



The 'Strategic Actor' and Public Security Strategy

A theoretically explorative study of how the concept of strategic actor can be developed, to increase understanding of states' and intergovernmental organizations' strategic reasoning

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With the aim of contributing one aspect to the international relations enterprise of understanding the grounds for security policy action, this essay makes a theoretical exploration of the basis for *security strategy-making* on the political level, with the aid of a multidisciplinary framework for analysis (combining research on strategy, narratives and role theory). Developing the concept of *strategic actor* by assessing its constitution through aspects of *strategic theory* (e.g. *theories of action*), *role enactment*, and *strategic narratives*, enables the study to construct an analytical tool which can be utilized to assess the strategic reasoning of actors within international relations. This analytical tool is tested for relevance by being employed to empirically analyse public security strategies of states and intergovernmental organizations as presumed *strategic actors*. Empirical analysis guided by the framework for analysis is conducted *vis-à-vis* a selection of *security strategies* (a.k.a. *strategic concepts*) between 2000 and 2010, of state-actors: the Russian Federation, the United States, the United Kingdom, and IGO-actors: the European Union and NATO. The essay increases the understanding of strategic actors' strategy-making in general and security strategy-making in particular. The findings augment the understanding of the complex choices facing political units if they aim to credibly cast themselves as a *strategic actor* – at least regarding the aspect of *reasoning* strategically – as well as shedding some more light on the particular policy material that security strategies represents.

Key Words: Actor, International Relations, Narrative Analysis, Public Diplomacy, Role Theory, Security Strategy, Strategic Studies

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1: INTRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING ACTION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In order to give a political science explanation of why an *actor* has acted in a certain way within the realm of international relations' security issues – e.g. intervened into a country using military force, the explanation may be deduced from a number of sources. Explanations may relate to the dynamics inherent in different actors (e.g. state, organization, group, individual) and on different levels (e.g. the systemic, the regional, the domestic), be ascribed to different specific factors (e.g. power, norms, ideology, identity, geography, strategic culture), depending on the research focus and theoretical view that is adopted (see e.g. Buzan 1991: 57-69, Ringmar 1996, Buzan & Wæver 2003, Haas 2005, Baldwin 2012, Mouritzen & Wivel 2012, Ångström 2015). One central analytical choice is where one's research focus will be: on the agent or the structure as the most central factor for explanations (see e.g. Wight 2013). If one thinks that factors related to agency are important to take into account, as explanans for actions in international relations, and chooses to explore what drives an actor's actions from this perspective – the *rationale* for the actor's choices for action seems important to understand.

This essay will make an exploratory study in this vein: studying above all how the actor reasons around how security is to be achieved *strategically*, and how it consequently states its rationale for security related actions (or approach to set up, initiate or counter such actions), with the aim that this approach will enhance understanding of at least one factor that may explain action: *strategic guidance*. The line for seeking understanding of an international relations actor's potential action, vis-à-vis security related issues, that will be taken here, is through analysing one form of security policies, that a set of international relations actors formulates, purporting to guide such policy strategically. With the aid of a framework for analysis, this essay explores a few different (vis-à-vis type and form) actors (states and intergovernmental organizations) within international relations as *strategic actors*, as this is expressed through these actors' official *security strategy* documents. The study makes no (pre analysis) empirical assumptions of either how and to what degree the units analysed may be strategic actors. Exploring how to make sense of this concept in relation to this particular material is what the essay aims to do. To accomplish this, previous research on this and related concepts are drawn on, in order to make theoretical tools which can acquire empirical findings, and assess if and how these policy documents conceptualizes strategic reasoning.

Previous research has been performed in direct or indirect relation to the subject, that this study will draw upon. For example: from research on the EU as a potential strategic actor (Engelbrekt & Hallenberg 2008); on national security strategy and strategic policy-making (Kugler 2006, Dorman & Kaufman 2014); on strategy from classical as well as contemporary authors (e.g. Gray 2010, Biehl et al 2013, Odgaard 2014); on narratives and strategic narratives in international relations (e.g. Ringmar 1996, Freedman 2006, Graaf et al 2015); on role theory (e.g. Holsti 1970, Aggestam 2004, Gaskarth 2014, Koenig 2014); in relation to NATO's strategy conception a narrative role-analysis has been undertaken by Charlotte Wagnsson (2011), and in relation to Britain's strategy making a role analysis has been done by Jamie Gaskarth (2014).

The driving force for the essay emanates from two puzzles – one material and one conceptual – that I both find begging further research: 1. how to more fully comprehend public security strategy

documents – especially their strategic aspects, 2. how to gain a more complex understanding of the meaning of a state or intergovernmental organization as a ‘strategic actor’. By making a theoretically guided analysis of the puzzling material, the study aims to gain better understanding of both the material and the concept of strategic actor as it may be conceptualized through the material.

It is important to emphasize that as the empirical material is of a very limited kind, in type of material and size of sample, the empirical analysis will only be taken as means for illustration of how the phenomenon of strategic actor conceptualization, as acquired by the analytical tool, may manifest itself. I have made the choice to focus on theoretical exploration in this essay, as it is the necessary ground for any study of *strategic guidance*. But the empirical analysis does nonetheless give some indication of the utility of this study’s operationalized concept of strategic actor, e.g. when one wants to assess what range of strategic approaches an actor employs, or the internal strategic coherence of a strategic actor set up.

The conceptual approach and findings of the study could problematize and potentially inform future security strategy making – e.g. a potential Global Security Strategy for the European Union, which has been analysed and debated by scholars within a project housed by inter alia the Swedish Institute for Foreign Affairs.¹

THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC ACTOR – THE STATE OF RESEARCH

The term strategic actor is not commonly employed in *Strategic Studies*. Lawrence Freedman does not use it in his *Strategy: a history* (2013); nor does Colin Gray, a prolific writer on strategy, in *The strategy bridge: theory for practice*, as Gray’s concern essentially is with how the *strategist* should make strategy to the best effect (Gray 2010). A *strategist* is one person – but the *strategic actor* we deal with here is an immensely more complex entity: a state or IGO. M.V. Rasmussen uses the term four times in *The Risk Society at War* (2006) – two times to discuss the strategic actor as risk minimizer or maximizer, and two times regarding *new* (transnational) strategic actors, like al-Qaeda (Rasmussen 2006: 39, 89, 174); in *Strategic Studies: A reader* (2008) the term is used once (in the general introduction) vis-à-vis that “the primacy of politics applies not only to states, but also to other strategic actors” and al-Qaeda is referred to as support for this claim (Mahnken & Maiolo 2008: 2). This way, i.e. regarding potential new (i.e. other than states) strategic actors, is also how the term is used in *The European Union and Strategy: An emerging actor* (2008) – i.e. if and if so how the European Union (EU) can be seen as a strategic actor (Engelbrekt & Hallenberg 2008). Kjell Engelbrekt investigates how the EU could evolve “strategic reasoning and action proper” and so indicates that a *strategic actor* should have the ability to “reason and act strategically” (2008: 10-11). I will adopt this dual conception and focus on analysing the *reasoning* aspect when exploring the concept of strategic actor in theory and in the empirical material. Jan Hallenberg gives a more detailed account of what characteristics the *strategic actor* “in the classical sense” “ideally needs to have”:

1. “be able to make an independent study of the world around it” i.e. “it needs an independent capability to collect and assess intelligence”
2. “be able to formulate goals that it wishes to attain and to make a hierarchy among those goals”

¹ The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, <http://www.ui.se/eng/pages/european-global-strategy>

3. "the actor needs to select among /.../ the possible means that are most likely to contribute to the goals formulated"
4. "the ability to implement its strategy in practical action on the ground in the attempt to reach its formulated goals"
5. "an ability to assess what has happened in a given situation and to learn from that experience in order to be able to be even more effective the next time a similar occasion arises"

(Hallenberg 2008: 3)

It would be futile to try to research this ideal type of the strategic actor within the security strategies solely, as we would need an overall different research approach, taking into account contextual information – points one, three, four, five; and classified or at least hard to come by information – point one. Besides, expressions of this ideal type may be non-existent in the strategic conceptions made in the security strategies (due to multiple reasons – e.g. through being more concerned with selling strategic approaches than explain what they are grounded on). A larger study that analyses strategic action could test the findings against this ideal type. I will in some way incorporate points two and three within the analytical tool devised, but on a higher strategic scale – in order to assess how the security strategy conforms to a *grand strategy* – where strategies can be seen as means to the overall grand strategic goal.

As can be seen from the above – although the ability of new actors on the international relations scene (such as the EU or transnational actors) to be strategic actors may be problematized – vis-à-vis states it seems taken for granted that they are strategic actors. This might be correct – but this study's *raison d'être* is that even regarding states this concept is in need of more exploration, not least regarding what different types of strategic actor there may be and how an actor may be more or less strategic – especially regarding its ability to reason strategically.

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This essay aims to elucidate a certain theoretical concept and potential phenomenon – the 'strategic actor' – within national and international security policy, as it can be deduced through *theoretical exploration* and from *analysing a particular material*: the public security strategies of state and intergovernmental 'actors'.

The purpose of the essay is specifically to explore how the meaning of the concept of 'strategic actor' could be further explored through developing an eclectic framework for analysis, and to test what this analytical tool, employed to analyse security strategy documents, can deduce regarding the presence and form of a *reasoning* 'strategic actor'.

Seeking answers to the following research questions will facilitate reaching the aims of the study.

Research questions:

1. What width of the phenomenon of a strategic actor did the analytical tool deduce from the population of cases?
2. Were there any marked differences between found signs of strategic actors (e.g. between types: states and IGOs)?
3. How could one classify a security strategy as a strategic instrument (for a strategic actor)? E.g.: What relation between the security strategy as a narrative of security strategy and as a piece of strategic narrative (strategic communication / public diplomacy) could be discerned?

4. Did any aspect of the strategic actor as analysed through the analytical framework seem to call for further exploration? Would a continued development of some aspect(s) of the analytical tool enhance such further exploration?

DISPOSITION OF THE ESSAY

First, the essay will explain the methodology of the study. Secondly, a theoretical exposition and exploration is conducted, in order to develop a framework for analysis, in the form of a theoretically guided operationalization of the reasoning aspect of the 'strategic actor', and an analytical tool (i.e. analytical questions). Thirdly, empirical analysis is conducted vis-à-vis a number of actors of different type and form. Fourthly, the empirical findings are summed up and assessed, in order to get a rough indication of e.g. the width of the phenomenon of 'strategic actor' as conceptualized by the population of states and IGOs, at least as far as this empirical material shows it. Fifthly, conclusions from the essay are drawn, and previous research is engaged, in order to assess the contribution of the essay, and to discern how further research building on (or further developing) the essay's analytical framework, may contribute to the research areas in question.

2: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH

The focus of this essay is theoretically guided conceptual exploration – engaging previous research in order to connect and develop concepts will therefore take up much space of the essay; this is motivated from two angles: 1. focusing more on connecting and building concepts in regard to the concept of *strategic actor* will, I think, contribute to the usefulness of this concept in the research fields of international relations (especially security and strategic studies); 2. as I have chosen to address a limited kind of empirical material, there is need for a complex analytical tool in order to extract all of interest to the topic from the material.

