Cold War Thinking Revisited

- An “offensive realist” case study on the foreign policy behaviour of the U.S and Russia within the African security nexus.

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Abstract

Cold War Thinking Revisited - An “offensive realist” case study on the foreign policy behaviour of the U.S and Russia within the African security nexus.

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This paper explores theoretical propositions derived from offensive realism, applied to the instance of military export and foreign policy strategies of Russia and the U.S in the field of Africa during the post-Cold War period. The sections of this paper have disserted paradigms of this phenomena by applying the congruence method under the overarching theoretical umbrella of foreign policy analysis, to answer the question regarding does offensive realism provide relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy of Russia and the U.S in the realm of the African security nexus? The study concludes that the degree as to which offensive realism provides relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy strategies of the actors is strongly competitive in contrast to other explanatory theories. The study further adds to the propositions of the theoretical framework by arguing that it is conceivable that the ambition to prevent the rise of another hegemon is likely to be prioritized within foreign policy strategy to a greater extent than has been previously asserted, and has in some cases been seen as more imperative than the aspect of maximizing the domestic security, and thus survival.

Keywords: Offensive realism, Global Hegemony, Foreign Policy, Security, Defense, International Relations
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>Areas of Responsibility</td>
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<td>CFP</td>
<td>Comparative Case Foreign Policy</td>
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<td>CJTF–HOA</td>
<td>Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FPA</td>
<td>Foreign Policy Analysis</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>International Politics</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office of the Secretary of Defense</td>
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<td>RAND</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
<td>Security Sector Assistance</td>
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<td>TNCs</td>
<td>Transnational Corporations</td>
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<td>USAFRICOM</td>
<td>United States Africa Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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1. The African Security Nexus

This section introduces the topic of interest for this study, together with an abbreviated background of the political phenomena. Previous research is presented as it lays the basis for understanding and prerequisites of this paper, given the nature of the paper being theory testing and anchored in previous research, theory and method. Lastly, academic contribution and structure of the study is outlined.

1.1 Introduction

“The Cold War is over but Cold War thinking survives.”
- Joseph Rotblat

The scientific context in which this essay resides, being theory testing and thus seeking to academically contribute to the scholarly discourse on the relevance and relative importance of offensive realism by testing and strengthening the position of offensive realism in comparison to other theories or paradigms in theoretical discourse, is within the realm of IR and IP and the power struggle ever influencing and changing the international arena and political sphere.

By the end of the 20th century the world once again faced the beginning of fundamental changes in the international security arena. The aftermath of the Cold War was a turning point in history, where Soviet glory was lost and the U.S was sole superpower, both militarily and economically. The world recognised this, and a period of disarmament by the two major powers began.

However, since the start of the 21st century, and the ascension of president Vladimir Putin, Russia has actively pursued the regaining of ties with African states in furtherance of the nations geopolitical goals and economic interests. This has sparked military export, cooperation in Africa and motives aiming for projection of Russian power, as Russia believes
that maintenance of a credible military power is a necessary condition for its interests to be respected by the international community.

President Putin has consistently spoken about the importance of having a strong military, and the emphasis on developing military capabilities is confirmed in Russia's basic strategic documents: The Military Doctrine (2014), the National Security Strategy (2015) and the Foreign Policy Concept (2016).

Driving forces behind Russia's security policy are ambitions to be perceived as a superpower by others and to ensure Russia's freedom of action internationally. The build-up of military capability has been supported by strong political will, which has been reflected in a growing share of gross domestic product dedicated to defense (Oxenstierna et al. 2020:82).

On the other hand, the ascension of president Donald Trump and the ‘America First’ policy is aiming U.S foreign policy on maintaining the U.S. position within the international system (Wolf, R. 2017:100). The ambition of restoring international respect for the U.S is argued to be one of the most shaping forces of foreign policy, much similar to Russian motives (Ibid.).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the aggressive foreign policy of Russia changed into that of a mild one along with the deterioration of its military power. Once the economy and military capabilities increased, foreign policy once again shifted into the previous aggressive form, as can be seen in the Russian role in the annexation of Crimea and the Syrian crisis, which was prominent in spite of U.S and western condemnation. In the aspect of offensive realism, which will be subject for this paper, one can assume that if the U.S military power deteriorates, foreign policy is expected to change in accordance with its hegemonic status- in turn affecting the foreign policy of Russia.

A struggle for international recognition is reflected in the actors foreign policy agendas, and one might argue that the Cold War thinking survived as Africa once again is an important area of influence and military projection in a somewhat manner of proxy conflicts and negotiations. The international system level, as seen from the perspective of FPA, is historically in a state of change and impression with rising and declining national powers making it an interesting field of investigation for power struggles amongst nations and in a
long term perspective, a view on the world as we know it. John Mearsheimer (2001:11), founder of offensive realism, considers the theory as “a powerful flashlight in a dark room: even though it cannot illuminate every nook and cranny, most of the time it is an excellent tool for navigating through the darkness.”

The case study selections has been based on criteria outlined to encompass foreign security policy through military cooperation deals and use of national armed forces with objectives to promote national interests. The applied method is congruence theory, under the overarching theoretical umbrella of Foreign Policy Analysis.

1.2 Previous Literature

This paper is anchored in previous research, theory and method, however with ambition to fill gaps of knowledge and create links between already existing findings in the field of FPA, aiming to elaborate scientific value and relevance and relative importance of offensive realism and its general paradigms, by strengthening the position of the theory in a theoretical discourse. Previous research has thus laid foundations for the outline of this paper.

The implications of past literature point to Russia’s increased number of signed cooperation deals, with detailed and thorough actions to deepen its relations with African states. The ultimate goal of Russian action is to advance its geopolitical goals- such as arms exports, imports of natural resources, projection of power and economic interests (Hedenskog, J. 2018). This mirrors current Russian motives in its domestic, nearby and far away security field, shaping Russian stance towards the international community, with the main goals to establish the nation as a great power and to form a sphere of interest within their local area as well as foreign area, embodied by its authoritarian domestic policy and anti-west foreign policy (Westerlund et al. 2019:77).

The U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM, states Africa as a region of growing strategic importance, where interests lay within Africa’s natural resources. Even though researchers such as Lauren Ploch (2011:12) extensively outline for the U.S strategic interest in Africa, this paper seeks to apply theory and find links between finding like these. The main goals
with U.S presence, though there is limited military presence in AFRICOM, is Countering terrorism (Gasinka et al. 2019:8).

When it comes to the interplay between the actors, Dr. Kofi Nsia-Pepra published a paper on *Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa: Strategic Gain or Backlash?* (2014) stating that other states find the actions taken by the U.S within Africa as imperialistic and exploitative. Together with other factors, this shows that the outcome of the U.S militarization policy of Africa has actually backfired, undermining the attainment of its strategic interests (Nsia-Pepra, K. 2014:58). This is interesting in the context of this research paper, as it adds to the basis of Russian opportunistic tendencies in Africa where the U.S has to some extent devalued.

