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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ERA OF DONALD TRUMP THROUGH THE LENS OF ROLE THEORY

Jana Tůmová*

ABSTRACT

Since Donald Trump's inauguration in the office, there have appeared many articles dealing with changes and shifts in the American foreign policy (see, for example Ikenberry 2018; Drezner 2019 or Jervis et al. 2018). There have been ongoing discussions, whether and to what degree the rhetoric of Donald Trump really corresponded with his political actions and whether and to what degree the American foreign policy had really changed. This article tried to contribute to this debate by applying the role theory approach to determine the changes and continuity in the American foreign policy. Using the Holsti's (1970) and Le Prestre's (1997) approach to role theory, it examined the changes in the American national role conceptions. The article aimed at detecting key categories of national role conceptions under Harry Truman's and Donald Trump's administration. The obtained results from these two eras were compared and subsequently evaluated through statistical analysis. The results show that despite some minor changes, national role conceptions which define and stabilize the political actions of the USA in the international system, were similar both in Harry Truman and Donald Trump era. These findings may support the assertions of the authors who argue that the American foreign policy shows some distinct similar traits in the long run. Further research may be aimed at detailed discourse analysis of national roles, which may provide more detailed insight in the development of the respective national roles.

Key words: USA; Donald Trump; Harry Truman; role theory; national role conceptions; quantitative content analysis

Introduction

The American foreign policy and its development have been subject to research for many decades. There have been many publications dealing with the American great-power status (see, for example, Kennedy 1987; Miller 2007 or

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Rasler and Thompson 2014) and its projection (see, for example Mearsheimer 2014 or Wallerstein 2003), American identity (see, for example Huntington 2011; Huntington and Dune 2004) and the ways they influence the American foreign policy and American participation in the international system.

Since the inauguration of **Donald Trump** in January 2017, the concerns about American foreign policy and the influence America aims to exercise in the international system grew even stronger. This was mainly due to **Donald Trump's** changing pro-active and isolationist attitudes and sometimes contradicting statements. This versatility mirrored itself in different publications, where some of the scholars were pointing out on profound changes in the American foreign policy (see, for example Ikenberry 2018; Drezner 2019 or Jervis et al. 2018) while others were insisting that there have been only minor shifts in the American political course of action (see, for example Herbert et al. 2019).

This article aims at contributing to the works of scholars who argue that we can observe common traits that unite **Donald Trump's** foreign policy attitudes with his predecessors. Applying **Holsti's** (1970) and **Le Prestre's** (1997) approach to role theory, this article identifies the national role conceptions of the USA in the post-World War II era under the administration of **Harry Truman** and compare the results with the national role conceptions under **Donald Trump**. The results are also statistically evaluated. This article argues that the key elements that influence the American foreign policy, namely the national role conceptions, remained fairly the same when compared to post-World War II **Harry Truman** presidency, which is traditionally deemed to be pro-active and advocating interventionism in international affairs.

The article consists of three parts. The first part deals with the introduction of the conceptual framework, which encapsulates the basic concepts of role theory which are applied in the empirical part of the article. The second part of the article focuses on introduction of quantitative content analysis which is used to identify the American national role conceptions. It also introduces the operationalisation of the variables (namely the categories of national role conceptions). The third part of this article deals with the identification of the American national role conceptions under **Donald Trump** and **Harry Truman** administration. It also deals with statistical testing, presents the results of research and testing the hypothesis.

1. Conceptual Framework

This article focuses on detecting American national role conceptions through lens of role theory. Role theory is a conceptual analytical framework which can be applied in various social science fields of study while applying different methodology (Walker 1979, p. 176). It cannot be perceived as a classical theory as its use and the results of its application are variable depending on applied methodology. Role theory was introduced to IR by **Kalevi Holsti** in the article *National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy* in 1970. **Holsti** was challenging the at that time prominent neo/realistic paradigm. He was namely criticizing the predominant interpretation of international politics through lens of structural holism. He thus focused on the social psychological approach to role theory and its concepts and accommodated the theory to IR environment, where it could take into account both external and internal aspects influencing the foreign-policy decisions. Using its sociological and psychological background, **Holsti** identified four key concepts: nation's status, policymakers' national role conceptions, alter's role prescriptions and foreign policy role performance (1970, p. 236 – 240).