Although the empirical material mainly serves illustrative purposes in the study, previous research conducted on it did offer guidance for how to further explore the concept of strategic actor. The results from the empirical analysis will also indicate where further research seems necessary in regard to the concept of strategic actor.

The investigation of this phenomenon will be done by combining research approaches from *international relations* in general, and *security studies* and *strategic studies* in particular. After having surveyed previous research, I found especially two relevant angles from which security strategies can be analysed productively: security strategies as *narratives of the actor's strategy* and as *strategic narratives*. Where the latter may serve the actor strategically or more generally politically: perhaps as part of promoting some security strategy, but potentially serving completely different political goals, e.g. as part of some *securitization* (see Buzan, Wæver & Wilde 1998). This dual approach, which will be followed in the study, will result in the construction of an analytical tool that should be of general use when analysing any public policy paper, in order to extract what elements of strategic reasoning it may contain.

As the chosen material promises to contain strategic thinking on how security is achieved, the findings of the analysis could divulge the forms, scope and complexity of the actor's strategic thinking vis-à-vis security issues: factors which are likely to have effect on why-when-with-what-how the actor chooses to act – and so indirectly contribute to the ability to explain actions. Similar to Erik Ringmar (1996), the actors' understanding (thinking) – as it is communicated through narration – is taken to be potentially important for action. Ringmar seeks, via a *narrative theory of action*, to explain the Swedish intervention in the Thirty Years war, by analysing the narratives offered for intervention as caused at least partly by considerations of identity; this analysis of narratives argues that focusing on identity-related reasons for action gives a better explanation than interest-related focus (Ringmar 1996: 66-186). A difference between this and Ringmar's approach, is that while Ringmar focuses on understanding of identity and the kind of actions it demands (see Ringmar 1996: 80-81), this study will focus on the actor's understanding of action and reasons for acting in a certain way.

David McCourt argues that it is more relevant in research, if it is explanation for a particular action one seeks (in McCourt's case the British intervention in the Falklands in 1982 is the case studied) to examine the role(s) the actor plays, as this is the vehicle through which identity expresses itself, rather than researching identity directly – “Since identity affirmation is dependent on role-playing, and impossible without it, states choose to enact roles such as ‘leader’ or ‘reliable ally’ in particular situations in order to make their identity affirming behaviour in international politics meaningful” (McCourt 2011: 1600). I will follow this lead in the study and focus the roles as they are expressed in the documents, as a way to potentially explore the strategic actor – *potentially*, as not all expressed roles may be strategically inclined .

There may consequently be a connection between the role narrative side and the strategic actor side, as what kind of roles one seeks to represent in the narrative of a strategy – the role *enacted*, may form choices regarding action as it, according to Lisbeth Aggestam, “expresses more specifically how action in foreign policy is perceived” (2004: 77). Choices of roles may thus affect how the actor thinks that action works – i.e. affect its *theory of action* (see Kugler 2006: 43, Edmunds 2014: 526-527). Strategy-making can be argued as reliant on both the identity and the interest of the actor (Gaskarth 2014, Edmunds 2014), although where one places the emphasis differ – and roles may be a vehicle that closes the gap between interests and identity.

That focusing roles when analysing security strategies is a fruitful approach is something previous research indicate (Wagnsson 2011), and this study will emulate – i.e. assume that: *the role or roles* the actor attempts to promote and perform, is likely to directly or indirectly influence its strategic behaviour: there may be a fit (the role fits the prescribed actions in the security strategy) or there may be a misfit (the role fits unwell with prescribed actions, or vice versa). This could have as a result that the role of (and interest of being a) strategic actor – may be obstructed by other roles the state actor attempts to perform. I make no pretence on expressing any original thoughts with the above points (similar thoughts on roles are already apparent in Holsti 1970) – but I have found that the strategic consequences of states' or IGOs' roles call for further exploration, especially vis-à-vis security strategy-making.

The methodological angle of focusing narratives makes it possible to draw on both research on identity and roles as sources of action within international relations (e.g. Ringmar 1996, McCourt 2011) and on the emerging research area on strategic narratives (e.g. Graaf, Dimitriu & Ringsmose

2015): the essay thereby engages the ‘narrative turn’ which has emerged within Security and Strategic Studies towards understanding actors’ communication and reasoning around action.

The relevance of focusing narratives in relation to strategy is also supported from the emerging research area on *strategic culture* as “a security community’s security and defence identity” as expressed through the “policy elites” (i.e. “the strategic communities and experts in the country”) “accepted narratives” is part of strategic culture (Biehl et al 2013: 12). A focus on narratives could potentially also contribute to empirical clarification of the concept of strategic culture, vis-à-vis both the particular actors whose security strategies are analysed, as well as general aspects of the concept, as it is divulged through security strategy documents.

If security strategies are, at least partly, *accepted narratives*, which seems likely, then if the empirical findings of two different actors show similarities in choices in regard to e.g. theories of action or the choice of strategic roles, then this may indicate that the actors have similarities between their strategic cultures – or perhaps are both part of some larger common (e.g. transatlantic) strategic culture.

The unit of analysis

It is necessary to clarify which kinds of strategic actors, and what aspects of the ‘strategic actor’, we can hope to deduce from the given material.

The *units of analysis* (see Buzan, Wæver & Wilde 1998: 6) that this essay uses is *actors* of two kinds: *state* and *intergovernmental organization* (IGO). Whether the two kinds of actors analysed are actors in reality, is regarding states often not an issue (possibly so called *failed states* excepted), but regarding IGOs it has been seen as requiring some transfer of sovereignty from the states to the organization (Rittberger et al 2012: 4-5). As this essay’s only source material is documents – i.e. the actor is only approached through text analysis; I will not engage in the debate of whether the analysed units are in fact, or to what degree, actors. The study will consequently only assess if and how the units analysed may be understood, through the narratives of these documents, as *strategic actors* – especially vis-à-vis the ability of *strategic reason* (see Engelbrekt 2008: 9-10).

Although there is no reason to categorically doubt that states are actors in international relations (though different theories may derive this action from different sources, e.g. more from structural systemic forces rather than agency, as in Waltz 1979) – there is no compulsory reason to assume that this action is *strategic*. I.e. that the state is a *strategic* actor is not given a priori, and the same goes for IGOs. Indeed the rational actor assumption is emphatically discarded within some research areas, e.g. Foreign Policy Analysis (see Hudson 2005:2-4). But as this assumption (or its rejection) above all relates to the ability to *act* rationally *externally*, it does not preclude that the actor can perform the *internal act of reasoning* strategically – at least as evident in policy documents.

Eclectic combination

A complex concept such as ‘strategic actor’ seems to require a complex framework for analysis. As the purpose of this essay is to increase understanding – and one major tool for understanding is via theories and concepts – a way to increase understanding is to singularly use theories or concepts as they stand – to “consume” them; alternatively one can eclectically combine them in order to

enhance the studies explanatory power – as more perspectives on the subject is achieved through using multiple approaches (Mouritzen & Wivel 2012: 4-6). An eclectic approach is adopted to increase the complexity of the analysis and so enhance understanding. Previous research has already indicated that a focus on roles can be fruitfully engaged to analyse strategy and strategies (see e.g. Holsti 1970, Wagnsson 2011, Gaskarth 2014). A combination of narrative role analysis (using role theory) is thus combined with research on strategy and strategy-making (including the element of strategic narrative) in order to assess the full width of how the security strategy may be part of, and reflect, the authoring actor as a strategic actor.

These two approaches complements each other, and should enable a complex analysis: that for example indicates strategic “problems” with a security strategy – e.g. when a narrated role within the security strategy is likely to act contrary to some strategy expounded in the document. Additionally the concept of strategy is approached from several different angles in order to make the analysis more complex.

The actual empirical analysis will be the judgment on the potential power of this combination to enhance understanding.

MATERIAL

The choice of empirical material is a central part of any research project – regardless of whether the weight is on the empirical case(s) or on theoretical issues.

The phenomenon of *public security strategy* has increased in actuality as the last decades has seen a rise in the number of actors – above all states but also intergovernmental organizations – making public security strategies (Dorman & Kaufman 2014: 280-281). This makes the material generally relevant as a research material. The choice to focus on solely one kind of material is furthermore made due to *methodological* and *material considerations*.

Methodological considerations – as it will exclude the kind of contextual and context-connected sources of explanation that otherwise could be utilised and thus detract from the full exploration of the security strategy itself. Naturally the context is of essential import if an overall understanding of the concept is sought, but the widening of context is for further research: as this is an exploratory study I will limit the field of view to concentrate the effort. This choice will therefore demand a greater focus on devising ways to enhance valid and reliable means of extrication of what these documents can disclose about strategic matters by themselves. Especially in the concluding section previous research is engaged to assess findings – thereby also enabling contextual factors to comment on the results indirectly.

As the stated aim of the essay is to increase the understanding of the strategic actor within security issues – this material furthermore is nominally natural to choose, and it seems reasonable to first of all take a material with apparent links to the issue at hand. Further research will consequently be called on to incorporate different documentary and other material.

The specific choice of material (se references for exact selection) is from these actors: the European Union, NATO, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The time span is between the years 2000 to 2010 – this is when (the US excepted) the major outlet of

these documents have taken place. Exact selection of years have been made to enable comparisons between actors. The choice of actors is based on these considerations above all: 1. They represent a spectrum of differences: regional and / or great powers (e.g. the UK, the EU, Russia) to global/super powers (the US) on the international scene (see Bull 2002: 40, 70-71, Buzan & Waever 30-37); states from different and similar geographical regions; states that are members or not of one or two of the IGOs analysed; IGOs with different focus. 2. Previous research on these actors is available, that can be used to evaluate findings.

Material - discussion

Regarding the representativeness of the material: although all material analysed is official output of the state or IGO, and could thereby claim to be representative of each actor, the material may despite this be misrepresentative of the state-actor or IGO-actor as a whole. This must be born in mind – any generalization from the study must be triangulated vis-à-vis other material, contextual factors, and evaluated by the aid of previous research, before accepted as affirmatively general knowledge of the actor (as strategic actor).

As the study will make illustrative comparisons between the documents in the population, to primarily draw out a rough overall picture of the frames these documents set for strategic actor conceptualization, it is necessary to discuss the comparability of documents. It is hard to see the documents within the population of cases as completely equivalent, not least due to that different conceptions of security may be used leading potentially to different conceptions of security strategy. Specified analytical questions to ask the material, as this study has, will make comparisons more valid, as it focuses the areas being compared: according to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett the “use of a set of general questions is necessary to ensure the acquisition of comparable data in comparative studies” (2005: 69). Following this, the study employs the *method of structured and focused comparison*: (*structured*) as it develops “general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases possible” – and (*focused*) “in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined” – which the study does by focusing on the aspects related to a strategic actor (2005: 67).