In researching international relations one often encounters the theories of realism and liberalism. Liberalism brings forth the importance of state-level analysis, with the sphere of domestic politics being an important factor. Thoughts scholar such as of Kant are that the prevailing anarchy in the international system will result in nations cooperating in order to establish “perpetual peace”, which in turn will demand “the transformation of consciousness, republican constitutionalism, and a federal contract between states to abolish war” (Baylis et al. 2008:110).

Furthermore, liberal subdivision of neo-liberalism or liberal institutionalism provides further insight into the current research situation. States are the main, but not only, actor within international relations as importance is given to non-state actors such as institutions, NGOs and TNCs (Keohane and Nye, 1972). Actors are much like in realist approaches seen as rational, aiming to advance in their interests and to maximize gains through cooperation.

A critical perspective of previous theoretical research on international-level analysis however might argue that there are flaws within some liberalist assumptions. Liberalists argue that nations are prone to becoming loyal to institutions, if these institutions are seen as beneficial for the actors (Baylis et al. 2008:132). A view of the international system with the supremacy of this ideology implies difficulties of reduced state power, wilfully transferring authority into the hands of unaccountable transnational corporations. To deal with the issue of anarchy, institutions such as the Bretton Woods System or WTO are needed.
Some might argue that U.S. foreign policy is fueled by principles of neoliberalism, and this assumption has been applied to specific cases of conflict such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Moreover, the framework of realism has been conducted to explain international-level within IR. Differing from liberalism and its subdivisions, realism focuses on competition rather than cooperation. Morgenthau (1955) argues that a nation's ambitions are defined in terms of power, and everything else comes in second- morals, principles and laws. Realist subdivisions, neo-realist, argue that states do not seek power solemnly because of power itself but rather to secure their survival within the international system (Waltz 1989; Mearsheimer 2001).

1.3 Aim and Research Question

The aim of this paper is to under the umbrella of FPA, using offensive realist theory, conduct a comparative case study, by applying the congruence method of comparative analysis theory testing. Thus, the nature of this paper is exploratory, aiming to contribute to scholarly discourse on the relevance and relative importance of offensive realism and its general paradigms, by strengthening the position of the theory in a theoretical discourse.

It is of interest to investigate effects of domestic factors on foreign policy behavior both theoretically and empirically. Theoretical ambitions of this paper are to analyze how actors within international-level interact and how this results in specific foreign policy behavior within a specific region, in this case Africa.

Furthermore, the paper aims to contribute to the debate within International Relations and FPA scholarship by investigating U.S. and Russia foreign policy through a theoretical framework focused on both international, domestic and historical factors within a multilevel-analysis. The research question is accordingly;

*Does offensive realism provide relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy of Russia and the U.S, in the realm of the African security nexus?*
This paper attains ambitions to achieve possibilities of generalizable results, by focusing on the specific case presented in the research add to the general framework of offensive realism with the prospect to be generalized and reproduced within other areas and other case studies.

**1.4 Definitions and Delimitations**

The broad and holistic definition of the concept of security policy is to be defined regarding how it will be applied in this paper. Because the aim is to investigate military cooperation and investments the analysis will be limited to domestic, foreign and military security. Cooperation will be measured in military cooperation deals signed, and investments will be measured in arms export.

It is however mentionable that the national Russian concept of military capability or power (военная мощь- Военная мощь) includes more than military means, and comprises political, social, economic, scientific and spiritual (духовный- духовный) factors to be implemented for military commitments. Therefore, when referring to Russian doctrine documents the definition might differ.

Furthermore this paper will assess national power by military capability. This is due to offensive realist belief that as nations exist in a sphere of anarchy, where internal and external threats to security are commonly occurring as well as constantly present, the nations military capability is seen as a reasonable measurement of national power. Military means enables nations to defend themselves against foreign and national threats while simultaneously making it possible to pursue national interests, in some cases over the inclination of other states (Tellis et al. 2000:133). As stated by Peter Paret;

“military power expresses and implements the power of the state in a variety of ways within and beyond the state borders, and is also one of the instruments with which political power is originally created and made permanent.” (Paret, P. 1989:240).

Moreover, this paper will be limited to the years following the end of the Cold War to present; 1991-2020. This assessment has been made based on assumptions that the current nature of
the world system is the outcome of capitalist-communitst struggles between the USSR and U.S and has been more or less constant ever since the collapse of the Soviet union.

The actors of interest for this paper are Russia and U.S, and have been selected by means of offensive realist assumptions that international politics takes the nature of the international system into account, where states respond to constraints and opportunities of the international system when they conduct their foreign and security policies (Ripsman, N. 2017:1). Russia and the U.S are deemed to be suitable actors considering their historical and current context within international relations and international security.

The field of research has been limited to Africa, including both sub-saharan- and northern Africa. This particular region is of interest because it reflects major trends within partially international arms deals, but particularly within the power relation between the U.S and Russia, and how offensive realist assumptions are portrayed in real world politics. It is distinctly reflected how nation’s deviations in investments and cooperation may alter power dimensions of the international security arena, when it comes to strong states seeking to extend and improve their power.

1.5 Academic Contribution

One primary strand of contributions of this study is the problem of foreign language being resolved, as both foreign policy documents from the U.S and Russia will be interpreted in their domestic language and the latter translated without any bearing data being lost in translation. William E. Odom (1991) states that Soviet defence policy never was detailly depicted, and some argue that the same can be said on Russian security policy, where the subject is most commonly treated as foreign- or defence policy in western sources.

Furthermore, this paper seeks to fill gaps within previous research providing an overarchig but simplistic comparative study of Russian and U.S military investments and cooperation deals in Africa from after the Cold War era to current (2020). The study itself on foreign military interest in Africa is nothing controversial nor new, however the element of comparison anchored in offensive realism laying the basis for understanding of future international relations power balance between states is what this paper seeks to academically
Another objective is to further develop discussions regarding when it is appropriate to adopt international-level analysis, by empirical demonstration.

Moreover, as the nature of the paper is theory testing it seeks to academically contribute to scholarly discourse on relevance and relative importance of offensive realism by testing and strengthening the position of offensive realism in comparison to other theories or paradigms in theoretical discourse. Lastly, the theoretical contribution in this paper will be sprung from the framework of FPA, and it is sought to further develop multi-level analysis as it investigates how structure of the international system and domestic factors shape foreign policy behavior, by adapting offensive realism theoretical framework.

1.6 Disposition

This paper consists of five main sections, followed by a conclusion. The introduction accounts for background and previous research aiming to provide overarching understanding of the phenomena of study. The previous research encompass U.S and Russian objectives with their foreign policy and goals in Africa overall, as well as their development in the region throughout the last two decades. Furthermore, the position of liberalism and its sub-theories within the area of study is outlined, and previous academic contribution regarding congruence theory, in order for the receiver of the paper to discern the following circumstances of the paper.

Followed by method and material, where the congruence method and its implementation on the theory of choice, as well as case study selections, is outlined and justified, with a critical assessment of the method. It has been deemed suitable to place method previous to theory due to the theory being intertwined with the following analysis section, as the nature of the thesis is a theory-testing one.

