, provides a good source from which the cases of relevance to PH were carefully selected. The ICB Project identifies crises at both the system (macro-) and actor (micro-) levels. At the system (macro-) level, international crises are defined as events that destabilize relations between two or more states by increasing disruptive interactions and thus challenging the

¹¹⁵ The latest version of the ICB data set (version 6.0) released on January 30, 2006, contains 443 international crises, 32 protracted conflicts and 975 crisis actors from 1918 to 2003. See detailed information at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/>.

structure of the international system. International crises can be categorized further into (1) crises within and outside of protracted conflicts and (2) Intra-War Crises (IWCs) versus crises that originated in non-war settings (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000: 5-7). Case selection in the present study focuses on crises outside of a war setting.¹¹⁶

At the actor (micro-) level, a foreign policy crisis occurs when decision-makers of the state actors perceive (1) their basic value(s) to be threatened, (2) finite time for response, and (3) heightened probability of involvement in military hostilities (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000: 3).¹¹⁷ To put it simply, an international crisis identifies events experienced in an objective sense that has implications to the international system, while a foreign policy crisis is based on the perceptions of leaders of an individual state in terms of the levels of threat and hostility.

According to the most updated ICB data set, the PRC experienced altogether 14 foreign policy crises since 1949. Table 4-2-2-1 lists these crises into five groups on the basis of substantive issues and actors involved: (1) Korean War I, II, III; (2) Taiwan Strait I, II, III, IV; (3) China-India Border I and II; (4) four crises across the border of China and Vietnam; and (5) China-USSR border dispute over the Ussuri River. The ICB actor-level variable for severity of violence, SEVVIO, suggests that the cases included, on average, are the more intense ones. Both of the full scale wars and five of the eight

¹¹⁶ The reciprocal effects of war and IWCs would generate complications beyond the model proposed here, and thus such cases might be more appropriate for inclusion in future research.

¹¹⁷ This definition is similar to Hermann's (1969a) that highlight three elements: (1) threat to the ultimate decision unit's high-priority goals; (2) limited time available for response; and (3) surprise to the ultimate decision unit at its occurrence. Hermann (1969b: 413-421) details the typologies of foreign policy situations. Other discussions on the definition of international crisis can be found in Snyder and Diesing (1977), Brecher (1978), Oneal (1982), etc. It should be noted that the occurrence, development or termination of a crisis does not necessarily involve violence or even war. As Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997: 7) observe, "all wars result from crises; but not all crises lead to war."

cases with serious clashes, are among the nine cases included in this study. For the Spratly Island crisis between China and the Philippines in 1995, the ICB data set regards China as the triggering entity rather than a crisis actor. China's initial reaction (i.e., major response, or the variable MAJRES in the ICB data set)¹¹⁸ and overall response (i.e., crisis management, or the variable CRISMG in the ICB data set) are not applicable. As a result, this case is not included in the present study and explanation for this decision rule appears in Brecher and Wilkenfeld (2000: 42).

Within the ICB jargon, China's initial decision in response to the given foreign policy crisis focus on how the major response (or MAJRES) to the crisis is derived. This corresponds to an action by China stimulated by the crisis trigger (see Table 4-2-2-1).¹¹⁹ In light of the poliheuristic perspective, one of the primary goals of the present project is to assess whether decision-making of the major response action follows a one-stage or two-stage process. In cases of the two-stage process, the assessment goes a step further to find out whether the decision for the major response is made from (1) a first stage of identifying politically viable options while eliminating politically unacceptable ones

¹¹⁸ Within ICB's terminology, major response (or MAJREP) is the variable referring to the specific action which captures the major thrust of its behavior once the decision-makers of a state perceive the act/event/change which triggers its crisis, they will decide on an appropriate response. See the codebook of the ICB Project at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/dataviewer/>.

¹¹⁹ Within ICB's terminology, crisis management (or CRISMG) is the variable that identifies the actor's primary crisis management technique (CMT) – how a crisis is managed in an overall sense in a given international crisis. CRISMG could range from pacific action (e.g., negotiation, adjudication, or mediation) to non-violent military act (e.g., threat to use violence, mobilization), to all forms of indirect or direct violence. While crisis management (or CRISMG) pertains to actions in a crisis as a whole, major response (or MAJRES) provides a specific picture of how things are handled at the outset of the case. See the codebook of the ICB Project at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/dataviewer/>. In other words, crisis management “need not be the first response of a state to the crisis trigger, but rather that action which was so clear in its intent that it came to characterize the crisis as a whole for that action” (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 843). The more expansive agenda of examining all decisions throughout the case would require deconstructing crisis management (or CRISMG) into its possibly numerous constituents, a task that is beyond the scope of this project.

using the noncompensatory principle as a cognitive heuristic; (2) a second stage of more balanced, rational or utility-maximizing calculations along a more *diverse* set of dimensions; or (3) other crucial properties of the crisis under scrutiny. In cases in which the decision-making processes appear to be deviant from the two-stage propositions, I make further attempt to analyze the other properties that may attribute to such difference in decision-making.

The present study focuses on nine of the 14 crises as a result of data availability.¹²⁰ More specifically, the present study primarily is interested in Chinese decisions about whether to use force as the initial response to each crises. For instance, why did China decide to send ground troops to North Korea in late 1950 while Beijing later concluded Taiwan Straits III (1962) unilaterally without use of force? Why did Beijing only bombard the offshore islands, Jinmen and Mazu, in Taiwan Strait II (1958), instead of landing on these offshore islands which could have escalated to a direct military confrontation with the military of the Nationalists and the US?¹²¹ What motivated China to invade Vietnam in 1978 when it was ready to embark upon domestic economic reforms? These different types of responses to foreign policy crises present a very interesting group of cases for further investigation and understanding of the decision-making process and fundamental roots of these actions. Beyond their

¹²⁰ Five of the 14 crises were excluded from the present study due to limited available primary and secondary sources that could be used for the coding. However, the absence of these crises would not significantly affect the overall results of this study. See details discussion of this point in the section on source materials in this chapter.

¹²¹ Bombarding, instead of landing on, the offshore islands seems the obvious choice according to a simple expected utility, cost/benefit calculations (in terms of human and financial resources, landing certainly seems more costly than bombarding from the distance). However, as will be clear in the preceding chapters, neither bombarding nor landing on the offshore islands was the optimal choice for Beijing. Here, it only serves as an illustration of the kind of initial response from Beijing to the second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958.

substantive significance in the individual cases, analysis of the foreign policy crises as a small group shares a common theoretical focus and strong comparability that should help the theoretical development of PH.

Each of these crises involves China as a central actor and together they form an interestingly similar group for understanding Chinese crisis decision-making and management. In the meantime, they noticeably differ from each other in several ways, which render the comparison and contrast theoretically meaningful and focused.

First, the crises occur in different historical contexts – from establishment of Communist China through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, to the economic reforms and then the post-Cold War era. Apparently, the socio-economic conditions and international political backdrops of the crises varied to a considerable degree. Across these historical periods, the structure of the international system has gone through fundamental changes from bi-polarity during the Cold War to uni-polarity in the post-Cold War period. During the Cold War, the triangular relationships among the US, the USSR and the PRC and the balance of power between the capitalist and communist camps also have experienced dramatic shifts in terms of alliance (Zhai, 1994; Chen, 2001; Ross and Jiang, 2001).

Second, the crises involve a range of actors other than China itself, most notably, two superpowers – the US and the USSR – as well as secondary regional powers such as Vietnam, India and the Nationalist-controlled Taiwan. These actors play different roles in different crises. For example, according to the ICB data archive, China was the initiator in Taiwan Strait I (1954-1955) but the respondent in Korean War I (1950).¹²²

¹²² The ICB data archive differentiated the role of the actor in an international or foreign policy crisis into initiator or respondent. In reality, however, occurrence and escalation of a crisis are the consequent buildup

Another example is concerned with the roles of the US in the crises. For instance, for China, the US initiated Korean War I (1950) by deploying the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. In Taiwan Strait III (1962), the US was not part of the crisis; Beijing started the crisis and quickly ended it without getting the US involved.

Third, the crises involve different motivations or reasons behind the triggering mechanisms; unresolved problems left from the civil war (e.g., the Taiwan Strait crises); territorial disputes (e.g., China-India border disputes), ideological confrontations (e.g., the crises during the Korean War), alliances (Sino-Vietnam War), nuclear deterrence, among other issues could be noted.

Fourth, these crises had different consequences and implications on the regional balance of power in Northeast Asia, and, within the scope of the study, China's position in the region and status in the world. A case in point is China's decision to enter the Korean War – in spite of the heavy monetary and military personnel investment, a long stalemate with the US-led UN troops ensued. Later, the truce negotiations with the US, one of the superpowers, in fact, increased the status of the PRC in East Asia as well as in the international system (Chen, 1994; 2001).

Fifth, and finally, these crises vary in terms of intensity, severity and duration – some took place within a protracted conflict, while others did not. For instance, the shortest crisis among all is Sino-Vietnam Border, which only lasted for four days between January 5 and 8, 1987. In contrast, the most recent Taiwan Strait Crisis lasted about ten months. These nuances and differences add significant contextual variety centering on Chinese decision-making and crisis management. Therefore, they present

of the interactions between or among actors in the pre-crisis period. The role of each actor in the crisis, more often than not, is ambiguous and subject to interpretation.

the kind of qualities required in the structured, focused comparison that will contribute to the theoretical development of PH and further understanding of Chinese foreign policy-making.

Moreover, the case selection criteria are in line with John Stuart Mill's (1973) "method of difference." In spite of the above-mentioned differences, the five groups of crises do share important common traits. Several observations need to be made regarding their similarities before proceeding. First, and most apparently, China is the central actor in each of these crises. The nine crises all deal with the focus of this study, i.e., Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises. Second, all crises took place in a generally restricted geographic area – along the borders or in areas neighboring China. Third, almost all of these crises occurred in the context of the Cold War, which highlighted the impact of the US and the Soviet Union, the two superpower rivals, during the first four decades of the PRC. The only exception is the Taiwan Strait Crisis IV (1995-1996), which occurred during the post-Cold War era. It should be noted that this particular crisis was part of a protracted (still ongoing) conflict as a direct result of the Cold War. Fourth, and finally, due to the difficulty of obtaining information, the analysis of these crises is based upon some primary, but mainly secondary, source materials from China and abroad.¹²³ Thus the Chinese crises, collectively speaking, are at once united by important characteristics but also diverse in other ways, which should facilitate the structured, focused comparison. In summary, these similarities among the cases are picked to control for the effect of variables irrelevant to this project, that is, to keep those

¹²³ Elaboration on the use of primary and secondary sources appears later on in the present chapter. See a detailed discussion on the issues and challenges with regard to case analysis and use of primary and secondary sources in George and Bennett (2005: 89-108).

superfluous factors from conflating or contaminating the causal effect of the explanatory variables. Therefore, these qualities show that the selected cases meet the prerequisites for a structured, focused comparison and complete task four of the research design by specifying variance in the variables.¹²⁴

According to the existing literature on PH, a set of contextual dimensions composed of political, military, economic and diplomatic dimensions, respectively, emerge as important in foreign policy decision-making (Mintz, 2003a; Sathasivam, 2003; James and Zhang, 2005). Mintz (1993: 600) argues that dimensions “typically involve *groups* of similar criteria. The criteria within a specific dimension are processed sequentially to arrive at an overall score on that dimension.” T. Ostrom et al. (1980) argue that a dimension can be regarded as an organizing theme for related information and variables.

The political dimension can be summed up as policy considerations that may lead to consequences, good or bad, for the standing of the current regime, the governing political party or coalition and top leaders or decision-makers, in particular. A key point should be kept in mind regarding the political dimension: it is the considerations for decision-makers’ own political gains/losses, rather than those for the overall political impact on the people and/or state, that PH contends as the most salient aspects during Stage I of the decision-making. Consequently, considerations along the political dimension are seen as non-compensatory by those along the other dimensions. Therefore, the following circumstances in Chinese decision-making are regarded along the political dimension, which is hypothesized to take primacy at Stage I of the process in Chinese

¹²⁴ See George (1979) and George and Bennett (2005) for a detailed discussion of the prerequisites of the structured, focused comparative method.

foreign policy crises:¹²⁵ (1) establishing control over the country by the Communist regime as a follow-up to violent revolution; (2) survival of the new Communist regime being endangered by the threat of being overtaken by the previous regime (i.e., the GMT or Nationalists); (3) survival of the Communist regime being threatened (i.e., verbally) by overseas adversaries who vehemently opposed Communism (e.g., the US and other Western capitalist countries within the opposition camp against Communism); (4) need for support, adulation, and even worship of individual political leaders (i.e., the personality cult and decision-making based on individualistic authority rather than collective or institutional authority¹²⁶); (5) continuation of communist revolutionary momentum (e.g., the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution); (6) maintenance of the sovereignty of China as a Communist entity; (7) the need to strive for leadership in the international Communist camp (i.e., against the Soviet Union); (8) maintaining Chinese political (i.e., ideological) influence over neighboring states; (9) obtaining political power/leadership in the CCP (through power succession and consolidation); (10) maintenance of territorial integrity; and (11) prevention of new instances of undesirable history (i.e., surrender of sovereignty to foreign powers).¹²⁷

¹²⁵ The coding rules elaborated here reflect the general categorization from the four dimensions in the PH literature (e.g. Mintz 2004a). They are tailored to the China context in tandem with the widely agreed upon Chinese political history, political culture, regime types and other institutional characteristics.

¹²⁶ See a detailed account of the leadership struggles within the CCP from 1949 to the 1950s in Sullivan (1986).

¹²⁷ The wide range of considerations along the political dimension are drawn from different periods in Chinese political history, beginning with establishment of the Communist regime on the mainland in 1949 through political consolidation and chaos in the 1950s and 1960s, to the power transition from Mao to Deng in the late 1970s and subsequent transformation toward a market-oriented economy, and finally to the demise of the Soviet Union and another power transition from Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin (most recently, from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao). These periods also hold true for the military, economic and diplomatic dimensions below.

The military dimension includes deliberations over policy implications related to military stratagems and tactics, military deployment, the physical readiness, strength and/or weakness of the military and weaponry. Similar to the list of possible considerations for the political dimension, in the Chinese context, the military dimension is manifested through reference to any of the following issues: (1) the condition of military equipment and training (i.e., is it seen as outdated and/or is the budget insufficient to support potentially desirable Chinese military operations)?; (2) the feasibility of the military option in terms of personnel (e.g., the Chinese army is noted as being large in number and the soldiers trained to keep courage and morale high in the battlefield); (3) the readiness of logistics and infrastructure for a military operation (e.g., some areas in China have no transportation system that is adequate for efficient logistical support); (4) completion of military reform and expansion of military forces; (5) acquisition of nuclear weapons; (6) competition for strategic sea-lanes or inland passes (e.g., Spratly Islands);¹²⁸ and (7) military aids/sales to the neighboring Communist allies (e.g., North Korea, Vietnam or Pakistan).

In a similar fashion, considerations in the economic realm include likely effects on national economy, trade, growth, employment, agricultural and industrial development, among other salient elements. Thus, the economic dimension may include references to any of the following issues: (1) the state of the Chinese domestic economy (e.g., is it regarded as being in bad shape as a result of long-lasting warfare, which would make

¹²⁸ Competition for strategic pathways resembles that over natural resources and the issue of détente, which are mentioned below in relation to another decision-making dimension. Each of these issues is acknowledged for the dimension along which it seems most naturally salient, but it remains possible that, in individual cases, one or more of these issues might be categorized differently. For example, depending on the context of the case (e.g., if there are a large quantity of natural resources that can be used to boost production), access to strategic pathways might be regarded as more salient along the economic as opposed to military dimension.

internal reconstruction necessary, even critical, which in turn limits options?); (2) competition for areas with a potentially large volume of strategic and profitable natural resources (e.g., oil, natural gas, minerals, maritime resources); (3) damage as a result of natural disasters; (4) damage as a result of economic sanctions from major powers (e.g., the US and the USSR); (5) rapid economic growth as a result of transformation toward a market-economy; (6) low production as a result of the centrally-planned and inefficient economy; (7) deteriorating economic performance as a result of mismanagement (e.g., the Great Leap Forward); (8) economic aid/loans from developed countries; and (9) economic aid/loans to other developing countries.

Finally, the diplomatic dimension refers mainly to policy deliberations or other non-violent actions over possible effects on external relations (e.g. verbal protest, accusation, demand, diplomatic communiqués, warning, threat, ultimatum, recall of ambassadors, etc.) In the Chinese context, the diplomatic dimension includes (although not limited to) references to the following criteria: (1) generally hostile Chinese diplomatic relations during its early years with the Western countries, except for relations with other Communist countries; (2) China-USSR relations, despite deterioration after Stalin died and Khrushchev came into power, remaining central in the 1950s and 1960s; (3) relations with neighboring countries (e.g., the USSR, India, Vietnam, etc.) involving territorial disputes that had been left from the imperial era and Chinese warlords; (4) détente with the US changing the balance of power during the Cold War; (5) return to the UN as an original member and subsequent permanent member in the Security Council; (6) expansion of diplomatic relations with the majority of existing states (through visits, meetings, talks, exchanges, etc.), inclusive of developed as well as developing countries;

and (7) expansion of membership in a variety of international and regional organizations. It is important to note that most of the activities that have expanded and improved Chinese external relations also have been effective means of isolating Taiwan's long-term pitch for formal statehood with international recognition.

In some cases the distinctions across the four dimensions are not clear-cut; the dimensions can be intertwined and thus difficult to differentiate (or such differentiation is subject to interpretations). Admittedly, as discussed in Chapter 3, this is an ongoing challenge to PH-related research in general. However, the initial reactions of decision-makers in a situation of foreign policy crisis are not presumed to be analytical in the sense of expected value calculations; instead, they lead to a process of screening policy options along the rough lines of these dimensions based on initial cognitive elimination. Although the importance of such distinctions is not disputed overall, more work is needed in search for criteria that can better differentiate the dimensions. This task, however, is beyond the scope of the current study.

Coding for the respective dimensions, as described earlier, creates a clear map to operationalize the two-stage decision-making process. This approach should enable rigorous testing of the poliheuristic model in the Chinese context.

4.2.3 Formulating the Questionnaire

Structured collection of data is the most essential step to be satisfied in the structured, focused comparative analysis of the cases. The testing of the PH-related hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3 started with the formulation of a questionnaire containing 16 *standardized, general* questions (see Appendix 4-2-3-1), along with

minimal, yet necessary, coding instructions, in order to generate the comparable data from the nine crises involving China. The questionnaire, as appears in Appendix 4-2-3-1, is designed to help illuminate the decision-making process of the key leader(s) in China to respond to the given crisis. For instance, some questions deal with the primary considerations of leader(s) on the policy options at the beginning of the decision-making (e.g., questions 4-7, 9). Other questions inquire about the options that appeared to have been eliminated before the final decision was made (e.g., questions 8, 11). Still others attempt to understand possible cognitive shortcuts that appeared to be applied during the decision-making process (e.g., questions 9, 12-14). All of the inquiries are designed in accordance to the core of PH, the research problem and research objectives of the study.

Before proceeding, it is prudent to note that the composition of the questionnaire was a learning process and therefore required re-formulation and re-wording based on reflections and feedback from multiple rounds of work with the coders. The questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-1 is a revised version of what was actually used for the coding by the five coders in the spring of 2004. The revision, following a pilot coding of a couple of cases (Korean War I and Sino-Vietnam War) using the original version, incorporated comments and suggestions by the coders. The revised version featured greater clarity in terms of the format of the questionnaire as well as the wording of some terms. For example, the word “rational” in Question 5 was clarified in the revised edition by adding the phrase “in the sense of maximizing gains while minimizing losses.” Regarding the format, the revision standardized the questionnaire by adding four standard choices for some of the questions.¹²⁹ In the meantime, the feedback on the revision in the

¹²⁹ The other questions are open-ended due to their nature.

pilot study was limited in the sense that the coders worked as figuratively “blind” or “ignorant” experts on PH, as they did in the coding later on. Informing them of the theoretical propositions of PH prior to or during the coding and debriefing potentially could have caused undesirable bias in the coding results. Therefore, the clarification of the questionnaire should not lead coders in any way that explicitly addresses PH’s propositions.

In retrospect, the questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-1 still shows room for further improvement.¹³⁰ Appendix 4-2-3-2 gives a new version after another round of rewording, based on experience with the coders on the Chinese crises for the present study as well as feedback from Patrick James, Carolyn C. James and Nukhet A. Sandal who have collaborated with me on a related ongoing project that compares Chinese and Turkish crisis decision-making. The questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-2 will be used for the coding of Turkish crises.¹³¹ The basic content of the questionnaire remains the same in the new version, with two exceptions: (1) a new question is added at the beginning for identification of the key decision-makers in the given crisis¹³² and (2) Questions 10, 11

¹³⁰ More retrospective comments appear later in the present chapter in the discussion on the potential pitfalls of the research design.

¹³¹ Since the coding deals with the Turkish crises between 1957 and 1998, you will see that the questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-2 is put in the Turkish context. This collaborative project aims to compare Chinese and Turkish decision-making in crisis. It is scheduled to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association in San Diego in March 2006 and the International Political Science Association World Congress in Fukuoka, Japan in July 2006. Given the practical limit on time and resources for the dissertation project, the newly revised questionnaire has not as yet been used to re-code the Chinese cases. Until then, it is hard to speculate how the results on Chinese decision-making would be different as a result of the two versions of the coding questionnaire.