QUALITATIVE TEXT ANALYSIS

Narrative analysis

The qualitative text analysis will be guided by general analytical questions, that partly incorporates elements which looks to the narratives present in the text. Following McBeth et al: “narratives are a major focus of politicians and strategists”, as “among political operatives, it is widely accepted that how a story is rendered is as important to policy success and political longevity as what actions are undertaken” (McBeth et al 2014: 225). It would be naïve to assume that security strategies (i.e. a species of policy document) are exempt from potential politically strategic usage, wherefore narrative analysis is called for, and will be applied – to deduce roles and strategic narratives. McBeth et al sets up four “policy narrative core elements” (2014: 228) given below – the following

parenthesis with my comments indicates how these elements are understood, and used in analysis, in this essay:

1. *Setting*: "the setting of a policy narrative consists of policy consequential phenomena /.../, and other features that most actors agree are part of the considerations one must come to terms with when dealing in a particular policy area." – (i.e. essential framing components of the narrative: e.g. Cold War – with nuclear armed actors – mutual deterrence should be taken into account – ergo nuclear weapons is out of the question when using force)
2. *Characters*: "Policy narratives must have at least one character." – (This element may be useful in drawing out roles from the text; this character must not be explicitly stated in order to qualify as a narrative in this study – often the implicitly understood subject of a story will be the authoring actor)
3. *Plot*: "Establishing the relationships between characters and situating the characters within the policy setting, the plot provides the arc of action" – (A central element that may divulge strategic thinking – especially to clarify the strategic interaction between a strategic role and it's Alter's prescriptions – see the *Role theory* chapter)
4. *Moral*: "Policy narratives also promote a policy solution. In narrative terms, we refer to this solution as the moral of the story." – (A central element that may divulge strategic thinking in the form of e.g. a theory of action)

(McBeth et al 2014: 228)

These elements will be drawn on to guide the analysis to capture essential parts of the narrative that may expound the strategic actor.

Analysis guided by analytical questions

As noted above, this study employs a *method of structured and focused comparison* – i.e. guided by general questions (George & Bennett 2005: 67-72). The analytical questions, which will be derived in the theoretical section, will be asked to every *case* (i.e. security strategy). When a question relates to a narrative (e.g. to draw out role conceptions narrated, or assess a piece of strategic communication) the analyst can draw on Mcbeths et al's narrative analysis framework above.

Employing these general questions to guide analysis, thus makes the text analysis as straight forward as possible – and when any part of text being inquired into appears arbitrary in regard to some question, the theoretical section of the essay should be consulted in order to maintain validity, and when precise theoretical support is used (as there may be variants on theory – e.g. regarding strategy) this should be indicated to maintain reliability.

METHODOLOGY – DISCUSSION

Alternative methodological approaches

Two alternative approaches vis-à-vis methodological choices present themselves as plausible alternatives. Firstly regarding the choice of actor samples – one could have focused on one actor, and studied its security strategies longitudinally, thereby making possible comparisons over time, and increasing the chances of reaching generalizable knowledge regarding this particular actor as a

strategic actor. I opted for a more diversified sample of actors, enabling exploration of the concept of strategic actor in its width, which is congenial with this being an explorative study of the concept.

Another alternative regards the choice of analytical method for text analysis. One could have chosen a more "discourse" oriented approach – e.g. the discourse on 'security strategy', for example following Lene Hansen, who has developed a framework for analysis of security discourse (Hansen 2006). Though if such a method would be better suited to draw out strategic actor conceptions is uncertain. The drawback with using Hansen's approach is that it, in order to be meaningful seems to require a lot of written material and from different sources in order to catch the discourse (2006: 82-92), and thereby partly shoot beside the purpose of this study – which is focused on one kind of material. To make a full "elaborated research design for discourse analysis" according to Hansen's model, could be a next step in a larger study of the conceptualization of strategic action in international relations (2006: 80-81).

If the sample of security strategies analysed had been larger, it would have been natural to attempt to use a comparative method to rise above particular findings on the *strategic actor* and seek explanations for patterns or peculiarities. One could then for example have searched for causal explanations of similarities or differences between subsets of the population (employing e.g. two general types of comparative method: the *most different systems design* using the *method of agreement* to explain likenesses between cases, and the *most similar systems design* using the *method of difference* in order to explain differences, Denk 2012: 43-46). A comparative approach cannot be undertaken – due not only to a too small population, but also due to the need of contextual analysis in order to really establish the potential patterns (which are the basis for employing the methods of agreement or difference) that could lead one to deduce *causes* of similarities or differences. Further research could take this path in order to find explanations of aspects of strategic actor conceptualizations.

3: THEORETICAL EXPOSITION AND EXPLORATION

This section explores how the 'strategic actor' is to be analysed: it provides the theoretical definitions, descriptions and explanations that are essential for meaning and coherence of the essay; and provides its framework for analysis. It is divided into three steps: step one contains definitions, concepts, theories; step two gives the operationalization of the 'strategic actor'; and step three sets up analytical questions.

The purpose of this section is not to give a complete survey of all aspects of the addressed concepts and theories, but to engage those aspects that are relevant for analysing the subject at hand. And in so doing give the analyst some preparation for the kind of theoretical and conceptual phenomena that may be encountered in the security strategy.

As how the actor *frames* itself, and/or is *framed*, may potentially affect the actor's strategic performance, it is necessary to first of all address such framings, in order to fully explore factors that may plausibly affect (or be part of) strategic actor conceptualization. *Role theory* is a natural source of knowledge for how one central form of framing (i.e. roles) can be researched.

ROLE THEORY

Nicole Koenig succinctly summarizes the main idea driving role theory (2014: 251-252):

role theory focuses on the co-constitution of the 'self' (ego) and the 'other' (alter). /.../ The understanding of roles is based on the analogy of the theatre where actors play their parts in accordance with pre-defined scripts. Meanwhile, they are observed by an audience with expectations about role performance and the ability to provide feedback.

Exactly how this co-constitutional dynamics function is obviously a complex issue.

K.J. Holsti generally theorizes *role performance* (i.e. *decisions* and *actions*) as ruled by the *position* (as action "always takes place within... a *position*, that is a system of role prescriptions"), which in turn is dependent on the *ego's* (e.g. national) *role prescription* (emanating from sources as: interests, goals, attitudes, values, personality needs) and the *alter's* (i.e. external) *prescriptions* (emanating from sources as: culture, social institutions, organizations, laws) (1970: 240).

Holsti specifically applies this general theory on national *foreign policy role performance* (i.e. decision and actions), which is set up as dependent (variable) on above all the (independent variable) *Policymakers' national role conceptions* (emanating from sources as: location, resources of state, capabilities, socio-economic needs, national values, ideology, traditional roles, public opinion, personality political needs), which in turn are dependent on *Alter's role prescriptions* (emanating from sources as: system structure, system-wide values, general legal principles, treaty commitments, informal understandings, 'world opinion') (1970: 245).² Furthermore the "Nation's status" (which in turn is affected by the *Policymakers' national role conceptions* and *Alter's role prescriptions*) also has some affect on the foreign policy role performance (1970: 245).

The above indicates that role conception and performance in international relations is not to be thought of as an easy performed act in a masquerade ball – but as dependent on a number of tangible and intangible factors. What leeway the security strategy gives for trying out roles, which has no supportive ground from necessary internal or external (Alter's prescriptive support) factors, is something which this study cannot in itself answer, but the role conceptions which are formulated may be tested for feasibility (in guiding and performing foreign policy action) in further research.

Examples of *national role conceptions* that Holsti engages in his study are: Regional leader, Regional protector, Active independent, Liberator supporter, Defender of the faith, Mediator-integrator, Developer, Bridge, Faithful ally, Independent, Example, Internal development, Isolate, Protectee... (1970: 296-297). This gives an idea of what kind of roles the empirical analysis may encounter, and the analyst is free to name any implicit role (that is not explicitly stated).

For our present purposes it is not necessary to be able to explain why an actor within the overall narrative of the security strategy expresses certain roles, as we are only interested in how the roles that in fact are expressed affect the possibility of a strategic actor conceptualization (i.e. how

² It seems apparent, if one follows Holsti's theory of role performance, that action as guided by role conceptions, draws on both types of what has been seen as the two different basic logics of action (though these concepts are disputed, see Goldmann 2005), i.e. action as driven by either a *logic of consequences* ("a logic of anticipated consequences and prior preferences") or a *logic of appropriateness* ("a logic of appropriateness and senses of identity") (March & Olsen 1998: 949).

the role relates to strategic action). Lisbeth Aggestam emphasizes the connection between role and action as a role “expresses more specifically how action in policy is perceived. A role conveys rights and obligations that policy-makers perceive on behalf of the state (or ‘Europe’). It tends to reveal the intentions and motives of the foreign policy actor, in other words, the meaning of action” (2004: 77). Aggestam concludes that a “role conception thus refers to *images that foreign policy-makers hold concerning the general long-term function and performance of their state in the international system*” (2004: 77).

As the last citation indicates – roles at least fit one arguable strategic criteria of certain long-term thinking. And more importantly as the first citation indicates – the role conception may give the analyst a key to how the document comprehends action – which is a vital element affecting the potential of executing strategic action. This last quality is corroborated by Jamie Gaskarth, as according to him *roles* “come with expectations about behaviour that shape actions” (2014: 562). Furthermore Gaskarth explicitly connects role (orientation) to strategic thinking, as (2014: 563):

The concept of role orientation /.../ represents the highest order of strategic thinking in foreign policy. /.../ Since role orientations is closely linked to social structures, and is the ultimate expression of how a state interacts with the system, it would seem to be a particularly difficult level at which an actor could exercise agency. Material constraints (national capabilities and relative power) as well as social structures (status and social interactions) combine to narrow the available choices. /.../ The way governments pursue role orientations is by making choices from a range of more specific national role conceptions. The use of the term ‘choice’ is not intended to imply that this is always a deliberate process. The choice may at times be made for the policy-maker by social expectations.

Whether as Gaskarth claims, the role orientation is the “highest order of strategic thinking in foreign policy” (2014: 563), is not something to be taken for granted. But that the role orientation may be part of, and affect, strategic thinking is something this study concurs with. It will accordingly search after conceptualized or enacted roles in the security strategies, in order to e.g. assess how the roles directly or indirectly relates to strategies expounded in the security strategy documents.

In the analysis this means that while some roles may be obviously stated – e.g. “leader” or “protector”, others may be more implicit within the narratives of the document. It will be of import to try to assess in the analysis, if possible, any hierarchy between roles, in order to judge which roles may affect strategic performance in the greatest degree.

The relevance of incorporating role analysis within an analysis of strategic actor conceptualization is, as the above research indicates, that roles may affect – drive or just interact with – strategic performance. What may be “problematic” for the concept of strategic actor, is that we may have to face the dilemma, of potentially having roles that are not the least strategically constructed, but all the same can be seen as affecting strategic performance to such an degree that they, as Gaskarth indicates above, are part of if not guiding the strategic thinking of the actor.