Nation's status was according to **Holsti** (1970) real position of the state in the international system which needed not necessary mirror itself in the foreign-policy making of the states and was thus not suitable for foreign-policy decision making analysis. He preferred to focus on the foreign policy role performance, e.g., the foreign-policy decision making of the actors/states. *Foreign policy role performance* was according to **Holsti** (1970) both the most general and appropriate level on which to study the actors' decision making. The expected behaviour within the certain role performance was according to **Holsti** (1970) influenced by internal (ego) and external (alter) notions about the content of certain role.

Ego part was represented by *national role conceptions* and was influenced by various factors ranging from national values, socio-economic position of the state to its geographic position etc., which subsequently influenced political representatives of the state and formed their conceptions about the role of their state in the international system (Hoslti 1970). Alter part (*role prescriptions*) was represented by systemic structures and constraints, which represented the general framework for the states' foreign policy decision making.

Holsti's approach to role theory and namely national role conceptions thus enabled the complex evaluation of psychological and societal contexts and their

influence on the foreign policy of states (Hudson – Vore 1995, p. 219). Because of the construction of the national role conceptions, **Holsti** (1970) assumed that the aspects which form the individual national role conceptions can be detected in the speeches of key political representatives of individual states.

Le Prestre (1997) slightly accommodated **Holsti**'s concepts and introduced the following categories: duties and responsibilities (this concept corresponds with **Holsti**'s national role conceptions), identity (formed by ego aspects of the role) and status (formed by alter aspects of the role). **Le Prestre** (1997) perceived *duties and responsibilities* as a summary of all duties and responsibilities which should be performed by state on the international scene and which are deemed as appropriate by key political representatives of the state (Le Prestre 1997, p. 12). These duties and responsibilities can be aggregated into individual categories of national role conceptions, which have certain content and main goals. The change of foreign policy can be then explained through gradual or intermittent change in the categories of national roles.

2. Methodology

To determine national role conceptions (duties and responsibilities) and their changes, this article applies content analysis. *Content analysis* can be described as a complex research technique which enables the analysis of the manifest or latent content of certain assertion. Main aim is to classify and assess its crucial parts to detect its key message and likely effects. (Krippendorff 2003, s. xvii). Content analysis can be performed both in qualitative and quantitative way.

There are several steps in which to perform content analysis. This article will follow their logic. First, it is crucial to determine the goal of the content analysis and set hypotheses which to test. Next, to focus on conceptualisation of the variables and their operationalisation. Then, to select the sample for the content analysis. After that, to create the criteria for coding. Then, to code the selected sample. And finally, to interpret the obtained results. (Neuendorf 2002, Krippendorff 2003)

The main hypothesis of this article runs as follows: The American national role conceptions under **Donald Trump** administration did not statistically differ from national role conceptions under **Harry Truman** administration. To test this hypothesis, the author of the article performs quantitative content analysis and paired sample t-test.

At the beginning, it is necessary to identify the population and the analytical units. *Population* is a summary of all materials, which include some references to national role conceptions in the reference period. Reference period is the period of **Harry Truman** and **Donald Trump** presidency. The *analytical units* are components which can be isolated and treated as individual parts (Krippendorff 2003, p. 97). There are several categories of analytical units: sampling units, coding units and context units (Krippendorff 2003, p. 98-101). This article applies context units which were assessed as a most appropriate type for this type of data and expected results of analysis. For the purposes of the article, the context units are represented by words, sentences and individual phrases in certain contexts which somehow identify, define or describe the national role conceptions.

After identification of analytical units, it is necessary to focus on *sample selection*. Within the framework of content analysis, sample can be selected both by statistical and non-statistical methods. This article applies non-statistical method, namely the relevance sampling. Relevance sampling is used mainly in those cases when there is different probability of finding relevant data in different type of materials. It *a priori* focuses on materials where the probability of finding relevant information scores higher. (Krippendorff 2003, p. 119) This article focuses on general political speeches of key political representatives from the relevance period. As the analysis has to focus on speeches of political representatives who exercise major influence on foreign policy decision making of the state and because of the American political system, the article analyses mainly key general political speeches of **Donald Trump** and **Harry Truman**, which can occasionally be supplemented by some key speech of high political representative (typically Vice President or US Secretary of State). When selecting the sample, it is also crucial to determine the time-frame, in which the speeches are going to be analysed. This article focuses on one the first term of both Harry Truman (e.g., 1945 – 1949) and Donald Trump (e.g. 2017 – present; for the purposes of the analysis, the article determines the cut-off date by the end of December, 2019) presidency.