The third section thus concerns the theoretical framework of the paper, with a deepened framework concerning offensive realism and its theoretical propositions, under the overarching theoretical umbrella of foreign policy analysis. The theory of choice with delimitations and justification is outlined, with a comprehensive approach laying the basis for deeper understanding of the next coming analysis.
The section on *Offensive Realist Perception of U.S and Russian Foreign Policy* provides an abbreviated insight of general U.S and Russian foreign policy, to enable deeper understanding of the position of respective nations within the arena of international security and foreign policy. This section thus lays the basis for the forthcoming analysis in the nextcomming section on *U.S and Russian Foreign Policy in the field of Africa*, as it cements the groundwork of the nation’s overall foreign policy.

The *Analysis and Discussion* stems from the previous implications of overall national foreign policy in the fourth section, and converges in the field of Africa for respective states. Furthermore the case studies are presented and the foreign policy decisions are linked to offensive realist theory and its theoretical paradigms and prepositions.
2. Method and Material

This section presents the method and material used in this paper, the nature of it being a comparative case study explored by the congruence method, aiming to disclose if offensive realist theory explains foreign policy outcomes of the cases. Research design and case study selection is outlined, as well as a critical assessment of the theory.

2.1 Method

This paper conducts a comparative case study, not following Mill’s methods of agreement and differences as the goal of this research is another than defining a causal relationship. The goal is, however, to find similarities and differences within foreign policy of the chosen actors of Russia and the U.S, and by doing so testing the theoretical framework of offensive realism. For this purpose the congruence method of theory testing will be applied.

2.1.1 Comparative Case

This paper stems from Blatter and Haverland’s (2012) definition of a case study research as;

“as a non-experimental research design that differs from large-N studies through the following four characteristics: 1. a small number of cases; 2. a large number of empirical observations per case; 3. a huge diversity of empirical observations for each case; and 4. an intensive reflection on the relationship between concrete empirical observations and abstract theoretical concepts.” (Blatter, J. and Haverland, M. 2012:4)

The characteristics of this small-N study does not fundamentally differ from one of a single case study, as the core characteristics remain the same. The cases that have been selected have been consciously held on the fewer side, with five isolated happenings from respective actor to be comparated within the framework of offensive realism. This makes it possible to select cases amongst a wider range of possible choices, with the previous outlining presented
by Blatter and Haverland, because the delimitations within cases themselves are more broad and based on abstract theoretical concepts.

Case study design has been chosen in order to investigate the abstract but still complex and new phenomena of the chosen actors foreign policy behaviour as seen from an offensive realist perspective, within the realm of the African security nexus.

2.1.2 Case Selections

The case study selections has been based on criteria outlined to encompass foreign security policy through military cooperation deals and use of national armed forces with the objectives to promote national interests.

Delimitation has been made to exclude use of national armed forces within military conflict or potential conflict to protect national citizens, covert actions or numerous occurrences in which national forces have been stationed abroad since the Cold War in occupation forces or for participation in mutual security organizations, base agreements, or routine military assistance or training operations. Furthermore acts of self defense, protection or extraction of civilians or national army personnel has as well been deemed reasonable to exclude as criteria to be included as a case study.

The reason to this delimitation is as to some extent these situations of use of national armed forces indeed do outline national foreign policy objectives, they are not deemed as suitable for the research of this paper as it does not provide insight on offensive realist assumptions regarding maximization power and countering the rise of another hegemon.

The chosen cases comprise of legal authorization either by the President’s powers as Chief Executive or Commander in Chief or by Congress, however most cases were presented to Congress by the President as a result of the War Powers Resolution in the U.S and the Russian equivalence; Резолюция о российских военных полномочиях (The Russian War Powers Resolution).
2.1.3 Research Design - The Congruence Method

Based on choice of case study analysis the congruence method has been chosen to make a deliberative and reflective contribution to the theoretical discourse within social sciences. The research question has been posed thereafter, namely; Does offensive realism provide relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy of Russia and the U.S, in the realm of the African security nexus?

The approach is of reflective nature in regards to theory selection, and the selection of cases suitable for the congruence method have been selected thereafter, as the ontological and epistemological basis within this method implicate certain tools of analysis, generating its own understanding of generalization. Because the aim is to test offensive realism, the congruence method is a suitable choice of method. The method is deductive, starting with a well established theory to be examined regarding its ability to explain and/or predict outcomes of analysis in chosen cases.

Thereby, the course for action for this paper has been to firstly define the value of FPA and insight on the actors foreign policy, to investigate whether offensive realist predictions or expectations are consistent with the actual turn out, and thereby if the actors stay consistent to their foreign policy. If so, a causal relationship may be claimed. However, the possible causal relationship should firstly be assessed as spurious, and whether the independent variable- the foreign policy- is a necessary baseline for the outcome of the causal relationship (George, A. and Bennet, A. 2005:185).

This paper will thus be testing offensive realism by following David de Vaus (2014) process containing six ideal typical stages of testing theory;

i. Specify the theory to be tested

ii. Derive a set of conceptual propositions

iii. Restate conceptual propositions as testable proposition

iii. Collect relevant data
iiiii. Analyze data


2.1.4 Critical Assessment

Some common objections towards multiple case analysis is that by limiting the research to one single case, the researcher enables deeper understanding of variables and phenomena within that case, which is not possible to the same extent when doing multiple case analysis, as well as not allowing the researcher to invest equally as much time and intellectual energy into one phenomena when studying multiple.

Furthermore, the levels of validity are higher when conducting smaller-N studies than large-N studies. However, as this study aims to test theory and not provide deep insight within the selected cases one may disregard this issue with validity concerning understanding of political phenomena.

However, internal validity is strengthened because of the possibility to use context-specific indicators within theoretical propositions. This is one of the advantages with congruence analysis, where the specific research design is based on the broad access to theoretical concepts.

2.2 Material

The study is based exclusively on non-classified, open and available sources. This entails some disadvantages in certain fields of this paper as it perhaps might provide an uneven picture of foreign policy whereas the true nature or some details of the policy might be classified. The understanding of the foreign policy has been derived from the most important doctrine documents, such as the National Security Strategy, the Military Doctrine, the Foreign Policy Concept and line figures by the President and important decision-makers.
2.3 Validity and Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measure within the study, and with high reliability comes the possibility of the study being repeated later, or by another researcher, and still achieving the same result (Eliasson et al. 2013:14). Validity explains the legitimacy of the study, and that what is meant to be measured has actually been measured. This paper will mainly treat the field of validity, as it is of qualitative nature (Ibid, p.16).

In order to reserve the study against fallacies within reliability or validity, the theoretical and empirical mapping of how appropriately and adequately the theoretical framework of Mearsheimer's offensive realism provides insight on the foreign policy behaviour of the chosen actors has been prioritized, rather than a full-scale assessment of alternative explanations of the phenomena.

This delimitation has been made to exclude overdetermined results within the specific area of this study, however it is acknowledged that alternative methods provide alternative answers. The sections on analysis and conclusion are thus sculpted within the realm of offensive realism, though as this paper is theory testing overdetermination of results and ambiguity within validity are argued to be insubstantial.