If this is so – how could one preclude the aspect of roles from any strategic actor conceptualization? This points to a fundamental flaw with the ideal type of strategic actor in the previous research discussed above (see Hallenberg 2008), which may be carrying its abstraction regarding the *actor* too far away from reality to be of any use analytically. Abstracting away the (potential) role orientation(s) from a strategic *actor*, may be taking it too far, even in an ideal type. This study will conclude that not only the abstracting away of role orientation, but also of theories of action and consequences, from the strategic actor, will make the concept of little utility for real life analysis. I will return to this discussion in the conclusions of the essay.

As the material analysed are *security* strategies – the concept of security must be elaborated in order to assess how the conceptualization of security within the narratives may affect conceptualization of strategic action. This relates to the *framing* of security. While the framing of roles may give actor characteristics affecting the strategic actor's performance, the framing of security sets the stage which the actor has to relate to, and therefore is an important element affecting strategic actor conceptualization.

THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Security is a contested concept (see Engelbrekt 2015). How the security strategy conceptualizes the concept security within the text is likely to affect the conceptualization of strategic action, not least regarding e.g. if the concept of security is applied (framed) narrowly (to just a couple of areas, issues, values etcetera) or more widely – as this may influence what range of strategic means, ways, threats, risks, etcetera, the strategic action has to (or will allow itself to) take account of.

In 1949 Bernhard Brodie stated that *security* is, not a value in itself but, “a derivative value, being meaningful only in so far as it promotes and maintains other values which have been or are being realized and are thought worth securing, though in proportion to the magnitude of the threat it may displace all others in primacy” (2008[1949]: 13). This is an open definition, as security may in fact apply to any area where there are values one wants to secure.

To contrast the above comprehension, a more modern influential theory on security, developed by Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998), divides security issues into a number of *sectors* (economic, societal, environmental, military, political) and states that *security* in international relations is (1998: 21):

about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally but not necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.

This makes security a constructed and exceptional concept; Buzan et al concludes that “‘Security’ is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (1998: 23). Buzan et al have contributed to defining a whole research area as, according to Allan Collins in *Contemporary security studies*, security studies “is to do with threats to survival” (2010: 2). There is however no compelling reason to assume that security strategies only frames issues relating to threats to survival as security issues.

If security is such a malleable concept, which both definitions above makes leeway for – this may indeed affect the ability to produce strategy for handling security: it may even simplify the ability for the security strategy to promote the actor as a competent strategic actor: if the security strategy itself frames what is (or is not) a security issue, it may choose primarily to frame things as security issues that it can credibly handle strategically.

I let the above suffice to indicate that how the concept of security is framed in the strategy, may affect the possibility for the actor to frame itself as a strategic actor through the text. It will therefore be necessary to assess in the analysis, at least in rough terms, how the security strategy presents the security environment (*vis-à-vis* which the strategies are to act) – its main characteristics and complexity.

The analysis will not try to take account of all such security related aspects and their potential effect on the conception of a strategic actor (this is for further research to study). As this would deviate from the study's focus, which is how the strategic actor is presented and the strategic thought underlying such presentations, but not to pursue every aspect of why it is so presented— which requires e.g. contextual research.

How the documents narrate strategy is obviously a central indicator – though one among several indicators – of how the actor approaches strategy-making, and so a central part of strategic actor conceptualization. In order to be able to catch several different kinds of approaches to strategic thinking, and on different levels, I will address examples of what I consider to be the most influential classical (that are still referred to) and contemporary approaches to strategy. One or several of these approaches may be mirrored within the narration of strategy in the documents. Consulting the section below, when conducting the analysis, will aid the analyst in narrowing down what kind of 'strategic' thinking (i.e. as conceptualized within the strategic studies field) the document espouses.

THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGY

Like security, strategy can be seen as contested: "There is no agreed-upon definition of *strategy* that describes the field and limits its boundaries" (Freedman 2013: xi). In fact as strategy for security issues (such as war and peace) is the traditional sphere for strategic theory – the widening (or narrowing) of the concept of security will likely affect how one conceptualizes strategy (the widening of the concept has been seen as detrimental to the strategy concept, see Strachan 2005).

Traditionally strategy deals with guidance of military matters, as e.g. Carl von Clausewitz defined it: "the use of engagements for the object of the war", where *war* was "a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means" (Clausewitz 1993[1832]: 146, 731). This implies that strategy is a political tool, used for the direction of the means of war. The concept has evolved over time vis-à-vis its military usage (see Heuser 2010). Hew Strachan sees strategy's use in that it "provide us with tools to better understand the nature of war" (Strachan 2011: 23). Perhaps, by making an analogy, a security strategy could be seen as a tool (at least partly) for the actor to better understand the nature of security – and as a tool to communicate (and perhaps test) this understanding vis-à-vis internal and external audiences?

Today strategy is referred to in many other contexts than the making of war for political purposes (see Freedman 2013). Most (traditionally moulded) strategies at least tries to have something to say about three elementary elements: *means, ways, ends*, i.e. *strategy* as "The direction and use made of means by chosen ways in order to achieve desired ends" (Gray, 2010: 18), i.e. strategy according to a means-ends rationality (Rasmussen 2006: 41), e.g.: "the aim of strategy is to fulfil the objectives laid down by policy, making the best use of the resources available" (Beaufre 1965: 23). How the strategic actor conceptualizes these resources (means) is thus essential.

Lawrence Freedman sees *power* not just as a means (resource) for strategy but also its political end: "strategy is the central political art. It is about getting more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest. It is the art of creating power" (2013: xii). Difficulties of strategy

emanates from this centrality of power as it "is unstable and subject to qualification. It does not always produce the preferred effects"; power may be wielded in different ways e.g. through the use of force, but preferably through other means, in particular through *authority*: the "institutionalization of advantage so that it becomes reflected in consensus and procedure is the supreme achievement of strategy" (Freedman 2008: 32). To analyse what drives the strategy – e.g. means of power, but also other motivational factors such as an opponent, threats, risks (see below)... – will consequently be relevant to take account of in the analysis, as the choices regarding these aspects are likely to influence how the actor approaches strategic action – and so affect, if not be part of, the strategic actor's reasoning.

Another main approach to the concept of strategy is to view it as *planning*. For example, Richard Kugler depicts strategy as a holistic enterprise – as an interactive planning that covers all angles (2006: 64):

The term *strategy* conjures images of a planned, coordinated set of actions aimed at charting a successful course in a demanding situation. A key feature of a strategy is that its multiple actions are not independent of each other, but highly interdependent. None of them stands alone. Each derives part of its rationale from those of the others. Their ultimate success is determined by how they interact to form a sensible game plan

If multiple activities are to be coordinated in pursuance of a common goal Kugler advocates the need for a *strategic theory* (Kugler 2006: 109). Kugler's somewhat ideal and totalitarian picture of a strategy, could still be an ideal for a security strategy – making all your efforts cooperate to achieve overall security, without suffering counterproductive effects. Signs of strategic planning are therefore sought in the analysis.

To counter this view of strategy as something that can be planned, M.V. Rasmussen argues that as Western societies have changed to *risk societies* they are no longer driven by *threats* – "A threat is a specific danger which can be precisely identified and measured on the basis of the capabilities an enemy has to realise a hostile intent" which during the Cold War "were understood in a means-end rational framework" (2006: 1-2), but driven by *risks*, thus employing *risk strategies* (see 2006: 33-41) as today's (2006: 2):

strategic agenda is about 'risks' rather than threats. From a risk perspective a danger is much less computable than from a threat perspective. A risk is a scenario followed by a policy proposal for how to prevent this scenario from becoming real. However, such a policy proposal does not aim to achieve perfect security: from a risk perspective the best one can hope for is to manage or pre-empt a risk; one can never achieve perfect security because new risks will arise as a 'boomerang effect' of defeating the original risk.

Whether this is a fact is not something this study will try to assess – but it will take into account that risk strategic thoughts may be present in the security strategies, and so possibly guide strategic action. Regarding motivation for strategic behaviour both threats and risks are furthermore sought in the analysis. The risk strategic approach to strategic actor reasoning has some similarities with the third main conception of strategy, which emphasizes the *dynamic nature* of strategy-making (and implementation).

For example Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, gives a strategy definition, which emphasizes the dynamic fluidity required for strategy making: "strategy is a process, a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate" (Murray & Grimsley 1994: 1). If strategy is so dynamic as depicted here – this seems to require that a strategic actor is as dynamic – but is it possible to demand such dynamic

behaviour from a state or IGO? Definitions like these latter may thus risk turning the search for a *strategic actor* on that level into a fools errand (at least if actual and continuous *strategic action* is required from the state/IGO actor). The empirical analysis will help indicate if this last strategy conception is prevalent or represented within security strategies, and so potentially could undermine the possibility to perform as an strategic actor, for the actors which espouses this strategy-conception.

In order to fully assess the strategic actor within a policy document, it is necessary to address the phenomenon of strategic guidance on a higher plane: *grand strategy-making*. Analysing this within the document will give an indication of the strategic ambition and complexity of the strategic actor that is conceptualized.

The concept of grand strategy and its relation to security strategy

Originally strategy-making on a *grand* strategic level was advocated in order to more coherently and effectively direct a war effort: "the role of grand strategy – higher strategy – is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war – the goal defined by fundamental policy" (Liddell Hart 1967: 335-6).

Current usage is more vague on the context of grand strategy: Colin Gray defines it as "The direction and use made of any or all among the total assets of a security community in support of its policy goals" (2010: 18). This definition seems to make a grand strategy to be a (national or international) strategy with potentially all available assets (the state or other community has) at its disposal.

Vilhelm Krüger-Klausen and Liselotte Odgaard defines grand strategy as "a state's vision concerning its future relative position on the basis of national interests and values", making it seemingly more concerned with strategic goals and incentives than actual construction of strategy (2014: 3). It therefore seems natural that Krüger-Klausen and Odgaard have a separate definition of *security strategy* (which they places at a lower strategic level subordinate to grand strategy) (2014: 3):

the development, application, and allocation of methods and instruments to achieve national security objectives. It is functionally specific in the sense that states can have strategies of economic development, foreign policy, defense, energy, and foreign aid.

I find this division between grand strategy and security strategy to be counter productive, as it makes the concept of grand strategy to be entirely visionary – while the security strategy is only function. But all things the two citations above enumerates are nonetheless things you could argue to be part of grand strategic strategy-making (and the grand strategy definitions from Liddell Hart and Gray allows this) as this study will see it: potentially containing both visions and specific directions. I will therefore include Krüger-Klausen & Odgaard's grand strategy definition *and* security strategy definition – i.e. both strategic vision and the overall direction of sector specific strategies to achieve overall security objectives – within this study's understanding of grand strategy.

Another variant of definition, given by Barry Posen, which also will be incorporated within this study's understanding of grand strategy, focuses on the theoretical guidance of this grand project: "A grand strategy is a nation-state's theory about how to produce security for itself" (2014: 1).

Whether a public security strategy in fact is a grand strategy for an actor (in either of the above senses) is nothing this study can answer as it would require more material and contextual research. But the study's analytical findings may indicate whether a specific security strategy possibly might qualify as a grand strategy in either, or a mix of, the ideal senses given through the definitions above. It is obviously possible that the actor has no elaborated grand strategy – in which case a security strategy may act partly in a similar capacity as a grand strategic guide for the actor.

Analysing the presence of grand strategic thinking within the documents, will give an indication of the complexity and coherence of the strategic actor conceptualization that the document mirrors. The greater degree of grand strategic thinking the document contains, the greater the complexity of the strategic actor conceptualization – although grand strategic thinking is not the only indicator of complexity.

Explicit “strategic” reasoning is not the only way that a strategic actor may ground action. Barry Posen's definition of grand strategy above indicates that strategies may be dependent on “theory” about how security is achieved. This calls for an analyse in the documents of all forms thinking, which have to do with thoughts about why a certain action will work. Such thinking, that can be called theorising of sorts, may directly or indirectly affect strategic actor conceptualization. It will therefore be necessary to analyse how the narratives of the document “theorises” action. This aspect has already been touched on in previous research, regarding *theories of action and consequences*, which this study will draw upon.

The concept of theory of action and consequences

Richard Kugler, in *Policy analysis in national security affairs: new methods for a new era*, sees a policy option's *theory of action and consequences* as a crucial element that must be assessed when one *strategically evaluates* a policy options credibility (2006: 43, 53). Kugler defines an options *theory of actions and consequences* as something giving its “core rationale for an expectation that it will succeed” – e.g. pointing out its “cause-and-effect mechanisms” (2006: 44). A theory of action *may* e.g. be “straightforward because it is anchored in physical mechanisms that can readily be measured” (2006: 53). Kugler furthermore gives examples of theories of action (from the Cold War US' strategies): “Whereas one school of thought advocated firmness to deter Soviet aggression, the other advocated accommodation to keep the peace” and discards these theories of action as unsuitable in “today's world” as “neither of these single-minded theories of actions and consequences is likely to apply all or even most of the time” (2009: 162).

I will follow Kugler's approach, and use these three concepts in the study: *theory of action*, *theory of action and consequences*, and *theory of consequences*. All three may be partly or wholly overlapping. I.e. you may have a theory of action that implicitly theorises of what exact consequences action will lead to; or a theory of consequences that implies a theory of action. But you may also have a theory of consequences, e.g. ‘democracy leads to peaceful behaviour’ which is not a really a theory of action. On the other hand some forms of theory of consequences could be seen as the simplest form of theory of action (action emanating from a condition). This overlapping possibility between the three types should be borne in mind even when a classification has been made.

The only aspects of a state actor's theories of action and consequences that are analysed here, are the ones being offered in / through documents (and only one sort of document). This is not the only source or expression of this phenomena, as it may be expressed (in potentially competing ways) by other documents, as well as through *practice* (Edmunds 2014: 526). Timothy Edmunds, in his analysis of British strategy-making, argues that "it is possible to see the outline of an emergent and distinctive theory of action in contemporary British strategic practice, characterized by principles of adaptivity, anticipation, self-organization and nascent cross-governmentalism" (Edmunds 2014: 526). Reasonably these principles (adaptivity, anticipation,..) are supposed to give better strategy.

The above citations from Kugler and Edmunds, indicates that the concept of theory of action and consequences has a broad range of complexity: from some rather straightforward assumption that certain practices leads to better action (and results) than other practices, to e.g. a political science theory on systemic effects.

Although *theories of action* (or *theories of action and consequences* – that not just theorises how some certain action works but also speculates on its consequences) that are expressed in the narratives of the security strategies, may not necessarily be what is traditionally termed strategic (i.e. e.g. prescribed within strategic studies), they are all the same liable to affect any strategic performance of the actor, and consequently be part of the set up of a strategic actor. They will accordingly be analysed in the material, guided by the above indications of what kind of phenomena previous research has included within these concepts. But generally anything that is taken as an argument for action may indicate the presence of some theory of action.

The analyst should clarify as far as possible, when a certain thinking within the document is classified as either of: a theory of action, a theory of consequences, or a theory of action and consequences.

Besides the strategic aspects of roles, security, strategy, and theories of action and consequences, these documents reflect two other strategic aspects, emanating from two fundamental properties – that these documents are *public* and that they contain *narratives*.

These strategic aspects are that a document may be *communicating* one or several *strategic narratives*, devised in the actor's interest (and thus may be part of some overarching political strategy) in order to influence external and/or internal publics, in ways that will enhance the chances to reach strategic goals. In sum: the security strategy document may be employed for strategic purposes. And as any such strategic employment will have to be strategically devised, this will consequently reflect the reasoning strategic actor.

The security strategy as a piece of strategic communication could furthermore be part of the actor's grand strategy-making – and therefore be an aspect of the strategic actor set up. The import of communication for directly enabling strategy has also been argued, i.e. as a crucial element in certain strategies, e.g. *coercive diplomacy* (see George 1994): this is also a form of strategic communication, as well as a strategic actor enterprise.

As any strategic action (such as strategic communication) may consequently be built on or reflect strategic actor reasoning, it is relevant for this study to analyse this phenomenon within the documents.

The concepts of strategic narrative, strategic communication and public diplomacy

Three (partly overlapping) concepts relating to strategic acts of communication will be addressed. First, the most elementary piece of communication, i.e. the *strategic narrative*. This concept is commonly employed to describe narrations relating to current affairs and targeting publics (e.g. as used by a state engaged in a military operation, see Ringsmose & Børgeesen 2011, Graaf, Dimitriu & Ringsmose 2015). Lawrence Freedman defines strategic narratives as “designed or nurtured with the intention of structuring the responses to developing events. They are strategic because they do not arise spontaneously but are deliberately constructed or reinforced out of ideas and thoughts that are already current” (2006: 22).

It is important to realise that a *public security strategy* as a strategic narrative may also be directed internally – to the sub-actors (e.g. agencies within a state, or states within an IGO) in order to align *intentions* so all members of the actor understand the strategy and work for the same purpose: according to Jennifer Mitzen “joint commitments can only shape choices if the commitments are out in the open, or public, among participants. The need for publicity is explicit in most accounts of collective intentions, and in an international political context in which there are incentives for secrecy and deception, publicity takes on even more salience”, which follows as “collective intentions must be common knowledge: all participants must know, and know that they know, what they have committed to and the extent to which each participant is following through” (Mitzen 2015: 72-73).

The presence of strategic narratives relating to events could so mirror and perhaps reinforce the *temporal* (forward-looking) aspect of security strategies, as a means for gaining support from domestic publics for a strategic approach. And possibly simultaneously attempting to influence international publics – i.e. moulding the international security milieu to accept the national (or organizational) strategic approach chosen. This temporal aspect is also clear in Miskimmon et al’s definition of strategic narrative as “a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors” (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin & Roselle 2015: 57).

Strategic narratives present within a security strategy can further be seen as part of a larger strategic communicative scheme: the actor’s *strategic communication*: i.e. “coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives” (Paul 2011: 3). This concept sees written communication as only a part of the possible means, that may be employed for strategic communication. To really appreciate if a security strategy is a piece of strategic communication would require contextual research. But the analysis will look for signs of strategic use of the document: if it seems to inform or influence the reader in support of some purpose.

Both strategic narrative and strategic communication could furthermore be seen as connected to the even more general concept of *public diplomacy* (see Paul 2011, Melissen 2013): i.e. “an instrument used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes and behaviour; to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values” (Gregory 2011: 353). Especially the last two sections in the sentence above could be relevant vis-à-vis public security strategies.

As it seems probable that policy makers are aware, when making documents like these public, that they will function as a piece of communication – and that the security strategy therefore is designed (at least) as a piece of public diplomacy, could so seemingly be taken for granted. But as it is of interest to understand exactly how this communication fits into the actor’s overall strategic approach, the analysis will have to look for signs that can indicate what the communicative aim is, and other specifics, e.g. if a certain public is sought. The above three definitions will serve as guidelines when looking for such signs of (strategic or public) communication.

Regardless of whether a certain part of the security strategy aims to inform, influence or persuade in any of the three above ways, this communication may at the same time reflect strategic thinking – i.e. reflect what above has been surveyed as a strategy, a grand strategy or a theory of action and consequences. In sum: strategic reasoning may be part of some communication, and one or several forms of communication be part of some strategic reasoning.

We are now sufficiently theoretically prepared to attempt an operationalization of the concept strategic actor, which build on the theoretical exposition and exploration above. This operationalization is then the ground for the analytical questions which will guide the empirical analysis.

Operationalization of the ‘strategic actor’

The operationalization of the strategic actor given here – concentrates on the actor’s ability to *reason* strategically, as the material will not allow any analysis of real strategic capabilities nor real strategic action/practice.

A strategic actor:

- Is (trying to be) guided in its action by strategies, i.e. e.g.: theories of action, theories of consequences (that is taken as argument for establishing conditions or enacting action), theory in general (e.g. science; political science; strategic theories – e.g. the means-ways-ends-formula, coercive diplomacy, deterrence, balance of power,...); roles that the actor thinks serves as guiding or constituting such strategic action (these roles may be “strategically” constructed or proven by use, or just traditionally/culturally used).
- Is (more likely than not) to communicate in a strategic way (using any or all of these ways of communicating: strategic narratives, strategic communication, public diplomacy) – the targets of communication may be internal (e.g. domestic public, internal actors..) and/or external (e.g. international publics, actors...)

With the aid of this operationalization, the theoretical section above and the methodology section, analytical questions are now devised which will guide and give structure and focus to the empirical analysis.

ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS

The purpose of these analytical questions is above all to assess aspects within the document, which taken as a whole will disclose if the document can be said to credibly project the authoring actor as a

strategic actor. Furthermore these questions will aid assessment of the overall complexity of the strategic thinking in the document – which can be taken as a measure of the strategic actor’s complexity. The analyst should consult the chapters *Theoretical Exposition and Exploration* and *Methodology* (the *Qualitative text analysis* section – e.g. when analysing roles and strategies the *narrative analysis* framework may be used for guidance) for conceptual guidance regarding the concepts used in the questions. The questions are not to be answered simply yes or no, but by explanations or descriptions of why yes or no applies.

1. Is there any explicit discussion of ‘strategy’? Does the narratives relate to any specified strategies?
2. Are there any theories of action and consequences, theories of action, or theories of consequences taken as argument for promoting or executing a certain certain strategic approach or action?
3. What is the dynamic giving impetus to (i.e. motivating or enabling) a promoted strategy or theory of action: e.g. a specified threat (e.g. an opponent), danger or risk; or forms of power such as force, authority, or other means the narrative directly or indirectly purports will enhance specific or overall (i.e. of the whole security strategy) effects?
4. Which roles seems to be narrated in the text? Are they directly or indirectly connected to strategic thinking (e.g. to some theory of action)? Are any roles on collision course with any of the expounded strategies or theories of action – or are they enforcing expounded strategies through giving them a leading subject in the narrative? Are there signs of (any) *Alter’s* prescriptions setting limits to, perhaps ruling, or enabling any of the *Ego’s* roles narrated?
5. How is the setting of the security strategy framed, i.e. the security environment that the strategies relates to? Is it complex (in e.g. number of areas addressed, or the complexity of each area) or clear cut (so that strategic action promoted seems naturally motivated)? Are the framing of the security environment conducive to the strategies promoted – i.e. do they seem to fit each other?
6. Which part of the text seems to contain communication that seeks to influence the reader towards some certain position? Are there indications either of strategic narratives, strategic communication, public diplomacy – and are either of these seemingly promoting some strategy being expounded in the security strategy?

After these questions have been answered these follow up questions can be asked of the findings:

7. Does the security strategy narrative prioritize between strategies? Answering this question could indicate if a strategic actor engaged in grand strategic thinking, conform to one aspect of Hallenberg’s strategic actor ideal type point three (“to select among possible means that are most likely to contribute to the goals formulated”) (Hallenberg 2008: 3), i.e. if we see strategies expounded within a security strategy as means to the overall goal of security. Does the text taken as a whole seem to narrate a coherent grand strategy (i.e. do incorporated strategies and strategic narratives all seem to draw toward a common goal or vision, or be ruled by one theory, or engage a number of sectors to achieve the same goal)?
8. What complexity of strategic actor(s) does the document indicate (taking the findings from all previous questions into account)? (Exemplify main indicators of judged complexity)

In the Appendix these eight questions have been transformed into a matrix, devised to draw out as many aspects of answers as possible, that is used to guide analysis of the security strategy documents, and note answers in. Comparing matrices between different strategies will indicate where possible common patterns or differences between strategic actors are to be found.

4: ANALYSIS

The answers to analytical questions (1-8) are summarised in matrices in Appendix 1.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

ESS (2003). *A secure Europe in a better world - the European Security Strategy.*

Explicit strategic projects expounded are *strategic partnerships*, especially EU-NATO, and the *transatlantic relationship* (EU-US), creating a buffer zone of “well governed countries” around EU, and the *enlargement* of the EU (p. 2,8,9,10,12,13,14).

Theories of action and consequences are above all vis-à-vis political domestic-systemic effects, e.g.: increasing “convergence” of “European interests” “mutual solidarity” makes EU more “effective”; the EU has transformed “relations between states”; the “progressive spread of rule of law and democracy” changes states into “secure, stable and dynamic democracies” – i.e. the spreading of democracy and rule by law means increased security (p. 1). The “transatlantic relationship /.../ strengthens the international community as a whole” (p. 9). Developing a “strategic culture” enhances intervention competence (p. 11). Integration “of acceding states increases our security” (p. 9).

Strategic impetus is given through motivators, above all: threats and values; and through enablers: the multilateral system enables global security; developing relationships and strategic partnerships is an “asset to build on” (p. 9,14).

Several roles are sketched in the document, with the *Global player* as the seemingly overarching role (p. 2) and other roles can be seen as aspects of this: *Peace maker* (p. 2,5,8); *Conflict resolution provider* (p. 8,10,11); *Spreader of values* (p. 8); *Shaper of the world* (p. 5,8,9,11); *Coordinator* (p. 8,10,11); *Institutional and economical developer* (p. 8,9); *Consolidator* (p. 1,2); *Rule follower (supporter to the UN)* (p. 8,3,9,11). All of these roles may be seen as implicitly strategic and in tune with the strategic vision stated, and none of the roles are obviously contra strategies or the theories of action expounded. Alter’s prescriptive influence: both limiting (the room for action) and enabling (giving legitimacy) to roles, is the UN Rule of Law system (p. 9-11).

A complex security environment, where “internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked” and where threats are “more diverse, less visible and less predictable” (p. 2,3). This picture of the security environment is conducive to strategies expounded.

The document can be seen as a piece of strategic communication, targeting both member states of the EU, with a narrative of how the EU has been a successful internal security project which

now should turn to international security issues; and also non-European states and regions (e.g. the US, the Middle East) (p. 1,13-14).

The main trace of a grand strategic vision or “theory” in the document is the emphasis on integration and cooperation (community, relationships, partnerships, multilateralism) as a way toward regional and global security.

The security strategy is complex within the non-military realm on its theme of grand strategic vision, with multiple approaches and theories of action. It mirrors a coherent reasoning strategic actor, that builds its strategies on a number theories of action and consequences, that overall build on knowing causal dynamics affecting international relations – i.e. dependent on political science theory/hypothesis.

NATO

SC (2010). *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

The document’s explicit strategies are *Collective defence* e.g. through *Deterrence*; *Crisis management*; *Cooperative security – shaping strategy* together with partners (e.g. *strategic partnership* with the EU); *Enlargement* “contributes to our goal of a Europe, whole, free and at peace”; *Development* (reform/transformation) of capabilities, capacity and abilities (p. 5, 7-9, 14-17, 19-25, 26-7, 33-34).

Theories of action and consequences evident vis-à-vis the effect of certain capabilities: “supreme guarantee of” security through “strategic nuclear forces”; and the effect of NATO enlargement – increases peace (p. 5, 14). Theories of consequences regarding relationships: NATO-Russia cooperation “contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security” (p. 29-30).

Strategic impetus is given through motivators such as common values, and conventional and new threats – NATO must evolve to face them; and through enablers such as capabilities (especially from the US) and partners (p. 4, 10-11, 14, 35).

The overarching role expounded is as a *political-military Alliance* that is a *Provider of security and defence* (to NATO members) and and *Protector* of values; a thereto connected but subordinate role is *Contributor* to international security, (p. 6, 14, 27, 35). *Alter’s* prescriptions through the UN Charter and UN Security Council, but these *Alter* prescriptions seem on par with the NATO Treaty (p. 6, 27).

The framing of security emphasizes its borderlessness: “Instability and conflict beyond NATO borders can directly threaten Alliance security” (p. 8, 11).

The document’s narrative projects strategic communication to members, partners, and relations (e.g. Russia), as well as potential partners in other regions – in all a global audience seems targeted.

Grand strategic vision of “preserving effectiveness” as a “political-military Alliance” through maintaining and transforming own capabilities and projects (e.g. partnerships) (p. 35).

The document mirrors a strategic actor, which in its reasoning is not very complex in theoretical speculation, but shows complexity in its intentions to organize and reform capabilities and relationships internally and externally to enhance the effectiveness of the alliance.

RUSSIA

NSC (2000). NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

[The document lacks pagination, but is divided into four sections (I-IV) which will be referred to.]

Overall strategies expounded are *Deterrence*; *Countering* international relations tendencies contrary to Russia's view on international order (I-IV); *Occasional global military presence*: safeguarding national security interests through Russian "military presence in strategically important regions of the world in appropriate circumstances" (IV).

Theories of action are above all that: international relation formation is ruled by competition between states striving for influence (I); and that weakness of Russia stemming from internal problems is a threat to its security, wherefore these problems must be taken care of (III).

Strategic motivators for strategy-making are national interests, and threats: attempt by other states "to weaken Russia politically, economically and militarily and in other ways" (I, II, III), and the break down of international law and security through enterprises such as NATO's "practice of using military force outside its zone of responsibility and without UN security authorization" which risks "destabilizing the entire strategic situation of the world" (III). Strategic enablers are Russia's "great economic, science-technological and military potential" and "unique strategic location" (I); and the means of intelligence and counter-intelligence (IV).

Roles implicitly enacted through the narratives are: *Protector* of Russia's national interests; an *important role* in international relations, and *upholder* of international law and order; and the main *Alter* prescription referred to is security multilateralism as regulated by the UN Security Council (I-IV).

The framing of the security environment emphasizes that threats may be international threats (e.g. terrorism, proliferation) which "calls for the unification of efforts by the entire international community" (I); but overall internal and external security issues are dealt with as separate spheres.

The narrative as strategic communication seeks to influence internal and external (global) audiences – but with its focus on national security i.e. "the security of its multinational people as the bearer of sovereignty and as the only sources of power in the Russian Federation" (Foreword). This citation in combination with that the weight of the document is concerned with internal security transformation, indicates that the documents communicative focus is mostly internal.

The overall approach to strategy expounded in the document, entails dealing with every problem, internal and external, that weakens Russia – as it expounds how all internal areas should adapt to further national security, it has a grand strategic quality. Internal security issues are on par with international one's in this scheme.

The strategy has complexity in relation to the number of issue areas approached regarding internal security strategy, but less complexity in its approach to international security. The document

mirrors the reasoning of a strategic actor preoccupied with internal problems and displeased with some external security practices.

UK

NSS (2010). *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*

Strategies expounded: the stated strategic approach the NSS is argued to be built around is the traditional means-ends-ways formula designed according to own “strengths and skills”, with a “flexible” outlook taking “account of the activities of others” (allies/partners and adversaries) – in sum straight from the strategic textbook (see Gray 2010) (p. 10). At the same time it emulates a risk strategic approach (see Rasmussen 2006): “this strategy must allow the Government to make choices about the risks we face” – risks are classified according to priority in order to “prevent and mitigate” them (p. 5, 11,). The NSS can be seen as ruled by a risk strategic approach, as risk rules the list of strategic priorities (p. 25-31). Furthermore it is *building security* through “networks” – the “networks we use to build our prosperity we will also use to build our security” (p. 9). *Shaping a stable world* – through “actions beyond our borders” (p. 11). The UK must *evolve* as the world evolves, and “reinforce existing international institutions” as well as networks, and evolve its relationships with the US, NATO, the EU (p. 15).

Theories of action and consequences – there is remarkable little theoretical speculation on systemic or domestic effects, but instead a focus on what you can affect through own agency (and set up cooperative schemes) and as such mirrors a rational approach, using methods to assess future dangers and take action to increase resilience against them – and thereby generating the effects sought through acting (what is thought as) *strategically*, rather than letting the strategy ride to any extent on thinking about international relations dynamics.

Theory of consequence: An open society in a networked world is vulnerable (p. 3).

Strategic motivators are national interests, threats, risks. Strategic enablers are “commitment to collective security via a rules-based international system and our key alliances” e.g. through the US, NATO, the EU “we share our security needs and gain collective benefits” (p. 10); *Understanding* of “the context within which we operate in order to protect our security” (p. 13); risk assessment “informs strategic judgment” as it judges risk according to likelihood and impact, which increases the possibility to make choices and increase prevention (p. 25-27).

The strategy is *self-conscious* about role enactment for strategic purposes: “Any strategy for our national security must begin with the role we want Britain to play in the modern world” (p. 4). A role as “political, economic and cultural” *authority* and a balanced *projector* of British influence, as well as an *adaptor* to a changing world (p. 4, 15). *Shaper* of “global change” and international institutions (p. 21-22). The UK is a universal *prescriber* in itself, upholding “the rule of law, democracy, free speech...” and wants to play “an active role in shaping international law and norms” – so these may be seen as *Alter’s* prescriptions, but the UK has a share in forming them (p. 4, 15, 23).

The framing of security speaks of a “complex range of threats from a myriad sources” e.g. transnational threats, and a security environment (consequently) ruled by risks and thus “complex” although without “existential” threats (p. 3, 14-18).