When selecting the sample, it is also necessary to determine the *sample size*. The most common techniques are statistical approach, experimental approach and split-half techniques (Krippendorff 2003, p. 121 – 124). This article applies experimental approach to sample selection, which was applied both by **Holsti** (1970) and **Le Prestre** (1997). **Holsti** (1970, p. 256) deemed that the sufficient sample size is 10 speeches (per one tested period). **Le Prestre** (1997, p. 13)

assessed the sufficient sample size to be between 40 – 60 speeches per two tested periods. This article applies similar methodology and thus sets the sufficient sample size to be 25 speeches per one tested period.

Subsequently, it is necessary to define *coding criteria/categories*. These criteria/categories are usually identified when coding the sources of information. At the beginning it is crucial to determine whether the researcher should code manifest or latent content of the source/texts or both. When coding the manifest content, researcher codes only the content, which is explicitly stated in the text. When coding the latent content, researcher codes the meaning, which is conveyed by certain assertions – context units. Because of the fact that this article analysis relatively smaller number of texts, these texts are analysed as originals (in English) and when coding solely the manifest content (by key words), it can lead to certain loss of the context, this article combines both the manifest and latent coding.

To perform the coding in the selected sample, the author sets the key words (see Table 1). Assertions which together with these key words convey certain meaning are subsequently coded in the form of data (coding of manifest content) or in the form of context units (coding of latent content) and then assigned to individual categories of national role conceptions. Categories of national role conceptions are defined through combination of inductive and deductive approach. This combination is the most common approach when analysing the text messages (Varkočková 2008, p. 160). As the coding is performed by only one researcher (author of this article) it seems reasonable to increase the inter-coder agreement by applying, where appropriate, the categories of national role conceptions as defined by Holsti (1970, p. 276). However, the operationalisation of these categories and their modification for selected state and period has to be performed by the author of this article (see Table 1).

Table 1: Operationalisation of American National Role Conceptions

National Role Conception (Holsti 1970)/Author	Main Aim of the National Role Conception (Holsti 1970)/Author	Key Words (author)
Regional-Subsystem Collaborator	Far reaching commitments aimed at creating and supporting community, cooperation and integration with other political units	community, regional community, communal cooperation/integration/cooperation in the framework of community, regional/subsystem integration,

		collective action, creation/development of regional community, our/Western hemisphere, Pan-American Union, Pan-Americanism, United Nations
Defender of Faith	Protection of values typical of the country	protection of democracy/democratic values/ faith/moral/justice; national/individual freedoms, support of individualism
Development Leader	Special commitments aimed at supporting development of (developing) countries	development leader, development/economic aid/support/programmes, development cooperation, assistance, leading role in development aid, development counselling, economic development
Regional Protector	Providing protection to nearby areas/regions	regional protection, regional military aid/support/counselling/commitments (orientation mainly on the Latin American countries/Western hemisphere)
Regional Leader	Special commitments and responsibilities to region, with which the state associate itself with	regional leader/leadership/primacy, leading regional role/position
America First	Focus on primary interests of the state (especially political and military), nationalism, isolationism	America first, American/national interests, nationalism, American military, isolationism
Economic Leader	key role of the state in enhancing economic growth and prosperity (especially at national level; possible cross-over to international level, but also with aim to promote domestic economic growth)	economic leader/take lead in economic questions; enhance national economic growth/development, economic treaties, (international) economic system
Example	Focus on gaining prestige and influence in international system through enhancing of certain aspects of domestic politics	support of individual initiative, equal opportunities, equality under the law, pursuit of happiness, American dream, creation of stable environment/opportunities; removal of obstacles/inequality/social injustice

Source: Holsti (1970, p. 276), (1983, p. 117-119), author

The *assessment of the data* will be performed through tabulation. Tabulation is often used to present the results of content analysis. It can be described as summarization of similar or same context units in individual categories and representation of the frequency by which they appear in the text (Krippendorff 2003, p. 192). The results obtained by text coding will be represented both in relative and absolute terms and subsequently tested through Student t-test, namely paired sample t-test. Paired sample t-test is a form of Student t-test which determines the difference between two means of two different samples. Paired t-test statistics tests the changes in the means of two samples – one sample consists of data prior to certain event and second sample consists of data post this certain event. T-test then tests the null hypothesis about the equilibrium of the means. When proven the null hypothesis, the results of the testing indicate that selected event had no statistically significant effect on the sample mean. Within the framework of this article, these statistics will be applied to prove that the changes in the person of political representatives of the USA, namely **Harry Truman** and **Donald Trump**, had no effect on the American role conceptions.