¹³² This particular question was not part of the questionnaire used for coding the Chinese crises. Although different institutions (such as the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the PLA) and leaders took part in Chinese decision-making during the crises under scrutiny, the key leadership responsible for the final decision was not as controversial as the roles of the counterparts in the Turkish cases.

and 14 originally from Appendix 4-2-3-1 are deleted in Appendix 4-2-3-2 because they are redundant.

Other changes mostly involve clarification of wording. For example, Question 3 was designed to ask coders to identify whether the decision was made in a one-stage or a two-stage process. In Appendix 4-2-3-1, it asks: “Do you see the decision-making process for the major response as a one-stage or two-stage process?” In Appendix 4-2-3-2, the same question asks:

“Do you see the decision-making process for the major response as a one-stage or two-stage process? In other words, did all the options appear to be considered only once (immediately followed by a final choice/decision), or were some of the options initially discounted as nonviable/unacceptable followed by another round of consideration of the remaining options?”¹³³

Apparently, adding the second sentence clarifies the exact meaning of “one-stage” vs. “two-stage” decision-making. Another example is concerned with Question 5 that I have re-worded in Appendix 4-2-3-1 (Question 6 in Appendix 4-2-3-2). The meaning of “rational” is clarified by further specifying “in the sense of maximizing potential domestic political gains while minimizing potential domestic political losses.” In Question 15 in Appendix 4-2-3-1 (Question 13 in Appendix 4-2-3-2), the word “politically” is deleted to avoid bias or leading the coders to responses that would support PH.

4.2.4 Collecting the Data and Inter-Coder Reliability

¹³³ Retrospectively, this question could have been worded as “How many stages do you identify in the initial response to the crisis?” This might appear to minimize the leading effect of the question. However, doing so might have run the risk that the responses would have identified multiple stages that are qualitatively different from the two-stage process proposed in PH.

To meet the methodological criteria of structured, focused comparative case studies, the most crucial principle for data collection is “*to report how the data were created and how we came to possess them*” (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 51; George and Bennett, 2005).¹³⁴

The data of this project primarily are drawn from the answers from a selected group of China scholars to the questionnaire, in light of a number of primary and secondary source materials on the given crisis. The general, theoretically-informed data lay down the foundation for inferring or mapping the Chinese decision-making process during those crises. This procedure follows a carefully-designed coding regime to guarantee that the comparative analysis at the later stage is structured and focused. The coding regime aims to answer several basic questions that will facilitate testing the hypotheses from PH: (1) What criteria should be used to differentiate the dimensions in foreign policy decision-making? (2) What materials would be deemed appropriate for identifying decision-making within a given foreign policy crisis? (3) What should be seen as the dividing line, according to PH, between Stage I and Stage II of the decision-making process in the foreign policy crisis under scrutiny? (4) What criteria should be used to identify whether Stage I or Stage II in the decision-making process is cognitive- or rational-based?

Given the nature of the data acquired for this project, the most critical part of the coding is a reliability check. Therefore, the following steps were implemented to maximize inter-coder reliability: the coders were (1) randomly paired to code a given crisis; (2) given the same set of primary and/or secondary source materials that I had

¹³⁴ Emphasis is in the original text.

identified as containing significant information regarding the decision-making processes in the randomly assigned crises; (3) provided with the same coding instruction on the procedures; (4) instructed to respond independently to the same set of questions after reading the source materials for each crisis; and (5) debriefed with me in an effort to resolve any major controversies following their independent coding.

The main part of the inter-coder reliability check was completed during the spring of 2004, relying on the expertise of five China scholars. The five scholars, all born and raised in China and trained in Political Science in North America, worked independently, pairwise, on the coding. Each of them possesses significant knowledge about Chinese political history and has actively done research or studied Chinese politics and Chinese foreign policy. Yet none had been familiar with either PH or the hypotheses at the time of coding. This was a deliberate choice intended to minimize bias for or against the theory under examination.

As a second reliability check, a supplemental round of coding was completed during the first month of 2006, involving another doctoral student who also specializes in Chinese politics. This sixth coder, Coder 5, as with the coders in the first round, has a Chinese background but no prior knowledge of PH or the relevant hypotheses. Ideally, it would have worked better if this new coder came from a different background, say, an expert on Chinese politics who is a non-Chinese speaker and did not grow up in China. It would have at least minimized the possible influence or bias on the coding rooted in the coders' own early years and educational backgrounds. However, the limited resources for this project have minimized the chance of finding such a candidate to do the job.

Nonetheless, adding another round of coding with even one new coder has strengthened the reliability test. The coding results of both rounds are presented in Chapter 5.

4.2.5 Source Materials

Before proceeding to a discussion of the source materials, it is helpful to keep a few points in mind. First, although case research in political science often must refer to historian's research, archives and historical studies always should be treated with caution. In order to minimize the potential biases inherited in historical research, it is necessary for researchers in political science to (1) avoid relying on a single historical analysis of a case; (2) "identify and summarize important debates among historians about competing explanations of a case, and wherever possible to indicate the possible political and historical biases of the contending authors" (George and Bennett, 2005: 95); (3) to consider the evidentiary value and significance of original sources such as archives, memoirs, oral histories, newspapers and interviews¹³⁵ (George and Bennett, 2005: 99-105); (4) to assess contemporary public sources (e.g., daily media) analyzing the contexts of a case¹³⁶; and (5) to be aware of the fact that crucial information or data may not be available for the study of decision-making (e.g., important discussions or argument among key decision-makers that have no paper trail or other records, classified records, etc.).

¹³⁵ This means that making use of historical studies by other scholars should not automatically assume the original source materials in those studies were properly evaluated. Berman (1982) and Greenstein (1982) offer good examples of how to effectively weigh source materials.

¹³⁶ George and Bennett (2005: 97; 99-100) argue that public contexts that usually can be found in contemporary sources, e.g., *who* is speaking to *whom*, for *what purpose* and *under what circumstances*. These public contextual details help infer the decision-makers' intentions, beliefs and other characteristics. Therefore, contemporary public contexts are useful in evaluating the evidentiary value of archival sources of private or classified decision-making/deliberations. A good example of such practice is Larson (1985).

Appendix 4-2-5-1 lists the coding sources for all the crises in this study. The documentary evidence mainly is based on primary sources (e.g., memoirs, original telegraphs and other documents) and secondary sources (e.g., historical accounts and analyses).¹³⁷ Most of the materials are suggested in the ICB case summaries, supplemented by Chinese and English sources found important.¹³⁸ Evidence of consideration of policy options along the four dimensions comes from the Chinese official media outlet (i.e., *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily]), other primary sources, archives, documents and secondary historical analyses.

During the process of collecting source materials and relevant literature on these crises, a number of problems and issues were encountered, appearing in order below with regard to the quality and quantity of the source materials used in this study.¹³⁹ First, it is prudent to bear in mind that the official compilation and internal and/or open publication of the works of the CCP leaders were not meant to provide accurate and reliable sources for scholars in China or other countries to study the Party history. Instead, the primary purpose was to serve as ideological guide for the mass-based revolution designed by the CCP (Chen, 1995/1996). This means that selection criteria and process of the CCP leaders' works mostly are determined by the Party's needs in order to promote its current

¹³⁷ In spite of the desire to be the opposite, these materials (particularly memoirs and secondary sources) can be as biased as those found in the West. Moreover, the availability of these materials across the crises is quite unbalanced. See below for an elaborated discussion.

¹³⁸ The length of the coding material ranges from 20 to 70 pages, depending on the available sources for each case. Due to limitations on space, not all materials used in coding are listed in Appendix 4-2-5-1. However, I can provide all of the sources upon request.

¹³⁹ All the points in this section further confirm the secrecy of Chinese foreign policy making, which in turn explains why China has been widely recognized as a rather closed society (it has gradually opened up since 1978 but the pace still is slow and under Beijing's tight control) and why the state of Chinese foreign policy studies is not as thriving as in many other countries.

policy or enhance the legitimacy of the Party and the current leadership. An example in point is *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Selected Works of Mao Zedong).

The texts of many pieces in this compilation were extensively modified from the original (Chen, 1995/1996: 1; Hunt, 1996). Inclusion or exclusion of some original documents is purely subject to the approval of the Party and its leadership. In spite of these defects, which could lead to potential problems, scholars (including historians) of Chinese politics still widely use such compilations as *Mao Zedong xuanji* in their research as one of the primary sources of important historical value. Basically, there is no other choice due to the strict hierarchy dominating Chinese politics and the secretive nature of decision-making in its foreign policy (Chen, 1995/1996; Hunt, 1996). Consequently, the quality of the primary sources used in the study, as in many other China-related studies, varies to a significant extent.¹⁴⁰

Secondly, the quality of some widely used and cited “selected works” of the CCP leaders varies to a great extent not only from one another but also among the volumes that contain internal documents beginning from the 1920s. For instance, the documents in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Mao Zedong’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China) are recognized of better historical value than a few other collections. The coverage of *Mao Zedong junshi wenji* (A Collection of Mao Zedong’s Military Papers, 6 volumes) is notably uneven, with only limited coverage of Mao’s military activities in the post-revolution period. Moreover, it was not possible to go back to Beijing to dig through archives in order to trace and reveal the original versions of those important works of the CCP leaders mainly for two reasons: (1) it would be too

¹⁴⁰ See Chen (1995/1996) for a detailed discussion on the opportunities and pitfalls of the primary documentary base of Chinese politics, Chinese revolutions, etc.

costly for a poor graduate student and (2) many of these documents are “sensitive materials” with very restricted access and will not be released to the public for an unknown period of time.¹⁴¹

Thirdly, from the available documents and archives, it is difficult to tell who, other than Mao Zedong, was within the top decision-making circle on foreign policy issues in some cases. Although some scholars argue that the CCP has attempted to replace individual authority with institutional authority within the Party (e.g. Sullivan, 1986), the majority of previous studies seem to suggest that the personality cult of Mao has virtually made him the sole decision-maker from 1949 to the Cultural Revolution.¹⁴² In the cases during this period, given the limited resources for archive work, little information is available to indicate who also participated in the formulation process of crisis response. In other more recent cases in which Deng (e.g. the four Sino-Vietnam crises) or Jiang (Taiwan Strait IV) was widely agreed to be the key decision-maker, useful information is limited, as well, regarding other participants in the decision-making.¹⁴³

Fourthly, for reasons related to the above-mentioned points, availability of primary and secondary source materials varies extraordinarily by case. It became difficult to obtain sufficient reliable sources for some of the crises. Some of these crises that are relatively of less value or significance may have been given inadequate attention for investigation by the Chinese government and/or China scholars, particularly with

¹⁴¹ Such activity not only is costly and time-consuming but also significantly goes beyond the main purpose and scope of this dissertation project.

¹⁴² See detailed discussion of the literature in Chapter 2.

¹⁴³ Such information on these recent cases may be too recent, or of great importance regarding national security or domestic politics, to be declassified as yet.

regard to the decision-making processes. For instance, decisions in the three Sino-Vietnam border clashes in the 1980s were apparently overshadowed by the Sino-Vietnam War from 1978 to 1979 and, thus, understudied. To a large extent, those bilateral crises thereafter were simply extensions of China's punitive war against Vietnam in the late 1970s and all were on a much smaller, isolated scale. Another case in point is the Taiwan Strait III in 1962. As compared to the other three crises over the Taiwan Strait in 1954-1955, 1958 and 1995-96, the one in 1962 had relatively low intensity (i.e., mainly political threat), involved no other actors except for China, and thus seemed much less salient and therefore understudied.

Alternatively, lack of information in such cases can be understood as more information about the decision-making processes of these crises awaits declassification of vital official documents by the Chinese government, specifically, the publication of memoirs of relevant top officials (or interpreters who participated in the relevant meetings) and the like. It is crucial to note that China follows a different practice (when compared to the US) when it comes to declassification of and allowing access to the national security archives (Ross and Jiang, 2001: 22-23). In the US, according to Robert Ross, the decision of declassification solely is on the grounds of national security, not domestic political concerns. Once the archives are declassified, they are available to anyone without restriction. In China, however, no law requires the government to open national security archives. Limited declassification of the archives basically depends on national security and domestic political considerations. This means that significant changes in Chinese foreign policy and domestic politics usually mark the opportunity

when limited archives can be released.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, not everyone has access to those declassified documents. In most cases, it is easier for China-based researchers than scholars from abroad to obtain clearance for access. It is even impossible for those privileged scholars to have *complete* access to all the declassified materials. Due to the extent of information constraints, only nine out of the 14 crises could be tested and analyzed with the structured, focused comparative method.

The cases that are *not* examined in the present study include the China-India Border I (1959–1960), Taiwan Strait III (1962), and two Sino-Vietnam border clashes (1984, 1987–1988). Analysis of these crises has to be postponed to the future if/when more primary and secondary sources become available for further investigation. A note of caution is necessary in regard to inference or generalization to the cases not included in the present study. Exclusion of the cases may risk false inference or generalization because these cases may “differ from the case or cases studies in the values of potentially causal variables omitted from the theoretical framework” (George and Bennett, 2005: 110). Until more relevant information is available, it would only be possible to speculate that the absence of the other five Chinese foreign policy crises in the current study is not expected to significantly affect the overall results. The ICB data set, as shown in Table 4-2-5-1, provides a good point of reference: the average scores for two of the most crucial variables, CENTRALITY OF VIOLENCE¹⁴⁵ and INTENSITY OF VIOLENCE¹⁴⁶,

¹⁴⁴ For instance, the archives prior to 1976 were declassified after the death of Mao Zedong. Similarly, the materials in Deng’s era were opened after Deng Xiaoping died in 1997. The two events were of particular significance in Chinese politics; even so, not all documents on the two eras are available.

¹⁴⁵ The ICB Project defines this variable as “the extent of violence employed by an actor as a primary crisis management technique. It refers to the relative importance which decision makers attach to their use of violence in order to achieve their goals in the context of a specific foreign policy crisis.”

indicate that the excluded crises, as a group, do not seem to be anything significantly different from the group of crises under study. A simple comparison of other crisis attributes of the excluded crises and those of the included ones, such as geographic regions and opponents, also leads to the same conclusion. Therefore, inclusion or exclusion these crises would not overturn the final results. Moreover, of most immediate interest, the present study has included most of the major crises for China.

4.2.6 Potential Limitations on Data and Methodology

Selection bias is a common and potentially serious issue in any qualitative research (Collier and Mahoney, 1996; George and Bennett, 2005). This section discusses the potential problems, or error terms in this comparative study, in light of the mixed results for some crises to be reported in Chapter 5. Other potential problems might derive from multiple sources. It is possible that the coders' prior perceptions and/or interpretations of the major response in a given crisis, to some degree, still biases the coding of the decision-making process in spite of the fact that background information from the ICB data set and debriefing sessions effectively limits such distortion.

In addition, varying understanding among the coders of the key terms in the coding questionnaire also may explain some of the differences in their answers. For instance, in spite of detailed instructions, the coders still could have different interpretations of the meaning of a "two-stage" process in Questions 2 and 3 in Appendix 4-2-3-1: Do the two stages refer to tangible phases, as distinguished by specific events or do they refer to two intangible stages in the minds of the decision-makers, which only can

¹⁴⁶ The ICB Project defines this variable for the crisis actors "which employed violence as a primary crisis management technique. This indicates the intensity of that violence."

be inferred from their writings, speeches, memoirs and the like? It almost goes without saying that the coders could not receive further detailed explanations for the key terms – had suggested understandings been given in advance, the coders would have been biased seriously from the beginning and any relatively high level of inter-coder reliability would lack credibility.

Another case in point is the connotation of the political dimension. Major disagreement among the coders is concerned with the exact definitions of such terms as “politically acceptable (or unacceptable) options” or “potential political loss” in the questionnaire. The confusion was between political foreign policy considerations for the state (and the people) and domestic potential political loss for individual top policy-makers. In other words, whether the political dimension should only refer to aversion to personal political loss for the top leaders or it also should contain primary considerations for the political sake of the state (and the people). Moreover, during Stage I of decision-making, is the consideration of personal political loss most critical among all other types of political concerns? Similarly, what kind of political concerns matter most during Stage II of decision-making? Debriefing sessions with the coders succeeded in clarifying and solving controversies in some crises but not all for the aforementioned reasons.

Then why did some coders still keep reservations on some of the answers to the questionnaire even after the debriefing? The primary reason is that the coordinator of the debriefing was responsible for clarifying the coders’ understanding on the questionnaire and the substantive issues regarding the crises. Given the nature of the project, the coordinator was not in a position to tell the coders the exact meaning, for instance, of the “two-stage” decision-making; otherwise, there could be the risk of biasing the coders

during the sessions and therefore reducing the credibility of the coding results. The revised questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-2 is intended to solve this problem, but whether the revision achieves the goal in the coding result in the Turkish crises will not be available in the collaborative research until after the dissertation project is completed.

In spite of these concerns, the structured, focused comparison offers an opportunity for an original test of PH in the context of Chinese crises.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter depicts the primary method for the dissertation – the structured, focused comparison – and accordingly, the coding procedure by which this study seeks to achieve the goals of furthering the understanding of Chinese foreign policy from the poliheuristic perspective, as well as testing (and refining) PH in the unique context of China. The design of the structured, focused comparison follows the four steps outlined by George (1979): (1) defining the variables, (2) selecting the cases, (3) formulating the questionnaire, and (4) collecting the data with the emphasis of inter-coder reliability. These steps are crucial to ensure the *structured* and *focused* nature of the comparative study.

An assessment of the source materials used for the study, along with the discussion about potential selection bias and other methodological and data limitations further clarifies issues concerning the research design. Some practical difficulties minimize the possibility of having a better data collection, which, nonetheless, do not reject the validity of the research design, as a whole, as well as PH itself. These

discussions help better understand the results of this structured, focused comparative study.

In summary, the present chapter draws a clear map for the remainder of the project. The following chapter discusses the execution of the structured, focused comparison of the Chinese crises, along with a detailed assessment of the merits and reflections of this study.

Table 4-2-2-1. ICB Foreign Policy Crises for the PRC, 1949-1996 [*]						
Group	ICB No.	Crisis Name	System-Level Duration	PRC Initial Reaction (MAJRES)	PRC Overall Response (CRISMG)	Crisis Actor(s)
Korean War	#132	Korean War I	25 Jun. – 30 Sept. 1950	Political	Non-violent military	US, S. Korea, Taiwan & PRC
	#133	Korean War II	30 Sept. 1950 – 10 July 1951	Violent	Violence	N. Korea, USSR, US, S. Korea & PRC
	#140	Korean War III	16 Apr. – 27 July 1953	Political	Multiple, with violence	US, N. Korea, S. Korea & PRC
Taiwan Strait Crises	#146	Taiwan Strait I	Early Aug. 1954 – 23 Apr. 1955	Violent	Multiple, with violence	Taiwan, US & PRC
	#166	Taiwan Strait II	17 July – 23 Oct. 1958	Political	Multiple, with violence	Taiwan, US & PRC
	#192	Taiwan Strait III	22 Apr. – 27 Jun. 1962	Non-violent military	Multiple, no violence	PRC
Sino-Indian Disputes	#415	Taiwan Strait IV	22 May 1995 – 25 Mar. 1996	Multiple, with non-violent military act	Non-violent military	Taiwan & PRC
	#171	China-India Border I	25 Aug. 1959 – 19 Apr. 1960	Violent	Multiple, with violence	India & PRC
	#194	China-India Border II	8 Sept. 1962 – 23 Jan. 1963	Violent	Violence	India & PRC
Sino-USSR Dispute	#231	Ussuri River	2 Mar. – 20 Oct. 1969	Violent	Multiple, with violence	USSR & PRC
	#298	Sino-Vietnam War	25 Dec. 1978 – 15 Mar. 1979	Violent	Violence	Vietnam & PRC
Sino-Vietnamese Conflict	#352	Sino-Vietnam Clashes	2 Apr. – 2nd half of Jun. 1984	Violent	Violence	Vietnam & PRC
	#371	Sino-Vietnam Border	5 – 10 Jan. 1987	Violent	Violence	Vietnam & PRC
	#384	Spratly Islands	14 Mar. – late Apr. 1988	Violent	Violence	Vietnam & PRC

*The 14 foreign policy crises for the PRC are drawn from the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project. See details about the ICB data set at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/> and <http://www.icbnet.org/>. Due to insufficient reliable information, perhaps connected to the relative lower level of importance of some of the crises, only nine out of the 14 can be included in our present study. These nine crises are bolded in this table.