The document potentially speaks to all audiences internal and external but seems to lack an aim to influence externally. As it is rather technical it seems to be intently targeting domestic audiences: civil and defence services in particular, and thus above all function as a source of information.

Although sectors important for national security are dealt with – this seems more in order to increase awareness of security issues, than designing a grand strategic vision how to deal with them (p. 16-18). The prevalent theory on security seems to be risk awareness – which may offer no grand strategic theory as cure (see Rasmussen 2006).

The strategic actor as it comes out of this document seems to be ruled by risk strategic thinking - quite as Rasmussen sees it (2006), but manages to combine it with more classical means-ways-end strategic thinking and thus offering a hybrid strategic approach. This approach builds on constant agency (preparation and adaption) rather than creating conditions that shall self-generate positive effects. Specifically this strategic actor's reasoning is guided by assessment, prioritising and prevention, when possible, alternatively increased resilience (p. 33). It is overall a rational strategic actor that is not prone to speculation e.g. on underlying causal systemic effects and their effect on international relations.

USA

NSS (2000). *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age*

[The document lacks pagination, but is divided into four sections (I-IV) which will be referred to.]

The overall strategy expounded is an *Engagement strategy* realised above all through *Shaping the international environment* – “adapting our alliances and encouraging the reorientation of other states, including former adversaries” and generally using “diplomacy, economic cooperation, international assistance, arms control and nonproliferation efforts, military presence...” – all this promotes “regional security” (which “enhances U.S. security”); furthermore engagement includes “responding to threats and crises, and preparing for an uncertain future” (I).

Theories of action and consequences built in the expounded strategies are overall that: through shaping the international environment, regional security is promoted, which increases US security; and promoting prosperity promotes security (I).

Main motivators for the security strategy is that it should “serve the needs of the people” and enhance “security at home and abroad, promoting prosperity, and promoting democracy and human rights”, furthermore to reduce threats (I, II).

Strategic enablers are alliances (I, III), “defense cooperation”, international organizations (e.g. OSCE) (III), the US intelligence community, and as transformation, as meeting the “widening array of new threats” “will require us to transform our capabilities and organizations” – i.e. such transformation will enable strategic security enhancing action (I).

Roles expounded are *shaper* of the international system; “global leadership role”; *Leader of transformation* of “defense entities into proactive instruments for meeting post-Cold War

challenges" (I). No clear *Alter* is giving prescriptions to US's roles – but prescriptions could be seen as "codified" in international institutions' charters and treaties, which the US supports (I, II).

The strategy depicts a globalizing security context that has multiple effects, it adds a mix of strength, security and "challenges" (I). New "technology and open borders" creates "new national security challenges"; security is "interdependent" – the US security depends on "security around the globe"; security is dependent on there being "hope for prosperity" (Preface).

It is probable that the NSS is a devised piece of public diplomacy as "public diplomacy -- efforts to transmit information and messages to peoples around the world --" is "an increasingly vital component of our national security strategy" (II).

The strategic idea of Engagement is built around some robust ideas that are supposed to enable its future completion – in this way the NSS can be seen as projecting a grand strategic *vision*, with some *theory* (e.g. spreading prosperity spreads security) on how this should be carried out; as well as *sector specific* ideas (within economy, military, international diplomacy – e.g. treaties for arms control,...) that are to be carried out by current or future projects (II, III). In sum the NSS could be called a grand strategy of sort. The strategic actor depicted acts on a couple of ideas, but with a complex assemblage of projects at hand directing how these ideas should be implemented.

NSS (2010). National Security Strategy

Strategic priority of the NSS is given to "renewing American leadership" (p. 1). Further strategic approaches are: to *deepen cooperation* "with other 21st century centers of influence – including China, India, and Russia" (p. 11); and *finding* "mutual economic interests with other nations and maintaining those economic relationships" (p. 15); *building security* through e.g. investing "in the Capacity of Strong and Capable Partners" (p. 26). Another strategic approach promoted is developing a *collective strategy*: "devise and execute a collective strategy with other nations facing the same threats" (regarding e.g. transnational criminality) (p. 49).

The NSS's grand strategic theory of action and consequences could be seen as: collective interests is the ground for collective strategy and action, and so enhances collective security; interests are a ground for cooperation so shaping interests will therefore be a crucial element of the strategy. "proactively investing" in societies better than "responding after state collapse" (p. 27).

Theories of consequences: Enhancing internal and external US leadership enhances the ability to reach US interests.

Strategic motivators within the NSS are interests; seeking to renew leadership; values – "just peace around the world"; threats (especially weapons of mass destruction) (p. 1-5).

The NSS indicates strategic enablers such as: leadership, alliances, military, economy, democracy, citizenry, international institutions, collective action, burden sharing (p. 1-3); and furthermore for "results-oriented national security strategy, there must be effective cooperation between the branches of government" (p. 51).

Roles promoted within the NSS are above all protector of US citizens, *moral example* and *strengtheners of world security* (especially regarding "states at risk of conflict and violence") (p. 1, 10,

27). There is no clear sense of *Alter* prescriptions influencing US's roles or actions, as there already are "international institutions and frameworks" which appear to embody the Alter, but these may have to reform in order to "live up to their promise" (p. 13).

The NSS depicts an overall complex security environment with many actors, and potential dangers e.g. "climate change and pandemic disease", "failed states" (p. 8) – but not one that it is not possible to handle through making concerted efforts.

As the goal of the NSS is to renew US leadership, the document can be seen as a piece of strategic communication trying to influence a global audience regarding what this leadership is about, and its positive effects.

An overall grand strategic *vision* projected through the narrative is global security through collective efforts guided by US leadership.

After the structured and focused analysis it is time to sum up and assess the study's overall findings.

5: CONCLUSIONS

First summary answers are given to the research questions with some illustrative examples. Thereafter the contribution of the study is discussed and previous research reengaged. Finally some further research is proposed.

Summary of the findings, and reengagement with previous research

The first question regards the width of the strategic actor as indicated in the findings. The first conclusion is that every security strategy had some aspects that set them apart from the others. Likeness between strategies were apparent above all in the universality of threats as a strategic motivation; furthermore an awareness of the import of the domestic/internal organization and effectiveness for external performance were something all strategies expounded on. All strategies managed (as far as the analytical tool could discern) to be overall coherent, i.e. without any obvious internal contradictions in this respect: all theories of action and consequences, strategic motivators and enablers, roles, framing of security, and strategic communication, fitted with and often enforced the expounded strategies.

Another likeness was the promotion of some form of cooperative security, – but where Russia (2000) emphasizes the UN Security Council's role in this respect, the US (2000) takes a diametrically different position and builds its grand strategic vision around security and other cooperation – this was also apparent in the US (2010) strategy with its idea of *collective strategy*.

The Russia and the US strategies from 2000 have little in common; and the different theories of action and roles expounded can be seen as the source for this nonconformity; this also leads to

different grand strategic project: while Russia is engaged in shaping the nation into a competitive actor, the US is engaged in shaping the international environment.

The EU (2003) also manages to come up with its own set of theories of action and consequences – together with the US (2000) these two strategies builds on the theories of action and consequences which draws most on the prediction of transformative domestic-systemic effects. The UK, US and NATO strategies from 2010 shows to no surprise similar strategic approaches – *collective* security, strategy, interests, efforts is a cornerstone for security production. The UK (2010) stands out in embracing a risk strategic approach that rules the whole strategy.

The state actors naturally addressed domestic security and protection of the people in some form, but besides this there were no fundamental difference between state and IGO strategies.

The chosen roles overall mirror different strategic approaches within the security strategy. Alter prescriptions were above all acknowledged from the United Nations.

The strategies as a piece of public diplomacy, or even strategic communication, targeting external audiences were mostly present in the ESS, the NATO SC, and the two US NSS. Russia's NSC and the UK NSS seemed to address domestic audiences as much if not more than external ones. This aspect (of being a piece of communication) seems on par with the strategic content. The overall strategic role of the security strategy is hard to deduce from the analysis – contextual research is necessary to answer this. Some strategies – as the UK NSS 2010 surely serves as a source of information domestically, and therefore could be of import in streamlining internal strategic understanding.

To answer the last question: in my view the theory of action and consequences aspect of the strategic actor's reasoning, is the part of the analytical framework calling for more research – as it seems a central element in strategy conception, but also will be absolutely crucial when strategy action is undertaken, and it will probably be a deciding factor in determining outcomes.

With all research questions answered the purpose of the essay can be reengaged. The concept of *strategic actor* has been theoretically explored and operationalized. An analytical tool has been produced from the operationalization, and the tool has been employed to investigate how public security strategy conceptualizes security strategy-making. And this investigation has in fact deduced some information about (to quote the purpose) the presence and form of a *reasoning* 'strategic actor'. The analysis gives plenty of indicators of factors mirroring a reasoning strategic actor (see matrices in Appendix 1). That the security strategies emerged as overall coherent regarding factors affecting strategy-making, is another indicator of these documents' function as a conceptualization of the actor as a strategic actor. The purpose of the study has thereby been achieved, but what research contribution does this entail? In order to answer this I will return to Hallenberg's ideal type of the strategic actor (Hallenberg 2008: 3).

Hallenberg's ideal type seems at a glance primarily concerned with strategic action. A closer examination discloses that the actor is engaged in reasoning in all the ideal type conditions (the five points in this essay's introduction) – e.g.: it “makes an independent study of the world”, “assess”, “formulate goals /.../ and make a hierarchy”, “select among possible means that are most likely to contribute to the goals”, “assess what has happened” and “learn... from experience in order to be able to be more effective” (Hallenberg 2008: 3). But as this study's theoretically guided empirical

analysis has made plausible – there are factors (theories of action, roles, etcetera) which are likely to influence, interfere with, or guide most of these choices. E.g. the strategic actor's study of the world may not be so independent – it may be directed by influential roles or a prevalent theory of action and consequences. Chosen roles may already formulate the goals an actor can choose from. It may not be possible to learn something the theories of action or roles do not allow as possible to contemplate. The selection of means may already be chosen or limited by explicit strategies, theories of action, or roles etcetera. In sum: the strategic *reasoning* aspects frame the strategic actor's room for manoeuvre: they seemingly set some structural constraints for the actor's leeway of coming up with an optimal or original strategy.

The problem with the ideal type of strategic actor is that the 'actor' is taken in the abstract – it operates on purely *strategic* grounds without taking any *actor-effects* into consideration. This does not mean that the ideal type must be discarded – but if it is used in combination with this study's operationalization of the reasoning strategic actor, this immediately makes the ideal type more realistic as a tool for strategic guidance. And utilizing this combination of strategic actor conceptualization, could make a state or IGO actor more aware of the inherent obstacles (emanating from e.g. choices of theories of action and roles) that may preclude ideal strategy-making from the start, or e.g. may prove a major obstacle ahead if the situation being addressed changes in some particular way.

This study's contribution is consequently through developing the *reasoning* aspect of the strategic actor concept – an aspect which affects the strategic actor concept as a whole. This development has been achieved through eclectic combination of existent theories and concepts, and through giving arguments for the relevance of the chosen parts and their coherence; and finally through the making of an analytic tool (i.e. analytical questions and matrix). This tool manages, so far as the analysed material has shown, to sift out a lot of relevant information regarding strategic actor reasoning. In order to make this tool of greater research utility – it should be further researched regarding all parts, especially concerning the theory of action and consequences and role aspects.

The essay's contribution is therefore twofold: it has contributed by developing the analytical concept of strategic actor; and it has contributed by constructing and test an analytical tool which can be used to inform actual security policy-making. Where one of the tools main purposes will be to provide a reflection of what the grounds for the actor's strategic reasoning are – and how these grounds may affect overall strategic performance. The essay has also indicated that this approach to the strategic actor can complement previous research in the area, especially regarding the concept of strategic actor.

Concluding discussion

The study has contributed with showing how a different approach to analysing public security strategies provides a new way to assess international relations actors' strategic thinking.

The validity of the investigation – on having grasped the reasoning of the strategic actor – is relevant as far as these documents disclose this aspect. Much therefore depends on the representativeness of the documents for the actor (as it was when the documents were conceived) if the findings should be taken as a valid estimation of the overall tendencies of the actor's strategic

reasoning at the time. Further research is therefore necessary to establish how accurate the findings are.

In order to explore the full potential of the employed framework for analysis – and assess where it needs to be augmented, and thus accumulate on this research and thereby increase its potential validity, any further research should first of all address more actors' security strategies. This would first of all give a more accurate measure of strategic actor width. A second step would be to use other types of documents and other kinds of material (e.g. studying strategic practice, by making for example interviews). This would enable the reasoning aspect of the strategic actor to become connected to the action aspect of the strategic actor, which could open up for interchange with previous research regarding the connection between (strategic) policy and (strategic) implementation.

One empirical finding of the study is indication of the centrality that theories of action and consequences play for security strategies vision and direction. This may not be surprising, but the traditional means-ways-ends formulas seem to cloud over that specific chosen "ways" may be grounded on a variety of different thinking – which may influence the probability that the ways are successful ways, wherefore making this aspect transparent is of import, if the strategic actor wants to reason with foresight.

Previous research has addressed the problematic situation that security strategies not get implemented to a large extent: that they show a gap between declared strategy and action (Edström & Gyllensporre 2015: 5-7). This may indeed indicate problems regarding whether the security strategy is representative of the strategic actor's reasoning. It shows the need for contextual research in order to assess which aspects of the strategy survives the contact with reality.

Previous research elucidates some peculiarities that especially the ESS and UK NSS showed – the former being the vaguest and theoretically most high flying, and the latter showing a remarkable intent on espousing a rationalistic strategic approach. Charlotte Wagnsson discusses how the EU as a global strategic actor may be facing internal problems in devising a coherent strategy as "the three leading member states – France, Great Britain and Germany – represent different outlooks on the role of the nation state and of the EU" leading to obstacles for "increased cohesion in the sphere of security – which is a precondition for a common strategy" (2008: 188). The rationalistic focus of the UK NSS could be at least partly explained by the difficulty for the UK of finding a common identity on which to build a strategy on (Dorman 2014: 75-79).

Joyce Kaufman in a discussion on United States security policy, addresses the importance that the choice of *role* has for directing US security policy (2014: 13). This leads to an important question – assessing the influence of the roles espoused in security strategies – to answer this would probably take contextual research of action and public discourse around action.

When looking to explain a certain strategic actor conception in relation to strategic culture there are a number of areas one could take into account as e.g. Yaacov Vertzberger has it: "accumulated historical experience, the political culture, as well as geopolitics, provide enduring perspectives, attitudes and beliefs, within which defense and security policy predispositions emerge. Taken as a whole, these perspectives and predispositions form the national strategic culture or style" (1990: 272). Further research should naturally engage the strategic culture literature, in order to

assess if there are any overlapping or interconnected parts between the strategic actor concept and the strategic culture, which could be further investigated to further either research field.

General Sir Rupert Smith's analytical distinction between *confrontation* and *conflict*, that he sees as crucial to be aware of, in order to devise relevant strategies and reach strategic goals; could be a starting point for analysing if a certain strategic actor set up fare better strategically in either of these two situations (or framings of the situation) (Smith 2005: 181-189). One could initiate such research by comparing how two or more actors, with different strategic actors' set up, fared in either of these situations. Cases of interest to study would ideally contain a change from confrontation to conflict or vice versa. This could be investigated by using historical case studies, if they allow the possibility to deduce enough variable-content (through the analytical tool) vis-à-vis the participating actors, to make comparisons possible.

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APPENDIX 1. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

EU ESS 2003		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	Transatlantic relationship. Strategic partnerships. A secure zone around the EU. Enlargement of the EU.	No clear prioritization	The strategies expounded are in tune with the main strategic vision	
Theories of action and consequences	Theories on political domestic-systemic effects. Interest-convergence, solidarity integration, relationship ,E.g. democracy generates security. Strategic relationships (the transatlantic one) enhance international security. Developing a “strategic culture” enhances intervention competence		Fits	Enforces
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivator: Threats, Values Enabler: Multilateralism, Relationships/ Partnerships		Fits	Enforces
Roles	Global Player Peace maker, Conflict resolution provider, Spreader of values, Shaper of the world, Coordinator, Developer, Consolidator, Rule follower <i>Alter</i> : UN rule of law system, with limiting and enabling influence	Global player overarching strategic role	Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	Complex security environment - transgressing boundaries, transnational. Low visibility/predictability of threat.		Conception of sec.environment has overall fit with strategic approaches	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	Implicit strat.com targeting of multiple audiences internal and external		Fits	Enforces
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	Grand strategic vision / theory, of: cooperation (relationships, partnerships, community, multilateralism) leading to security internally and externally			

NATO SC 2010		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	Collective defence, Deterrence Crisis management, Cooperative security, Enlargement, Development	Deterrence core element of strategy.	The strategies expounded are in tune with the main strategic vision	
Theories of action and consequences	Strategic nuclear forces guarantees security. NATO enlargement increases peace. Engaging Russia through cooperation contributes to security		Fits	Enforces
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivators: values, threats Enablers: capabilities, partners		Fits	Enforces
Roles	Overarching role as Political-military Alliance: <i>Provider of security and defence.</i> <i>Protector of values. Contributor</i> to international security. <i>Alter's</i> prescriptions through the UN Charter and UN Security Council	<i>Provider of security and defence</i> overarching strategic role	Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	Borderless.		Fits	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	Strategic communication targeting global audiences.		Fits	Enforces
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	Vision of security through adaption and optimizing effectiveness. Complexity in organizational aims (regarding its relations internally and externally to former opponents, partners, and potential partners).			

Russia NSC 2000		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	Deterrence. Countering international relations tendencies contrary to Russia's view on IR order. Occasional global military projection.	No clear prioritization		
Theories of action and consequences	International relations is ruled by competition between states striving for influence. A weak Russia cannot uphold security – internal strengthening will increase security.		Fits	Enforces
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivators: National interests, Threats Enablers: Russia's (economic, scientific, military) potential and strategic location; intelligence and counter-intelligence		Fits	Enforces
Roles	<i>Protector</i> of Russia's national interests. An <i>important role</i> in international relations. <i>Upholder</i> of international law. <i>Alter</i> prescription: UN SC		Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	National and international threats, produces risks that must be dealt with internally and multilaterally.		Fits	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	Strategic communication to internal (above all) and external audiences.			Enforces
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	Complexity and grand strategic design in optimizing internal functionality to enhance national security, but less complexity in regard to international relations design.			

UK NSS 2010		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	<i>Building security</i> through international relations networks. <i>Shaping</i> the world – through shaping international institutions and preventive action. Strategy-making is guided by both the means-ways-end formula, and risk strategic thinking.	Risk strategic thinking rules all strategic thinking and action.	The strategies expounded are in tune with the main strategic vision	
Theories of action and consequences	Theory of action and consequences – ruled by a rational actor scheme – strategic choices guided by risk assessments provides foresight and preparation that increases security. Theory of consequences: An open society in a networked world is at risk, i.e. vulnerable.		Fits	Enforces
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivators: national interests, threats, risks Enablers: collective efforts, rule of law, allies		Fits	Enforces
Roles	<i>Self-conscious strategy-maker</i> <i>Global authority</i> <i>Projector of influence</i> <i>Shaper</i> of global change		Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	Complex – and ruled by risks. No existential threats.		Fits	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	Potential global audience, but the communication seems mostly intent on informing domestic audiences, e.g. civil and defence services, of chosen approach, and that it is reasonable.			
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	Complexity in its analysis of how risk should be assessed and handled. Grand strategic vision for making the whole strategy work rationally.			

US NSS 2000		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	Engagement strategy. Shaping the international environment. Promoting regional security.	Overarching strategic approach is the engagement strategy executed through shaping strategies		
Theories of action and consequences	Shaping the international environment - promotes regional security, which promotes US security. Promoting prosperity globally promotes security.		Fits	
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivators: serve the people nationally, and promoting values globally; threats Enablers: alliances, defence cooperation, international organizations, the US intelligence community, suitably transformed US capabilities and organizations		Fits	Enforces
Roles	<i>Shaper</i> of the international system. <i>Leader</i> of internal transformation.	<i>Shaper</i> of the international system overarching strategic role	Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	Global security context. Security is interdependent. Security is ultimately dependent on prosperity.		Fits	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	The NSS is conscious about the importance of public diplomacy for national security strategy – presumably the NSS serves as a piece of public diplomacy, i.e. with a general purpose of influence.		Fits	Enforces
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	Grand strategic design apparent in the overall construction of the overarching strategy – building on theories of action and consequences, and with sector specific sub strategies. I.e. the NSS mirrors both g.s. vision and theory.			

US NSS 2010		Prioritizing (e.g. through a hierarchy) between strategies	Connection to overall strategic thinking in the text	Enforces expounded strategy / strategies, or is neutral, or is contra strategy / strategies, expounded in the text
Explicit strategies expounded in the text	<i>Deepen cooperation</i> with other influential actors. Building security. Finding mutual interests and developing <i>collective strategies</i> .	Overarching strategic approach: cooperative security under leadership.		
Theories of action and consequences	Main theory of action and consequences: collective interests is the ground for collective strategy and action, and so enhances security. Proactive investment in states prone to conflict, better than trying to handling failed states.		Fits	Enforces
Overall or specific strategy/ theory of action, <i>motivator</i> or <i>enabler</i>	Motivators: interests, promoting values (e.g. just peace), threats Enablers: leadership, alliances, military, economy, democracy, citizenry, international institutions, collective action, burden sharing, internal effectiveness of government			
Roles	<i>Moral example</i> . <i>Strengtheners</i> of world security.		Fits	Enforces
Framing of security / security context	Complex but manageable		Fits	Enforces
Communication (strat. narr. / strategic com. / public dipl.)	Strategic communication targeting domestic and global audiences.		Fits	
Complexity? Signs of attempt at grand strategic design?	A large strategic project, but building on few and not so complex building blocks, especially the grand strategic theory that national and international security will be enhanced through collective efforts guided by US leadership.			