3. Data Presentation and Discussion

Main aim of this chapter is to present the results of quantitative content analysis of the selected speeches of **Harry Truman** and **Donald Trump** (or their Secretaries of State). Number of speeches in individual years and their authors are stated in the Table 2 and Table 3. For detailed overview of selected speeches, see section Literature.

Table 2: Selected Speeches for Content Analysis (1945 - 1949)

	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Harry Truman – No of Speeches	5	4	5	5	5
James Byrnes – No of Speeches		1			
No of Speeches - Total	5	5	5	5	5

Source: author

Table 3: Selected Speeches for Content Analysis (2017 - 2019)

	2017	2018	2019
Donald Trump – No of Speeches	5	10	10
No of Speeches - Total	5	10	10

Source: author

Key events which influenced the formation of American national role conceptions under **Harry Truman** were the circumstances under which he assumed office. Truman assumed the office of American president on April, 12th, 1945, that is during the World War II fights in Italy and Germany (The White House 2015). Main goal, which he concentrated on at that time was thus to conclude these military operations. During that time, it was obvious that the American national role conceptions had been undergoing major redefinition. In the period of 1945 – 1949, we can thus identify major increase in the number of national role conceptions (when compared to pre-World War II period). For details, see Table 4.

Table 4: American National Role Conceptions in the Period 1945 – 1949 (relative frequency of individual categories)

National Role Conceptions - Categories	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	Total
Regional– subsystem Collaborator	25%	28%	28%	22%	28%	26%
Defender of Faith	10%	8%	10%	14%	12%	11%
Development Leader	17%	19%	21%	22%	23%	21%
Regional Protector	8%	6%	10%	8%	7%	8%
Economic Leader	13%	11%	8%	14%	12%	11%
Example	17%	14%	15%	14%	14%	15%
Regional Leader	10%	14%	8%	6%	4%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: author

Regional –subsystem collaborator represented the most frequently identified category for the period 1945 – 1949. The main aim of this category was, according to **Holsti** (1970), identified as commitments to support and develop community, to cooperate and integrate with other units. In case of the United States, for this category and period, the content analysis detected gradual diminishment (when compared to pre-World War II period) of cooperation with Latin American countries (this position also indicated the step back from hemispheric isolationism). New units with which the USA started to cooperate were defined more broadly as democratic countries both on Western and Eastern hemisphere and new international organisations (mainly the UN and its agencies).

The second most common category for this period was *development leader*. Main aim of this role was according to **Holsti** (1970) to support the development

of the developing states. In case of the USA in this period, this role was slightly modified. Its main goal was to provide economic cooperation and support to strategic regions, which could often not be classified as developing countries. This national role conception mirrored rather pro-active American foreign policy in post-World War II era (when compared to pre-World War II period). It included the financial assistance for Greece and Turkey in the framework of **Truman** doctrine, economic assistance to European countries through **Marshall Plan** and economic assistance for Asian countries and Middle East.

Example was the third most commonly identified category of national role conceptions. This national role conception was identified in the pre-World War II period as well and represented rather stable category of the American national role conceptions. Main aim of this category was to emphasize certain aspects of domestic policy which could be used as an inspiration or example for other nations and states. In case of the USA in this period, the core of the role was to emphasize the fulfilment of basic needs of the citizens, especially their democratic rights and freedoms. The analysis conveyed obvious long-term influences on the construction of the role – e.g., the traits of **F.D. Roosevelt**, **Abraham Lincoln** and other.

Defender of the faith and economic leader ranked in the fourth place both with 11% of total references to national role conceptions. Main aim of the role defender of the faith was the protection of the values typical for the country. In case of the USA for the selected period the analysis identified key following values: democracy, faith, moral, support of individualism and pioneering spirit. This national role conception represented also rather stable category of American national role conceptions (when compared to pre-World War II period). On contrary, national role conception economic leader was a new category (when compared to pre-World War II period). This national role conception again mirrored rather pro-active approach to American foreign policy in post-World War II era. Main aim of this national role conception was to emphasize the key role of the state in the international economic system and to support the national economic development of the state. This national role conception mirrored itself especially in American initiative during establishment of multilateral economic treaties or international organisations focusing on regulation and development of international economy and commerce.