Table 4-2-5-1. ICB Centrality and Intensity of Violence in Chinese Foreign Policy			
Crises Tested			
ICB No.	Crisis	Centrality of Violence	Intensity of Violence
#132	Korean War I	1	1
#133	Korean War II	4	4
#140	Korean War III	3	3
#146	Taiwan Strait I	3	3
#166	Taiwan Strait II	3	3
#194	China-India Border II	4	4
#231	Ussuri River	3	3
#298	Sino-Vietnam War	4	3
#415	Taiwan Strait IV	1	1
	Average	2.89	2.78
Crises Excluded			
ICB No.	Crisis	Centrality of Violence	Intensity of Violence
#171	China-India Border I	3	2
#192	Taiwan Strait III	1	1
#352	Sino-Vietnam Clashes	4	3
#371	Sino-Vietnam Border	4	3
#384	Spratly Islands	4	3
	Average	3.20	2.40
Source: International Crisis Behavior Project at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/			

CHAPTER FIVE

TESTING THE POLIHEURISTIC THEORY: A STRUCTURED, FOCUSED COMPARISON OF CHINESE CRISIS DECISION-MAKING

The structured, focused comparison of Chinese crisis decision-making started with a period of “soaking and poking” (George, 1979; George and Bennett, 2005: 89).¹⁴⁷ The full details of this process are too lengthy to enumerate here. Instead, given the primary purpose of this project, this chapter aims to test the primary hypotheses derived from PH in Chapter 3. The tests proceed in light of the structured, focused comparative framework, as elaborated in Chapter 4, for comparative analysis of Chinese decision-making in nine foreign policy crises. Most notably, the chapter details the rationale of the coding scheme and how the coding is executed to test each hypothesis. The focus is on the results for the two primary hypotheses that emphasize decision-makers’ primacy on politics and the change of their decision rules from the noncompensatory principle at the initial screening to utility-maximizing during the final choice of the options. The empirical analysis of decision-making in these crises attempts to explain how and why evidence with reasonable degree of confidence supports the primary hypotheses in seven of the cases. This process illuminates the core of PH in Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises. As noted previously, the Chinese case is regarded as especially

¹⁴⁷ This is a preliminary step of immersing oneself in the case to construct a chronological narrative of the case under scrutiny. To keep the focus on the research questions and objectives, the “soaking and poking” process is deliberately skimmed through in case analysis instead of being given a thorough treatment.

challenging – even *sui generis*, by Sinologists – so even mixed results should be regarded as encouraging for PH as this unfolds.

In light of the overall results for the primary hypotheses, the case study on Beijing’s decision in the Sino-Vietnam War serves as an example with supporting evidence for the primary hypotheses. Another case study on Beijing’s decision in Korean War I serves as an example with inconclusive evidence to test the primary hypotheses. In these case studies, further analysis of decision-making in each decision is based on the coding responses to the questionnaire, as designed in Chapter 4, and process-tracing with additional source materials.¹⁴⁸ This allows for a more in-depth understanding of the decision-making processes of the two cases – specifically, how the ‘decision matrix’ (or in Jack Levy’s terminology, the “editing phase”) is screened in the first place and how the final option is picked.¹⁴⁹ Overall, the structured, focused comparison highlights major differences and similarities in the coding results for these cases regarding the process and outcome of decision-making. It leads to an overall understanding of Chinese decision-making behavior in foreign policy crises.

5.1. Characteristics of the Cases

The nine Chinese foreign policy crises, as noted in Chapter 4, share some important commonalities while they significantly differ from one another. Within the

¹⁴⁸ Use of supplementary materials is a legitimate procedure of process-tracing through which the details for the decision-making in the crises can be revealed. None of the material included has been used to generate the hypotheses in the first place, so at least one basic criterion is in place for selection of supplementary material.

¹⁴⁹ It is a challenge in this project to strike the adequate balance between a detailed, historical account and the theoretically informed explanation of each case, particularly in this comparative study of nine cases. See George and Bennett (2005: 94) for a detailed proposal of how to deal with this dilemma. George and Smoke (1974) offers an example of fulfilling this task.

framework of the ICB Project, this section discusses the key characteristics of the crises organized by time period, Chinese leadership, geographic location, superpower opponent and other actor(s) in the crisis. Such practice builds a better structure of analysis that focuses on the crisis decisions below.

Table 5-1-1 summarizes these crisis-related attributes. First, in terms of crisis location and actors involved, it is evident that all but one of the crises involved at least one of its neighbors, from the USSR in the north, to the two Koreas in the northeast, Taiwan to the southeast, and Vietnam and India to its southwest.¹⁵⁰ The exception for this is Taiwan Strait III (1962), in which Beijing initiated the crisis and soon ended it on its own without triggering a subsequent crisis for any party that was part of the other Taiwan Strait crises. Moreover, the majority of the crisis actors, including China, are land powers (rather than maritime powers) with quite limited power projection capabilities. The exceptions are the two superpowers, the US and the USSR; both had significantly greater power projection capabilities and therefore could engage in military deployment in regions far from their own. To a large extent, this explains why the geographical scope of the crises was limited to the immediate regions between/among the non-superpower actors.

Second, in terms of the presence of a superpower opponent, the US participated as China's opponent in five out of the 14 crises, among which are three Korean War crises and two of the Taiwan Strait crises.¹⁵¹ The USSR participated as China's opponent in

¹⁵⁰ Note that not all China's neighbors are sovereign states at the time of the crises. The legal status of Taiwan, for instance, still is under dispute.

¹⁵¹ Here, superpower involvement only refers to direct participation of the superpower(s) in a given crisis. Any indirect activities by the US and/or the USSR in the crisis are not regarded as superpower involvement, for instance, covert military assistance to any of the crisis actors, mediation through international or regional organizations, etc.

only one crisis – the Ussuri River border dispute. Only one crisis – Korean War II – involved both superpowers as actors, but the only superpower opponent in this case was the US. Most of the foreign policy crises for China took place in the Cold War context. Presumably, the US and the USSR had significant influence on Chinese foreign policy and Beijing’s decision-making in these crises. This also sheds light on China’s current relations with the US and Russia. The extent to such influence will be further discussed below.

Third, Table 5-1-1 presents the foreign policy crises by periods of Chinese leadership, with the intervals designated on the basis of who was widely believed to be the top decision-maker in Beijing during these crises. To be exact, Mao Zedong was the predominant decision-maker in nine crises from 1950 to 1969 (seven of them are under scrutiny in this project), during which decision-making was highly centralized and secretive to the outside. During Deng Xiaoping’s era after Mao’s death, China had four foreign policy crises, all against Vietnam.¹⁵² During Jiang Zemin’s era, China only had a crisis with Taiwan in 1995-1996, which resumed the unsolved political dispute with Taiwan, and, consequently, the US. Since the mid-1980s, Chinese decision-making has gradually de-centralized, except for the most crucial decisions concerning national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Principles of collective decision-making

¹⁵² Although he never officially occupied the civilian top leadership in China, there is little doubt that Deng Xiaoping was the actual ultimate decision-maker in major decisions like the ones in foreign policy crises. As the top military leader, Deng chaired the Central Military Commission (CMC) as commander-in-chief of the PLA till 1989. Deng was believed to have remained the *de facto* predominant leader from behind the scenes after he retired from China’s political stage. His influence on China’s general direction in terms of economic reforms, development strategies, and single-party rule has been far-reaching even after his death in 1997. For instance, Deng hand picked his predecessors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, both of whom have vowed to follow Deng’s guiding principles (*fangzhen*) and policies (*zhengce*). See detailed discussion about Chinese top leaderships in Chapter 2.

are gradually institutionalized although this has yet brought any fundamental change to the political system of China. China remains an authoritarian state with further delayed prospects for democratization.

5.2. Primary Hypotheses

This section focuses on how the core of the primary hypotheses is tapped and tested. That is, what answers to which specific questions regarding a given crisis decision yield what types of coding results that can be used to test these hypotheses. The coders' responses to the questionnaire, along with their corroborated interpretations based on the source materials, are able to tap into the theoretical core of the two primary hypotheses.

Before proceeding, a few notes of caution are in order. First, the hypotheses associated with PH should be seen as *general* hypotheses, rather than the type of hypothesis that usually is put forward in a large-N, statistical analysis or formal modeling. As noted earlier, the reason is that the type of hypothesis testing in this study fundamentally differs from statistical testing or formal modeling. For this reason, the following testing of these hypotheses should *not* be upheld against the same yardstick for Large-N statistical analysis or formal modeling.¹⁵³ As elaborated previously, the key purpose of this structured, focused comparison is to search for any patterns of Chinese crisis decision-making that in general support or reject the PH propositions; broadly

¹⁵³ The causal inference in case studies is similar to the method of causal imputation frequently used by historians, which is different from the kind of causal inference often seen in statistical analysis. In spite of their different methodological logics regarding fundamental issues (e.g., case selection, operationalization of variables, the use of inductive and deductive logic, etc.), it should be noted that case studies, statistical methods and formal modeling share “a similar epistemological logic” that emphasizes logical consistency (George and Bennett, 2005: 6).

speaking, the goal of theory testing is to “identify whether and how the scope conditions” of PH “should be expanded or narrowed” in the Chinese context, rather than trying to refute or embrace PH decisively (George & Bennett, 2005: 115). Thus, the results should not be understood or interpreted in terms of statistical significance in quantitative analysis.

Second, the confidence of the testing of the primary hypotheses relies primarily on the degree of *inter-coder agreement*, followed by a structured, focused comparative analysis with process-tracing. To establish plausibility, the case analysis must be consistent with the available data or materials and find support in valid generalizations based on the existing studies (George and Bennett, 2005: 91).

Third, the causal assumptions of PH, to a significant degree, determine the degree of difficulty or complexity to test the theory. In other words, it is most difficult to test, even with a large number of cases, the theories that are composed of complex types of causality, such as complex interactions among variables, low-probability relations between variables, or endogeneity problems or feedback effects (George and Bennett, 2005: 116). Moreover, factors such as discovery of new historical evidence, neglect of important rival hypotheses, or misunderstanding or mistreatment of significant evidence could challenge any existing rationale for any crisis decisions (George and Bennett, 2005: 91).

Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 map how the coders’ responses to the questions in Appendix 4-2-3-1 were further structured to tap into the core of PH and synthesized to test the Primary Hypotheses (I) and (II), respectively.¹⁵⁴ This coding process demonstrates the coders’ independent work, followed by debriefing in case of disparate

¹⁵⁴ As shown in these two tables, the coders are numbered in order to keep track of who worked on which crises. This will help with the analysis of the results.

responses on the same crisis. More importantly, Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 synthesize the coders' substantive contributions to one of the key research objectives of this project, i.e., to assess PH in an overall sense in the context of Chinese crisis decision-making. The remainder of this section explains in detail the coding process and results, as displayed in these two tables.

Primary Hypothesis (I):

During Stage I of crisis decision-making, leaders tend to avert political loss by using the noncompensatory rule with an emphasis on the political dimension.

During the initial stage of decision-making, from the perspective of PH, a combination of a high level of stress within the compressed timeframe, acute threat to basic value(s) of the nation, perception of violence, cognitive constraints of the human brain, and imperfect information create imperatives for leaders to resort to cognitive shortcuts to reduce the complexity and uncertainty of their decisions.¹⁵⁵ Studies in cognitive psychology suggest that a heightened perception of threat and shortened time period tend to impair people's cognitive ability, including "creativity and the ability to cope with the complexity" (Holsti, 1979: 108).¹⁵⁶ In this sense, it is a dilemma that decision-makers would never want to make impaired judgment in a crisis when their ability to make sound decisions could easily be impaired. To avoid such impairment, as

¹⁵⁵ The ICB Project identifies many of these important factors, such as high value threat, time constraint, and perception of war (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997, 2000). It should be noted that the ICB data set has approximately 85% inter-coder reliability, rendering a high degree of confidence in the data collection.

¹⁵⁶ See the detailed discussion about cognitive psychology in Chapter 3.

argued in Chapter 3, decision-makers tend to resort to some kind of cognitive heuristic to help cope with decision-making.

More importantly, according to PH, foreign policy decision-makers tend to put their own political well-being first and foremost in their deliberation while the final choice eventually comes from a comprehensive evaluation of all factors. This in fact allows decision-makers to employ two fundamentally different types of decision rules in the decision-making process. First and foremost, decision-makers must keep the politically unacceptable options from being further considered so that at least their final decision will not end up hurting themselves politically.¹⁵⁷ In other words, they must employ the noncompensatory principle to ensure that any decisions to deal with the foreign policy (crisis or non-crisis) situation would be politically acceptable to themselves. In fact, during this initial stage, foreign policy decision-makers would even eliminate “alternatives perceived to be politically infeasible for the opponent” (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003: 31) because they are “not only unwilling to make compensatory trade-offs on the political dimension but presume that their opponents are as well” (Astorino-Courtois and Trusty, 2003: 40). Therefore, both political primacy and

¹⁵⁷ History tells us that there are occasions in which decision-makers’ foreign policy decisions did end up with failure and damaging their political careers, even though in their deliberations they tried to prevent such consequences from happening. For instance, Lyndon B. Johnson and his key foreign policy advisers’ decision in 1965 to intervene in Vietnam dragged the US into the longest quagmire of war that ended up with a loss of 58, 000 American lives and the US withdrawal from South Vietnam in 1973. Even worse for Johnson, his tremendous unpopularity ignited large-scale anti-war demonstrations throughout the country. The war in Vietnam eventually destroyed his own political career, and in March 1968, Johnson withdrew as a presidential candidate for re-election. Such foreign policy failures, however, not necessarily falsify the theoretical core of PH. At the time of decision-making, decision-makers’ subjective evaluation of the objective foreign policy circumstances still would put their political interests as top priority. It should be the decision-makers’ misjudgment and/or miscalculation of the situation in the course of decision-making that leads to failures to protect and/or gain personal political interests. In other words, these foreign policy failures do not necessarily suggest that decision-makers fail to put politics as their top priority or they fail to follow the noncompensatory principle to avoid political disasters in the first place. The reasons for these foreign policy failures are worth further investigation; however, this is beyond the scope of the present study.

the noncompensatory principle are necessary *and* sufficient conditions for the Primary Hypothesis (I). Without empirical support for any of these theoretical criteria, the core of PH would lose ground.

In the meantime, it is critical *not* to conflate political primacy with the noncompensatory principle. In foreign policy matters, political primacy and the noncompensatory principle often go hand in hand; however, they are independent of each other by nature. The necessity of the noncompensatory principle is not necessarily derived from political primacy; it could be associated with priority on dimensions other than politics, depending on various decision-making settings. For instance, political considerations that are first and foremost to foreign policy decision-makers would become secondary to business managers; instead, their economic well-being would be the top priority during the decision-making process. The business managers still would employ the noncompensatory rules to sort out the available options, but in this case, the noncompensatory rules are linked with economic primacy for business leaders. This apparently differs from the core of PH, which puts emphasis on both political primacy and the noncompensatory principle.

In order to have a valid test of both hypotheses, it is imperative that the questionnaire can directly tap into the theoretical core of PH as accurately as possible.¹⁵⁸ To support this hypothesis, for the reasons discussed above, the coding result of a given crisis should *simultaneously* satisfy the two theoretical criteria. First, the coding result should be able to demonstrate that the political dimension indeed takes primacy over any

¹⁵⁸ Even with some potential weaknesses inherent in some of the questions in terms of wording and ordering of the questions, as noted in Chapter 4 and later in the present chapter, the responses to most questions in Appendix 4-2-3-1 still can fulfill this goal and hence serve as empirical evidence to test these hypotheses.

other dimensions (i.e., diplomatic, military, or economic) in decision-makers' initial deliberation of the available options. In a given crisis, the options regarded as politically viable are those that may have higher utility values along the political dimension than others. Although they may not be optimal overall, due to their relatively higher value on the political dimension than on other dimensions, these options are kept viable for the next phase of the decision-making. In the meantime, the policy options eliminated or taken off the table immediately are those that have low values as far as decision-makers' political outlook is concerned, regardless of the magnitude of their values on other policy dimensions.

Simultaneously, to support the Primary Hypothesis (I), the result should be able to show whether (and how) decision-makers initially employ the noncompensatory principle, as a cognitive heuristic, to simplify the 'decision matrix' and to facilitate decision-makers' policy choice in a given crisis. The noncompensatory principle is a satisficing decision rule, or, more precisely, a cognitive heuristic that decision-makers resort to at the beginning of the decision-making process in order to ease their stresses and pressures. In response to the crisis trigger, decision-makers' choice among the available options cannot compensate or counteract for the option with higher utility values on other policy dimensions than politics if the value of this particular option on the political dimension is too low to be acceptable to the decision-makers (Mintz, 1993). To put it differently, the fundamental reason for foreign policy decision-makers' adoption of the noncompensatory principle is because they are loathe to any loss in their political career or any damage to their own political well-being. Therefore, it is important to capture and demonstrate the non-holistic, satisficing nature of the crisis decision-making process. The

noncompensatory heuristics require no detailed evaluation of specific options; instead, they rely on the contextual dimensions to help simplify the decision task. In sharp contrast to the holistic, compensatory procedures, this process is attribute-based, non-exhaustive, and thus less demanding to decision-makers in order to overcome their cognitive constraints.

The process of selecting politically viable options and eliminating politically non-viable ones at the initial stage of decision-making is the *essence* of using the noncompensatory rule to ensure decision-makers' political survivability. Therefore, failure to support either the noncompensatory rule or political primacy would reject the Primary Hypothesis (I). To be specific, the noncompensatory principle would be rejected if the coding result of a given crisis is able to demonstrate that the decision is made with comprehensive considerations of all policy dimensions at once, which would suggest the use of compensatory rules across all dimensions. By the same token, political primacy would be rejected if the coding result of a given crisis suggests that decision-makers' initial deliberations put priority on factors other than or more than decision-makers' political well-being. Should either of the theoretical criteria be rejected, then the Primary Hypothesis (I) would be rejected. Given the high political stakes involved in foreign policy decisions, the two theoretical criteria of this hypothesis must go hand in hand. Evidence of the noncompensatory principle most likely would be derived from the primacy for political factors. On the other hand, evidence of political primacy most likely would be accomplished through the adoption of the noncompensatory principle.

Table 5-2-1 maps this coding process and summarizes the results for the Primary Hypothesis (I), with a particular focus on decision-makers' use of the noncompensatory

principle for political primacy during the initial decision-making phase.¹⁵⁹ The primary purpose is to demonstrate two critical, logical steps that lead to the empirical testing of the Primary Hypothesis (I). First, Table 5-2-1 bridges the empirical evidence from the answers to the specific questions and the abstract theoretical criteria of political primacy and the noncompensatory principle, or the union of the two – political unacceptability. Second, the establishment of such linkage makes it possible to test the Primary Hypothesis (I) by these theoretical criteria. Both political primacy and the noncompensatory principle are not only *necessary* but also *sufficient* conditions to support the Primary Hypothesis (I). Therefore, if and *only* if foreign policy decision-making processes in a given case find evidence of both of these theoretical criteria *simultaneously* can this case be regarded as empirical support for the Primary Hypothesis (I). In fact, this sets the bar high enough to allow a hard test of PH, assessing the empirical evidence against the theoretical criteria by the most conservative standards. To facilitate understanding of each coder's responses for each case, a general illustration of the following coding rules is listed at the bottom of the table.

To be specific, the coders' responses to Questions 9, 11, 12 and 14 in Appendix 4-2-3-1, as Table 5-2-1 indicates, are combined together to directly tap into political primacy. Recall that these four questions ask, respectively:

Question 9: At the initial consideration of policy alternatives during the crisis, did the potential loss along the political dimension tend to be more salient to the decision-makers than that along other dimensions?

Question 11: Did the fear of or concerns about political loss take precedence in the initial elimination of policy alternatives?

¹⁵⁹ In Table 5-2-1, among the nine foreign policy crises, Korean War I and Sino-Vietnam War ended up being coded by three coders as a result of the additional round of coding completed in January 2006. The rest of the crises were coded by a pair of randomly selected coders.

Question 12: If we arbitrarily categorize the dimensions as follows, on which did decision-makers tend to ground their decisions: political, economic, military or diplomatic?

Question 14: Do you agree that decision-makers tended to give more consideration to the political dimension at the outset of the crisis?

In any given crisis, if and *only* if all the responses to Questions 9, 11 and 14 are “yes” *and* the response to Question 12 is “political” can the evidence of political primacy at the initial stage of decision-making be valid. In other words, should any of the responses appear otherwise in the case under scrutiny, no evidence can be drawn to support politics as the first and foremost concern to decision-makers at the initial screening of options. By this rule, 18 out of the 20 responses to these four questions, as a whole, clearly find support for political primacy.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, should all of the responses to Questions 9, 11 and 14 appear negative, and/or should Question 12 get an answer other than or more than “political,” it would be sufficient evidence to reject political primacy. Coder 1’s responses to these questions for Korean War I offer a good example for answers that would reject political primacy. If all of the responses to Questions 9, 11 and 14 are “not sure,” “don’t know” or a mixture of both *and* if the answer to Question 12 is “not sure,” “don’t know,” a mixture of both, a contradictory combination of “yes” and “no,” or anything other than or more than “political,” then no conclusion can be drawn to either support or reject political primacy.¹⁶¹ Coder 2’s answers to the four questions for the Ussuri River crisis illustrate this type of inconclusive evidence. In any event, if the

¹⁶⁰ In the original coding, there were two coders for each of the nine crises. Thus, there are altogether 18 responses for each question. Including the additional coding by the sixth coder on two of the crises, there are 20 responses in total for each question in the results presents in Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2,

¹⁶¹ Note that “don’t know” never appears in the six coders’ responses.

responses to these questions are contradictory and inconsistent (e.g., two affirmative responses and a negative response to Questions 9, 11 and 14), then the evidence also is treated as inconclusive.