In ascertaining whether the empirical evidence in a case or in a sample of cases either supports or does not support a given theory, external validity and the generalization of research results is an issue to be treated through methodological procedures. In theory testing, all measures are indirect indicators of theoretical constructs and external validity can not be reached by any methodological procedures alone (Lucas, J. 2003:236).
3. Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework of the essay. Firstly, FPA and its relation to International Relations theory is outlined, and the use and definition of the levels of analysis will be determined. Furthermore the theoretical propositions of offensive realism are laid out, in accordance with a critical assessment of FPA and the theory.

3.1 Foreign Policy Analysis: An Overarching Umbrella

This paper will address the two main challenges in the debate of FPA. First, the methodological challenge concerning whether to conduct a single case foreign analysis or a comparative case foreign policy (CFP). The nature of this study is comparative, supported by scholars such as Rosenau (1968) and the more recent Kaarbo and Beasley (1999). The argument is to produce a generalizable study that bridged between nations, providing cross-national understanding.

This paper argues that a single case study analysis indeed does provide profound knowledge of political phenomena, however it does not exclude the use of comparative case study analysis as equally as academically bearing. The two study designs are instead seen as suitable for researching different cases, and as the aim of this paper is to within the realm of offensive realism provide generalizable results a comparative case study design is deemed as a plausible theoretical framework within FPA.

Furthermore, the second and somewhat more prominent challenge within FPA is the theoretical challenge. Foreign policy analysis in the post Cold War era is still evolving; there are, however, some clear commitments that most researchers share- commitment to looking below the nation, state level, commitment to build middle-range theory, commitment to pursue multi-causal explanations spanning multiple levels of analysis, commitment to utilize theory and findings from across the spectrum of social science and commitment to viewing the process of foreign policy decision-making. The challenge however lays within making
the choice of a suitable and proper theoretical assumption, as the field today is as good as flooded with theories (Ikenberry, G.J. 2005:7). An example of this challenge is the choice of applying FPA or IR theory, as both approaches are theoretical sources in the field of studying foreign policy. The link between them, however, that this paper recognizes and will base the analysis upon is that FPA is an actor-specific theory that provides the basis upon which IR is based (Hudson, V.M. 2005:21).

Moreover, this paper claims that FPA is a multilevel theory where researchers might incorporate elements from other disciplines, such as sociology, and find gain within this multidisciplinary approach (Hudson, V.M. 2005:2). However, this crossing of IR and FPA brings forth the contemporary debate on actor-structure, as IR theory is based on an approach that is highly actor-general. Structure is the most important element deciding the behaviour of actors, leaving the question regarding if micro-pathways prescribe macro-phenomena or vice versa (Wendt, A. 1987:X). Because this paper is based on offensive realist theory the unit of analysis will be considered to be the state, as it will conduct international-level analysis, and therefore FPA.

When talking about different levels of analysis, this paper will assume Waltz (1959) and Ikenberry (1988) three level analysis presumption, where the individual, the state, and the international level are the levels of analysis through which foreign policy can be explained.

The international-level analysis is conducted in this paper with background in the scholarly debate on when it is appropriate to adopt international-level analysis. Some scholars argue that it is most reasonable to use international-level analysis in times of international crisis, while state-level analysis is most appropriate to use in international peaceful times (Ikenberry, G.J. 2005:9-10).

Thereo, some argue that international-level analysis is most suitable to analyze within foreign policy of small states, because great powers are more free to act upon their will and interests within international relations because of international power balance, making them less interesting when it comes to factors shaping foreign policy, because there are probably less factors (Rosenau 1966; Snyder 1991). However, Waltz argues that as great powers are dealing with threats from other great powers, these states are rather operating in relation to
international-level constraints. This results in small states actually operating in relation to domestic-level constraints, meaning that great powers indeed should be studied from an international-level analysis perspective. (Waltz, K. 1979:72-73).

A critical assessment of the theoretical framework of FPA results in reasoning regarding the lack of distinct theoretical assumption, as FPA incorporates assumptions from a diverse range of fields. Some scholars, such as Brian Ripley (1993), state that structural realist assumptions are amongst other incompatible with FPA, and that researchers within the field are facing a challenge of retaining a focus on foreign policy analysis, rather than crossing academic boundaries by drawing from other disciplines, and thus losing the essence of political science or international relations research (Ripley, B. 1993:404). However, this issue of ambiguity will not pose any difficulties for this paper, as the scope of cross-disciplinary use will be limited.

3.1.1 International-level Analysis

In this level of analysis, the international system is the cause and state behavior is the effect. Factors that are seen as relevant for impacting foreign policy analysis affect both theoretical and methodological choices in research.

This paper addresses the agent-structure problem by applying an offensive realist perspective and thus arguing that the seeking of power maximization is a means of ensuring survival in an anarchic world, within the international level where that causes the actors to engage in such situations. FPA allows researchers to draw assumptions like these because of the multilevel and multifactorial approach.

This would not be possible within IR, because of IR focus on broad trends within political phenomena, while FPA deals with the structure-agent problem by countering IR focus on structure with thorough conceptualization of agency to possibly resolve possible theoretical blind spots (Hudson, 2005:4).
3.2 Offensive Realism

There are two subdivisions within neorealism, namely defensive realism and offensive realism. The latter will be applied within the field of FPA and thus the theoretical framework will constitute offensive realism, which argues that states are power maximizers and should pursue aggressive foreign policy to do so, and thereby ensure their state survival in the international arena (Mearsheimer 2001). The aim to maximize security within defensive realism, is solved in offensive realism by simply maximizing its state power.

Military means enable nations to defend themselves against foreign and national threats while simultaneously making it possible to pursue national interests, in some cases over the inclination of other states (Tellis et al. 2000:133). The highest level of security a state can reach is by becoming a hegemon, and then protect its posture as a regional hegemon by offshore balancing (Mearsheimer 2001).

Offensive realism is chosen as the theoretical framework of this paper because of the approach to reality and real world politics in its core averts from normative assumptions on how reality should be, but rather focuses on explaining reality as it is. The theory furthermore does provide some propositions that are important for the understanding of how empirical data is selected and utilized, to explain the outcome on foreign policy and in prolonging the suitability of the theory itself to explain foreign policy outcome (Schmit, B. 2008:8).

Offensive realism is deemed suitable for this paper because the nature of this paper being played out on the international-level, and offensive realism is a theory of “high politics” as it deals with the international outcome of the mere survival of states and politics amongst great powers (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:5).

Mearsheimer’s offensive realism is based upon five main premissess (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:30-31);

i. The international system is composed of anarchy (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:332).
ii. Super powers possess offensive military capabilities and thus possess the capability or harming or annihilating one another (Ibid.).

iii. Nations are suspicious of other nations intentions within IR, as exemplified by the security dilemma (Ibid.).

iii. Survival is the main goal of states and there is no higher priority, norms and laws come second (Ibid. p.46).

iiii. Nations are rational actors whose behaviour is dictated by the aim to survive and the constraints imposed by the international system (Ibid. p.31)

As a nations primary goal in an anarchic system is survival, and relying on self-help and maximization of power, the actors can not know how much power is needed to ensure this and will thus strive to become a global hegemon, making the premise that great nations will not accept the status-quo phenomena which is prevalent within defensive realist way of thinking. If states would settle for a status-quo setting, Mearsheimer argues that these states are misguided;

“Given the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to become hegemony in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive.” (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:34).