Last, but not least, content analysis identified categories of *regional leader* and *regional protector*, both with 8% of all references to national role conceptions. These national role conceptions were identified in the post-World War II period

and again implied higher international activity of the USA in the international system. Main aim of the role regional protector was to provide the protection to nearby areas/regions. In case of the USA in this period the protection was mainly aimed at the countries of Latin America. To a certain degree, this role was present also in the pre-World War II period in the form of declaratory statements aimed at the security of Western hemisphere. After the WW II, this approach crystallized in new category of national role conception. This role mirrored itself for example in constitution of Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance in 1947. Main aim of the role regional leader was declaration of special commitments to region which the state associate itself with. In case of the USA, it was not a region in the exact meaning of the word, but areas, on which stability the USA focused as they deemed them crucial for the foreign-policy goals of the United States. These areas were mainly the countries in Latin America, or more globally, on the Western hemisphere. The main goal of this role was to provide support, which would lead to political and economic stabilisation of these regions.

Key events which influenced the formation of American national role conceptions under **Donald Trump** were also the circumstances under which he assumed office. **Trump** namely focused on delimitation against **Barrack Obama** policy, or more generally, against the policy pursued by the Democratic Party. **Trump** both in his campaign and during his presidency mirrored the present criticism against (neo)liberal political approaches pursued by **Obama's** administrative. **Trump's** main concerns were thus focused on improving American economic position and international position. For impacts of **Trump's** presidency on American national role conceptions, see tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: American National Role Conceptions in the Period 2017 - 2019 (relative frequency of individual categories)

National Role Conceptions - Categories	2017	2018	2019	Total
Regional– subsystem Collaborator	19%	21%	16%	18%
Defender of Faith	7%	8%	8%	8%
Development Leader	14%	13%	16%	14%
America First	22%	16%	19%	19%
Example	14%	16%	11%	14%
Economic Leader	24%	26%	30%	27%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: author

Table 6: American National Role Conceptions 1945 – 1949/2017 - 2019 (ranking, relative frequency)

National Role Conceptions - Categories	1945 – 1945 (Ranking)	1945 – 1949 (Relative Frequency)	2017 – 2019 (Ranking)	2017 - 2019 (Relative Frequency)
Regional– subsystem Collaborator	1	26%	3	18%
Regional Protector	5	8%	x	x
Regional Leader	5	8%	x	x
Development Leader	2	21%	4	14%
Example	3	15%	4	14%
Economic Leader	4	11%	1	27%
America First	x	x	2	19%
Defender of Faith	4	11%	5	8%

Source: author

As we can see from Table 6, which compares the American national role conceptions under **Harry Truman** and **Donald Trump**, there have been some, but only minor changes. Most prominent category in **Donald Trump** era was role *economic leader* (compare to regional – subsystem collaborator under **Harry Truman**). In this period the role economic leader evolved especially around re-establishing American economic position (both domestically and in the international system). The means with which Donald Trump aimed at achieving this goal differed somehow from the Harry Truman administrative; however, the main aim of the role, to achieve the key role of the state in the international economic system and to support national economic development remained fairly the same. Moreover, both the role economic leader and regional-subsystem collaborator have rather high ranking on the international activity scale (Holsti 1970), which contradicts some statements about **Trump**’s isolationism (see, for example Galizzi 2019 or T. Cha 2016).

The second most commonly identified national role conception in the period 2017 – 2019 was the *America first*. This national role conception was the only one, which had not appeared in the 1945 – 1949 period. The analysis identified the main aim of this national role conception as a focus on primary interests of the state (predominantly political or military). This national role conception also to certain degree enhanced American nationalism.

Other national role conceptions remained fairly the same as in the **Harry Truman** era, only with slight changes in their ranking and geographic focus. The *regional subsystem collaborator* role in this period thus focused mainly on

cooperation with and within areas, which might be of current or potential American geopolitical interests. This somehow mirrored in weakening cooperation with traditional institutions like the UN. On the other hand, it was obvious that **Donald Trump** does not denounce international organisations as such, only focuses on cost-benefit analysis. The *development leader* role under Trump concentrated especially on Middle East countries and countries, where there might be imminent clashes of geopolitical interests with other great powers. Defender of faith and example emphasized similar values as under **Harry Truman** presidency. However, in the period 2017 – 2019 the analysis identified no references to regional protector and regional leader role. These roles had been focused mainly on the Latin American region (under Harry Truman). The erosion of interest in Latin American countries was however not a new approach introduced by Trump’s administrative. It can be considered as a long-term trend which dates back to 80’s (see, for example Hayes 1988, Leogrande 2007, Fuente 2017).

To determine, whether there occurred statistically significant changes in the national role conceptions under **Donald Trump** when compared to **Harry Truman** era, author of this article performed paired sample t-test. MS Excel had been used to calculate the data. Significance level was set at 0,05.

Table 7: Paired Sample T-test: American National Role Conceptions 1945 – 1949/2017 - 2019

Number of Categories (n)	National Role Conceptions - Categories	References to Categories in Absolute Terms (1945 – 1949)	References to Categories in Absolute Terms (2017 – 2019)	Number of Speeches per each Period (N)
1	Regional- subsystem Collaborator	51	34	25
2	Example	29	25	25
3	Defender of Faith	21	14	25
4	Development Leader	40	26	25
5	Regional Protector	15	0	25
6	Regional Leader	16	0	25
7	America First	0	35	25
8	Economic Leader	22	50	25

Mean		24,25	23	
Standard Deviation		14,76270639	16,37833935	
T-test (H0 probability)		0,869815165		

Source: author

The results summarized in table 7 show that there occurred no statistically significant change in national conception roles. This result contradicts the assumptions of some authors (Ikenberry 2018; Drezner 2019 or Jervis et al. 2018) that Donald Trump departed from traditional American foreign-policy conceptions, which were typical for the USA in previous eras. The content analysis of the speeches revealed that there occurred some changes in rhetoric and therefore also the presentation of the foreign-policy activities and goals. However, the content remained fairly the same.

Conclusion

Because of the international status of the USA, American presidential elections and the president-elect trigger great deal of international attention. During the presidential elections in 2016, many articles focused on **Donald Trump** and perceived changes that he planned to introduce to American domestic and foreign policy. Being a Republican, he sharply delimited against **Barack Obama** and Democratic Party approaches, which might have some consequences for the international system. In the presidential campaign, **Donald Trump** spoke out against international organisations and alignments, which were one of the cornerstones of **Obama's** presidency.

After **Trump's** inauguration, there occurred many articles focusing on shifts or departures from approaches, which were deemed traditional for the US foreign policy. This article applied different approach and tried to identify common traits that united **Trump's** approaches with his predecessors. Article deliberately chose to compare **Trump's** presidency with Democratic Party representative, **Harry Truman**. **Truman** was by many scientists labelled as interventionist and architect of the post-World War II international system. The article tried to prove that there are some common traits unifying **Trump's** and **Truman's** international policy.

To identify major aspects of American foreign policy under **Truman** and **Trump**, article applied role theory. Using the approach of **Holsti** (1970) and **Le**

Prestre (1997), it identified American national role conceptions under **Truman** and **Trump**. To identify these roles, quantitative content analysis had been applied.

As the results of the quantitative content analysis show, there have been only minor shifts in national role conceptions. All national role conceptions (with exception of regional protector and regional leader) defined and performed during **Truman**'s presidency have been present during **Trump**'s presidency. There were only minor shifts in ranking of these roles as well. As the statistical analysis (paired sample t-test) shows, there were not identified statistically significant changes in the national role conceptions, when comparing **Trump**'s and **Truman**'s presidency.

However, there might be some limitations to this analysis. The first stems from the fact that the period of Truman presidency might be specific because of the post-war challenges that the USA had to face in the international system. This limitation might be overcome when comparing **Trump**'s national role conceptions with other American presidents, presumably across political spectrum. However, as **Holsti**'s (1970) analysis for American national role conception for the 60's shows, most of the roles identified for **Truman** presidency by this article remained stable also for that period. Another limitation stems from the selected methodology. The quantitative content analysis is suitable for detecting frameworks or tendencies; however, for more precise assessment, it might be interesting to perform qualitative content analysis or discourse analysis to describe the American national role conceptions and their evolution in more detail. This might be the topic for further research. For further examinations of American foreign policy under **Trump** presidency, it might be also interesting to focus on changes in American identity and status (as defined by **Le Prestre** (1997)), which according to **Holsti** (1970) and **Le Prestre** (1997) also influence formulation of foreign policy goals of the individual states.

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