Furthermore, the responses to Questions 8 and 13 directly tap into the notion of political unacceptability, which, as noted above, essentially are the theoretical combination of political primacy and the use of the noncompensatory principle. In Appendix 4-2-3-1, recall that Questions 8 and 13 ask, respectively:

Question 8: Did the CCP decision-makers appear to eliminate these politically unacceptable options immediately?

Question 13: Do you think that, from the decision-makers' point of view, consideration along the political dimension can be substituted for by another dimension (i.e., economic, military or diplomatic)?

As evident in Appendix 4-2-3-1, none of the questions, in their original form, can tap into the noncompensatory principle *alone* (without linking it with political primacy), this criterion cannot be tested *separately* from political primacy. Instead, the noncompensatory principle at best can be tapped and tested *jointly* from the responses to Questions 8 and 13. This might be one of the potential problems inherent in the questionnaire. Nonetheless, given that the questionnaire at least attempts to tap into these two theoretical criteria together and such practice has found consistent and strong support, the results for the Primary Hypothesis (I) still should be regarded as valid. Ultimately, the evidence for or against political unacceptability is equivalent to that for or against the Primary Hypothesis (I).

In any given crisis, if and *only* if the response to Question 8 is “yes” *and* that to Question 13 is “no” can the case under scrutiny be regarded as evidence of political unacceptability. Table 5-2-1 indicates that 19 of the 20 responses to these two questions

together yield support for political unacceptability. Conversely, should the answer to Question 8 be negative *or* that to Question 13 be affirmative, decision-makers' perceptions of political unacceptability would be rejected. This occurs in Coder 1's responses to these questions for Korean War I, as the only case of rejection against political unacceptability shown in Table 5-2-1. Should the answers to both or either of the questions are "not sure," "don't know," a mixture of both, or contradictory responses, this would suggest a lack of sufficient evidence and therefore no conclusive evidence could be drawn to support or reject political unacceptability.

Table 5-2-1 shows the coders' overall assessment of the decision-making processes on the basis of available information about the cases, with a high degree of inter-coder reliability even prior to debriefing.¹⁶² By the theoretical criteria of the non-compensatory principle along the political dimension, the Primary Hypothesis (I) finds strong support in seven out of the nine Chinese foreign policy crises, namely, Korean War II and III, Taiwan Strait I, II and IV, China-India Border II, and Sino-Vietnam War. The coding responses in all the seven crises provide consistent and coherent support for the Primary Hypothesis (I). Detailed examples of how empirical evidence is yielded to support the hypothesis in these crises will appear later in this chapter in the case study on Sino-Vietnam War. In the other two crises, Korean War I and the Ussuri River crisis, the results are mixed; there is a low level of inter-coder agreement on whether both political primacy and the noncompensatory principle, or political unacceptability, exist in the decision-making process. As a result, these two crises cannot support or reject the

¹⁶² It is impossible for any decision-making model to actually re-play the decision-making process, so it is only a simulation of the history at best. The coding in this study is no exception, but the answers provided by the coders do represent more than summaries of the coding materials.

Primary Hypothesis (I). The case study on Korean War I, as will appear below, will illustrate this point. With consistent and strong support in seven crises, mixed results in the other two, and no consistent and strong rejection in any of the nine crises currently under scrutiny, this demonstrates solid evidence that Chinese decision-makers tend to employ the noncompensatory principle at the beginning of the decision-making process to avoid political loss. In times of foreign policy crises, Chinese leaders, similarly to those in Western democracies, also put primacy on their political well-being and political survivability. Overall, the results for the Primary Hypothesis (I) reinforce the core of PH; that is, decision-makers put primacy on their own political interests and domestic politics. This is the fundamental incentive for decision-makers to employ the noncompensatory principle, at the onset of foreign policy decision-making, to avoid any political damage or loss as a result of their cognitive impairment. Therefore, the evidence in Chinese crisis decision-making demonstrates that Chinese decision-makers are political-loss averse at the initial stage of decision-making.

Primary Hypothesis (II):

During Stage II of crisis decision-making, leaders tend to make the final choice among the remaining options by rational choice-based, utility-maximizing calculations along a more *diverse* set of dimensions, which include the political but also military, economic and diplomatic.

In contrast, the Primary Hypothesis (II) focuses on the decision-making process and outcome *after* the politically unacceptable options are discarded. In terms of procedure, during this second stage of decision-making following the elimination of the

politically unacceptable options, decision-makers would switch their decision rules from the noncompensatory to compensatory principle, such as utility-maximizing, to *optimize* their decision outcomes within the set of the remaining politically *satisficing* options. In terms of outcome, in this second stage of decision-making, decision-makers' comprehensive evaluation of these remaining politically viable options along a wider range of policy dimensions would facilitate the final choice of the *optimal* option among them. In other words, the final choice in this stage should emerge from a comprehensive evaluation across all policy dimensions, emphasizing cost-benefit tradeoffs among the surviving options from the previous stage.

The political dimension at this point is no more salient than the other policy dimensions to decision-makers. The remaining politically viable options that still are being deliberated at the second stage are all that would not cause severe political damage or loss to themselves. Therefore, decision-makers would analyze the crisis situation in a more rational fashion by rationalizing the remaining options with an effort to balance the costs and benefits from the economic, military, diplomatic, or other important policy dimensions related to national interests. For example, after the noncompensatory elimination based on political unacceptability at the onset of option screening, political and military considerations might be equally important among the remaining politically viable options in one case, but military considerations are most important in another, and then, in still another instance, economic stakes become most important, and so forth.

The key theoretical criteria for the Primary Hypothesis (II) are two-fold: one is decision-makers' comprehensive evaluation along a more diverse set of policy dimensions and the other is their ranking of policy options based on utility-maximizing.

The outcome of this procedure should be the option with the highest utility value overall. To support this hypothesis, the coding results for the decision-making in a given crisis should demonstrate that decision-makers make the final choice from among the remaining politically viable options, based on utility-maximizing along a more *diverse* set of dimensions. To put it simply, both theoretical criteria must be fulfilled *simultaneously*. In a given crisis, if and *only* if decision-makers at this stage evaluate the remaining options from a more comprehensive set of policy dimensions *and* such process takes place in a utility-maximizing fashion can this decision be regarded as valid supporting evidence for the Primary Hypothesis (II). Conversely, should either or both of these criteria be rejected, the evidence from the crisis under scrutiny would reject the Primary Hypothesis (II). To reject this hypothesis, the coding responses for the decision-making in a given crisis must demonstrate *both* of the following: (1) the final choice is made without a comprehensive evaluation across policy dimensions (e.g., decision-makers still focus on only politics in their policy assessment); or (2) decision-makers do not use utility-maximizing calculations to optimize the final choice (e.g., decision-makers still use the noncompensatory principle by ignoring the utility value of some option along less important dimensions). Again, this sets the bar high enough to ensure the most conservative test of this hypothesis.

Table 5-2-2 maps the coding process and results for the Primary Hypothesis (II). To be specific, the coders' responses to Question 15 in Appendix 4-2-3-1, as listed in Table 5-2-2, directly tap into the theoretical criterion of comprehensive evaluation across policy dimensions. The responses to Question 16 in Appendix 4-2-3-1, also listed in Table 5-2-2, directly tap into another theoretical criterion of this hypothesis – utility-

maximizing. As argued above, these answers, combined together, are able to provide the empirical basis to test the Primary Hypothesis (II). To facilitate understanding of each coder's responses for each case, a general illustration of the following coding rules is listed at the bottom of the table.

Recall that Questions 15 and 16 in Appendix 4-2-3-1 ask, respectively:

Question 15: Do you think the final choice among the politically viable options was calculated on the basis of a more *diverse* set of dimensions, including diplomatic, economic and/or military?

Question 16: Was it a utility-based (i.e., conventionally rational based on cost/benefit analysis, as opposed to normative/moral) calculation?

In any given case, if and *only* if the responses to both of these questions are affirmative can the evidence for this hypothesis be valid. As Table 5-2-2 indicates, 17 of the 20 responses to these questions are supporting evidence for the hypothesis. By the number of crisis, the same seven cases that support the Primary Hypothesis (I) also support the Primary Hypothesis (II). The empirical support is strong and consistent as a result of a high degree of inter-coder agreement in the affirmative answers to both Questions 15 and 16.¹⁶³

Conversely, should the responses to either or both questions appear negative in the case under scrutiny, the Primary Hypothesis would be rejected. For example, Coder 6's negative response to Question 15 for the Ussuri River crisis rejects the comprehensive evaluation of the remaining options across dimensions. Coder 1's negative response to Question 16 for Korean War I is a good example of rejecting utility-maximizing. These

¹⁶³ Note that in Taiwan Strait IV, Coder 4's response to Question 16 is marked with '*' in Table 5-2-2, indicating that this response was obtained after debriefing with the two coders who worked on this case. As a result, Coder 4's overall coding for the Primary Hypothesis (II), reported next to that response, is marked with '*'. The debriefing successfully resolved the disagreement in this case, and thus consistent results indicate supporting evidence for the primary hypotheses. More detailed discussion on this point will appear later in this chapter.

are the only two negative responses that reject either of the two criteria for the Primary Hypothesis (II). However, since in neither Korean War I nor the Ussuri River crisis did the coders *all* give negative responses to either or both of the questions, the degree of inter-coder agreement is low and thus it is impossible to reject this hypothesis in the two cases.

Should the answers to either or both of the questions be “not sure,” “don’t know,” a mixture of both, or a contradictory combination of “yes” and “no,” this would mean lack of sufficient evidence and therefore no conclusive evidence could be drawn to support or reject this hypothesis. For instance, in a given crisis, if the response to Questions 15 is any of the above, then no conclusion could be drawn to either support or reject comprehensive evaluation of options across dimensions. Similarly, should the response to Question 16 be any of the above, then no conclusion could be drawn to either support or reject the criterion of utility-maximizing. In Table 5-2-2, Coder 1’s answer to Question 15 for Korean War I and Coder 2’s answer to Question 16 for the Ussuri River crisis illustrate this type of inconclusive evidence. Furthermore, Coder 1’s inconclusive response to Question 15 and negative response to Question 16, combined together, reject the Primary Hypothesis (II) in Korean War I. While Coder 1’s responses essentially reject it, Coders 3’s and 5’s affirmative responses support the Primary Hypothesis (II). As explained previously, due to the low level of inter-coder agreement, no conclusion should be drawn that Korean War I, as a case, supports or rejects this hypothesis.

In summary, the primary hypotheses together picture PH’s two-stage decision-making of a crisis decision in a given foreign policy crisis: decision-makers first

eliminate the decision options that are politically unviable because, to them, politics is the first and foremost consideration; after that, the decision-makers pick the best option through utility-maximizing from the remaining options for the sake of a comprehensive, more balanced evaluation among all important factors (including economic, political, military, diplomatic, etc.). To reiterate, as advocates of PH contend, the two stages are differentiated not by any specific historical events, but by decision-makers' switch of decision principles from the noncompensatory to compensatory principle. Evidence of the noncompensatory principle suggests a two-stage process. In other words, the two-stage decision-making goes hand-in-hand with the use of the noncompensatory rule. This does not make the Primary Hypothesis (I) un-falsifiable. In fact, the switch is invisible and intangible; however, it is possible to infer the change from primary and secondary sources. Should either or both of the primary hypotheses be rejected by the above coding criteria, it would cast doubt on PH's two-stage decision-making model, and, hence, the theoretical core of PH might be discredited.

For illustrative purposes (given the space limitation here), two randomly chosen decisions in the following two Chinese foreign policy crises are in order below to demonstrate how the primary hypotheses are tested: the Sino-Vietnam War (1978-1979) as one of the cases with strong evidence to support the primary hypotheses and Korean War I (1950) as one of the borderline cases without conclusive evidence to either support or reject them. The two case studies will provide more details and nuances beyond the coding results to understand their respective decision-making processes and outcomes.

5.2.1 Cases with Supporting Evidence for the Primary Hypotheses

Among the seven cases that provide strong evidence to support the primary hypotheses, as shown in Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2, Sino-Vietnam War (1978-1979) is randomly chosen to illustrate how and why such conclusion is reached for both hypotheses.

Sino-Vietnam War Background (ICB Case 298)

The Sino-Vietnam War is a crisis between China and Vietnam, which escalated to full-scale war and lasted from December 25, 1978 to March 15, 1979.¹⁶⁴

Tension between China and Vietnam mounted in the summer of 1978. On June 29, Vietnam joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the Soviet bloc's economic community. On July 12, China tightened border controls in order to stem the influx of refugees, primarily consisting of 169,000 Hoa people (or ethnic Chinese in Vietnam) fleeing Vietnam to China. Moreover, a significant military buildup occurred along the Sino-Vietnam border. The two countries edged toward full-scale war during the summer of 1978, while fighting continued during the fall, followed by a break during the rainy season. In November, Vietnam and the USSR signed the Treaty of Friendship, in which both pledged military assistance in the event of a third-party attack on the other.

Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia on December 25, 1978 triggered a crisis for China.¹⁶⁵ The PRC responded with a military incursion into Vietnam on February 17,

¹⁶⁴ China and Vietnam were hostile neighbors for a thousand years. Most of what later became North and South Vietnam – Cochin China (from 1862) and Annam (from 1874) – was controlled by France through the first half of the twentieth century. Although Vietnam declared its independence in September 1945, French domination ended only after its defeat at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 and the Geneva Agreement on Indochina soon after (see ICB Case 145, in *Indochina Protracted Conflict* [Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997]). From that point onward there were several incidents and disputes between China and Vietnam including armed conflict over the Paracel Islands in 1959 and 1974.

1979 and the occupation of several border villages. This, in turn, triggered a crisis for Vietnam. Chinese troops met with stronger-than-anticipated military counterattacks, leading to a halt in their military operations. These operations were resumed on the 23rd, after the invasion force had been enlarged to 200,000. Vietnam responded by launching two counterattacks into Chinese territory the same day.

On February 17, the day of the Chinese incursion, Vietnam urged the UN Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to put an end to China's "aggression," but did not request a formal session of the Security Council. On the 22nd, the US, the UK, Norway and Portugal requested an urgent meeting of the Council to consider the situation in Southeast Asia. The five Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries circulated a draft resolution calling for a halt to all hostilities in Indochina; but, as with the proposed resolution on Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, it was vetoed by the Soviets.

On March 5, 1979, a government statement from China announced that the Chinese troops had attained their goal – "to punish the Vietnamese aggressor" – and would withdraw to Chinese territory. Fighting subsided the same day, although the government of Vietnam issued a decree proclaiming general mobilization. Chinese troops were withdrawn from Vietnam by March 15, terminating the crisis for the PRC and Vietnam.

China's military exercise in deterrence had mixed results; it was revealed as unable to prevent the toppling of a regime in Cambodia to whose support it was publicly committed and it failed "to punish" Vietnam. At the same time China emerged in a stronger political position because the USSR abstained from participating in the war.

¹⁶⁵ In December the continued drain on Vietnam's resources led to its decisive Invasion of Cambodia (see Case 284, in *Indochina Protracted Conflict* [Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997]).

There was no apparent damage to the normalization of the Sino-US relations, which had been strengthened in December 1978.

Evidence of Support for the Primary Hypotheses in the Sino-Vietnam War

As Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 indicate, the coding responses from Coders 1, 3 and 5 all support the two primary hypotheses in the Sino-Vietnam War.¹⁶⁶ To be specific, in Table 5-2-1, Coders 1's, 3's and 5's answers to Questions 9, 11 and 14 all are affirmative and their answers to Question 12 all are "political." Recall that the supporting criterion for political primacy specified above is: if and *only* if all the answers to Questions 9, 11 and 14 are "yes" *and* all the answers to Question 12 are "political" can these responses be regarded as supporting evidence for decision-makers' predominant concerns over politics at the initial stage of decision-making. By this criterion, the three coders' responses demonstrate strong support for political primacy in Chinese leaders' decision to use force in the Sino-Vietnam War. As will appear below, the coders' responses to the open-ended questions in Appendix 4-2-3-1 reveal more details of their corroborated interpretations to allow for the untangling of the decision-making process and outcome in the Sino-Vietnam War. More importantly, by the above coding criterion on political unacceptability (i.e., if and *only* if all the answers to Question 8 are affirmative and those to Question 13 are negative can they be regarded as evidence to support decision-makers' perception of political unacceptability), to reiterate the argument made earlier, this would yield supportive evidence for the Primary Hypothesis (I).

¹⁶⁶ As an additional round of inter-coder reliability check, Coder 5, who had had neither prior exposure to PH nor the relevant literature but has been well-trained in international relations as the original five coders, independently worked on this case based on the same set of questionnaire and source materials. Coder 5's responses reinforce and validate the supporting evidence in Coders 1's and 3's results.

Overall, to test the Primary Hypothesis (I), these results are consistent and demonstrate a remarkably high level of inter-coder agreement. Therefore, it can be concluded with confidence that the coders' area expertise on Chinese foreign policy and decision-making provide strong support for the Primary Hypothesis (I). That is, at the onset of the Sino-Vietnam War, Chinese decision-makers did try to avert political loss by using the noncompensatory rule with an emphasis on political considerations to eliminate the politically unacceptable options.

Similarly, in Table 5-2-2, Coders 1's, 3's and 5's answers to Questions 15 and 16 all are affirmative, demonstrating again a high level of inter-coder agreement. Recall that Question 15 taps into whether the final decision is the product of comprehensive evaluation of all factors and Question 16 taps into whether the final decision turns out to be utility-maximizing. By the supporting criterion, if and *only* if all the responses to both questions are "yes" can they be regarded as supporting evidence for the Primary Hypothesis (II). Therefore, it can be concluded with confidence that the coders' area expertise on Chinese foreign policy and decision-making provide strong support for the Primary Hypothesis (II). That is, at the final stage of decision-making in the Sino-Vietnam War, Chinese decision-makers did try to employ a rational approach of utility-maximizing by a comprehensive cost-benefit evaluation of all other factors of the remaining options.

Figure 5-2-1-1, with a schematic illustration, summarizes the two-stage decision-making process based on the coders' overall assessment of this crisis with their corroborated interpretations of the source materials. The coders identify the following five options that were available to Beijing at the onset of the crisis: (1) not to intervene

(to do nothing, or to stand pat); (2) to have diplomatic negotiations with Vietnam; (3) to dispatch Chinese troops to Cambodia and Laos; (4) to launch a punitive war against Vietnam; and (5) to launch a full-scale war against Vietnam. Option 1 reflects the hesitation of the civilian members in the Politburo, fearing that the war would have had negative impact on China's modernization (Chen, 1987: 86). Apparently, this was a conservative choice, mainly for the sake of domestic economy. However, it was seen as a politically non-viable option to the Chinese leaders and thus eliminated at the onset of decision-making. The deterioration of Sino-Vietnam relations was irreversible, in part, due to the deep-rooted suspicions and irreconcilable conflict of interests between the two sides (e.g., border conflicts including Spratly Islands, Vietnam's push for an Indochina Federation and its growing influence over Laos and Cambodia, etc.) (Camilleri, 1980: 226). Consequently, "...for several years, a number of Chinese officials had wanted to give Vietnam a lesson" (Chen, 1987: 85). Option 2 came to a deadlock due to the escalating interactions between China and Vietnam without any powerful third-party mediation. It largely depended on the external factors, such as Vietnam's Indochina strategy, the Cambodian issue, the Soviet involvement, and ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. Option 3, which actually was recommended by Wang Dongxing and Su Zhenhua at the enlarged Politburo meeting from mid-November to mid-December 1978, was dismissed (Chen, 1987: 86; Nguyen-vo, 1992: 136).¹⁶⁷ This was a politically viable option with considerable military and economic stakes, and, thus, it involved more considerations on the cost of war, the possible impact of war on China's modernization, and national

¹⁶⁷ Wang Dongxing was Mao Zedong's long-term body guard, who later moved up to the political ladder to Vice Chairman of the 11th CPC Congress in 1977. Both Wang Dongxing and Su Zhenhua were members of the Politburo at that time.

interests and values. Option 4, proposed by Xu Shiyou, Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, was the final choice. Option 5 was the most violent form of response to the crisis, but it also was politically viable. Options 4 and 5 both would involve direct military action against Vietnam, the triggering entity. The difference was that the former was limited in scale and thus easy to keep the situation from going out of control, whereas the latter potentially could drag the entire country into long-term warfare.

The initial deliberation at the enlarged Politburo meeting showed two opposite views: dovish vs. hawkish.¹⁶⁸ Among the above five options, ‘to do nothing or stand pat’ (Option 1) and ‘to negotiate with Vietnam’ (Option 2) represented a more general form of action – use of a non-violent act – to respond to the crisis. The coders concurred in their written responses and oral discussions during debriefing that, at the onset of the crisis, the Deng Xiaoping-led leadership was first and foremost concerned with political survival, especially given that this crisis took place in the aftermath of Mao’s death and the end of the Cultural Revolution and soon after Deng managed to rise to power for the third time from the fierce power struggles among various political factions in Beijing. The domestic political situation in China was still shaky, and Deng had yet to consolidate his political power in the midst of the ongoing factional struggles between Deng Xiaoping and his followers and other factions (e.g., Hua Guofeng and his associates). Thus, the war against Vietnam signified Deng’s reemergence to China’s top leadership, particularly in China’s foreign policy (Chen, 1987: 77).¹⁶⁹ In order to maintain Deng’s political

¹⁶⁸ Although China and Vietnam are historically hostile neighbors (except for the temporary solidarity with North Vietnam under the International Communist movement), the formal consideration of the major response in this particular crisis did not take place until the enlarged Politburo meeting.