3.2.1 Theoretical Propositions

This section will focus on theoretical propositions within offensive realism, which later will be used to explain U.S and Russian foreign policy choices. These are divided into three areas, namely; states goals within IR, strategies to reach these goals and lastly strategies to prevent other states from gaining power at the expense of their own nation state.

Within offensive realism the is assumption that there are four main goals within great nations;
i. The strive for regional hegemony in order to prevent other nations from becoming regional hegemons (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:140-147).

ii. Have the maximum amount of global wealth under their domestic nations control (Ibid.).

iii. Be on the stronger side of the balance between land and power (Ibid.).

iii. Domesticate nuclear superiority (Ibid.).

Furthermore, there are four main approaches to reach these goals and thus gain relative power;

i. By engaging in war with other rival states (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:147)

ii. By threatening rival states (Ibid.).

iii. By the “bait and bleed-strategy”, where a nation baits other rival states to engage in conflict or war with each other while the baiting nation remains with intact strength (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:47-155).

iii. By the “blood letting-strategy”, which is based on the bait and bleed strategy, however with the difference that instead of baiting, a nation supports a rival to its rival. An example of this would be the U.S support to Afghanistan during the Afghan-Soviet war, where America’s rival the USSR suffered great costs from the conflict indirectly funded by the U.S.

Lastly, to prevent other states from gaining power at the expense of their own nation state offensive realists advocate two main strategies;

i. The Buck-Passing strategy, where the implementing state- state A- aims at getting another state- state B- to confront and use preventive measures against a third
aggressive state-state C. In some situations the buck passing strategy may even be implemented by state A towards state B when state C is at risk of creating disorder within the balance of power, and in such situations state B may even engage in fighting state C (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:157-159). According to Mearsheimer this strategy requires well developed diplomatic ties between state A and B, in order to find relative gains in the sense of being a rational actor. Some argue that buck passing is not possible in a bipolar international system, however this essay stands by Mearsheimer’s assumption of the possibility of buck-catching states being present in a multipolar international system (Mearsheimer 2001:270-272).

ii. The balancing strategy, where world power is seen as balanced and thus states take precautions to act upon that balance being distorted by other states, or to prevent other states from distorting it from start. Aggressor states must always be deterred because if they are not they will tilt the balance of power if possible, in the sense of being rational actors (Mearsheimer 2001:156).
4. Offensive Realist Perception of U.S and Russian Foreign Policy

This section aims to provide an abbreviated insight of U.S and Russian foreign policy post Cold War, to enable deeper understanding of the stance of respective nations within the arena of international security and foreign policy. This section thus lays the basis for the forthcoming analysis in the nextcomming section on U.S and Russian Foreign Policy in the field of Africa, as it cements the groundwork of the nation’s overall foreign policy.

4.1 U.S Foreign Policy Post Cold War Era

The foreign policy of the U.S is defined by some core values primarily tied to democracy, human rights, free market economy and the rule of law. Furthermore the U.S leadership role is central together with strategic use of multilateralism and pragmatism (Maull, H.W. 2011:174-175).

Research on U.S foreign policy in a post Cold War era often focuses on the Asia-Pacific region due to China challenging the U.S in manner of regional, and global, dominance. For example Mearsheimer (2001) does so, by applying neoclassical realist assumptions to predict the competition amongst the nations in the region, showing continuation and change in foreign policy, and together with scholars such as Walter Lohmann (2018:43) argue that the actions taken by the U.S in the region are a continuance of its ambitions to maintain strong leadership and maximize state security in the region.

This can be further demonstrated by bringing forth Walter Russell Mead’s (2001:44) contribution to FPA and political research, where he conceptualizes U.S foreign policy into four categories, that are deemed to be of interest for this paper, namely;

i. Hamilton
ii. Wilsonian

iii. Jeffersonian

iii. Jacksonian

The current foreign policy of the U.S Trump administration is recognized to be Jacksonian. This implicates suspicion towards federal power, being skeptical towards domestic and foreign policy and aiming for loose federal structures where ideology mainly focuses on honor (Mead, W. 2001:40). This can be found in the foreign policy of the U.S in examples such as the withdrawal of the Paris agreement, Trump’s posture towards NATO and the war in Syria and Afghanistan where the ultimate goal is to within the frame of unilateralism “reestablish” the reputation of the U.S, with what is called the ‘America First’ policy.

As a regional hegemon the U.S takes measures within its foreign policy to remain in position, broaden its relative power and counteract the emerging of any other regional hegemon and thus acts as an offshore balancer in regions such as the Asia-Pacific and Africa. Within offshore balancing the U.S uses buck passing strategy where the nation relies on local great powers to balance each other out (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:237).

Furthermore, worldwide military projection of power is a common offshore balancing strategy that is used by the U.S. This is of interest because the U.S is unique in its approach to doing so, firstly because it relies on a wide range of different dimensions of military projection of power; such as air, land and sea power (Mahan 1890; Mackinder 1904; Philpott 2013). Moreover, it has created such a structure where every region of the world is tied to a separate area of responsibility (AOR) within the Department of Defense.

Within each AOR, the U.S obtains military bases both in air, ground and sea, such as Djibouti, South Africa, Turkey, Germany, Afghanistan, Japan, Australia et cetera. Remaining with the logic of offensive realism this projection of military power is a prolonging of the offshore balancing strategy aiming for the prevention of other regional hegemons, making it a legitimate claim that offshore balancing is an inherent strategy within U.S foreign policy (Layne 1997:88).
4.2 Russian Foreign Policy Post Cold War Era

Russian foreign policy consists of two main goals, to be established as a superpower and to challenge U.S status in world politics. According to The National Security Strategy (2015) one of the long term strategic interests is to fortify the Russian posture as a leading nation within international relations, where the aim of the state is to maintain strategic stability and mutually beneficial partnership in a polycentric world.

This is also mirrored in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept (2016), where it is stated that Russia has a need of cementing its status in international relations as a centrality of influence. Another important factor is the preservation of the Russian nuclear power status, which still makes Russia stand out in the international system with its nuclear weapons stockpile as a particular power attribute.

The foreign policy becomes more and more aggressive in combination with national power being strengthened. This can be easily detected within Russia annexing Crimea and Russian role in the Syrian crisis, where the nation goes on the offensive even though these actions have been condemned by the U.S and various other states.

As seen from an offensive realist perspective this could be described as the rational acting of wanting to establish the nation as a superpower, aiming for regional and in the long term global hegemony in order to secure Russia’s national interests and security.

One may argue however that it is not comparable with the previously mentioned offshore balancing, but as a rather aggressive rampaging of military projection of power, and as will be further investigated in this paper- the stepping up of comprehensive cooperation operations with several nations, including African states.
5. Analysis and Discussion

This section stems from previous implications of overall national foreign policy, and converges in the field of Africa for respective state. Derived from the foreign policy of the states, the case studies are presented and the foreign policy decisions are linked to offensive realist theory and its theoretical paradigms and prepositions.

5.1 U.S Foreign Policy in The Field of Africa

During the Cold War Africa was seen as a crucial area for the U.S to counter Soviet influences and convert the content orientation towards the West (Lyons, T. 2015). However, shortly after the Cold War as there was no strategic gain left in Africa the interest faded, and together with the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia 1993, policymakers and public opinion led the U.S to withdraw from the continent (Brakel, S.Y. 2016).

However this trend of retirement was short lived as the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, together with the ‘9/11’ attacks on US soil in 2001, highlighted Africa as a ground for counter-terrorism which until recently has been the main objective with U.S presence in Africa, according to their official doctrines. However, in 2019 AFRICOM amended its objectives and now highlights six main goals;

i. To strengthen partner networks
ii. To enhance partner capability
iii. To develop security in Somalia
iii. To contain instability in Libya
iiii. To support partners in Sahel and the Lake Chad region
iiiii. To set the theatre to facilitate AFRICOM’s day-today activities, crisis response, and contingency operations (Statement of General Tomas D. Waldhauser, United States Marine Corps Commander United States Africa Command, 2019).
5.1.1 Case Studies- U.S Undertakings in Africa

Table 1. Case studies of military cooperation deals and use of national armed forces with the objectives to promote national interests of the U.S in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2011 | Libya    | On March 21, 2011, the President submitted to Congress “consistent with the War Powers Resolution,” a report stating that at “approximately 3:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, on March 19, 2011,” he had directed U.S. military forces to commence “operations to assist an international effort authorized by the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council and undertaken with the support of European allies and Arab partners, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and address the threat posed to international peace and security by the crisis in Libya.” /.../
| 2017 | Africa   | On October 10, the Army announced rolling out its first conventional units designed to carry out so-called train and assist missions that are the centerpiece of U.S. military strategy in these regions. See also CRS In Focus IF10675, Army Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), by Andrew Feickert. |
| 2018 | Africa   | On November 15, 2018, DOD announced the realignment of Counter-Violent Extremist Organization personnel operating in U.S. Africa Command to support priorities outlined in the National Defense Strategy. Over the next several years, the realignment projects a reduction of about 10% of the 7,200 military forces serving in Africa Command. |
| 2020 | Africa   | On February 12, 2020, the Secretary of Defense announced that the Army’s 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, based at Fort Benning, GA, would soon deploy to Africa to provide training and assistance to African forces as a way to better compete with Russia and China. The deployment is the result of a review of DoD forces, programs, and activities within each Combatant Command to ensure support with the National Defense Strategy’s priorities. As a result, infantry brigade personnel from the 101st Airborne Division would return to Ft. Campbell, KY.113 |
| 2020 | Morocco  | The United States and Morocco on Friday signed an accord that aims to strengthen military cooperation and the North African kingdom’s military readiness over the next decade. |

An interesting aspect of the case studies presented in the U.S - Africa relation above is the skewed distribution of cases during the timeline, as they are presented from 2011 and forward. This depends partially on the fact that the criteria to be included as a case study was to be either a cooperation deal or use of national armed forces in order to promote U.S interests. Most cases of use of national armed forces during the period of 1991-2020 U.S-Africa, and especially previous to 2011, are orders to liquidate missions or extract personnel or civilians. Remaining instances seek to protect U.S embassies or assists in humanitarian aid.

As seen from an offensive realist perspective, this skewed distribution might be a consequence of the shift in Russian foreign policy during the same time frame. After the fall of the Soviet Union the aggressive foreign policy of Russia changed into that of a mild one
along with the deterioration of its military power. Once the economy and military capabilities increased, the foreign policy once again shifted into the previous aggressive form.

With the ascension of president Vladimir Putin, Russia has actively pursued regaining ties with African states in furtherance of the nation’s geopolitical goals and economic interests. The timing of these phenomena are coordinated, indicating that as the power of Russia increases, so does the will to broaden U.S horizons in areas and regions of competition between the two nations.

This is further strengthened by previously mentioned shift in AFRICOM objectives from counter terrorism to strengthen partner capabilities and networks. As Mearsheimer states, one of the five main premises of offensive realism is that nations are suspicious of other nations intentions within IR and that nations are rational actors whose behaviour is dictated by surviving the constraints imposed by the international system (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:332).

The offensive realist interpretation is that, as the presence of Russia is heightened in Africa, the U.S objectives shifts in order to facilitate themselves as the hegemon, and thus prevent the rising of another hegemon. One might also interpret the shift in objectives as the U.S suspicion of the intentions of Russia, and therefore taking a more active part in a community that hitherto has been dispersed in favor of other regions of interest.

In the case of Libya 2011, the statement “in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.” is as well compatible with the aim to be on the stronger side of the balance between land and power (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:147). Even if the case of Libya, or the Africa missions in 2017 or 2018, are not direct measures taken towards gaining relative or absolute power, these train and assist missions are creating bonds of dependence between the states and U.S, by applying the balancing strategy. (Mearsheimer 2001:156). What is however interesting in the relation with Russia, is that the somewhat defensive foreign policy of the U.S shifts in the latter cases in 2020 as a way to better compete with Russia and thus ensure the National Defense Strategy’s priorities, which shifted recently prior to this statement.
The cooperation deal signed with Morocco in October 2020, reflects the will to establish U.S influence and policy in the region, as a reaction towards the Russian progression in the region, and especially with Morocco’s neighbouring country Algeria that together with Russia is the biggest importer and exporter of arms in Africa. In this manner the accord is of aggressive nature in U.S foreign policy making, as it now infers that the most Russian-friendly versus U.S-friendly nation in Africa are neighbouring and highly supported by the military capability and power of the nations.

The countries are employing the Buck-Passing strategy (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:157-159). This shift in U.S strategy, from the previously outlined Balancing strategy, is a direct answer to the implementations of Russian influence in the region.

As Mearsheimer stated, strategy requires well developed diplomatic ties between state A (Russia or the U.S) and B (Algeria or Morocco), in order to find relative gains in the sense of being a rational actor. Some argue that buck passing is not possible in a bipolar international system, however this essay stands by Mearsheimer’s assumption of the possibility of buck-catching states being present in a multipolar international system (Mearsheimer 2001:270-272).

One might argue that the shift in U.S foreign policy as well as strategy is to prevent the rise of a Russian hegemon, and to cement its interests in the region. In the long run, offensive realism might further provide understanding in a conflict between the Buck-Catching states of Algeria and Morocco, by implementing bait and bleed-strategy (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:47-155).

5.2 Russian Foreign Policy in The Field of Africa

The foreign policy priorities of Russia as conveyed its 2016 Foreign Policy Concept divides the region of Africa into North Africa together with the middle east, and sub-saharan Africa. However, as this paper focuses on Africa in its entirety the objectives for both parts of the region will be taken into account. The reflectives for Africa are thus;
“To expand multidimensional interaction by improving political dialogue and promoting mutually beneficial trade and economic ties, stepping up comprehensive cooperation that serves common interests” (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia’s involvement in Africa decreased because in order to strengthen the nation-state and rebuild at home, and thus bilateral relations were put on pause.

Now in recent years however, expansion of economic, military and political cooperation has rapidly increased, one may argue this course of action to be a part of the aim to consolidate the Russian Federation's position as a centre of influence in today's world- as outlines in the Foreign Policy Concept for Russian goals within foreign policy and international relations (2016). Furthermore it can be interpreted to be a long term goal to balance the U.S hegemony with liberal values, by instituting an altering pole of values and beliefs more consistent with Russian, and in some ways Chinese, values.