¹⁶⁹ In the course of Mao’s numerous domestic political campaigns, Deng Xiaoping was purged at three different times and still managed to rise back to power three times.

dominance within the CCP and the PLA, the Deng-led leadership appeared to eliminate the two dovish options at the onset of the crisis because either option would have made China appear weak in terms of its new foreign policy. More importantly, that, in turn, would have weakened Deng's domestic political power by making him appear too weak to be capable of steering the wheel of China's future. To Deng and his associates, these were politically unacceptable options, and, therefore, had to be eliminated immediately at the onset of decision-making. Moreover, deep-rooted mistrust and misperceptions between Vietnam and China over thousands of years of history had prepared Beijing (and Hanoi) for a military confrontation against the other; to either side, a confrontation was probably inevitable in time. For these reasons, the dovish options were both politically unacceptable to the Chinese leaders and thus eliminated from further consideration at the onset of the decision-making. Elimination of these dovish options clearly demonstrates the use of the noncompensatory principle at the beginning of the decision-making because neither of the options scored high on the political dimension. In other words, in their perceptions, adopting any of these options might have incurred major damage to the political careers of Deng and associates.

Upon elimination of the dovish options, the decision-making moved to the second stage, focusing on the remaining politically viable options. By contrast, the hawkish options – to send Chinese troops to Cambodia and Laos (Option 3), to launch a punitive war against Vietnam (Option 4), and to launch a full-scale war against Vietnam (Option 5) – all were seen as the politically viable options to the Chinese leaders, in particular to Deng Xiaoping, even though they might induce heavy costs on the other dimensions. Deng was “the man who masterminded Beijing's policy for Vietnam at the time,” from

the Politburo meeting in December 1978, to the diplomatic trip to the US, and to his approval of war objectives, etc. (Chen, 1987: 83). He had favored the war options all along (Ngugen-vo, 1992: 109-144). To the Deng-led leadership in Beijing, the billions of dollars of logistical support China had offered to Hanoi during the Vietnam War was totally in vain given the context of the growing bilateral border clashes, the deadlock of the refugee talks, and most importantly, Vietnam's ambitious expansion in Indochina and security alliance with the USSR (Nguyen-vo, 1992: 109-144). As a result, these options were kept in this stage of further deliberation, in which more careful assessment along all dimensions took place.

Geng Biao, the Party's Chief of the CMC, in a speech delivered in January 1979, explicitly opposed sending troops to Cambodia and Laos (Option 3) to directly rescue the Pol Pot regime for several reasons: (1) direct military intervention would break China's principle of non-intervention and give the appearance, at least, of a hegemonic power; (2) direct military intervention would lose many UN members' support for the Kampuchean membership; (3) direct intervention could drag on too long and possibly turn into a war quagmire in Indochina, given the US experience in the region; (4) more importantly, direct intervention would provide a good excuse to the USSR for potential military intervention from the north and unfavorable international campaigns against China¹⁷⁰; and (5) direct intervention eventually would hurt China's Four Modernization Programs (Chen, 1987: 86-87). Similarly balanced assessment also led to the dropping of Option 5, "launching a full-scale war against Vietnam." Chen Yun explicitly pointed out in his

¹⁷⁰ This was mostly based on Deng Xiaoping and Geng Biao's evaluations.

comment that capturing Hanoi – a clear sign of a full-scale war – would be unacceptable (Chen, 1987: 113).

Based on the three coders' corroborated responses to the open-ended questions, the final choice – “to launch a punitive war against Vietnam” (Option 4) – eventually was selected after Beijing's careful, rational considerations. From the strategic, geopolitical point of view, the limited warfare aimed to change the balance of power between China and Vietnam in Laos, Cambodia, and the ASEAN regions in Indochina.¹⁷¹ More importantly, Beijing's resentment against Vietnam, in part, derived from the alliance formation among the communist countries, especially its alliance with the USSR, which, to China, was a grave security threat. The decision to use force reflected Beijing's deep concerns over the Soviet influence in Indochina and the Soviet-Vietnam alliance, which eventually would have encircled China from the north and the south. “It was, not until after the conclusion of the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty in early November that Beijing sensed the great urgency of the crisis” (Chen, 1987: 85). In Deng's summary of the war prospects, the possibility of Soviet intervention to defend Vietnam was of particular importance (Chen, 1987: 88). In addition to “teaching Vietnam a lesson,” as Deng declared, Beijing wanted to use the limited border warfare to probe the USSR's true intention in Indochina and test its real commitment to defending Vietnam under their newly signed Treaty of Friendship in November 1978, in which both the USSR and Vietnam committed to extend security protection in case the other was under attack by a third party.

¹⁷¹ Nguyen-vo (1992: 145) describes the post-war era in Indochina as the Vietnamese Decade.

Deng summarized the specific means, scale, and possible costs and benefits at the end of the Politburo meeting during which the debate whether to use force against Vietnam was unified into a war tone (Chen, 1987: 85-86). The summary comprehensively considered all major policy dimensions. It is evident that the evaluation at this stage extended beyond the political dimension, meaning that politics is no longer the top priority at this point; the military, diplomatic, geo-strategic, and economic dimensions, together with the political dimension, all turned out to be equally salient areas of assessment (Chen, 1987: 84, 88). The overall decision-making, i.e., Stage II of decision-making, primarily reflected a comprehensive evaluation of the remaining three options for utility-maximizing. Evidence clearly lies in the limited military objectives (e.g., the punitive purpose, quick in-and-out strategy, not capturing Hanoi) as well as Deng's summary of war prospects. These considerations greatly reduced the impact of war on China's economy and diplomatic objectives in the international system; "measured by events after the war, Deng Xiaoping's judgment was reasonably accurate" (Chen, 1987: 88). It turned out that the crisis and war development later on were within those calculations of Deng's summary.¹⁷²

In summary, the three coders' responses, along with their corroborated interpretations and process-tracing, strongly support the two primary hypotheses regarding China's decision to wage a punitive war against Vietnam in the Sino-Vietnam War. The high level of inter-coder agreement on this decision-making process further strengthens these results. This case, among the seven, shows that PH has solid empirical validity in Chinese foreign policy decision-making.

¹⁷² See Deng's report at the meeting of the Chinese Central Military Commission from February 9 to 12, 1979 (Chen, 1987: 92-93).

5.2.2 Borderline Cases with Inconclusive Evidence

For the remaining two crises, namely, Korean War I (1950) and the Ussuri River crisis (1969), given the low level of inter-coder agreement, there is insufficient evidence to either support or reject the primary hypotheses; the results for these crises do not fully support the primary hypotheses, yet neither do they reject the hypothesis as a whole. To illustrate this point, Korean War I (1950) is randomly chosen to test the primary hypotheses.

Korean War I Crisis Background (ICB Case 132)

The first international crisis related to the Korean War began on June 25 and ended on September 30, 1950.¹⁷³ There were four crisis actors – South Korea (formally known as the Republic of Korea, or the ROK), the US, the PRC, and Taiwan.

On June 25, 1950, forces of the DPRK (North Korea) invaded the ROK (South Korea) by crossing the 38th Parallel, the *de facto* border between the two Koreas. This triggered a crisis for South Korea and the US. Rhee responded the same day with an appeal to the US for military aid. On June 27, Harry S. Truman authorized the US forces

¹⁷³ Prior to the crisis, according to the ICB crisis description, constant tension and minor incidents were reported in 1949. That year, too, General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) and *de facto* ruler in Japan, and Secretary of State Acheson had defined Korea as beyond the US defense perimeter in East Asia. The Chinese Communist regime was preoccupied with internal reconstruction after the Chinese Civil War (see ICB Case 125--China Civil War, in 1948-49, in *Multiregional Protracted Conflicts: Taiwan Strait* [Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997]), and plans were made for a probable invasion of Taiwan in 1950. From September 1949 until June 1950 the South Korean leader, Syngman Rhee, frequently announced a “march-to-the-north” policy, to unify Korea by force. During June 1950 Kim Il-Sung, the leader of North Korea, initiated an all-out campaign for the reunification of Korea.

to fight alongside the ROK troops.¹⁷⁴ He also reacted to the critical situation developing between the two Chinas by ordering the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait and establishing a naval blockade as a preventive measure against a possible Chinese attack on Taiwan. This triggered a crisis for the PRC, whose plans for the military attack of Taiwan were complicated by a possible combined US-Taiwanese invasion of the mainland. China's major response, on June 28, was contained in a speech by Premier Zhou Enlai accusing the US of aggression.¹⁷⁵

The crisis for China faded in July as events in the area merged with the ongoing Korean War.¹⁷⁶ By September 29, 1950, the UN forces had restored control of South Korea to the Rhee government, so the crisis ended for South Korea and the US. The following day, the crisis ended for Taiwan with the reduction of intensity of the conflict.

¹⁷⁴ According to the ICB description, a US-sponsored resolution at the UN Security Council was passed on June 25 by a vote of 9 to 0, with Yugoslavia abstaining and the USSR absent – its delegates had walked out of the Council. The resolution condemned the North Korean attack and demanded the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the north of the 38th Parallel. A second Security Council resolution on June 27 – 7 to 1, with Yugoslavia opposed, India and Egypt abstaining, and the USSR still absent), called on the UN members to provide assistance to South Korea. On July 7, after the US and ROK forces had come under heavy attack and had been driven southward, the Security Council passed a third resolution in the USSR's absence – 7 to 0, with India, Egypt, and Yugoslavia abstaining: it urged all members to contribute forces to a UN Unified Command. The US General MacArthur was appointed to lead the combined forces.

The Soviet attitude and role are now known. After almost a year of hesitation, according to official USSR documents, Stalin gave Kim Il-Sung a “green light” to launch a full-scale attack on South Korea: first, in a message to the Korean leader on January 30, 1950, via the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang – “tell him that I am ready to help him in this matter [a large matter in regard to South Korea such as he wants to undertake]”; and second, during a meeting with Kim in Moscow in April 1950. Thereafter, Soviet military advisors were sent to North Korea to help plan the campaign, along with a large amount of weapons and supplies. The USSR also provided air cover over North Korean cities. Kim Il-Sung also secured the support of Mao Zedong at a meeting in Beijing in May.

¹⁷⁵ General MacArthur ignored Beijing's warning signal that China would send troops to intervene if the UN-ROK troops crossed the 38th Parallel. Taiwan, fearful of a Chinese Communist invasion, as the PRC forces were massed along the coast, perceived Zhou's speech as a threat with possible grave consequences and responded the following day with general mobilization.

On a separate note, Zhou Enlai was both Premier and Foreign Minister from 1949 to 1958.

¹⁷⁶ Note that there was no specific UN action concerning the PRC-Taiwan crisis.

Evidence of Disagreement in Testing the Primary Hypotheses in Korean War I

By the coding criteria specified above, Coders 1 and 3's original responses to the questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-1 together were not sufficient enough to either support or reject the two primary hypotheses. In fact, their understandings of the decision-making in Korean War I were in serious disagreement. A third coder, Coder 5, later responded to the same questionnaire based on the same set of source materials independently.¹⁷⁷ The additional responses provide some weight to the evidence that tends to support the primary hypotheses. By the most conservative testing criteria proposed in this study, however, the overall evidence from this case is not sufficient to support the hypotheses.

There are two major discrepancies across Coders 1's, 3's and 5's evaluations of this crisis. One is concerned with coding results for the Primary Hypothesis (I): Coder 1's responses are entirely different from Coders 3's and 5's regarding the Primary Hypothesis (I). To be specific, in Table 5-2-1, Coder 1's answers to Questions 9, 11 and 14 all are negative and his answer to Question 12 is "military/security." By the coding criterion for political primacy that if any of the answers to Questions 9, 11 and 14 are "no" *and* the answer to Question 12 is anything other *or* more than "political," these responses from Coder 1 serve as evidence to reject decision-makers' predominant concerns over politics at the initial stage of decision-making for Korean War I. More importantly, by the coding criterion for political unacceptability, Coder 1's negative answer to Question 8 and affirmative answer to Question 13 are completely the opposite

¹⁷⁷ Coder 5, who had had no prior exposure to PH and relevant literature but has been as well-trained in international relations as the original five coders, worked on this case later on as an additional round of inter-coder reliability check.

of the corresponding responses that otherwise would support decision-makers' perceptions of political unacceptability, that is, the combination of political primary and the noncompensatory principle. In this case, Coder 1's results are consistent in themselves, and as argued earlier, serve as strong evidence to reject the Primary Hypothesis (I).

On the contrary, as Table 5-2-1 indicates, Coders 3 and 5 gave entirely opposite responses to the questions mentioned above. All of their answers to Questions 9, 11 and 14 are "yes" and all of those to Question 12 is "political." By the coding criterion for political primacy, therefore, these responses from the two coders will serve as supportive evidence for decision-makers' predominant concerns over politics at the initial stage of decision-making for Korean War I. More importantly, by the coding criterion for political unacceptability, Coders 3's and 5's affirmative answer to Question 8 and negative answers to Question 13 support decision-makers' perceptions of political primary and the noncompensatory principle. As argued earlier, according to Coders 3 and 5, Korean War I contains consistent evidence that supports the Primary Hypothesis (I).

The other major discrepancy is concerned with the coding and testing of the Primary Hypothesis (II). Similar to the above mentioned problems, Coder 1 totally disagreed with Coders 3 and 5 on the answers regarding the Primary Hypothesis (II). Recall that, to test this hypothesis, Question 15 taps into whether the final decision is the product of comprehensive evaluation of all factors and Question 16 taps into whether the final decision turns out to be utility-maximizing. Specifically, in Table 5-2-2, Coder 1's response to Question 15 is "not sure" and that to Question 16 is negative. Clearly, these

responses together indicate that, to Coder 1's understanding of the decision-making, there was not sufficient evidence to suggest Beijing's comprehensive evaluation across all policy dimensions and that Beijing's ultimate decision in response to Korean War I was driven by utility-maximizing.

In contrast, Coders 3's and 5's affirmative responses to Questions 15 and 16 *simultaneously* satisfy the criterion that if and *only* if all the responses to both questions are "yes," can they be regarded as supporting evidence for the Primary Hypothesis (II). According to these two coders, at the final stage of decision-making, Beijing's final choice in this crisis was through a more balanced, utility-maximizing evaluation of the remaining options across various policy dimensions.

Given the completely contrasting views from the three coders regarding these questions, the coding results of this crisis are mixed with evidence of support, rejection and uncertainty. Two out of the three coders showed supporting evidence; however, Coder 1's strong rejection of the hypotheses cast doubt on the other two coders' supporting responses. Given that only three coders worked on this crisis, a supporting conclusion for the primary hypotheses would be pre-mature. Without a high degree of inter-coder agreement among the three sets of coding responses, no conclusion can be drawn with reasonable degree of confidence that the primary hypotheses are supported or rejected.

Moreover, the coders' disparate responses to the open-ended questions in Appendix 4-2-3-1 reveal more details of their own corroborated interpretations to show why this case, given the entire coding results from three coders, is unable to provide sufficient evidence to support or reject the decision-making process and outcome in

Korean War I. Specifically, the three coders' descriptions of China's major response to this crisis were only partially consistent with the ICB description. According to the ICB data set, Beijing's initial response to the crisis – Premier-Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai's condemnation in his June 28 speech, along with a massive nation-wide political mobilization of hostility toward the Americans – “were more directed at American moves in the Taiwan Strait than at the fighting in Korea” (Whiting 1960; Gurtov and Hwang, 1980: 48; Chen 1994: 139, 141; Zhai, 1994: 65).¹⁷⁸ This is evident in the internal directive to all of the CCP-controlled propaganda agencies, issued on June 29, 1950 by China's General Information Bureau (Chen 1994: 129):

Harry S. Truman announced on June 27 to intervene in the Korean civil war and to use naval forces to control the Taiwan Strait with the attempt to stop out liberation of Taiwan. Foreign Minister Zhou has issued a statement to solemnly condemn these actions. This is an important event at the present time. The United States has thus exposed its imperialist face, which is not scary at all but is favorable for the further awakening of the Chinese people and the people of the world. All over China, we have to hold this opportunity to echo Foreign Minister Zhou's statement and to start a widespread campaign of propaganda, so that we will be able to educate our people at home and to strike firmly the arrogance of the US imperialist aggressors.¹⁷⁹

In addition to the nation-wide political mobilization, as suggested in the ICB Project, the coders emphasized that the military mobilization in preparation for the US invasion of Taiwan and North Korea was a significant component of Beijing's response to the crisis. In fact, months before the Inchon Landing and the ROK's crossing of the 38th Parallel, Beijing had considered and prepared for the possibility of intervention in Korea. Not until the Inchon Landing on Sept 15, 1950, however, did Chinese leaders

¹⁷⁸ This was the so-called “Resist American Invasion of Taiwan and Korea” Campaign.

¹⁷⁹ Originally from “Instructions on the Propaganda of the US Imperialists' Open Interference with the Internal Affairs of China, Korea, Vietnam and other Countries,” June 29, 1950, the Research Department of the Xinhua News Agency (ed.), *Xinhuashe Wenjian Ziliao Huibian*, 2: 50 (see Chen 1994: 266, note 15).

decide to send troops to Korea (Chen, 1994: 58).¹⁸⁰ With this consideration in mind, the CCP leaders made a large-scale effort toward logistic preparations and re-deployment of the PLA to the Northeast of China (Chen 1994: 137-9). To put it simply, according to the coders, the CCP's response to this crisis was the combination of large-scale political and military mobilizations.

In Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2, Coders 3's and 5's coding results are consistent and demonstrate support for the primary hypotheses. Their corroborated interpretations of the decision-making also demonstrate support for the primary hypotheses. Coders 3 and 5 identify that the CCP leadership faced five options at the onset of the crisis for China: (1) no action; (2) political mobilization against the US; (3) military mobilization/preparation in Northeast China and the coastal area across Taiwan; (4) use of armed forces to take over Taiwan; and (5) direct military confrontation with the US-led UN forces in Korea. The no-action option (Option 1), although probably practical to the new China given its lack of financial resources and military weaknesses, had no appeal to Mao Zedong. Option 2 was a non-violent act by political means. Political mobilization involved the government's use of mass media to achieve decision-makers' political goals. Option 3 also was non-violent, but it was a military action that could easily spring off into violent aggression. Both Options 4 and 5 involved the use of armed forces although their targets were different – Taiwan in Option 4 was the direct target that the CCP had aimed for in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War, whereas the US-led UN troops was the target as a direct result of the US intervention in Korea and its show of force in the Taiwan Strait.

¹⁸⁰ This in part explains why the decision in Korean War II was a two-stage process.

By the time the crisis broke out for China, the newly established CCP government faced a collapsing economy, a society with deep-rooted oppositions, and, more critically, widespread, rampant anti-Communist forces. China's economy was on the brink of total collapse after decades of foreign intrusions and civil wars. The KMT's flight to Taiwan with most of the reserves in the state treasury further exacerbated the final strain. The ill-equipped PLA, especially after the long-lasting wars against the Japanese and the KMT, by no means could match the US military power. Moreover, the new China had been isolated by the majority of the international community. Only the USSR-led Communist bloc recognized the new China, while the US-led capitalist bloc not only denied recognition but also imposed economic sanctions against China. Thus, the diplomatic and economic blockade from the West significantly limited Beijing's options to those emphasizing political and military objectives. Although declared to be neutral, the US naval deployment in the Taiwan Strait had significantly changed the balance of strength between the CCP and the KMT. In a word, faced with both internal and external threats, regime survival and credibility became of paramount importance for the CCP and the individual leaders in the wake of the Chinese Civil War. Under such circumstances, China's immediate military action would have been rather ill-advised as this potentially could have quickly sabotaged the new Communist regime in China.

According to Coders 3 and 5, under such circumstances, the Mao-led CCP leadership deemed Option 1 as politically unacceptable and appeared to have eliminated it at the initial stage of decision-making. Option 1 would have been a better choice for the sake of domestic economy and stability if this option was evaluated along a diverse set of policy dimensions, including economic, military and diplomatic. However, the

external threat to the future survival of the CCP government was too grave to ignore. In particular, to Mao himself, the survival of the CCP government was so closely linked to his own political future as the predominant leader of China. Mao's personality also played an irreplaceable role in his decision-making in this crisis (Shen, 2000). "Although under huge psychological pressure, Mao did not lack self-confidence. For him, the problem now was how to get the Politburo's backing for the decision." (Chen, 1994: 179-182)¹⁸¹ In this sense, the two coders' interpretations suggest the CCP leadership's predominant concern over its political survival. Immediate elimination of this option demonstrates the use of the noncompensatory principle by the Mao-led leadership. By contrast, the other four options all appeared at least acceptable to the decision-makers' political survival, and, thus, those options were kept for further consideration in the second stage.

With the selection of the political viable options, the Mao-led CCP leadership entered the second stage of decision-making. The US aggressive movement in Korea and the Taiwan Strait had direct and serious implications for China's national security, in particular, when it initiated the crisis. Among the remaining four politically viable options, from various sources (e.g., Whiting, 1968; Gurtov and Hwang, 1980; Chen, 1994; Zhai, 1994), Chinese leadership did appear to have taken the overall domestic situation into consideration before deciding to respond to the US aggression with political and military mobilizations. Inference from these materials suggests that lack of financial resources and economic and military capabilities further narrowed Beijing's options. Options 4 and 5 both could have achieved Beijing's goals of overtaking Taiwan and

¹⁸¹ Also see how Mao Zedong masterfully directed the Politburo meeting on October 4, 1950 and unified the decision to send troops to aid North Korea (Chen, 1994: 181-185).

counterattacking the US, which could have had the potential of solving two major problems for Beijing. However, realistically speaking, they simply were unfeasible. More importantly, in the anti-Communist context in the US, Beijing had to re-evaluate the US East Asian policy, the real intentions of the US toward China, and relative military capabilities of both sides. Evidently, politics was no more of paramount importance at this point. Such re-evaluation was a process of assessment of China's strategic position primarily for the security and military reasons. The final decision combined Options 2 and 3 as Beijing's response to the crisis. The nation-wide political campaigns and military mobilization in the northeastern border and southern coastal regions not only aimed to fulfill the CCP leadership's political goal of power consolidation, but also the choice fit China's all-around reality at that time. The goals were to: (1) rally the domestic public to a united ideological front against the US-led capitalist bloc so that the revolution would be continued throughout China (Chen, 2001) and (2) be prepared for any further military aggression from the US. All in all, this decision eventually was a utility-maximizing calculation about a more diverse set of factors.

Coder 1's responses failed to support the Primary Hypothesis (II) for two reasons. First, given Beijing's predominant concerns over security and military readiness to fight against the US, Coder 1's answer to Question 15 was that he was "not sure" whether the final choice was the product of comprehensive assessment along a variety of dimensions. Second, according to Coder 1's response to Question 16, Beijing's response to the crisis primarily was on moral grounds, rather than rational, utility-maximizing calculation.

Retrospectively, the major discrepancies in the inter-coder reliability check seem to have to do with individual coders' understanding of the source materials as well as the precise definition of a foreign policy crisis (as opposed to the entire war that can contain a number of different crises). In practical terms, this involves the cutoff dates of the crisis. Most of the source materials, in fact, discuss the Korean War as a whole, which is at odds with the ICB crisis framework that divides the war into three consecutive crises.¹⁸² This could be confusing, especially when it comes to decision-making within a constrained period of time. Questions 2 and 3 in the questionnaire also complicated matters. As will be further discussed below, these questions seem useful in identifying the decision-making process. However, a closer look suggests that they are of little help in doing so; rather, they might confuse the coders with the impression that the "stage" of decision-making here refers to concrete historical events. For example, Coder 5 stated, "Delimitating the duration of decision-making process is needed here. From the initiating event towards the Inchon Landing, Chinese leaders had many options. After the Inchon Landing, especially when the UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel, Chinese leaders finally set the decision of war. In this sense, this is a two-stage process with the Inchon Landing as the dividing line." Apparently, if including the events since the Inchon Landing, the coders would have coded the "crisis" as a two-stage process. However, the Inchon Landing and the events thereafter were not part of Korean War I.

All in all, the coding responses from the three coders show a mixed picture in terms of testing the two primary hypotheses. The anomaly in the coding of this particular crisis is that the responses from both Coders 3 and 5 strongly and consistently support the

¹⁸² This also is why the source materials for Korean War I and II overlap.

two primary hypotheses whereas Coder 1's responses reject the Primary Hypothesis (I) and do not support the Primary Hypothesis (II). Similar conflicting results from two coders also are evident in the other borderline case – the Ussuri River (1969) crisis.

In summary, it should be emphasized that the standard for the testing is set very high in two aspects: (1) the coders' responses to the multiple questions that tap into the theoretical core of PH must be consistent in order to yield solid support for the hypotheses and (2) given that only two coders worked on the coding for each case (except for the two cases with the additional coder), any case short of 100% inter-coder reliability instantly would become the candidate for borderline cases that can neither support nor reject the hypotheses. In spite of such a hard test for PH, the coding results strongly and simultaneously support both of the primary hypotheses in seven out of the nine cases. Only two cases belong to what is categorized as the borderline cases. With a closer look at the coding results for these cases, however, it is not difficult to determine that none of the crisis decisions in this project *completely* reject the hypotheses. Each of the inconclusive cases offers a certain degree of support for the hypotheses by at least one of the coders. However, the evidence in these cases is not sufficiently strong enough due to the low inter-coder agreement on the results. In other words, none of the nine cases was able to reject both hypotheses with 100% inter-coder reliability. This shows that even in the borderline cases, some of the fundamentals of PH remain plausible, in particular the primacy of political considerations, which often links to the use of the noncompensatory heuristics. Overall, therefore, PH demonstrates an impressive explanatory power in Chinese crisis decision-making.

In addition, the quest for how and why the decision is made in each crisis should include an examination of those politically unacceptable options that appear to be eliminated from the very beginning. In the case studies on the Sino-Vietnam War and Korean War I, the option of “doing nothing” or “no action” appears most frequently as one of the politically non-viable options to be eliminated immediately during the initial screening. In a foreign policy crisis, rather than standing pat, decision-makers are expected to adopt some measures in order to fulfill domestic public’s expectation of handling the crisis well. In this sense, for their political interests, “doing nothing” might lead to serious damage to their political career.¹⁸³ This also is true in the Chinese context. Although the exact meaning of political survivability to Chinese leaders is different from that of leaders in Western democracies, the means of increasing the chance of political survival are similar. At the other extreme, “waging a full-scale war” is another frequently eliminated option during the initial screening of options. Literature on the diversionary theory suggests that political leaders tend to resort to aggressive foreign policies in order to “Rally Round the Flag” and thus divert the public’s attention from domestic troubles and instability; however, most diversionary decisions, unless attacked by other countries, only resort in limited warfare by avoiding a full-scale war. By and large, Beijing’s handling of the nine foreign policy crises suggest that Chinese leaders always try to respond to the triggering entity with great caution for the sake of their political interests. By eliminating the option of doing nothing or avoiding entering full-scale, possibly

¹⁸³ It is also important to note the significance of non-decisions in some of the crises. Non-decisions are helpful to start thinking and probing how and why a no-action option is taken and by whom (DeRouen, 2003). These questions are insightful to understand the political and social structures underneath the decision-making body or agency (Hill, 2003: 107-108).

prolonged, warfare with the triggering actor, the Chinese leaders tend to avoid losing legitimacy and public support from home.

5.3. Inter-Coder Reliability and Debriefing

Inter-coder reliability examines the level of coding agreement, that is, the extent to which different coders, using the same set of documentary evidence with the same instructions, are able to provide the equivalent answers to the same questionnaire about each case. By the nature of the particular type of research in this project, the degree of inter-coder agreement correlates to the degree of confidence in the final results of the structured, focused comparison.

In order to have a valid and strong test of the primary hypotheses from this structured, focused comparison, it is imperative to have a high level of inter-coder agreement for the coding responses under scrutiny so that any support for or rejection against the primary hypotheses can be clear. It is especially important that both (or, in the case of three coders, all) of the coders agree with each other about the results for this particular crisis decision. Such a ground rule for inter-coder reliability also boosts the level of confidence on the overall empirical evidence for the PH-generated hypotheses. Therefore, as Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 indicate, only the results with nearly perfect inter-coder agreement, including those achieved through debriefing, are treated as valid evidence for either supporting or rejecting any of the two primary hypotheses.¹⁸⁴

To facilitate the inter-coder reliability test, a pilot coding and two rounds of debriefing sessions with the coders who worked on the same cases but produced disparate

¹⁸⁴ To make it easy to identify, I mark those crises with a low level of inter-coder agreement with ‘**’ before the crisis name. I also highlight the results for these in light blue in Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2.

results was held. The first round of debriefing sessions took place after the pilot coding and the second round after the comprehensive coding of all nine crises. The purposes of the two rounds of debriefing were different. The first round of debriefing after the pilot trial served as a means to: (1) identify potential problems and errors in the questionnaire; (2) clarify the meaning of key words; (3) evaluate the overall quality of the questionnaire; and (4) clarify and assess the coders' understanding of the questions to see whether it was consistent with the original purpose of the question.¹⁸⁵ The pilot coding involved fewer coders but proved efficient for identifying errors in the questionnaire. Appendix 5-2-1 presents a list of sample questions used in the debriefing sessions and explanations of the intent of the questions. In this sense, the debriefing at this phase was helpful in clarifying disparate responses from the coders. As will become evident below, the debriefing could produce significantly different results from the original coding results. It is important to note that during both rounds of debriefing the coders were not given any information on the propositions of PH, which would otherwise influence their responses.

In the second round of debriefing, I intended to identify: (1) comprehension-related problems in the questionnaire and (2) discrepancies in the answers between the respondents and find out the rationales that were not written in their answers, in order to determine whether those answers to the questionnaire truly were consistent with what the

¹⁸⁵ Given the nature of the research questions and the theoretical foundation used in this study, I contend that the debriefing sessions after the pilot coding were absolutely necessary to improve the questionnaire and those after the comprehensive coding were important to clarify anything confusing in the coding process. Some scholars, however, hold a different view. For instance, Hughes (2004: 11) argues that although debriefing is useful in identifying errors in the questionnaire, the implications for the quality of the data are insignificant even after the debriefing.

respondents had intended.¹⁸⁶ For instance, as noted earlier and in Table 5-2-2, this round of debriefing successfully resolved the disagreement between Coders 4 and 6 over Question 16 in Taiwan Strait IV. The original response from Coder 4 was “not sure” simply because “National integrity and dignity are involved.” In the debriefing, both coders spoke with me in an attempt to resolve the disagreement. Coder 4 could not further justify why a decision involving national integrity and dignity might not be the result of utility-based calculation. Instead, Coder 6 managed to convince Coder 4 that Beijing’s decision to have military exercises in the Taiwan Strait eventually was a rational, utility-based calculation. Psychological issues such as national integrity and dignity had been taken into consideration at the very beginning of the decision-making; otherwise, Beijing would not have narrowed down their options. In the end, military exercises provided a balanced solution: (1) this choice would accomplish the political goals of trying to influence Taiwan’s presidential election and protesting against the US for allowing Lee Teng-hui’s visit to the US; and (2) this choice would minimize the chance of escalating the crisis into a violent military confrontation against Taiwan and/or the US. In Korean War I and the Ussuri River crisis, however, debriefing did not successfully accomplish this goal. The case study on Korean War I offers detailed discussions about this point.

5.4. Re-Evaluation of the Questionnaire

¹⁸⁶ In case any comprehension-related problems remain, the identification of the problems will help in the next phase to either further improve the questions or to recruit different coders to see whether the problem still persists.

Chapter 4 discusses the problems inherent in the questionnaire in Appendix 4-2-3-

1. Instead of repeating what has been discussed, the purpose of this section is to re-evaluate the quality of the questions in light of the empirical findings of this study.

A retrospective re-examination of the questionnaire shows some biases inherent in some of the questions. For instance, Question 7 in Appendix 4-2-3-1 asks: “What do you think might have been the *most salient* politically unacceptable options that may conceivably have been considered by the CCP decision-makers in this particular foreign policy crisis?” The wording of this question potentially could prompt the coders to respond with something that would be considered politically unacceptable. It should have asked first whether there are any most salient politically unacceptable options and asked for further explanation of the answer. However, in the coding results reported in Tables 5-2-1, Question 7 has no fundamental difference in terms of tapping into whether political unacceptability exists in the initial stage of decision-making. Therefore, this particular question has very little impact on the testing result for the Primary Hypothesis (I).

Another example is concerned with the order in which the questions were presented to the respondents. Consider the original order of Questions 9 to 12 in Appendix 4-2-3-1: Questions 9 to 11 repeatedly mention “political loss” to decision-makers, which might prime the coders to respond Question 12 with “political.” The order of these questions should have been reversed, that is, asking Question 12 first and the other three afterwards. This might have affected the results for political primacy to some degree. However, considering the high degree of consistency between the majority of these answers and those to Question 14, in most cases, the responses would not have

changed significantly if the questionnaire had been presented otherwise. In a word, the biased effect is still acceptable.¹⁸⁷

The results for the primary hypotheses are clear and strong enough to indicate that the majority of the questions, even with these potential problems, are still useful in tapping the theoretical core of PH. First, carefully designed not to use the language of the theory, the questions, altogether, directly search for empirical answers about the core of PH. Given that none of the coders had had prior exposure to PH, the questionnaire set a relatively neutral tone about Chinese crisis decision-making. This is crucial because the results from the coders would have been contaminated otherwise. Second, as argued earlier, the questionnaire served as the basis for the structured, focused analysis. It can be used for cross-national comparison for future research. Third, the mixture of the “yes/no” questions and open-ended questions allows for a clear set of theoretical criteria for testing the hypotheses. More importantly, for the main purpose of this study, the questionnaire allowed the coders to provide more in-depth, corroborated interpretations of the source materials regarding decision-making. The responses to the open-ended questions in Appendix 4-2-3-1, including Questions 4, 7 and 10, present corroborative evidence from the source materials to depict how the noncompensatory rule was employed in each case to eliminate the politically non-viable options in the first place. Questions 1 and 6 are more general questions inquiring about the coder’s understanding of the main decision under scrutiny and the underlying reasons for such a choice. The open-ended questions do not directly tap into the two primary hypotheses; nonetheless, they provide valuable and concrete information to facilitate process-tracing in the in-

¹⁸⁷ In fact, this could be seen as an equivalent of the error term in a quantitative study.

depth comparative analysis of specific decision-making processes and outcomes.¹⁸⁸

Without these open-ended questions, the process-tracing of decision-making in each crisis would lack corroborative evidence, especially from the perceptions of different coders.

For example, Question 1 in Appendix 4-2-3-1, as a typical open-ended inquiry about Beijing's major response to the crisis under scrutiny, checks whether the coders agree with each other and whether their understandings of the main decision under scrutiny are in line with the information in the ICB data set. Other than the two anomalies, what the coders identified as the major policy responses in the crises is consistent with those supplied in the ICB data set. The anomalies are concerned with the decisions in Korean War II (1950-1951) and China-India Border II (1962). In Korean War II, Coder 6 saw sending troops to North Korea as China's major response while Coder 4 suggested that the major response to Korean War II is identical to that of Korean War I. The debriefing revealed that Coder 4's answer partially had to do with the source materials for the two crises, which are identical because they cover the period from

¹⁸⁸ Retrospectively, some of the open-ended questions are problematic: Questions 2 and 3 ask for the coders' own understanding of the decision-making processes, i.e., one-stage or two-stage. These answers seemed crucial because they essentially tell whether the two-stage proposition of PH is supported or not. However, the coding experience revealed the problem. Primarily due to their unawareness of the PH propositions at the time of coding, most of the coders thought of the processes as the stages differentiated by historical events or substantive issues, rather than the stages differentiated by change of decision rules in the PH sense. For the Ussuri River crisis between China and the USSR in 1969, the two coders did not concur with each other on the decision-making process. While Coder 6 saw it as in line with the two-stage proposition of PH, Coder 2 regarded it simply as a one-stage process because some studies suggest that this crisis was sparked by independent action of a local military commander who had different regional interests from those of the central authority in Beijing (Segal, 1976; Brown, 1976). Bear in mind that the key objective was to keep the results from being contaminated by informing the coders during the coding process the exact meaning of "stage" in PH. Therefore, this issue was not successfully resolved even in the debriefing session. More importantly, with regard to the key theoretical criteria being tested here, Questions 2 and 3 are of little use for genuinely tapping into the core of PH. At best, these questions confirm that the coders had no prior knowledge of PH at the time of coding.

Korean War I and Korean War II together.¹⁸⁹ Although each coder was provided the original ICB descriptions on top of the coding sources in which the cut-off dates of the given crisis are explicitly noted, it could still be possible to confuse the major response of the first crisis with that of the second when the two crises are consecutive. The major response to China-India Border II represents the most significant disagreement among all cases: Coder 4 saw it as diplomatic means while Coder 3 deemed it as military preparation, which is consistent with what the ICB Project identification in this particular crisis. Similarly, Question 6 allows the respondents to elaborate on their own understandings, based on the common source materials, of the key reasons for the decision choice in response to the corresponding crisis. This also allows for a reliability check with the ICB information.

5.5. Secondary Hypotheses

Protracted Conflict (PC) Hypothesis:

In an *initial* crisis in a series of crises within a protracted conflict, decision-makers are more likely to put primacy on politics at the onset of decision-making.

Conversely, in a *successive* crisis in a series of crises within a protracted conflict, decision-makers are less likely to do so.

Protracted conflict stands out as a distinctive type of interstate conflict, accounting for approximately 60% of all the international crises in the ICB data set. The primary reason for its distinctiveness, as elaborated in Chapter 3, lies with decision-

¹⁸⁹ It is noteworthy that many historical or archival sources do not categorize the events into different crises as the ICB Project does. To follow the ICB's time spans for some of the crises, sometimes the same coding materials must be used for decisions in two or more temporally adjacent crises.

makers' psychological or cognitive constraints associated with the ongoing protracted conflict. Under stress in the crises within protracted conflict, decision-makers' perceptions, in many cases, are embodied with deep-rooted mistrust, hostility, deeply clashing values, and perceived threat of the use of force from the old opponent over the same values because of the length and intensity of hostility between/among the same triggering and responding entities. By contrast, in an isolated crisis, the triggering and responding actors deal with more immediate disputes with less psychological and emotional attachment to accumulated hostility as would otherwise exist in a protracted conflict.

The PC Hypothesis focuses on the linkage between political primacy in decision-making and the placement of a crisis in a series of crises within a protracted conflict (also known as enduring rivalry). Theoretically, decision-makers might approach the decision for the *initial* crisis in a fundamentally different way from the decision for the *successive* crisis within the same protracted conflict. Specifically, whether it is the *initial* crisis or a *successive* one is closely related to whether decision-makers are more likely to put primacy on politics at the onset of decision-making. If their states previously have had repeated interstate crises against the same opponent(s), decision-makers might put primacy over the non-political factors and give less serious consideration along the political dimension at the initial screening of decision options. By contrast, if the crisis involves a new opponent, but with long-term, low-level hostility, decision-makers might put primacy over politics at the initial screening of options.

Among the Chinese foreign policy crises identified in the ICB Project, there are three protracted conflicts: (1) Korea, one of the "long-war protracted conflict," is

composed of six international crises or twelve foreign policy crises for the parties involved, among which, China was directly involved in the first three during the Korean War; (2) the Taiwan Strait is composed of five international crises (including the Chinese Civil War and the four Taiwan Strait Crises) or ten foreign policy crises for both sides; and (3) China-Vietnam is composed of four international crises or eight foreign policy crises for both sides (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 821, 833).¹⁹⁰ As a result, only the decisions in the crises within these three protracted conflicts can be used in the preliminary investigation of the PC Hypothesis. These crises, as categorized in the three protracted conflicts, include Korean War I, II and III, Taiwan Strait I, II, III and IV, the Sino-Vietnam War, the Sino-Vietnam Clashes, the Sino-Vietnam Border and the Spratly Islands.

The preliminary investigation about the PC Hypothesis would rely, in part, on the coders' responses to the questionnaire and, in part, on the process-tracing with the available information from the ICB data set and other source materials. The goal of the investigation simply is to identify whether the placement of a crisis in a series of crises within a given protracted conflict might have any empirical connection with the first and foremost state of politics to decision-makers during their initial screening of decision options for that crisis. In other words, at this initial phase, the investigation should not be evaluated by the same criteria as those used for testing the primary hypotheses.

¹⁹⁰ The protracted conflicts of Korea and China-Vietnam terminated for China after overtly hostile behavior among the parties had ended. See Brecher and Wilkenfeld (1997: 821, footnote 1) for the definition of termination. The protracted conflict of the Taiwan Strait has not terminated in this sense; however, no other crisis among the PRC, Taiwan and the US has erupted since the Taiwan Strait IV in 1995-1996. It should be noted that the Chinese Civil War, the first crisis within the protracted conflict of the Taiwan Strait, was the crisis before the formal establishment of the PRC. Given that the governing entity during that crisis was different from the CCP government and, thus, there would be no comparability in terms of decision-making between this crisis and others under the CCP government, it is deliberately excluded from this project.

At present, a further developed test of this hypothesis is infeasible for several reasons. First, among all of the foreign policy crises for China, Korean War I and the Sino-Vietnam War are the only two suitable candidates as the *initial* crises for China in the series of crises within their respective protracted conflicts. Evidently, the number of *initial* crises for China is too small to be able to yield significant, generalizable conclusions regarding the PC Hypothesis.¹⁹¹ Second, the coding questionnaire, as originally designed, had no specific questions that directly addressed the theoretical connections proposed in the PC Hypothesis. Given that the secondary hypotheses only became part of this project *after* the coding for the primary hypotheses was completed, the study on the PC Hypothesis is tentatively based on inferences drawn from the coding responses to the questionnaire along with the information from the ICB data set. Third, with a closer look at the data or the coding results for the primary hypotheses in all the crises, it is not difficult to find that there is little variance across the placement of a crisis within the protracted conflict and decision-makers' primacy on politics. Korean War I and the Ussuri River crisis are the only two cases out of the nine in which political primacy is not supported; no conclusive evidence is present to reject political primacy as a result of low inter-coder agreement. Note, though, that the Ussuri River crisis is not part of any protracted conflict, so only Korean War I can be used to compared to the other cases that belong to protracted conflicts. Again, such comparison would yield few significant, generalizable findings about the PC Hypothesis. Consequently, the current data simply cannot serve as the empirical basis to test whether decision-makers are more

¹⁹¹ Note that the initial crisis for China in the protracted conflict of the Taiwan Strait is the Chinese Civil War, which is not included in the present study. Given the nature of this study, this, by no means, is in the sense of statistical significance.

likely to put primacy on politics in the *initial* crisis than in a *successive* crisis within a protracted conflict. Last, but not least, if the empirical data do appear to support this hypothesis, it still is important to have further within-case and cross-case comparisons to examine the causal mechanisms underlying the hypothetical connections. Given the data limitations in the present study, it is infeasible to conclude whether the hypothesis is empirically valid or the connections are simply spurious.

Nonetheless, a preliminary induction is necessary to facilitate a more detailed deduction of such theoretical connections. The induction is quite simple: from the coding results for the crises within protracted conflicts, if there is a clear and consistent pattern linking all *initial* crises with decision-makers' primacy on politics (i.e., the responses to Questions 9, 11, 12 and 14 in Table 5-2-1), then it is a plausible sign for the PC Hypothesis. The coding responses for the Sino-Vietnam War seem to point in this direction. However, the responses for Korean War I show a complicated picture. Given the most conservative test on political primacy, as discussed previously, no conclusion can be made that decision-makers put primacy on politics in this particular case. In this sense, this case alone seems to cast some doubts on the PC Hypothesis. Furthermore, if there is a clear and consistent pattern linking all *successive* crises with decision-makers' primacy on factors other than politics, then it provides much stronger evidence to support the PC Hypothesis. Unfortunately, as indicated in Table 5-5-1, none of the coding responses for the Chinese crises suggest so. Therefore, in spite of its plausibility in theory, the preliminary investigation of the Chinese crisis decision-making yields little significant findings about the PC Hypothesis.

Superpower Opponent (SO) Hypothesis:

In a foreign policy crisis involving a superpower opponent, decision-makers of the non-superpower actor are more likely to put primacy on politics at the onset of decision-making. Conversely, in a crisis without a superpower opponent, decision-makers of the non-superpower actor are less likely to do so.

Nearly half of the crises in the ICB data set occurred under the huge influence of the US and the USSR during the Cold War. As elaborated in Chapter 3, crises with a superpower opponent supposedly are fundamentally different from the ones without. At the actor level, the SO Hypothesis attempts to tap into whether the presence of a superpower opponent might have any significant impact on the non-superpower decision-makers' primacy on politics.

Theoretically, the presence of a superpower opponent would instantly and dramatically increase the relative power disparity between the superpower and the non-superpower opponents. As a consequence, the non-superpower decision-makers tend to perceive the presence of the superpower in the crisis as a more credible threat to their basic values and with a greater probability of having militarized confrontations (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000: 3).¹⁹² In the meantime, they would be less inclined to have militarized confrontations with the superpower, given the disadvantages in their military capabilities and, thus, a lower likelihood of winning. This would increase their perceived severity of threat and centrality of violence concerning the potential consequences of their initial reactions.¹⁹³ The most immediate consideration for the non-superpower

¹⁹² See discussion of the definition of foreign policy crisis in Chapter 4.

¹⁹³ As noted previously, if it is not an actor in the crisis, the superpower still could get involved in the crisis as a third party and such involvement could be overt or covert (military or political) operations. Given that

decision-makers would be how to avoid use of violence or escalation of the crisis. Being much weaker in terms of national capabilities, particularly in military strength, non-superpowers tend to be more defensive when a superpower is their opponent. Their weaker status only allows them to be reactive rather than proactive to the superpower's actions in the crisis.

Under these circumstances, military considerations, in particular, ought to be more salient than other factors. For the non-superpower decision-makers, however, it is evidently impossible to narrow the military disparity within the confined period of time in which to respond to the crisis. For this reason and the predominant importance for their political survivability, the decision-makers should be more likely to put primacy on political factors during the initial screening of the options to search for options that not only would bring them personal success in domestic politics but also would help compensate for their military disadvantages in the crisis.

In contrast, the non-superpower actor is more likely to have comparable military capabilities with its non-superpower opponent in a crisis. Decision-makers would perceive less of a severe threat from the non-superpower opponent to their basic values and a lower probability of militarized confrontation. In the meantime, they would have a greater incentive for the use of violence, given the relatively even military capabilities with the opponent and, thus, a greater chance of winning. Instead of putting primacy on politics (especially, their political survivability), decision-makers may be more likely to place primacy on military or other factors during the initial decision screening.

the focus of this study is on crisis actors, here I only address superpower(s)'s direct involvement as crisis actor(s).

Similar to the PC Hypothesis, the preliminary investigation about the SO Hypothesis would rely, in part, on the coders' responses to the questionnaire and, in part, on the process-tracing with the available information from the ICB data set and other source materials. The goal of this practice simply is to search for the matching behavior patterns between the presence of a superpower opponent and the non-superpower decision-makers' primacy on politics. Again, the investigation about the SO Hypothesis should not be evaluated by the same criteria as those used for testing the primary hypotheses.

The tentative study on the SO Hypothesis can only rely on inferences drawn from the coding responses to the questionnaire along with the information from the ICB data set. Among the Chinese foreign policy crises identified in the ICB Project, the US or the USSR was China's opponent in six of the nine crises, namely Korean War I, II and III, Taiwan Strait I and II, and the Ussuri River crisis.¹⁹⁴ Only the decisions in these crises can be used in the preliminary investigation of the SO Hypothesis.

As shown in Table 5-5-1, the preliminary results for the SO Hypothesis appear more concrete; at least four of the six crises involving the US or the USSR – Korean War II and III, Taiwan Strait I and II – suggest that Chinese decision-makers tend to put primacy on politics. In light of the previous discussion about political primacy in Korean War I and the Ussuri River crisis, no conclusion can be drawn whether politics was decision-makers' primacy at the onset of decision screening. However, the crises in which neither the US nor the USSR was the opponent complicate the results. In China-Indian Border II, the Sino-Vietnam War and Taiwan Strait IV, Chinese decision-makers

¹⁹⁴ Given the ideological confrontation between the US-led capitalist and the USSR-led communist blocs, it was impossible for both superpowers to be China's opponent simultaneously.

also appear to put primacy on politics. To be precise, the results together cannot indicate whether politics might be *more likely* to be decision-makers' primacy during the initial screening of options.

At present, a further developed test of this hypothesis is infeasible. A closer look at these results reveals that the current data, or the coding responses for the primary hypotheses, picture an unclear pattern for the preliminary induction. The coding questions, as originally designed without the secondary hypotheses, contained no specific questions that directly addressed the theoretical connections proposed in the SO Hypothesis. Consequently, the current data simply cannot serve as the empirical basis to test whether decision-makers are more likely to put primacy on politics in the crises with a superpower opponent than in the ones without. It is necessary to further examine the validity of the theoretical connections between the presence of a superpower opponent and the non-superpower decision-makers' primacy on politics at the onset of crisis decision-making through within-case and cross-case comparisons.

In summary, the two secondary hypotheses are theoretically plausible, both present two different, yet crucial crisis contexts: one focusing on the sequence of the crises with a protracted conflict and the other focusing on the presence of a superpower opponent. However, the coding responses on Chinese crisis decision-making in Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 do not seem to support these hypotheses. The coding responses to the questionnaire and the information from the ICB data set, as the primary sources for the preliminary investigation, both demonstrate a high level of inter-coder reliability in themselves. Therefore, these conclusions about the secondary hypotheses should render

a reasonable level of confidence – with a cautious note that further within-case and cross-case comparison is necessary to fully examine the causal connections, as described in the secondary hypotheses.

Even though few significant findings can be drawn from the preliminary investigations on the secondary hypotheses, the investigations are not in vain. Putting them in the bigger picture, we should not lose sight of the value of the secondary hypotheses in the main task of this study, that is, to test the primary hypotheses that directly speak to the theoretical core of PH. As noted above, both secondary hypotheses narrow the crisis scope for further testing PH-related decision-making by specifying two of the most crucial contextual conditions of crisis decision-making (the sequence of crises within protracted conflict and the presence of a superpower opponent). The secondary hypotheses depict two respective scenarios in which it presumably would be the hardest to find support for political primacy at the onset of decision screening: one is in the successive crisis within a protracted conflict and the other is in the crisis without a superpower opponent. Under these circumstances, as discussed in detail earlier, decision-makers might be less likely to put primacy on politics during their initial screening of decision options. At least in the Chinese context, however, decision-makers seem to put primacy on politics at the onset of option screening, regardless of where the crisis is located in the sequence within a protract conflict or whether the opponent is a superpower. In this sense, the secondary hypotheses are not inconsistent with the primary hypotheses. Moreover, the little empirical support for the secondary hypotheses turns out to be indirect support for decision-makers' primacy on politics, one of the theoretical core of

PH. Therefore, the preliminary investigation on the secondary hypotheses indirectly reinforces the overall findings for the Primary Hypothesis (I).

5.6. Conclusion: Chinese Decision-Making in the Poliheuristic Framework

With the structured, focused comparison, this chapter analyzes the results for the primary hypotheses on PH, along with two secondary hypotheses related to protracted conflict and superpower opponent, respectively. The core of PH has found clear support in Chinese crisis decision-making from the evidence in this study. Overall, the results from the coding responses show empirical support for the two primary hypotheses in the Chinese context. As Tables 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 indicate, evidence in seven of the nine crises under scrutiny suggests that Chinese decision-making in response to foreign policy crises experience a two-stage process. At the initial screening of the decision alternatives, Chinese leadership resort to the noncompensatory principle to eliminate the options that are politically unacceptable to themselves; then, Beijing's final choice is the product of utility-maximizing followed by the more comprehensive evaluation of all the remaining politically viable options. These supportive crises are Korean War II (1950-1951) and III (1953), Taiwan I (1954-1955), II (1958) and IV (1995-1996), China-India Border II (1962-1963) and the Sino-Vietnam War (1978-1979). The remaining two crises, namely, Korean War I (1950) and the Ussuri River (1969), do not support or reject these hypotheses due to a low level of inter-coder agreement. In addition, Table 5-5-1 shows the preliminary results for the secondary hypotheses. Chinese crisis decision-making shows little support for the PC Hypothesis and weak support the SO Hypothesis. As argued above, lack of empirical support from the Chinese crises for these secondary

hypotheses, in a sense, indirectly reinforces the empirical support for the primary hypotheses related to PH.

The empirical evidence in this chapter demonstrates that in a state as distinctive as China, the structured, focused comparison of decision-making in past foreign policy crises finds that crisis decision-making in the CCP leadership is not significantly deviant from that in many other states. Chinese political leaders also make policies against a crucial contextual dimension – domestic politics – although under non-democratic systems leaders do not necessarily seek for re-election (as described in Mintz, 1993), but, most of the time, they tend to seek for legitimacy and public support. In the Chinese context, political leaders put primacy on politics at the onset of decision-making. This suggests that these political leaders' political survivability is closely associated with intra-Party factional struggles, public legitimacy and individual leaders' personalities. In the decision-making process following the initial elimination of politically unacceptable options, according to the coders' aggregated evaluations of the decision-making source materials, the Chinese decision-makers do appear to switch to the compensatory rule of utility-maximizing to optimize the final choice with a comprehensive evaluation of the remaining options across all policy dimensions concerning national security.

The entire test in the Chinese context relies on what Eckstein (1975) calls "least-likely cases." The test strengthens PH because it even fits the cases in the Chinese context in which it should be weak. The relatively strong evidence supporting PH from these cases boasts well for the explanatory power of the theory in understanding the processes and outcomes of the decision-making in these crises. In sum, the PH model

provides a useful theoretical framework that merges cognitive psychology, rational choice and Sinology in this study.

Table 5-1-1. Characteristics of Chinese Foreign Policy from the ICB Project, 1949-1996												
ICB No.	Crisis Name	Location (to PRC)	Triggering Entity (for PRC)	Trigger Start Date (for PRC)	Trigger End Date (for PRC)	Triggering Act	PRC Initial Response (MAJRES)	PRC Overall Response (CRISMG)	PRC Leader	Super-power Opponent	Protracted Conflict	Gravity of Threat
#132	Korean War I*	Korean Peninsula (Northeast)	US	6/27/1950	Jul. 1950	Non-violent military	Political	Non-violent military	Mao Zedong	US	Korea	Territorial threat
#133	Korean War II	Korean Peninsula (Northeast)	Non-state Actor	10/1/1950	7/10/1951	Political	Violent military	Violent	Mao Zedong	US	Korea	Threat of grave damage
#140	Korean War III	Korean Peninsula (Northeast)	US	5/22/1953	7/27/1953	Other non-violent	Political	Multiple, with violence	Mao Zedong	US	Korea	Threat of grave damage
#146	Taiwan Strait I	Taiwan Strait (Southeast)	Multi-state	Early Aug. 1954	4/23/1955	Political	Violent military	Multiple, with violence	Mao Zedong	US	Taiwan Strait	Territorial
#166	Taiwan Strait II	Taiwan Strait (Southeast)	US	8/27/1958	9/30/1958	Non-violent military	Political	Multiple, with violence	Mao Zedong	US	Taiwan Strait	Threat of grave damage
#171	China-India Border I	Sino-Indian Border (Southwest)	India	8/25/1959	4/19/1960	Non-violent military	Violent military	Multiple, with violence	Mao Zedong	n/a	No	Territorial threat
#192	Taiwan Strait III	Taiwan Strait (Southeast)	Taiwan	4/22/1962	6/27/1962	Political	Non-violent military	Multiple, no violence	Mao Zedong	US	Taiwan Strait	Political threat

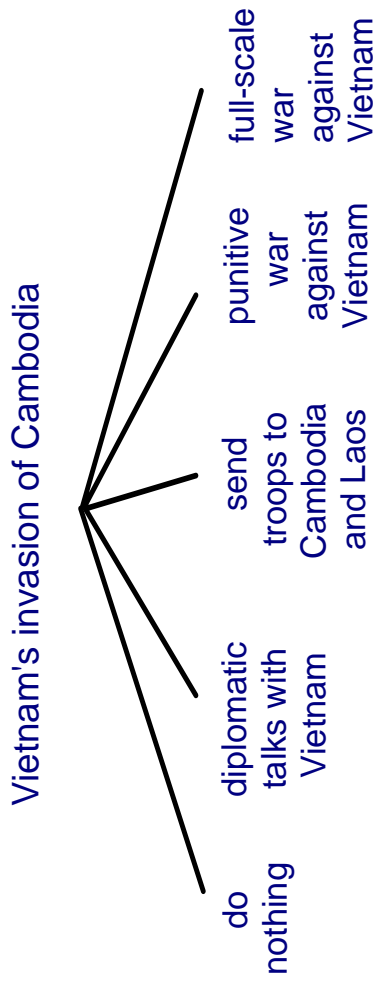
Table 5-1-1. Characteristics of Chinese Foreign Policy from the ICB Project, 1949-1996 (continued)												
ICB No.	Crisis Name	Location (to PRC)	Triggering Entity (for PRC)	Trigger Start Date (for PRC)	Trigger End Date (for PRC)	Triggering Act	PRC Initial Response (MAJRES)	PRC Overall Response (CRISMIG)	PRC Leader	Super-power Opponent	Protracted Conflict	Gravity of Threat
#194	China-India Border II	Sino-Indian Border (Southwest)	India	10/4/1962	11/21/1962	Non-violent military	Violent military	Violence	Mao Zedong	n/a	No	Territorial
#231	Ussuri River	Sino-USSR Border (North)	USSR	3/15/1969	10/20/1969	Violent	Violent military	Multiple, with violence	Mao Zedong	USSR	No	Territorial
#298	Sino-Vietnam War*	Sino-Vietnam Border (Southwest)	Vietnam	12/25/1978	3/15/1979	Indirect violent	Violent military	Violence	Deng Xiaoping	n/a	China-Vietnam	Threat to reg'l/int'l influence
#352	Sino-Vietnam Clashes	Sino-Vietnam Border (Southwest)	Vietnam	4/28/1984	2nd half of Jun. 1984	Indirect violent	Violent military	Violence	Deng Xiaoping	n/a	China-Vietnam	Territorial
#371	Sino-Vietnam Border	Sino-Vietnam Border (Southwest)	Vietnam	1/5/1987	1/10/1987	Violent	Violent military	Violence	Deng Xiaoping	n/a	China-Vietnam	Territorial
#384	Spratly Islands	South China Sea (Southeast)	Vietnam	3/14/1988	late Apr. 1988	Violent	Violent military	Violence	Deng Xiaoping	n/a	China-Vietnam	Territorial
#415	Taiwan Strait IV	Taiwan Strait (Southeast)	Multi-state	5/22/1995	3/25/1996	Political	Multiple without violent military	Non-violent military	Jiang Zemin	n/a	Taiwan Strait	Political threat

Table 5-2-1. Results for the Primary Hypothesis (I) in Chinese Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises, 1949-1996											
Crisis	Coder	Answer to Q9	Answer to Q11	Answer to Q12	Answer to Q14	Political Primacy	Answer to Q8	Answer to Q13	Poli. Unacceptability (Poli. Primary & NC Rule)	Primary H (I)	Primary H (I) (Overall)
**Korean War I (1950)	1	no	no	military/security	no	no	no	yes	no	rejected	not supported
	3	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
	5	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Korean War II (1950-1951)	6	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	4	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Korean War III (1953)	1	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	2	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait I (1954-1955)	4	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait II (1958)	6	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	2	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait IV (1995-1996)	4	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	6	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
China-India Border II (1962)	4	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
**Ussuri River (1969)	6	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	not supported
	2	not sure	not sure	political & military/security	not sure	inconclusive	yes	no	yes	inconclusive	
Sino-Vietnam War (1978-1979)	1	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
	5	yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	
Coding Rules:		yes	yes	political	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	supported	supported
		no	no	other	no	no	no	yes	no	rejected	
		not sure	not sure	not sure/other	not sure	inconclusive	not sure	not sure	inconclusive	not supported	
		don't know	don't know	don't know/other	don't know	inconclusive	don't know	don't know	inconclusive	not supported	

Table 5-2-2. Results for the Primary Hypothesis (II) in Chinese Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises, 1949-1996					
Crisis	Coder	Answer to Q15 (Comprehensive Evaluation)	Answer to Q16 (Utility- Maximizing)	Primary H (II)	Primary H (II) (Overall)
**Korean War I (1950)	1	not sure	no	not supported	not supported
	3	yes	yes	supported	
	5	yes	yes	supported	
Korean War II (1950-1951)	6	yes	yes	supported	supported
	4	yes	yes	supported	
Korean War III (1953)	1	yes	yes	supported	supported
	2	yes	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait I (1954-1955)	4	yes	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait II (1958)	6	yes	yes	supported	supported
	2	yes	yes	supported	
Taiwan Strait IV (1995-1996)	4	yes	yes*	supported*	supported
	6	yes	yes	supported	
China-India Border II (1962)	4	yes	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	supported	
**Ussuri River (1969)	6	no	yes	not supported	not supported
	2	yes	not sure	not supported	
Sino-Vietnam War (1978-1979)	1	yes	yes	supported	supported
	3	yes	yes	supported	
	5	yes	yes	supported	
Coding Rules:		yes	yes	supported	supported
		no	no	no	rejected
		not sure	not sure	not sure	not supported
		don't know	don't know	don't know	not supported

Figure 5-3-1-1. Sino-Vietnam War, 1978-1979:
A Poliheuristic Model for Chinese Decision-Making

Stage I: Elimination of "do nothing" & "diplomatic talks with Vietnam" as politically unacceptable options



Stage II: Selection of "punitive war against Vietnam" based on rational calculation



Table 5-5-1. Preliminary Results for the Secondary Hypotheses in Chinese Foreign Policy Crises, 1949-1996

Crisis	Political Primacy	Placement in Protracted Conflict	PC Hypothesis	Superpower Opponent	SO Hypothesis
Korean War I	inconclusive	initial	inconclusive	US	not supported
Korean War II	yes	successive	not supported	US	yes
Korean War III	yes	successive	not supported	US	yes
Taiwan Strait I	yes	successive	not supported	US	yes
Taiwan Strait II	yes	successive	not supported	US	yes
Taiwan Strait IV	yes	successive	not supported	n/a	n/a
China-India Border II	yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ussuri River	inconclusive	n/a	n/a	USSR	not supported
Sino-Vietnam War	yes	initial	not supported	n/a	n/a

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION:

CHINESE DECISION-MAKING IN FOREIGN POLICY CRISES: FINDINGS, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Using PH, developed by Mintz (1993, 2003a), which incorporates both psychological and rational choice components in a synthesis of these previously isolated approaches, the present project is intended to illuminate both the *process* (how) and *outcome* (why) of Chinese decision-making in response to major crises with other countries. The queries not only attempt to explore the validity of PH in the Chinese context; they also possess practical significance, given the rise of China into a world power and the concerns on many people's minds about whether the rise of China will be peaceful or belligerent.

Chinese foreign policy-making is especially challenging to study, yet it has important implications for understanding other political systems and their interactions with China (Gaeslen, 1986). It is challenging because China is widely seen as a distinctive, or even unique, actor in the international system in terms of its political institutions, strategic thinking, and the way it deals with international relations. To a large extent, Chinese decision-making has been regarded as a "black box": little is known regarding how and why decisions are made, particularly during foreign policy crises. And yet, such knowledge is important as China is an important regional power in Asia

and, in many people's eyes, a rising global power with the fastest growing economy among major states. Nowadays, Chinese foreign policy decisions play a significant part in shaping and maintaining regional and global security and stability. Therefore, in-depth study of Chinese decision-making in past crises will potentially identify patterns that could facilitate forecasting crisis behavior of the CCP leadership in the future.

In the vast literature of FPA, PH, a relatively new theory of foreign policy decision-making, holds that foreign policy decision-making is a two-stage process (Mintz, 1993, 2003a). At the onset of decision-making, given cognitive constraints, time pressure and intensity of the crisis situation, decision-makers tend to resort to cognitive heuristics (or short-cuts) to simplify their decision task. This process follows the noncompensatory principle, which helps eliminate options that are non-viable for the *political* well-being of decision-makers. Afterward, decision-makers are able to analyze the situation along a more *diverse* set of dimensions (e.g., military, economic and diplomatic). To decision-makers, at this point, the political dimension is not necessarily most salient because none of the remaining options could lead to major political damage or loss to the decision-makers themselves. The final decision is the result of expected utility calculation from a comprehensive evaluation of all factors. The outcome derived from the two-stage decision-making process becomes the initial major response toward the crisis, which is the focus of this project.¹⁹⁵

PH has yet to be applied to the Chinese context. Thus, testing PH in a hard case such as China would further and notably strengthen the empirical validity of the theory.

Taken from the authoritative compilation of the ICB Project, nine foreign policy crises

¹⁹⁵ Other actions subsequently may be taken, which join major response as part of the overall management of the crisis. Such overall management, however, is beyond the scope of the present investigation.

for China (with available data) span the period from 1949 to 1996. A structured, focused comparative analysis of Chinese crisis decision-making is used to test two primary hypotheses derived from PH. The hypotheses focus on how decisions are anticipated to occur over the two stages of the decision-making process. At the initial stage of deliberation, decision-makers tend to rely on the noncompensatory rule, which puts primacy on political considerations. The purpose is to select the viable options, and, at the same time, eliminate the ones that are politically unacceptable to the decision-makers. At the later stage of decision-making, decision-makers make the final choice, as a result of utility-maximization, based on comprehensive considerations along with more diversified policy dimensions. Moreover, the secondary hypotheses examine some crucial attributes in crisis settings, including protracted conflict and superpower opponent, to see if and how they are associated with decision-makers' perception of primacy on politics.

This chapter concludes the dissertation project with a summary of the key findings, contributions and reflections from the structured, focused comparative analysis of Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises. It also discusses the theoretical, empirical and policy implications on the basis of the results in this study.

6.1. Key Findings

This study is intended to make theoretical and empirical contributions in two areas: (1) examining Chinese foreign policy-making in crises from a systematic, theoretically driven perspective and (2) assessing the empirical validity of PH of foreign policy decision-making in the distinctive Chinese context. To accomplish these goals, I

derived two primary hypotheses from the core of PH and two secondary hypotheses, which connect crisis decision-making with two prominent attributes of a foreign policy crisis – namely, protracted conflict and superpower opponent. I tested the two primary hypotheses with a structured, focused comparison of Chinese decision-making. The independent coding from six area experts on Chinese decision-making in nine foreign policy crises from 1949 to 1996 served as the empirical basis of this comparison. I also put forward a detailed coding criteria and procedure to emphasize the structure and focus of this comparison. The coding responses for each crisis decision were based on the coders' corroborated interpretations of a set of source materials regarding Chinese decision-making.

As shown in Chapter 5, the structured, focused comparative analysis of Chinese decision-making in the nine foreign policy crises produces strong support for the PH model. The coding results demonstrate a high level of inter-coder reliability in seven of the nine cases. The decision-making processes and outcomes in these crises strongly support the two primary hypotheses and, thus, provide empirical support for the validity of PH. The study also makes a preliminary attempt to examine the specific conditions under which decision-makers would be more inclined to put primacy on political well-being. The secondary hypotheses mark a starting point for more in-depth study on the linkages between decision-makers' political primacy and the concrete contextual attributes of the crisis. Due to data limitations, specifically for the secondary hypotheses, the tentative examination finds little empirical evidence to associate decision-makers' political primacy in crisis decision-making and the placement of the crisis within protracted conflict. It shows more encouraging results for the relationship between

decision-makers' political primacy and the involvement of a superpower as their opponent. Altogether, these results would require within-case and cross-case analysis to specify the causal mechanisms of these connections. Nonetheless, as argued earlier, these results at least reinforce one of the key findings in the primary hypotheses: the primacy of politics in decision-makers' initial deliberation regardless of whether the opponent has had history of conflict with them or whether the opponent is a superpower.

In a country as unique as China, these results suggest that Chinese decision-making is nothing significantly different from the decision-making in many Western democracies. In a crisis, Chinese leaders also tend to resort to the noncompensatory principle first as their cognitive short-cut to simplify their decision task by eliminating the options that would be never acceptable. Such initial elimination puts primacy on their political interests. In other words, during their initial screening of the available options, Chinese leaders tend to keep the options that would not do major political harm to themselves and discard those they deem unacceptable for their political interests. This is the core of PH; it obtains strong empirical support in Chinese crisis decision-making. Political survival is the first and foremost to foreign policy decision-makers, which surpasses anything that may come into their immediate attention in a crisis. In pursuit of this goal, Chinese leaders do not need to seek re-election to stay in power; instead, they seek legitimacy and public support through different channels from those in democratic countries. Charisma, personal connections, or *guanxi*, and internal factional struggles are the primary means for Chinese leaders to stay in power. This has changed little over the course of Chinese history.

PH's performance should be regarded as quite impressive, given the extremely difficult challenges posed in this study. First, the cases included in the present project focus exclusively on crises. The deck might be regarded as "stacked" against PH because, regardless of the stage of decision-making being considered, the primacy on politically motivated foreign policy decision-making should be *least* in evidence during situations where the risk of military violence is significantly above the norm.¹⁹⁶ Second, the cases pertain to China, a state that hardly could be more distant, literally and figuratively, from Western models of decision-making, whether taken from political psychology or rational choice. Given such considerations, the empirical support for PH in this project should be regarded as extremely encouraging.

6.2. Reflections and Lessons

Case researchers should explicitly discuss the major research dilemmas the case study researcher faced in the analysis of a case and the justifications for solving those dilemmas in a particular way....[They should] give some indication of how his or her initial expectations about behavior and initial data-collection rules were revised in the course of the study. This would permit the reader to make a more informed analysis of the process by which a case and conclusions based on the case were reached.

– George and Bennett (2005: 94)

Regarding the notable issues inherent in the questionnaire and potential problems related to the coding, the best strategy at this point is to deal with them through trial and error. This means that further improvement in the research design must begin with learning from the merits and flaws in the current one. Therefore, in retrospect, this

¹⁹⁶ A contrary case could be made: military violence and potential lives lost can lead to *heightened* political calculations (Redd, 2002).

section aims to summarize the reflections and lessons learned from the research design and data collection. In a balanced effort, it addresses both strengths and weaknesses in designing and executing this project.

Echoing the value of expert knowledge, noted momentarily, human-generated coding is an appropriate method to use in this project. The human brain has better capacity than computers to process complex information, such as the decision-making information used in this study. With regard to human-generated coding and the validity of inference on the basis of human coded data, Gerner, Schrodtt, Francisco and Weddle (1994: 95) offer a useful point of reference:

“...event data coders do not observe events; they observe reports of events presented in a natural language such as Arabic, Chinese, English, German, or Hindi. Empirically, events can only be defined with respect to a human language or set of languages. The event coding exercise converts natural language into nominal data that can be analyzed using formal methods... This approach, which assumes a certain level of uniformity and translatability in human-language-based discourse, is well grounded in the psycholinguistic literature (e.g., Osgood, 1971).”

– Gerner, Schrodtt, Francisco and Weddle (1994: 95)

More importantly, the data generated by the experts who were unaware of PH are most useful in identifying the decision-making processes and outcomes in each foreign policy crisis. These experts are able to provide relatively reliable, or neutral, insights without being biased by the theory. In a word, the coding procedure and specific rules are critical for producing valid results for the study.

One of the greatest challenges in decision-making research is the gaps between the actual decision-making processes in the past and the ones that researchers have interpreted. Similarly, in this study, it is impossible to specify how wide the gaps are between the decision-making processes depicted by the experts and what actually

happened decades ago. Nonetheless, given the present research conditions, the coders' corroborated interpretations, based on the primary and secondary sources, might be the best approach to minimizing these gaps. Moreover, the inter-coder reliability checks boost the level of confidence in the final results. The testing of the primary hypotheses followed the most conservative approach; thus, definite conclusions can only be drawn in the cases with perfect inter-coder agreement on the coding results. The ICB Project also provides a reliable, authoritative source to double check the historical events and contextual attributes related to the crisis decision-making.

It is prudent to be aware of potential biases in the present study, including biases in the questionnaire and the selection of cases and source materials.¹⁹⁷ Many of these issues have been identified and discussed in detail in various places in Chapters 4 and 5. The Chinese crisis decision-making cases present a group of least-likely cases for testing PH because the center of crisis decision-making is a unique actor in international relations.¹⁹⁸ Should PH find empirical support in these least-likely cases, it would boost the validity and credibility of PH. In addition, the crises for China can be viewed from two perspectives: (1) if the focus only is on *Chinese* foreign policy decision-making, then they are the “universe” of the data; or (2) if this is to serve as an initial step toward a more comprehensive, cross-national study of PH decision-making, then they are only a congregated group of data. In either case, the selection bias is minimal, particularly in the framework of the ICB data set.

¹⁹⁷ See Lustick (1996) for a useful discussion about the problem of selection bias of using historical records.

¹⁹⁸ The case selection in this study conforms to the latter criterion in Eckstein's discussions about “crucial cases” – the cases that “*must closely fit* a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory's validity” and the cases that “*must not fit* equally well with any rule contrary to that proposed” (Eckstein, 1975: 118; George and Bennett, 2005: 120).

Finally, some theoretical and empirical issues still need further consideration and validity checks. For instance, in foreign policy decision-making, exactly how are individual preferences aggregated into a group's decision?¹⁹⁹ How can strategic dynamics be captured and included in the PH model?

6.3. Major Contributions and Implications

The present project seeks to make both theoretical and practical contributions to FPA, in general, and the study of Chinese foreign policy, in particular. Theoretically, the present project directly addresses one of the heated debates in foreign policy decision-making – the debate over the rational choice approach vs. the cognitive approach. The study further affirms that neither approach is sufficient for providing plausible explanations for foreign policy crisis decision-making.

With respect to the contributions of the present project to FPA, in general, it is worth a reference to two points made by Vertzberger (2002) in a recent overview of the field. First, in the midst of the ongoing arguments about rational choice, reality is “much more complex than reflected by the debate” (Vertzberger, 2002: 488). The present analysis of Chinese decision-making in foreign policy crises through the lens of PH reinforces that point. When the multiple stages of decision-making, along with the multifaceted dimensions of interest, are taken into account, PH shows that decision-making cannot be comprehended fully without real depth of analysis. It is possible to find evidence that confirms both the cognitive and rational orientations within the same case of decision-making – just at different stages.

¹⁹⁹ Nisbett and Ross (1980) argue that most important decisions are made by groups instead of individuals.

Second, this study affirms the wisdom of Vertzberger's (2002: 490) calling for a more "context-sensitive" implementation for any given theory of human behavior. George and Bennett (2005: 19) echo this point by emphasizing "contextualized comparison" in case studies. The primary hypotheses from PH find relatively strong support through a data-intensive, highly contextualized process of testing that focuses on decision-making in nine specific Chinese foreign policy crises. The nuances of the policy dimensions in each of these crises confirm that Vertzberger (2002) and George and Bennett (2005) are on the right track in calling for context-sensitive theorizing and empirical research.

Another original contribution of this study is the research design. The structured, focused comparative study of the major crises for China provides a systematic account of Chinese decision-making in response to foreign policy crises. It sets the foundation and presents broader implications for a larger-scale, cross-national comparison of crisis decision-making. The coding and hypothesis-testing is another original component of this study. The coding is based on the structured, focused comparative analyses of area experts who have neither prior knowledge of PH nor the relevant hypotheses of this study.²⁰⁰ The results are maximally guaranteed with the inter-coder reliability checks described earlier. Answers to these general questions serve as the basic data for testing the hypotheses derived from PH. The expert-generated coding for the structured, focused comparison, along with process-tracing provides the empirical foundation for testing the PH-related hypotheses in the foreign policy crises for China. Nothing similar to the method in this study has previously been used to test PH in any setting. This, from

²⁰⁰ This also is known as "blind or ignorant-experts-generated data."

another perspective, also indicates why there is room for further improvement, as noted previously. In spite of those practical difficulties and potential limitations on the data, the method and data in this study still generated strong and consistent results from Chinese decision-making that support the core propositions of PH.

More importantly, the greatest value underlying the research design goes beyond the current purpose of testing PH. A combination of theoretical rigor of the models as the ones under scrutiny with the nuanced insights of area experts illuminates the real power of this approach. Abstract theories have analytical strengths. Bridging the gap between cognitive psychology and rational choice, PH provides a theoretically rigorous approach to further understand Chinese foreign policy decision-making. In the meantime, expert knowledge is crucial to practically understand the specific mechanisms and nuances of issues. Without the expert knowledge about Chinese foreign policy and decision-making, it would be impossible to understand how and why Chinese decision-makers make certain decisions in a crisis. The results should be most reliable if theory works in conjunction with area expertise. It should be noted that it is possible to achieve a high level of accuracy and inter-coder agreement on the essential information for decision-making, even in cases when the coders disagree with each other on some of the questions (Bueno de Mesquita, 1994: 103).

The key ideas that can be drawn from the present study have broader implications for other areas of concern. For instance, this structured, focused study of Chinese decision-making during foreign policy crises could provide a useful benchmark for understanding the dynamics of Chinese policy-making overall. In the case of a domestic crisis, such as the SARS crisis in 2003 and the recent bird flu crisis, how would Beijing

react to the spread of these contagious diseases? In other words, would the PH model be applicable to decision-making in domestic crises? I leave it as a future task for myself and other scholars to determine. Broadly speaking, the findings in this study also bear important theoretical and empirical implications for decision-making in other non-Western states in crisis situations. For example, would Turkish decision-making in crisis share any resemblance to the patterns of Chinese crisis decision-making even though these two countries are very different from each other in many respects?²⁰¹

With regard to wider policy implications, the present project illuminates Chinese strategic culture and their commonly used cognitive heuristics when it comes to decision-making in foreign policy crises. More importantly, PH-based understanding of Chinese crisis decision-making helps government officials and pundits from within and outside of China better prepare for any future eruption of international crises with the country. In the foreseeable future, this might be entirely possible given the factors of potential instability in East Asia, including tensions across the Taiwan Strait over sovereignty and independence, historical grudges between Japan and its neighboring countries, including China, nuclear standoffs in North Korea, concerns over China's growing military power and weapon proliferation, and long-standing territorial disputes over the East and South China Sea, among other regional security issues. Even though Beijing has declared the official policy, which emphasizes sustainable development and a peaceful rise, the chance still exists that any of the above-mentioned security concerns could trigger a new foreign policy crisis for China at any time. In this sense, it is crucial to have a systematic understanding of Chinese decision-making, which will facilitate inferences about

²⁰¹ This particular question is being explored in another research project in collaboration with Patrick James, Carolyn C. James and Nukhet A. Sandal.

Beijing's future decision-making patterns and behavior and, thus, provide useful policy implications for policy-makers to make appropriate decisions in case of an outbreak of a new crisis with China.

APPENDIX

Appendix 4-2-3-1. Questionnaire:

Chinese Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises²⁰²

1. In this case, what was the major *policy* response/action made by the Chinese leaders to the initiation of the crisis?

2. Do you see the decision-making process for the major response as a one-stage or two-stage process?
 - a. One-stage.
 - b. Two-stage.
 - c. Not sure.
 - d. Don't know.Justification:

3. With regard to Question 2, if this was a two-stage decision-making process, what do you think was the dividing line between Stage I and Stage II?

4. What were the politically viable options for the Chinese decision-makers?

5. With regard to Question 4, were these options rational for the decision-makers in the sense of maximizing gains while minimizing losses?

²⁰² The options of “not sure” or “don't know” are offered in the questionnaire for three reasons: (1) the available coding material might contain contending points of view; (2) the coders might hold different views from those in the coding material; and (3) the coders might deem the available reliable sources insufficient to decide the decision-making processes in some of the cases.

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

6. What do you think were the most prominent reasons why the decision-makers made their decision?

7. What do you think might have been the *most salient* politically *unacceptable* options that may conceivably have been considered by the CCP decision-makers in this particular foreign policy crisis?

8. Did the CCP decision-makers appear to eliminate these politically *unacceptable* options immediately?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

9. At the initial consideration of policy alternatives during the crisis, did the potential loss along the political dimension tend to be more salient to the decision-makers than that along other dimensions?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

10. In this particular case, what scenarios represented potential *political loss* for the CCP leaders?

11. Did the fear of or concerns about political loss take precedence in the initial elimination of policy alternatives?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

12. If we arbitrarily categorize the dimensions as follows, on which did decision-makers tend to ground their decisions: political, economic, military or diplomatic? Please briefly justify your answer.

13. Do you think that, from the decision-makers' point of view, consideration along the political dimension can be substituted for by another dimension (i.e., economic, military or diplomatic)?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

14. Do you agree that decision-makers tended to give more consideration to the political dimension at the outset of the crisis?

a. Yes.

b. No.

c. Not sure.

d. Don't know.

Justification:

15. Do you think the final choice among the politically viable options was calculated on the basis of a more *diverse* set of dimensions, including diplomatic, economic and/or military?

a. Yes.

b. No.

c. Not sure.

d. Don't know.

Justification:

16. Was it a utility-based (i.e., conventionally rational based on cost/benefit analysis, as opposed to normative/moral) calculation?

a. Yes.

b. No.

c. Not sure.

d. Don't know.

Justification:

Appendix 4-2-3-2. Revised Questionnaire:
Turkish Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises

1. Who was/were the ultimate decision-maker(s) in Turkey in this crisis? Please justify your answer.

2. In this crisis, what was the major *policy* response/action made by the decision-makers to the initiation of the crisis? Please justify your answer.

3. Do you see the decision-making process for the major response as a one-stage or two-stage process? In other words, did all the options appear to be considered only once (immediately followed by a final choice/decision), or were some of the options initially discounted as nonviable/unacceptable followed by another round of consideration of the remaining options?
 - a. One-stage.
 - b. Two-stage.
 - c. Not sure.
 - d. Don't know.

Justification:

4. With regard to Question 3, if this was a two-stage decision-making process, what do you think was the dividing line between Stage I and Stage II? Please justify your answer.

5. What were the *politically* viable/acceptable options for the Turkish decision-makers?
Please justify your answer.

6. With regard to Question 5, were these options rational for the decision-makers in the sense of maximizing potential domestic political gains while minimizing potential domestic political losses?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

7. What do you think were the most prominent reasons why the decision-makers made the final decision as they did? Please justify your answer.

8. What do you think might have been the *most salient* politically *unacceptable* options that may conceivably have been considered by the decision-makers in this particular foreign policy crisis? Please justify your answer.

9. Did the decision-makers appear to eliminate these politically *unacceptable* options immediately?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

10. If we arbitrarily categorize foreign policy considerations along four dimensions, at the initial consideration of policy alternatives during the crisis, did a potential loss along the political dimension tend to be more salient than the decision-makers' potential losses along other dimensions?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

11. On which dimension(s) did decision-makers tend to ground the *final* decision: political, economic, military and/or diplomatic? Please justify your answer.

12. Do you think that, from the decision-makers' point of view, consideration along the political dimension can be substituted for by consideration along another dimension (i.e., economic, military or diplomatic)?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

13. Do you think the *final choice* among the viable options was calculated on the basis of a more *diverse* set of dimensions, including diplomatic, economic and/or military?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Not sure.
- d. Don't know.

Justification:

14. Was the *final choice* a utility-based (i.e., conventionally rational based on cost/benefit analysis, as opposed to normative/moral) calculation?

a. Yes.

b. No.

c. Not sure.

d. Don't know.

Justification:

Appendix 4-2-5-1. Sources Materials on Chinese Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises

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Appendix 5-2-2. Sample Debriefing Questions Following the Comprehensive Coding

1. In the answers to the questionnaire, you indicated Could you clarify what you mean by that?
2. Why is the major response in _____ crisis _____?
3. What made you code the decision-making process as a one-stage (or two-stage) process?
4. What do you mean by 'stage'?
5. What made you code the politically viable options as rational for decision-makers?
What do you mean by 'rational'?

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VITA

Enyu Zhang was born and raised in China. She earned her B.A. in English and Diplomacy from Foreign Affair College (now China Foreign Affairs University) in 2000 and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Missouri at Columbia in 2002 and 2006. She specializes in international relations (foreign policy analysis) and Chinese politics (Chinese foreign policy). Zhang has won the 2005 Alexander L. George Award for the Best Graduate Student Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association.