The course of action to counter the unipolar international order made space for after the collapse of the Soviet Union, where Africa was of interest for the marginalising potential rivals and therefore is of importance once again when Russian interests shift from domestic strengthening to international hegemony. This rising trend is more concretely expressed in the states of Algeria and Egypt, being the biggest importers of Russian arms.

During the last ten years (2009-2019), these states have purchased US$8 billion and US$3.1 billion worth of Russian arms, which together with investments from the rest of the continent accounts for 39% of the total defence import for the continent during the same period (EPRS, 2019:2). A double increase in comparison with the previous ten year period (Ibid.).

A factor that is advantageous for Russian military investments in the region are the long-going ties with several of the African nations since the USSR times, and the fact that Moscow had no ambition to colonise Africa, and moreover even supported its anti-colonial struggle. Furthermore, Russian weapons are relatively cheap while still having a competitive functioning, making them attractive for some impoverished African nations (EPRS, 2019:2).
5.2.1 Case Studies- Russian Undertakings in Africa

Table 2. Case studies of military cooperation deals and use of national armed forces with the objectives to promote national interests of Russia in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>When the United Kingdom and the United States were slow to respond to Nigeria’s request for help, Nigeria turned to Russia for counter-terrorism training for its special forces and bought military hardware to fight Boko Haram. With regard to peace operations, several hundred peacekeepers from African countries have been trained at the Advanced Training Centre of the Russian Ministry of Interior since 2006. Since 2000, Russia has contributed troops, expertise, and military observers to different UN peacekeepers operations in Africa. By 2018, however, only Western Sahara (MINURSO) remained. Since 2008, Russia has also participated in the international anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Russian Ambassador to Cameroon Nikolay Ratsiborinski told Cameroonian President Paul Biya that Moscow will provide a wide range of military equipment to the Cameroonian armed forces with the aim of supporting its counterterrorism efforts, the president’s office said in a statement. The nations have struck a deal on military and technical cooperation between the two countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>In an interview with the Ghana News Agency in Accra, Valery Orlov, Russia's ambassador to Ghana, reaffirmed the Russian government’s intention to deepen relations with Ghana in the interests of both countries and support the development of the African continent. He said he believes that the important events that have taken place between the two countries over the years will give new dimensions to their traditional friendship and deepen the ties between them, thus in June 2016 Military and technical cooperation between the two countries were signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>The Russia-Nigeria deal allows Nigerian servicemen to be trained in Russia's military educational establishments, it said. According to Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, the two countries will pay special attention to joint training of troops, exchange of peacekeeping experience, and fighting against piracy and terrorism. The Russia-Niger agreement &quot;will promote further improvement of cooperation and strengthen the two militaries in the fight against international terrorism,&quot; said the Russian Defense Ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>The Botswana deal allows Botswana servicemen to be trained in Russia's military educational establishments, it said. According to Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, the two countries will pay special attention to joint training of troops, exchange of peacekeeping experience, and fighting against piracy and terrorism. The Russia-Botswana agreement &quot;will promote further improvement of cooperation and strengthen the two militaries in the fight against international terrorism,&quot; said the Russian Defense Ministry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In similarity to the skewed U.S distribution of cooperation deals and use of national armed forces to promote national interests within Africa, the distribution of Russian deals and use of national armed forces ranges from primarily 2014 to current. There are two main reasons for this distribution. First and foremost, its vital need to establish new commercial roads and diplomatic alliances after the Crimea-related Western sanctions imposed on Moscow in 2014.
Second, the shift in foreign policy as a result of economic and military capabilities increasing once again after the fall of the Soviet Union. From an offensive realist perspective, these are Russian opportunistic tendencies acting upon the decrease of U.S presence in Africa since the end of the Cold War, based on the assumptions of realistic actors wanting to maximize their power, and if opportunity presents itself become an regional, and in extension, global hegemon, it should be acted upon. The aim is thus to rebuild its image as a world power and decrease Western influence in a region where socialism has often been part of the political culture of independence leaders.

Furthermore, offensive realism would explain these actions as Moscow perceiving Washington's tendency towards isolation with the ‘America First’ policy, as a weakness within the West, which inspires Moscow to advance its positions in conflicts outside its immediate neighborhood. It can thus be more effective for Russia to undermine the interests of the West by increasing in Africa.

The above stated case studies mirror this exakt image of Russian offshore balancing in their favour, where survival is the main goal of states and there is no higher priority, norms and laws come second and where nations are rational actors whose behaviour is dictated by the aim to survive and constraints imposed by the international system (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:30-31).

This is expressed in the Nigeria accord 2014, where one driving force of Russia signing the deal was due to the U.S and U.K’s inability to do so, and therefore showing how powerful in action Russia is, and is an ally to be trusted and counted with. This ties to offensive realist objectives of wanting to be, and project being, on the stronger side of the balance between land and power (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:140-147).

These same premises are applicable on the Cameroon, Ghana, Niger and Botswana accords, where military cooperation deals and deepened ties between the nations are the main objectives. Furthermore the choices of these nations reflect a will to spread out its influence throughout the continent, as for example Botswana and Niger are on opposite sides of Africa, and Russia’s biggest partner Algeria is at the top of the saharan Africa.
5.3 Discussion

“The West is not very much loved by many countries. And many (see) Russia as the country that will oppose the West,” said Dmitri Bondarenko, an anthropologist and historian at Russia’s Institute for African Studies (2018).

This statement represents a wide view of positions towards cooperation with Russia, not least within African nations. Russia’s aim is to constitute new alliances in order to rebuild its status as a world power. In a region where socialism has been a part of the political culture and world view of its leaders, Russia has an advantage and thus an advance in decreasing Western influence in this specific region. This effort to create strong bonds can be reflected in more than half African nations, 25 of 45, either opposing or abstaining from a UN General Assembly Resolution condemning the annexation of Crimea. Furthermore Russian cooperation deals can be explained by exactly this instance, that Russia needs to establish new diplomatic alliances and commercial roads after Western sanctions imposed on Moscow after 2014.

These alliances have furthermore been expressed by offshore balancing of Russia in order to undermine U.S interests. The USSR projected itself as a strong opponent towards Western imperialism, suitable for the policy interests of Africa, and now Russia is acting on previous parallel goals as it is in the interest of both newly independent African states and older struggling states to free themselves from colonial structures and rule (EPRS, 2019:2).

For example, Angola and Mozambique were inspired by Marxist-Leninist ideology as former Portuguese colonies. This ideology was also driven by states such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Tanzania. However, even though the USSR was strongly driven by ideology, modern Russia is not outlined by any particular ideology in its foreign policy, making itself flexible with any actors suitable for Russia’s interests at the time, further developing its offshore balancing buck-passing strategy, as expressed by Mearsheimer (2001:140-147).

U.S security sector assistance, SSA, is also deemed to be allocated differently in the Cold War and post–Cold War periods. Previous to 1991 the main goal was to cultivate partnerships with African nations in order to prevent their governments from engaging in cooperation with
the USSR. The aims of promoting democracy, peace, stability or human rights were secondary goals of the U.S foreign policy. This led to a strategy focusing on autocratic nations and the likelihood of the U.S providing SSA to these nations was notably higher in order to steer them away from the Soviet. In the period after 1991 however, this strategy changed as the Soviet threat was eliminated, and less SSA was provided to repressive governments (RAND, 2001).

This is consistent with previously mentioned prioritization within offensive realism, where norms are secondary to the maximization of power and to counteract the rise of another hegemon (Mearsheimer J. 2001:21). What is interesting within this aspect, is that other theories might fail to explain or predict this phenomenon, such as the often contrasting theory of liberalism, which rejects power politics as the only possible outcome of international relations; and thus questions security and warfare principles of realism and its subtheories, failing to explain phenomena like this.

As the ultimate goal of a great power is to become a regional hegemon, this paper argues that offensive realism explains the foreign policy of actors because where there has been space to expand military power and influence, that possibility has been taken, however not solemnly to expand its own national power and influence - but to also undermine the power and influence of the competition, and hinder the rise of another hegemon. In the case presented in this paper, these opportunistic trends are presented distinctly, as shown in the graph below;

![Trend Indicator Values of arms exports from U.S and Russia to African nations](image-url)  

Figure 1. Trend Indicator Values of arms exports from U.S and Russia to African nations 1991-2020. Retrieved from SIPRI.
This graphic representation presents arms exports from U.S and Russia to African nations during the given timeframe for this paper; 1991-2020. What is of interest, and what this paper seeks to contribute with, is that in line with offensive realist presumptions that nations are suspicious of other nations intentions within IR.

Russia’s goals are to restate its global status as a superpower, and reinstate their diplomatic and military ties with Africa, and these ambitions are mirrored by the export shown- which is on constant rise since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, with a steady climb from the beginning of the 21th century with the accession of president Putin.

Many African nations see Russian compliance in ignoring human rights problems as beneficial, and the no-strings-attached type of cooperation makes Russia a desirable ally, for example Russian relations with Burundi are reported to be better than ever, after Western sanctions towards Burundi over human rights violations. In turn, Russia has used its UN Security Council veto to protect nations in Africa from international human rights-related criticisms and sanctions, as in Zimbabwe 2008 (Ploch, L. 2011:12).

As exemplified by the security dilemma, and that nations strive for regional hegemony in order to prevent other nations from becoming regional hegemons (Mearsheimer, J. 2001:140-147), this graph represents these structures within the foreign policy action of U.S respective Russia. It is shown how their strategy with arms exports and cooperation deals are intertwined and reflected by one another.

When in 2002 Russia acceded as the largest distributor of arms of the two, the U.S did not come to exceed Russia in export until in 2020 when the accord in Morocco was signed to strengthen military cooperation with the North African Kingdom, which was a deal signed with clear motives to strengthen the U.S side in the competition with Russia, in the region.

The graphic representation of the trend shown above is in line with further offensive realist statements, where the U.S as a regional hegemon of the western hemisphere has as a primary goal to maintain the status quo of the international system and prevent the emergence of a competitor regional hegemon (Mearsheimer 2001:41,236-237).
6. Conclusion

This paper tested several theoretical propositions derived from offensive realism, applied to the case of the military export and foreign policy strategies of Russia and the U.S in the field of Africa during the post-Cold War period. To answer the research question, namely does offensive realism provide relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy of Russia and the U.S in the realm of the African security nexus, the sections of this paper have disserted paradigms of this phenomena.

The main empirical and theoretical contribution are suggestions on using offensive realist theory in predicting foreign policy outcomes of power states, and suggests that the degree as to which offensive realism provides relevant explanatory insight on the foreign policy strategies of the actors is strongly competitive in contrast to other explanatory theories, which might fail to explain the outcome of certain circumstances in international relations, as brought up in this paper.

Moreover, a contribution to the scholarly discourse on the relevance and relative importance of offensive realism and its general paradigms, by strengthening the position of the theory in a theoretical discourse has been made, through prioritizing the theoretical and empirical mapping of the theory within these case studies rather than a full-scale assessment of alternative explanations, and thus broadening the horizons within the offensive realist and FPA relation.

Theoretical ambitions were further to analyze how actors within international-level interact and how this results in specific foreign policy behavior within a specific region, in this case Africa. This has resulted in findings pointing to a strategic approach towards foreign policy, prioritizing both the maximization of national power but also the counteracting of another hegemon.
These are two well known premises within offensive realism, however this paper contributes to the development of the theory by lifting that the prevention of another hegemon might be a bigger driving force for chaining foreign policy strategy than has been advocated, and that nations might prioritize this aspect sometimes over the aspect of maximizing the security, and thus survival, of the domestic nation state. As shown by the U.S policy shift within AFRICOM, going from shielding the domestic nation from terrorist threats by diplomatic and humanitarian means, to engaging in military cooperation and training deals- with some nations that are seen as previous threats, such as Somalia- in order to undermine the influence and reduce the presence of Russia.

In short, the conclusions are as such that policy actions are dictated by the anarchic status of the international system and strive to not only become a regional hegemon, but to prevent the rise of another regional hegemon as well. This has led to patterns in foreign policy strategy by both the U.S and Russia stemming from self-help, power maximization and offshore balancing strategy relying on the buck-passing and balancing strategies. When there has been no actor to be a “buck-passer”, both the U.S and Russia have instead used direct balancing by trade and the creation of alliances.

It is concluded that changes or continuations in foreign policy strategy is shaped by a combination of circumstances such as the anarchic system, the potential and real military capabilities possessed by other actors within the international system and the threats and opportunities created by the system. However, it is important to once again note that offensive realism in general and in this paper deals with “high politics”, meaning that it explains actions of great nations because these are able to influence the international arena in a way that small states are not.

In order to reserve the study against fallacies within reliability or validity, the theoretical and empirical mapping of how appropriately and adequately the theoretical framework of Mearsheimer's offensive realism provides insight on the foreign policy behaviour of the chosen actors has been prioritized, rather than a full-scale assessment of alternative explanations of the phenomena. This delimitation is made to exclude overdetermined results within the specific area of this study, however it is acknowledged that alternative methods provide alternative answers.
Furthermore, even though this paper has ambitions to create generalizable results it is highly possible that other case studies conducted on other regions or limitations of the timeframe might generate different results, meaning that the answers of study might have been different had the study been set up in a different way. However, as discussed in the section on validity and reliability the conclusions are deemed to be legitimate considering the theory testing ambitions of the paper.

Lastly, suggestions for further research tied to the empirical aspect of this paper are to apply a contrasting theory on the same basis as for this paper. This might provide deeper insight partially for the theory of subject for that particular research, and further the knowledge on the discrepancies and congruences of the theories in question.

To deepen the theoretical aspect of this paper, suggestions for further research might focus on the contrasting premises; using offensive realism on a new set of case studies with the ambition not to test the theory but rather to further develop it, and thus fill scientific voids within international relations.
7. References

7.1 Primary Sources


7.2 Secondary Sources


Schimmelfennig, F (2003): The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe


