The Rise of China and International Relations Theory

Jean Kachiga

PETER LANG

This book examines succinctly the substantive assumptions of each one of the main international relations theories, namely realism, liberalism, constructivism, the English school, critical theory and idealism, against China's choices and behavior as an international actor. The author seeks to articulate how China's choices and behavior alternatively reflect and vindicate, or challenge and reject reigning assumptions of international relations theory.

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To Father Roger Devloo
The most polyvalent, reliable, humble, and saintly of all the human beings I have met.

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Introduction

International relations theory examines the behavior of actors and the phenomena in the international realm beyond nation-states. Modern international relations theory consequentially begins, in time and space, with political developments in the center of Europe, since the Napoleonic Wars. Off the heel of emerging unitary states (The Dutch Republics), newly formed nations (Germany, Italy), and established nations (Spain, Austria, France, Great Britain), European nations had gradually taken a justified interest in the ordering of relations among themselves. The aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars commanded a reasoned interest in scrutinizing the behaviors of relevant international actors for their implications. The numerous states, rivalries, and wars logically demanded strategizing both intellectually and martially. They also produced intense diplomatic activity as well as new concepts to guide their relations, and practices that resonated years later in the first half of the 20th century. Concepts such as *realpolitik*, balancing power through alliances, and war as a tool of foreign policy—many of which already known due to the rivalries between the Greek city-states, as revealed by the Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian Wars (431–404 BC)—kept their validity among those approaching international affairs from the realist perspective. Those using this perspective therefore consider Thucydides the intellectual forefather of these concepts. Like in the time of Thucydides, these nations responded to the need of

creating conditions in which vulnerabilities were lessened, security maximized, and overall conditions for peace strengthened. In Europe, they aimed at keeping "new Napoleons" from threatening the rest of the continent's nations and beyond.

Once in the 20th century, the World Wars ensured continued interest in international affairs and relations. The first half of the 20th century has allowed, in fact, the intensification of such an interest and in many ways has cemented the pursuit of modern international relations theorizing. The interwar period has seen emerge the consciousness of a causal link between the succession of events (see E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919–1939*) and the existing structure of the international system of states, which requires thinking about the world as a closed system, as Hartford Mackinder described (1904). Consumed and concerned by the ever-present menace of the World Wars, and then by the possibility of a nuclear war, the state of international affairs quasi-naturally resulted in an intellectual leaning toward the realist approach to international relations. By then, the center of political gravity had shifted. It has crossed the Atlantic Ocean. It now resided in North America, more precisely in the United States. The realist approach to international relations throve with the writings of H. Morgenthau, K. Deutsch, and A. F. K. Organski, to name just a few. It became an academic discipline. It throve just as well in the political culture of the United States, which had spearheaded the West against the Soviet Union as an ideological rival and a superpower nemesis. The United States was preoccupied with the implications of its growing influence in world affairs, the imperatives of ideological rivalry with the Soviets, and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. It was no coincidence that theorizing about international relations emerged in Europe, and it is no coincidence that it was cemented, as a discipline, in the United States. Europe and North America laid its bed.

The time, space, and historical context of the emergence of international relations theory and discipline have had the following two consequences. First, because international relations theory and discipline historically emerged in a specifically Western context, it produced an analysis reflective of both the experiences and the identity of those acting (political actors) as well as of those theorizing (scholars). To their identity belongs a long-established history of civilization worldviews, cultural norms, and customary practices as well as an intellectual heritage of epistemic inquiry rooted in taxonomic, rationalist, positivist, materialist, and deductive logic. The practice of, and the theorizing on, international relations, consequently had to reflect this intellectual context. This context explains the materialist, positivist, and deductive main theoretical approaches to international relations, namely realism and liberalism. They are taxonomic as they

proceed through establishing categories and their substance and attributes. They are materialist, as they premise states' materialist interests in military capabilities and economic prosperity. They are rationalist as they use concepts and provide them with content to produce knowledge. They are positivist as they rely on observable phenomena and quantifiable factors. They are deductive as they proceed with the constructing of hypothesis to test, and to produce inferences. We do not imply that there is, per se, anything wrong with these approaches. We simply imply that they leave room for non-materialist, post-positivist, critical, and many other approaches. In fact, this is the reason why constructivism and the English School emerged. It is as well the reason why critical theories of post-modernism, post-structuralism, and even the feminist approaches found their place in theorizing international relations. These subsequent approaches to international relations emerged as a result of dissatisfaction of those not completely sold to the assumptions of the positivist approaches. And this interest in theorizing international relations will certainly produce further new approaches and assumptions. This is what is now being noticed in China, where the interest in international relations has been growing.

The second consequence of international relations theory emerging in the West is that it reflected in its content, Western perspective and dominance of international affairs. Consequently, any erosion of such a dominance will open up international affairs to new perspectives. The erosion is underway. East Asia is the region whose share of influence in world affairs has been growing, benefiting from Western erosion. The East Asian perspective, therefore, is bound to seek its place among the other approaches to international relations, like the post-positivists approaches had done. Spearheaded by China, East Asia has now started to move into the center of gravity of world affairs and to express the need for a different perspective. Signs of it can be already observed both through ways in which China justifies its policy choices and the new theoretical grounding of some of its scholars. These scholars could articulate a Chinese perspective. What could become the Chinese school of international relations is most likely to infuse a new perspective and probably challenge the dominant approaches and assumptions. Both scholarship and policy choices in international relations from China will enrich the discourse and analysis of international affairs.

So far, the body of theoretical approaches to international relations, examining the nature of the international system and the behavior of actors within, is elaborate enough to suggest that there was no possible behavior of international actors not yet accounted for. In other words, the implicit assumption, based on the elaborate body of work in international relations theory today, suggests that

for each policy choice, from which derive foreign policy and for each international actors' behavior, there is a theoretical approach accounting for it. While scrutinizing China's behavior as an international actor, one naturally seeks to find which assumptions and descriptions China's policy choices reflect; or whether its behavior is accounted for by existing theories.

Recent scholarship has been preoccupied with fitting China's behavior into theoretical boxes, and, in the process, validating or discharging other approaches. This attitude of course suggests that there is nothing an international relations actor can do that has not already been theorized. What if China's behavior does not squarely or simply fit the templates or matrix laid out by the existing theories? What if China was to prove through its behavioral choices that existing theories do not adequately exhaust the possibilities of international actors? After all, China is the state that chocked the entrenched orthodoxy of political and economic ideologies as it maintained simultaneously political communism and economic free market capitalism. What if China took the liberties of going beyond the existing cannon of international relations theory? Of course, China may still end up resembling in its behavior any other state constrained by the structural exigencies of the international system.[1] In any case, there is room for any state actor to use agential capacity and to surprise the world of international relations theory. And if any state can, China can. Although states generally end up finding their place in the system and behaving accordingly, some choose not to fit into the place left for them and the role expected for them to play. This is what we call taking liberties. It reflects the capacity of an agent to shape processes and procedures in the system within which it operates. Whether a state will take such a liberty depends on a number of factors such as size, capabilities, ambition, interests, identity, degrees of satisfaction with the status quo order, and so on.

What about China? Is China a state that is likely to take liberties with its choices and behavior to affect processes and structure of the existing order? China seems to meet the prerequisites that position states to seek the reshaping or reshuffling of the status quo order. First, China is beginning to outgrow the place it has occupied and its growing clout calls for a new role. Second, China's identity is unique enough to cause deviation from existing behavioral norms. Third, China's size, interests, ambitions, and capabilities are growing significantly enough to induce increased relevant influence. There are reasons to expect of China, behavior

1. We understand the international system like Gilpin (1981) defines it, namely as made of rules of the system and division of territory, international economy, hierarchy of prestige, and great power dominance.

that international relations theory has predicted. There are reasons, as well, to expect behavior not yet accounted for in the repertoire of international relations theory. This is what has already been observed in the Chinese political leadership's careful orchestration of its diplomatic activity as it becomes conscious of the new role it is called to play in the international system. China has become a shareholder benefiting from the system structure, but is also realizing how confining the system structure is, to its identity, culture, and history. Like any other state, China will have its interests but the choice it will make to pursue them may be refreshing and surprising simply because of its identity.

All these reasons point to first, a potential challenge that the rise of China poses to both international politics and relations; and second, to theorizing about international relations. Our goal here, therefore, is twofold. With the first goal, we seek to scrutinize China's actions as an international relations actors to find out whether it comes with fresh behavior, a new attitudes not accounted for in the existing international relations scholarship. This interest derives from the basis that China has a number of identity features, distinct enough to allow the anticipation of potential novel behavior. After all, all very important international actors have been Western, sharing a specific Western history and social metaphysics, or ideational values, with the exception of the Soviet Union. And in the case of the Soviet Union, there was indeed new behavior relevant enough to the international order.

We will find answers to this first question of interest through a systematic observation of China's foreign policy behavior and activity in the pursuit of its national objective. And we will then use predictions, expectations, and assumptions of the main international relations theoretical perspective (realism, liberalism, institutional liberalism and neoliberalism, constructivism, the English School, critical theory, and even idealism), as reading grid to establish how China's behavior vindicates them, deviates from them, or simply discards them. As for the second question of interest, namely a potential challenge from China to international relations theorizing, here as well, the assumption is whether China would indeed demonstrate through its behavior that states' actors can still display new type of behavior that deviates from, or discredits in some ways, the canon of the existing international relations theory. Should that be the case, China will have demonstrated the limits of international relations theorizing, and entice or stimulate new theorizing. Such challenge to theorizing international relations may as well come from a different source. It may come from the academic source. Indeed, the interest of Chinese scholars in international relations theory has been rising, and soon there will be more students and scholars in the field from China than

anywhere else around the world. Their domination in the field will naturally depend on the quality of their scholarship. But before then, and in the meantime, there has already been dissenting voices to be heard among current Chinese scholars of international relations. These scholars, Qin Qin (2016), Tang (2012), Yan (2011), Zhang (2012), and Tingyang (2003, 2009), to name a few, have begun questioning the validity, the explanatory power and therefore the universality of international relations theory from the West. They generally suspect the lack of non-Western societal experiences perspective in existing international relations theory. This has been a reason good enough to prompt an interest in production of international relations theory from a non-Westerner, in particular, a Chinese perspective. These scholars have embarked on a project designed to provide answers to the question asked by Acharya and Buzan (2007),[2] namely why has there not been a non-Western international relations theory?

To find answers to what is the second question of interest, namely, finding the challenges to theorizing international relations, and how such challenges have been addressed so far, we will canvas the literature, and focus on the most significant ones, the most representative and indicative of the expressions of the responses to the challenge. In this second question of interest around a non-Western international relations theorizing, the debate revolves around questions of whether a Chinese perspective in international relations should just be an enrichment, or a contribution to existing theory, and therefore Chinese scholars interest should simply be distributed along the existing assumptions of international relations? The debate revolved as well around the question whether China's interest in theorizing international relations should produce a Chinese school, the like of the English School, using new assumptions; or whether China should develop a new social metaphysics, new lenses from which to view the international system and relations among state. These questions have been driven by the argument according to which, like any social scientific theory, international relations theorizing has a historical, a cultural origin and context, and therefore is produced by scholars who are parts of a specific social metaphysics and epistemic culture, which is reflected in their intellectual production. It could even be worse, namely when theory is produced to support a specific agenda, as famously Robert Cox (1981)[3]

2. Why is there no non-Western internaiotnal relations theory? An Introduction. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7 (3) (September 2007): 287–312.
3. Robert Cox. "Theory is always for someone and for some purpose," in *Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory*. Millennium 10 (2): 128–155.

has cautioned. At the same time, the same Cox's words of caution should also be valid for Chinese scholars who may be tempted to produce scholarship designed to support or sell the political agenda of those who might be interested in them. China remains an authoritarian, if not totalitarian state. Scholars are not beyond, at least not yet, any political influence. Yong Deng (1998: 309) wrote, "China's developing international studies area are intertwined with official thinking." He has been supported by Xue (2016) who noted that universities and academic research centers were now playing a role in collection and analysis of foreign information under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Deng wrote further (p. 309) that Chinese publication of scholarship still requires clearance. He conceded that "there is no doubt that the Chinese scholars enjoy some freedom in expressing their views, however, the degree to which scholarship writing reflects and influences official thinking is extremely difficult to establish." In any case, from both the state and government side and the academic side, China has been actively pursuing an agenda designed to refine its original view and description of the world and its community of states and to suggest it to international systems and international relations, and in the process, to no longer coast as a "free rider."

My interest in writing the book lies in shedding light onto the fact that the extensive scholarship in international relations theory has become almost deterministic in assigning roles, and in expecting behavior and choices on behalf of actors within the international system that reflects the assumptions posited. It is a product of material interest-based behavior. It is a product of rational choice and deductive logic. It is a product of a systemic and structural reasoning. This perspective puts more weight on the system than on behavior, which is seen as its corollary. In fact, in this age-old question of structure-agency interaction, agency is limited by the constraints of structures in the pursuit of its interests. This perspective leaves out the historical context of which Hegel and Marx spoke. It leaves out the possibility of changing social metaphysics, as the consciousness of people and nations can change, and their views of their world. It leaves out the possibilities of new transformations that new paradigms may induce. The world has existed before the Westphalian order. This Westphalian order has been tested by the transformations brought about by the intense interdependence of globalization and the digital technology. There are already cracks in the Westphalian order with the growing consciousness of the fragility of this planet, which if anything were to go wrong in it, we will all be affected. It may take the next transformations, induced by new consciousness or new technologies, to crack further open the Westphalian order. More importantly, putting more weight on the international structure seems to reduce agential capacity, seen as a victim of the constraints of

the structure in which agents act, and also seen as a victim of an attitude vis-à-vis the material world, anchored in a social metaphysics that remains unquestioned. The world of international politics, however, is dynamic; and so should be the views and attitudes developed by those looking at it, or living in it. The world can be changed by agency. Such a change, consequently, occurs as a result of change of perspective. The Chinese philosopher Zhu Wenli simply states that " a change in ideas often paves the way for changes in behavior."[4] And there are those who look at it not through the lenses of structure-agency duality. They are those who believe that duality is always relational, not etched in stone, here the structuration theory at the sociological level, therefore state level, comes to mind, and that it is subject to change and flexibility to serve the ever-changing identity and need of agency. The latter is the perspective of the Confucian tradition, in which China is grounded, and with which China seems to renew. From this perspective, the international level, its processes, norms, actors' identities, and interests are all relatively perceived. This confers to China's approach a pragmatic essence that explains its choices of policy and flexibility in their pursuit.

Systemic structures, if and when not natural but social, ought to be bendable when they need be, because they do not exist as objects, in and for themselves. The international system is not a static and independent object to which, properties, among them state-actors, have no other choice but to conform. This core belief of constructivism justifies all those states that take liberties to daringly embark on new behavioral courses. Taking liberties does not mean going "rogue." While going rogue is choosing to be indifferent or rejecting of international norms, taking liberties is about enriching the processes and structure of the international system with new behavior by actors. This seems to be the international vocation of China—becoming instrumental in shaping the international system of tomorrow through new initiatives.

This book, therefore, explores China's policy and behavioral choices: how it seems to take liberties in concocting such choices and, in the process, provides to the international relations theory new insight to consider in producing new theories. We note and argue that China is cautious and methodical in its approach, aware of the danger it might face. Eager to continue its rise, China has started to carve a path whose features are not easily explained by just the one or the other existing theoretical approaches to international relations.

4. Zhu Wenli cited by Yong Deng in: "Chinese Conception of National Interests in International Relations." *China Quarterly*, no. 154 (June 1998): 309.

In the next few chapters, I place China's rise in the modern historical context. In the subsequent chapter, I argue that China presents identity features that presage a different conception of the international system. The next few chapters will echo China's distinctiveness through the articulation of a new thinking about international relations theory by Chinese scholars, and by new approaches in the pursuit of national interests by the Chinese leadership. This will constitute the bulk of our preoccupation. The preoccupation, as stated, consists of pinning China's policy choices and behaviors in the international system against the assumptions and predictions of the main international relations theory.

1

China's Rise in Modern Historical Context

The rise of China is a consequence of a state agential capacity to respond to both the demands of its own circumstances and to the epochal exigencies of the dynamic of history. History is indeed in constant state of motion, driven by specific driving forces at any given epoch. These driving forces come with specific exigencies. In fact, these exigencies are distinct enough to induce a break between the status quo and the new. Driving forces in the world's modern political history have been trade, the market and its influence on modes of production and social structures, capital, the liberalization of markets, and the spread of economic liberalism worldwide. These driving forces have induced different epochs, namely mercantilism, agrarian capitalism, commercial capitalism, industrial capitalism, the combination of capitalism, commerce and industry to produce the liberal economics, which in turn produced institutional liberalism, and finally global free market system, which we call globalization.

Each one of these epochs of the modern era has produced emerging powers; some of which reached great power status and other superpower status. Modern political history has seen the rise of Portugal, Spain, and the Dutch in the mercantile era. The reinforcement of the Dutch and the rise of England and the consolidation of its power as it morphed into Great Britain and the United States in the industrial capitalist era. The establishment of the United States in the economic

liberalist epoch, which combined capitalism, industry and market, and the institutionalization of trade exchange practices. Modern political history has produced the current epoch of globalization characterized by a global liberal economic system; and China is rising to be the premier global economic power.

The modern era seems to produce a recurrent pattern. The pattern consists of specific driving forces (trade, market, capital, industry, and spread of free market) which come with new exigencies. Individual states need to adjust, and they do so with different degrees of urgency. Some are quick to react and adjust while others are slow, and others again even not at all; allowing some to sit at the driving seat of change, others to be newcomers or late comers, and others to just be inert. As while they adjust, they do so with different rates of success. The consequence has been the recurrent shift in the hierarchy of wealth and power throughout modern political history. This explains the recurrent power transition and hegemonic transition theory (Organski, 1958; Gilpin, 1981).

Scholars, the likes of Modleski (1987) and Thompson (1999), represent this historical perspective. They represented an entire view and perspective in international relations theory that focuses on the historical perspective. From this perspective, international relations reveal an evolutionary process and cycles. These scholars see in this dynamics the primary cause of international changes. They are those who write focusing on change in international relations. The relevance of this perspective lies in the fact that such change shapes and reshapes the structure and the conduct of international affairs. It produces hegemonic powers with the political will and capabilities of ordering international relations. Portugal and Spain had produced the Treaty of Tordessillas in 1494 until the Dutch succeeded in enforcing the Freedom of Navigation in 1609. Britain imposed the Pax Britannica. Together with the United States they produced institutional liberalism. From this vantage point, the rise of a state the size of China becomes relevant to international relations. China is acquiring capabilities. It is showing interest in global economic exchanges in which it projects itself to be in the driving seat.

The dynamics of modern world political history has produced such changes. Indeed, modern world emerged from the rigid and static nature of the feudal system through the embrace of the flexible and dynamic practice of trade and the market system. The establishment of the market as a pivotal element in the economy, emerged in the aftermath of the Crusades during the latter half of the Medieval Era. The spatial mobility brought about the emergence of towns in Western Europe, the origin of a historical dynamics that will spread to eventually reach the rest of world. There was the rise of agrarian capitalism in 15th-century England, which solidified the emerging centrality of the market. Trade, on the other hand,

was practiced toward Asia Minor and was pioneered by the Italian city-states of Venice, Florence, Pisa, and Genoa. These city-states flourished. They caught the attention of other European nations, starting with Portugal. In 1453, the rise of the Ottoman supremacy in outward trade became essentially maritime and eventually produced full-blown mercantilism. The Ottoman Empire's aggressive quest for bullion and understanding of trade as a zero-sum game led to their conquest of territories for access to needed resources.

Since then, nations have done whatever they needed to do through policy initiative, ideas, and reforms, to outcompete or catch up to their competitors. The world has seen the dynamics of states positioning, including the clear but changing hierarchy of economical wealth and military might among world's nations. Different nations in different epochs of the modern era knew best how to capitalize on driving forces of a given epoch. China's rise in the hierarchy of world's great powers, and possibly superpowers, is to be seen in that light.

China adjusted after the 11th Party Congress meeting of 1978 to adopt reforms that master the exigencies of the driving forces of liberalism and neoliberalism. The bureaucracy and investments that China made capitalized on the opportunities brought about by the changes of globalization—namely those of liberalization of investment, financial market, and production mobility—to become a preferred destination of foreign direct investment. China's adjustment produced a differential rate of success, evidenced by its decades-long growth rate, to justify its improved status in the hierarchy of the world's economies and world's military might.

China rose during the neoliberalism epoch and is a rising power of the globalization epoch. China is a neoliberalist power, as strange as that might sound for a communist country. China is rising to the top of the hierarchy of the world's wealth and might. The consequence lies in the fact that being at the top means an improved status ranking and influence—and with influence comes power. With power comes a new role for China. China has cautiously begun to play that role as evidenced by its intense diplomatic activity, bilateral and multilateral agreements, participation in international gatherings for issues of global interest, and even in China's initiation of security and economic regimes and alliances and organizations. China has been cautious, because with this greater role comes not just the benefit but also responsibilities and even costs. As China finds its voice and determines its influence and its responsibility, it will feel more comfortable in its new role. The process is, for now, still in progress and may last until China reaches the full potential of its economic growth and military might. We are now witnessing just its beginning.

However China chooses to play its new role, it will only reflect that which is both possible and beneficial to China within this specific epoch of the modern era in which its influence is growing. China's growth and rise have been made possible by the opportunities of neoliberalism (globalization). Naturally and rationally, China will be ill-advised to develop a revolutionary attitude towards it. China cannot be expected to seek structural changes to neoliberalism or seek dismantling it or refusing the changes it brings. China can only be expected to improve neoliberalism's functional structure. This alone justifies the non-revisionist approach of China to international relations. China's role, logically, will be played in those terms, which means to reflect and respect the exigencies of the driving forces of the global era. These driving forces have been facilitating and causing the interconnectedness of national economic activities, but, as it always is the case, because of the centrality of economics such interconnectedness has permeated other areas of human expressions and interests—namely their societies and cultures.

The globalization era may very well put humankind on the path to a future potential world culture. To be revisionist under these circumstances is to counter this process. To choose to counter this process, then the benefits should outweigh the cost. In all likelihood, China's benefits for now are not better served countering such a process. Consequently, China's choice will reflect the exigencies of the global era—just as the choices of any rising power has reflected the exigencies of their epochs. Portugal responded through Henri the Navigator, as did Spain, and Great Britain responded to the exigencies of the mercantile epoch with the acquisition of maritime capabilities and aggressive protectionism. The exigencies of mercantilism explain and justify the choices of Portugal, Spain, and Great Britain in their greater roles. The United States, Japan, and Russia rose during the Industrialization epoch, which occurred within the context of imperialism and ideological rivalry and explains the choices of those nations.[1]

China's rise during the globalization epoch suggests that China cannot be a nation driven by territorial conquest for the sake of accessing resources or for the sake of territory acquisition to expand and exert influence. Today, there is no need for territorial conquest to access resources. Such resources can be accessed through investment, trade agreements, and commercial exchanges and

1. It should be noted the United States has industrialized since the second half of the 19th century and remained relatively distant until eventually compelled, during the world wars, and particularly the time between the wars, since 1934 through the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act, to influence the dynamics of protectionism, imperialism and ideological rivalry in favor of free market.

membership in international trade regimes. There is no need to seek conquest for influence. Influence can be exerted from afar. Chinese policy choices therefore will primarily be shaped to fit the mold of exigencies of the globalization epoch. They will be designed to benefit from the opportunities of their epoch. The Soviet Union, for instance, has diverted and highjacked its industrial capacity away from its commercial use to serve and service the needs of its military only because of the context of its epoch, which revolved around ideology and a commitment to anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism. In Russia today, policy choice and behavior are thought, designed, and shaped by the uncertainty of this emerging multipolar world. Japan has diverted and highjacked its industrial capacity away from its commercial use to serve and service its military in the context of the epoch of imperialism. If Japan were the rising nation that China is today, logic dictates that its choices would be in conception, intent, and execution in more of a commercial purpose than a militaristic one.

Although the international arena remains characterized by anarchy and states weary of its consequences, the era of globalization has lessened the worries of imminent wars. The priorities of nations are not to forge alliances. Although there are still security regimes and, despite what alarmist realists in international relations want the public to remember, the fact is that the international system of states is not consumed by the impending classic interstate wars. Very few states of the 197 worry about invasion or being the target of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The climate of insecurity that fuels fear and worry of populations around the world is driven by localized conflicts, many of which are cultural in nature and others often involve non-state actors or even no states or actors at all, as is the case for environmental calamities. These conflicts make the issue of human security more urgent than nations' security, as unfamiliar as this may have sounded a couple of decades ago. Adding to this explanation of diminishing interstate wars and its implication on world security, Wohlforth (2009: 29) writes: "But for today's leading powers anarchy-induced security problems appear to be ameliorated by nuclear deterrence, the spread of democracy, the declining benefits of conquests, and changing collective ideas, among others." He writes further: "in combination, these factors appear to moderate insecurity and resulting clashes over the status quo."

Although potential interstates wars still are a reality, and states rightfully remain alert as in the cases of China and Japan or China and India, rising neoliberalist are not consumed by these concerns. They are consumed, instead, by efforts of economic development, prosperity, and the interdependence used to condition development and prosperity. The international system and international relations

are today proceeding within the epoch of global neoliberalism. States are aware of how digital technology has impacted the world of information and security; how instantaneous communication has become; how intense and disperse transportation, competition, and the mobility of products, finance, investment and production have become. These processes have spread, expanded, and diversified activity centers as the capabilities of individual states have increased. The wealth of many states has become diversified; they adjusted successfully, as has the wealth of individuals.

The most clairvoyant entrepreneurs knew how to harness the potential of the new technologies and the global market. The context of neoliberalism has empowered non-state actors through the opportunity it offers them to successfully work across borders and increase their influence. The complexity of interdependence brought about by neoliberal activity had room for more participants. Decision-making in such an interdependent environment has become sensitive to various actors and to global implications. Interdependence diversify the sources of power as it helped spread the empirical factors of power almost ubiquitously. Strategic and economic policy choices, as well as the behaviors of states around the world, had to be reflective of these processes. China's policy choices and behavior are reflective of these properties. This means that a rising state, like China, whose growth and gains are grounded in these processes of interconnected constellation of actors and interests, certainly thinks about the international system differently than mercantile Spain or Britain or imperial Japan. Unlike nations that rose during the epoch of mercantilism or imperialism, the Chinese, Indian, or Brazilian economic policies and behaviors worry less about protectionism or wars.

Historical epochs change. As they do, they induce adjustments befitting the exigencies of the driving forces of the current paradigm. This makes the different epochal contexts relevant to the choices, policies, and roles that states play. The current epoch and context of globalization is made relevant to what China, as an important player, can do. The epochal context within which a state rises, its choices, and the role it plays in the system of state are reflective of its identity. The role a state plays reflects that state's values and interest. Interest, as material and values, are ideational. Material interests derive from economic and security needs (the economy and the military), while values derive from worldviews and ideals. Both find their expressions through foreign policy objectives and diplomacy. Material interests and ideational values are products of given cultures.

Just as historical epochs can change, so do state identities. A state's identity can change because its underlying ideational foundation can change. States can move from being communist to democratic. They can move from being totalitarian to

pluralistic. They can move in many sorts of ways. And such changes to political identity induce change to political culture and even change to social culture. History has already given us plenty of examples of such changes of state identity. Italy and Germany used to be fascist, but they are now liberal democracies. Japan was imperial and authoritarian until it became a liberal democracy. Similar changes are occurring in Poland currently. The change from tsarist Russia to communist Russia to oligarchic capitalist Russia is another illustration of the process. The underlying state identity, political culture, and social culture become cross-fertilized. Indeed, a state that suppresses private property or the free market because of its communist identity produces, through a trickle-down effect, a different political and social culture than those that allow such factors. They respectively command different principles and practices that beget different norms and, in the process, produce a new political and social culture. Although here the process trickles down, it can as well start from the bottom in the sense that social culture can be the foundation of political culture and identity shifts. China's identity flexibility becomes easier to understand under this context. China was, until recently, exclusively Marxist-communist, but it has turned partially (politically) communist and partially (economically) liberalist and is reclaiming its Confucian cultural heritage. China's identity today is that of a great power that is still rising that is non-Western.

Has the world ever had a great power or superpower that had the state identity of China? The Soviet Union came close by being non-Western and Communist. Contrary to the Soviets, however, China put economic communism on the back burner before it collapsed under the policies informed by the communist ideology. Contrary to the Soviets, China has embraced economic liberalism for the simple purpose of servicing the material interest of its people. Contrary to the Soviets, China has allowed its historical culture to resurface in the quest for an affirming value system. And contrary to many other nations, China navigates unbounded by the limitations of any of the many identities it has adopted. In other words, China seems to take the best of each of its identities and leaves out the rest. Because China is pragmatic, it is therefore flexible and even innovative in its behavior and policy choices. It can only be that pragmatic in the epoch of globalization with the experience of its driving forces, given the multi-dimensional state identities it has developed. China can only be pragmatic to be effective. This seems to be in agreement with the Confucian worldview that acknowledges change and that understands conflicts as challenges that require harmonization and which understands contradictions as parts of a whole. It is a worldview that synchronizes rather than isolates.

Concretely, what does the pragmatic approach look like in China's pursuit of interest and foreign policy choices? How does China, as a pragmatic state and an increasingly important international actor, see and approach international relations? China has communicated its pragmatic, innovative, and unbound-by-prescription behavioral codex known to, and expected by, international relations theory, so far. At first, China was a standard-bearer of the international proletariat cause, as described by Marxism communism, and advocated capitalist imperialism, as evidenced by Liu Shao-Chi's speech in October 1949, during the World Federation of Trade Union Conference in Moscow. China then expanded its reach toward the rest of the world, as evidenced by the Zhou En Lai's speech entitled *The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, while visiting Nehru in India in 1954. Those principles were:

- Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Non-aggression
- Noninterference in internal affairs
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful coexistence

Two years later, Zhou En Lai pressured the rest of Asia with what was to be known as the Chinese brand of communism in the international arena. Later, Chinese diplomacy expanded toward the rest of the developing world during the decolonization conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1958. In Accra, visiting Ghana in January 15, 1964, Zhou En Lai gave a speech on China's involvement in and commitment to African development entitled *The Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Aid*. Of all these speeches revealing China's intentions for the world, the one that was most relevant to China's role today was the speech given in India in 1954 about peaceful coexistence. In that speech, China affirmed its adhesion and commitment to the provisions known to support the coexistence of nations since the Westphalia Treaty of 1648, which have been absorbed into the United Nations Charter and have become a body of the international law and codex of behavior between nations.

These principles have since relentlessly been stressed by China, which remained committed to them. As a communist nation, often under attack for not sharing many other norms of international order and enduring recurrent pressures, these principles suit China just fine. The pressures on communist China largely come from the West, and are viewed by China as examples of interference in internal Chinese affairs. From China's perspective, such interferences is in violation

of the Westphalia Treaty and UN Charter principles. China found refuge in those principles that happen to coincide with the idea of the international system of states, as it sees it. The line of "peaceful coexistence" became even more salient and relevant as China became an established member of the international system of states after its recognition by the UN in 1971. China's own internal policy deficiencies, evidenced by the failed successive Mao grand policy goals (Collectivization, Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution), have been limiting China's ability to be a viable state at home, and a respectable state abroad. Hence the need for reform of the debacle of the Cultural Revolution. China's fate was to change. It all started with the reform known as the four modernizations[2] since 1978. Around China, in small neighboring states, signs of economic growth propelled by policy of economic liberalism have not remained unnoticed. The reform policy measures in the four sectors were designed to modernize the nation's affairs in light of the failing policy of communism, embracing liberal economic principles. Soon, China's Four Modernizations reform initiative proved to be successful. The success was evidenced by sustained economic growth, which averaged 9.5% in the last two decades (OECD) and 6.9% in subsequent decades. Such a sustained economic growth rate was bound to show effects on the overall economic indexes of any country. As a result, China's national income doubles every eight years and its adjusted purchasing power parity became larger than almost all but one of the OECD countries. Additionally, since 2010, China has seen a sharp rise in GDP per capita, reaching $8,123,18 USD in 2016 (World Bank) and an unemployment rate of just 3.9% in 2017 (CEIDATA), leading to steadily reduced poverty.

China's need for economic reform and the adoption of a free market economic system has produced enough change to induce additional adjustments. One such subsequent adjustments was about China's own identity as a state. It was no longer just a communist state. It no longer behaved internationally as a communist state, with the goal of resisting imperialism, and championing the cause of communism, internationally. China adjusted its identity to be just any other normal state and international actor with normal interests. Yong Deng (1998), among many others,[3] credited Deng Xiao Ping for this identity shift away from a China resisting the international system, toward a China embracing of the international system. Deng (1998: 309) wrote: "Deng was hailed as being single-handedly responsible for shifting China's erstwhile approach in drawing its foreign

2. Which focused on the modernization of the following agriculture, defense, industry, and science and technology.
3. PengJiang Qian, Gao Jingdian, Weng Taipeng.

policy lines according to the social system and ideology to a rightful emphasis on dealing with international relations based on national interest."

At the beginning of the 1990s, China was in a different posture and in a different state of mind. It has changed its ideational perspective. With it, often, comes a change of behavior (Deng, quoting Zhu Wenti). China was seeking a total reinsertion in the community of nations and aiming to build trust and show stakeholder concern in matters of international common interests. Economically on the upswing and benefiting from foreign investment, China began to show signs of more responsible behavior in the international system by actively participating in containing the Asian financial crisis and in expressing new commitment to the ASEAN security and economic organization, as well as with APEC. China's participation in international organizations became noticeable by being included in the six-party talk in the North East Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD). It created its own economic and security regimes and, in 2001, became a member of WTO. China has since committed troops to the UN's peacekeeping mission. In 2003, conscious of its economic success and aware of the worry it brought to Japan with whom it has historical grievances, China wanted the world to know it was not about to duplicate the aggressive behavior of the past. China wanted to lower any opposition to its rise and to lessen its own worries about potential conflicts while it reached for its fullest potential. During his October 2003 speech entitled *The New Way of the Peaceful Rise of China and the Future of Asia* at the annual Asian Forum meeting at Bo Ho, Hainan, Zhen Bijian[4] delivered China's own view of its rise and what its expected behavior was. This notion of peaceful rise (*he ping jue qi*) sought to avert potential use of force as promoted by Confucian thought (*chung-yung*), a view that argues that strength should not be asserted by force. China wanted to be strong defensively and was going to emphasize moral conduct and rules of propriety. Bijian said, "I must emphasize that China's path is not only to strive to rise, but to adhere to peace, and never seek hegemony. Modern history has time and again testified to the fact that the rise of a new major power often results in dramatic change in the international configuration and the world order—it may even trigger a world war. An important reason for this outcome is that these powers have followed an aggressive path of war and expansion. Such a path is doomed to failure. In today's world, how can Asian countries—China included—follow a path that serves nobody's interests? China's only choice

4. Zheng Bijian was chairman of the Forum for China Reforms and vice chairman of the Chinese Communist Party.

is to strive to rise and, more importantly, to strive for a peaceful rise. That is to say, we have to work toward a peaceful international environment for the sake of our own development and at the same time, safeguard world peace through this process of development."

China continued to reduce the value deficit it carried by brandishing the banner of communism. The ideological stigma of communism, the "red threat" branding in the United States, and even the more pejorative stigma of the "yellow threat" in Europe gradually eroded. China was a state among peers, not a different "other." China, with a communist identity in a sea of non-communist states, had the worry of been cast aside, a reality that it has experienced in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. China's effort to redefine its identity as a state has paid off. Its engagement was quickly reflecting its growing economic status. It now shared a common economic interest, and was driven by the quest for growth and prosperity responsible. The proof of that was its active and effective diplomacy. An additional proof is China's diplomatic and economic presence in all regions of the planet. China has become the most important trading partner to many nations around the world. With the sidestepping of its communist identity while interacting with the world at large, China was becoming a responsible and a trusted member of the society of states.

Flint (2016) speaks of geopolitical codes to describe how a state may change for the better with its growing number of allies, friends, and potential allies and potential friends that it has won over. However, this could change for the worse depending on the number of foes or potential foes that a state has or is producing. In that regard, China's geopolitical codes have been greatly improved in the past few decades. This is thanks to its ability to address both the value and the interest dimensions of such associations or the lack thereof. China has been able to increase its attractiveness as an economic partner, the interest dimension, while minimizing the concern of its partners about its partially communist state identity, the value dimension. This effort by China justifies the level of recognition it has gotten among peer states around the world.

To gain an even greater measure of appreciation of what China has been able to achieve since its adjustment to integrate the international system, one should may be think of the case of Russia. What justifies this analogy is the fact that Russia is a fellow Asian state. Russia is a fellow great power. Russia is a fellow former communist economy. Russia is a fellow state with enormous potential. Russia has been in the transitioning process from a communist-run economy to a free market economy. But unlike China, Russia has embarked on a challenging course. Of course, Russia is not solely to blame in this challenging posture, since it claims

NATO's expansion into the East is too close for its comfort. Unlike China, Russia has been in a challenging mode, confident of its nuclear capabilities and military might. It did not hesitate to pursue, like any other state would, its national security interests despite Western concerns, as was the case with the Crimea invasion of 2014, leading to more openly antagonistic relations which have culminated with the imposition of economic sanctions by the West. The sanctions hurt Russia, whose economy had by then become vulnerable and sensitive to the interconnectedness of the world economy. These sanctions have limited the capability of the Russian economy to grow to its fullest potential. China was spared such a fate.

Unlike China, which focuses on its economy, Russia has military commitments and interest it deems worthy of engaging outside its territory, as demonstrated in the case of Syria. The challenging mode of Russia vis-à-vis the West was once again on display, while China actively avoided such challenges, except in a few case cases. Unlike China, Russia has not been actively reducing the values deficit it has, vis-à-vis the West and building on the potential ties with the European Union. Unlike China, Russia has a culture and a history of challenging the West directly. Unlike China, Russian transition toward free market and globalization was not visionary enough. Russia, which has embraced both the free market and democracy, has had more issues reaping the promised benefits of either since its abandonment of communism.

China, on the other hand, has been successful in its commitment to the free market while resisting democracy. And because China has been so successful committing to the free market, it now stands to compete with the US economy, but not to challenge the US military. China is playing in the league of soft power, which does not overlook concerns of hard power and the military but is not driven by them. Here is where the embrace of any given culture of anarchy becomes demonstrable. Because China has chosen to play in the league of soft power, it is not driven by the Hobbesian culture. China is Lockean in this regard and perhaps even Kantian. In this league of soft power economic interests, the ability to make allies, whom we call trade partners, depends on the ability of any other state to be attractive as such. In this league, the ability to court them, to win them to trading and cooperation projects and initiatives is, in demand. This ability relies on diplomacy, not firepower. It relies on effective negotiations, not coercion or threats. It relies on mutual trust. It relies on mutual recognition. If China has been winning an increased number of trade partners, it simply means that China has chosen to court, to use diplomacy, to be effective, to be trusted, and to enjoy recognition by peers. Such recognition by peers is a currency in the international system for any state with the capabilities of capitalizing in it. It is a currency of status and

influence, which a state with capabilities may convert not only into power but also into hegemonic power, potentially.

By 2001, China was no longer the sleeping giant, as the rest of the world was made aware after the Goldman Sachs Economic Report.[5] Unlike its smaller neighboring countries, China's rise stood the chance of overshadowing not only anything seen in the region, but also anything seen around the world since the rise of the United States in the second half of the 19th century because of its sheer size and population. That potential actually materialized as China steadily improved its economic standing and its stature as an economic actor—first as a beneficiary of foreign direct investment, and soon as an importer and producer of goods that enhanced its own industrial capabilities. China was burning the candle on both ends, benefiting on one end from its cheap labor and low production cost; and on the other end by quickly producing valuable human capital, highly skill labor, and even spearheading some innovation in a variety of industries, such as alternative energy sources, electro-mobility, solar cells, cell phones, microchips, and displays. It quickly became the land with the most registered patents, yearly.

Soon, China became an appraised market to enter into as access to income improved and a consumer market started to emerge. China's economic stature was being established. It became the first trading partner to Japan, to most countries in East and Southeast Asia, and to the continent of Africa. It is the second trading partner to Europe and to Latin America.

With a GDP only second to that of the United States, China has established itself as an economic power. As an established and still rising economic power, China's influence is rising. With acquired influence China's political clout and status are rising as well. To define such a status, we use the defection by Renshon (2017: 10) who writes: "Status is an attribute that states possess, and their rank helps to structure the relationships and interactions that take place within the system."

China's reforms since 1978 have been a striking success. With the success, China gained confidence. With the confidence, China developed political will. With the political will, China articulated an ambitious national objective. Such a national objective and its many goals necessitated the development of a grand strategy. Grand strategies, therefore, are options that reveal themselves as necessary in light of historical developments. In other words, grand strategies are products

5. In which Jim O'Neil brought the attention of the world to the group the nations with the most growth, being Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). China led the way of the BRIC.

of history simply because they are responses made necessary by the exigencies of specific forces' driving of history. They are responses to epochal changes. State actors design such responses with different degrees of commitment, political will, resources, vision, and so on. The result is that, like all responses, they come with different degrees of effectiveness. Some responses are inadequate. Some states simply fail to provide any. And some other states are effective in designing the appropriate responses. Like reforms undertaken by states actors to adjust, strategies can be incremental and limited in their depth (scope), or comprehensive, reaching various sectors (scale). The most courageous, and ambitious states adjust to exigencies of historical epochal changes with encompassing strategies. They adjust with grand strategies. China seems to have a grand strategy in the making. Its goals have been articulated by President Xi Jinping in 2013. Their pursuit is currently underway through a flurry of diplomatic activity, ubiquitous investments, foreign aid provision, restructuring of its decision-making institutional architecture, trade agreements, epitomized by the Belt and Roads initiative, and so forth. Should it succeed, the world will witness another change in the hierarchy of wealth and might among states.

2

Bound to Differ

China's long history has produced a sense of pride. Confucian, Marxist, and market liberalist identities have made China unique. A steady economic growth over decades has increased China's stock as an international actor. Together, these factors have conferred to the nation of China a renewed confidence, and have reaffirmed its conscious self-image. Confident and self-conscious, China has identified its vast interests and articulated its ambitious objectives since 2013. To that end, China has conceived strategies, and has been using its agential capacity in the international realm in a distinctive fashion. China's distinctive attitude to international relations is the focus of this chapter. It is justified not alone by the fact that China has a specific attitude, because all other states have their own specific attitudes; but because combined with its size and ability to affect the international realm, such an attitude becomes worthy of interest.

The attitude we speak of consists of China's nuanced approach to navigating processes in the international system. It has chosen to adhere to it, but proceeds in its own way. A picture is starting to emerge showing a cautious and non-confrontational China, and often even absent or inaudible on conflicts around the world, and the recent case of the South China Sea, is an exception and a new aspect in its behavior, and the reasons are spelled out in Chapter 4 on realism. The picture shows a China that circumvents potential dangers described by the hegemonic

transition theory. The picture shows China integrating the institutional liberal order but carving for its self a role that suits its ambition, as we discuss in Chapter 5 on institutional liberalism. The picture shows a China that thinks strategically and develops grand strategic schemes as demonstrated by the Belt and Road Initiative. The picture shows a China that reaffirms and innovates the role of the states as an international actor by converging its foreign policy, foreign investment, foreign trade, and foreign aid, as we discuss in Chapter 14. Above all, it is rather on the ideational level that China intends to show the most, its distinctive character. Although China has difficulties articulating to the world what its vision of it is, it has tried, throughout its history since the Mao years. Attempts by China to spell out its view of the world have been articulated in white policy papers, and other official pronouncements often producing nothing but bullet-point guidelines, slogans, and principles but none of them has amounted to a full-blown systematic view of the world on which to base policy decisions, capable of competing, for instance, with the realist view of the international system. Much less, China has yet to suggest an ideational purpose for the world. The result of all such attempts has been unsuccessful in allowing the world to expect China has a different view than the dominant Western description of the international world. But this does not say that China does not have one, nor that it will not produce one. In fact, the task that policy makers and politicians have not been able to do has now been undertaken by Chinese scholars. As we show in the subsequent chapter, Chinese scholars have embarked on a research interest journey to producing a specifically Chinese perspective, approach, or theory of the international relations. Until then, China has been and will be living in a world whose international norms reflect the ideational view of the West. There are those who noted that China has been benefiting from it; and there are those that simply charge China of free riding the system produced by others, without any alternative or suggestions of its own view of it. To that effect, Zhang (2011: 306) writes: "China is usually seen as 'freeriding' on the existing international order without clearly articulating its own vision and approaches. While China's foreign policy has been held back by a defensive mindset until recently, Chinese views of international relations in the official circles, are being developed at an accelerating pace and with growing originality."

Yes, efforts are currently underway, and the need is certainly there for Chinese officials to produce a clear principled view in which their policy decisions are grounded. Chinese scholars may help. The articulation of a Chinese worldview and approach to international relations will certainly be a product of collaboration of both sources. Either way, China is bound to articulate

what it is about, based on its self-image. Such a self-image is the sum of history, traditions, experiences, and ideational values China, or any other state for that matter, holds. Self-image ultimately is what a nation and its people consciously perceives to be uniquely self. It is ultimately, next to its material interest such as the economy and security, the basis of states' actions in the international realm.

Consequently, such self-image finds its expression through states' foreign policy. Finland, Sweden, the United States, or Japan, for instance, each has a self-image. It is manifest in different degrees of consciousness and intensity, through foreign policy formulation, objectives, behavior, engagement, and attitude of each, as an international actor. Self-image, in the end, helps explain states' behaviors in international relations. It is relevant to any approach to international relations that emphasizes agency, and states agential capacity. States choose to act a certain way because of the sense of who they are. Although they do within the structure of the international system, such a structure constraints but does not determine their behaviors (Stein, 2006). The international system structure contains the behavior of states' actors but does not determine them. This leads us to envisaging room for state actors to be different, to make a difference. Applied to China, it is evident that it has arguably an identity that stands out, as mentioned earlier. Its long imperial or Confucian heritage coupled with its political Marxist and communist regime, which has adopted capitalist free market, are the reasons for its outstanding identity. Zhang (2011) found a way of identifying the exceptional character of China in all these phases of its history. In its imperial era is grounded predominantly the culture of Confucianism. This feature of its identity, he argued, was exceptional enough. He finds it exceptional because of its claim for moral rectitude, cultural superiority, and benevolent pacifism, as in the Ming Dynasty, for instance, China's foreign policy sought to "share the fortune of peace." It accompanied China in its history as great power. Then, China was Marxist, or Maoist. China found itself championing the cause of the oppressed of imperialism, which he finds exceptional. Now China is advocating harmonious inclusion while rising, which he finds exceptional. Arguing along the same line, one can indeed see a continuation today of the same reasoning that Zhang finds exceptional. Today's China foreign policy pronouncements are peaceful development, harmonious world, a plea to move past power politics, a democratic international relations, harmonious world, win–win cooperation, a future of shared destiny, and so on. They seem to have a common denominator, which echo the Ming's dynasty vision of "share the fortune of peace" and what he calls "inclusionism." Indeed, he argues that any state can be exceptional. It only depends on who is claiming exceptionalism, and

that "only, some exceptionalism matter more than other, simply depending on who is claiming it: the US or Singapore?" (p. 306). Zhang defines exceptionalism as "unique qualities … that differentiate one country from the other" (p. 306). China is not the size of Singapore. Its exceptionalism is bound to matter more. It has mattered in the case of the United States. But, based on Zhang definition, US exceptionalism is not the only one. China has its own. And just like in the case of the United States, when a state the size of China decides to export the ideational values of its exceptionalism, it should matter. According to Zhang, China's exceptionalism finally is, or should be, the peaceful nature and the moral grounding of its foreign policy. These are Confucianism-derived values. Should these values be ground for Chinese exceptionalism, Chinese exceptionalism will be essentially rooted in Confucianism. For China's claim of exceptionalism to be relevant to the world, a state needs to have the size, because it matters in international relations. The state needs a political will to export values. Like the United States, which has both the size and the will, China as well, seems to have both. Unlike the United States, China has a different ideational value system. It is bound, therefore, to be different from the United States, as an influential international actor. The only question that remains is how much universality can Confucian ideational value system claim? Liberalism does make that universal claim because it speaks to all human beings, not just those who happen to be found in the regions of origin of the Enlightenment Movement. Those arguments against the universal validity of liberalism premises are usually cultural in nature, and therefore relative. Logically, universalism is more encompassing than relativism. But the very strength of the universal is at the same time its weakness because although encompassing, it must overcome the originality of the local. Local cultures may not have the intellectual force of appeal of universal arguments, but they possess the force of internalized attachment to the familiar, one's own culture. Confucianism will first have to establish its universal claim, and then survive localized resistances. But, maybe that is not what China wants. Maybe China, in all its pragmatism, will be satisfied with the idea of letting the diversity of cultures and civilizations find their expressions. After all, both pragmatism and disdain of imperialism are parts of its political identity. China has often and repeatedly denounced all expressions of hegemonic expansion. China has rejected what Zhang (2011) calls missionary universalism of the West. This alone would be a feature of China's own exceptionalism. Zhang adds (2011: 319): "While America claims the superiority of its ideals about democracy and freedom, China professes respect for and tolerance of all political values and systems without putting its own doctrines at the center." The fact that China and the West start from different cosmogonic perspectives,

or different social metaphysical perspectives as we discuss in the next chapter, explains this difference in attitude vis-à-vis the other.

Here, China might just provide proof of some of the Confucian claims, namely benevolent pacifism, harmonious inclusion, and share the fortune of peace, all of which are echoes of Confucian teaching. This would have to be the way through which Chinese exceptionalism would have to be articulated. It will then provide proof of the difference between its own exceptionalism and that of the United States. After all, one state's claim of exceptionalism should not be shoved down the throat of others. That in and by itself seems to be a refutation of exceptionalism, and it justifies the notion of the attractiveness of soft power. Speaking of soft power, one of the West's expressions of soft power is free market liberalism. It has spread, and conquered nations without the use of hard power. China itself has succumbed to the attractiveness of the soft power we call free market economic system.

China preferentially and purposefully utilizes tools of soft power (diplomacy and cooperation) which imply interpretative communication, exchanges by representatives, and fostered sociological benefits of recognition, understanding, acknowledgment, expectations, friendship, and even consideration and affection. They are tools that differ from those utilized by states that view the international realm primarily as a system wrought in anarchy. Those who view the international realm as a system of states rather than a society utilize the tools of threat and incentives. Even diplomacy is a tool utilized to that end as Carl von Clausewitz (1832)[1] once argued. By understanding the international realm as an international society, China counts on developing friendships, sharing interests, sharing norms, mutual respect, recognition, non-interference, sharing institutions, and harmonizing disputes. All of these aspirations are best achieved through soft power and diplomacy. Both soft power and diplomacy imply interactions. They are, therefore, social practices in the international society. Through them, China has been making considerable gains—improving ties, recognition by peers, and influence among them. These are benefits that understanding the international realm as a society produce. These are benefits that come without the entanglements that an understanding of the international realm as a system brings. An established state like the United States, which rests primarily in the realist mode, instrumentalizes tools of soft power for realist purposes, namely security. The

1. Carl von Clausewitz's original work published in 1832 but various versions exist namely, the one published by the Floating Press in 2010.

international involvement of the realist state, namely what Stokke (1989) and Warmerdam (2012: 205) focused on the involvement of powerful nations in the developing world, has called realist internationalism which "fosters the belief that States pursue, and should pursue, solely their own national interests, because they believe other states are doing likewise." The result is that when the United States increases its military presence in Africa, China increases its economic footprint. Understanding the international realm as a system leads to developing policies, that likely, rightfully or wrongfully, produce foes or entangling foes (the cases of Afghanistan, Iraq) in the case of the United States. China seems to be developing an understanding of the international realm that incites the design of policy measures and attitudes aiming at increasing the ranks of friends. China is cultivating the art of winning friends because, like the English School, it understands the international system as an international society. China, while benefiting from its involvements around the world, because it arguably focuses at the same time on the welfare of others, and seems to take its responsibility in assisting the developing nations, practices a different kind of internationalism as the United States. In contrast to the realist internationalism, Stokke (1989) calls the other kind humane internationalism.

China knows too well the significance of the societal dimension of the international realm. It was kept out of it a few times in its modern history. It was, at a few occasions, humiliated, excluded, isolated, and exorcised. As mentioned earlier, China was forced to sign eight extraterritorial treaties with Western colonial powers. China was denied full sovereignty until the end of the Treaty of Nanking in 1942. China was denied full representation of its seat at the United Nations until 1971. After the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, China was isolated and subject to condemnation. Until 2017, there were still twenty countries that recognized Taiwan as an independent state, a reminder of China's rejection. All these incidents remind us of how vulnerable China has been as a member of the international society. It carries scars. It has remained sensitive to them, and it will remain sensitive as long as it continues to be communist because its recent vulnerability has been driven by that factor. It is China's particularity that makes it a non-sharer of the democratic norms, a feature of shared identity in the international society to many. These incidents also must explain the sense of gratification and even vindication that China feels today as it enjoys increasing recognition and respect. The basis of China's assault, from China's perspective, from the West, has been eroded or reduced. That basis was the concentration of wealth, power, technology, science, military capabilities, and intellectual property, as well as its ability to influence international institutions subservient to its values.

The reason for the erosion is not China. The reason has been the recent development in world history, leading to the paradigm of globalization. China has only been the prominent beneficiary of these developments, through a few skillful adjustments. Every incoming new paradigm produces a new epoch and each new epoch produces its leading powers. It was the case with Portugal in the early phase of mercantilism and as others, like Spain and the Dutch Republic, followed as they better adjusted. The process keeps producing new paradigms and new epochal rising powers, like Great Britain in the Industrial Revolution, which was eventually supplanted by the United States. China is the rising power in the new paradigm and the globalization epoch it has produced. Others will certainly follow. For now, China's rise is to be understood in that historical perspective, and it is a vindication on China's part after years of vulnerable standing among states in the international society.

The last time the international system saw the rise of an important actor the size of China and with a different identity than other dominant Western states, and that found itself to be exceptional and decided to export its exceptionalism, international politics was affected. Chinese sources of political identity (imperial Confucian, Maoist Marxism, and market liberalist) are respectively morality of power, pragmatic, revolutionary, and seeking prosperity. These attributes have consequences in China's international attitude. If political China decides to be consequentially Confucian in its aspiration, its foreign policy will continue to use the argument of the morality of power. It will be pragmatic, as Confucianism understands that change is an inherent feature of the social world. This suggests less reliance on ideology or any other rigidly understood international relations practices and norms. China has already been demonstrating that ability. China, therefore, may often be where it is least expected. As for the revolutionary heritage of Marxism and Maoism, it is in today's China less pronounced, after China has adopted a free market economic system. It remains, however, a fighting cry, a source of tension, and still underlining the worldview of some Chinese communist leaders, including Xi Jinping himself. It has an enduring power because of its idealistic and exceptional claim to look up for those state actors, with less influential status in the international system. This dimension of Marxism and Maoism has repeatedly found its way in many of the policy papers and public pronouncements of the Chinese regime, addressing the international system, relations, and politics. Such papers and pronouncements often refer to democratic international relations, harmonious inclusion, win–win economic cooperation, and so on.

All these expressions hardly veil the Marxist view and quest for equality, and disdain for oppression. This is a way through which, Marxist Maoism harmonizes

with the Confucian values of inclusiveness. China simply has to use its prosperity gained from opening up to the capitalist system, to actually justify the complexity of its current identity, which is not free of intrinsic contradictions. In fact, the regime in Beijing is aware of all these dimensions, and the unique position they put China in. For the regime to continue legitimizing the complexity of its current identity, it must continue to deliver material proof of its functionality. What the regime in Beijing has going for itself is pragmatism. The functioning of the regime, as we discuss in the chapter on foreign policy, is structured for a streamlined decision-making. This confers to the Chinese communist leadership, the flexibility necessary to navigate the many changes of the current fast-paced world, the expectations of the Chinese, and to meet, face, and react to potential danger with capable swiftness. This also means that China will take liberties in its attitude, in discerning and choosing measures it deems appropriate for any given case in any given circumstance, without a priori. China will behave the Chinese way. What that means is simply the fact that China, when adopting foreign ideologies, or entering a new realm, as is the case of its integration into liberal institutionalism, has always made sure to remain true to its identity. The expression that keeps being repeated in such cases is, "with Chinese characteristics." When China adopted Marxism communism, it adorned it with features uniquely Chinese. What that specifically means remains debatable. To some it is nothing but a way of claiming appropriation of the subject. To others it simply means bringing the subject closer to the Chinese traditions. My own interpretation is that the expression "with Chinese characteristics" simply signals or suggests that China, in its grandeur and sense of self-image, is not ready to just absorb, or be absorbed by, any foreign values without approval by its own. I see it as a way of implicitly refuting to suggest an ideational cave. This interpretation is supported by the long tradition of cultural superiority, which has been temporarily dealt a blow during the "century of humiliation," but has never died and resurfaces in many attitudes of the Chinese official acts. It is a sense of pride that feeds nationalism. And nationalism has been part of China since the 19th century. Concrete examples include the case of Marxism when Maoist China refused to blindly follow the Soviet model and painted Marxism with its own colors, calling it one with Chinese characteristics. And China has since kept its own version of the Marxist heritage and, as we argue later, has been used as lens through which to approach the established and existing international order. Its approach was essentially that of caution. The same cautious attitude has been displayed while integrating the international liberal institutionalism. It is an established order that is foreign to China, insofar as it has not been part of its conception, and let alone initiated its

inception. While the world economy has been driven by the dictates of neoliberal economic principles and policy tools, which Williamson (1989) referred to as the Washington consensus, China chose not to go along. This is taking liberty by China as an independent agent and who utilizes its capacity to act within and despite the constraints of the international structure. It designs its own policy measures against the dominant impulse of the international structure. That has been noticed throughout the world, and suggested that the orthodoxy of the Washington was not apodictic. Joshua Ramo (2004) eventually referred to this attitude as the Beijing Consensus, obviously a retort to the expression "the Washington Consensus" formulated by John Williamson. The Beijing Consensus has been a creative approach by China to display its independence as an international actor in matters of economic policy choices, while integrating into the global liberal economy. Looking into China's behavior since its rise, it has made a number of choices to fully integrate the liberal order. Such choices tend to reflect both the necessary objective exigencies of the international system as well as degrees of independence, making China's choices and behavior truly particular. For instance, China is adhering to global economic neoliberalism without succumbing to the expected pressure of adopting policy remedies prescribed by leading economies and world's economic institutions. The Chinese government did not think that the state with its garnished toolkit could stay away from the market. With a long history and tradition of being a strong state, it was counter to its political culture to fully sympathize with laissez-faire, on top of being communist. Consequently, China did not jump on the Washington Consensus wagon. It maintained its independence. China preferred a governed market (Wade, 2003) rather than to leave it exposed to the negative effects of deregulation—most precisely, in the financial market. China remained true to the development state model, which is dear to Asian states.

As such, the Chinese state sees itself in symbiosis with its economy and with its businesses. From this perspective, state's goals and objectives are intricate parts of the economic equation. Businesses are not entities freely functioning in an economic framework provided by government. Often, the goals of businesses are the goals of the government. Market realities are then not the only factor to determine the policy choices of the state. And here is where China's approach to economics and to development differs from the Washington Consensus-inspired policy measures. China applies this approach in its engagements with partner states around the world. These partners sense the difference in approach between a Beijing Consensus-informed decision and any other partner-informed decision by the Washington Consensus policy measures. China's partners observe its approach,

noticing how it takes liberties from the Washington Consensus remedies. They realize there is an alternative. They may get inspired to imagine their own remedies. They may simply imitate China. But, even if they do not, they have in China a partner with a different set of expectations than the institutions of the West, which all play according to the playbook of the Washington Consensus. They used to endure the conditions of the Washington institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). Now they may knock at another door. The more they come to China for that purpose, the more China's leverage as an international actor increases. China has imagined a different way of dealing with its less-fortunate economic partners. And so the application of the Beijing Consensus model naturally enters into competition with the Washington Consensus model. China, pursuing its economic interests and faithful in its commitment to economic assistance to developing nations, has concocted a remedy that differs from that which was proposed by the Washington Consensus recipe. The ability for China to propose a different model, to find client states—many of which were former or still clients to the Washington institutions—and to increase preference of use of the Beijing Consensus recipe over the Washington Consensus recipe.

China's behavior, described and summed up in the expression "Beijing Consensus," is an example of what we refer to as agential capacity for action within structures that certainly constrain but do not determine. This behavior that seems to be characteristic of China has continued. It has now been exposed for display through the Belt and Road Initiative. Currently, since the 1980s as China developed interest in international relations theory, as we discuss in Chapter 3, Chinese scholars have been thinking about ways of developing international relations theories and approaches "with Chinese characteristics."

In this debate between structure and agency, Marxists lean toward the weight of agency. China is still Marxist, and therefore leans toward preferring the ability of the agency to determine its course, even in the international system structure. This is the reason, as we argue later, that of the various approaches to international relations, China is more ontologically in agreement with constructivism in the sense that it also considers the weight of agency, in its identity. It considers identity and interests of actors, which can change. China's own identity and interest have been changing. And the idea of change is central to constructivism, Marxism, and even Confucianism. But this realization does not allow pigeonholing China on the side of those privileging agency to the detriment of structure. On the side of those leaning toward privileging structure, we have neo-realists, world system theorists, and neoliberalists. Since abandoning economic Marxism in 1978, China gradually integrated the international liberalist system in which

the prevailing approaches were structuralists. One of such prevailing approaches is neo-realism in so far as it focuses on the implications of the imbalance distribution of capabilities among actors, and its influence of the system as such. The other prevailing approach is the world system theory, which also essentially argues from the perspective of distribution of capabilities, but this time induced by the capitalist world economic system (which China has now integrated). Another prevailing approach is neoliberalism, in so far as it focuses on building institutional economic infrastructure to curtail the consequence of the state of anarchy.

As uncomfortable as China is with realism, as an international system actor for reasons we evoke in Chapter 4, it cannot be oblivious to the implications of the state of anarchy. Even constructivism, which demystifies it, cannot totally dismiss it. In all Chinese pragmatism, China remains a state with interests. Such interests may call for defending. Besides, China has what Fearon (1995) has called indivisible interests, which we discuss in Chapter 3. These two reasons alone justify a realist attention of China. As for neo-realism, by fully embracing institutional liberalism, China naturally subscribed to the notion of belonging to a structure, which even if it does not confine, it does at least constrain the behavior of actors. And speaking of liberalism, China's adhesion to liberalism is not as sudden as it seems, as we explain in Chapter 5. Introduced to liberalism, as understood by the Enlightenment Movement in the 19th century, among Chinese, there have always been advocates, sympathizers, and believers in liberalism. Among such advocates, sympathizers, and believers, one could find various elites, intellectuals, aristocrats, and even some, within the leadership of the Communist Party itself. Their time simply arrived after the tumultuous Communist Party inner fighting after Mao Zedong's death and the debacles of his polices, between the 1950s and 1970s. China turned economic-liberalist, and therefore mindful of the intentional system structure.

Since the 1990s, China has been a nation with multifaceted identity. It is now Marxist-communist, Confucian, and economically neoliberalist. These identities have distinct, autonomous value systems, which certainly in some areas converge, in some other areas intersect, but in some other areas are mutually exclusive. The fact that China is succeeding in reconciling them is unprecedented. Indeed, not long ago, communist China suppressed Confucianism, accusing it of reflecting old values or class oppression. Now, that is no more. Not long ago, China fought capitalism as an instrument of oppression. The fact that none of these attitudes is no longer valid is a testimony of change, of change of identity and interest. It is a testimony to agential action and capacity, and also an indication that the international system has an important actor that is essentially constructivist.

This rhymes with pragmatism and flexibility. Pragmatism and flexibility fear no change. China is essentially about change. Marxism (is no longer through revolutions, but to empower the poor), Confucianism (is only the most wise and the most foolish do not change), and economic liberalism is about change (the very idea of market entails the notion of change). They all boil down to prosperity. It is the goal that China expresses through its win–win slogan. Everything else should come second. All the changes that need to be done should not jeopardize or should occur in support of that goal. Change shifts perspectives. It necessitates new thoughts, new alliances, and even new interests. They all fall within the reach of agency, not structure. China, in the tradition of Marxism, believes in the emancipative role and mission of the state as an agent to positive change. In this role, it is in the Marxist tradition to seek historical progress beyond the state order, as we discuss in Chapter 12 on China and critical theory. China does not see the state as powerlessly constrained by the structure of the international system, which would only leave her with the realist option of maximizing power. Yet when constrained by the reality of the international system as described by neo-realism, it endeavors to maximize its capabilities; case in point, the South China Sea debate. And when constrained by the international system as currently institutionally structured under neoliberal institutionalism, it endeavors to extend its possibilities (creation of new institutional infrastructure) for itself, and for others, those left behind (according to China, by an imperialism taint of the current system). And in its Marxist tradition lies the idealist dimension of China's agential zeal. China seems unbound, drawing from all philosophical approaches, with a potential of producing new agential attitudes and affecting the structure of the international system.

How can a state maximize its possibilities of its agential capacity given the constraints of the international system structure? What are the chances of China initiating a new type of behavior among international relations actors? About the constraints of the international system; they are just that, namely constraints. They are limiting but not confining. They are constraints but not determinants (Stein, 2006). By pointing to the semantics of both, Stein emphasizes the room for agency to maneuver that one, more than the other, allows. Constraints leave room to circumscribe a set of possibilities "rather than determines" (2006: 190). As constraining as they are, they are not an issue unless and until they are narrowly defined, confining or too specific. Theories in international politics, therefore, are "rarely delimiting," he argues (190). As such, they leave room for many possible behaviors, and cannot predict which one will prevail. Structuralism and non-structuralists theories of international politics cannot be more than a set of

deducted possibilities of agents' behaviors within a specific system structure. To underline the point, Stein (2006: 190) suggests the following examples:

> Even the venerable balance of power theory provides no specific prediction. States can respond to imbalances either by mobilization or by alliance. No specific response is determined by realism, or by any specific balance (Zinnes, 1967; Stein, 2001). Further, both strategies of containment and war are explained by appeal to balance of power arguments (Stein, 2006). Moreover, there is an array of states' strategies beyond merely those of deterrence by one self or with allies. States do not immediately respond to change of power, or even to threat, by deterring—but rather adopt an array of strategies, including ingratiation (Healy and Stein, 1973), appeasement, (Kennedy, 1976), conciliation (Luard, 1976), and deterrence.

The possibility of new types of behavior always exists, even with those acting with the international system. Whether they are manifested or not, it only depends on agents taking liberty and imagining what else one would want to do. Examples of such "thinking out of the box" in the international system have been numerous.[2] In this regard, larger states stand a better chance of metaphorically "rocking the international boat," which is the international system. Both large and small states, however, have the possibility of new behavior initiation, as the international system presents more of a constraint, but not a determinant. Understanding the international system from this perspective offers the possibility of linking neo-realism with world system theory, constructivism, and even the other approaches such as idealism and critical theory because they then focus on change. And where change is not contemplated, as in the case of realism and it premise of state of anarchy, the very possibility of change allows the imagination of ways to once neutralizing once and for all. That too can change, with change.

What are the chances of China initiating or displaying new types of behavior in the international system? By taking liberties, because short of encroaching on existing actual constraints, there is room for action. And this room is more richly available for large states than it is for small ones. Small states are more confined than larger ones (Stein, 2006: 192). As a large state China is less confined. It is

2. Here we think of political leaders' acts of bravery of policy changes that went against the systemic flow. Gorbachev, the Soviet Union Secretary who initiated reforms to end the Cold War. We think of Anwar el Sadat of Egypt with the peace accord of Camp David. We think of China under Mao Tse Tung in his rapprochement with the United States in 1972, etc.

currently getting away with claiming the South China Sea for itself. It stands to exhibit behavior unfamiliar because it is large and different in its identity, value system, and political ideology than those who have induced the current international neoliberalist system. Yet China shares with them, and the rest of the world, that key value of economic neoliberalism. When another large state felt less constraint by the international system and therefore could use agency by taking liberties, it affected international system structures. That large state was the Soviet Union.

It is clear that China is a state that will take liberties in conceiving its path in the international system. Its size, identity, self-image and influence, and already existing evidence, point to that preference. This implies that there is a different way, a different view of doing business in the international system. What we can now expect Chinese politics to bring to the international relations table, it seems that we can expect Chinese international relations scholars to bring to the table of international relations theory. Indeed, just as Chinese politicians believe that there is a different way of approaching the international realm, there are Chinese scholars who believe that the existing international relations scholarship shows limits in accounting for some experiences, realities, and most importantly, ideational perspectives from the non-Western world. Currently, they are actively producing works, addressing and articulating some of what they perceive to be unaddressed possibilities in international relations theory. The following chapter discusses this fact.

3

China's Challenge to International Relations Theory

The rise of China induces broader interests and new heights of influence. Beyond interests and influence, China has adjusted its identity and its ideological frames of reference. All these reasons have led to the need to evaluate its policy preferences and attitude in its dealing in the international realm. All these factors justify China's political ruling class growing interest in foreign policy and international relations, gradually since 1978. They also justify the growing of scholarship among Chinese academics, in the field of international relations theorizing. Politically, China is too different, as we discuss in the next chapter, to be just another international actor with growing clout in the system. China is not about to leave the international system currently under the domination of the West, which would imply its own subjugation. Conscious of the weight of its millennial civilization, China believes it has a counter-argument to suggest when any of the Western will not suit it. That counter-argument is manifest politically, through differences in foreign policy choices; and intellectually, through a robust engagement of Chinese scholars with international relations theorizing, essentially produced in the West. This engagement since the 1990s, and the translation and publications of the most emblematic works in international relations theory from Western authors, has started to produce a rich tapestry of positioning among Chinese international relations scholars. This tapestry spans from identifying with

existing different approaches to questioning their premises and validity, and to rejecting their validity because not grounded in an Eastern social metaphysics. Their interest stems from, and the zeitgeist reigning in China since its "going out" policy, and which also justifies China's involvement and integration in international liberal institutionalism. The influence of this approach continues to grow as on the political side, China's economic success bore fruits, and its leaders emphasized the notion of "peaceful rise" (Biejean Speech in 2003). This, however, should not imply the meaninglessness of realism in China, a state whose history has given birth to nationalistic spirit, from which realists are born. As a consequence, there are in China both from the academic side and the political side, those with a realist leaning in approaching international relations and affairs. On the political side, they use argument of the defense of the nation as policy reason, as demonstrated in the case of South China Sea to promote an assertive behavior in China's foreign policy.

And, as more writing of other approaches to international relations establish their legitimacy, the likes of constructivism and the English School, they find echoes among Chinese growing scholarship in the discipline. Indeed, even when adopting features and contributions from outside, China is keen and known to ascertain that they acquire a Chinese connotation, or, as they like to put it, a Chinese characteristic. The assumption is that because any social theory has a cultural perspective, and here the perspective is Western, there is room to strip such theory from its embedded foreign elements and replace them with own.

Indeed, Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (2007), Acharya, (2017)[1] questioned why had there never was a non-Western international relation theory. Part of their response in the inquiry was the evocation of Ole Weaver's sociology of the discipline.[2] The academic production in the field of international relations reflected the distribution of power and wealth. The phenomenon explained the concentration of academic production in the field of international relations

1. Acharya and Buzan addressed the question in 2017. They revisited the quesaiton ten years later: Whys is there no non-Western Internaional Relations Theory? Ten years on. In: *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 17, no. 3 (September 2017): 341–370.
2. Borrowing the expression from Ole Weaver who saw international relations as a discipline reflecting a sociological fact that of power and wealth which become variables explaining the distribution of academic production in: "The Sociology of a Not so International Discipline: American and European Development in International Relations." *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 689–727.

in the West, North America, and, to a lesser degree, in Western Europe. With changing variables, because that is what variables do, the phenomenon was to incur a shift. More wealth and more influence moved toward East Asia. There, China, with rising power and wealth, and which by the sheer numbers of scholars, will expectedly and increasingly produce more scholarship in international relations in the future. The process is under way. As they enter the arena, they found it already occupied, dominated by those who preceded them. They have produced a number of approaches and utilized a number of premises and concepts that cover the field. What is there left for China to do? A China that likes to stamp every foreign feature it embraces with "Chinese characteristics"? The question of course carries meaning and relevance at many different layers from the Chinese perspective.

First, China, as we will have to reiterate in this text, has a sense of pride, which keeps it from just feeding off what others have produced. Second, both culturally and politically, China is suspicious of Western social metaphysics, and intellectual heritage, simply because they produced colonialism, imperialism, and hegemony from which China suffered. And this hegemonic West has not sufficiently considered non-Western experiences in its analysis; and when they were, they were considered from a Western perspective. Just as there is admiration of a thriving West, there is as well some level of caution with the values of its social metaphysics that champions self-interest. Chinese scholars clearly believe that Western international relations scholarship has something to do with perpetuating a view of the world accommodating of such a dynamics of international relations. Chinese scholars seem to disagree with Mearsheimer's (2016) view of benign hegemony, referencing Western dominance of international relations theory. He implies it does not hurt anyone. They may be dissenting voices here. There was a scholarship in international relations that rationalized the policy of regime change and the war in Iraq, for instance. Both scholars and policy makers were from the West, and their approach to this particular issue in international relations was not benign. Furthermore, the dominance in number of scholars translates in the dominance of the content they divulge in the field. And when one considers that the number of scholars serves to compound the effect of the content, it turns out that it is not indeed benign.

Hence, the need to oppose it with their own, which is the Confucian, or thoughts found in imperial China, some of which will be revived exactly for this purpose, as we shortly state. The Western perspective has not incorporated China's millennia experience, and, finally, that Western international relations theory cannot be universal without the contribution of others.

Beyond discovering the analyses of theories formulated by Western scholars, Chinese scholars are bracing to leave their marks. They are bracing to produce a Chinese international relations theory, and to provide an answer to the question asked by Acharya (2007). As the Chinese scholars embarked on the journey, questions rose as to what their charge was. Was it simply to enrich the existing theories? Indeed, they are scholars who believe that being Chinese does not compel them to be different. They use the argument of universality of scientific theory. Qin writes (2011: 250), "Some Chinese scholars do believe that IRT can only have universal validity, arguing that IRT is scientific theory and that scientific theory recognizes no geographical, cultural, national identity." The simple fact that most existing international relations theory was essentially produced in the West does not suffice to dismiss it. Those that identified with this view are scholars who simply sought to enrich the field with their new contributions. They espoused the premises of existing theories. There are therefore in China, scholars producing works from the realist, liberalist, and increasingly the constructivist approaches. And the changing strategic needs and the growing economic interests of China, scholars and works from the perspectives of realism and liberalism, will continue to flourish.

Others scholars felt it sufficed to proceed weeding out specific cultural reference in analysis that claim universal validity. Others felt the need to produce international relations theory with Chinese characteristics. This was the most compelling reason. But what concretely did that entail? Did it mean to produce a Chinese School of international relations? And what did concretely "Chinese characteristics" in international relations mean? Did it mean infusing international relations theory with a Chinese perspective, or Sinicize it, or indigenize it? (Zhang, 2012).[3] The notion of "Chinese characteristics" is vague and potentially problematic. It is problematic because it can be understood and defined differently by the many scholars. One such definition provided by Zhang (2012: 75)) quoting Liang Shoude[4] states that it meant "theories that are developed under the guidance of Marxism, that are based on the paradigms of the international political theory of Chinese statesmen, that draw on both China's cultural tradition and

3. Zhang, Feng: Debating The "Chinese Theory of International Relations" Toward a New Stage in China's International Studies, a contribution in the book titled: *Contemporary Chinese Political Thought: Debates and Perspectives*. Edited by Fred Dallmayr and Tingyang Zhao. Kentucky University Press, 2012.
4. Liang Shoude: Explorations into the Constitution of International political Theory in China. In: *World Economics and Politics*, 2 (2005): 16–21.

Western international relations theory, and that fit the realities of both the world situation and China's national circumstances by seeking the best convergence of the two." And because we view sinocization and indigenization of international relations as synonymous, here is the definition of the latter as proposed by Zhang (2012: 76): "rather than relying entirely on international relations concepts and theories imported from the West, Chinese scholars are now consciously trying to enrich existing theories or develop new ones by drawing on Chinese concepts and thought." He goes further, describing indigenization as "a critical engagement with Western theories through the lens of indigenous Chinese resources." Needless to state that divergences will appear in the views of scholars on these questions.

Many scholars agreed on the need for a Chinese contribution in international relations theory, among them Qin Yanking (2010, 2011, 2016), Yan Xuetong (2011, 2008, 2009, 2016) and its collaborators such as Song, David Kang (2012), Zhang Feng (2015), Shih (1990), Shiping Tang (2013), to name just a few. That contribution could range from infusing new concepts and their definitions and content to proposing new approaches and their paradigms and premises. These scholars still differ on many questions, for instance, on which expression will such contribution take. While Qin Yanking from the Foreign Affairs University argues in favor of establishing a Chinese School, Yan Xuetong (2016), from the Tsinghua Beijing University, argues that there was no need for such a characterization of an approach by the name of China, since science is science regardless of where it is produced (Zheng, 2012). Yan Xuetong (2016) and collaborators such as Song, and Shi Yin of the Renmin University, understand the contribution of China as consisting of bridging Western international theory with Chinese practices and thoughts of past eras. They use the Chinese thought of pre-Qin dynastic era. Advocate of a positivist and rationalist approach to scholarship, Yan Xuetong sees no need for an abrupt deviation from the Western scholarship. He simply argues for the application of its methodology in producing a Chinese perspective. He does that through applying it to ancient Chinese thought, primarily in his book *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*. He is producing a distinct approach, which has been called "the Tsinghua approach," after the University of Beijing where he teaches; but a designation we find generous at this stage. Other scholars like Guanzi and Hanfeizi have aligned with a rational and materialist perspective of the West. There are, however, those, like Feng Youlan (1991), who are skeptic of the rationalist perspective. They are faced by those who see limits to Western attempts to capture and analyze the world in its complexity, most particularly, the Chinese world. They attribute such limitation to the cultural

embeddedness of Western theory construction. They believe that China has a different perspective, one that purports to overcome the limits of Western theoretical perspective in explaining international relations. Tang (2013) goes even further, denying universal claim to some key international relations approaches, such as realism and liberalism. They believe that there is room in international relations theory for accommodating the infusion of new insight from the Chinese perspective, inspired by Chinese original premises. For instance, Zhao Tingyang (2005, 2009) sees the Western view of the world as made of nation-states, misses capturing the totality of it as one unit that needs to be held together. He proposed the "all under heaven" ancient model of the Zhou Dynasty through what he calls the Tianxia system. It is therefore called neo-Tianxian; and there is in this perspective the previously mentioned Qin Yanging, its leading proponent. Because of his importance, and his effort to move past the vagueness of a Chinese theory of international relations and to produce a Chinese School of international relations, his argument is worth presenting.

In his advocacy of and adhesion to the need for a Chinese School, Qin (2016) has suggested in his book *A Relational Theory of World Politics*, which he believes comes with a different theoretical hardcore. Any social theoretical hardcore is composed of a substantive and a metaphysical part. The former captures the signals from the real world and presents them to the latter for conceptualizing, processed through ideational filter (2016: 27). The use of the term "metaphysics" here obviously does not imply a transcendental reality or source of knowledge but rather, to use the words of Gellner (1977),[5] a specification of general features of human or social historical situation. It is a new metaphysics, a human basis by which to judge and understand human or social reality. It is an understanding of the concept as West gravitated away from the focus on God and toward a focus on humankind in the exploration of its affairs, increasingly, since the Renaissance and the Reformation. It is, therefore, a human social metaphysics. It can be Western or anything else. Western social theoretical hardcore has the real world as substance and its metaphysical part is individualistic rationality (or ontological individualism). Individualistic rationality empowers self, and agential decision-making, which does not necessarily include others. Others are factored into the decision, as far as they are beneficiaries or payers of its consequences. He goes further arguing that individualistic rationality is a product

5. Ernest Gellner in conversation with Ryan Magee on: The Social Context of Philosophy, 10977.

of Western metaphysics. He writes: "It has become a widely acceptable concept that nurtures the theoretical hardcore even without being realized by those who follow it" (2016: 34). He sees it as a product of cultural influence, of Western epistemology, and evidence of cultural influence in social theorizing. Western thinking is ontologically individualistic because it is in its core rationalistic. It has produced theories that share a metaphysical component, namely individualistic rationality. Western theorizing in international relations either instrumentalizes or normalizes individualistic rationality. This rationalistic metaphysical core gives birth to positivist, deductive approaches applied in the natural sciences. Both the positivist approach and its object, the natural world, are materialistic. Therefore, Western ontology is materialistic in its core. And when positivism of the natural science is then applied in the social sciences in order for them to claim a scientific status, it brings a materialistic approach into the social world. It equates the social sciences to natural sciences. It objectivizes the social world. The materialness of the natural world is transferred into the social world. It suggests the expectation of objectivity and certainty of the natural science into the social sciences. In this perspective, a link between science and positivism is established; but so is established a link between rationalism and materialism. And because the social world is material in essence, reason is the tool by which to understand it. This perspective has produced both rationalistic and/or materialistic social theories, from realism, neo-realism, liberalism, neoliberalism, and even the English School and structural constructivism. They share the same metaphysical core, and may only disagree on the substantive level. This is what a critical eye sees. It cannot but absorb what is commendable from it, namely what material reality dictates to use and therefore requires a rational response. But the same critical eye, if not sharing this Western perspective, would wonder more about whether it was the only human social metaphysics by which to understand the world. Hence, the following point of divergence emanating from Qin.

The social world, however, has no independent existence from humans, while the natural world has. The limits of Western social science theorizing lies in the reification of the social world. Their shortcoming lies in the fact that social theories about human beings who happen to be not materially uniform, like the social world they inhabit. These Western theories are part of a shared metaphysical component. It permeates their understanding of the substance of the real world. The problem, however, is that the social sciences deal with the social world—the world of humans. Human beings and their constructed world, the social world, are the subject. In the world, humans get to ascribe meaning to what they do and create. Qin writes, (p. 15):

> In the study of the social, the most significant purpose is to understand the social meaning of human agency. Meaning belongs to the ideational domain and therefore the social world is very much concerned with ideas and meaningful action.

Qin proposes a metaphysics, a different one. He opposes relationality to rationality. One is Confucian and the other is Western. The Confucian relationalism focuses on relationships while the Western rationalism focuses on individuals. Relationality is his new metaphysical core. Relationalism is about process. It implies interaction and others. It has a cultural origin in Chinese Confucianism, just as individualistic rationality has its cultural origin in the Western Enlightenment Movement. While rationality is the metaphysical core of Western international relations theory, relationality is proposed as the metaphysical core of the Chinese contribution to international relations theory. It has a different perspective. Its assumptions are, first, the world of international relations is a universe of interrelatedness. From this metaphysical level, it looks at the world "as being composed of continuous events and ongoing relations rather than substantial objects and discrete entities" (2018: 108). It focuses on relationships of actors in the system. It represents a shift away from the view that sees the world in terms of structure (system) and units (nation-states), an essential product of Western rationality. Second, actors are in relations; which means, argues Qin, that their identities and roles are shaped by social relations. "No absolute, independent identity of the self exists" (2018: 130). The third assumption states that relationality is a process, simply because relations are in motion. They are "ever-unfolding" (2016: 16). In the end, relationality means "a social actor bases her action on relationships" (2016: 16). Relationality, therefore, is about action measured to one's role in a social context rather than action designed to benefit one in a given context. Applied to international relations, this proposed metaphysical core is believed by Qin to possibly be China's contribution. This contribution is one that reclaims the relevance of culture in social theoretical perspectives. This cultural relevance has always existed. It died out, Qin argues (2016: 4), and although it resurged in the 1980s, it has never fully regained its rightful and relevant place. The open use of culture as a variable is not unproblematic to science. Indeed, cultural is inherently specific and regional, while scientific theory has a universal vocation. But this does not scare away Qin who persists, arguing that there is a legitimacy in the relevance of culture in theory building. He explains it by arguing that in each theory that has two cores or components, the substantive and the metaphysical, the latter is the place of birth of cultural embeddedness in social theory construction. He sees

its influence in Western theory construction process. What he does not clearly state but implies is that the significance of culture and its influence in Western social theory production has only seemed to disappear under the illusion that its process has become fully scientific, positivist. But is has not. He argues that the metaphysical core remains embedded in Western ideational culture. Western epistemic culture is itself cultural. This erroneous belief that the cultural influence had disappeared has allowed Western theory building to claim universality. It has traveled around the world and established itself as universal, while being nothing but a product of Western social sciences. By reclaiming the relevance of cultural perspective in social science theory building, Qin seeks to achieve three things at once, kill three birds with one stone, so to speak. First, he wants to force Western international relations theorizing to acknowledge its Western cultural perspective, thus forcing the consideration that it is not naturally universal. Second, he wants to use the same relevance of culture in social sciences theory building to justify the legitimacy of Chinese social sciences scholarship to advance and propose its own theories whose ideational origin, whose metaphysical core, is embedded in Confucian culture rather than Western. Third, by so doing he seeks to induce the acknowledgement and acceptation of such Confucian perspective as legitimate as any Western perspective. Once that has been achieved, whatever Chinese theorizing in international relations comes up with, will now only have to respond to the criteria of whether it is indeed theory, or just thoughts or anything else. Chinese scholarship will simply have to meet the epistemological criteria of theory validation, but no longer worry about being depraved from recognition simply by not being Western embedded. They will simply have to worry about matters such as abstraction, systematization, conceptualization, generalization, testability, and empirical investigations. In that case, the debate about Chinese theory of international relations will be about whether it fits the monistic or pluralist criteria.

As much desire and early steps that some Chinese scholars are demonstrating in the construction of a theory whose perspective will be uniquely Chinese, the way is still long. These scholars will already benefit international relations theory if they produce a Chinese school of thought, the likes of the English School of Thought of the Frankfurter School, which are nothing but products of a dominant paradigm, compelling enough to entice the attention and the scholarship of a number of scholars from a specific geographical and cultural area. They differ from what Qin has suggested, which proposes a new metaphysical background as he calls it, away from rationality to rationality. Whether the effort succeeds it will still have to meet the acceptation of the world of the international relations theory. This hurdle entails two dimensions. One is the degrees of ontological and

epistemological satisfaction of the proposed theory. The other is more subtle and cultural. It is a source of possible dissent, and possible cause of resistance. While a possible Chinese theory will have a Chinese cultural perspective, like a Western has, the validity of either lies in the explanatory power it has. Like a Western theory, a Chinese theory will have to have an explanatory power beyond its cultural region. This, of course, is acknowledged by Chinese academics as a prerequisite condition of epistemic enterprises. In addition, a Chinese theory would have to demonstrate the limits of Western theory. It will have to demonstrate the limit of Western theory in East Asia, and its lack of explanatory power there, and at the same time demonstrate the applicability of its own, outside East Asia. Theories have a universal vocation and aspiration. Only few achieve it. There is, of course, a caveat to theories, to social theories most precisely. They are affected by time and space. They struggle to be valid always, everywhere and all the time.

In any case, there is a need to globalize international relations theorizing, which implies the infusion of all perspectives, familiar and unfamiliar. This unfamiliarity of cultural perspective has not been detrimental to the West, which has succeeded in spreading its perspective outside. It has been, however, detrimental to non-Western thought. Unfamiliar, some have been rejected. Today, unlike in the Columbian epoch, unfamiliarity with other cultures and societies is no longer an excuse. Cultures are familiar to each other today. And the cultures of today are less accepting of dismissal, much less of a priori rejection. This means that international relations theory has vocation of becoming global. The only requirement for infusion of cultural perspective in theorizing is the ontological and epistemological hurdles. Aristotle is to be accepted not because of his Hellenic cultural heritage but because of analytical palpability of his reasoning. And if Aristotle's thought is subject of critical observation and scrutiny, so should Confucius. If Bertrand Russell can riddle Aristotle's teaching on categories or causes, or even logic with bullets of criticism, if Confucius thought is epistemologically theocratized, Russell should be able to take a crack of the validity and evidentiary of his thought. In the end, that process is what ensures universal validity.

The logical and hope for an end result is an international relations theory that is global in relevance, application, and explanatory power. There will not be a Chinese international relations theory and a Western, despite their regional and cultural perspective. Should that be the case, neither would have any merit of existing. It will be a proof of their respective temporal and spatial limitation; and that would mean that they cannot be tested for evidence, universally. They will be nothing but area theories, the kind found in area studies, and that would

be unacceptable if the international system structure is one and whole. The explanatory power or limitations of realism are intrinsic to the theory. Whether it was influenced by a Western metaphysical attitude that may explain both its strength and weakness, but such strengths or weaknesses do not explain cultural perspective. Scientific methodology and processes allow the possibility of weeding out cultural contamination of intellectual products. The simple fact that limitations are pointed out in a number of Western-produced theory, and some of such pointing out coming from non-Westerners, it is because the ontological and epistemological tools of science allows that critical analysis. In the end, the perspectives of theories, as Cox (1986) argues, that all theories have one should not stand in the way of theorizing, being from China or elsewhere.

The world is irreversibly multicultural. All productions, endeavors, and expressions of human activity are bound to be reflective of such plurality. To this effect, and in conclusion, Qin (2016: 51) writes:

> We live in a multicultural world, which is composed of various cultural communities of practices, defined in terms of shared background knowledge. Such a world should provide rich resources for the prosperity of social theory development and innovation if, the shackles of discursive domination were to be destroyed from the minds of people across the world.

Qin reminding us of the social context of knowledge production and theory building is certainly justified. It is even more justified when it comes to producing the basis for understanding the social world. It is imperative in the social sciences. It seems more imperative today, in light of the claim for recognition of various civilizations perspectives. These civilizations bring to the understanding of the social world particular insights long discarded or neglected by the dominant civilization, producing what it claimed to be universal without the contribution of the universe. The new consciousness does not imply that what has been produced by a Western epistemological perspective of the social world was false. I simply dare suggest the consideration of other perspectives. These perspectives, however, just like the Western perspective will have to undergo the scrutiny of epistemological inquiry and evaluation.

What comes to mind after considering Qin's suggested contribution of the Confucian perspective to the social sciences, and most particularly to international relations theorizing, is the following. Qin focuses on Western metaphysics and Confucian metaphysics. One is rationalistic and the other is relationalistic. These two sources of human metaphysics have the social culture as context. The only difference between the two is that Western metaphysics privileges reason,

which induces the use of positivist science to understand the worlds, both the natural and the social world, while Confucian metaphysics uses relationality which privileges the dynamics born out of relations among entities. These two metaphysics, however, may not be the only metaphysical sources of understanding the social world. There is as well a Marxist source of human metaphysics. It is both rationalistic because it is materialistic. And it is materialistic because it focuses on the material conditions in the social world. It is as well historical because its context is history. Historical materialism, therefore, is as well another source of human metaphysis in the quest for understanding the social world. It is the Marxist metaphysics. This Marxist metaphysics differs from both the Western and the Confucian in the fact the first two consider social ideational culture as the sources of their metaphysics, whereas Marxism adds history to the social cultural context. The context of Marxist metaphysics is both history and social culture.

China, it appears, has been in contact with all three sources of human metaphysics. It has been historically and organically the hub of Confucianism. Confucianism is its culture. But China has been in contact with Marxist metaphysics, and still is politically Marxist. There are Chinese who have internalized Marxist values. There are Chinese who sincerely are Marxist. There are Chinese whose identity is Marxist, both politically and culturally. China, by all practical measures has been exposed to Western metaphysics. And just as there are Chinese who sincerely embraced Marxism, there are Chinese who are liberalists. Even within members of the Chinese Communist Party, there are liberalists. They espouse the rationalist metaphysics. They are rationalists. Among Chinese scholars, some are realists, and neoliberalist, which constitute a proof of their embrace of the rationalist perspective. The presence of rationalists, in form of realists, and liberalist, both in politics and scholarship simply allows the conclusion that China has not remained culturally pure, and exclusively Confucian. The fact that Confucianism may dominate the culture does not exclude presence and contribution, in whichever degrees of other ideational perspectives, namely from the Marxist and Western metaphysics. Maybe because of the pragmatism of the Confucian teaching, the East is known for its capacity to syncretize various belief systems and ideational sources. One, therefore, must wonder, how predominant the relationalist approach proposed by Qin will be. One must image the possibility of competing approaches coming from China. In other words, it is difficult to image that rationalism will be the sole, or even the most, original contribution from China in international relations theorizing. One can imagine, in the tradition of the East to syncretize, a theoretical approaching that fuses the Western, Marxist,

and Confucian perspectives as China's true contribution. One can imagine a new synthetize that combines the use of science to understanding society (materialism and positivism from the West) with the use of both science and history as a context guiding analysis of society (historical materialism) and the Confucian focus on human beings and their relationships (pragmatism). Of all these sources of human metaphysics, Qin seems to single out the Confucian, but the others are as well present in China.

This seems to be the approach most likely, for now, to inform China's foreign policy given the fact that it can extirpate for now any of these three sources of metaphysics. China is Confucian. It will reflect in some ways Confucian worldview. China remains Marxist, it still claims to hold on to the ideals of a Marxist society. And whether it admits it or not, China is already part of the liberalist, realist, and therefore, the rationalist world as understood in the Western social metaphysical perspective. China's contribution to international relations will be other than the products of academic scholarship embraced by policy makers, or it will be the product of Chinese foreign policy choices as conceived by its leaders, and only codified in scholarly text to be presented to the world in the for of an original theory from China. Of these two possibilities, it seems the former will be the case. Chinese political authority will not wait to hear and listen to what Chinese academics say or produce as scholarship to adjust their policy accordingly. It will rather be that the demands of their duties will require specific, well-thought responses, both domestically and internationally. The sum of these responses will constitute the subject of Chinese scholarship analysis, which will then be disseminated for the world to read and understand what China's understanding of world politics is.

Qin's relationalism may be the overarching contribution for Chinese scholarship, if it is meant to subsume all other approaches. Indeed, privileging relationships in and by itself does not a priori reject or exclude rationality. But once reason in use, it has the ability of undermining relationships; simply, there are developments that are unreasonable. But on the other hand, if the focus is on relationships, those in such relationships have more than just reason to arbiter what is unreasonable. Relationships include emotions, forgiveness. Some of them even exclude rejections, exorcising. Relationships are governed by more than reason. This is not explicitly stated in Qin's understanding of relationality, but can be deduced. And if this deduction is correct, then, indeed, relationalism is a concept, an approach above those found in international relations theorizing today. It simply means that a new perspective, with potentially new norms, should now guide the relations among international politics actors.

Qin's contribution is a step in this process of Chinese scholarship interest in international relations theory. The process has had phases, of which Zhang (2012) counts five. It started with absence of international relations as a discipline in China, the time between 1949 and 1963. Then came the period of 1963 to 1978, characterized by preoccupation of the communist regime at home, with the Cultural Revolution and abroad with its relation with the Soviet Union. China was involved in international relations but viewed it antagonistically, negatively. From the academic perspective, international relations as a discipline was still not studied. Then came the phase of 1978 to 1990, a time of "genuine interest" (Zheng, 2012). It was the time during which Chinese scholars took interest in international relations theory, reflecting the political developments in the nation. It was the time of positive involvement with the international world. The phase of 1990 to 2000 was the one of maturing and awakening of an independent international relations discipline. To these phases suggested by Zhang, I add the current phase, underway since 2000, the one in which the discipline of international relations has been appropriated; the phase in which Chinese scholars have started attempting to make it their own, the same way scholars in the United States has domesticated it in the last sixty years. The process is underway, where will it be in the next sixty years, will tell whether Chinese scholars will have succeeded in their endeavor.

As for the question how it will influence Chinese foreign policy, the question is not easily answered. The world of academia and that of policy making notoriously function in two distinct gears. The world of Chinese official foreign policy makers are preoccupied with the need to provide answers to urging, concrete, and timely material questions and issues, in a time frame that often leaves no room for deeper and prolonged time for reasoning and research. The world of academia has that time. Nevertheless, the actions of one and the production of the other inform and benefit from each other. The question is this can easily be demonstrated in some cases, and not so easily in others. The relevance of Chinese international relations scholarship to Chinese state behavior internationally remains opens. However, what can be answered is the question of how international relations theory canon, what it has produced to tell us what happens, and how nations behave internationally applied to China's behavior as an international actor. We started with the assumption that China presented a number of identity features that presaged a potential distinctive behavior, and equally potential novel challenges to the assumptions and predictions of existing international relations theory. This is what we endeavor to scrutinize in the following chapters. We observe China's interaction actions against the prescriptions of realism, liberalism, constructivism, the English School, critical theory, and idealism.

4

China's Rise in the Prism of Realism

China is a rising power, a great power, and may rise even higher. Realism has plenty to say about states in either one of these statutes. Naturally, we scrutinize here what the theory says against how China behaves. Realism can be traced back to Thucydides time (431–404 BCE) as he theorized on the rivalry, behavior, and wars among the Greek city-states. This approach established itself intellectually in the 1500s and the 1600s with Niccolo Machiavelli (1532) and Thomas Hobbes (1651), who respectively reflected on the monarchical rivalries of Italian city-states and the English Civil War. The approach remained a prevalent vantage point in making sense of international relations through the Napoleonic Wars and Europe's tumultuous history. It finally gained sustained momentum in the conditions leading to both World Wars and beyond.

During this long history of scholarship, from the realist perspective, a variety of explanatory assumptions and concepts have been used to distinguish realist scholars and their works from one another based on the focus or the perspective they bring to the edifice of the approach itself. These foci and perspectives are those of historical realism, classical realism, neo-realism or structural realism, neo-classical realism, and even defensive and offensive realism. Through their different angles and their additions, they have all contributed to the establishment of the realist approach as one of the most unavoidable in international relations

theory. Within the assumptive cannon of realism, we count the selfishness of human nature, the centrality of the state as an actor in international relations, the international system viewed as a system of states with a structure and characterized by a state of anarchy, national security as a primary interest of states, and power as a currency in international relations.

China is a state with interests, with a need for national security. It is a state in the international system that has a structure and is characterized by a state of anarchy. Hence, China is included in and concerned by the assumptions of realism. But how has China, in its policy practices reflected the realist approach? Some have attempted to find expressions of realism in the long and glorious history of the Chinese state. And, like in the case of liberalism, any aspects of the theory found did not amount to reflect the body of theoretical architecture that realism today presents. China has different philosophical and cultural traditions to draw from. In recent history is where it makes more sense to scrutinize the reflection of the realist assumptions in China. In its recent history, China has theorized its existence within the context of the Marxist analysis. During that time, the state, through its political leaders, articulated strategies and foreign policy objectives reflective of, and inspired by, a Marxist worldview with a "dash of Chinese salt." China developed a view of the international system unreflective of realism. Since its reforms of 1978, China has redefined its identity and reformulated its national objectives. China has moved to integrate the international system as a share and stakeholder. China understands itself more like a normal state, with normal national security needs and interests, which should be pursued next to those of other states in the system. China was now fully a part of the international system described by realism. This system has a structure that requires a kind of rational choice-driven behavior. As a rising power in the system, realism predicts the choices it has. But is China reflecting such predictions? China is aware of the assumptions of realism. This awareness is reflected by the existence of hardliners within China's Communist Party, and in the growing number of scholarship publication from China echoing or revolving around the realist approach. Indeed, international relations theory as understood in the West appeared in China after 1978. Since then realism and other approaches have been studied through the lens of China's own reality and identity (Qin, 2011).

Like elsewhere, Chinese realists recognize the structural nature of the international system and the imperative of national security dictated by the threatening nature of the state of anarchy. Consequently, they focused on the military. But, realism comes with further inferences, namely with the focus on power, with the need to prepare for war, to be ready for unavoidable conflicts and prevail in them

after they produced wars, to be prepared to use force, to sanction, to defeat, subjugate and dominate, premised on the wickedness and selfishness of the human nature. China is unease with this canonical vocabulary of realism. China is philosophically, culturally, politically, and ideologically unease with this vocabulary of realism.

Philosophically, Chinese thought on society, human nature, and political order does not produce the same inferences as realism. The reason is that such inferences of realism are drawn from the contrasting of proprieties of actors from which derive their attributes and behavior. Such behavior can be contradictory in nature and incompatible. An example here will be the identity or interests of states. In such contrasts inhabit contradictions, which in turn breeds competition and conflicts. This is what Qin (2016) calls Western epistemic culture of taxonomy. In Western taxonomy, entities are examined in their identity or distinctiveness. They fall under different categories. They are seen as different objects in so far as they are distinct through their proprieties (attributes), which determine their behavior. This breeds a relationship of cooperation or contradiction in which one is bound to prevail at the expense of the other. And such contradictions, therefore, call for either submission or surrender in order for the contradiction to be eradicated. It is in fact what Hegel called a dialectic process in which a synthesis is produced, after eradication of the contradiction. Realism seems to build on this process. Beyond realism this epistemic culture of taxonomy permeates other fields of public expression and prevails in the political culture of the West. In the field of politics, it explains the culture of contrasts, competition, or contradiction between unions and employers, between political parties, between interest groups, and so on. In the fields of international relations, this culture prevails as well. Let us take the case of two states, one of which is capitalist and the other communist. They inhabit the taxonomic contradiction. States that are distinct must produce a synthesis for any functional relationship to be envisaged. And the same distinctiveness makes the production of the needed synthesis, one characterized by conflict. Feng Zhang (2015) claims that such instrumentalization of distinctiveness may explain the many wars in Europe, from the Crusades through World War II. Realism is imbedded in this categorical taxonomy of Western thinking. It explains the culture of confrontation and competition in realism that China is historically unfamiliar with and politically uncomfortable with.

In contrast, Chinese thought focuses on bridging, not instrumentalizing, what seems contradictory in proprietary attributes of actors. China and the rest of Asia breed a culture of entities in relationships. China's version of the international system is essentially relational. Zhang defines relationality (2015: 5) as "the

dynamics of connections and transactions among actors in structured social relationships, as opposed to their substance and attributes." From Zhang's perspective, the Chinese approach is relational, while Western approach is instrumental. This means that the nature of one's relationships with others affects the way they act, not the fact that have or do not have such or such attributes.

An Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)[1] fighter relates to an opponent in the fighting cage differently than he relates to his dog (assuming he is gentle with his dog). This says that his behavior does not depend on his own attributes or even the attributes of either his opponent or his dog, but rather on the type of relationship he entertains with each. So, he uses his fighting skills on one, while maintaining a much gentler relationship with the other. And while Zheng and others, such as Qin (2010) and David Kang (2012), attribute the long period of peace in East Asia, before its interaction with the West, to this approach, contrasted with the wars in the West. Their conclusion, however, is not shared by those who argue that it was not the rationalist approach that brought peace to East Asia, but the fact that China, during the Mind Period, was a powerful empire and the hierarchy it established accounted for the long peace. The proof they provide is the turmoil that ensued in the region once China lost its hegemonic status in the 19th century. This argument naturally strengthens the realist argument that argues that the remedy of anarchy in the international system is hierarchy.

Philosophically, China sees objects in nature, in society, in states, in culture, and in people, as changing but not eternal in their essence because their proprieties and character can change. From this perspective, their behavior as well can change. And even their attributes can change, especially when such objects are entities in the social and historical world, which are constructed worlds. Their relationships can change as well. It is a social philosophical reasoning premised on the capacity and ability of objects to change their proprieties. Societies, cultures, states, people, and even the international system itself can change because they are socially constructed. If, where, and when features of such objects do not change, the contradiction they bring is subject to harmonization efforts, not conflict. In this philosophy contradictions are cause for harmonization, where others see contradictions as a cause for conflict. Philosophically, the focus on force, power, conflicts, competition, hegemony, and empire building is off-putting from China's perspective. China has expressed the need to move away from power politics the

1. American mixed martial arts organization.

need for democratic international relations, as expressions of such aversion against the muscular reasoning of realism.

Culturally, China is Confucian, a culture that promotes harmony, community, respect, conflict avoidance, and duty. It is essentially less boisterous and less bracing for conflicts as societies in which the assumptions of realism are more reflective of historical culture. This is not to say that conflicts do not exist, nor that the reality of wars is foreign to China, and nor that Confucianism is pacifist.[2] Rather, such wars are primarily a product of political calculation rather than culturally induced, and the Confucian culture chooses to focus on the ability of culture and society to transform that bellicose political realm into one that suits its values. In other words, Confucian thinking seeks to escape the wickedness of human nature that justifies the bellicose attitude of realism, or just the greed of political leaders that produce conflicts and wars. Confucianism, and China by extension, aims at getting past the wickedness of human nature. In this sense, Confucian teaching and China's aversion to power politics are a form of idealism as far as they refuse to cave in to nature when nature does not produce the best of human beings. The idealist wants to help reality (realism) to overcome the limits of human nature.

In any case, it remains a fact that China and East Asia entertain a culture of cooperation rather than of competition. This preference explains the political culture of corporatism, reflective of the Confucian ethics. This ethics promotes duty rather than rights. It also explains the mindset of "all in the same boat." It breeds the culture of consensus seeking, decision-making process. Together, these features have found expressions in East Asian politics in various forms. They are expressed through authoritarianism in Malaysia or Singapore; through authoritarian pluralism in Japan; and in China, through the totalitarianism of communism. China is in the process of reconciling communism and Confucianism. Although the process might not be entirely smooth because of the growing influence of capitalism, these two ideologies (communism and Confucianism) seem to agree on the role and duty of authority to promote social cohesion.

Politically, China has suffered from the domination of foreign powers since the Manchu Dynasty (1644–1912), including Japanese invasions (1937, 1945), and Western aggression. China subsequently turned communist after the civil

2. In *Analects*, there are a few passages in which the Master (Confucius) dispenses advices to the disciple on matters of wars. Confucius was too aware of the complexity of the Chinese state and too involved in matters of governance to be naïve about the reality of wars.

war since its independence in 1949. Naturally, China has developed a sensitivity to matters of domination, which is the root of imperialism. There is, analytically, a short distance between imperialism and realism in the sense that they both are predicated on acquisition and use of power (force). If one uses state power to expand and to dominate, the other relies on a state's preponderance of capabilities to ensure security of self but also to supply order beyond its own region. In recent modern history the use of force and the imposition of order have come from the West, precisely from the United States, as hegemonic power. An explosive mix-up becomes then easily constructed—realism, use of force, imperialism, hegemony, and the West. China has been at the receiving end of this reality. China has seen itself as a victim of foreign interference, and has even developed a "victim mentality" (Medeiros, 2009). Chinese nationalism has its root in the historical circumstances from which China suffered to explain such a mindset. China is therefore sensitive to the idea of foreign interference.

Ideologically, after turning communist in 1949, China became part of an international system of states, in which its place in it was not booked without any reservations. The ideological rivalry between communism and capitalism has constrained China's action beyond its border. Not having much alternative, it chose to inscribe its involvement in world affairs in the countering of imperialism and in support of decolonization effort in the developing world. It successfully carved a niche for itself as an alternative to the communist leadership, next to the Soviets and against the capitalist world. This capitalist world was that of the imperialists and colonizers. Their capitalist system was inherently hegemonic, exploitative of the weak and poor states in the system. These weak and poor states were foreign, displaying a number of different features. They fit the taxonomic approach of sizing, evaluating, and categorizing entities one faces. Found weak and poor, they fell prey. China itself has fallen prey to the capitalist West, when weak and poor. China saw in the realist approach to international relations, a fit and a continuation of Western imperialist foreign policy. China had developed a suspicion and a disdain of the hegemonic West. The realist use of notions of power, capabilities, wars, etc., are relayed in the international system by expressions such as unilateralism, interventionism, embargo, sanctions, and so forth. In the end, China argues, they serve as venues and instruments of Western hegemony. This hegemonic tendency is fueled by the realist approach and a Hobbesian culture of anarchy that it inspires. To counter this tendency, China promotes an anti-realist message. It promotes non-interventionism, the abandonment of power politics, the adoption of a democratic international relations, the respect for rule of law and international law, and underlines non-interference in internal affairs.

All these factors explains China's wariness with realism and justifies its defensive military buildup. Speaking to the 16th Party Congress in November 2002, Jiang Zemin declared: "China will never seek hegemony and never go in for expansion." This is how the Westphalia Treaty provisions suits China, and this is why China is such a consequential advocate of its content.

China's Behavior against Key Assertions of Various Currents of Realism

There are many aspects and behaviors taken into account by the different sub-currents of realism that should apply to China; or which China's behavior should reflect. Let us examine each of the currents within the realist perspective, seeking to find what behavior it expects from China and whether China behaves accordingly.

Starting with the original realist, Thomas Hobbes, we draw from his writing, *Leviathan*, two key concepts: human nature and anarchy. There is a reason why Hobbes' writing and the realist perspective he theoretically brought to life have had an unshakable status in the field of international relations theory. Its view on human nature is both simple and grounded in empirical common sense. It does not need intellectual insight to make sense to common people. His view on the potential state of anarchy in society entails the same quality as that of human nature. He reminded us of the inadequacies and imperfections of each human—naturally and inherently selfish.

Selfishness is a dangerous premise for human beings who are essentially social beings and therefore live in society, as it can easily produce a general war. Where there is such an absence of order, chaos and anarchy prevails. This reality requires a social contract, which Hobbes sees materialized through a strong rule or ruler whose authority is absolute to inspire the metaphorical fear of Leviathan. What is the case in society is as well the case in the international realm, where such a potential for chaos is ever-present because there is no rule or ruler. The international realm is inherently in a state of anarchy. Hence, a certain behavior designed to ensure the survival of individual states against the predatory selfish behavior of others becomes imperative.

The inevitability of chaos as the result of human nature is not shared by all—not by constructivists, for instance. There are also other premises for social contracts other than Hobbes'. Jean Jacques Rousseau comes to mind, as does the democratic social contract. But it is as well not shared by other social philosophies, like the one found in China. It is the Confucian understanding of human

nature and what it makes of the wickedness of human beings. Acknowledging the imperfections of human beings, Confucianism through *Analects* (XVII, 2, 2090) sees human nature in less alarming terms than Hobbes sees it. Human beings, he argued, are by birth close, but separate through practice. J. J. Rousseau echoes the same reasoning, positing that it was the sophistication and inventions of human societies, as opposed to its natural nature, that was responsible for such separation among mankind. Confucian teaching sees no cause for alarm from human nature—it can be changed through contextualization. In other words, it is incumbent to family, community, society, and even the state to socialize or contextualize human beings, making them social beings. Yes, Confucius is optimistic about human nature, but the social being ought to further become a citizen, a *gentleman*, as he describes it, and therefore, it is incumbent upon the state to be part of that contextualization.

Confucian thinking on social contracts includes family, community, society, and state, in an effort to contextualize human beings. The Confucian state is a father figure, not a policeman. The difference being that there is a bit of a policeman in a father, but there is more to a father than just a regulatory policing function. A father has the responsibility of educating his children and even providing support. This father state implies trust. Answering a question of a discipline, Tsze Kung said about the prerequisite of government (*Analects* Book 12, Chapter 7) Confucius suggests weapon, food, and trust in government. Of which, upon insistence of the disciple to rank them, Confucius picks trust in government as the most important.

The government must ensure and maintain order and security for all and must therefore be strong. The state must have the necessary strength or power to ensure such order and security. This is Hobbesian, but the state is as well a father figure. Therefore, it is incumbent upon it to demonstrate support, if not affection. The Confucian state, therefore, navigates these two functions of the state: the father figure and the policeman. Confucius advises those in leadership, and therefore the state, to lead by moral power (virtue) and win a following without recourse to physical power. And when the state does its function right, all other relationships fall into place.

The relevance of this to China as an international relations actor is simply the moral use of force. How is this use of power grounded in a Confucian perception of morality reflected in China's behavior as international actor? It is reflected through the preference of China to win, following internationally through moral force and virtue. That is concretely translated through preference for soft power use. This is the view embraced by a growing number of Chinese neo-Confucian

intellectuals, among them Kang Xiaoguang (2004), a proponent of an authoritarian state that uses its power for good. This is what makes China, as a Confucius-inspired state, somewhat uncomfortable with what it sees as deterministic implications of realism assumptions.

Spearheaded by Morgenthau (1948), classical realism simply argues that a state desires power. But, if that power is realistically used abroad to achieve national interest, then it poses a potential moral legitimacy question. The question of moral legitimacy becomes a moral deficit if the interest of the powerful state is exercised through coercion and not through conviction. The issue here is the coercive instrumentalization of power by the powerful for selfish gain, which means taking advantage of the state of anarchy by putting smaller and less powerful states at the mercy of the powerful, which realism sees as a reality that states have to deal with. It agrees with the logic based on taxonomic cultures that see states as distinct in their features, goals, and interest, which may induce contradictory behavior and lead to confrontation. Hence, confrontation is a reality of realism. This approach does not think past the contradictions or even live with them, but it thinks in term of forcing about a synthesis, which occurs through either annihilation or submission of the contradiction by the victorious party in the confrontation.

In this logic, states naturally desire power, as Morgenthau argued. From this perspective, power capability is instrumental. This instrumental view of power capabilities begets power politics. China has repeatedly proclaimed to want no part in power politics. This type of politics is of a different epoch of international relations, China argues. It is foreign to China's political culture. China wants to focus on peace, harmony, and inclusion in international relations, as naïve as that might sound to a realist. That is exactly the point. In fact, China's tradition of foreign policy, debating what attitude to adopt vis-à-vis the foreign world and cultures, was centered around the notions of exclusivism and inclusivism. But it was not centered around the question of how similar or how dissimilar they are or what their intentions were as a result or whether they were powerful. This latter line of thinking is taxonomic. It is realist. While some Chinese intellectuals today have started to adopt it, others argue that the West has come to be anchored in its taxonomic thinking, so much so that anything else begins to sound out of place. China is consciously avoiding immersing itself in that tradition.

The tradition is one in which states focus on their ability to survive in a context where they cannot truly count on others for security and have only themselves to rely on. When that ability is limited, the balance of power becomes a focal point. States arm themselves to maximize their security to keep

up with any state that is perceived as a threat (arming). They join others to balance the threat, if their sole effort may not be enough (balancing), or they let these other states do the balancing (passing the buck). They may join the protective security of a powerful ally (bandwagoning) or they may keep their options open and join forces, depending on a calculation of whatever serves their interest best in any given situation (omnibalancing). By so doing they increase their security but decrease at the same time the prospect of a rising power to feel unbound (Thucydides, 431 BCE; Morgenthau 1948; Waltz 1979; Singer and Deutsch 1964).

Such balancing of power becomes a mechanism of world peace. We have mentioned the interests of China through President Xi, expressing the need for a new type of great power relationship that removes the fear of threats to make this behavior obsolete. From the perspective of the balance of power theory, China fits in as a state with its own security needs, therefore can pick and choose any of the behaviors described. China can arm, balance, pass the buck, bandwagon, or omnibalance. It is rising so considerably that its reasonable choice would be to increase its capabilities immensely, which will make it a target of worried states feeling threatened. Should China not be reassuring, these worried states would feel compelled to arm or join forces to create a balance. This certainly is a reason why China continues to insist its peaceful rise. Creating a balance of power for the purpose of guaranteeing world peace was questioned by other realists, beginning with Organski (1958), Organski and Kuegler (1980), and later Gilpin (1981), Modelski and Thompson (1989), and many others. They argued from a perspective of shifting power, not balancing power.

The power shift theory contends that a balance of power is a fragile state, as the likelihood of war is systemic because power constantly shifts. War occurs regularly because of the dynamics of history. The shift itself is made possible through a differential growth rate among nations. China benefits from that differential growth rate and is therefore the rising power that is causing the power shift. The shift brings about a new hierarchy in the system, which in turn produces states that can be satisfied or dissatisfied with their ranking. In this ranking, Organski (1968) sees the dominating states, followed by great powers, middle powers, small powers, and then colonies. It is among the dissatisfied states where danger arises, if and when they are confident enough (if they are powerful enough to challenge the system's order). Instability in the system, and therefore the possibility of war, increases when power shifts among major contenders. That danger subsides when the balance of power has tilted in favor of a clearly powerful state with preponderant capabilities. Therefore, this was the preferred structural condition for world

peace, as such preponderance of capabilities makes any balancing or challenging futile and produces a state of peace.

Power transition theory argues that satisfied states are not the initiators of wars. Only dissatisfied great powers are. Organski, Kugler (1980: 20) argue that "the source of war is to be found in the differences in size and rates of growth of the members of the international system." In other words, and contrary to classical realism and its balance of power theory, states are not always in constant quest for security improvement, which makes them all dissatisfied. They, therefore, must engage in balancing behavior, which in turn breeds security dilemma.

From the power shift perspective, should China continue to rise past great power status it stands to induce the condition of a power transition. This means that China could overtake the incumbent dominant power. On its way up, China will encounter an established power. That power, the United States, may accommodate China, may preventively attempt to stop its further ascent, or may cave—just as China may cooperate with the United States, may possibly challenge it, or may avoid any such challenge. The behavior of both the rising and the established powers depends on their degrees of confidence and levels of capabilities, as well as on their intentions. Classical realism assumes, through the balance of power theory, to know the intention. It argues that all states want more power, while power transition argues that states seek to maximize their gain. If China's behavior was to reflect the balance of power theory, it is poised to challenge the incumbent United States when the time is right, when its capabilities promise a successful outcome, provided the United States does not cave or accommodate China. Aware of such expectation, China uses its peaceful political rhetoric not to trigger the expected counter behavior by immediately concerned rivals, like the United States. In other words, China's political rhetoric of a peaceful rise is purposefully articulated and designed not to stir the pot while it is ascending.

From the perspective of power shift, China should be about maximizing its gains. Power transition theory, through Kugler and Organski (1989: 172), claims, "The objective of nations was not, as the balance of power theory argued (Morgenthau, 1948), to maximize power, rather, the objective was to maximize net gains." China has been maximizing its nets gains since joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 as it rises without weakening its security. If anything, it uses its increasing economic might to increase its defensive capabilities. It stands to lose its economic prowess by solely focusing on security, which would take away its opportunities to challenge the incumbent. China is expected to challenge the incumbent dominant power only if it was dissatisfied, as it continues to grow.

So, is China a satisfied or a dissatisfied state? To answer that question, we should first find out whether China considers itself a satisfied state or a dissatisfied state. Second, we should scrutinize the behavior of China as it rises to find out whether it was adopting, through its actions, the policies of dissatisfied nations or those of satisfied states. The policies of dissatisfied states are revisionist, while the policies of satisfied states are cooperative. Revisionist policies and cooperative policies suppose an existing status quo to rebel against or to cooperate with. Such existing order has been the international institutional liberalism since World War II. It was spearheaded and oversaw by the incumbent dominant state with preponderance of power.

But if China saw itself as dissatisfied, and therefore dared challenge the incumbent power, it would have to ensure that the benefits of such a move outweighed the costs. As it stands, China stands to lose should it engage in such a challenging endeavor, as that might jeopardize its current economic gains, which contribute significantly to its own security. Should such a challenge produce a war, China's prospects for a net gain are not certain. There is no net gain China can realistically expect, currently, both with respect to its economy and its security. China is better served to continue maximizing its gain and not be consumed by taking on the incumbent. This realization is reflected in China's own pronouncements, speaking once again of a peaceful rise. It counters the expectation of the balance of power theory, which believes that states naturally seek to maximize their power and security, and, therefore, China was expected to take on the incumbent.

Does that mean that China was a satisfied state? The behavior of a satisfied state is expectedly cooperative with the existing norms of the international system. This would make China a status quo power. Therefore, one must answer the following question first: Has China's behavior as a rising power been cooperative? China participates in many of the existing institutions as a cooperating member and has on many occasions chosen not to disrupt the flow of the decision-making processes of these institutions, beginning with the UN, where it sits on the Security Council, in the WTO, and even in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. China engages in worldwide initiatives, from environmental issues to humanitarian relief, as well as development aid, non-proliferation efforts, and anti-terrorism. Even when China is not given the deference it now deserves as a rising power in institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, China does not choose to quit or rebel. China tries to reform, and, even with such desire to see its status acknowledged and recognized—for instance, through a greater voting right that has not materialized—it still did not rebel. What China has recently been doing is a different kind of challenge to the status

order. Because China won't quit or confront the status quo, it finds ways to circumvent the limitations it experiences through the initiatives of creating new instructions and speaking to nations around the world that have not been seriously implicated in the current status order.

From the perspective of classical realism, China ought to be dissatisfied. All states are, according to classical realism. Seeking the driving seat, states can only be revisionists, as Morgenthau (1948) argued. Those who believe China is a dissatisfied state point to its dissatisfaction with the US support of Taiwan. They point to the US presence in East Asia. They point to the fact that China is not yet fully recognized by various US administrations as an equal or the fact that it still does not enjoy the representation it ought to in the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. Overall, they argue China cannot be satisfied in an order it did not design with norms it does not always agree with, such as Human Rights issues. From this perspective, a dissatisfied China is a revisionist China, and therefore in the challenging mindset. But, according to China's own pronouncements and its behavior, it is not unequivocally a dissatisfied state. Even if China was dissatisfied, China's choice of dealing with dissatisfaction may not be what classical realism predicts.

From the perspective of power transition theory, China will have to meet the following conditions to become a challenger: It will have to be a rising power, it will have to be a great power, and it will have to be dissatisfied with the existing order. Power transition theory predicts the degrees of dissatisfaction to increase disproportionally to the ranking of the hierarchy of world powers. The lower a state is positioned in such hierarchy, the higher its degrees of dissatisfaction (Organski, 1968). China's rise implies diminishing degrees of dissatisfaction. The higher up it rises, the more satisfied it ought to be. Should that not be the case, it will be powerful enough to challenge the status quo. Organski (1968: 361) himself anticipated the rise of China, seeing it as a threat to Western supremacy, but also as part of the process underlying power transition. He argued that power may shift as a result of a difference in growth rate, but it was the challenge from the rising, dissatisfied power that threatens the established order.

If and when China successfully challenges the dominant power and the order it oversees is when the power shift will produce a power transition. Such a power transition brings about hegemonic transition. Hegemonic transition supposes the presence of a hegemonic power. Such hegemonic power is the state with preponderance of power and a global leadership, which manifests through the existence of international order. In the case of a successful hegemonic transition, such order becomes subject to revisions by the incoming dominant power.

Inversely, the challenger is a "powerful nation that is dissatisfied with the global order" (Organski, 1968: 364–365). Hegemonic transition has occurred through the assertive behavior of the rising challenger. That would become a possibility only if China continues to rise and grows dissatisfied with its status attribution in the hierarchy of powers. Or if it considered its interests as better served through challenging the state above it. Or if it became successful, and set out to propose a new or different or adjusted world order. But there are so many "ifs" that need to materialize for the world to witness another hegemonic war because such challenges often occur though hegemonic wars.

There have been sixteen cases of such cases of power transition, and twelve ended in war (Allisson, 2017). The hegemonic war between England and Spain in 1588 and the dramatic defeat of the Spanish Armada comes to mind. And, if the many "ifs" were not enough, the incumbent dominant power has a role to play in such an eventuality of a hegemonic war. For such a war to happen, the incumbent dominant power would have to resist such a takeover attempt. But it could also choose to accommodate the rising power. It could even just cave to the rising power, as it was during the warless hegemonic transition between the United States and Great Britain.

A number of factors which made such a takeover between the United States and Britain peaceful may not be given between the United States and China. Britain, as an incumbent dominant power, was rapidly becoming less of a formidable foe against the US after the economic rise of the latter in the second half of the 19th century. The US industrialization meant it built up its military in a scale that did not allow Britain's economy to compete. The sizes of these respective nations were asymmetrical, and with such size difference came a colossal difference in armies and populations (Britain's approximately half of US by the turn of the 20th century). These nations were "cousins" from the same liberal heritage and civilizational grounding. The United States took the world where Britain was going to take it anyway.

Britain was a bit dissatisfied with its new status, but it was not going to be forced to embrace a new worldview. It shared it. In fact, it voluntarily became a status quo power. This would be different between the United States and China. China is a formidable foe that will soon be able to put up a fight. With respect to size, these nations are comparable. Their respective population, however, displays a colossal advantage for China, a fact that, in the age of weapon of mass destruction, carries less value than it once did. These nations belong to two different political cultures. One is liberal both in its political and social order, the other is communist and only economically liberal. They belong to two different

civilizational spaces and, with such differences, come a difference in worldviews. Such differences may not necessarily be a *casus belli* as China would argue, but should China be on the winning side of such a hypothetical scenario, the United States would be the one to compromise with the new worldview.

In other words, would the West be willing to concede its preeminence, which it has enjoyed since the beginning of the modern era? Will it be willing to accept the East's views as equal—to respect them as equals? It is, therefore, about whether the West was able or willing to abandon an idea that historically has been anchored in international modern history, namely, the superiority of the West, which has been supported by its economic wealth and its military might. In the 19th century, the US pride, nationalism, and ascendency to the top was accompanied by a discourse of manifest destiny; first within the United States, carrying a message to spread light and civilization—implying the existence of uncivilized people and areas.

Next to the manifest destiny, there was exceptionalism. The US rightfully claims its exceptionalism based on the embrace of individual freedom, democracy, rule of law, and all the good concepts and society organizing principles found in many of its founding documents. The US would not be ready to consider and prefer Confucius, regardless of how highly he is thought of in China as a source of principled reference for societal organizational norms. This potential confrontation would only happen if China continues to rise and seek its hegemony leadership. But reality appears to present itself in not-so-clear-cut terms. Ironically, as China continues to grow economically and improve its military capabilities, there have been, among Chinese scholars, a beginning of a discussion about China's own version of exceptionalism. Chinese identity, as a state on top of all strategic considerations with respect to security, is a real cause for concern to the United States because identity suggests interest, and interests condition intentions and behavior.

As long as China's political identity remains communist, its intent will concern the US. A free market and democratic China, meaning a liberal China state, would be less worrisome to the US as the liberal US was to liberal Britain in the previous power transition process. The worry is over the difference of norms and, therefore, of the cultures inspiring them. The world, however, has steadily been moving toward increased shared norms as China has turned to a free market. Should China become a democracy, on top of already becoming a free market state, the world will move even closer to globally shared norms and there will be less indivisible issues at stake—issues about which there is no compromise possible (as democracies do not fight each other). Such a difference in norms,

grounded in a cultural value system, is indeed a reason behind the lack of compromise between rising and incumbent powers in the process of hegemonic transition. James Fearon (Wohlforth, 2009: 33) asked the following questions: "What prevents states from striking a bargain that avoids the costs of war? Why can't states renegotiate the international order as underlying capabilities shift their relative bargaining power?" To these questions, Fearon (1995) answers "such bargains are infeasible when the issue at stake is indivisible and cannot readily be portioned out of each other."

China is aware of this barrier, just as the United States is. From China's perspective, however, its identity as a communist state, or non-Western state, should not be an issue driving any antagonistic attitude from the West with respect to a possible hegemonic transition, because such differences in norms and values will always exist in the world. China has no issues with that. There are plural cultures and civilizations with their respective norms and value systems. The issue is not the difference in them but realizing that similarities, contrasts, incompatibility, or exclusions they exude is part of the grand complexity of nature. The challenge lies in harmonizing contrasting values and norms and coexisting with compatible and exclusive ones, rather than declaring them "targeted for destruction." This is possible, as these norms and value-systems are constructed, and therefore can change. This is the perspective justifying the pragmatic attitude of China, which explains why China's rational choices are somewhat illusive to the international relations theory. Deng Xiao Ping, a Chinese leader unbound by communist ideological orthodoxy, captured Confucius-inspired culture, and its acceptance of change and even of identity. He was as well unbound by any economic allegiance except the commitment to that which works. He was a pragmatist. His pragmatism was captured by the following words: "It does not matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches mice."[3]

But does China seek such a hegemonic takeover? China has clearly and repeatedly proclaimed not to be interested in donning the hegemonic mantle; although its recent ambitions suggest otherwise. That, at least, is not the case at the moment. For the US to feel challenged, China would have to display and demonstrate dissatisfaction through policy choices and hostile behavior. The fact that China is not doing that pushes the moment of reckoning a bit further away. China has increasingly integrated into the post–World War II liberal institutional order. By so doing, China has agreed to the norms, functioning principles, and

3. Deng Xiao Ping: speaking to the Communist Youth League in July 1962.

decision-making processes of these institutions, which were conceive d by the US. That alone takes away the sting of dissatisfied behavior, and therefore the need for the United States to think about containing China.

China has already displayed a status quo power behavior, at least for now, to the chagrin of those who expected it to show signs of a dissatisfied revisionist state. But this is China's behavior respective to its own prosperity. Of course, such a need to contain China may still be there, respective to security issues. However, China will not be the dissatisfied, revisionist state that the Soviets were, nor even the likes of Russia today. Its own premier leader, Deng Xiao Peng, left behind a series of advisees to the Chinese political leadership in the matter with the following words: "always keep low profile never seek hegemony, or thrive to be the best but not the first." If China continues to rise peacefully and to increase its gains steadily, the hegemonic confrontation feared by realists of any persuasion will eventually be rendered less salient and maybe unnecessary. China's economy may clearly surpass that of the US if all remains on course and that will settle the question of economic hierarchy. Militarily, the US continues to outspend China per GDP share allocation, despite China's increase by a ratio of 1/6 (in 2010). In pure military spending terms, it will take China, at the current rate, up until 2032 to achieve a military power transition. It may happen naturally without any shots or bloodshed. This is a somewhat-comforting thought, rather than that of a possible confrontation between China and the US. This prospect of a war between great powers—or, better yet, superpowers—can only be destructive to no one's benefit, considering the destructive capabilities both states possess.

On the more substantive side, exercising hegemony is certainly recognized by China as a serious and risky endeavor. It is the most demanding role that an international actor can play. First, to use the words Mearsheimer (2006: 83) presenting the view of offensive realism on hegemony: "The ultimate goal of great powers, according to offensive realism, is to gain hegemony, because that is the best guarantor for survival. In practice, it is almost impossible for any country to achieve global hegemony, because it is too hard to project and sustain power around the planet and onto the territory of distant great powers." Exercising hegemony certainly comes with some benefits. However, it comes as well with cost that the actor must be willing to pay. The benevolent hegemonic power can benefit from an order alongside the rest of the members in the order it creates. But, the benefit can be less noble if the hegemonic power selfishly uses it to advance its interest in a coercive manner. Either way, China is not convinced that the use of a hegemonic power is the ultimate best end goal to servicing the entire global community,

as it comes necessarily with degrees of coercion on behalf of the hegemon. The thought is off-putting to China.

Secondly, China is not convinced that its own interests are better served through an assertive deployment of military capabilities around the world. Those in favor of such a line of thinking, the hardliners, find themselves currently in the minority. Although they may influence China's foreign policy in this regard in the future, right now their influence has only been felt in East Asia but not beyond. China prefers diplomacy. China, however, is ready to use force in a few cases but not ubiquitously. China has a few unequivocally declared *casus belli*, namely the Taiwan question, the South China Sea, and any question regarding its national security. China has not hesitated to show sensitivity and to react accordingly every time any of these indivisibles were in question. China did not hesitate to react in the 2000s, when it was already on course to act as a responsible shareholder in the international system, when one of these indivisible issues was in question. Ross (2012) listed a series of incidents since the 2000s, when that happened, like the US sell of arms to Taiwan in January 2010, prompting China to suspend its senior US–China security dialogue and even imposing sanctions on US companies investing in Taiwan. In July, China protested against the joint US–South Korea naval exercises. In October, China imposed sanctions against Norway for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the democracy activist Liu Xiaobo.

With respect to the South China Sea, China is even willing to alienate its neighbors, those it needs in its orbits to assert its regional influence. But such neighbors cannot afford the danger required to defy China. They need China for their own economic prosperity. The situation presents a conundrum for them, as they now have to decide whether their claims to the South China Sea are vital; whether it was worthy antagonizing China, or whether the respect for international law, which they claim China undermines, or their loss of prestige, if they were to cave were damaging enough to justify confrontation. The Philippines and Vietnam have faced the choice. Their behavior has been telling. Vietnam, for instance, while courting the friendship of the US, evidenced through the USS aircraft carrier *Carl Vinson* on March 5, 2018, is still not prepared to pose any concrete act beyond just irritating China. The Philippines, which has benefited from a favorable ruling from the International Court in its dispute against China over the South China Sea, has yet to hold China accountable.[4] Instead, President

4. Hannah Beech. *The New York Times* 03/05/2018.

Rodrigo Duarte has intensified his rapprochement with China, not with the United States.

Still, in the case of China, Mearsheimer (2006: 84) presents the views of defensive realism on hegemony: "For starters, it does not make strategic sense for great powers (*like China*) to pursue hegemony, because their rivals will form a balancing coalition and thwart—maybe even crush—them." The views of defensive realism correspond with both China public pronouncements and behavior. China's declaration for a peaceful rise addresses the anticipation of a coalition of powers around it. That is a menacing thought that China does not need, hence a behavior designed to calm down neighbors, with visits to Japan and increased economic ties with others, like India. Even if these involved actors do not see eye-to-eye on everything, in Chinese thought that is not a good enough reason to be offensive. China has been building up its military for defensive purposes, and that alone has been a cause of some security dilemmas. Its rise comes with concern and fear for its neighbors, known as the Thucydides trap. Hence China's intensive diplomacy of reassurance.

So far, China has behaved as a true defensive realist. According to defensive realist Waltz (1979), China, like any other state, must be concerned with its security and must build for defensive purposes as, he argued, states seek to ensure survival. Any attempt to pursue actively hegemony would present a danger to security, as it alerts other comparable powers and therefore is counterproductive. Both the security dilemma and the Thucydides trap become recurrent features of power politics that are somewhat put-to-rest, either in a state of true power equilibrium achieved through balancing or in a state of hegemonic dominance. As power is shifting in favor of China, China is building up its military, although primarily defensively but necessarily offensively as well. The buildup therefore can trigger a notion of threat. China's buildup necessarily has caught the attention of not only the hegemonic power but also of its neighbors. These neighbors are alarmed for reasons that Walt (1985) articulated, arguing the need for a balance of threat. The threat that triggers balancing is felt under the following conditions: strength (size, population, economic strength), which China meets; geographic proximity, which China meets; offensive capabilities, which China has not explicitly been advocating; and offensive intentions, which as well China has not shown. A few of the conditions laid out by Walt are clearly not met, and China has even been reassuring about those that are. However, some of China's neighbors have expressed concern—among them the hardliner, militarist conservatives in Japan. China still has work to do. To this effect, Chen (2014) wrote:

> Domestically and ideologically, China is more emotionally isolated in the global society than ever. Although China's material capabilities have greatly improved in the past decades, China is haunted by The China Threat theory, which argues that the rise of an undemocratic China will pose a great threat, not only to the western world but also to the global stability.

Every year that passes China makes progress in reassuring the world. As evidenced by the speech by Xi in the Davos Summit on globalization and through its intensive diplomacy and applications of soft power around the world. China's defensive behavior has done a lot to keep such worries about China's rise low.

In any case, China is more in a defensive realist mode than in an offensive realist mode. China seeks no domination on a global scale nor regionally, according to its own officials. Mearsheimer (2006: 84) further states that "it is much smarter for China's leaders to act like Bismarck, who never tried to dominate Europe, but still made Germany great, rather than Kaiser Wilhelm or Adolf Hitler, who both made a run at hegemony and led Germany to ruin." China is aware of this history of rising powers. It has led its leaders to reassure the world in this regard.

As defensive and pragmatic as China is, it is not idealist in matters of national security. Like any state, it has interests. Some of such interests are national interest, meaning those China holds dear to its political heart. They are generally those about which a state is less willing to compromise about or allow tempering or bargaining with, unless of course there is a Copernican revolutionary change. They are what Fearon (1995) refers to as *indivisibles*. They are issues or interests about which a state has an unwavering commitment. There is certainty about them and the policy-governing behavior pertaining to them.

Interests can be divisible or indivisible. They are divisible if and when a tradeoff is possible, a relative gain is obtainable, or, as cherished as they are, they are not vital. They are indivisible if and when they are deemed indispensable, identified as essential and denying, abandoning, or relinquishing them is a betrayal of the nation's sense of being. And these divisible or indivisible issues can be social or material. Material issues or interests are often divisible, while social issues and interests are often indivisible. Constructivism may have an issue with this view of divisibility and indivisibility as its perspective allows the deduction that both are constructed and, therefore, the implications of their consequences as well are constructed. To illustrate his view, Fearon uses the example of Japan, which lost divisibly, materially World War II, but socially won, remaining indivisible without surrender. Surrendering is conscious and, therefore, a constructed decision. If the

Japanese army did not surrender, it was because of its leadership after constructing victory as a socially indivisible outcome and leading to the unacceptability of surrender. It was not because it was naturally un-Japanese to surrender. It was only constructively un-Japanese to surrender. Eventually, such surrender happened, as a matter of course.

With that in mind, what are China's indivisible national interests or issues? They have been officially articulated as follows:

> The Chinese government has argued that state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national unification; China's political system established by the constitution, overall social stability, and the basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development are the core interest which China firmly upholds. (Information Office of the State Council, 2011)

Among these indivisible China's interests, we count the South China Sea, the Taiwan question, and, naturally and legitimately, its own national security. This does not come without danger. The US has enjoyed a great power presence in the region of East Asia and South East Asia since the Cold War. The US has benefited from its hegemonic status, although not undisputedly so, in a region with many great powers. If any danger of confrontation between the US and China exists, it is more probable to emerge from China growing less tolerant of US presence in its backyard. But, at the same time, the US will not easily cede the ground to China. China's claim to the South China Sea has been aggressive as it builds on the sea and actively moves to protect it. The US, not ready to relinquish its presence in this region, argues on international law to counter China and has been further encouraged by China's neighbors to stay.

Considering China's indivisible interests and the probable reluctance of the US to leave the region is where the potential for a direct confrontation lies. Despite China's defensive realist attitude, Southeast Asia may be region where its offensive realist attitude rings true. China will move maintaining security to maximizing its security through offensive acts, as demonstrated in the case of the South China Sea. Mearsheimer (2006: 83) writes: "If offensive realism is correct, we should expect a rising China to imitate the USA and attempt to become a regional hegemon in Asia. China will seek to maximize the power gap between itself and its neighbors, especially Japan and Russia." For the offensive realist, hegemonic war between the US and China is probable. Mearsheimer writes further: "An increasingly powerful China is also likely to try to push US military forces out of Asia, much the way the USA pushed the European great powers out of the

Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century. China can be expected to come up with its own version of the Monroe Doctrine."

What the US was able to do in the Western Hemisphere may not be duplicable in Asia. In the Western Hemisphere, US challengers were faraway powers with diminishing capabilities. These European powers did not think to balance their power against the rising US. In the case of Asia, China's ability to fend off intruders may not be an easy task considering the number of great powers in the region, US, Russia, India, a nuclear North Korea, and a capable Japan. They will all be concerned and involved. Their concern and involvement will necessarily call for balance, which led Ikenberry (2014) to speak of a return to great power politics in the region.

Regionally or globally, with hegemonic transition comes an interest in the question of hegemonic stability. But the question about whether hegemony brings more stability is disputed. It reflects the debate about which hierarchical structure of the international system was better conducive to stability in the system.

In this debate, some have argued that peace and stability are better served when there is one dominant power (unipolarity), other when there are two such dominant powers (bipolarity), and others still when there are many great powers (multipolarity). While the balance of power seems comfortable with multipolarity, as these powers can balance against each other, the power transition theory prefers the presence of a clear dominant power, as that is what historically tends to happen as power shifts. Different scholars have expressed their views and preferences on which of these hierarchical models is preferable with respect to world stability. Their views will not be recounted here.

These varying realist scholars have sought to explain and predict the behavior and choices of international state actors based on a few assumptions. They are the assumptions of rational states, behaving within an international context that is anarchic, which presents some dangers in light of the selfish behavior of actors making possession of power capabilities a currency. The same international context presents a recognizable structure, making it a system that compels individual state actors to consider while acting and behaving. This perspective does not make any suggestion on how states should act but predicts how they will act in their respective cases, depending on where in the hierarchy of status they happen to be. Waltz (1979: 92) states that "an individual may behave as [he] likes to. Patterns of behavior nevertheless emerge, and they derive from the structural constraints of the system." Because of a focus on structure and system, a system entrenched in structural constraints almost predicts the behavior of actors. Hence, it sounds as if neo-realism prescribes states' behaviors or sees them trapped by what the system allows or does not.

After everything is said, China is already a great power from the realist perspective. It is a regional great power, and, if it continues to grow as it currently is, it will increase both its interests around the world and its influence. Realistically, China will find itself compelled to develop military capabilities, which it is currently demonstrating through its increased defense budget to modernize its military for weapon systems development, acquisition of aircraft carriers, and assertive behavior for its indivisibles. China is acquiring the ability to defend its interests around the world as demonstrated through its military base on the West Bank of the Gulf of Aden in Djibouti, Africa. It may even soon acquire the totality of operational control of the Doraleh Container Terminal (DCT) near its military base, which would allow China to have considerable maritime control at the southern entrance of the Red Sea, close to the Suez Canal. China now can claim possession of hundreds of high-yield nuclear weapons with an intercontinental reach. China has the most advanced ballistic and cruise missile programs. All these capabilities position China to rise with the ability to respectably challenge the US in East Asia, though, in a quarter century, it may be able to challenge the US elsewhere. By so doing, it would put itself in a position to defend its interests and influence in regions beyond its own. Should that happen, as many realists see inevitable, China will become a power capable of challenging the US navy, putting it in the realist superpower category.

China will then become a great power at home, in East Asia, and a rival superpower abroad to the United States in a multipolar world. That can happen, should China so choose it in the next few decades after the erosion of the US's superior, enduring military capabilities. This is why China focuses on economic growth and performance, with the goal to become an economic superpower before anything else. This focus on economic growth brings interest and influence upon which China can build. China seeks to institutionalize venues of its economic engagements and cooperation with its partners in a manner that is producing parallel institutions that rival, expand, and support those established by the Unites States. For this reason, we argue that there is a co-hegemonic order in progress, designed by China to avoid rivaling the US without circumventing its grip on the institutional liberal order of post–World War II.

Accommodating and Hedging

China, so far, has behaved like a status quo power, which implies that it was satisfied with the existing liberal order. Some realists believe that China is bandwagoning.

There are as well those who see China building up both its military and its economy and, therefore, conclude that it is mounting an anti-hegemonic strategy. This seems to be characteristic of China's behavior—to not squarely fit in boxes prepared by international relations theory. It is because China is pragmatic. China is not informed by a worldview, policy making, or scholarship with remedies stocked in silos. The consequence is that such remedies are picked from one or the other silo and mixed together, pragmatically and syncretically. The silo thinking is, as Qin (2010) argued, a Western approach in which the content of one silo is not mixable with that of the other because these silos are distinct. That distinctiveness, which is the expression of their individual proprieties, ultimately dictates that the content of one must be voided to make room for the content of the other. Or if they produce a synthesis, such synthesis is produced through a frontal face-off of contradictory or opposing features of the respective silos. The category of status quo versus dissatisfied revisionist powers is an experiences of silos. China is expected to fit into one or the other; however, China chooses instead to behave in a way that is either compatible with one or the other or both at the same time, which is the expression of pragmatism. It explains the hedging that China finds itself engaged in.

It is clear: China is not just a status quo power. It is a status quo power with options and possibilities. It has the option to improve its military while being a status quo power. It has the possibility of doing more with its economic might, in many ways taping into the weakness of the current hegemonic power. We have mentioned the many regions of the world in which the current hegemonic power has limited economic leverage, interest, presence, incentive, or emotional cultural ties. These regions can be found in Asia, Africa, Central and Western Asia, and eastern and western Europe. These regions have become the theater of the Chinese diplomatic offensive. As a status quo power, China cooperates, but as a state that is pragmatic, China hedges both in areas of security and economics. Its hedging raises the prospects of an emerging co-hegemony. With such a promising future—unlike previous rising powers, such as the Soviet Union, Germany, or Japan—China is not revisionist. That alone dictates that China's steps will not be pre-ordained by the logic of rising versus challenging power behavior. This pushes the prospects of a transitional challenge a bit further down the line. In fact, accommodating the incumbent hegemonic is to the benefit of China.

The dynamics on the ground continues to play to China's favor while it accommodates the incumbent hegemon. If this dynamic continues, it will naturally propel China past the incumbent hegemon. In the meantime, China hedges to avoid confrontation. The only confrontation it will take head-on will be about its

indivisible interests, which are a few and known. For now, from the perspective of the realist, China is doing all it can to be in a position to defend its indivisible interests, but not more. Where China is more visionary is on the economic diplomatic front. Its successes are palpable. This seems to be China's strategy. It has raised the question, as Foot (2006: 84) rightfully noted, whether China was ducking a good challenge with the United States. She notes a progress from approaches that China had previously demonstrated, and she answers the question, writing:

> Although this reads like a "ducking strategy," in fact "making the best of it" has meant more than that and has involved projecting a more sophisticated view of the world and, a more nuanced set of foreign policies than was prevalent either in the cold war era or in the period immediately after the Tiananmen-Square bloodshed in 1989.

This strategy is what Foot (2006) calls accommodation and hedging. It consists of China accommodating the current global order while seeking ways to continue the pursuit of its own rise independent from the hegemon. In this strategy of accommodation and hedging, one can find a willingness to cooperate, bandwagoning, reliance on multilateralism, commitment to a globalized neoliberalism, a wish to move away from power politics, and commitment to international law. China advocates for the moral authority of the United Nations, whose institutional design it sees as both moral and legal. Moral to serve as a platform to undermine all unilateral policy adventures it despises their imperialist drive, which China finds morally and legally unacceptable. On the realism front, China feels the need to reaffirm its own sense of security through arming by modernizing its military and forming new alliances. On the liberalism front, China seeks as well to overcome the limitations of the existing liberal order through adjustments and creations of new institutional venues and new spheres of influence in regions in which it stands a better chance than the incumbent hegemon for many reasons. Such reasons, explicitly stated earlier, expose the weakness or the limit of exercise of the hegemonic power by the incumbent hegemon. China is simply capitalizing on it.

In its hedging, China uses every vulnerability of the incumbent hegemon to accelerate its establishment and to precipitate the decline of the incumbent. Every opportunity is ceased to chip away, without confrontation, the pillars on which the current hegemon stands. One such pillar is the use of the dollar as international reserve currency. China can continue to support the dollar standard, since by so doing it supports both the US currency stability and its own commerce, which benefits in tandem with the world economy. But, it is evident that, given the right

circumstances, an economically powerful China would not naturally and voluntarily prefer relying on a foreign currency rather than its own. In due time, China may decide a different policy path, which could precipitate the transition toward a new hegemonic order. That might happen the day China's economy is in a position to rely less on export, or when its own currency, through the strength of its economy, gains enough reliability to attract the trust of economic actors around the world. While China await such opportunity, in May 2014, the Bank of China and Russian's second largest financial institution signed in a summit in Shanghai a thirty-year deal that promises the sale of Russian gas to China in each other's respective domestic currencies. Not economic earth-shattering measures, but a step in the direction of bypassing the dollar as an international reserve currency. The step is an incremental crack in the reliability of the dollar. Should another crack follow, we may have a trend. Should such a trend find adherent, we will have an economic earth-shattering moment when the dollar will no longer be the only currency of international trust. The candidate to compete or replace it will be the currency of the largest economy. Granted, there is a lot that must continue to occur for that to happen; for instance, the reliability and confidence in the Chinese currency, the Yuan. Therefore, this is just a hypothetical.

China's fellow members of the BRICS countries have all expressed some need to lessen the dependency on the dollar. Where there is such an intention, it is usually halted from materializing is the absence of confidently contemplating the time such a replacement would take. But such confidence grows by the years. Any weakness of the dollar and the BRICS nations can launch an assault against it, which would present a venue through which a Chinese co-hegemony may materialize, if the Yuan were to become the international reserve currency.

In sum, while hedging, China mixes up idealism as it seeks a democratized international relation in which all states have the same rights. China remains a true believer of the United Nations, through which it believes that some of its goals can materialize. China expressed the need to help the small nations and promote global prosperity. China increasingly speaks of Confucian values and has started promoting the spread of Confucian institutes around the world. Finally, China speaks of loving peace and of rising peacefully. China is pragmatic as it chooses neither to be a revisionist power nor just any other status quo power, but takes little of each, which has led some to refer to its attitude as a revisionist-reformer.

Such pragmatism is evidenced in China's attitude of accommodating the incumbent's status quo order, integrating its institutions while at the same time carving for itself a sphere of influence through the creation of parallel and competing new institutions. By so doing China commits to neoliberalism, while claiming its

embrace of Confucianism to inform its intent for a peaceful rise. In its pragmatism, China mixes such Confucian ideas and its idealism of a peaceful rise with the realism of modernizing its military. While hedging, China ultimately blends idealism, Confucianism, realism, and neoliberalism to explain its pragmatism.

Hedging in China's very nature is an expression of insecurity. It is about the danger of fully embracing its place in the international order. Such a danger is compounded by the rapidly shifting pace of changes in its value systems, social consciousness, technological innovations, and impact in life in general, within China and abroad. China is insecure about knowing with certainly the tight kind of steps, policy, and behavior to embrace. China cannot predict the next move of the incumbent hegemonic power. But worrying too much about the danger of unraveling changes would be paralyzing. Therefore, hedging is about being bold and cautious at the same time.

It is bold to capitalize on changes, but cautious to not to overlook the many dangers it may encounter. China's behavior seems to reflect this reasoning. China knows where it currently stands, but it does not necessarily have a discourse. What China has done to develop its set of choices has been inspired by what it believes its values and interest to be. China is busy managing its ascent and is less preoccupied with conceptualizing it. That time will come. China itself may not know exactly and for sure what belies ahead, but it will be guided by its pragmatism, which is informed by and draws from the ideologies of idealism, realism, neoliberalism Confucianism, and communism.

5

China's Rise in the Prism of Liberalism

This chapter briefly recounts the assumptions of liberalism as an approach to international relations rather than a moral and philosophical current. But, retracing the historical steps of China's encounter with Western liberalism, we open up briefly the notion of liberalism in its various facets, principally, economic or commercial liberalism and liberal institutionalism. We describe the novelty of liberal ideals in China, the many attempts of their implantation, and the obstacles they encountered. Subsequently, the chapter examines the conditions of the emergence of economic liberalism in China and its consequence of interdependence, after the reform of 1978. Finally, the chapter questions the sustainability of China's novel construct of combining economic liberalism with political Marxist communism. These segments lay the ground for further discussion in the subsequent chapter, which examines the rise of China in the prism of institutional and neoliberalism, and examines how China manages their assumptions.

Liberalism

As stated above, liberalism is axiomatically simple and rich in its premise (the inherent freedom of individuals and their innate rights). It is comprehensive as it

finds application in the various sub-systems of the modern society. Focusing on the sub-system of economics, it eventually provides the bedrock for economic activities and processes. Into the field of international relations, it acquires an even larger dimension, that of institutional ordering of international economic exchanges. But no matter at which level one deals with liberalism, it seems to drag along the very historical reasons that caused its emergence, namely a reaction against authoritarian abuse, autocratic rule, ideological dictates of those who have secured the exercise of power. Liberalism, therefore, was thought as a remedy of monarchical order. Liberalism empowers the individuals. It empowers the will of the people. It aims, naturally, at disseminating power of choice, and therefore of decision, onto the people in political societies, and away from autocrats through republican mechanisms. Emmanuel Kant (1724–1804), the most prominent advocate of this perspective, saw in the wisdom of the collective individuals as guarantors against senseless acts whose outcome often caused more harm to their welfare than good. Liberalism sought to elevate individuals and groups to act both nationally and internationally. It is carried by all those who embraced an idea of mechanism, institutional structures, or entities that are not bound by the notion of the nation-state. Kant, who thought of that as a venue through which a hope for a perpetual world peace could be achieved, embodies this perspective. Citizens of different republics enjoy its benefits across their respective borders in Kant's cosmopolitan ideal. This vision into the future, looking for a peaceful international world, was naturally ahead of its time. It is rooted in humanism and the need to ensure its survival in peace through reason and order, beyond national borders, and was provoked by sustained European expansion. The result, short of a cosmopolitan peace, has been the establishment of liberalism as a paradigm of societal order.

Liberalism assumes that the individual is rational and of sound mind. It assumes further that individuals are the best arbiters of their affairs. As such, it is only reasonable that such individuals shall preside over the pursuit of their happiness, which they can adjust, redefine, and reorder. This individual grows and so does his or her state of mind and interests. Liberalism, therefore, envisages change. The individual can change. Liberalism argues further that the state, which is the institution governing the relations of individuals and is reflective of their desiderata, also can change. And both individual and state change to adapt to the changing world. Lynch (2016: 48) writes, "As people change, so do their governing institutions. For liberals, international relations evolve and improve, for the realists, they are static and prone to conflicts." Lynch further explains, "For liberals, states are not autonomous entities; they are amalgamations of people with different

tastes, and interests that are reflected in their governments." For the realists, the international system as well does not change because the state of anarchy does not change. For the liberalists, not only people change, their institutions change to reflect how they change, but they also see a way around anarchy through reliance on multilateral institutional infrastructure building (international organizations). Such infrastructures bring and breed interdependence. Liberalists argue that the more interdependent a state grows, the more its gains become intertwined with the people of the world's biographies, corporations of the worlds' bottom line, and states of the world's prosperity—chipping away the saliency of anarchy.

In the end, what we understand liberalism to be today are values or principles of rule of law, democratic order, and its institutions, individual freedom and rights, respect for property, free market and competition, and a justice system based on positive law.

Political Liberalism and China

Historically, what has been China's exposure to or experience with the Western-defined philosophical and political ideology of liberalism? The early but inconsequential introduction to Western thought took place around 1723, during the Qing period when Jesuit missionaries reached China. It was inconsequential because of its contained scale and its interruption, as the Jesuits were expelled after the first Opium War (1839–1842). Through the teachings of Jesuits, Western philosophical and political concepts of intellectual history were introduced to small groups in China. A more consequential exposure to Western liberal ideology came through traders and the first and second Opium Wars (1856–1860) as result of British imposition of trade to a reluctant China, as both wars successively forced China to relinquish authority over Hong Kong and established port treaties.[1] China also dealt with the Sino-French war (1883–1885) and the Japanese invasion (1894–1885)—all occurring while China was still under the Manchu occupation through the Qing Dynasty.

Beside these historical encounters, were any of the value elements of what we call today liberalism found in ancient or imperial China? The notions of peace, harmony, and humanistic values grounded in the autonomy and rights of individuals, can be found in early Chinese writings. Although such values will eventually constitute pillars of the philosophic approach of liberalism, this does not mean

1. In Shanghai, Canton, Amoy, Fuchow, Ningpo.

that China was liberal or liberalist. Whatever elements of today's liberalism can be found in ancient or imperial China thought were more socially ethical, emphasizing duty rather than political rights. They were grounded in a philosophical worldview designed to help the Chinese live their lives individually, in their communities, and in their nation. Confucianism, indeed, acknowledges individual responsibility—to sound mind and judgment, to independent decision-making, governance, and conduct of one's life, and even exhortation to prosper individually to satisfy desire without greed. In *Analects*, Book 15, 4.5 the master (Confucius) says:

> Wealth and honor are what people want, but if they were the consequence of deviating from the way (Dao), I would have no part of them. Poverty and disgrace are what people deplore, but if they are the consequence of staying on the way, I would not avoid them.

However, Confucius finds recourse to these values elements that echo those of liberalism only to organize them around an individual life that finds its fulfillment in community, and not in personal aggrandizement. Confucius exhorts followers to seek live a virtuous life. Confucius places virtue above all, reminding us of Socrates and maybe even justifying the comparison of one to the other. There have been inquiries by scholars (Hu, 1988; Jenco, 2010; Orborne, 2012; von Glahn, 2016; Feng, Li, Osborne, 2017) looking into the traces of liberalism in the Chinese long political tradition, philosophical thought, and commercial economy. These inquiries have produced sparse and scattered notes, allusions, and occasional policy measures that fit with those we have come to associate with liberalism today. The period of the Warring States (475–221 BCE) and the Han Dynasty, most particularly with Emperor Wen (202–157 BCE), saw reduced taxes, reformed criminal law, reformed state examination to find bureaucratic officials (Feng et al., 2017: 224). These elements of liberal thought in ancient China are known as proto-liberalism.

These inquiries, however, have not been able to decipher a specific consequential treaty, elaborate philosophical current, metaphysical reasoning, sustained economic practices, or policies that were thoroughly driven by what we understand today as liberalism.

The fact is as Feng et al. (2017: 225) noted:

> Thus there were many examples scattered over the centuries of individual ideas also found in classical liberalism, as one could expect of a civilization with as long a history and as much complexity as China. But there was no coherent

> philosophy of classical liberalism in the sense of other Chinese schools of thought such as legalism and Confucianism.

As much as neo-Confucianism makes efforts to reconcile Confucianism with liberalism, Confucian philosopher Mencius (372–289 BCE) was skeptical of commercial life, arguing it corrupted human nature. Legalists in Chinese philosophical tradition, like Han Feizi (280–233 BCE), argued that commercial life generated wealth among only a few and was a source of social inequality (Feng et al., 2017). Some scholars, like De Barry (1983), however, have argued that Confucianism was not necessarily a source to justify the status quo order. Therefore, the sleeping giant status that China has enjoyed until its reforms could be understood and used as a tool to explain today's thriving China. He argued that notions of self-worth and individual dignity, within the social community, were values in China—particularly in the Song and Ming Dynasties. In fact, rather than just noticing elements or features of liberalism in some policy measures in specific periods of China's long history, De Barry has called the work of neo-Confucian intellectuals Huang Zongxi (1610–1695) of the Ming Dynasty and the Gu Yanwu (1613–1682) of the early Qing Dynastic period simply liberalism. This liberalism is distinct from the sparse thoughts reflective of liberalism and found in the work of some intellectuals and which is called proto-liberalism.

The fact is that, whatever notions of liberalism there might have been in Chinese traditional thought, they have not constituted socially contracted grounds for transferring power from the hands of the various dynastic monarchs to the people, which is what Western liberalism gradually achieved.

In this strict sense, China has not been a liberal country. In fact, China has a tradition of authoritarianism. Feng et al. (2017: 221) write:

> China has been an authoritarian country for more than 2,000 years. It has no democratic tradition, a general skepticism of common, less-educated people having a significant say in national affairs, and a fear of the spread of separatists thinking and even the outbreak of civil war, not a rare event in Chinese history.

Soon, the values of ancient and imperial China will be tested by historical developments. China was under the Manchu rule of the Qing Dynasty, and Japan during the peak of imperialism. It was as well the time in which ideologies competed for political real estate in nations around the world. Among these new ideologies were Marxism-Leninism (communism and socialism), nationalism, anarchism, and old monarchies resisting the pressure of the "new" idea, the republic. In this constellation of competing interests and ideologies, fueled by the power of

the Industrial Revolution, which helped assert Western imperialism, Western liberalism was competitive. China needed to adjust and react to the onslaught that seemed to come from everywhere with the help of an ideology of its own or adopt one of those in front of them, using it to galvanize their resistance. Whichever resistance they needed to mount, it had to face a powerful West and its liberalism.

China, like Japan, was both resentful of, and in admiration of Western superiority in most areas of statecraft. Unlike Japan, China, skeptical of the Western value system and uncertain of how it would influence its Confucian heritage, did not at first mount a full program to duplicate the transformation observed from the West, in order to sufficiently improve its standing and stand up against the West and any future invaders. That transformation produced a materially superior Western model of societal organization. An effort to duplicate this Western transformation would have meant the implementation of a full-fledged modernization program, like Japan with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, designed to catch up to the West. Some citizens in China, some officials on the court of the Qing Emperor, some officers in the military, and some intellectuals and students increasingly deemed such an effort necessary. Among them were reformists Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan. They required reforms of the nation's institutions, economy, and the military—which still did not use firearms—among other reforms.

Liberal-minded Chinese had a different disposition and perspective with respect to reform and modernization. Emphasizing this Chinese perspective, Schrecker (2004: 159) writes, "They did not advocate a complete break with the Chinese past but nonetheless were eager to import that dynamism and the sense of possibility that infused the Occident." Unlike their Japanese counterparts, Chinese reformers seemed more attracted by political liberalization than economic liberalization, "broadly based and decentralized authority, government responsible to the people, and rulers bound by explicit constitutional restraints and parliamentary bodies" (Schrecker, 2004: 159). This focus on political governance was understandable, given that China was under foreign rule. It was as well demonstrated by the demands of the reformers from 1898 to the advent of communism in China in 1949.

However, Chinese liberal-minded reformers sought to reform China. The Qing Dynasty resisted the attempt. Short of such concerted efforts of modernization by China, the infusion of Western liberalism would occur through individualized endeavors by Chinese who traveled to the West, among them Yan Fu (1854–1921). Translating some of the most relevant and representative of works of Western prominent thinkers, he further exposed Western liberal thought to China. He translated Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Huxley, Charles

Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, and Herbert Spencer. Liberalism was thereby implanted in China. These translations allowed Chinese intellectuals and reformers to further explore their contents. Among these reformers, Qing Monarchy advisers, like Tan Sitong, Kang Youwei, and Liang Qichao, started a reform movement. Willing to learn from Japan and inspired by previous reformers such as Gu Yanvu, Wang Fuzhu, and Feng Guifeng of the early Qing period, they suggested reforms of the constitution to secure individual rights and to limit the power of the Qing monarchy. They started a "Hundred Days of Reform" in June 11, 1898, taking advantage of the death of a Qing Prince, Gong, and other internal imperial family discords to move closer to the center of power near Emperor Gunxu.

The reforms they pushed through the young emperor were eventually stopped by Empress Cixi on September 21, 1898, after realizing they would weaken the Qing Dynasty's grip to power. The reforms failed and some reformers were captured, while others fled from China to Japan, among them Liang Qichao. The seed of liberalism, however, was planted. The many unrests and rebellions between 1898 and 1911 succeeded in garnering the support of the elite, the laborers class, and the intellectuals to rise against the status quo. They demanded the advent of the republic. Court officials, young officers, and students, frustrated by the refusal of the Qing dynasty to modernize and growing increasingly impatient, found a voice in Sun Yat Sen. The liberal-minded reform seekers were eventually successful in the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, through which the Qing Dynasty was deposed. China was a republic under the short reign of liberal Sun Yat Sen.

The push for a more liberal China continued between 1911 and the 1920s, a time during which attempts by Yuan Shikai, Sun Yat Sen's successor, to restore dynastic rule and the enduring warlords stirred civil wars. The 1919 Versailles Treaty conceding the Shandong province to Japan only pushed young intellectuals and influencing figures such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Hu Shi, Lu Xun, and Li Dazhao to more political radicalism. Their agitation sparked a movement (the May Fourth New Culture Movement), also known as the Chinese Enlightenment. Understood as an Enlightenment Movement, the May Fourth Movement was about rupture. It sought to separate China from its political order, deemed despotic because the top government officials dictated to the masses, who were left devoid from any say. The Enlightenment Movement sought to empower the individuals though a democratic rule. It was an attempt to move past the inability of China to forcefully defend its interests because of its subjugation by Manchu foreign rule. It was a rupture with the traditional Confucian values, deemed to subordinate the individual to the needs of the family and society. It advocated for inversion of social norms, deriving from the respect, dignity, and rights of the

individuals to affect their individual fates but also to determine that of society. The movement incorporated all the pressing political needs of China—determined by the intellectuals and their young followers—while transforming from a nationalism sentiment to interests in new ideas, anarchy, and liberalism but also the embrace of scientific and intellectual endeavors. They pushed for more liberalism.

Intellectuals the likes of Zhang Shizhao, Song Jiaoren, and Liang Yan advocated for a liberal constitution and multi-party parliamentary system. Other reformers, like Zhang Dongsun and Zhang Jumai, who promoted constitutional democracy, which meant a rejection of nationalism and authoritarianism, relay them. They all sought to modernize and to safeguard more rights for the Chinese under the Qing rule, but liberalism was not the only ideology making disciples in 1920s China. Nationalism was another, and with it, Marxism. The Bolshevik Revolution and its socialistic ideals in nearby Russia in 1917 echoed into China. The idea of revolution against a despotic rule, under the ideals of equality and against the privileges of a few was attractive to many intellectuals, students, and young people in China. Kuomintang (KMT) was in power in the 1930s and 1940s with the reputation of corruption and an inability to defend China. Its connivance with the West made socialist/communist nationalism a viable and attractive alternative. Even some Chinese liberals (Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao) began to believe in a scientific socialism as a better tool to bring about the ideals of liberalism because of its appeal to equality for the masses. They bought into Lenin's the Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky argument for a truncated democracy under capitalism, arguing in favor of a proletariat democracy (October 11, 1918, Moscow, Pravda no. 219). Chinese intellectuals rationalized that socialism was a product of liberalism, and, therefore, the kind of democracy it supported was a "new democracy."

It took a full-fledged Japanese invasion in 1937 to see the debate about China's ideological future take its next turn. It caused the rise of the Constitutional Movement. China, it seems, was producing new political and ideological debates in the aftermath of a particular crisis it endured. This movement came as the KMT was weakened further by the invasion creating a power vacuum in China, which was used by the Communist Party (CCP) from its retreat in the North. Just as the invasion weakened the KMT, it ignited the fervor of all Chinese against the invader. This fervor was primarily animated by the radicalized youth. Disappointed in the KMT, the radicalized and energized youth gravitated toward the CCP, tilting the rapport de force in the favor of the latter.

China had to unite the KMT and the CCP. The effort materialized in 1939 during the 4th Plenum of the First People's Political Council. In this council, it

was the CCP that advanced the most progressive and liberal propositions. Among such propositions, they demanded the end of one-party rule and they advocated for democracy, Human Rights, and the rule for law. The KMT was the party that would be negatively affected by a multi-party rule in China, and therefore it was good for the CCP. Furthermore, these ideals, concepts of liberalism—namely democracy—Human Rights, and rule of law were understood in this particular Chinese context and in the particular way in which Chinese liberals within the Communist Party understood them, namely as vehicles of true socialism against the rule of the few in power, which they were not. These poor Chinese, uneducated Chinese, and Chinese peasants were the constituents of the Communist Party. The Communist Party in China had them in mind while advocating for liberalism values, which were understood in their essence as primarily and definitively socialistic, aiming to equalize the social field. It was about what they understood the new democracy to be.

The CCP's interpretation of the new democracy was in terms of the simple people having a say and participating in the conduct of public affairs. The new democracy had the appeal of a mass project and was sympathetic to the people. It also had support of the critical liberalist elite and intellectuals. It was almost a mode phenomenon to be a leftist critical elite. These critical liberals and intellectuals equated old democracy to a product of the bourgeoisie and the world of privileged classes they created. In that old democracy, despite its claim, the proletariat class was on the sideline, often enduring the consequences of policies designed to reinforce the status quo. This idea of privileged social class was to be sought through egalitarian projects. They included the idea of political and economic inclusiveness and egalitarian ideals about access to land, to prosperity, and to labor. This was how liberalist values connected to socialist values in the eyes of Chinese liberalist communists in the 1930s and 1940s. However naïve, erroneous, utopian, or sincere this belief was, it was simply too soon to be demonstrated once the Communist Party took over the reign of power in China after the civil war.

The KMT and the CCP eventually united as nationalists in the defense of China against the invaders, the most immediate threat being Japan. Japan suffered the defeat in the World War II, and Chinese nationalists were left among themselves. Their respective nationalism ideals, however, reposed. One fell on a liberal ground and the other on Marxist ground with some liberal communist forces. The conditions for civil war were set. After the victory of Mao's Communist Party and the communist nationalists, the KMT nationalists left China for Taiwan. Among them were intellectuals such as Yin Yaiguang, Lin Yusheng, and Fu Sinian. Liberalism in China disappeared on the surface. Although open liberalists fled

China into Taiwan, there were liberal communists still within the Communist Party. They laid low and periodically purged in anti-rightist campaigns like the one in 1957–1958 and more obviously the one ensuing in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. They never totally disappeared and are collectively known as reformers, among them Deng Xiao Ping.

The reformers' time came when the circumstances of both political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and the economic hardship caused by communist policies forced a change. Liberalism remerged as a viable alternative through the reform led by Deng Xiao Ping in 1978. This time around, not Chinese liberals found recourse in liberalism but communists reformers. In the short period of time between the death of Mao in 1976 and 1978, China quickly turned ferociously totalitarian and abandoned totalitarianism as quickly as the reformers emerged. Once again it took the Cultural Revolution and its abuses to see an emergence of a post-totalitarianism movement in China. Communist reformers within the realm of communism led this one, and they called themselves pragmatists.

These pragmatists are in many ways communist democrats. They are liberals within communism—many, today, are wealthy millionaires and members of the Communist Party. They have been around since the 1980s, among them Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Wang Ruoshi, and Su Shaozhi. Such communist democrats remained as they continue to believe in liberal values. And these liberal values have proven very persistent. In China's long history, they seem to reemerge every time China's political life takes a turn toward fewer liberties. Liberalist demands were expressed in the 1990s through the student democracy movement. It was crashed, and the hardliners won the day. It is only a matter of time until they reemerge, if such liberties erode. The Chinese Communist Party has to deal with legitimacy issues simply because its authority does not derive from a rational, enlightened, and liberal process in which the people have a say. Many have argued that rising prosperity in China has postponed the saliency and urgency of that question.

The communist leadership, certainly aware of this latent demand, thinks about ways to anticipate its expression or even address it before it is expressed, or they may find a way of making it a non-issue. There are many venues from which such demands stand to be heard at any time. They can be heard from liberal reformers within the party itself. They can be heard from intellectuals and students. They can be heard from the people. All these venues have to be satisfied in their demand for liberal values for China to avoid a theater of demands for liberalist values.

This has been the path of liberalism within China since the Qing Dynasty. As mentioned, some have argued that it has existed before Western influence.

Others have argued that the Jesuits were the ones that planted the seed. And others still have mentioned Yan Fu as the true introducer of liberalism in China. And still others again argued that before the May Fourth Movement and its new culture liberalism was not a factor in political China. The fact is that historical processes often do not have clear-cut beginnings and clear-cut endings that explain this divergence. Those looking at specific historical phenomena also do so from different vantage points and using different evaluating rubrics, which as well often lead to such discrepancies in appreciating the emergence of historical processes or events.

In the case of liberalism in China, the lack of agreement on when is it found may lay in the fact that liberalism entails many pieces, making up its ideological structure. These many pieces range from reason, freedom, individual freedom, property, rule of law, representative government, rights, equality, Human Rights, human dignity, democracy, free market, and rational legitimacy. These pieces appear at different times and in different shapes in the history of China. They appear in their rawest form the earlier one looks, and they clarify to become defined as and to undeniably become part of liberalism. The notion of human dignity is present in the writing of Confucius, but that alone does not exhaust the structural building of liberalism. The 19th-century attempt by reformer officials in the Qing monarchies and the "Hundred Days of Reforms" the notion of individual rights articulated some liberalistic thought. Liang Qichao's essay "New Citizen" in 1902, written during his exile in Japan, was clearly explicit about liberal values. The revolution of 1911 demanded a Republic, and therefore a liberal constitution. By the time the May Fourth Movement erupted in 1919, it articulated and expressed a full-fledged list of demands for individual rights. Finally, this demand for political liberalism, despite its lack of overall success, turned economical through the reforms of 1978.

Like elsewhere, the Chinese experience with liberalism is both intellectual and political, but it was less economical until 1978. In this regard, Fung (2010: 133) argued:

> From the start, the Chinese case was different from the European experience because of the nonexistence of clericalism and, even more importantly, the absence of the Industrial Revolution, which accompanied the scientific revolution and from which developed a powerful middle class that contributed to the individualistic special order in the West.

The Japanese experience with liberalism was different from the Chinese, because it deliberately aimed at emulating closely the Western experience. Japan voluntarily

chose to ground their quest for economic growth and prosperity in the same path that justified Western growth. Japan set to catch up to Western superiority in areas of statecraft in general. To this end, adopting liberalism as a societal organizing principle was the key to achieving their version of an industrial revolution. Their pursuit of liberalism was first economical, unlike China's. It was more unanimous and consensual, unlike China's, whose pursuit of liberalism was first political and contested. China's pursuit has to be political first because of the Qing foreign dynasty, which impeded any effort to modernize pursuant of liberal ideals and was itself antithetical to liberalism as foreign-occupying power. Japan subsequently adjusted its society and later its politics (even under particular circumstances of World War II) to reflect the ideals of liberalism it has economically adopted. China's first pursuit of political liberalism has failed as a result of rising communist nationalism. Ironically, the same communists who suppressed the pursuit of Chinese political liberalism were the ones, reformers among them, who pursued economic liberalism and succeeded at that.

Chinese communist reformers reformed but did not disrupt communism. They are not revolutionaries. They are liberal within communism—with all the paradox that the phrase suggests—but such a paradox is in the eye of the reformers driven by pragmatism, a logical step. Besides, such a pragmatic logic is enshrined in Chinese communism through the expression "Seek truth from facts." And so, we have a China in which political communists preside over an economic liberal China. The Chinese communist leadership, in its pragmatism, chose to use liberalism in what it most effectively does, namely organizing economics, while avoiding buying into its political value system based on individual rights rather than duties, as recommended by Confucius, with all the danger that such an inversion of values could cause China. The same Chinese communist leadership, confident of the success of its choice, is more and more emboldened in its choice when looking at the many flaws and deficiencies observed in the leading liberal states today. Chinese officials are more and more vocal in reacting and commenting on events in the West as if to push back against what they understand to be Western hegemonic attitudes.

They look at cases such as separatist tendencies in Spain, Belgium, the UK, and Scotland. The UK left the EU. The US political parties have been in paralysis, which started during the Clinton administration, continued under Bush, pushed to the limit under Obama, and still is prevalent under Trump. As I write this book, there is a government shutdown in the US due to the usual budget and funding quarrels in Congress, and the Chinese official news agency, Xinhua,

has taken time through Liu Chang to voice an opinion about it, stating that it exposed the "chronic flaws" in the US system (*Newsweek*, January 22, 2018).

Further confident, China is starting to look at liberalism as a subject of comparison to Confucian values rather than that of tension (Jenco, 2010). Ironically, as Confucianism has resurged through neo-Confucianism, it is worth remembering how it was reviled once by the radical liberalists movements in the 1920s, and a second time by Mao's communism, both of which for the same reason but for different purposes. One thought its value system hindered the liberal progress and the other thought its values made it difficult to implement the Marxist societal model. Scholars, liberalists, and communists alike champion this neo-Confucianism, remerging in the 1970s and early 1980s. Neo-Confucians find in Confucianism elements compatible with liberalism today or use it to compare and better understand both ideologies. Liberalists now think it was not so unambiguously anti-liberalist, or they contend that it was part of the tapestry of pluralism in the world's ideological fields. Communism, short of brandishing communist values, after losing all credibility when enacting liberal reforms, chose to brandish the values of Confucianism as a counter value system against the ever-hegemonic values of liberalism. Politically liberal-minded Chinese are found in China, and so are found economic liberalists.

These reformers coexist with Chinese still enveloped in the political identity of communism, less enthusiastic about reforms, and digesting them incrementally. They still worry about the consequences of a full-fleshed liberalism China might bring. They are generally seen as conservatives. Beyond the values of liberalism and those of communism, there are still those of Confucianism and even Buddhism or Daoism to choose from. In this political regard, today's China is creating a differentiated society in which not everyone is completely communist. As China continues to grow and face the complexity of life, interests, and choices found in advanced societies, and as social classes continue to show more defined stratifications, China will produce internally a somewhat-pluralistic society in which citizens will develop differentiated sensibilities, socially, politically, and economically, along the line of values of communism, liberalism Confucianism, or even Buddhism and Daoism. Or it may just synthesize them all. It remains unknown whether liberalism will someday prevail in China.

One thought is clear, from its earliest entry in China: liberalism has recurrently erupted onto the surface of the political life in China. The forces behind it have been intellectuals, those reform-minded politicians, but also the youth, students, or non-students. These recurrent liberalism eruptions resulted in the

student movement, demanding democracy in China and ending in violence at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

A century went by between 1898, when liberalist ideas were pushed into China's political arena, and the Tiananmen Square massacre. This long time span is a testimony of the enduring desire for what liberalism is about, even in China. One cannot therefore discard, if history is any guide, the reemergence some day of a new liberalist movement. It seems to have gone into a period of calm, as liberalist voices both in China and abroad have gone quiet. Economic prosperity and pride should have something to do with it. There are always a number of actors coming into play in grand-scale social phenomena. They have one thing in common, the degrees of dissatisfaction and tolerance that it allows. There is, in China, currently reason to be satisfied economically. The only question is about the degree of tolerance and the ability of the majority of Chinese citizens to go without political liberalization. All these unknown make it impossible to imagine or predict if, when, or which form a potential liberalist movement might take.

Economic or Commercial Liberalism in China

A dynamic process of integration characterizes the history of humanity it seems. Since the modern-era mercantile trade and European expansion, exporting in the process the nation-state construct, cemented by institutional liberalism since World War II and recently accelerated through the invention of new technology that defies time and space, facilitating the quality of exchanges and communication around the world, have driven it. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world seems to have adhered to free market economic liberalism, which increased economic interdependence through free trade, and with it the need for the converging power of institutional liberalism. The underlying factor in this development is the idea of the market. The idea of the market underlies inherently a dynamic force. Production, innovation, distribution, flow, exchange, growth, gain or loss, expansion, share, access, trade, and sell or buy are all terms associated with the market, and they are all dynamic. The dynamic process of the market has eventually succeeded in breaking through the rigidity of the feudalistic order.

Since the 1300s, the forces of the market have not ceased to permeate human existence through its ability to satisfy their needs. Consequently, market, commerce, and the economy are at the center of the existence of modern actors,

from individuals to organizations to states. Indeed, commerce encompasses and subsumes other domains of modern society: culture, politics, society, and science. Commerce is nourished by technological innovation (science). It is next to security in political preoccupation. In fact, it ties politics and society together. It ties society to culture, as its mode of production explains and justifies relationships and rapports in society. It explains, for instance, why the main economic thinkers are, at the same time, sociological and political thinkers, which ultimately explains why economic thinkers the likes of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes are father figures and references of political parties, political ideologies, and economic systems.

The market process of which we speak necessitates a natural flow, as physiocrats argued. This means that the market economy ought to flow freely, like any other natural process, not territorially circumscribed in its circulation and not burdened by unnecessary political regulations. Physiocrats criticized primarily agricultural policies of the feudalistic France and its emerging restrictive policies of mercantilism, but they also planted the seed of the free market in the late 17th century and early 18th century. Adam Smith visited France during that time when the world was engulfed by a philosophic movement known as Enlightenment, in which ideas of natural law, natural rights, and innate freedoms prevailed, and in which the notion of freedom became paramount. Adam Smith, next to David Hume, philosophers in their own rights who both despised mercantile policies, expanded the natural flow to economics as a natural activity. And the battle between the enduring feudalistic order, the emerging mercantilism, and now free market was on.

These modes of organizing both society and the economy evolved, like many other historical processes, concomitantly rivaling, interfering, and influencing each other to produce, possibly, something new. European nations made incremental but steady progress through targeted and limited bilateral preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and unconditional most-favored nations treatments (MFNs) in favor of the free market. Anything more was still resisted by the spirit of protectionist mercantilism and political contentions among the Europeans. The most significant step forward was the agreement between Britain and France (Cobden-Chevalier Treaty) in 1860.[2] These agreements reached a total of fifty-six

2. The treaty reduced protective duties of French products by 25% for five years, and free entry of all products except wines into Britain; while France reduced duties to British products to 20%.

within fifteen years. The struggle for a free market continued. It took two World Wars and a world depression to see protectionist policy preferences in the US and in Europe give way to an emerging consensus in favor of free trade.

The free market system had prevailed, at least for the main economic players at the time. After progressively leaving behind feudalism and mercantilism, the history of commerce progressively produced agrarian capitalism (England), commercial capitalism (Holland), financial capitalism (Holland and Great Britain), industrial capitalism (Great Britain), liberal capitalism (Great Britain), institutional and neoliberal capitalism (United States), and a global neoliberal capitalism (the rest of the world), since the collapse of the communist Soviet Union. This is the integration process of the world's economies into one global economy. It is primarily a practical, empirical, and historical economic process. The process has however been supported by a distinct philosophy of liberalism. China, eventually, through European mercantile endeavors, became exposed to the philosophy and political ideology of liberalism.

The institution of the market has existed in China for many centuries. There has been merchant activity and the drive to exchange and accumulate wealth by merchants. The great Chinese historian Sima Qin himself (145–88 BCE) describes some aspects of the Chinese merchant commerce, even with neighbors and beyond, demonstrating in his records awareness of market forces, the notion of pricing, demand, and incentive to produce for the market. Such commercial activity, however, did not sustainably rely on the market to change the traditional mode of production. It did not change the relations of production, labor, land, capital, and resources to induce social structural changes (new professions, new social classes, statuses, new interest groups, etc.) or compel the adjustment of laws, policy, or new ways to approach economics. China, like many other pre-modern predominantly feudalistic societies with hierarchical dynastic governments, has suffered from lack of flexibility and sustained dynamics that a free market engenders. The key element is the adjective "free" which implies free-floating labor, capital, investment, entrepreneurship, supply-and-demand pricing, property rights, laws and institutions designed to back market activities, and somewhat deregulated processes. These elements exist in free markets and justify its flexibility and sustained dynamics, conditions which were not met in pre-modern China, despite at times a flourishing merchant trade activity. They came to define market processes through the infusion of capital. Capital, as a currency, gave participants freedom. And this explains why Milton Friedman (1962) defines capitalism as "freedom to choose."

> Commercial activity in China did not develop the dynamics of the liberal market system witnessed in Europe, where merchant activity gradually and increasingly became sustained by the growing role of the market over the years. The increasing role of the market in economic activity compelled policy change, new economic thought, and practical adjustments in various social categories. They gradually brought about social changes, like the birth of cities, new social professions, and new social classes and their identified interests. Fueled by a number of actors both internal and external,[3] this dynamic continued into and produced commercial and financial capitalism, industrial and liberal capitalism, and global neoliberal free market economic system. Like in the case for political liberalism, there has not been, in China, historically, explicit and unequivocal commitments to economic liberalism, as understood fundamentally. This does not mean that the notion of liberty is foreign to China. It exists in Chinese as *zi you zhu ye*. In both cases, explicit and unequivocal articulation of a consequential liberalism was simply a product of a contentious encounter with Western presence after the late 18th century for political liberalism and after the 19th century for economic liberalism. In both cases, the push by Chinese intellectuals to adopt liberalism, after they realized that it accounts for Western superiority in a number of statecraft domains, was contested.

It is almost ironic that, in the development of capitalism and free market in the West, China was a factor. Indeed, the gradual use of the market in Europe led to trade. The successes of earlier trading European nations, like the Italian city-states (Venice, Florence, and Genoa) trading with Asia Minor between the 11th and the 15th centuries and the Dutch Republics' trading along the Baltic Sea and eventually into the Mediterranean Sea, sparked further trade and mercantilist interest. That zeal was manifest through the willingness to trade with faraway markets. The most praised market was that of Far East Asia, in which China played a central role. Accessing that market linked China to European mercantilism. That became imperative in 1453 as the Ottoman Empire made it impossible to access Asia through Asia Minor. Already a pole of commerce between India and Japan, China was positioned to do more with maritime capability, but retreated from further external commercial activity during the Ming era.

Satisfied with its empire, the emperor deemed the potential dangers of the unknown not worthy of China's trouble. The quest for commerce was worth the

3. Internally, Western Europe was constantly experiencing new waves of socio and religious, the likes of the Reformation, new ideas, scientific innovations, and externally, the increasing influence of trade with new colonies.

trouble for Europeans, though. European sustained mercantile activity eventually produced capitalism. The benefit of increasingly capitalist trade gave the edge to the West. A few centuries later, after capitalism produced the Industrial Revolution, a second encounter between the West and the Far East occurred to the detriment of the latter. Once the hub of international trade, with 60% share of the world economy (Frank, 1988) in 1820, this second encounter with the industrialized West found China weaker. By will of force, Confucian China had to deal with the ideas of economic liberalism.

Indeed, it was forced. And so, China spent its last dynasty under the yoke of the Manchu Qing Dynasty and the subservient role to the western European semi-colonial powers who occupied its ports for trade. China's political nationalism had an economic dimension in the sense that those nationalist despised the West, including its economic system informed by imperialism. These nationalists were communists led by Mo Tse Tung. The blow to economic liberalism in China came as a result of the defeat of the pro-Western nationalist led by Sun Yat Sen and Chan Kai Tshek, and their retreat to Taiwan explains the economic liberalism practiced there. The particular arrangement with respect to Hong Kong kept that city from falling under communism. China had to forgo on economic liberalism to the limits of communist policies, the last being the Cultural Revolution, which caused further economic hardship and revealed to be inadequate and unable to move the masses out of such enduring hardships. This realization during the Cultural Revolution occurred between 1976 and 1978. As China decided to change its economic fate through reform, economic liberal policies came to the rescue. Liberal forces have always competed for consideration in time of either or both political and economic turmoil in China. After the Cultural Revolution, reformers (politicians, liberal Chinese, students, intellectuals) within the Communist Party who gave liberalism the consideration it has sought for years, even if it was limited to economics.

They came up with the novel idea of adopting liberalism for its economic promise, but not for its political implications. It was going to be about free market, not democracy. There have been other non-liberal regimes, such as authoritarian regimes, that adopted policy measures of economic liberalism, like the case of Chile under Pinochet, but the novelty of China's adoption of liberalism in 1978 lies in the fact that it was communistic, given its core dislike of private property, free market, and its use of capital. The promise of economic liberalism has materialized, as shown by the growth of the Chinese economy since its reform initiative of 1978. As a result, China has become the last neoliberalist power after being the last major state to join the free market economic system. With China

on board, liberalism has now completed its hegemonic march. Such a march will then be even more complete in the event that China turns politically democratic.

In any case, as Frank (1988) once noted, Far East Asia triggered the European international mercantile zeal at the dawn of the modern era, which gave way to economic liberalism. The spread of economic liberalism has circled back to Asia. Far East Asia is once again in the process of regaining its crown as the pole of international trade, as it once was. China currently has this double political identity of being communist and liberal. Chinese pragmatism has succeeded so far to merge these ideologies that happen to be inherently contradictory, each in the application of its full extent. This double identity raises the question of sustainability.

Sustainable Path?

The Chinese experiment involving political communism and economic liberalism has been subject of interest to many. Those interested in this reality in China wonder how sustainable it is. Some contend that the social forces and dynamics that market economic brings will eventually force political communism to cave. They argue that, with private property, wealth, economy stakeholders, interest groups, and a middle class that is growing aware, interested, educated, and traveled, the greater Chinese population will want a say in the decision-making that communist leaders exclusively enjoy. Such a middle class will constitute a pool from which social demands to the leadership of the Communist Party will be formulated, eventually challenging that leadership. Others have observed the diminishing voices demanding liberalism in China. There are fewer individual liberal reform activists. Not even students, who in the recent past have demonstrated significant liberal standings, have been vocal lately in that regard. As the middle class grows, it seems the quest for more liberties diminishes. The argument has been that satisfied citizens are not interested in causing trouble. The reality described by the Kuznet Curve shows a rising inequality China industrializes. The concentrated investment in cities causes an urban and rural income inequality.

Accentuated, such inequality is a potential source of unrest. The growth of the Chinese economy has been sustained enough to bring about a rapid improvement in income, as millions move into the middle class, improving the per capital income. With an effective but changing *Hukou* system, through which social security benefits are provided, the improving human capital and credit market and measures of spatial diversified investment, such inequalities predicted in the

Kuznet Curve are currently being addressed. Others have also argued that liberalism is good for material prosperity but not political and cultural values, since China already has Communism and Confucianism. It is, therefore, not without interest that one must note the combination of material prosperity and the recourse to Confucian values as a potential remedy to use to inoculate the rising pool of the middle class against demands for more liberalism. The common Chinese citizen finds pride in owning as much income, property, wealth, and means as those counterparts in liberal countries while cultivating the pride of being part of a millennial cultural and Eastern tradition, distinct from the West. These cultural and civilizational traditions cultivate a different value system, away from individualism: away from emphasizing rights. They cultivate a community-minded society, emphasizing duty. Where one is individualistic, the other is relation-based. Confident China has started to look at Western political liberalism not as an enemy but as competition. Chinese no longer fear the West but compare themselves to the West.

The definitive outcome of this Chinese experiment remains unknown. Liberalism is primarily philosophical. Its premise stating that all human beings, being *free* and *equal* by birth, garner enough axiomatic power to challenge any other existing and competing philosophy. It has application in all expressions of human existence. It is therefore economic, political, sociological, and cultural. It has proven to be, in all its aspects, a universal force with many nemeses. They are all those whose premise are pre-enlightened. Among them, the forces of traditions, the forces of religion, the forces of the ideologies that preceded liberalism, and even those that came after it. Christianity has made room for it (the debate about reason and faith). Communism has been defeated by its political and economic applications (liberal democracies and free market economies). The entire modern society has emerged pushing the pre-enlightened, pre-modern society behind with the force of reason, a potent tool used by liberalism. Liberalism prevailed by producing an economic dynamic responsible for the Industrial Revolution, which in turn made possible the advent of the modern culture, emancipated from the forces of traditions, to use the terminology of the German sociologist Max Weber. There are still ideologies and religions resisting this axiomatic power. Time will tell if, when, and how they eventually incorporate the tenets of liberalism. Chinese political communism must accommodate, make room for, find an arrangement with, or cave to the social forces of liberalism.

Every philosophical current or ideology reveals its proprieties and, therefore, its nature through its premise. By nature, I mean whether it is peaceful, revolutionary, tolerant, hegemonic, or otherwise. Liberalism is, for instance, not

belligerent. It does not seek territorial conquest. This is because its premise assumes individual freedom, while Marxism's premise is revolutionary. Liberalism is as well congenitally political because its premise entails a societal organizing principle. It is congenitally economical because it assumes the innate, natural disposition of individuals to seek what is needed for their sustenance and happiness; a process that is naturally better served through the distributive nature of the market. Liberalism is as well congenitally international as it premises the need for cooperation without which the world would be "dismal" to use the vocabulary of Keohane (1984). Keohane wrote (1984: 11): "People may disagree on what forms of international cooperation are desirable and what purposes they should serve, but we can all agree that a world without cooperation would be dismal indeed." Consequently, the benefit of cooperating creates demands for international institutions and rules (Keohane, 1984: 7, citing Metrany, 1975), and liberalism relies on international institutions to get past a possible "dismal" outcome. Our interest in liberalism in relation to China addresses, in a flexible manner (alternatively or concomitantly), these three dimensions of liberalism.

China, like many other nations taking this path, has been integrating and selectively adopting pillars of the liberal order. This is, in fact, justifiable because of liberalism's claim of universal validity. It claims to be fundamentally humanistic. It is axiomatic in its annunciation, and its strengths lies in the force that axioms come with. Liberalism, however, remains an authentic product of Western critical thinking. Both its Western origin and its universal claim have caused admiration and embracing, but they have also encouraged skepticism, relativism, and even negation and rejection. Regardless of where in this scale of reaction to liberalism one happens to be, it is a fact that liberalism, both as a bearer of societal and economic organizing principle, has not ceased to advance. Such an advance is certainly a demonstration of effective economics and attractive politics, as it breeds both free market and democratic rule. It is really an exported idea of the West. Here is where Fukuyama (1992) has often been evoked, as he argued that the world needed to no longer look for the ultimate or best form of economic and political system.

Indeed, liberalism has an emancipative character, from which it draws its force. It places the individual at the center of everything. This individual has rights. This individual has aspirations, which he/she alone can determine and pursue. And such a pursuit is natural and therefore included in his/her rights. This individual is deserving of justice. The individual is not enslaved or infantilized, and, above all, no one shall rule over him/her without his/her consent. In fact, the entire mode of governing refers to the people, not to God, not to kings (monarchy), not to force, and not to tradition. And here, China and the Confucian

view of political legitimacy applied the concept of Mandate of Heaven. As far as governing is concerned, the world moved "to one in which government was legitimate only if it derived its power from the consent of those it governed" (Lynch, 2016: 48). And such a government shall not in any way, as Locke (1690) has argued, interfere with any endeavor that is naturally human, except when needed in the name of the Commonwealth. It is a social order that has moved away from pre-modern, traditional ones, built on kinship and community rather than on individuals, those which focused on duty rather than rights and concerned themselves with tradition rather than change, driven by nationalism and religions rather than republican values.[4]

As the modern era advances, non-republican states have caved or been defeated, one way or the other by the pressures of liberalism. As fewer states find themselves in the category of non-liberal democratic states, this leads to the expectation that it may be just a matter of time until states around the world have embraced the liberal democratic order. This means that China, as a Communist state, remains within liberalism's sights. This is not because liberalism is belligerent or because communism is not legitimate. It is not because the world cannot host more than one political order or ideology or because these ideologies have to compete until one caves. It is because political orders or ideologies have inherent strengths and weaknesses. It eventually comes down to the attractiveness of the ideology and its ability to demonstrate its strengths or avoid succumbing to its weaknesses, and by withstanding time, the critical look of the evolving social consciousness of the human mind. By becoming economically liberal, China has already avoided one of the two-frontend assaults of liberalism, economic liberalism, and its free market system. China still faces the liberal assault on the second front from political liberalism and its democratic order. Speaking of democratic order, should China one day become democratic, it will place itself fully in the ranks of democracies. Belonging to the host of democratic nations has its benefit. It has the benefit that republican liberalism advances, namely that of democratic peace. The malaise that still exists due to the Marxist-communist identity and the authoritarian regime in Beijing would then dissipate, as a democratic China will lose the ideological reason that induces some wars. For now, China, by increasingly integrating the world economy, is opening itself for more interdependence, which signals it has no intent to get involved in wars, as such integration simply increases the cost of wars.

4. Republican values as those deriving from the principle of universal applicability to all citizens regardless of their particularities of gender, race, religion, culture, etc.

6

The Rise of China in the Prism of Neoliberalism

Institutional Liberalism

A consensus emerged to move away from protectionist policy measures, which were to blame for World War I, World War II, and the world depression. The consensus produced the preference of trade among nations, and the need for institutions and organizations to both cement its structures and facilitate its processes. Indeed, the processes of the interwar period were chaotic: the collapse of the exchange rate mechanism, outrageous effects of an uncontrolled laissez-faire, followed by increased protectionism, competitive deprecation and retaliation, rampant inflation, shrinking world trade, economic depression, rise of unemployment, rise of fascism, and war. The mission of liberal institutionalism was to promote prosperity and lessen the possibilities of war. It was about promoting security and prosperity through entrenched mechanisms of cooperation.

The US was, of course, affected. The turmoil, therefore, succeeded in getting the US to shift its attitude vis-à-vis international affairs. It shifted from isolationism to internationalism. The interwar period also demonstrated the consequence of the state of anarchy in the international system and the need for leadership. The US accepted to embody the leadership role, demonstrated by the Woodrow Wilson administration and the initiative to create the League of Nations in 1922,

which eventually enacted the Reciprocal Trade Agreement of 1934. After the interruption caused by World War II, through which the US consolidated its claim to the most powerful state status, US leadership was in full swing. It initiated the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the International Trade Organization—disagreements about which have allowed for a Generalized Agreement on Trade and Tariff, and later morphed into the World Trade Organization.[1] Undisputedly in command of a preponderance of power, proven in both wars, and with an economy that has grown exponentially since the second half of the 19th century, the US established itself as the hegemonic power.

Indeed, a case of hegemonic distribution of power, as defined by Webb and Krasner (1989: 183), is "one in which a single state has a preponderance of power, is most conducive to establishment of a stable open international economic system." Hegemony itself is the sum of ideas, rules, principles, and norms that shape a system and the actions of actors within it. With hegemony, many initiatives and the contours of what we now called institutional liberalism were put in place. Liberalism has now been embedded in the institutions of monetary policies, money supply, and trade. All nations not hindered by ideology or politics became directly part of it. Developing nations were conveyed to participate, as they had essentially raw materials to supply with the promises of distributive market gains.

The US is then a benevolent hegemon. After helping the world to rid itself of fascism, the US was helped foster world prosperity. Like Webb and Krasner, Kindelberger (1973), Gilpin (1987), Keohane (1989), and others have stated, the hegemonic role helps in the context of organizing the world economic. Hegemony was used and needed for the stability of world economics and world economic processes. This explains the theory of hegemonic stability. Such a role cannot be exercised without the preponderance of power capabilities, which, when used to impose the will of the most powerful, produces a coercive hegemon, as shown in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq. If used for just the greater international public good, it produces a benevolent hegemon, as shown with the creation of the

1. The disagreement on the type of trade liberalism, dispute over resources transfer explain the short life of ITO (1947/48). But the need for reduced tariff and eliminate trade barrier to promote international trade did find enough support, of initially twenty-three members but the list has not ceased to grow since; has produced GATT (October 1947), which needed to adapt to the newest complexity of world trade, technological implications and new property rights, and led to the creation of World Trade Organization in 1995.

Bretton Woods institutions. If used to persuade and associate the smaller states in different regions of the globe, it produces a benign hegemon, as shown in the case of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the East Asian Economic (EAS), or the Summit, or the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Through its tenure as the current hegemonic power, the US has had phases during which any of the three expressions of hegemonic exercise has been at display. Benign and benevolent hegemons are practically and morally preferable because hegemony is more than dominance. It implies leadership, which in turn implies followership (Mastanduno, 2002). This is what Buzan (2008) saw as compromised by the United States in the aftermath of the Iraq War, a question he explores in *A Leader without Followers*. Morally, because such a leadership commends a moral clout that makes the international order it supplies worthy of enduring adhesion. These two kinds of hegemony exercised are preferred because the other one, coercive hegemony, has shown time and time again its limits.

The term "hegemony" consequently is used by both realists and liberalists in international relations. It is used by liberalists in the context of a liberal international economy and by realists as a mechanism of order, in the context of the anarchical nature of international relations. Here is where these two main theoretical perspectives appear to look like two sides of a same coin. While realist still see the state with preponderance of capabilities as essential in the organization of everything international, liberalist see other entities, individuals, groups, firms, and organizations as instrumental in ordering the international realm alongside states. Liberalists see states as driven by interest and therefore naturally cooperative for their achievement rather than simply driven by the fear of the consequence of anarchy.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism in its economic dimension is essentially an embrace of specific laissez-faire policies based on deregulation and liberalization of trade and investment; privatization, advocating for the private sector and the retreat of the sector in entrepreneurial activity; and the harmonization of fiscal and monetary. Harvey (2005: 2) defines neoliberalism in the following way:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedom and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade … The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money …

> Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or the environmental pollution), then they must be created, by state action if necessary … State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum.

This brand of economic liberalism surged in the 1970s to counter the Marxist policies in countries where political coups sometimes brought the liberal-minded to the heels of Marxist socialism, as it was the case in Chile between Allende and Pinochet. Economic liberalism also pushed back against Keynesianism, which informed policy remedy of post–World War II economies. The economic reasoning of Keynes, which came to prominence in the 1930s, was hailed as the better alternative to the chaos of the uncontrolled laissez-faire[2] of the interwar period and the limit of the market under specific conditions, and therefore argued in favor of a government role in matters of political economy. His time as the leading referential figure soon expired.

The wave of neoliberalism was amplified when Margaret Thatcher came to power in Great Britain (1979–1990) with a fondness for Friedrich Hayek's economic reasoning. Hayek, who experienced the rise of fascism, the rise of socialism, and was a contemporary prominent economist, became the nemesis of J. M. Keynes' divergent brand of economic reasoning. Hayek argued, in his countless works, specifically the *Road to Serfdom*, in favor of non-governmental intervention to leave room for capital, market, and individual choices. He argued against the central planning of an economic system devoid of the market and against planned societies, in favor of spontaneous social order, and he argued against the aggregated model of Keynes, which, in his view, failed to recognize or to realize the effects of individual factors, such as interest rate or capital structure in a free market economic system.

Ronald Reagan came to power in the US (1981–1989) with a fondness of the same line of economic reasoning utilized by Chicago's economists the likes of Milton Friedman (1912–2006), another critic of J. M. Keynes. Friedman's economics focused on money supply and taxation (monetarism) and advocated for privatization and deregulation. Like Hayek, he was an entrenched advocate of free market and minimalist governmental intervention. Like Hayek, who whispered in the ears of Margaret Thatcher; Friedman whispered in the ears of Ronald Reagan. Like Hayek, Friedman despised the idea of social justice, if and when engineered by the forces of politics, and he forcefully argued against the welfare

2. John Maynard Keynes published *The End of Laissez-Faire* in 1926.

state. Both have based their analysis on a transcendent idea of freedom, free will, and choice. They both conferred the primacy of decision and action into the hands of individual actors, entrepreneurs, and the forces of the market, and not in government plans. This is made clear through the titles of their important works, which include words such as "serfdom" and "freedom."[3]

The overbearing government interference in matters of economics has the potential to remove individual freedoms. Plus, individuals utilize capital as a tool for individual freedom. This line of economic reasoning perfectly squared with the established tenet of the 20th-century Anglo-Saxon conservative ideology. It was the economic reflection and expression of the conservative social order. It explains, therefore, the sympathy of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, respectively, for Hayek and Friedman. This line of economic reasoning, which promoted specific policy measures, is now known as neoliberalism.

Further promoted by both Reagan and Thatcher, neoliberalism was accepted by other nations, even those in Europe that preferred a different version, known as social market economic system. Germany and Japan soon bought into the new economic system, based on reasons of trade, and together they applied pressure to the rest of the world through the already existing international multilateral economic institutions (International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) to associate, voluntary or involuntarily, with their clients around the world.[4] The instrumentalization of these institutions has given to neoliberalism an aggressive connotation it does not have in its essence. The rallying cries from the left target neoliberal policies that produce wealth while increasing social inequality. Such inequalities, in developing nations, have produced casualties of many sorts.

Here is where economic neoliberalism meets the international relations theory of neoliberalism. Institutional liberalism produced Bretton Woods instructions. The world entered an era of the Cold War, creating the need to build alliances along with the larger need to build even deeper ties between the economies of the free market liberalist states as their exchanges grew more intense and more

3. Milton Friedman published *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press, in 1962.
4. Essentially through the Structural Adjustment Program, which simply reflected the policy remedy listed by John Williamson in his Washington Consensus' argument, namely: lowering of the budget deficit to be financed without recourse to the inflation tax-reducing public expenditure-tax reform to broaden the tax base, and cut marginal tax rates-financial liberalization-unified exchange rate-abolition of barrier impeding the entry of foreign direct investment-privatization of state-owned enterprises, etc.

complex. Next to the creation of NATO, GATT became the World Trade Organization; the European Union deepened its integration process to turn into a Union. It is a development that seems to underline the perspectives of both neo-realism and neoliberalism. It is a development that neoliberalists see as a success story (Lynch, 2016: 53) as it evidences the effectiveness of a successful multilateralism during the Cold War era. The US benefited from it, and whenever it chose to venture into isolated unilateral actions, as evidence by the case of Vietnam (Lynch, 2016), the US has not been successful. There are cases of such US isolation, even its refusal to adhere, participate, initiate, or encourage the formation of multilateral institutions. Such was the case with the Kyoto Protocol in 1995 and the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal in 2010, which have nevertheless emerged as additional institutions in the multilateral institutional architecture.

There is often a consensus among the world's nations about specific international public goods. When such is the case, multilateral institutions can still be built without the impulse of the most influential nation. Ruggie (1983) sees in such broad consensus the conditions for constructing relatively stable multilateral institutions. If such institutions can emerge without the hegemonic power, even in the case of the US during phases of relative decline in a quasi-unipolar world, it will be even more the case in the upcoming multipolar world, in which refusal, absence, or resistance of the US against any such international projects may be without effect. And the more such cases we have, the more the US risks marginalizing itself from the hegemonic status, in the neoliberalist perspective. The instrumental role that the hegemonic power plays will be more and more eclipsed by a greater consensus and the diversified capabilities of other players. And, if among such players there is a rising power, like China, with comparable capabilities, and it agrees to don the mantle of neoliberalist leadership, which differs from the mantle of neo-realist leadership, the world system of tomorrow will indeed be post-US, as Zakaria (2008) argued.

Neoliberalism believes that there is value in cooperating. It promotes multilateral actions as instruments for fostering peace, as they reduce the effect of selfish behavior. They moderate the excesses of unilateralism. They are, therefore, morally valuable. And as such they are an end in their very nature, not just an instrument of a material interest.

In conclusion, all versions of liberalism have in common the focus on the individual, its rights, and its prosperity. They have in common the recognition of a complex, changing world that requires the engagement of all individuals, institutions, organizations, and states to reach a cosmopolitan peace through

multilateral actions. A global neoliberal world is one in which the liberal democratic order will prevail worldwide, and with it a democratic peace. And in a world that is cosmopolitan, an individuals' mobility is a bridge-building factor of peace as it induces cross-national activities, encounters, exchanges, relationships, business joint ventures, and other investments to justify the idea of social liberalism. People, cultures, products, and so on of which one only theoretically knows, cease to be abstract because one has been exposed to them and they become part of one's own experience. The experience reduces detachment. With such interdependence grows interests, benefits, and stakes in international connectedness. And so, international financial crisis, the effects of climate change, access to nuclear capabilities by terrorists, a genocide perpetrated somewhere in the world all become issues within the scope of the interest of any human being on the planet, although not occurring in the vicinity of our zip code.

This idea of peace through cross-national border engagement may not be as chimerical as realists may think. Liberalists accepting the notion of the changing human mind and changing state interests and goals do not exclude the possibility of a new consciousness, viewing interdependence as a value worth protecting more than selfish state interests. World peace could then become more than an idealist hope but a practical instrument. Both individual and state interests may shift, not to depend exclusively or a great deal solely on one state, and the peace and prosperity of the world may become a cause as worthy of defending as one's own state. In other words, to echo Hegel's thoughts[5] on consciousness, history, and social order, the changing consciousness of the human mind may in the future produce a social order or international system that better suits its current level of consciousness. After all, there was a time when such a consciousness was accepting of slavery, territorial conquests, imperialism, and colonization. It is less accepting of these phenomena today. There was a time when such a consciousness was accepting of interstate wars. They are becoming less of a norm in international relations. Currently, looking around the world, one cannot help noticing how the consciousness of the collective human mind is shifting before our very eyes in a number of issues. These are contested issues, whose past legitimizing ground has lost its validity in today's levels of awareness in the history of mankind. They are issues of gender equality, many of which argued on the basis of the noble principles of liberalism, namely individual freedom and equality of rights. While many of these battles are fought even within states that are already liberal democracies,

5. F. Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Mind.*

they are fought in states whose levels of liberality is less established, like in new democracies, and they are up-in-coming in non-liberal states.

On a larger scale, and in the historical long run, liberalists seem to have a better prospect in seeing their global worldview come to life than realists, who do not expect to see changes in the ideas of human nature and that states have interests. On the economic front, liberalists have already demonstrated, through the growing world's prosperity, the promise of their call for interdependence. The interdependence they call for bridges both the world of economics and that of politics. It helps forge conditions for a global governance, multilateral intuitions, and international regimes, all of which through their creation of norms pave the way for organized individual, institution, and state interactions. In such conditions, who would want to start a war and risk global condemnation?

Liberalism believes that the hope for prosperity will supplant the fear for war. Limiting the complexity of world affairs to just the necessity for state survival, or to maximize security, reduces the explanatory power of realists in international relations, argue the liberalists. What makes realists' explanation of the nature of world affairs insufficient, argues the liberalists, and is their belief that the answer to world's security issues was the possession of hard power (military capabilities and GDP). In the liberalist complex world, such hard power is becoming ill-equipped as instruments to address the complex issues of and interdependent, digital, and cosmopolitan world. It might even be losing its saliency under the conditions of globalization. All the hard power one may have still cannot scare away illusive terrorism. All the hard power one state might have still cannot protect them from environmental disasters. All the hard power that a state might carry still cannot protect that state from the spread of lethal viruses awoken in the atmosphere by the changing temperatures. All the hard power one state may have still cannot keep the savviest hacker from penetrating sensitive sights and sites. All the hard power that one state might have still cannot guarantee protection from the kinds of sources of dangers we are coming to realize are not from military invasion or enemy countries.

On the other hand, following are increasingly the currencies of nations in the world we live in today: The ability of a state to harness the support of friends around the world, the ability to amass trade surplus and foreign reserve currency, the ability to develop the most attractive idea or solution for world problems, the ability to attract businesses, the ability to increase the number of one's own multinational corporations, the ability to attract tourism, and global interest in one's culture, and so on. Therefore, the liberalists gladly think past the nation-state border and consider other forms of power than hard power. Consequently, Nye

(2003) proposed the use of the soft power. How does China fit into the institutional and neoliberalism?

China and the Institutional and Neoliberalist World Order

China entered the framework of institutional liberal order as a result of its own need to reform economically in order to improve the living standards of its people. China had decided to put economic development at the center of its endeavors, coming to the realization that its own viability, a proud country with a long tradition and bearer of a civilization, was in jeopardy. The process of reform started in 1978 and has not ceased, as China has adjusted at any step of the process requiring it.

In the 1980s, China consolidated its transition into the liberal economic system by de-collectivizing agriculture. China reformed taxation and the financial system, encouraged entrepreneurship, created parastatals, revamped the wage structure and banking, credit, and facilitated foreign direct investments. In 1984, China established the Shenyang International Economic and Technical Cooperation (CSYIC), a limited corporation designed to support Chinese assault onto available and low-competition market entry. It aimed at supporting the nascent Chinese industry.

In the 1990s, China embraced neoliberalism. It took steps to align its economic activity around the world with expectations of neoliberalism through its bilateral and multilateral agreements. The Shanghai Stock Exchange was created, and privatization and liberalization policy accelerated, leading to reduced regulation. Public–private partnerships were also becoming a feature of its economy. The Yuan became convertible on the current account, facilitating in the process the flow of money in the import–export activity. In 1993, Zhao Ziyang articulated a new rationale of mutual benefit, economic development, efficiency, and effectiveness as the basis of China's cooperation with the world. China initiated a forum on China–Africa Cooperation in 2006 to apply the new policy attitude. The Communist Party itself reconciled with liberalism in 2002 by allowing entrepreneurs membership in the Communist Party.

China's success was apparent, as evidenced by the Goldman Sachs report in 2001 on the economies of BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). With a growth rate averaging 8% over four decades, China led the way of the BRICs. Confident as a result of steady economic growth and loaded with cash as a result of trade surplus, China was ready to compete with the West. China entered the World Trade Organization in 2001 to fully become a member of the institutional

liberal order. Benefiting from trade liberalization by taking advantage of its comparative advantage, China continued to harness the benefits of a global free market system.

To open its culture to the world, China started in 2004 the Confucian Institute Program, which has spread into at least seventy-two nations. In 2005, the Yuan was no longer pegged to the dollar. And a year later China's foreign reserve currency was the world's largest, with a little over $1 trillion. To signal its adhesion and goodwill as a member of the international state system and to counter the isolation that ensued from the Tiananmen Square forceful repression of the democratic process, China became an active participant and a contributive member of the international liberal institutional order. It did so through its involvement in regional trade and security regimes, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of South East Asian Nations, and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation.

In the 2010s, China sustained its economic growth. It has improved its economic status, improving its GDP to second to no other but the US. With improved economic status, China has sought to expand its reach, multiplying bilateral and multilateral agreements in all regions of the globe. The process occurs within the framework of existing international economic infrastructure. In that regard, China has been a cooperating state within the neoliberal international system. China continues to participate in other such existing multilateral international institutions, even when it has not been given recognition for new economic achievements, as is currently the case within the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. China, however, does not shy away from initiating and creating new international institutions designed to support the international liberal order, with or without the blessing of the initiator of the current international liberal order—the United States. This activism on behalf of China has had, to its credit, the creation of the New Development Bank (the BRICS Bank) in 2014. China has initiated the creation of the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank with founding members, regional and non-regional members, currently reaching the number of seventy-seven—among them Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Saudi Arabia, and Australia, along with prospective members such as Canada, Brazil, and South Africa. The list grows every year as new applications for membership are received and approved.

In 2013, China announced the creation of the Belt and Roads Initiative. The ambitious project for which China has disbursed 100 thousand billion and which may reach multiple trillion when it's all done, involves roads, sea routes, ports, airports, and railroads with the participation of more than seventy nations and

more than thirty international organizations. It links Guangzhou, China, to Venice, Italy, reaching South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the eastern coast of Africa. The initiative seeks nothing short of recreating, under the conditions of today's infrastructural building potential, financial capabilities, and technological knowhow, the once existing Silk Road. And, as if the Silk Road project was not impressive enough, China plans—as revealed though its Arctic policy white paper of May 15, 2017—an expansion into the Arctic. China aims to take advantage of climate change, which makes it possible to envisage shipping route into the region to open up a "Polar Silk Road" and expand the space, comprised of arctic states and liberal economic enterprise.

Improving its participation in, and contribution to, the world economic order as a member, China has since achieved a higher status through qualitative structural change, from being an imitator in the manufacturing and the service sectors to becoming an innovator in the areas of alternative energy sources, electro mobility, solar cells, microchips, and displays. Today, China's economy is an engine of growth to the many economic partners it has.

China's success as a full member of the institutional liberal order has been more than evident. The most summative of the evidences to be advanced is a substantiated projection of the Chinese economy to become the world's largest. With that success comes influence. With that influence raises the question of how China will use it. This has been a burning question to many. Those interested in exploring this question are often scholars interested in matters of international security and stability. They wonder which attitude China will develop vis-à-vis security arrangements around itself in East Asia and around the world. They wonder whether China will develop revisionist policy or a cooperative attitude. Those scholars interested in world prosperity and matters of international economics and other forms of exchanges wonder whether China will use its influence to strengthen them by donning the hegemonic mantle next to the US as a co-hegemon or would seek taking the mantle away from the US, or just content itself to navigating the existing institutional structural waters. Or does China have something else in mind to propose? States around the world—friends, competitors, rivals, and potential friends and potential foes—wonder in one way or the other how they might be affected by the implications of the rise of China. Chinese policy choices, behavior attitude, and diplomacy will be key factors in determining the distributions of the many nations.

As the world expects to see how these changes affect the structure and the stability of the international system, China itself ponders what the best path forward is. China, as it stands, does not necessarily have it all figured out. China has been

cautious so far, because not everything is certain. China is in the process of figuring out what its choices should be, and it has already made some choices. Some such choices have been unsurprising, while others have been surprising What kinds of choices has China been making one way or the other, so far?

China turned economically liberal during the phase of neoliberalism. China is, therefore, a product of neoliberalism. As such, China has been increasingly participating in international organization activity. China has been cautious doing so, participating in its own rhythm and calculations. It wants to avoid an early, premature entrenchment (Foot, 2006). To reaffirm the same sentiment, Chen (2014: 425) wrote: "Uncertainty and fear account for China's passivity in taking global responsibilities, which are viewed as numerous traps to hinder the growth of China's power." This attitude explains the low ranking of China in the index of involvement in International Organizations and other forms of international involvement. China, however, has been making progress in its cautious manner as recently demonstrated in the case of environmental issues. And, in all fairness, compared to the US and the European Union, it is still a newcomer as a purveyor of support. This cautious behavior with respect to international involvement is both a testimony to China's avoidance to take over the reign of world affairs, as it is a testimony to a China's faithfulness to the cautious behavior recommended by the late Deng Xiao Peng. China remains in many instances (GDP per capita of just 8, 123.18 USD in 2016 for instance) a developing nation, eager to avoid the costs of unnecessary involvements. China further argues that its involvement will increase in the degree of its capabilities. The question of a clear and assertive China's presence internationally still remains unanswered. The willingness to sustain the cost or endure the setbacks of international involvement is an indicator of China's willingness to become a hegemonic power. It can indicate whether China is a candidate for hegemonic leadership.

China's economic fate has been rising almost too fast to give China the time to digest its implications globally. The process is ongoing and China is adjusting its behavior to its new status. China is catching up on its understanding of and functioning in global free market system. By all accounts and evidence, China has adjusted rather quickly and effectively so far, capitalizing on comparative advantages, opening up to foreign direct investments, and harnessing the benefits of transfer technology, seeking and accessing resources and markets around the world through trade. The other area is the one informed by a new identity as a normal state. As such China ought to have legitimate national interests, different from those of communist nations which were driven by the goal of a united international proletariat. In this regard, China has reflected in international relations scholarship, addressing the sensibility of its national security and carefully

orchestrating its integration in the international liberal order to address the uneasiness of its identity as a non-democratic and communist state doing business with liberal democracies. China has also been reassuring nations around the world through its active diplomacy with all nations regardless of their identity and based on norms of the existing international order. Its diplomacy offensive has been remarkable and palpable. China's ascendance in diplomatic skills is remarkable in the sense that, not long ago, China seemed awkward on the international scene, looking unfamiliar, uninterested, opaque, and mysterious. Today, the ubiquitous presence of Chinese officials in different capitals and international gatherings and their sudden sophistication, nuance, and agility, considering that, for instance, teaching international relations is as recent as since the 1980s (Xinning Song and Chan),[6] seems to render their economic surge justice and their improved status more digestible. The progress is palpable because their success is visible through increased sympathy and increased exchanges with the rest of the world, which has erased the fear of a Red China in the West.

China's pragmatism, its approach grounded in its Confucian culture of tact, sensitivity, and the flexibility necessary to avoid conflict collisions has been winning trust. It is the trust of being a responsible shareholder in the international system. China's trust is its capital, which can be used alongside the influence it is acquiring through its economic power. China's rise is the product of the promise of the neoliberal era. China's rise in the epoch of neoliberalism makes China a neoliberal power. China's rise to acquire capabilities rivaling those of the current hegemonic power means that China will either have to become a second neoliberal hegemonic power or seek to supplant the abilities of the current hegemonic power. Either way, China will have influence. It can use such influence in a number of ways. China may content itself with a second-tier status. China may just seek a few reasonable accommodations and reforms to the international system while being second in line. China may seek more influence to reflect its rising status and its values. Or China may seek, when the time is right, to supply the world with a new value system and norms to do away with the areas it finds itself at odds with in the current hegemony.

But does China even seek to don the mantle? Does China have a hegemonic ambition on its mind as a consequence of its rise? What is the real value of

6. Xinning Song and Gerard Chan: "International Relations Theory," in: *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*. Edited by Weixing Hu, Gerarld Chan, Daojiong Zha, p. 19. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000.

hegemony in a world in which great powers and even some not-so-great powers possess nuclear capabilities? China's likelihood of possessing preponderance of capabilities in the near future might have been a reason for triggering hegemonic ambition in the past. It seems much more daunting today because of interdependent, growing, and emerging internationally shared norms, the ubiquitous distributions of technology, wealth, and power, and the increased diminution of interstate conflicts. For the above reasons, possession of a preponderance of capabilities and hegemonic status are increasingly worn as an honorific title. If and when used, it can only be in concert with the many other claims of contributors to the supply of world order. Even before power factors were diversified and multipolarity was becoming the hierarchical structure of the system, the US itself was not really a true hegemonic power (Mearsheimer, 2006).

The US is a superpower because it has the ability to project great power capabilities beyond its region, all the way to East Asia, and defend its influence or interests. In other words, the US is a superpower because it can demonstrate great power influence and interests beyond its own region (Fox, 1944). But the US is not hegemonic in East Asia. Then, it is difficult to exercise hegemonic power in regions far away, where a number of great powers are at home. There can only be a partial hegemony, as true hegemony is only possible regionally, wherein a great power can effectively project power. The US is a true regional or hemispheric hegemon since the Monroe era in both Northern America and Southern America it has remained the undisputed power. Where else is such a clear-cut undisputed case demonstrable?

The effectiveness of the United States as a hegemonic power lies in the appeal of the liberalist order, not in the realist elevation of the notion of power. Given the difficulties to effectively be a realist global hegemonic power, and the cost that comes with the attempt to accomplish such a goal, China seems reluctant to seek a realist global hegemony and seems to aim for a regional hegemonic status, simply because its own security is at stake. However, China seems to be more comfortable with aiming for a global liberalist influence. This means that China will seek to maximize its potential as a liberalist world power while remaining only measurably realist in matter of its own security and interest. By so doing China is leaving space to the incumbent hegemonic power that is comfortable with the realist use of power, as the US is, while possibly outperforming the US economically. So, as China's economic clout continues to grow, China continues the institutionalization of its engagement and cooperation with the world while remaining militarily reluctant, and it will set the ground for a scenario we call co-hegemony.

7

Is China a Realist or Liberalist Power?

The sense that each one of the theoretical approaches to international relations make do not make up for the limited explanatory power of each. It is evident that the international world requires caution because of the state of anarchy. While one theoretical approach focuses on the challenge of permanent danger it poses, the other focuses on overcoming that challenge. Realism focuses on how to better face that challenge, and therefore is interested in the international distribution of power. Liberalism focuses on the opportunity that exists beyond states in the generation of wealth and therefore applies itself in neutralizing the danger that the state of anarchy poses. The limited explanatory power of each one of these approaches, separately to comprehensively account for what we observe internationally is drastically reduced when taken together. As distinct as these approaches are, and therefore states can emphasize one over , the other, they are often concurrent. Indeed, some states have a culture, a history and imperative reasons leading them to rely more on defense, power capabilities, and military spending. They focus more on security and alliance building, etc., using the military as a tool of foreign policy, threatening or deterring foes and courting potential allies with incentives. They are firm believers that power is the dearest currency of the international system. One might think of Israel, the United States, North Korea. The others spend energy in fostering cooperation, building institutional infrastructure, promoting

international organizations, advocating for trade, contributing to reaching international agreements, fostering multilateralism and international norms. One might think of Canada, Sweden, Norway, and in a conditional way of Japan and Germany, to name just a few.

The pursuits of a desired rank in the distribution of military power for security and the promotion of trade for prosperity can naturally occur concurrently (Dueck, 2005). Consequently, a state can be both realist and liberalist minded. The United States, for instance, spearheaded the project of institutional liberalism buildup, while spearheading the military and defense alliance against communism during the Cold War. These two grand strategic projects occurred concomitantly. Furthermore, the realist approach must not imply preference for war, but just the threat of it. The difference is that national objectives often are achieved without actually bullet being fired (Art, 2009), as demonstrated by the end of the Cold War.

A number of factors come into the determination of whether to espouse the realist or liberalist culture. Geography, historical experiences, national interests and objectives, national identity, collective disposition of the people, are just a few. But among such factors, there is as well the will of the state, through political leadership. Such political leadership justifies the agential capacity to decide what between the challenges of anarchy or the opportunity of the international realm to focus on. Later, while discussing constructionism in Chapter 8, we address this important agential capacity factor.

This means that China has a choice as a state to determine what culture of anarchy it wants to embrace, a concept we expand on further in Chapter 10. China has a geography, a history, a cultural identity, national interests, and a certain political will among its leaders. Briefly, China has a self-image. It provides a rich source in understanding the choices a state makes, and in the process its attitude with respect to navigating the state of anarchy. Among the choices to make, realist to liberalist approaches will certainly be reflected. They will be reflected because these two approaches are prevalent. They impose themselves to states, one way or the other. But they are even more imperative for a rising state, the size of China, whose every international move becomes noticeable because of its weight. Large states with capabilities are generally great powers or superpowers. They are confronted with issues of international security. But they are as well interested with the opportunities of economic prosperity that lay in international realm. Consequently, their policy choices, vision or objectives as international actors are more consequential to the international system. In the realm of the global economy, the choices of Finland, or Sweden, all things considered, are less consequential than

those of the United States, Russia, or China. The same logic applies for strategic choices. The difference lies in the scale of their interests, capabilities, and influence. The choices of those with the greatest scale of influence, which we call great powers or superpowers, is the most consequential. China is stepping into that category. Hence, it becomes relevant to ponder which choice of influencing exercise will China be. Until there are more possibilities to choose from, China will have to pick from the three known. They are becoming a benevolent hegemonic leader; or become an aggressive power, user of coercive assertiveness to cement their domination; or use the Dutch style of exercising hegemony, which was essentially neutral yet serving national self-interest, and simply interested in opposing any force undermining the flow of commerce (Danner, Martin, 2019).

In the previous chapters on realism and liberalism, we hope to have demonstrated that China cannot easily be identified as solely one or the other. And here, it is premature to have developed an answer to the question what kind of hegemonic leadership will China gravitate to. The authors cited above also noticed already evidences of China's foreign policy activity in all these three different directions of hegemonic exercise style. What China has demonstrated so far is its subtlety, flexibility, and discretion. China does take liberties. These features allow to presage all sort of unpredicted moves, so far that is possible in international relations. China seems to be up to that challenge.

It has legitimately its security needs, and has been building up its military, but it is more in the defensive realist mode. As stated earlier, in the chapter on realism, China is uncomfortable with the realist discourse for cultural and historical reasons. It is reluctant to engage realism even when its rise as a great power dictates to deal with it. Earlier in the course of its rise, still in progress, China was using the existing provisions of international treaties, as far as they entail language to curtail the unilateralist tendencies of aggressive hegemonic powers. It remains strictly committed to the Westphalia Treaty provisions. China, so far, has refused to be pinned down to a behavior that the mainstream international relations theory expects of a rising power. China has refused to be seen as aspiring to take on any hegemonic leadership role to the detriment of the United States, which it reproaches to impose itself more to other nations than need be. China, it argues, is not challenging anyone. China speaks of a democratic international relation system, not based on military capabilities or power politics.

China's quest for a new type of great power relations represents China's ideals about great power behavior, away from the traditional understand of it. Known in Chinese as *xinxing da quo quanxi*, this new type of great power relationship primarily involves the rapport between China and the United States and was first

made known by Dai Bingguo[1] at the US–China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in 2010. It was reiterated by Xi while visiting the US as China's vice-president in 2012 and again as president in 2013, during a summit with US President Barack Obama. The notion is based on three principles:

- No confrontation or conflict
- Mutual respect
- Win–win cooperation

The Chinese ideal of a great power relationship was obviously aimed toward moving away from the tensions that have characterized previous great power relations. The notion of rivalry was assumed and implied in any such relations, and China wanted no part of it. This is where we must notice a certain consistency in China's approach to world affairs since 1964. China's major foreign policy pronouncements have included the notion of peaceful coexistence, a peaceful rise, and a new type of great power relationship revolving around the notion of conflict avoidance. China has clearly tried to signal its good intentions to the world. Aware of the worries among some of its neighbors and aware of the danger in international relations to rising nations, China sought to reassure the world. It claimed to have no desire to donning the mantle of the hegemonic power. Obviously, these views are still inspired by the advising words of the late leader Den Xiao Peng, who wanted China not to seek to take the lead while aiming at highest achievement possible. China wants to strive to be the best, but not number one. That was before Xi Jinping's arrival.

It is more in the field of trade and commerce where China is visibly excelling. It is the field of liberalism. Its performance in that field has made China an unavoidable force in the international system. China has entered into a full liberalist mode, checking all the boxes of a liberalist state, namely participating in international organizations, creating new institutional infrastructures, new alliances and regimes, news cooperation venues, in order to promote trade for what it calls win–win proposition, namely generation of wealth for all. China has even become a vocal proponent of global free trade, rising to its defense when the incumbent hegemonic power of the United States, under the Trump administration relents, as it questions a number of existing multilateral trade agreements.

China, as Wertime (Foreign Policy, March 2, 2017) argued, has increasingly de-emphasizing a realist discourse around a new type of great power in favor

1. Dai Bingguo: *A Chinese State Councilor.*

of donning the mantle of hegemonic aspiration, citing Xi's speech at the Davos (Switzerland) Globalization Summit in January 2017. In his speech, Xi laid out the following:

- There was a time when China also had doubts about economic globalization and was not sure about joining the World Trade Organization. But it came to the conclusion that integration into the global economy is a historical trend. To grow its economy, China must have the courage to swim in the vast ocean of the global market. If one is always too afraid to brace the storm and explore the new world, he will sooner or later get drowned in the ocean. Therefore, China took a brave step to embrace the global market. They had their fair share of choking in the water and encountered whirlpools and choppy waves, but they learned how to swim in this process. It has proved to be the right strategic choice.
- Whether you like it or not, the global economy is the big ocean that you cannot escape from. Any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries, or people between economies and channel the waters in the ocean back into isolated lakes and creeks is simply not possible. Indeed, it runs counter to the historical trend.
- The history of mankind tells us that problems are not to be feared. What should concern us is refusing to face up to problems and not knowing what to do about them. In the face of both opportunities and challenges of economic globalization, the right thing to do is to seize every opportunity and jointly meet challenges and chart the right course for economic globalization.

The speech was viewed as a defense of globalization in the light of growing doubts and even attempts to push back against it. Xi's China was suddenly seen as an ardent defender of globalization while Trump's US led the way of critics. Indeed, the US under Trump developed a discourse and behavior of what I call reverse revisionism. It is a revision of aspects of the world economic order that the US has essentially forged, as it started to suffer some of the negative effects of its distributive effects. The Trump administration has not hesitated to question bilateral trade agreements with states like China, South Korea, Canada, and regional trade agreements, like NAFTA, and potentially the transatlantic trade with Europe, as it has decided to levy higher tariffs, up to 25% on 1,300 products.

Ikenberry (2003: 49) sees this behavior as a feature of US hegemonic exercise. He wrote that the US has "been reluctant to tie itself too closely to these

multilateral institutions and rules." Here, US reluctance to commit to the work of the International Court of Justice comes to mind, as well as its previous detachment to the Kyoto Protocol of 1995. China, among other nations often those known as actual revisionists, sees more than just the expression of realism in international relations, but an abuse of power by the most powerful nations, disqualifying them morally to lead the world.

This willingness of China, which was until recently a developing nation, to defend the institutional liberal order while the US, the once-ardent promoter of it, to be its most vocal critic is what is reversed. A once revisionist state is turning into a status quo power, and a once premier status quo power is articulating a revisionist discourse. Because of this, Wertime (2017) predicts that China will take the responsibility of leading the world's nations, as the US seems no longer willing to. In the process, China will have to abandon its hope for a "new type of great power relations." Strictly speaking, however, Xi's speech does not necessarily unveil such intentions.

China's quest for a new type of great power relationship was essentially about strategic matters and the security of the world's stability, while Xi's speech in Davos was about economic matters, prosperity, and world's stability. These two dimensions are not the same, but they complement each other. China's new great power relationship is about avoiding conflicts and Xi's speech is about promoting prosperity. Conflict over security matters more likely leads rivals toward wars, while competition over prosperity is less likely lead competitors to war. China is confident, as Xi argues, that no major rational state would risk questioning the benefits of globalization for fear of hurting its own economy. China is also increasingly more comfortable making that case and taking on the US in matters of economic prosperity—however, it is far from willing or ready to compete in matters of military conflicts. In matters of economic prosperity, China is in either a positive-sum game, which is an incentive to engage, or a negative-sum game, which is not necessarily an incentive to disengage. In matters of military conflict, it is a zero-sum game with a much riskier outcome in an era of weapons of mass destruction. The trade incentive not to engage in disruptive behavior is making China a peace-seeking state. It is peace induced by shared capitalism, which has led Gartzke (2007) to speak of "capitalist peace."

China is still not ready to don the leadership mantle in world security matters, but it may very well be willing to rather don the leadership mantle in world's prosperity matters. To that end, China is cooperating within existing institutions of liberalism, but it also takes liberties to organize its own sphere of influence. There is an opportunity for China to reaffirm its somewhat-different approach to

international relations, once established as a great power. It sure promises to be an approach that blends idealism, realism, liberalism, pragmatism, communism, and Confucian thinking.

However, China's major foreign policy speeches are clear indications of how China perceives the international arena, and consequently its place and role in it, which will dictate its behavior. So far, that behavior has been rather focused on soft power, while not neglecting other dimensions of national interests—namely the use of the military to defend China's national security priority causes. China's soft power use encompasses commerce, as it builds new alliances, signs new agreements, and forges new institutional venues of trade with territories long left out of the world economy. China's soft power also includes aid, which is practiced together with trade, through which China's largess, infrastructure building, money, loans, and grants are exchanged or given against whatever the recipient nation has to offer. China's soft power does as well focus on cultural exchanges, exporting its culture through Confucius Institutes, active in education, training, communication, infrastructure, and capacity building. China wants to make itself attractive, not feared. China sees soft power, as Nye (2004) understands it, as attractive and non-coercive power. China is indeed acquiring a reputation as a premier soft power around the world, away from the hot spots of international tensions and conflicts often in the news. After unsuccessful attempts to make the US government aware and conscious of the need and benefit of soft power as a potent instrument of foreign policy, Nye resigned his effort only to see China fully embracing it.

There is a certain logic in the pragmatism that China seems to have developed since the 1960s. This logical and pragmatic approach seems to have served China just fine so far. There has been a lot of skepticism about China as it has embraced the Westphalia Treaty provisions and the UN Charter without being really fully part of the liberal democratic world. Maybe its pragmatism will help it navigate its shortcomings in that regard. China can still change and adapt, as pragmatists do, and as China has already proven to do, by embracing the free market economic system while being a politically communist. There has been skepticism as well in regard to its claim of peaceful rise in light of the many thorny issues it still faces. There is the Taiwan issue. There is Japan. There is India. There is the political "natural need" of a rising power to make its presence known as a matter of prestige.

What if China was to forgo that political "natural need" and content itself with an essentialist approach, which consists of getting involved if and when it need be for the sole purpose of allowing the flow of international processes to continue without burdening itself with all the unnecessary resistance that comes

when a powerful nation wanting to make its will be known? China's strict adhesion to the Westphalian provisions and its revived belief in Confucian teachings would suggest a different path. Realism suggests that the world must have a hegemon to police the world. The need for such a hegemon, China would argue, can be reduced to a minimum if the hegemonic power did not use force to impose its worldview on nations and people who legitimately would see otherwise. The democratic international relationship that China wants to promote—as well as the essentialist approach to world order, consisting of nations agreeing to the necessary provisions for a functioning world order—is necessary, but does not require the overbearing role that a hegemonic power tends to play.

Whatever China chooses to do will derive from choices they have made. Those choices derive from factors mentioned earlier (geography, history, national interest, objectives, collective values, and political will). A pragmatist does belief that even identity can change, and interest can be easily swayed. The United States used to be protectionist and isolationist until the interwar period after World War I. China used to be exclusively Marxist communist, but is now only partially so. These changes and the new choices they induce are dictated by the changing context of world politics. These choices, therefore, are made within the international system which both leaves room for agential capacity and constrains behavior through existing norms and common practices to actors within.

While acting internationally, as a stakeholder in the liberal institutional order, China has been pragmatist. Ideological orthodoxy no longer governs its foreign policy objective and behavior. In its reinvention, China has embraced a Lockean culture of anarchy. As an international actor, China has become the first, second, or third trading partner to many and creating new institutional infrastructure. China has embraced the Kantian culture well as it continues to promote peaceful coexistence among nations. China is is only defensively Hobbesian (focusing on defensive capabilities), while the other co-hegemon, the United States, has developed a primarily Hobbesian offensive identity (with well over 700 military bases around the globe); secondarily a Lockean identity (trading, but increasingly losing faith in international trade, evident through the Trump administration), and minimally Kantian (as a consequence of its Lockean role, since it sought peace after World War II through commerce). China, therefore, as a co-hegemon, has a different culture and identity as a co-hegemon, which explains the complementarily aspects that will ensue and justifies co-hegemony. It is in the context of this difference of identity that the competitive-cooperative rapport between the two will play out. One will emerge, eventually, on top. This outcome will depend on the ability of each, through the behavior dictated by its identity and culture of

anarchy, to sway followership from the society of the rest of the states. I leave aside the competitive-confrontational rapport between the contenders—like it was between the US and the Soviet Union, in which context war was the ultimate determinant—to assume that the competition between China and the United States will not be determined by war. This assumption is nourished by the hope that neither of these states will risk a nuclear war over some dispute. Therefore, whoever will come out on top, between China and the US, will have done so without a fight. Curiously, this is what some in the US military are worried about: the ability of China to forge ahead and eventually win the match against the US without a fight. This worry was triggered by the intensive diplomacy of China, its reliance on the use of soft power venues and its spending largess, providing loans, granting funds, and suggesting new investments and trade agreements to outspend the United States, which remains in the Hobbesian mode, while China is fully in the Lockean. China is putting this Lockean mode on display with the Belt and Road project. China is succeeding in establishing literal and figurative bridges with nations with Southeast Asia, East Asia, Southern Asia, and Western Asia. The nations in Latin America and the Caribbean have been invited to join the project. Its route expands to the Middle East, as well as eastern and western Europe and Africa.

But how long can China increase interest and influence globally and still maintain a disinterest in the strategic issues and goals beyond its home in East Asian region? Signs of this need for a military and navy capable of been deployable anywhere any time are slowly been seen. The case of Djibouti and it is because of China's active presence in Africa in a number of infrastructure projects across the continent that the United States military worries about China's ability to "weaponize capital," as noted by Richard Spencer with respect to Djibouti. The US military worries further about China's committed 8,000 troops, as announced by President Xi in 2015, to the UN peacekeeping standby force, which, according to George/Lendon (2018), makes up one-fifth of the 40,000 total troops committed by all countries—among them 2,500 combat-ready Chinese blue helmets active in Africa. The assumption here is that they can be instrumentalized to safeguard China's interests in the continent.

Because of its successes, China has been allowed to be ubiquitously present in various areas of the globe—in the process, exposing its interests to the hazards of the international conflict. The ever-growing and expanding of China's trade interests, investments, and aid dictate that it becomes ready and willing to defend them, wherever undermined. This has led some scholars (Blanchard, Guo, 2008: 30) to express doubt as to how long China could maintain some of its own

foreign policy principles, such as non-interventionism. China will have to be assertive, just alone for deterring purposes, to protect its interests. By becoming assertive, it will awaken the fear of some. The question then becomes how to be assertive while wanting to be conciliatory? Those who doubt that China can manage both an assertive and conciliatory attitude at the same time use the case of Soudan and the crisis in Darfur, which started in 2003. Genocide was being committed in a region where China has oil interests. China's growing ability to purveyor aid could lead toward leveraging, as other donors have done. More recently, the tension in the South China Sea has been pointed to showcase how difficult it is for a rising power not to seek improving existing security deficits it could have done while weak and powerless. Such a rising power may as well see its interest growing and diversifying, which call for an adjusted definition of what considers national interest, and worthy of its military attention. This has proven to be a dilemma for China. Under Xi Jinping, China has deviated from the advice given by Deng Xiao Ping, that of keeping low profile while achieving. With more open, assertive, and defined national ambitious objectives, China has ceased keeping low profile. China openly wants to be second to none both in military might and economic wealth by 2049. Yan Xuetong (2011) suggested that even for a nation unconvertable with the realist discourse, China can be most powerful and still be moral at the same time. He speaks of "moral realism" which consists of basing the realist assertiveness in morality. Such a kind of realism would legitimately be about defense, and the safeguard of the nation's most values but would not use force for selfish national interests. So far, China seems to embrace the Dutch-style hegemonic exercise of global power. The many dangers of an unpredictable world, which makes realism not easily to discard, will compel China to keep a dose of realism in its approach to exerting influence anywhere. Here is where its moral realism would be of help. It could just use its military capabilities for defensive purposes, or benevolence. Even in its own backyard in East Asia, the security issues remain current. There is the issue of North and South Korea. There are dormant tensions with India over the Doklam Plateau and Kashmir. There is the South China Sea issue, and the reality of China's own confining geography, which led to such an assertive move. There is the Taiwan question. There is the US presence in the region since the Cold War. There is resentment with Japan over the atrocities of the Japanese soldiers during the wars, the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. All these issues and open questions will first need to find a workable and peaceful resolution before China can fully be liberalist.

Until then, China's approach has been holistic and syncretic, which led Epp (2013: 30)[2] to write: "China will not flatten easily into the realist shorthand of national interest or the liberal teleology of peace through cultural-commercial convergence." Foot (2006) has cautioned against laying upon China what a structural thinking about the international system often leads to—the expectation of a pre-ordained behavior. There are a number of factors, such a sociological, psychological, cultural, and even the individual experiences of states to account for in their behavior and foreign policy choices. Among such factors, Foot mentions events. Events, she argues, can change perceptions and behavior. And China has had its share of perception-changing events. She urges therefore (2006: 78):

> All these factors favor a more interpretive approach to the matter of Chinese perspectives on global order: an approach that suggest nothing is pre-ordained, that policy choices are being made, and that not everything is determined by systemic structure.

China's approach, indeed, requires a new interpretation. It is not fully comprehended through the straightjacket reading of typical foreign policy pursuit, which tends to have specific goals for specific issues in specific circumstances. China's approach is a wholesale approach, in which all the necessary players, factors, and drivers of foreign policy are directed by the state in a pursuit of national foreign policy goals, and, as such, is more effective in bringing all instruments of statecraft to bear in whichever direction they are called to be utilized. China's foreign policy machinery is overwhelming in that sense. In fact, China through its leader Xi's speech during the 19th Party Congress of China's communism has articulated the following goals. First, he promised to restore China's greatness by 2049, the centenary anniversary of the People's Republic of China. It is nothing but a nationalistic goal aiming to erase the years of humiliation that the century encompassed. It is nothing but a goal designed to help the Chinese reconnect with their sense of grandeur and pride. And, in the quest to regain such a grandeur and pride, China wants to be second to no one, even militarily. President Xi expressed the goal of great rejuvenation, which entails the goal of fully mechanizing the army by 2020, fully modernizing the army by 2035, and making it a

2. Roger Epp's contribution: "Translation and Interpretation: The English School and International Relations Theory in China," in: *System, Society and the World*. Edited by Robert Murray, May 15, 2013. https://www.e-ir.info/2013/05/05/translation-and-interpretation-the-english-school-and-ir-theory-in-china/

world class by 2050. China should be in such a position of claiming hegemonic status after 2050. Before that year, China will still be on the rise. Before that year China will not be ready for the military exigencies of supplying order and stability in the international system. That year also fuels the arguments of those who argue that any imminence of a power transition between the United States and China was exaggerated or premature.

The second goal that was expressed in President Xi's speech during the 19th Party Congress (2017) was that China would take responsibility on global governance. This particular goal is clearly evidence of the leadership role that China will welcome as soon as it believes the time is right. The willingness of China to don the mantle of leadership in matters of global governance became obvious during President Xi's Davos' speech (2017), as mentioned earlier. Beyond promoting globalization, President Xi knows that it implies measures to support multilateral trade, which in turn is only possible if and when international order is secured and other surrounding issues of concern to humanity, such as the environment, are forcefully addressed. Global governance encompasses all of these and much more. China, under the leadership of President Xi, seems more and more at ease with the idea of embodying global leadership. It is, as others have noted, a departure from the more subtle rise, the more discrete navigating of the waters of international affairs, suggested by the late leader Deng Xiao Ping. The challenge is that China will have to seek to accomplish these goals without causing any disruption to its own rise.

The third goal that was articulated in President Xi's speech was to assert leadership in China's own backyard. The backyard, which is Far East Asia, has its number of unresolved issues, dormant issues, and unsettled issues that can erupt at any time—among them: The China Sea issues, Taiwan, the US presence, Japan, the north western border with India, and so on. No one wants that to happen. China wants to make sure of that. But, that task as well comports risks. China hopes that its economic leadership may have enough drive to divert belligerent zeal away from matters of war and focus on those of prosperity. Many in China believe that the world has begun to move from focusing on war to focusing on prosperity.

Prosperity, indeed, seems to be the focus of President Xi's foreign policy objectives. His speech lacked the value, vision, and purpose as components expected from those embodying and exercising a leadership position. But maybe China does not need this dimension, if it chooses to be content with the ideals of liberalism as long as they allow pluralistic expressions of choices. China has signaled and expressed its adhesion to key principles and norms deriving from the liberal value

system, and its main dissenting argument was that such principles and norms ought to be essential to allow the integration of many into the system without encroaching their sense of identity. And China seems to have developed an approach, to achieving such goals, that is nothing short of grand strategic. China currently has, and is executing, a grand strategy, whether it consciously spells it out or not. It is evidenced through the degrees of coordination in the various objectives it pursues. Grand strategies are indeed is evidenced through the following elements: First, a defined national objective that often is a bold therefore complex in its attainment.

Consequently, grand strategy is an encompassing approach. Van Hooft (2017)[3] simply defines grand strategy as one that "establishes how states, or other political units, prioritize and mobilize which military, diplomatic, political, economic, and other sources of power to ensure what they perceive as their interests." It utilizes instruments of power such as diplomacy, formal and public, foreign policy, economic and financial incentives, countries resources, political will, national mobilization, a narrative, and so on. This effort requires coordination. And if such coordination requires the mobilization of various state's resources for the attainment of a national objective, then the process justifies the descriptive of grand strategy (Corbett, 1988). It is then grand, as in "major" objective to be distinguished from a "minor" objective, which is what foreign policy is about.

Following is how China's approach and operationalization effort to reaching its goals amount to a grand strategy. First, China seeks to converge world commerce toward, and from its own nation. Already, as stated, the premier trading partners to seventy-one nations, it has efforts underway to increase that number. To that effect, the following efforts are underway: infrastructure building, aggressive investment in both foreign direct investments, and in construction. These activities go hand and hand, which implies coordination on China's part. With respect to infrastructure building, investing in construction is the consequence. It occurs where China builds roads, sea routes, ports, airports and railroads, linking Shenzhen, China, to Duisburg, Germany; Venice, Italy; South Asia; Central Asia; the Middle East; Eastern Europe; and the eastern coast of Africa. This infrastructure building is conceptualized in the Belt and Road Initiative. In 2017, China expressed the intent to expand the Belt and Road Initiative into Latin America. China now has secured presence, access, ownership or leasing in all the six choke

3. Van Hooft: *Grand Strategy*. Oxford Bibliography, 2017 https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0218.xml

points of international commerce, namely: Strait of Malacca, Suez Canal, the Strait of Bab el Mandeb, Turkish Strait, Strait of Hormuz, and Panama Canal. Beyond these choke points, China has secured presence in what is called the string of pearls, namely Sudan, Djibouti, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia and Hong Kong. China's presence in these strategic locations can be used for more than just trade. They can be used to secure China's interests from the Middle East and the Mediterranean to the India Ocean to the South China Sea. Focus on infrastructure building has allowed Chinese companies to occupy seven spots in the group of the ten largest construction companies in the world.

Second, China has targeted attracting foreign direct investment since integrating the World Trade Organization. Using its comparative advantage of cheap labor and low production cost, benefiting from the liberalization of trade and freedom of capital and investment. Through this venue, China, like other East Asian nations in the 1980s, has taken advantage of the expertise and know-how of Western investment to learn and to acquire technology. As time went by, Chinese has developed its own manufacturing industry, and lately, there have been many complaints about how China privileges such companies to the detriment of foreign ones, and even complaints of shielding its inner market.

On the other side of foreign direct investment into its territory, once loaded with cash from its trade surplus, since mid-2005 China has gone out to invest, buying assets and companies around the world. In 2017, Chinese companies that had outbound FDI of just 4% of all FDI globally have exceeded 10% since 2009 and reached 17% in 2016 (McCaffrey, December 16, 2017). Since 2017, Chinese FDI assets holdings are second only to the US. Total Chinese investment has risen to 1941.53 billion in 2018. This development is evidenced by the rise of Chinese companies among the most significant on Forbes' 500 global companies list. While one could find only 30 Chinese companies on the list in 2007, the number increased to 109 in 2016. While investing, China targets advanced industrialized economies of its foreign direct investments, and the developing nations for its investment in construction and infrastructure building.

With respect to foreign direct investment, it is concentrated in high-income nations, essentially North America and Europe, receiving 65.6% of Chinese investment between 2005 and 2017.[4] Chinese FDI in Europe has increased from 1.6 billion Euros ($2 billion) in 2010 to 35 billion Euros ($44. Billion) in 2016

4. From: Heritage Foundation's China Global Investment Tracker.

(European Think Tank Network on China). In Europe, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy have been the preferred targets for the obvious reason. They are the hub of some of the most advanced European technologies. China's investment includes infrastructure building in all nations signatories of the Belt and Road Initiative; it includes utilities, transportation, industrial machinery, and equipment, on top of natural resources it still pursues for its developing manufacturing.

Naturally, this development has justified the need for a debate around the question of China's acquisition of top-notch European technology. They worry about the many potential consequences from the loss of technological edge and absolute comparative advantage vis-à-vis China, and its negative economic effects. These worries have led the European Union to envisage investment-screening measures. The idea itself has run into some difficulties dues to its intent to restrict investments, but also due to the various interests and various degrees of worries that the debate poses among the many members within. While Eastern members are less sensitive to the issues, those in the West, Germany for instance, seek necessary protective measures. The European Union has not been the only Western source of Chinese investment fears. The United States has its own plethora of issues with China, which has led to a raised tariff against China by the Trump administration.

In general, however, the West's complaints against China are grounded in a few areas. The West argues that the Chinese government supports Chinese FDI. If the issue is that of subsidies, China has been accused of supporting its high tech companies with tax rebates, cheap funding, and a steady flow of financing. If not reported to the WTO, it constitutes a violation. China, however, sees itself in its right to practice interventionism, unlike the West that has preferred laissez-faire. The West argues further that China seeks foreign markets while shielding its own from foreign entry. China is further more protective of its market in industry sectors where it has become competitive. It allows, however, foreign entry in those industries in which it has yet to acquire the technology. Once such technology is acquired, China will mount a fear campaign against this competition. There have been cases in which pressure has been exerted to foreign companies to disclose, relinquish, or facilitate transfer of the needed technology. Like many East Asian nations, China requires foreign investors to partner with locals, and this has been a venue through which technology transfer has taken place. Pressures can be exerted by third parties to avoid leaving trails of evidence that can be used against China in WTO (The Editors, Bloomberg, April 24/2018). The same editors write: "In sectors such as telecommunications and aviation, companies are

directed to sources 70 percent of their core components domestically by 2025." China has been promoting the goal of being a full manufacturing nation by 2025 with the slogan "Made in China 2025." Cases of cyber theft have been used to argue against Chinese aggressive methods to acquire the needed technology, often with high commercial and military value. The consequence of this was that China has been accused of stealing intellectual property, a charge which President Xi has recently indirectly admitted to, by stating the need for China to do better in that regard. China has been accused of using undue methods. It has also been accused of bending the rules of free trade.

The worry is legitimate. And the argument utilized against China was that it can rise and prosper while letting others prosper along, as the distributive process of free market makes it possible. The worry about China's practices reveals the West's fear of eventually losing their technological edge, which they have had since the modern era. Old apprehensions about China as a communist nation, and the uncertainty of its overall intent while not sharing the familiar Western historical values, norms, and identity is as well a factor at some level. The worry is not just about economics. Indeed, the intent here is that China aims "at replacing Western companies that dominate the high-end side of the global production chain" (Stevens, 2018). China has already achieved leading status in some sectors of advanced technology such as alternative energy sources, electro-mobility, solar cells, cell phones, microchips, displays, and registering the most patents. China is moving from being an imitator to becoming an innovator of advanced technology.

With respect to construction, China believes that all economic development passes through infrastructure building. It has applied this mantra and is now exporting it elsewhere. The Belt and Road Imitative, announced in 2013, has been the manifestation of this vision. China is almost building the world, given its ubiquitous presence in construction sites around the world, primarily, in the developing nations. The obvious reason here is that the developing world needs infrastructure, which no other foreign investments have financed. But China is a believer in infrastructure. It has demonstrably argued that no development was possible without it. Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with concentrated Chinese investment ($119.7 billion), North America ($106.9 billion), East Asia ($98), West Asia ($84.9 billion), Europe ($82.5), South America ($77), Arab World ($60.2), Australia ($59.2 billion). China builds bridges, roads, railways at over 200 sites around the world, 41 pipelines, 199 power plants (nuclear, natural gas, coal, and renewables). China finances 112 countries around the world (*New York Times*, November 18, 2018). China's view of promotion of growth through

infrastructure building has the willing adhesion and participation of countries that together will soon contribute 80% of the world GDP growth and make up more than 60% of the world population (Oxford Economics, 2017). While the United States is peripherally aware of it, Europe is more accepting.

In the end, China's investments cover from the high-end technology sector in Western and Northern Europe to infrastructure in Southern and Eastern Europe. It includes a strategic partnership with Russia and Pakistan and investment in Central Asia to market entry in Africa through a mixture of infrastructure building, investments for its own industry, and development. It tightens ties with the developing world through the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean Nations (CELAC). Many of these trade, investment, and aid partnerships are increasingly integrated into expanding the Silk and Road Initiative and are increasingly tied together with a Chinese financing and investing institutions. The United States, which for now is linked to China through its market, is linked to China's economic fate through its debt to China.

Third, development aid or economic assistance as an instrument of statecraft conceived ideally to assist developing nations has been in many ways and many cases used for additional purposes. It has been instrumentalized as a leverage by many purveyors or donors. It comes with conditions to recipient nations that are designed to service interests beyond assisting them. Such interests are, for instance, foreign policy goals of donor nations. Such goals are, for instance, demands formulated to recipient nations to open their resources for foreign exploitation. Such demands have been also pressures exerted on them to govern their nations to the liking of the donor nations. Briefly stated, development aid or economic assistance naturally, morally, legally, and politically gives to the purveyor state an ascendant. This ascendency can be utilized. As China implemented its economic reforms in the late 1980s, it adjusted its economic assistance policy away from helping developing nations to fight imperialism and capitalism to demanding that they trade to benefit both China's economy and their own. The shift toward trade was the consequence of the need for China to access natural resources for its nascent, and later to find entry opportunity into the market of developing nations and compete. China's economy continued to grow; and soon, in the early 2000s, it solidified its status as purveyor of economic assistance. Today, China is an established source of economic assistance, as stated to many nations around the globe. With the status, China developed a policy that merged its need for market entry, access to natural resources and infrastructure building and other venues of assistance, such as soft power venues, together. It called this approach a "package approach," which it claimed was designed for a win–win outcome.

The model does not start with negotiation about loans, and conditionalities and all kinds of prescriptive injunctions form the donors as the Western model proceeds, but rather with accepting the Chinese holistic approach, whose financing is guaranteed by China as loans or grants, and expects return in the form of exploited natural resources. This model, however, did not erase the ascendency, which translates into leverage or influence, that the purveyor of financing has vis-à-vis the recipient. China now had such leverage and influence. It could use it for political purposes if it so chose. Indeed, there are those who believed it has. US Navy Secretary Richard Spencer[5] spoke of China's willingness to "weaponize capital," while testifying before the US House Appropriation Committee, with respect to Djibouti and the likelihood of China using its economic influence to secure military bases and ports. Recent cases of weaponizing its capital are Sri Lanka, Greece, and an attempt in Tanzania to use such leverage to buy, lease, acquire part-ownership of strategic ports or choke points, have shown that this leverage has a way of coming due, when the purveyor nations, regardless of who they are so decided. Indeed, the Belt and Road Initiative offers plenty of opportunities for China to capitalize on its status as purveyor of economic assistance. Because China's economic assistance package bring together financing (investments: foreign direct investment and construction), loans and grants, use of its manufacturing sector, and diplomacy, its model supports China's national objectives. This is how China's economic assistance to the developing world contributes to its grand strategy. The growing importance of economic assistance in the scope and scale of its grands strategy has led to the upgrade of the agency in charge in order to meet the demand and to reflect its status as a donor. China has created a State Development Cooperation Agency in March 2018, with the design of coordinating its growing budget for foreign aid. It is "an institution with the specific mission to control and distribute funds for its international aid programs," Legarda (2018) writes.[6] The most important and established great powers have their state development cooperation agencies. It is a way of stating their status as wealthy, arrived states. It is a way of creating venues of relations with the many dependent and recipient states. It is a way to promote China's own industries, facilitating their implantations in these states in order to access their resources. It is, finally, a way to ensue, structurally, the rapport de force between donor and recipient. In this

5. Quoted by Steve George and Brad Lendon, in his article "Weaponizing Capital: US worries over China's expanding role in Africa," CNN, 3/14/2018.
6. Helena Legarda: "China Upgrades Diplomacy While the US Pulls Back." *The Diplomat*, March 20, 2018.

rapport, as the saying goes, the hand that gives is above the hand that receives. This means, in the context of realpolitik, donor states do not hesitate to use their status in this rapport de force to influence a number of outcomes in their favor, should they have to deal with the recipient state.

Fourth, China has expressed its intent to compete and to become a leading nation in the fields of telecommunication technology (processing network and data gathering capabilities) and digital technology. The consequence has been a buying spree of companies or shares of companies with high technological know-how, which have been anything from robotic, artificial intelligence, semi-conductors, bio-medicine, and autonomous vehicles to augmented reality, sensors, chips, aerospace, and informational technology. Because many such companies are located in the West, and because much of China's technology can be diverted to servicing the need of the military, and because some of these companies represent a technological edge, the alarm has been raised in Europe and the US.

The worry is not unfounded. China has now used advanced aerospace technology to develop an air-to-air missile, the PL-15, and in the process becoming competition in the sky, which used to be the sole domain of the Unite States. PL-15 has the ability of hitting even the most agile fighting jet because it is equipped with electronically scanned array radar. It has a greater range than the European equivalent, Meteor, or the US long-range air-to-air missile of 100 miles. And the PL-15 is not the only air-to-air weapon. The other one is the PL-XX, which can strike slow-moving airborne warning and control systems from as far as 300 miles. China has as well a new PL-10 missile, comparable to any other "fire-and-forget" weapon, the kind that ensures a mutual kill (Champion, 2018). China's trade surpluses and investments have allowed for the ability to fund research. The same ability to fund research has allowed the United States to achieve its technological superiority. The issue is, therefore, also that of the narrowing technological gap. China has yet to reach the levels of technological advancement that the US enjoys, but the process is underway. It is part of China's grand strategy. Russia was not able to keep up with the sustained pace of funding weapons systems because of the economical toll it can cause, but what Russia was not able to do, China might. In 2017, Russia spent just $66.3 billion on defense, while China spent $228 billion, a 3-to-1 budget allocation ratio (SIPRI).

Fifth, such telecommunication technology, as stated, has repercussions in another field, namely the military. Here as well, China has a declared objective of becoming second to none by the 2050. It has embarked on an aggressive modernization and buildup of its military. China can use its space technology for both military and civilian uses. The first Chinese *taikonaut* (astronaut) was launched

into space in 2003, and China has successfully conducted an anti-satellite weapon test. It has sixty to seventy intercontinental missiles with nuclear weapon delivery capability and an estimated 240 to 400 warheads (Lanteigne, 2016). Since 2016, China has become the owner of aircraft careers, the ultimate status symbol of blue water navy in the world of military capabilities. China continues to reach new milestones. The latest advancement is China's fifth generation J-20 stealth fighter jets[7] with a capacity for long distance. China has developed air-to-air missiles, the PL-15, and the PL-XX, as well as the PL-10, which are, respectively, the best performing to date and equipped with an electronically scanned array radar, making difficult for agile jet fighters to escape. These missiles are capable of striking slow-moving airborne warning and control systems. Then, the Chinese military also has fire-and forget missiles. Together, these weapons have propelled China into the ranks of sky competition, comparable to the US. And China continues to develop and collaborate with others, like Russia, to develop or buy weapon systems, like the S-400 air-defense system. China is improving its military capability in dramatic fashion, as demonstrated through steadily increasing defense spending. With respect to the navy, an important aspect of its military, for reasons, evoked earlier China has built in four years, a fleet to surpass that of France. In four years, China has launched more warships and submarines, support ships and major amphibious vessels than the entire number of ships bow serving in the United Kingdom (International Institutes for Strategic Studies, London, 2019).

Sixth, China continues to explore the planet (different continents, the Arctic, and the North Pole) and the outer space (the dark side of the moon) for strategic natural resources, both mineral and non-mineral. The access to these resources can then allow China to secure its premier position as a trading nation and world's largest economy, access to strategic resources and position itself favorably at the top of world powers in the near future.

In the end, the sum of the scale and scope of China's grand strategy is its ubiquitous economic interests. In East Asia, China has a natural presence. Its influence has spread beyond its immediate geographic environment to reach South East Asia, Central Asia, Western Asia, East Europe, and the European Union. In Africa, China's outward pursuit of economic opportunities has been showcasing this new era for China's new era. The many visits of the Chinese President Hu Jintao, as well as the many visits of Chinese high-ranking officials, has been unprecedented

7. It is a twin-engine stealth fighter with wing stability appendages, advanced electronic, and with three internal bays for air-to-air missiles and bombs.

for a reason. No African country seemed too small for the Chinese president. Africa is a low-barrier entry market. Africa needed investment and aid. Africa has numerous important raw materials, which suits China's own growing economy and nascent industry. China designed a mechanism of trading, investing, and adding Africa in ways that have been too spectacular not to notice. Since the 2000s, there is no region where China has not been making or expanding its footprint through the same mechanism of packaging trade interests with investment interests and economic aid. To date, numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed; and supporting institutions have been created, including institutions such as banking, financing, investing, grant disbursement, and loans.

China's grand strategy is essentially a liberalist grand strategy. But, it is a liberalist grand strategy with realist implications. Indeed, there are to elements linking a liberalist with realist strategy. Those elements are economic growth and technology. Economic growth is the goal of a liberalist strategy. It produces wealth, which can be utilized to acquire, develop, or improve technology. Technology, research, and financing go hand in hand. Combined, technology and economic growth produce power. Indeed, technology and economic growth are both factors of power. They are sides of the same coin. Technology and economic growth have respectively dual uses. Technology serves the purpose of inventions, which, however, can be utilized for strategic needs. And economic growth serves primarily the material economic needs but it yields resources that serve national purposes beyond economics. China's ultimate national objective expressed by Xi Jinping, namely to become "second to none" by 2050, simply implies a China that will have made great strides in both the fields of economics and technology. China has an ambitious national objective. Ambitious national objectives require grand strategies. Grand strategy, and here reflected by China, takes the notion of strategy fully outside the realm of the military, simply because the object in view here is not a battlefield victory.

States' national interests or objectives are thought, neither primarily, nor solely in military terms. The battlefields of today have multiple theaters, both physical and non-physical. In non-physical theaters, the cyber space, for instance, must not involve military commanders. It involves policy makers and other kinds of actors. Placing grand strategy into the hands of statecraft is predicated on the ability of policy makers and political leaders to do more than military commanders can. It subsumes any military campaigns. The benefice is to avoid battlefield victories that do not produce enduring peace; or produce meaningless victories, as demonstrated in the case of Napoleon in Russia. Despite separating the realm of politics from that of the military, one cannot escape the analogy between battlefield and

statecraft, or between military commanders and political leaders. Both battlefields and statecraft are fields of actions; and both military commanders and political leaders must make the most of the available resources to achieve the desired outcome, using their abilities. They must demonstrate the abilities of being both tactical and strategic, which leads us to Archilochus' (7th century BC) metaphor of hedgehogs and foxes as reported by Isaiah Berlin (1953) and recently, in this context, by Gaddis (2018). Grand strategy requires both tactical and strategic skills.

Chinese grand strategy is primarily liberalist because its military ambition is woven into an ambition of prosperous grandeur and not a Napoleonic desire of dominance. In a sense, military capabilities are a corollary of China's ultimately goal but not the intent. Military capabilities belong to a powerful state but are not the justification of its power. Military capabilities are a moral requirement in the defensive sense. China's grand strategy therefore does not present the features of a realist power whose preoccupation is acquisition of military power supremacy, and only uses the power of its economy to that end. On the other hand, China has embarked on a soft power, intense official and public diplomacy, soft power generosity, and investment, finance, and trade cooperation and multilateralism that makes its liberalist project the main goal and its military capability as it support, not the other way around. China's grand strategy is liberalist as it promotes trade, foreign investment, for the generation of income at home and abroad to which goals domestic policy is aligned. One needs to take a look at the US secretary of state foreign visits and find out how much of their agenda content revolves around matters of strategy concern and interest as opposed to those dealing with keeping the world the way the United States likes. This is the perspective of coercion, threat of use of force, military deployments, and so on. But just as it is not justified to place China entirely in the category of revisionist or status quo power straitjacket, it is as well reductionist to fit China in a liberalist versus realist straitjacket.

In addition, a liberalist agenda embraces change. Trade is indeed dynamic, and that which is dynamic changes. Trade breathes through innovation. Trade forces adjustments. Trade induces new interests, which calls for new alliances. China is eager to produce change, which is a mark of a literalist. A realist, on the other hand, is comfortable with the status quo. It implies stability, equated with security. The more secured the less enthusiastic they are of change, which brings uncertainty, which in turn breeds insecurity. Change naturally disturbs the balance of power, because it affects the distribution of it. Those who enjoy the favorable balance, and even those who are not, but nevertheless worry about the uncertainty that changes bring, and have made peace with the status quo, are realists,

for better or worse. While change is primarily seen as bearer of opportunity for the liberalist, it is primarily seen as one of challenges and potentially destabilizing. And ultimately, while trade is dynamic, power is stationary. The consequence is that the realist perspective explains why states do not always react to change, in time and adequately as they should. History is full of illustrating examples.

China wants to lead the world into a liberalist prosperity without being an entirely liberalist itself. It will be one liberalist power lacking full legitimacy as long as it remains politically Marxist-communist. Its liberalist advocacy will only satisfy the free trade component of a philosophic approach whose idea of freedom is compressive and goes beyond the economical. China will lack key other elements, namely the democratic ideal, political freedom, and individual's rights. To this deficit, China so far pushes back, arguing that the sense of duty to community should prevail over the requirement of individual rights. Attracted by the successes of economic liberalism, it has no history of political liberalism but does fear its centrifugal effect from central power. Drawing from its experiences of the past with the many, not less than fifteen, civil wars, it has leaned toward privileging the options that favor strong government, a feature that has served it well. In the chapter about the English School, we articulate how China envisions existing in a liberalist world while not being liberalist itself.

8

China's Rise in the Prism of Constructivism

State actors are constrained because they are not alone; they must interact and induce world-affecting dynamics, taking into account the expectation of others or how they are affected by their own actions. State actors have as well attributes and roles, which present their roles in a social context. The costal context here is the international society. Hence, they have produced templates of behavior and, consequently, expectations of state choices.

Naturally, the case of China has ignited political interest in finding out how and where China is using their template, or assumptions, as a reference. Our perspective slightly differs in the sense that we observe China's behavior first. Then we seek to find out how such behavior reflects, deviates, or contradicts what these theories have assumed. This perspective, as stated earlier, is borne out of the observation that China takes liberties in its choices of policy and behavior as an actor, based on its identity but not based on the assumptions of international relations theory, in whose epistemic analysis China does not squarely fit. The notion of identity, central to constructivism, is of significance because it enables others to make inferences about the interests and behavioral choice of one.[1] China's

1. The "one" here is the state, as an actor; although it can as well be understood as individual actors, such as political authorities, officials, presidents, party leaders, and

pragmatism does not always allow such a deductive inference on its behavior based on its identity.

In the previous cases of realism and liberalism, it became clear how China's choices and behavior was evading, in many instances, established reasoning in the international relations theory. Here, we set off to examining China's choices and behavior to see whether they reflect, deviate, or repudiate the assumptions of constructivism. We anticipatively assume that there will be a larger convergence between China's choices and behavior and constructivism simply because China's identity, as a state, seems to be grounded in the mindset of constructivism. We anticipate that convergence simply because constructivism sees the international system as a society of states in which individual states have an identity. This society of states implies a culture in which interactions ensue and therefore norms are produced, and the socialization of members is practiced. These processes help shape the behaviors and establish the roles and mutual expectations of actors. These processes ultimately shape the identity of states. The respective interests of states are pursued in this context. And the decisions taken in this context involve more than just human cognition, but also emotion. Hence, international decision-making is not only sociological, but it is as well psychological. It explains a different reaction for the same act taken by an ally or taken by a foe in the international system.

Because such processes are dynamic, the identity of states as well is dynamic. China has proven this assertion to be true through the changing of its identity as a state in the last forty years. This chapter examines further how China's choices and behaviors fare with respect to constructivism. The interest lies in the need to gain proper appreciation of China's choices and behaviors as an increasingly important actor in the international society of states.

As a theoretical approach in international relations, the material character of the international structure, unlike realism and liberalism, does not bind Constructivism. The structure of international relations is anarchical for realism, and therefore dictates the necessity of acquiring material capabilities to avoid being the "sucker" of human nature. Liberalism necessitates the same structure of self-help measures to overcome the limitations of anarchy through the creation of institutional infrastructure to foster material prosperity. Constructivism, on the other hand, using the definition of Adler (1997: 322), "is the view that the

diplomats, whose individual identities often influence their policy choices, preference, and behavior.

manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human actions, and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretation of the material world." For realism and liberalism, while international politics is shaped by rational choice behavior and decision in the pursuit of material interests, constructivism is ideational and stresses the social and inter-subjective origin of the material world and the world of international politics and, therefore, is interpretive of it.

Compared to realism and liberalism, constructivism is certainly closer to liberalism than it is to realism. Liberalism sees the world as made of rivals, not enemies, and constructivism, which sees the international system as a society of states, implies the same mechanism that a functional society requires, reflected in the society of states. Indeed, like in society, the society of states forms individual identity of actors through a process that establishes norms, roles, and expectations, and, therefore, it regulates behavior. This behavior is expected to be friendly rather than antagonistic because other actors in the system are not enemies but rivals. And a rival is not an enemy (Wendt, 1999), making liberalism closer to constructivism.

Let us therefore continue the comparison with realism and constructivism before invoking China. Realists argue from the perspective of human nature and from the structural perspective of international relations, which they see as objective realties. Arguing from a structural perspective always gives the argument a certain sense of comfort and definitiveness. This sense is grounded in the fact that structure, once defined, is stable and one can determine its elements and the nature of their relationships. One can also establish the process and procedures in which such relations unfold and thereby define the functional dynamics of the whole system structure. One can then observe and rejoice in how such a dynamic predictably unfolds. From this comfortable vintage point, realists read what happens in the international realm. Constructivism is as well structural as it acknowledges the state system and the state as the unit of analysis. But it does not see that structure as etched in an objective material reality. Nor does it see the state itself as a "constant object" or a "fixed" phenomenon.

States are facts created and not facts in and by themselves. Their essential features, such as sovereignty, nationality, interests, and pursuits of power, are not inherent but constructed. The state is not naturally sovereign, nor is sovereignty naturally linked to statehood. The same logic can apply to state interests that are defined through policy, or any other feature tied quasi-naturally to the state. Constructivism points to the lack of naturality of the state and claims the international system of states lacks the ontological properties that realism ascribes to it.

It is rather a product of an inter-subjective idea, and that changes everything. Indeed, it changes the perception of the international structure, which is now seen as social product. It then becomes malleable. It changes as well the perspective from which states operate. States that happen to be actors in the international system find themselves subject to the same mechanisms of social processes responsible for generating norms, producing identity, distributing roles, regulating behavior, and even shaping interests. If the nature of the international system is sociological and cultural, it ought to be examined through the lens of interpretative analysis rather than positivist, because not everything is verifiable, and rather than rationalist, because deductive logic of the natural science does not, across the board, apply, and rather than materialist, because human beings and states have intentions and values. The international realm is a product of culture, and as such it is malleable. It can change. The actors within the system, whose roles, interests, behaviors, and identities are established in such cultures, also can change.

Structural changes occur in various ways. They can be incremental, evolutionary, or revolutionary—each of which command a different pace. These changes occur because history constantly produces driving forces (new ways of trading, new ideas, new technologies, new consciousness, etc.) which characterize different epochs, and that induces process and procedural shifts in the functioning of structures and their institutions. New driving forces can cause the dismantlement of old structures and the emergence of new ones. It was not long ago that states did not exist. It was not long ago that a discussion was under way on whether the system of states was going to survive the changes induced by the forces of globalization. The forces of globalization have yet to produce such a structural demise. But can anyone definitively predict that it will never happen again, either with a progressing process of globalization or any other future paradigm?

It is a historical fact that the international system structure has changed since its Westphalian beginnings in 1648. These changes have not yet dismantled the international system of states, but they have undoubtedly produced qualitative changes. We have moved away from constant fighting, which Wendt calls the Hobbesian culture (1999), towards a system of states more focused on trading with one another. The pursuit of prosperity through trade implies recognition of the other. This is what Wendt calls the Lockean culture. There is no reason to believe that the same qualitative improvements and changes in the international system of states or—from a constructivist perspective—a society of states will not continue to improve, as the growing interdependence brought about by the process of globalization leads us to believe, which would be what Wendt calls the Kantian culture.

This changing nature of the international system structure, induced by human history and presided over by humans in society, constitutes the premise of constructivism. The international system structure is the product of human history. Human history has authority over the international system. The international system is not a natural object, independent from human consciousness. In fact, as Kant (Jackson/Sorensen, 2016) argues, every bit of knowledge we detain about the world can only be subjective because it is filtered through human consciousness. The international system does not have laws of nature to function by. Because of the role of the inter-subjective human consciousness to produce, shape, and interpret the social world, constructivism sees the world as primarily constituted by ideas, not material forces. Everything in the international system is a product of ideas. Indeed, the structure and institutions of the international system is a product of ideas. Ideas produced the culture of the international system in which the roles of individual actors emerge, their interests and identities are constituted, and ultimately their behaviors are regulated.

The world of international relations is primarily ideational rather than material. Here is where Onuf's (1989) distinction between the social and the material reality is worth mentioning. Ideas can produce a social reality that is different from an objective reality. But they both occur in an objective material world, and therefore they contaminate each other. They contaminate each other to the point of rendering facts a bit complicated. Socially constructed reality may gain the force of fact while not being fact. Even the world of science is full of facts that will soon no longer be facts once deconstructed through new insight. Does the word "red" inherently tell us or entail the reality of the color we call red? Does the word "hot" inherently mean high temperature? Yet, we take hot showers as a fact inherent to the reality of high temperature water. Consequently, a lot of what we consider facts in the international system is what we have produced as such but not what can inherently display as an objective existence. In the same vein, the notion of anarchy has come to mean disorder and impending war by the realist school of thought, but constructivists, through the words of Wendt (1999), argue that the word alone does not induce that fact (war), as he stated that anarchy was what states made of it. The idea that states feed into the notions that produce wars, while not the notion itself.

Indeed, the absence of government does not inherently and apodictically produce war; just as parents leaving siblings alone at home does not mean that they will necessarily fight. If they fight, it will be of their choosing. It will be the result of how they want to use that time during which they are left alone. States can use anarchy for war, or for peace. The success of realism lies in the materiality of

fear—such as the lack of military protection in case of open conflicts and war. But anarchy itself does not ignite or trigger conflicts or wars. The state of anarchy feeds the fear, but only for those allowing themselves to fear it. States can indeed choose to either cultivate that fear or render it less threatening. But for those choosing to fear it, like the realists, it becomes a constructed reality.

The realists confer to the state of anarchy the force of objective fact. It then induces the necessity of defensive or offensive arming as a given. But the state of anarchy exists because the international system of states exists. It did not exist prior and will not exist after the system of states. This means that the state of anarchy is the consequence of a constructed reality of the system of states, and therefore cannot naturally, by itself, produce conflicts or wars. It makes wars possible but not apodictic. While realism links human nature to the state of anarchy to reach its conclusion about the impending wars, constructivism argues that, in the constructed world of international society of states, there is a host of reasons why states do not engage into wars, despite anarchy. States, as agents, use their capacity to determine their behavior. And constructivism therefore gives precedence to the agents in the structuring of the international system of societies, which they give precedence over the constraints of the structure itself. But, ultimately, constructivism wants to establish the distinction between objective fact, which is only found in the natural world, and constructed fact, which are material and ideational. The state and the international system, and everything we associate with them, are constructed ideas. Constructivism wants us to remain mindful in the implications of each fact.

So, like in the case of hot water becoming naturally equated with high temperature water, international wars become associated to the state of anarchy. As an objective fact, water still exists as an objective reality, independent of whether we call high temperature "hot." Wars and conflicts still exist as material objective reality in society, independent from the state of anarchy. Constructivism argues that it is about the ideas behind these facts that shape their materiality, which means how we see them, evaluate them, and appreciate their manifestations.

And so, constructivism argues from an ideational perspective without being idealist, and it dissociates itself from the material perceptive without denying the existence and relevance of the material world. While realism assumes a material view of the world, constructivism assumes an ideational view of the world. In other words, ideas give meaning to the material reality. Ideas precede facts. From that perspective, for example, the United States and the Soviet Union were enemies not because of an objective reason, but because of an ideational reason (Sorenson/Jackson, 2016). The Cold War consequently was not materially objective, but

ideationally induced. This means that conflict and cooperation are the result of ideational convergence and divergence. This led Bukovansky (2002) to argue that normative dissonance stands to produce conflicts. It is only after the ideational dimension has produced meaning to the material reality that calculations of rationalist and positivist nature come into play to explain, navigate, and negotiate.

Because it is constructed, the international system structure is subject to interpretations. Such interpretations have been purely rationalist, materialist, and positivist. Realism and liberalism are manifestations of materialist, positivist, and rationalist interpretations. They constitute the bedrock of the epistemological culture of the West, which reflects its political history since the Peloponnesian Wars until today, while inspiring scholarship from Thucydides and Machiavelli to Hobbes. And, in the end, it feeds its policy choices, foreign policy attitudes, and behaviors to reproduce, validate, and entrench the view according to realist, materialist, rationalist, and positivist interpretations of the world. But as such they are ill-equipped to account for subjective, emotional, cultural, psychological, and identity-driven approaches, which as well are needed in interpreting the world and the behavior of actors within.

The limitations of rationalists, positivists, rationalist, and materialist interpretations account for the rise of post-positivist theories, from constructivism to post-structuralism and post-modernism. They are critical of positivism, which seems to confine the human experience in an objective box. The same positivist, rationalist, materialist, and rationalist interpretations of the international world have become targets of new critiques from the emerging scholarship from China. Although it may be premature to assume and present a Chinese approach to international relations, there have been attempts to formulate a Chinese take on the international world. The Chinese take, like we already have an American international relation theory, and even the English School, should articulate how the international world functions, or how it should function, rooted in its own epistemic culture and history the same way dominant theories of international relations are rooted in the historical and epistemic culture of the West. It must not be totally new, and it should entail new interpretations of the international society of states to structure, and the roles and behaviors of actors within it. The world could use new interpretations, either from China or from somewhere else, as the dynamic processes of world's history is inducing changes that compel new interpretations of world structure and the role and behavior of its actors. For the realists, the structural argument of the international system is made of independent states and sees no reason to reinvent the wheel, as long as states remain structured as they are. For the constructivist, such changes always carry the potential of

altering the functionality of structure, which means altering rules and conditions that guide the behavior of actors. And altering the identity, and therefore the interests, roles, and behaviors of actors.

The notion of change sets constructivism in a different perspective than realism. Structural change is as well recognized by realists, but they consider change when it interferes with the distribution of capabilities to produce a new hierarchy of powers and status, which is the case of power transition theory, because it is through such change that security and stability can be affected. This latter concern is their only reason of interest in change. What realism has in mind when it speaks of the structure of the international system is exactly whether such a system presents a unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar structure. But even change in the international system structure as narrowly understood by realism affects the interests, the behaviors, the roles and the identities of states. As states change statuses, they require adjustments in behavior. This puts them in a position to play different roles and allows them to develop new interests. The same process that creates such changes also induces the possibility of a change in state identity. All these changes have been happening in China as part of a larger historical process. And history, therefore, is nothing but a construction site in which states as actors can reinvent their identities.

China's identity has been changing throughout its history, more so in its recent history. But of which Chinese identity we speak of? We speak of the national identity, which Wendt divides in four distinct categories. Wendt sees a corporate identity, which is the historical, traditional identity of a people and entrench in their ethos and which endures the change and circumstances of time. He distinguishes it from type identity or regime identity, which we call here political identity; and he finally identifies a role identity, which we understand to be someone's place in society in relation to others; and collective identity, which Wendt understands to be the shared identity. As interesting and relevant as these categories are, we focus on the one that is the most relevant to the international system: the national identity. Wendt (1999: 224) defines the national identity as "a property of international actors that generates motivational and behavioral disposition."

National identity is relevant because it underlies foreign policy choices. It explains the hierarchy of importance for choices made by a state. It justifies its interests. It inspires behavior and interaction with others. It is relevant because it changes as all these dependent factors must change. And this is exactly what has happened to China. Because China's choices and behaviors change while influencing the world, the world is affected by its changes. This is why changes in

behavior among the system's actors may produce process changes in the system and sometimes procedural changes to the system.

China underwent such a national identity transformation since its economic reform in 1978. The occurrence of this national identity change and the deliberate choices made by China, as a state taking liberties, therefore, points to pragmatism while negotiating its behavior, role, interests, and identity in the international system. In that sense, China has been fully in a constructivist mode. The Chinese state has made choices and engaged in behavior that take liberties that led us to anticipate a Chinese convergence toward the constructivist prescriptive of international politics. In other words, China empowers itself as an agent to shape its role in the system, and by so doing, it intends to shape the system structure. While understanding that its choices and behaviors ensue in an international system that has a structure, China embraces the views that such a system is malleable because its norms, values, institutions, etc., are in that system. Furthermore, China embraces the view that the intents, interests, and identities of the actors can change, and, therefore, China focuses on pragmatic choices and flexible behaviors.

China is constructivist because it believes in change both at the unit (agential) and structural levels. At the unit level, it believes in the capacity of the agent to change itself. It believes in the capacity and necessity of the state and society to change if and when need be. The state can change itself, its identity, and its interests to induce new behaviors as change dictates. Everything in the social world is subject to change, and everything in it is cultural. Culture changes because of the new consciousness, new ideas, new knowledge, new values, and new beliefs. Nothing is fixedly objective. Nothing is intrinsically constant, even though cultural changes may occur incrementally. It is a Confucian attitude, which has been seen in the recent history of China.

At the structural level, China is constructivist because the changes that occur at the agential or unit level are transferred onto the structural level. As the agent's identity changes, it induces a change in interest, and therefore in its behavior, which in turn affect its rapport and relations with others in the system. They affect the system processes and, consequently, the system structure. It is a process involving interplay between structure and agency to the point, as Wendt argues, that they cannot be separated. They are dependent on each other. Concretely, the recent change of identity in China, as well as the changes in interests and behaviors that it induced, has undoubtedly altered the landscape of its relational flows around the globe. They have affected the pace and the intensity of exchanges. They have induced the creation of new institutions and organizations to accommodate and support them. They have as well allowed the emergence of new alliances.

All these process changes transform the structure as they necessitate adjustments of norms because old ones lose their validity and induce new behaviors. These adjustments compel new regulatory mechanisms and induce structural change. Wendt (1999: 336) writes: "Structural change occurs when the relative expected utility of normative versus deviant behavior changes."

To complete our review of all the necessary elements of constructivism, all these changes of processes, and their effects on the structure, we must recall that the state must have started with a new consciousness (the need to change) and a new idea (reform of 1978). China necessitated a number of policy measures and initiatives, which induced a change of identity and interests. Indeed, China's attributes (identity) have changed as its role in the structure has changed, and therefore its interactions with others. The China of today is not that of the Mao era. How that actually unfolded is the subject of the next chapter. It is designed to document a constructivist attitude in the case of China, translated through the notion of pragmatism, has materialized, as China through a new idea of self has reinvented its national identity.

9

China's Identity Redefined

After discussing constructivism, it is only befitting to address the notion of national identity with respect to China. The notion of identity is an essential feature of constructivism because it is the lens through which the choices, interests, intentions, and behaviors of states are better understood. It is through national identity that foreign policy makes sense. And it is through foreign policy that states interact with the rest of the states and the system itself. It is therefore through foreign policy that China can affect process and structural changes in the international system. Unlike structural theories of international relations, such as neo-realism or neoliberalism, which argue that actors' behaviors are essentially constrained by the exigencies of the system, constructivism recognizes a reciprocal influencing capacity of the agent and the structure. In addition, that ability of the agent to influence structure occurs through the agent's identity and interests.

China's identity has been in a transformational process since its 1978 reforms, making the examination of such a process relevant in order to gain understanding of what to expect from China as an increasingly important actor in the system. These are the reasons justifying the interest in China's reinvention of national identity: What is the current national identity of China? Does China have just one identity to speak of? From the perspective of its identity how does China perceive the international system of state? How does China identify with it? What

identity has China acquired interacting with the rest of the states in the international system? Has that identity changed as a result of China's improved status? What is the emerging new identity of China as a result of recognition among peers as an important actor in the system?

China's State Identity

Identity can be individual and collective. It is the end result, although not definitive, of establishing the features by which one or the collective body is known. We leave here individual identity to focus on collective identity. It is the one that transmits cultural identity determining factors. Such identity determining factors can be belief, religion, worldview, language, folklore, values, customs, diet, and attire. Individuals or groups assume, acquire, embody, and share these factors with others. The process occurs through ascription and socialization, which in turn are products of interactions that occur within sociological contexts. But such cultural identity factors are constitutive of individual identity because they are internalized by individuals. This makes collective and individual identity intertwined.

Although there are features of identity constitution that are not socially determined, the notion of identity is essentially a socio-cultural phenomenon. It is constructed. And it is therefore a subject of the sociological constructivist approach. It is subject of international relations because constructivism sees the international system as a society of states, and such states interact. In the process, states contribute to confer to other states their identity, just like society confers to individuals through the same process. The identity of states is both internal, based on internal cultural identity determining factors (history, tradition, value system, norms, ethos, etc.) and external (based on the identity they acquire through their "place" in the world). Identity formation has many expressions. This is certainly the reason why Wendt (1999: 224) argues that it is not "a unitary phenomenon susceptible to general definition." Wendt goes on to distinguish between four different categories of identity. There is one that is assumed through our profession or moral persona (role identity). There is one that we share historically and traditionally (corporate identity). There is one that states render possible because of their communality of law, constitution, and political regimes (regime-type identity). Finally, there is one that a group shares to induce the "we" feeling (collective identity).

This chapter takes interest in how China's corporate and regime-type identities have evolved in recent history and takes interest in how driving forces behind such an evolution have led China to assume a different role identity internationally.

Starting with the corporate and regime-type identities, the first is known to underlie the latter; just as the latter often reflects the culture of a nation. Together, they constitute the frame of what we generally call political culture. If Western countries are liberal democracies, it has something to do with the spread and gradual acceptance into the social fabric of liberal norms since the Enlightenment. Here in the case of China, Confucianism, legalism, Buddhism, and Daoism have accompanied Chinese statecraft for centuries. They are the foundation of the traditional corporate culture from which Chinese political culture is naturally expected to emerge. But, regime-type identity can emerge and be established independently from the traditional historical corporate culture of a nation. Corporate culture occurs often through ideological adoption by the political leadership of a nation, reflecting the collective or corporate culture of a nation. Regime-type identity sometimes subsumes the corporate identity of a nation. Here is where the case of Turkey, under Kemal Ataturk, whose state identity (Wendt's regime identity) is a modernist state, was not necessarily reflective of the Turkish cultural or national identity (Wendt's corporate and collective identity) as a predominantly Muslim nation.

China, however, has adopted the ideal polity of a republic since 1911, seeking a republican order and the political ideology of communism through the revolutionary movement of the 1930s. These two regime identities supplanted the traditional Confucian corporate identity of China since its independence. Lately, since the 1980s, the communist political leadership in China has started reviving interest in Confucianism, as if to avow and to concede the relevance of corporate identity in the regime-type identity. But China's regime-type identity has added, since its 1978 reforms, another layer to its identity on top of communism by incorporating the normative values of economic liberalism. It has changed China's regime identity. It has changed China's national identity. This constitutes a proof of the agential capacity to change its identity; to reinvent itself. It is a proof that identity is dynamic. It is a proof that identity is constructed. And as it changes, it brings about new validity criteria (new culture), new interests to reflect the new identity, and new behavior to reflect both the new identity and new interests, just as constructivism argues. And like any other identity, China's identity may not yet be done with changes.

China and the Republican Identity

The earliest attempts to introduce liberalism in China occurred around 1898, and the movement articulated republican ideas and ideals in China. The movement

succeeded eventually in 1911, turning China into a Republic after the Xinhai Revolution and the deposition of the Qing Dynasty. Sun Yat Sen assumed the reins of power, but China went through a series of events, among them the May Fourth New Culture Movement, which ensued after 1919, and the attempt by Yuan Shikai, Sun's successor, to restore dynastic rule. It was as well a time span that saw the pro-liberalism movement and its goals to move China away from despotic rule to embrace the rule of law and order and to empower individual reason and eventually democracy.

The pro-liberalism movement was not the only movement, however. Nationalist and Marxist ranks had been growing. The arguments empowering the people to participate in political life and decision-making, a true democratization process of the decision-making, which were championed by the pro-liberalism movement, were co-opted by the growing number of Marxist sympathizers, who also argued for empowerment. Chinese communists saw their ideology as more suitable, and the best guarantor of the will, the hope, and the power of the people, the proletariat. Communism, in their argument, was the true home of democracy, which has been hijacked by capitalized bourgeoisie and the interests of non-communist countries. The Japanese invasion of 1937, and eventually World War II and the Chinese Civil War, interrupted the debate on the true home of the democratic ideal. By the time the tumultuous period was over, and the communists had won, they simply proclaimed China a communist republic in 1949.

Modern nation-states call themselves republics. The term and the identity of a republic state implies a number of prerogatives that not all these states reflect. The essential attribute and nature of republics is that they ought to be able to preclude despotic, monarchical, and arbitrary rule. Therefore, they established a civil constitution. They ought to be rational, driven by the positive law and other rational processes, and have an institutionally defined decision-making process. The entire dynamic of the legal process finds its practical and functional materialization through the legislative body of elected representatives from the people. The people give their decisions on what is enacted in their name and in the entire nation-state.

The republic is not just a name. It is a commitment. It confers an identity to the state that carries it. Most of these republic features are as well those found in Kant's (Doctrine of Rights) understanding of the concept. Two other most-known attempts to frame the idea and notion of republic stem from Plato (the *Republic*) and Cicero's two works (*De Republica* and *De Legibus*), while Plato is expansive in the framing of his dialogue called the *Republic*, he includes

reflections on justice and happiness, ethics and politics, and the notion of good and bad. Cicero focuses on the legal process and its ability to serve as a conduit for "Concordia" and equity in politics and society (Kennedy, 2014). Other declinations of the concept, for instance, the notion of the Commonwealth that emerged in 16th-century England, all have in common the quest for a just society and political order; a goal achievable through real institutional and contractual mechanisms and processes. Since then, the idea and ideal of the republic has made some revolutionary progress, or just made incremental progress. It has also experienced stagnation and setbacks, but it has been established as a frame of reference of the modern nation-state.

China, as a modern state, has accepted that frame of reference. The question is only whether the kind of the republic China built since 1949 corresponds to the ideas and the ideal of the republic. Granted, China does have a constitution, however there is a rule of law. There are institutions of executive and legislative, which it claims are representative of the people. However, these representatives are representatives of the people's party, not of the people as unaffiliated citizens. The necessary condition, at least as seen by Kant, is to separate the abilities of the executive and legislate to enforce the law. This is questioned in China, given the ties that these different branches have to the party, given that the constitution itself is reflective of the party ideology, which ultimately substitutes the will of the people for the will of the party. The republican process is skewed by the party mold. The individual civil rights of its people are taken and considered only through the lens of the Communist Party. The issue with China's identification with republicanism lies in the fact that it does not guarantee that mechanism through which the people are ultimately constitutionally, institutionally, and practically empowered, independently from the lenses of the Communist Party. The issue as well lies in the fact that government runs through and with the institutions of the Communist Party. The People's Liberation Army, China's military, is an organ run by the party but not the government.

However, keeping Kant's understanding of the republic in mind, this deficiency of the Chinese republic does not keep China from engaging peer states internationally in the creation of international institutions and in contributing to their functioning in order to bring about Kant's perpetual peace or move closer to his cosmopolitan hope. China's earlier difficulties, mainly their difficulty with peer acceptance, have been a result of not sharing the republican identity as currently understood among liberal democracies. China is aware of that hurdle and does work to lessen the concerns it brings.

The Communist Identity

After the communist victory in the Chinese Civil War in 1948, independent China was communist. The era of Chairman Mao Tse Tung had begun. Naturally, the communist Chinese leadership started implementing a series of policies to transform China's social and economic structures from their essentially feudal, pre-modern foundation to reflect the ideals of a communist society. Such transformation was attempted through the policy of collectivism (1950–1953), the Great Leap Forward (1958–1961), and Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). By all accounts, these policies failed. The land reform and collectivization led to a harsh treatment of former landlords, resulting in about 1 million deaths. The Great Leap Forward failed to produce industrialization, and it produced, instead, famine with casualties estimated by most sources to be between 20 million and 55 million people, though the most sympathetic estimate to Mao's action report only 6 to 8 million. The Cultural Revolution, designed to purge the Chinese society from intransigent traditionalists and subversive communists, simply removed the most productive professional members of society from contributing to its well-being. Since 1976, with a GDP per capita of $1,654.10, China found itself with its back against the wall. What ensued was a need to change course. Such a need was gradually necessary in light of the reality both abroad and at home. Abroad, the communist Soviet neighbors had entered into a mode of detente with the West, but China was not yet ready for such a conciliatory attitude with imperialism. China sought to demarcate itself from the Soviet brand of communism, an intent that China had already displayed and articulated in the mid-1950s through independent foreign policies and approaches to industrialization and collectivization. China even developed an attitude of mistrust vis-à-vis the Soviets as a reliably communist country, whose members, China believed, had gone soft.

Within China, the years of applying their own brand of communism had produced havoc, causing some members of the party, among them Zhou En Lai, Deng Xiao Peng, Chen Yun, Liu Shaoqi, to advocate within the limits of the possible—the modernization of all sectors of economic activity. In January 1975, speaking before the National People's Congress, Zhou En Lai articulated such a program of reform, aiming to reorganize bureaucracy in order to support investment, which implied an open-door policy. This program was later reaffirmed on the 3rd plenary session of the 11th National Party Congress in August 1977. In 1977, Deng Xiao Peng was back in the leadership position, after being purged three times—one of which during the Cultural Revolution. He was perceived to be among the old guards, weary of the revolution, and, like some in the Soviet

Unions, had gone soft. Reinstated by Chairman Mao Tze Tung in April 1973, he slowly regained his position in the communist leadership as a standing member of the political bureau and later as vice chairman of the party in charge, among others of defense and the economy by July 1977.

It was then and there when the fate of China was to change. Because Zhou En Lai and Mao Tze Tung died respectively in January and September 1976, leaving the Chinese political scene. Because clear-cut, opposing positions were emerging among Chinese Communist Party leaders, competing for influence was unavoidable. Because the time and the table was set for an internal competition, everything both internally and externally forced China to either adjust or risk descending into downward spiral.

China's Adoption of an Economic Liberal Identity

Influential members of the Chinese communist party were vying for positions as well as for the soul of the party. As always, in such internal power plays, there were the radical hardliners, epitomized by the gang of four (Jiang Qing, Wang Honwen, Yao Wenyan, Zhang Chunqiao) who enlisted the support of the Red Guards—young communist enthusiasts made famous through their purges during the Cultural Revolution. There were those sold to the idea of reforms without jeopardizing the legacy, adherence to core beliefs and ideals of communism. Among them, Hua Guofeng, Mao's successor, dared to initiate a timid open-door policy. This timid approach was the reason why the third wing of the debate on China's course through history was justified. It was the wing of those members convinced that the time had come for China to be courageous and go all the way down the path of economic reforms in the main four sectors identified as vital—agriculture, defense, education, and industry. It was the conviction of Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiao Peng, Liu Shaoqi, and the Old Guards. These Old Guards were veterans, Mao's loyal followers since the early years of the Revolution, who were disenchanted by the meager results of his policies. Many of them suffered from the purges conducted by the gang of four and their Red Guard supporters. With Deng Xiao Peng, they embraced the notion of reforms and recognized the changing time in international politics as a result of détente, thereby deciding not to resist it but to seize the opportunity it offered and engage the world while spending less on the military.

In addition, the radicals led by the gang of four and the reformers led by Deng Xiao Peng, there were other Mao loyalists, led by Hua Guofeng, Mao's

successor. He was both a timid reformer and a Mao loyalist. This position led him to arrest the gang of four while not attracting the sympathy of radicals by being too reform-minded, which made him a non-entity among the modernist reformers. Lacking both charisma and support, he could not resist the mounting tide in favor of reformers led by Deng Xiao Peng. With the rising influence of Deng Xiao Peng both in the party and in government, Hua successively relinquished both his party chairmanship and his premiership, and subsequently resigned in 2002.

During this chapter of modern Chinese history, China made a choice between sustained beliefs in the ideals of communism as it understood it and the embrace of reforms in the pursuit of economic development and wealth and prosperity for the Chinese people. Had China chosen the former, it was going to continue preparing for war and revolutions to see the advent of communism triumph not only in China, but worldwide. The consequence of this choice was a sustained commitment in military matters. China would have opted for a status of revisionist state, in disagreement with the liberal institutional order in vigor since World War II. But if China was to choose the latter, it was going to engage the rest of the world in investment and trade. China was going to embrace the premise of cooperation and free market competition with the rest of world's nations. China was going to open its doors and deal with the consequences, good or bad.

Multiple National Identities

China's regime-type identity is currently a people's republic. It claims the republican frame of reference because of the existence of a legal constitution and institutional presence and practices, despite their flaws. It claims the identification of the communist ideology with the people through the proletariat class while, it argues, liberal democracies have subjugated the democratic ideal to the needs of capital. Since the adoption of the reform initiative by Deng Xiao Ping in 1978, China has embraced the need of capital through its adoption of the economic liberalist identity. China is now simultaneously politically communist and economically liberalist. China has as well renewed its traditional corporate and collective culture of Confucianism, restoring the moral authority of Confucian teaching. President Xi Jinping made it clear when he declared that Confucianism was "the cultural bloodline of China and the cultural soil that nourishes the Chinese people."[1]

1. XI Jinping addressed the International Confucian Association during the 2,565th anniversary of Confucius' birth.

China is now a communist republic that uses the economic recipe of its ideological archrival, capitalism, while remaining Confucian. China's experience, as a nation and a state, is a case that demonstrates the constructed nature of identity.

Currently China's national identity accommodates multiple sources of collective identity-forming ideational value systems. They are Confucianism, communism, and economic liberalism. China may not be done infusing its national identity with new identity-forming sources. China seems flexible in its ability to use agential will and capacity to construct and deconstruct its identity as needed by the exigencies of the changing times. And it is this flexibility that explains China's pragmatism. China continues to provide proof of its pragmatic attitude through its diplomacy, which does not operate on a basis of a set of prerequisites and preconceptions. This flexibility of China to rethink and re-imagine its national identity is allowing incorporation of new identities. The identity of the Chinese state is both anchored and in flux.

Changing Identity and Changing Interests

China is taking liberties by fusing all of the above-mentioned national and state identities into its own dynamic reality. As China's state and national identity morph so do elements of its value system, interests, and objectives. This shift is echoed by its foreign policy goals. Nowhere else has there been such a state identity transformation. China and its shifting values, interests, and objectives are better illustrated and reflected in its foreign policy since adopting reforms in 1978. And nowhere has such reflection been better illustrated than with its relations with the African continent. The clear case of its relations with Africa is worth revisiting. After its independence, communist China saw the international realm as a war against imperialism and wanted to reverse the dominance of the bourgeoisie and establish the rule of the proletariat class. Consequently, China's international commitments served the interests and the goals of the international proletariat. Its theater of activity was everywhere where people were under colonial yokes.

China involved itself in troubles in Africa, using Egypt as a stepping stone in 1956, followed by Algeria, and soon after in the rest of African nations, namely Angola, the Congo, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. China's assistance consisted primarily of military and logistic assistance, as well as technical and personnel training. It was limitedly able to provide financial support as well. China was in many ways ferociously more anti-imperialist than even the Soviet Union, which it believed to be too cautious in its defense of the anti-imperialist cause. The

anti-imperialist focus reflected China's identity as a communist state and its perception of the international system. That identity, and consequently that perception of the international system, was undermined by the reform course embraced in 1978. How could China fight imperialism and its capitalist predatory and market hegemonic nature if it was itself now embracing investment and open for trade and the market economy? The same need for trade made capitalist and imperialist nations potential investors and trade partners for China. They were becoming China's partners.

China dropped the anti-imperialist, pro-revolutionary pursuit of their foreign policy goals. Instead, China continued to claim communist beliefs for its own internal governing. China's international friends and allies took notice. Africa, whose nations were almost all independent by then, began to expect less developmental assistance and more trade from and with China. This was a foreign policy. It constituted a change of interest dictated by the shifting identity of the Chinese state, from being a total communist state into turning half-communist and half-Lockean as a capitalist state. But as China's reform policy continued to yield good results, and as the world turned neoliberalist at the turn of the 1980s and early 1990s, China as well adjusted its foreign policy and interests.

China embarked on the neoliberalist train and started engaging Africa as a neoliberalist nation, seeking access to African mineral and non-mineral commodities to fuel its own economic growth. It promoted its own nascent industry for access into the African market, and soon Chinese companies were competing with Western firms in Africa. With a combination of soft loans grants, development projects and infrastructure building, and access to African raw materials, China succeeded in 2010 to remove both the United States and Europe as the most important trading partners to the continent with a trade volume reaching $200 billion in 2013(World Bank, 2012). China has moved from being anti-imperialist capitalists to becoming partnered and in competition with imperialist capitalists, and then, finally, to outcompeting them in Africa and increasingly elsewhere.

China owes its success in Africa and elsewhere to its own pragmatism. It takes a pragmatist attitude, anchored in a worldview that is not bound by the notion of contradiction and embraces syncretistic approaches, to create such a success. This worldview shies away from confrontation and conflicts, preferring harmonizing and reconciling. It shies away from Manichean and deductive logic, which necessarily embraces an approach of dissecting, separating, and dividing pieces of a whole to analytically understand it. China embraces an approach reflecting the *yin* and *yang* mindset, in which even contradictory pieces are part of one another, as together they form a whole. Such a whole is more important than the

contradictions between its pieces. This point of view explains the relationalist approach of China. This syncretic approach explains China's essential pragmatism. China has already found a way of reconciling Karl Marx (Marxism) with Adam Smith (free market liberalism). It will find a way to reconcile both with Mencius Confucius (Confucianism) and with anything else that might come its way. After all, Confucius wrote to underscore the essence of pragmatism (*Analects*, Book 1, Chapter 8): "When you make a mistake, don't be afraid to correct yourself."

China's New Role Identity and Attribution of Recognition

The success of its reform has allowed China to sustain economic growth for four consecutive decades. The Chinese economy has improved enough to warrant a change of status in the ranking of world economic powers. The redefinition of China's national identity has therefore produced a new perception of China internationally. China and the rest of the world faced a need for a readjustment of China's role among its peers in the international system. This means that China was acquiring a new role identity in the international system, from a developing nation to a leading economy, from a seeker of developmental assistance to a purveyor of economic assistance around the world, from a recipient of foreign direct investment to an investor in foreign markets in its own right. As stated earlier, a dimension of one's identity is acquired through the role that one holds in society and through the mutual expectation in behavior and attitude that results from it.

China now was holding a new place in the international society. Next to the material capabilities that allowed access into a new role and status, the question of recognition or acceptance by peers is a necessary prior condition. The question therefore is whether China was accepted or recognized by peers as becoming an important actor. This is the dimension of acceptance. The relevance of this lies in China's ability to successfully play its new role, depending on the level of acceptance that China enjoys in the community of its peers. Anticipating this requirement, China began in the early 1990s to make steps to demonstrate its worthiness as a stakeholder in the international system. China knew it was going to need the collaboration of peers to succeed as an important actor. China needed a good image for its nation, for its commerce with others and for its own security, as it did not want to risk awakening a hostile attitude against itself by still being communist in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre. After the internal reinvention of its national identity, China embarked on a quest for a new identity

in the international system, which it knew could only occur through the recognition of peers. Such recognition was only possible through a change of behavior on its part. The result was that China was increasingly socially acceptable, becoming a reliable and sought-out trade partner, and, to many nations around the world, an alternative to the United States and a welcome new powerful address. To date, China has succeeded in allowing the dissipation of worries among great powers and has been attempting to reduce skepticism with the United States. The consequence has been that China has moved into a new role, has embraced it, and has been accepted and recognized for it. From this ground, China is poised to play a co-hegemonic role.

China's Identity and the International System

This segment reflects the evolution of China's own understanding of how it has changed, how it ought to approach its interactions with other states in the international system, and how it perceived the international system after it has redefined itself. The segment therefore portrays the reflection of Chinese scholars, primarily as accounted by Qin's (2011) observations of the political changes occurring, the choices standing before China, and the debate about how best to adjust. When states undergo changes, political leadership, political practitioners, and the social and intellectual elites are often the participants. Through Qin's accounts of Chinese scholars, one can see the questions that China's political leadership was forced to answer.

China's own understanding of the international system has shifted away from the communist view of the world to become a "normal nation-state." As a normal state, China hence sought to engage the world on the basis of open trade and not on the basis of communist ideals. The international system was no longer a theater of revolutionary wars to bring about the triumph of communism and the demise of imperialist capitalism. China, as an international actor, has abandoned the pursuit of and spread of communist ideals. Communist identity was no longer a driving force of Chinese engagement with the world. With such a change of attitude, China faced the need to adjust its view of the international system. China faced the choice of determining what to make of the state of anarchy, like any other normal state. Did China view the international system now as primarily a theater of dangers due to the state of anarchy or of opportunities that trading with other nations offers, or as a theater offering to state actors a climate and conditions of a

harmonious peaceful coexistence—to which task China itself, as an increasingly important actor, could contribute greatly?

Whichever normal state China chose to see itself as has implications in its behavior with others. After its economic reform, China became an enthusiast and beneficiary of a brand of capitalism known as neoliberalism. China had to find its voice in the international system that had become a global theater of neoliberalism. In other words, how did China want to be identified by the rest of the nations? That voice could no longer be that of a proletariat state, because China chose to reform, to open up for investments and prepare its bureaucracy to that effect, accepting the idea of private property, individualized income, and wealth.

As a normal nation-state, China now had legitimate national interests, which it legitimately could pursue like any other state. In this context, other states were not capitalist enemies or communist friends. They were just normal states with their own legitimate national interests. And the recognition of other legitimate national interests made these states not foes but competitors or partners. But is the international system only surrounded by competitors and partners? Or are foes still around? Or can competitors turn foes? Or can they be both? Or what makes foes, foes? Can foes turn partners? What attitude should China develop in this context as an international actor? All these are questions that point to the undetermined nature or uncertainty of the international system. The uncertainty is explained by the state of anarchy. Individual states develop different attitudes vis-à-vis this state of anarchy. It is what Wendt (1999) call the culture of anarchy. What is China's culture of anarchy after abandoning the compass of communism to navigate and understand the international system of states? In other words, what is China's understanding of the international system in which it pursues its national interest?

10

China and the Cultures of Anarchy in the International System

The international system has an essential characteristic, namely the state of anarchy. It necessitates a stand. It calls for a reaction from international actors. It calls for a reaction because international actors find themselves before a space voided of any naturally established order and the one they create finds itself with structural limits. This does not leave indifferent, international actors. International actors may choose to be utterly cautious, suspicious and prepare not to fall victim of the hazard it permits. They can choose to embrace the opportunity it offers. They can choose to develop strategies found within national states and export them into the international realm. This state of anarchy has allowed actors to develop specific attitudes. The different attitudes they take may be defined enough to develop into a culture. It is what Wendt (1999) had called a culture of anarchy. The theater of the international realm consequently can only be the reflection of the attitudes taken by different actors. Looking closely at what this international theater has looked like in the course of the years, Wendt has distinguished the following cultures of anarchy: the Hobbesian in the 17th century characterized by threat, violence, conquest, annihilation, which reflect the attitudes of those actors viewing the international realm as an arena of all kinds of dangers. Then there is the Loackean culture of anarchy, which he sees emanating from the Westphalia Treaty in 1648. It brought about the recognition of peers, restraint from war of eliminations,

conquest, and the habit of wars. Third was the Kantian culture of anarchy, which he sees as the most recent. It is one characterized by relations among states.

These states have functional constitutional and institutional frames of the rule law, democratic order, and in which states refrain from the use of force to settle dispute. They use mechanisms of supra-national structures to cooperate and tackle international issues. These distinctions suggested by Wendt are naturally ideal types. They may, or may not be duplicated in the reality of the international realm. They may, or may not be reflected in the actions of individual international actors. Brief, they are not an exhaustive inventory of cultures and possible behaviors in the international realm. Furthermore, states do not exclusively embrace one culture over the others. A Hobbesian states is not only focused on increasing its security, on power politics, on improving its standing in the distribution of capabilities, building alliances, pursuing matters of strategic interests. Such states also participate in international trade and are part of multilateral institutions. And on the other hand, a Lockean state is not unconcerned with matters of its own security, and having allies to count on in time of conflict with third parties. States can find a balance while pursuing their many interests. Better yet, they prioritize. And because they have different identities, which include history, traditions, culture, values, ideologies, size, geographies, and self-image, they are bound to produce different prioritization. They have different interests and objectives, which are pursued with different degrees of urgency. These are the true indicators of what culture of anarchy is likely to preoccupy domestic policy makers, and consequently dominate their choice of foreign policy and their behavior as international actors. Consequently, states such as Switzerland, Sweden, Costa Rica, Israel, or the United States will develop different foreign policy foci and will behave internationally in different fashion. They will develop different cultures of anarchy.

The inventory of these attitudes has been central in the theoretical analysis of states behavior of international relations. They are reflected in the main theories of international relations. They are as well reflected differently in individual states, which seem to privilege one or the other attitude, or culture of anarchy. The fact that states get to decide, develop their culture of anarchy is itself in keeping with the constructivist perspective that Wendt advocate, simply because the state of anarchy in and by itself, does not necessarily dictate the one to the other attitude. The attitude taken by individual states actors is solely product of exercising agential capacity. While exercising agential prerogative, states are determined by a number of factors that all boil down to their identity, as stated above. And because the agent state in question here is China, if becomes naturally logical to taking

interest in what China's culture of anarchy may be, or is. If the identity of states help establish their culture of anarchy, the same identity helps in the analysis what that culture is or will be, if it is not yet established. In the case of China, the process is underway. It is underway because China's identity has been changing. China's self-image has been changing. China's interests have been changing. Following is an account of all these changes and their implication on what should be China's culture of anarchy.

There was a time, between the Chinese Civil War of the 1930s and the reform initiative of 1978, when China's regime type conferred to the nation a communist identity. During that time, China saw the international system as divided into two spheres: on one hand stood the imperialists and their colonized world of unwilling followers and, on the other hand, the resisting anti-imperialist international communists and proletariat world. Between these spheres, China naturally identified with the latter. This identification foretold its interests and the role it would play, as well as the behavior it was to be expected to have in the international system. China committed its international engagement in assisting those oppressed by the yoke of Western imperialism and in working toward the advent of the international proletariat. But soon that dualistic vision of the world would end. World's communism did not have lasting power. It ended in the 1990s. China in the meantime had already reached the limits of its communism to foster economic prosperity after a series of debacles caused by communism-inspired policies in the Mao era. China has ended its own reliance on communism through the 1978 reform, as if it had foreseen what the Soviet Union later saw. Communism has ceased to exist as a nemesis of capitalism. In the long history of the world, communism was a hiatus from the hegemonic forces of the market seen by communism as imperialist and capitalist.

In the way of the dynamic march of the forces of the market stood nothing else. This march started in the 15th century during which England made the first steps to break away from rigid feudalistic structures to imitate an agrarian capitalist economy. Soon, a new thought started to emerge, articulating the views on how a society driven by property ownership, market profit, and entrepreneurship should function, from which politics took its cues on how to organize it. In France, Antoyne de Montchretin (1615) articulated the notion of a national political economy; in England, John Locke (1689) published *Two Treaties of Governments*. The principles thought to organize national economies and national governments will soon be valid, relevant, informative, and applicable to the international realm. It is, however, the realm of anarchy. It necessitates adjustments different from those applicable in the national realm, in which there is established

political authority and therefore order. It requires a different culture. It requires what Wendt (1999) refers to as a culture of anarchy.

A number of thinkers have particularly informed the different cultures that such anarchy inspires. They are thinkers who reflect on ways through which the limitedness of the national state and the uncertainties of the international realm can be overcome. They reflect on the nature of interactions in the international realm, which promises to be perilous, given the inexistence of order beyond national sovereignty and given the inclinations of human nature to be selfish or conniving—a behavior that can be transferred to individual states and therefore into the international realm. They proposed their reasoning on how to navigate such perils and to create conditions for a cosmopolitan peace. Three names stand out most in particular, Wendt argues, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1579), John Locke (1632–1704), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). They respectively stand, metonymically, for the Hobbesian state, the Lockean state, and the Kantian state cultures of anarchy in the international system.

Thomas Hobbes, whose focus on human nature—as was the focus of many other thinkers on the British Islands, mainly Scottish moral philosophers—argued from a perspective of fear dictated by that human nature when left to its own devices. The implication of that perspective to a political society is clear from his mind. The metonymic use of Thomas Hobbes in a Hobbesian state serves to imply the focus on the primary necessity for the state to supply order. Hobbesian states are preoccupied with the danger of insecurity and are fearful of human nature and see the state as primarily tasked with the duty of guarantor of order. The authority of governing comes from the governors to the governed in the name of security with all the dangers of authoritarianism or totalitarianism. A Hobbesian state is Hobbesian because it shares Hobbes' preoccupation with the state of nature and the insecurity and therefore fear it induces in society. What justifies preoccupation with insecurity and fear nationally justifies preoccupation with insecurity and fear internationally, only here there is no Leviathan and, therefore, there is anarchy.

A Hobbesian state in the intentional system of states is essentially concerned with matters of security, and therefore of the military and defense. A Hobbesian state is seen and measured through the importance, significance, attention, and resources allocated to military matters. It is about security issues. It is what the realist and neo-realist approaches in international relations are about. China has been historically, culturally, and ideologically reserved vis-à-vis the reasoning of realism. Although it recognizes the need and necessity for protecting its national security, it seems not to develop an interest in going beyond to become an offensive realist. China seems to be strictly a defense realist, and consequently not an

unequivocally Hobbesian state. The Hobbesian culture of anarchy is naturally driven by the mindset of an impending general war: the war of all against all. It induces a state of mind of self against others. The others are not friends, and not even rivals, but foes. It implies that others will have advantage of one. This compels one the right to look at others as enemies, and an enemy's rights to enjoy the privileges not enjoyed by the one should be nullified. This is the state of mind laying the ground for a general war under the state of anarchy that characterizes the international realm. Because states playing a role in it are sovereign and do not heed to any other state, they can pursue their interests unabashed.

Such an unabashed pursuit of state interests tends to materialize at the expenses of others. To avoiding being the "sucker," states must be prepared to prevail in case of such an eventuality. They are turned into antagonists, and not just any antagonist but "violent antagonist" (Wendt, 1999: 260). Unlike in the Lockean culture, in which the intention of the other is known, seeking to compete for a market share, in the Hobbesian culture, the intention of the other is perceived to be a threat for the territory and general survival. The intention of the other is assumed to be malevolent. This Hobbesian culture of anarchy compels policy choices and behavior revealing of the assumption of enemies around the world. They favor taking stock of the international system of states and distinguishing allies and friends from foes and potential foes. The United States, which has shown evidence for both the Lockean and the Hobbesian culture, became clearly Hobbesian during the George W. Bush administration as he declared in the aftermath of September 11: "you're either with us, or against us."

John Locke, most particularly in his *Two Treatises of Government*, which accompanied England in its transition away from feudalism and absolutism, has shifted the paradigm of societal order from the top to the bottom, arguing that the consent of the governed, and not any other attribute, makes someone a legitimate ruler. His thinking could inform the organizing of the international realm as it entails a recipe for peace and prosperity among nations. States embracing his thinking are Lockean states. The metonymic use of John Locke, in the Lockean state, serves to imply focus on the rights of the governed, which they hold naturally through the natural law. In this natural law, humans are naturally free, and, therefore, the authority of governing can only be justified if utilized to safeguard that natural freedom. The Lockean state is a product of reason to protect the governed from the inconveniences of natural freedom. Locke did not expand on the consequence of his analysis internationally, but we can make inferences as to what a Lockean state's behavior in the international system consequently is. Unlike the Hobbesian behavior, predicated on fear for anarchy, the Lockean state

international behavior is predicated on positive agreements (1988: 299) between states—not out of fear but out of consent in the pursuit of their identified interests. A Lockean state in the international system is a participant in the creation of international agreements to overcome the deficiencies and inconveniences of natural law. One notes here the influence of Hugo Grotius.[1]

The Lockean state is not fearful of the state of nature, which is not governed by chaos as Hobbes argues, but which is governed by natural law, which may have its limitations and therefore has to be improved by positive agreements. The Lockean state in the international system is driven not by fear but by interest. It behaves through interest-driven reason to overcome the inconveniences of the state of nature (Locke, 1988: 276). Consequently, a Lockean state focuses not on the military, but on the need to foster the conditions for an international commonwealth. It is about cooperation. China, after neutralizing internationally the forces of its internal communism, is internationally fully committed to the need to foster its own prosperity through the institutional infrastructure of neoliberalism. China was, at least then, embracing the Lockean culture of cooperation. China has since evolved to become an important member of international institutional liberalism and has been taking steps to extend its reach and its institutional infrastructure around the world.

The Lockean culture of anarchy is that of a state interested in increasing its prospects for prosperity through trade, which occurs with state partners and therefore implicitly acknowledges not only their existence but their equally legitimate interest in prosperity through trade. But, most of all, they recognize each other's legitimate rights to exist. These states become partners, who primarily think of one another as peers, but rivals in matters of trade. They are not enemies and therefore do not threaten each other's existence. Although security is important and necessary, it is not the driving force fueling the dynamics of their relationships. The nature of their relationship is that of mutual acknowledgment, that of the recognition of the others to legitimately pursue goals that are not caused by nature to undermine the equally legitimate pursuit of others' legitimate goals. They are sovereign to decide for themselves. They possess the freedom to do so. Wendt adds that they live and let live. States looking beyond their own borders and recognizing that the international realm can be organized to permit such generalized pursuit of each other's goals, in a manner that foster prosperity, see in

1. The Dutch jurist (1583–1645) known for his groundwork on international law and natural rights.

each other rivals but not enemies. They promote a culture that faces the international state of anarchy with a perspective of encouraging trade, building bridges, and creating the necessary infrastructure to that end. Their respective prospects of prosperity outweigh the fear of the state of anarchy for the simple reason that others are not enemies and their interests do not reside in the conduct of wars but in the preservation of conditions for trade. The modern-day Lockean states are internationalists, multi-lateralists, and neoliberalists. They see trade partners around and seek to incorporate those that are yet to be part of the culture. They favor the building of institutional bridges to greater interdependence. The European Union has become a prototype of the Lockean culture.

Then, there was Immanuel Kant. Like Hobbes, Kant recognized the existence of a state of nature in the international realm because individual states are sovereign. But, unlike Hobbes, who combined the state of nature with the selfishness and desires of human nature to see danger, Kant advocates for the establishment of international institutions that could go as far as taking the form of a federation of states, a universal state, or even, for him preferably, the constitution of a world republic. It sees it as a remedy for the state of nature. That state of nature permanently threatens wars and therefore Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* makes suggestions as to how to achieve the opposite, namely the state of permanent peace. Among such suggestions, he included cosmopolitan rights of universal hospitality. The metonymic use of Kant in Kantian states therefore describes republics that are governed by a body of legislatures representative of the people and distinct from the executive, which enforces laws created by others than him/her. Such a construct should prevail internationally where a federation or a universal state or world republic should be created through which a cosmopolitan legal basis should be promoted and perpetual peace was to become possible.

The Kantian culture of anarchy is about the crafting of conditions capable of inducing a state of peace on to the entire global landscape of states. It ought to bring about a state of perpetual peace to counter the state of anarchy and the imperfect human nature, which carries the ability of inducing violence. Kant's projection is cosmopolitan in its scope. It aims to harness the potential of a world made of republics to create constitutions and mechanisms to enforce them nationally and to do the same internationally through cooperation. Republics possess proprieties of deliberating, of creating institutions, of trading, and of creating alliances, which he called confederation. They are as well capable of inducing a convergence of identities and interests. Believing in the ability of reason to triumph, he saw this process toward a perpetual peace ultimately

materializing. After the Westphalia Treaty, the idea of cooperation has come a long way indeed. It has reached the Lockean milestone in the aftermath of World War II with the establishment of institutional liberalism to support international trade. States had become rivals rather than enemies. The world has since embarked on a process of globalization, which very well carries the seeds of what Kant called international cooperation, and, if not producing perpetual peace, these seeds could still reduce further enmities among the republics of the world, improve their economic partnerships, and maybe bring about a new culture of friendship among states. This friendship does not mean total lack of conflicts or even unrest. It simply means a greater degree of states identifying with each other's interests and pursuits, even though that total identification with others is not synonymous with tranquility. The world has been undoubtedly moving away from the Hobbesian culture and embracing the Lockean culture. It is conceivable that the only culture remaining is the Kantian culture, as the international system seems to evolve qualitatively.

These three political thinkers, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant, have laid out templates that inspire the cultures of the international system facing the reality of anarchy. An international system, in which the individual states are sovereign, does not foresee the presence of any other authority beyond the states. To navigate an international realm without recognized authority, active states will have to determine the right attitude to have. They will develop different attitudes corresponding to the views of Hobbes, Locke, and Kant. They will adhere to different cultures of anarchy. These three different cultures of anarchy differ from each other in the way they approach dealing with the potential for conflicts, war, chaos, and destruction in the international system, as it would exist in a lawless society. They resort to expecting it, seeking to minimize its advent, or seeking to lay ground to avoid it all together.

The Hobbesian culture prepares for war through all the necessary tools, from the acquisition of power, arming, deterring, in order to defend oneself against the greed of others. The Lockean culture, realizing that there is a natural need to prosper and pursuit interest, juxtaposes Hobbesian culture with the equally natural need to secure one's existence and ultimately choose to pursue the latter in order to curtail the former. The Kantian culture is simply mindful of the ability of reason to inform the quality of human existence, which has produced the recourse to the forms of societal organization we call the republic. Kant places his hope for a perpetual peace in the properties of these republics to concoct conditions for cooperation. His idea of a world republic even promotes cosmopolitanism.

What Kind of Culture of Anarchy Will China Embrace?

As an international actor, and after abandoning the struggle for the communist cause, what kind of culture of anarchy was China going to choose to navigate the prevailing state of anarchy in the international system? China can choose among the Hobbesian, Lockean, and the Kantian cultures, but it can also use its own agential capacity to decide otherwise. It can draw from its own experience and the Confucian worldview and analysis to create a new template. China has a rich menu to choose from as it ventures into the international arena as a normal state, and an increasingly important one at that. Time will tell with which culture of anarchy China will navigate the perils of the international state of anarchy.

The pertinence of this question lies in the fact that its answer will help the world understand what type of international actor China will be. China has a long history of statehood and statecraft reaching as far back as 3,500 years ago. The Chinese state has carved its place in the historical, social, and political culture of the Chinese people. Since the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) that social and political culture were shaped by the teaching of Mencius Confucius.[2] The Chinese state therefore has an ideational basis, rather than the basis of Hobbes, Locke, or Kant. Confucianism has been declared the enemy of Chinese communism, who saw his teaching as much about the preservation of the traditional order, inherited from feudalism and opposing the proletariat revolution that Marxism taught. Confucianism, or better yet neo-Confucianism, has reemerged. The Chinese state officially renewed with Confucianism in the 1980s[3] under Jiang Zemin (1989–2002). This Confucian renaissance, or rehabilitation, has helped restore and reconnect the Chinese state identity to its cultural and national identity.

China has a number of pragmatic reasons for such rehabilitation, among them the fading glance of communism and the need of a positive cultural projection to support the growing sense of nationalist pride fueled by economic growth, but also the sheer realization that basic Confucian teaching should be harnessed. Indeed, Confucianism promotes order, obedience, respect, duty and community, harmony and stability, and so on. What was there not to like from the perspective

2. The many Chinese dynasties alternated between Confucianism, Buddhism, and legalism to support statecraft.
3. Growing interest in society, academia, and the Chinese Communist Party, which created in 1986 the Confucian Society to promote Chines value system, and to counterbalance the value system of the West.

of political authorities, Chinese or any other? Confucianism was restored while China remained politically communist and after embracing economic liberalism.

China's state identity now has five ideational inspiration sources for its treatment of anarchy, namely: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and Mencius Confucius. Hence, the Chinese state can be looked at through the lenses of the Hobbesian, the Lockean, the Marxian, the Kantian, and the Confucian models for greater appreciation of the pragmatism of the current Chinese state culture. In the exploration of the China's culture of anarchy we leave behind the influence of Marxism, since China no longer considers it a factor while navigating the perils of the international state of anarchy. Communism is now just for China's national consumption, and limitedly so. But the Chinese state's culture draws from Confucian teaching, which sees the foundation of societal functional processes rooted in the notion of duty that individuals incorporate toward fellow individuals in society and toward the state, and from which community and states are strengthened. Then, we must ask: Does the Confucian perspective place China more in the camp of Hobbesian, Lockean, or Kantian culture?

Thomas Hobbes's pessimist view of human nature and the thematic of fear it commands are rooted in his own biography, personal circumstances,[4] and the English Civil War (1642–1651). Confucian teaching recognizes the inadequacies of human nature, but, like Socrates, believes that these inadequacies can be overcome by the equally natural inclination of reasonable human being to embrace virtue once they are made aware of it. Confucius sees this happening through the contextualization of the natural human being into society. Hence, individual, society, and government ought to work to contain the unwanted features of the natural individual. He draws his confidence in the ability of human beings to change, given the circumstances. He wrote: "Only the most wise and the most foolish do not change" (*Analect*, 17: 2).

Unlike Hobbes, Confucius does not fear the consequence of human nature. Although fear is a universal independent variable, what Hobbes makes of it is constructed. Confucianism deals with fear as an internal emotion that ought to be overcome by all noble persons. The internal lack of fear produces the societal lack of fear. It is therefore the petty person (ch'i) who is in distress because of fear, while the noble person (tang) is characterized by the state of peacefulness and calm (*Analects*, vii: 36). Hobbes and Confucius deal with this universal independent variable

4. Born prematurely when England faced its nemesis Spain, abandoned by his father and living through the English Civil War.

of human nature differently with respect to its implication to society as well. Like Hobbes and Locke, Confucius recognizes and shows interest in general welfare. All three differ in their views of how to produce general welfare, given their respective views of human nature of people in society. While Hobbes is pessimistic about it, Locke sees in it elements of hopes—namely the desire to prosper—and Confucius is optimistic about it. Consequently, in a Hobbesian state, because of its fear of the selfishness that drives human nature, government must come with the authority required to provide security, without which human life is brutish, short, solitary, poor, and nasty: in a state of anarchy and chaos. The Hobbesian state cares for the general welfare through security, while the Confucian state, less fearful of human nature, promotes benevolence among noble persons, citizens, and social harmony as a way of achieving general well-being.

The Chinese state earned and endeared itself in the Chinese psyche as a father figure. However, the Chinese state turned communist in 1948. Unlike the Hobbesian political culture, the traditional Chinese Confucian state culture does not present the state as a Leviathan, nor does it present the state's authority as justified by the fear for the selfishness of desires and appetites of human nature as premised by Thomas Hobbes. The Chinese state and Confucius are not oblivious to individualized greed or the ambitions of some in the nation, which led to the many civil wars of the Chinese history. This calls for a strong state. Hence, the Chinese state, through its succession of dynastic rulers, has been characterized by strong states—those that did not tolerate unrest, revolts, and sessions. The current Chinese leaders, justified by both their awareness of China's history of separatism and by the totalitarian nature of the communist state, have remained sensitive to rising movements. The traditional Chinese state has been Hobbesian in that sense. How does this translate in Chinese culture of anarchy? While China remains sensitive at home and about its sovereignty, it is not a Hobbesian state in the sense of fearing human nature applied to states and therefore dictating a behavior that is reflected in the realist approach to international relations.

Is China rather a Lockean state, and therefore does exude a Lockean culture of anarchy? The Lockean political culture sees natural law as already entailing the foundation of societal political order. Such political order ought to reaffirm natural law into natural rights, which governments only have to uphold through positive law. The traditional Chinese state is as well less Lockean as it is less Hobbesian for the simple reason that it is not, historically, grounded in the notion of individualized rights. John Locke's entire analysis is essentially rooted in the historical circumstances of 17th-century England. His focus on human nature and natural law and what is said about them is a familiar theme among English and Scottish

moral philosophers, from Hume to Smith, Thames, and Fergusson. His singling out rights that all women and men possess naturally, equally, and individually—among them freedom—allowed him to argue against his fellow countryman Robert Filmer[5] who defended the theory of divine right, and by so doing initiated a new perspective in government as a precursor to liberalism. His inclusion of property among the rights we ought to naturally possess has a lot to do with rise of agrarian capitalism and the need to own land for proper and efficient use. Those capable of efficient use of land ought to own it. It becomes their property. The individual is central in Locke's philosophy, as opposed to monarchies, institutions, and governments. In fact, Locke believed that these entities exist to promote the individual and what is naturally his or hers, such as freedom, possessions, health, and life. Naturally, to be Lockean is to subscribe to those views. China has its own history in which its political culture derives. It is essentially enveloped in Confucianism, including legalist, Buddhist, and Daoist teachings. In these teachings, the focus is not on rights or freedom, but on duty. In his teachings, Confucius, for instance, urges respect for authority and harmony. Such a respect for authority has served as a ground for tolerating authoritarian rule in Asia, just as exhortation to harmony suggests rejections of individualism.

The Chinese state is authoritarian—if not for any other reason but for the fact that it is communist. From this vantage point, the Chinese state, because it is communist cannot be Lockean. However, with its reforms since the 1978, China has infused dimensions of the Lockean state in its statecraft. China has liberalized its commerce, allowing private ownership and pursuit of individual happiness, as well as a free movement of people (despite the enduring effects of the Hukou system)[6] and a guarantee of some rights. Granted, the current Chinese state is not Lockean in its political dimension of individual rights and their inalienability as found in established liberal democracies and in which the government is excised from and with people's consent—a bottom-up government. The long history

5. Robert Filmer who wrote: *Patriarcha*, or the Natural Power of Kings in 1680 in the defense of the royal power; arguing that fatherhood was a model and a basis for authority; an argument that did not sit well with the enlightened mind of John Locke, who found it a rich target to gun down; which he did in the his 2nd Treaties of Government: "Of Civil Government."
6. The Hukou system is a system of registering households in order to limit and control mobility, primarily for the purpose of access to public service based on birth place. It now often penalizes populations in the rural areas as they seek to migrate into appraised areas for their attractiveness in terms of economic opportunities.

and culture of China has not experienced government by the people. Its political culture emphasizes duty, not the Lockean rights and has always been wary of accentuating individual liberties in a nation with a population of more than a billion people. Sensitivity to the excesses of individual freedoms, which justifies the Hobbesian preoccupation with security, is certainly justified there. Its political history has shown the dangers of centripetal forces that threaten the cohesion and existence of the Chinese state.

The Kantian culture of anarchy has not been reflected in the history of statehood in China, and naturally so, primarily because Kant's views, most precisely concerning the republic described in the *Doctrine of Rights.* Kant calls a *republic* a state that is not despotic because it has established a constitution and has a body of people's representatives that make laws, and whose powers are distinct from those of the executive. Because the representatives convey the will of the people, such will is reflected in all matters of importance to the state. Kant sees in the will of the people a buffer against the potential recklessness of a state in which one rules. Such a description of the republic and its features can only be expected after the Enlightenment era of the late 18th century. After that time, China, like many other states, has not been nor pretended to be a republic. Such features of the republic remain unmet even after China called itself a republic in 1911, and it is much less a republic after the Communist Party proclaimed China as a People's Republic in 1949.

In the Kantian sense, there is no clear separation of the executive from the legislative, a separation for power. The institutions of governments are confounded with those of the Communist Party. In addition, the people's representation is not dissociated from that of the party, which allows a deduction that the will of the party subsumes the will of the people. In the construct, the party is the people and the views of the party become the views of the people. This is a totalitarian mechanism and is therefore anti-republican. Even when the people are part of the party, the question of their voluntary adhesion is raised because of the inexistence of any other party and because the identity of the party may preclude some decisions: hence, totalitarian. Here the people are not fully empowered. It does not constitute the buffer needed against a despotic rule, in this case the despotic rule of a totalitarian party. It is antithetical to Kant's republic. The People's Republic of China is not republican in the Kantian sense, not necessarily because there is no universal suffrage elections held, because even Kant's republic does not see democracy nor election process as prerequisite for republic, but because the functioning of its constitution does not provide mechanisms that institutionally empower the people.

Can China still be linked to the Kantian culture of anarchy? China seems astonishingly in agreement with the core prescriptions of the Kantian culture. The Chinese political discourse heard from the many pronouncements of its leaders echoes the recipe of the Kantian hope for a cosmopolitan culture. The Chinese leadership has not ceased to proclaim a peaceful rise, a peaceful coexistence of nations around the world, and a peaceful neighborhood with its neighbors in East Asia. They say that China seeks a democratized international relations, and they accentuate, emphasize, and even promote reforms of the United Nations, which it sees as an important body in the international system to curtail the idiosyncrasies and unilateral tendencies of some actors. That would occur through multilateral agreements, norms, and laws: demanding a new kind of great powers relations away from power politics and constantly reminding the rest of the world nations of the need to uphold the provisions of the Westphalia Treaty. In the end, China's culture of anarchy is neither exclusively Confucian nor communist, neither Hobbesian (authoritarian) nor exclusively Lockean (liberalist ideals) nor Kantian (promoting the ideals of cosmopolitan republicanism). China is sorting itself out by blending these cultures, and in the process may produce a fusion of the Confucius, Lockean, Hobbesian, and Kantian cultures of anarchy.

China is still carefully crafting its way through these identities and cultures of anarchy. China is doing so currently through policy choices whose contours suggest that, as an international actor, it may be all of the above. China's policy choices and behavior reveals traits of a Hobbesian state. China has articulated its national security interests and signaled its intransigence in such matters as the South China Sea dispute, the Taiwan question, and its military capabilities. China's policy choice and behaviors reveal traits of a Lockean state. Since the late 1990s and definitely throughout the 2000s, China has increased its commitment to and participation in existing international institutional infrastructures and has even started initiating new ones. China has, as well, shown its preference to using diplomacy and soft power. China's policy choices and behaviors also reveal traits of a Confucian state. This certainly explains the creation, promotion, and proliferation of Confucius centers by China around the world.

However, as an international actor, China's policy and behavior have ceased to reveal traits of a communist state. China has remained politically Marxist and does not shy away explaining the simultaneous embrace of Confucianism and Marxism. China explains this construct through its understanding of Marxism's basic principles with deference to the Chinese culture and history. Confucian ideals link China to Kantian cosmopolitanism. China's diplomatic pronouncements toward the world express goals corresponding to Confucian views, like those of a

harmonious world, respectful of international agreements and laws, peaceful resolution of conflicts, the rejection of power politics, all of which can concur to the advent of the cosmopolitan society, the international brotherhood, and perpetual peace of which Kant speaks.

Just as Confucian values can be linked to Kantian, Kantian values can be linked to Lockean values through commerce. Kant sees commerce as a bridge and an element sustaining the effort toward a cosmopolitan ideal. It makes the Kantian culture dependent on the Lockean culture. China seems to build on both the Lockean culture, driven by commerce, and the Kantian culture, driven by perpetual world peace, to dare imagine what the future can be. The future that China sees as harmonious and peaceful, reflecting Confucian values, and pursued by Kantian cosmopolitanism, is as well built on the economic prosperity of neoliberalism, driven by a Lockean culture. The cultures that seem to be sidelined are those of Marxism and the Hobbesian. There is a reason for that. The international culture of Marxism is revolutionary and therefore aggressive and combative. It is not driven by harmony, prosperity, or peace. And so is the Hobbesian culture, which is in a state of alert against the greed of others and ready to take advantage of the weak to prepare for battle. The Confucian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures privilege approaches that remained underwhelmed by the fear of Hobbes and the revolutionary drive of Marx. These approaches were made appealing by the possibility of achieving a harmonious world society (Confucian culture), of achieving perpetual peace (Kantian culture), and of achieving prosperity, which ultimately produces peace (Lockean culture).

China has been crafting its own culture of anarchy, taking the liberty to bridge together these sources of international behavior, from the Hobbesian and Lockean to the Kantian, Confucian, and communist cultures. In the end, the adoption of China's culture of anarchy remains unclear, just as its own national culture is, as it continues to juggle a number of moving pieces (identity, interests, status, roles, and objectives).

China's Own Culture of Anarchy in the International System

Since the 1950s, while still carrying the fight of communism internationally, China has been articulating an independent foreign policy. It articulated a different view of the world before its reform. Since its reform it has been developing a new view, which shows signs of the same independent mindset. Now, even after

associating itself with institutional liberalism, it has been articulating its own path independently from the existing dominant ideal type (of liberal democracy and its democratic rule), from the existing dominant policy measures (of the Washington Consensus), from the pressures of dominant normative value system (of Human Rights, individual rights, etc.), and from the pressures of a converging effect of globalization—preferring a diverging globalization. China has its own view of the world, and its own culture of anarchy. It is a culture that blends known cultures, like Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian, with its own, like the East Asian world-views found in the texts of Confucianism and Daoism. China can blend these cultures because of its own syncretic culture that tends to unify rather than oppose seemingly distinct proprieties of entities.

One can find a reflection of the realist culture in Chinese foreign policy as a matter of legitimate national security concerns, and because not even Confucius was a pacifist. One can find elements of the liberalist culture in China's foreign policy, and it is obvious through China's "going out" mindset since the reform. These two cultures explain China's rational approach to international relations. One can as well find in Chinese foreign policy construction the reflection of revolutionism as it seeks a harmonious world as a foreign policy goal. China's foreign policy is a synthesizing approach and it is only possible when one understands the international realm as described by the pluralist perspective of the English School.

The particularity of a Chinese culture of anarchy is that it will have blend of Western rationalist metaphysics, its own Confucian relational metaphysics, and the idealism of communism for a world free of structures of dominance and oppression. Indeed, the international world requires a metaphysical perspective, which means the civilizational, cultural, source of ideational values, and epistemological background through which to interpret or ascribe meaning to the social and natural world. Together they constitute social metaphysics. They determine one's perception of the substantive world they observe. For many in China, the current structure and functioning of the international system is the product of Western social metaphysics.

The perspective is rationalist, materialist, and positivist. It is essentially deductive. It is dichotomist. Its taxonomy fosters differences in subjects it observes. It is the basis of Western interpretation of the international world. It explains cultures of anarchy found in the West. It explains the approaches to international relations found in the West, realism and liberalism to name a few. China is aware of this Western perspective. It finds in it elements that coincide with its own metaphysics. It finds elements in it that diverge from its own metaphysic, and it might even reject some others because opposed to its own. Case in point is the

assumption of realism which informs a certain culture of anarchy. One does not have to be Chinese to dare question absolute adhesion to it. Constructivism has done just that. If one agrees with Qin, Tang, Kang and others, mentioned in previous chapters, who see the Chinese metaphysics as fostering rationality, inclusivity, hierarchy, and benevolence, it appears that China may have a view of the international world reflective of its own metaphysics. In other words, China does not have to subscribe to Western metaphysics unreflectively.

China has its own metaphysics. It is the Confucian relationality. China therefore can blend the parts that are acceptable in what Western metaphysical approach produced with what it knows. Its own Confucian perspective sees nothing wrong with blending. It even requires from its followers the ability to incorporate that which is new. China operates with this mindset. It explains the versatility. It explains the comfort in the blending of perspectives. It indeed believes that opposites are parts of the whole. If the world is a whole. If the international relations is a whole, if the West and the East are parts of a whole humanity, and if rationality and relationality are products of the same humanity, there may be ways both serve the totality of the cause. Confucianism believes that oppositions ought to be overcome. If the world of international relations inhabits oppositions, they are not obstacles but opportunity for the wise to proof its wisdom as he seeks to overcome them.

China's foreign policy is therefore one that is not supposed to be fazed by obstacles, by differences of identity, ideology, cultures or anything else. It is relational. It believes in the dynamics of relations to produce venues of agreements and advancements. It sees the limitation of the Western perspective, despites its strengths, in the fact that it posits a priori unsurmountable differences due to differences of proprieties or entities involved. It considers that even in nature such unsurmountable essential proprietary features of entities does not keep such entities to exist in the world. This possibility of coexistence is even less unsurmountable given the malleability, the capacity to change entities in the social world. Both human beings, states and systems they create are parts of the social world. They are malleable and changing. In that, Confucianism sees the possibilities of a better future. It explains China's foreign policy attitude. It is likely to inform China's culture of anarchy. This likelihood lies in the fact that China has a conscious and confident self-image. It is the substance underlying foreign policy. It is the compass of states' material interests and intent. It helps produce, guide, and justify foreign policy choices and pursuit. Indeed, beyond their material interests, states have histories, cultures, ideologies, and identities. They find their way into foreign policy pursuit. Some states, for instance, do not hesitate to seek exporting them beyond their own

borders, through foreign policy. The same venue is the one through which states project their self-image. That self-image is defined by Nack (2019: 83) as "the story a people in a country tells about who they are as a people, who their country 'is' in the world, and what their country does in the world." Such stories are supported, promoted, and perpetuated in various venues, formal and informal, for instance, through use of diplomacy or soft power instruments.

A powerful state can export its social metaphysics, and its self-image as it pursues its material interests around the world. It can export its culture of anarchy. That is what occurs when elephants in international relations exercises foreign policy. They suggest themselves as norms. Their ways are proposed as standards and their values as reference. China has plenty of self-image to suggest, to propose. After all it once understood itself to be the middle kingdom. It once was the center of world commerce. It has been in a formal existence since the earliest time of world civilizations. With its comeback to the near center of international political gravity, China may believe it has a story to tell the world. If it does, that story will be that of its self-image. It will be the one that China will sell to the world. It will be the one that will contain the purpose of its quest for global superpower status. It will constitute the teleological dimension of its hegemonic claim. Foreign policy will be the venue through which China exports its teleology. And the grand strategy it has embarked on can be evaluated and appreciated in light of its teleology.

Other nations that rose to the same firmament of international politics had more than just their material foreign interests to sell. The United States found ways of securing free trade and promoting world order. But it also, in the process, sought to secure the establishment of its liberal ideals to serve as norm provider for international order. The Soviet Union embodied a socio-political model of communism, whose ideals united the economic order and the political order. It sought to export it through its foreign policy. China is destined by its size and potential to fit the category of these nations. And China is currently succeeding to establish a ubiquitous presence to secure its material foreign policy interest, as demonstrated by the Belt and Road Initiative. It now needs to articulate a common ideal to serve as a binding glue for all these nations around the world that are now gravitating in its orbit. China may not need to reinvent the wheel because it functions perfectly in its dynamics. But it can shape it for the future. China will help promote international stability into the future. The need to promote international stability for a state that has ubiquitous interests becomes imperative. China will become an expected supplying agent of international order. The fact that China has started creating an institutional infrastructure parallel to those created by the Bretton

Wood is a manifestation of this possibility. As China grows more confident in its role of shaping new functioning institutions of the existing system, it will come to a point where it will as well shape their functioning norms. From the Chinese political leadership, so far, we have heard new principles and guidelines that could inform such potential new norms. China has expressed wishes and suggestions for the international system that speak of a harmonious world, a peaceful coexistence, a community of shared future, a democratic international relations, anti-hegemonic world, win–win cooperation, multilateralism, and so on. As stated earlier, one cannot but notice a trend in the content of these wishes and suggestions. One can also not see their grounding in a certain view of Confucianism about the community of human beings. And from the academic world, there have been so far, concepts and views, drawn from imperial ancient China and from Confucian teaching, which have suggested the grounding of China's poltical action, foreign policy and teleology, in Chinese metaphysics. Such concepts and views are relationalism, benevolent leadership, inclusiveness, neo-Tianxian world (all under heaven), hierarchical world, morality of power. And here as well, there is a noticeable theme. It is Confucian in its essence. It is about hierarchy, harmony, morality, benevolence. Those placed highest in the hierarchy have the obligation for benevolence and the duty of moral use of power for a harmonious and inclusive world in which all are shareholders and stakeholders of peace and prosperity.

These concepts, views, and principles are Confucian. China is however, Marxist communist as well and had embraced economic liberalism. These other two ideologies are grounded in their metaphysics; on one hand, the materialist and individualist liberalism and the materialist and collectivist Marxist communism. One is accepting of the market-produced inequality while the other promotes an egalitarian society. One is critical of the other. One is the institutional founding of the international capitalist order while the other is critical of such an order. China must find a way of blending all three social metaphysical ideologies. Blending Confucianism with liberalism is less of a daring task because of the pragmatism of the former. Indeed, the gulf separating liberalism from Confucianism is less deep than the one separating Marxist communism and economic liberalism. China has already succeeded in blending Marxism communism with economic liberalism. It has removed out of the way the contradiction between the individualism of liberalism and the collectivism of Marxist communism through a simple declaration by Deng Xiaoping[7] that it was beneficial for the collective if some individual got

7. Barry Naughton: "Deng Xiaoping: The Economist." *China Quarterly* 135, Special issues (September 1993): 491–514.

rich (*Rang yi bu fen ren xian fu qi lai*). He has in the process validated and nullified the critics against free market that Marxism sees as built on a premise of private ownership and source of inequality. It is seen by Deng Xiaoping, and all market advocates, as a distribution tool.

How seemingly smoothly that move in favor of free market went is in and by itself telling. It is telling of the social metaphysic of the traditional Chinese culture being confrontable with the idea of individual wealth. The resistance was to be found within the party not within the people. This speaks to the necessary distinction between the aspiration of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and that of the Chinese people and its traditional national culture. One is a relatively new phenomenon, while the other is anchored in millennia of history.

In the end, China uses the pragmatism of Confucianism as a bridge to reconcile the individualism of liberalism and the collectivism of communism. What in the end is China's national culture; and how it will inform its own culture of anarchy? It appears that China's culture of anarchy will be one, which sees the world as a whole. A world that offers an opportunity to foster prosperity for all (liberalism) in a peaceful, harmonious way and in which power is used morally (Confucianism), a democratic international relations, free from structures of domination (a key demand of Marxism communism).

11

China's Rise in the Prism of the English School

Previous chapters have looked into the contents of realism, liberalism, and constructivism as approaches to studying international relations to help us evaluate China's choices and behaviors as an international actor. I use international relations theory to find out whether the choices and behaviors we see from China entail novelty, particularities, and idiosyncrasies that had not yet been observed by such theoretical approaches. If such was the case, China would be enriching the field of international relations with possibilities above those in the content repertory of international relations theory. This perspective is informed by the assumption that China is susceptible of using its agential capacity as an international actor to surprise the world. This assumption is in turn inspired by the pragmatic attitude that China has exuded since its 1978 reforms.

Here I focus on China's choices and behavior to see how they reflect, vindicate, or reroute the English School approach to International relations. This approach to the study of international relations is more nuanced and encompassing in its assumptions. It is less dichotomist and revolves less around one key concept—for instance, the materiality of power or trade like realism and liberalism from which they derive the behavior of international actors, which behavior, they argue, is necessarily and naturally rational. Hence, the behavioral choice of international actors is not just driven by rational choices. The English School is

more about context and interpretation. Like how constructivism provided a good lens from which to understand China's pragmatism, the English School stands to be an even better lens from which to understand China's choice and behavior. The reason here is that China's pragmatism presupposes the understanding of the international world the way the English School describes it. And how does the English School describe the international world?

The English School understands the international world beyond its material and objective reality but also as through changes, context, construction, and interpretation. It sees the international world as a theater in which material factors (interest, power, trade, capabilities, etc.) and non-material factors (identity, morality, friendship, values, norms, rules, expectations, rights, intentions, etc.) have a role to play. The international world is historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, economic, and political. With such a perspective and starting point, the English School does not limit itself to positivist, deductive, or material approaches to understand and explain choices, behaviors, and attitudes. It takes into account the emotions of nations, so to speak, their intentions, their judgments, their appreciation, their sensitivity, and so on. Therefore, the English School believes that there is room, beyond explaining, for interpreting what is happening among international actors. The development or acquisition of a powerful weapon by the United Kingdom and the acquisition of the same weapon by China is differently interpreted by the United States. Therefore, the English School also believes that the international world is one that requires not just cognition but also emotion to understand.

The English School considers that, in the international world, there is enough of what happens in society in general and therefore prefers calling it the international society. It is a society whose members are states who interact through their officials, representatives, diplomats, and increasingly many other actors, such as firms, non-state actors, transnational actors, private organizations, and activists. These members are linked together through interests and values. The international society has laws—the international law. Its members recognize each other and respect each other, like it is required in society. They interact according to rules and expectations. Like in society, they establish norms. They follow regulations. These interacting state actors are sovereign and they have purpose, duties, and voluntarily refrain, even in time of wars (the Geneva Conventions). They have an identity. They are recognized by peers. They have certain rights. They recognize and agree with the need to respect each other's rights. They have created conditions under which they function. They have interest in the maintaining of the order they established because they benefit from stability and interdependence.

Furthermore, in this international society, state actors are not the only ones that matter. All other members and parts of the international society matter. Among them are the people. They are contributors to its existence, and they are deserving of the benefits it offers. Their happiness, security, peace, welfare, and rights ought to be protected and fostered.

But within the English School, the set of these acknowledged elements of the international society causes a problem of hierarchical order. It is principally the hierarchy between the rights of individuals in the international society and the recognition of sovereignty of state members. There are those who argue that rights of individuals anywhere in the international society ought to be upheld by all members, and consequently approve of interventionism in case of transgressions. There are those who argue that sovereignty is a key functional element of the international society and see interventionism as undermining the hierarchy. While the first insists on shared values, the latter argues that such shared values must not be understood fundamentally. The tension between these two perspectives justifies the existence of the *solidarist* and the *pluralist* perspectives within the School. We explore their repercussions with respect to China in the following segments.

In any case, the English School dissociates itself from the notion of the international system of states. I speak of international society. To nail down the difference between society and system, Bull (1977) argues that there are interactions in both. In systems, however, there lacks mutual recognition while there is mutual recognition in society among members. This mutual recognition induces mutual expectation. And while there are not necessarily shared rules and institutions in systems, there are shared rules and institutions in societies. One can naturally surmise that these practices within a society allow the emergence of a collectively shared identity. These practices also allow that a society is an improvement of a system. It is an improvement simply because the same complex functioning mechanism that occurs within a system occurs within a society, but the functioning in a society requires the additional general agential consent of members about the terms under which they interact. Such is not the case in mechanical or ecological systems.

In society, there is a need for interpretation because of the complexity of cultural contexts. Such is the case because of the subtleties, nuances, and grey areas of human behaviors, and eventually state behavior, as their actions are driven by ideational, non-material factors, such as intentions, prestige, respect, status (seeking status, protecting status), pride, sentiment of friendship, of enmities. These actions can cause a state to cut their friends some slack or to be severe with their foes, just like members of society would do. For instance, an increase in military

spending in a friendly state has a different appreciation than had it been in a rival state, simply because their intentions are appreciated differently, and consequently their implications. Clearly, these are relevant factors in the international realm. This realm therefore exudes features of a social cultural context. In this context, just as it is the case in society, the behaviors of actors require interpreting. Once again, while not denying the purely materialist self-interest-driven behavior of states, which justifies the acceptance of the notion of international system by the English School, it goes beyond that description to add a sociological and even psychological dimension. The English School, through some of its leading proponents, makes sure we understand the difference.

Bull and Watson (1984: 1) define such an international society as a:

> group of states (or more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculation of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest maintaining these arrangements.

The international society, as defined by the English School, is an advanced structure of the international system as understood by realism. Indeed, the realist's international system acknowledges a sphere of activity among states. In this functioning environment, however, states are advised to be on the lookout for the expected bad behaviors of states looking to take advantage of anarchy. The friendships and alliances are contemplated greatly with the intent of maximizing one's security and the chances for survival against such an ever-present threat. It is not much of a society, because these international states are not preoccupied with recognition of others as equal. The international society, as understood by the English School, is one in which there are interactions among mutually acknowledged peers for common purposes and in an order-negotiated framework. Members here develop shared values and identity. In this sense, liberalism, constructivism, and the English School operate more in the context of a society, while realism is comfortable with an international system. Therefore, there is no forming of societal values based on rights, recognition, justice, or shared interests in the international realm. In the realist system, the energy of active states internationally is not spent to create conditions for the emerging of a society of states (creation or norms, rules and institutions) for the conduct and regulation of behavior for the purpose of achieving common interests. That possibility is given if and when the most powerful state decides to use the preponderance of its capabilities to

create an order in which the ever-present threat is contained. In the end, society carries the idea of solidarity (in the collective enforcement and success of a common endeavor), while systems carry the idea of surviving functionality. While the international society promotes the conditions for fruitful interactions, the system focuses on the supply of order.

However, the English School is not dismissive of realism, nor is it dismissive of liberalism. In fact, it bridges these two theoretical approaches of international relations with considerations for new dimensions. The English School, like realism, recognizes the sphere at which, in the international system, states are relevant actors. And these states actually live in a context of anarchy, which renders Hobbes and Machiavelli's views of it relevant. It recognizes further a sphere in the international relations in which such states are members of an international society. In this international society, these member states are interested in cooperation, despite their self-interests (Suganami, 2013). I dare even say that states, therefore, cooperate because of self-interests. We know from liberal economics, and from Adam Smith in particular, that sometimes the best way to achieve one's self-interest is through the help of others. And self-interestedness is not the same as selfishness. The former is legitimate and can be pursued and achieved legitimately, without disadvantaging others, while the latter exclusively considers its own gain, regardless of the cost for others. Reason compels us to collaborate. In such cases, anarchy does not impede cooperation. It is the reason why states should cooperate; their self-interestedness renders that need imperative. This is one view within the international society proponents, which is known as pluralist. One can see here the English School's desire to bridge realism and liberalism justified. Therefore, states are rationally compelled to think of a mechanism-producing norms on the basis of which they cooperate. In this process, the views of Grotius are the inspiration, and they lead to the creation of international rules, which in turn produce principled intrernaiotnal agreements and regimes. It is the world of liberalism and the Lockean culture of anarchy (although not mentioned in the English School). As for the other view within the international society proponents, it is that of solidarists.

Solidarists focus on bridging the international society level (second sphere) with the third sphere (world society). They emphasize the relationship between an interdependent Lockean international society and the needs of the individuals of the globe. The interdependent world has an institutional international infrastructure that serves the rights, security, peace, and the pursuit of happiness for the world's citizens. They seek to bridge the Lockean and the Kantian cultures of anarchy. Solidarists also recognize the sphere of the people in international relations.

It is a sphere in which the people of the world are relevant. It is the transnational dimension of non-state actors, organizations, civil society, and the people of the world. It is, in other words, the world of republican liberalism. It is as well the level of a world society or global society. It finds its inspiration from Kant, and the Kantian cosmopolitan, and universalist understanding of a world citizenry. This level, called revolutionism by Martin Wight (1991), transcends the centrality of the state to look forward to the emergence of global societal identities.

The Solidarist and the Pluralist Perspectives

The English School presents two divergent answers for how the international society is formed, how it exists, and how it functions. The solidarist perspective, led by Martin Wight and R. J. Vincent,[1] is *value-oriented*. It posits that in order for the international society to exist and to function, shared culture and values among its members ought to be its prerequisite. The solidarist perspective seeks homogenized values and cultures of the members of such an international society. Vincent (1986)[2], for instance, argues that Human Rights ought to be shared universally and therefore interpreted universally. The argument of the solidarist perspective is ultimately that of a shared identity within members of the international society to be deservingly known as a society. Such a shared identity can only emerge through shared values, norms, and institutions. For now, the value basis of the international society is liberal. This value basis bears and induces norms reflective of its premise. They induce norms such as the consent of the people, democracy, respect for Human Rights, and so on. Such values would have to be universal for this prerequisite to have truly an international validity, and therefore be normative for the international society.

The case of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 debated how universal Human Rights really were. On the other hand, it has become more and more difficult to deny universally that human beings, wherever they may be, are not deserving of those thirty rights specified in the declaration of 1948. Although one or the other may have problems of universal acceptability, the idea of a human

1. Their contributions are to be found respectively in the following books: *International Relations Theory: The Three Traditions* and *Non-Intervention and International Relations Order*, as well as *Human Rights in International Relations*.
2. In his book: *Human Rights in Intenraiotnsl Relations*, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

deserving fundamental rights is very well universal. This is to say that there is room for this solidarist perspective to grow and improve if it has, as prerequisite, adhesion to the values of liberalism. Until there is a universal acceptance of values and norms of the liberal order, in all its facets, there will be a few roadblocks to the building of an inclusive, solidarist international society. The roadblocks are caused by varying value systems and their validity criteria from various members of the international society. Positing the notion of shared norms as a prerequisite for social society poses a number of issues. Among such issues are the implications of shared norms. Vincent (1974) advocates for the need to uphold such norms so much that it can lead to interventions. Among such issues are the claim of cultural pluralism and their legitimate rights to autonomous cultural values and their norms, which may or may not harmonize with those of liberalism.

There are as well within the English School those who seem to have realized the problem of the solidarist perspective. They constitute the pluralist perspective. They argue that shared norms and culture must not be prerequisite. They argue that for the existence and functioning of an international society, it suffices that potential members adhere to a set of rules, principles (sovereignty, non-interference, etc.), and standards of behavior. Unlike the solidarist perspective, which is value-oriented, the pluralist perspective is *behavior oriented*. It requires a minimum of necessary but sufficient code of conduct. To this end, institutions are created to ensure adoption and practice of rule-conformed behavior. Members, recognizing each other's existence and interacting (through diplomacy) in an orderly fashion, are glued together by institutional rules for a common interest. From the pluralist perspective, such a society must not pre-require adhesion to same values.

The pluralist perspective does have a low-entry barrier to members integrating the international society. It should be mentioned here that all states are *ipso facto* members of the international society, once admitted in the United Nations and having interactions with other nations. Interacting with other members presupposes recognition, which is a feature of belonging to society. Here, the notion of integrating the international society implies all those features but only to a larger scale. China was recognized as state and a member of the international society before 1978, but has since become a much better recognized member. The scale of recognition as a member by other members of the international society is to the determinant of membership in the international society. It is evidenced through diplomatic presence and activity, high profile foreign visits into and from other nations, participation in international gatherings, memberships in international and multilateral organizations, and so on.

The pluralist perspective, therefore, is functionally rational and essentialist. It is attractive as it extends adhesion into the international society to all potential members. It is not predicated on the values and norms of the most powerful members, even though such powerful members can still influence the rest. It does not require subscribing to values and norms. This pluralist perspective does not put the burden of carrying the functioning of the international society on the shoulders of one individual state member, and therefore it can survive the inability of such a member to promote it. An argument has been made that liberalism, because it entails many fundamentally universalist elements, such as the pursuit of happiness, prosperity, freedom, self-determination, equality of rights, already carried the seed of pluralism for both a national and an international society. It is an argument articulated in an earlier chapter, formulated by Ikenberry (2008), that liberalism did leave room for any addition into the international society. Liberalism has stood the test of time, increasing adhesion to its societal functioning principles. It has absorbed into the liberal order successively, formally decolonizing nations that turned into developing nations and that now drive global economic neoliberalism. Liberalism has absorbed former Soviet republics as well as eastern European nations. From the pluralist perspective, China and Sweden are members of the same international society as India and Pakistan, because they can interact within it based on a necessary minimal consensus on the functioning principles of the international society. After all, not even in society must everyone agree on everything with the rest of its members. The solidarist perspective of the School argues that if China and Sweden can interact without shared values, they must be members of a system but not of a society (Bull, 1977), which they see only existing when the degree of identification with others is maximal not minimal.

There are, within fully integrated members of the international society, different degrees of commitment to liberal values. There are undeniably limited shared values or identity between Singapore and Sweden. That is a feature of the international society. There are different degrees of commitment to the norm of democracy. It is practiced with various degrees of openness and credibility. Malaysia, Singapore, and Angola are democracies that claim the mantle of democratic rule just as the United Kingdom, Italy, and Brazil. The same observation is valid for other values and norms of liberalism. For instance, the commitment of members to Human Rights, equal justice, civil rights, civil liberties, equal access to the justice system, and the independence of the justice system are applied in various degrees in all the member states. The applications of their norms varies substantially to allow a differentiation among states—some being full democracies, others being

flawed democracies, hybrid, or even democratically authoritarian. Such different degrees of commitment to the norm and the different expressions of democracy they produce is the product of the conditions under which they are practiced. Participation and representativity bring together opinion and policy, argues Soroka and Wlezien (2010). Such conditions in which democracy is practiced are reflective of the cultures and histories of the respective states. Because the cultures and histories are diverse, the application of democratic norms is likewise diverse. The application of these norms depends on cultural sensibilities. If liberalism has a foe it is cultural sensibilities and values. And China, like many other states, can resort to cultural sensibilities to argue that their norms are essential and supersede the non-essential norms of liberalism. Not all liberalist norms are fundamentally applied in the diverse cultures of the international society.

States' members integrating into the international society do so while bearing their pre-existing values. These values have their origin in traditional customs, and traditions precede modernity. If modernity truly starts with the Enlightenment Movement, which produced the values of liberalism, then traditions and customs are pre-modern, unenlightened, and fundamentally parochial. This means they have no universal claim and are locally anchored. They are reinforced by an inter-subjective adhesion. They are often justified by a metaphysical reasoning, which escapes the pure argument of reason. This means that they are not validated by reason, because they are a product of an era before reason, before the enlightenment and its liberalist norms and its validity criteria. Such validity criteria of liberalism often defy traditional customs and anything else that fueled them, such as beliefs and religions. This process of defying traditional pre-modern customs has occurred in the West and has produced what German sociologist Max Weber (1905)[3] has called emancipation or secularization and separation of Church and state. As a result, the public sphere fell into the domain of governed constitutions and the legislative process.

The legislative process achieved both the submission of culture and religion to reason and the modernization of culture, accelerated by the rationality of the capitalist mode of production and economics. This means that traditional cultures of the West have gone through the transformation induced by a process of rationalization, as described by Max Weber. The process has not produced the disappearance of traditional customs or religion in the West. It has rather produced their

3. Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, originally published in 1905, of which many other editions exist, among them one by Dover Publications in 2003.

recompilation with the exigencies of the enlightened world of liberalism. It also means that traditional cultures and religions are not irreconcilably enemies of the Enlightenment or of liberalist principles. In a number of non-Western cultures this process of reconciling traditional cultures with the exigencies of modernity has been underway. It is happening at different paces and is processed differently, as the exigencies of modernity, which occur through absorption into modern economic life, take root in different degrees in the vast world of non-Western nations. In this process, the roadblock is often the difficulty of traditional values and their validity to cede the way to the enlightened principles of liberalism. In the best case, as it was the case with Japan, they will enter into modernity while reconciling their traditional values with it. China will certainly succeed in doing the same. Where such a process has been shoved down the throat of non-Western nations, it has been counterproductive or it has had only epidemic adhesion and superficial acceptance.

A cross-fertilization of the traditional values and the values of enlightened liberalism has to occur. If not, one hinders the other. In non-Western cultures, it is traditional values that are the nemesis of the non-essentialist values and norms of liberalism, and therefore by extension of the notion of international society. The attractiveness of liberalism, namely its ability to foster economic prosperity and to serve as organizing principle of modern societies, is adhered to in non-Western states. But such adhesion does not extend to non-essential norms, often cultural in nature. Many of the values and norms found in Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, and other religions—worldviews or belief systems, for instance—may not cave to Western ideology, and therefore help the pluralist perspective of the English School to prevail over the solidarist perspective.

Indeed, this process of integration and the necessity of shared liberalist values may not remain one-sided. The established West has been increasingly held accountable to the same exigencies of liberalism as it has withheld liberal rights and full representativity in the most important institutions of liberalism to non-Western members. The pushback from non-Western members still continues. These non-Western members are many in number and in population. As their capabilities continue to grow, they will either fully embrace liberalism or get a chance to challenge it. In the first case, liberalism would have stood the test of time and proven its universal claim. In the other case, a new order with new values will emerge. Next to inclusion in the international society, there is hierarchy. Member states naturally find themselves alongside others, each with various degrees of capabilities, wealth, status, and influencing power. These determining factors of hierarchy within the international society grow or shrink. In the process, they

induce a shift in the standing of state members. The West has dominated this hierarchy of world member states as far back as the start of the modern era. We have had states such as Portugal, the Dutch, Spain, the United Kingdom, and France led the hierarchy during the mercantile period and colonization. We have had the United Kingdom, the United States, and other Western states at the head of the hierarchy since the industrial era. Recent shifts have improved the standing of a number of non-Western state members. We now witness the improvement of the emerging markets of China, India, Brazil, South Africa, the rising South East Asia, and Turkey. They have been surpassing or closing the gap between themselves and the members of the G7 (Italy, France, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany). In fact, the weight of Europe now lies in the European Union, not in its individual members. It seems as if only the United States still maintains the influence it acquired since the industrial period. As such a hierarchical shift continues to favor rising state members from the non-Western world, it opens the possibility for a re-evaluation of some aspects of the notion of shared values in the international liberal society.

Indeed, while the greatest ally of liberalism and the international society is the prosperity of economic liberalism, its greatest foe is the power of entrenched cultural values found in many non-Western members. As a result, we often have adhesion to economic liberalism before adhesion to political liberalism. Where political liberalism is embraced, it often is practiced with degrees of commitment. The two examples that come to mind are China and Russia. Political liberalism, despite the rationality of democratic rule and the rule of law does not seem to be the option which people naturally gravitate towards. Historically, political liberalism has come about after much trouble, revolutions, wars, destruction, and decay as a means of last resort. Often, there is a cultural tradition causing resistance against it.

It is culture that justifies the emerging expressions of liberalism. Because the pluralist perspective of the international society is essentialist, it allows a variety of expressions to individual members and thereby produces a multifaceted liberalism worldwide. Multi-liberalism is therefore the variety of degrees at which a state applies the values or provisions of liberalism. We already have various cultures of economic liberalism. We also already have such various expressions of democracies. Liberalism will be increasingly approving of different degrees of value, depending on culture. This will move the understanding of liberalism away from its Western center. Just as economic liberalism may soon change its epicenter, liberalism as an idea may acquire new substance if and when reinterpreted by the many cultures of the international society. Because the pluralist perspective of the

English School focuses on international behavior, and as long as an essentialist code of functional behavior is upheld by all members, such multifaceted expressions of liberalism is possible in the international society.

How Does China Fit the Lens of the English School?

What does the English School say about China? The School naturally worries about the ability of China to fit into the international society because of its communist identity. It presents an ideological barrier to shared identity with communist member states. China may not share the prevalent norms of liberalism. Although it currently shares the norms of economic pursuit of prosperity, it does not share liberalism's ideational values and norms. The norms in question are those of democratic rule and Human Rights. This is the view of Buzan (2010).[4] China, he argues, will have to either accept such norms or change them. This, of course, could cast doubt on the Chinese notion of a peaceful rise. Buzan's appreciation of China's situation is reflective of the taxonomy of Western epistemic culture. Its deductive logic allows Buzan to present just that choice to China: to either attempt to change the norms of the international society or change its own identity. The notion of identity convergence or identity confrontation is here the issue. But is it that simple? Is it this Manichean? Is it an either/or proposition to integrating the international society? China has been a member of the international society but it did not start that way.

There was a time where the West undermined China's own sovereignty. It was a time of extraterritorial treaties, more precisely the one of Nanking which lasted until 1942. There was a time when China's seat at the United Nations was occupied by Taiwan until October 1971 through UN General Assembly Resolution 2758. There was a time when China's communist identity was an issues and a cause of its isolation. And there was the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, which was used by the West to renew the threat of isolation. All these incidents are a testimony to the English School notion of international society. They remind us that states are members of a society, in which fellow members play a role by recognizing one another. They play a role in accepting each other's sovereignty, rights to exist, and their rights as members. Through this process they establish a context in which they function. Their behavior affects others and draws reactions,

4. Hung-Jen Wang paraphrasing Barry Buzan: *The Rise of China and Chinese International Relations Scholarship*. Lexington Books, 2013, p. 46.

depending on whether they adhered to shared norms, values, interest, and identity. China has been vulnerable to this practice of the international society, but China has also changed since 1978.

China's change, like in many cases, started with an awakening, a realization of a need. China needed to reverse the course of its history that it had been going down since its communist independence. As stated, it changed a few practices, a few norms, and acquired new values and principles of liberal states, economically. By so doing, China was halfway toward the convergence of its identity in order to enter the international institutional liberal world. It now shares a materialist identity with the liberal world, but still does not share the ideational identity of the liberal world. China has partially converged, and it has not been confrontational. It now shares the norms, the institutions, and the interest of the economic liberal order with the rest of its members. The fact that it has yet to fully combine its ideational value system with those of democracy and Human Rights remains potentially a cause of concern for its full membership in the international society. However, having successfully integrated one side of the liberal institutional order by creating new institutions, actively participating multilateral organizations, signing multiple bilateral agreements with many other members, and gaining recognition, China has solidified its membership in the international society—to the point that the West would have a much tougher time threatening its exclusion. What was possible for the West in 1989, the last time it threatened China with isolation, is less evident twenty years later, and as China's influence continues to grow, it will become unthinkable in a few years from now.

For China, and for a number of other non-Western nation-states, membership in the international society from the perspective of solidarists poses a bit of a problem. It poses a problem of potentially undermining sovereignty if international norms ought to be shared. If they were to be shared, they may reduce the ability of states to make their own choices and, instead, induce interference from the outside. It also poses a problem of undermining cultural autonomy, which may then be supplanted by international norms produced by liberalism. It finally poses a problem of having to accept the precondition of adhering to liberalist norms, whichever they are, before integrating into the international society, as if such preconditions were naturally and objectively inherent to the idea of international society. As a result, China fears that such expectations of the solidarist perspective dilutes substantially the particular identity of individual members and reduces agential capacity vis-à-vis the structure, which is the international society. Furthermore, China notes that, in this international society, the norms are established by the West. This does not make them unacceptable, but it does open the

possibility that they are only reflecting of the values of a specific culture or identity. If the West is enamored with economic norms of laissez-faire, those found in the prescriptions of Washington Consensus, then those norms will become labeled internationally shared norms and are easily "shoved down the throat" of new members. With respect to East Asia, this approach has been identified as the cause of their financial crisis in 1998. As for values and norms, namely democratic rule and Human Rights, China continues to argue that, because they are matters under state sovereignty prerogatives, the international system ought not to interfere. China worries that insisting state members of the international society homogenize their identity is a euphemism for adopting Western values. China has its own different and distinct remedies and sees no reason why they should take a second seat.

The solidarist perspective starts with an all-or-nothing attitude. Potential members have to share the existing values of the international society or risk exclusion. The solidarist perspective starts with a premise of non-negotiability or non-immovability of existing norms and assumes that they either have to be accepted as such or changed, implying that if China wanted to change them, it will have to do so using its power. But force is not the only factor that changes norms. The implication of power to change norms supposes an international system governed by the will of the hegemon. This is an argument from the realist perspective. The English School argues that social practices are as well in action in the international society, which means that China ought to envisage the possibility of a change of values or culture of members, or even a change of collective identity. Norms can change, either through the impetus of the hegemonic power (realism) or through the changing identity, values of members, and the changing cultures and norms of the international society. Integrating the international society should not be the equivalent of integrating the European Union. Integrating the international society should leave room for all members. This implies the possibility of incoming members to influence future norms of the international society. This also implies that the establishment of norms is a process that remains in flux and not fixedly Western, unless such is the end product of a consenting process among members.

Qin (2010) and other Chinese scholars have pointed out that the current norms of the international society are not its inherent norms, as they are constructed by the West, which was in the position of influencing the international societal order. This means that, because Western norms are not inherent to the international society, new norms or other norms can come in to replace old ones. Two arguments speak in favor of this possibility. The first suggests that norms,

rules, institutions, and everything in society are fluid. They can change. The second suggests that they also change through the impetus of the most influential state member, the hegemonic power, if it succeeds in garnering support to its initiative. Therefore, the dynamic of the changing world today may produce a need for new norms tomorrow. In the consideration or establishment of new norms, the impetus of the rising influence of non-Western members could infuse the international society with new normative suggestions.

The rising influence of China may offer an opportunity for such a contribution. It may occur just as the realist approach suggests, through the use of influence by the state with a preponderance of capabilities with which it may induce the establishment of new values, norms, rules, principles, and institutions. It can as well occur, as the English School argues, through a process of interactions among members with interests, intentions, and objectives, in which their behaviors mirror those observed in society as they become regulated both by the system and the watchful eyes of other members. In this context, there is room for individual state members to improve their stock, status, recognition, and influence. China is currently thriving in this context.

China simply uses the flexibility of its pragmatism to navigate within the entrenched structures of the liberal order without being unnecessarily held back by the rigidity that seems to characterize the behavior of Western state members of the international society. China does not seem to categorize members into friends and foes. China does not impose preconditions to befriend other members. China does not insist on converting others to its beliefs. China raises its stock, status, recognition, and influence by attracting and facilitating the friendship of many member states in the system who resent being pressured. It does that by focusing on the materialism of liberalism and the ability of liberalism to foster economic prosperity. From there, once established, it can start influencing the consideration of or adoption of new norms, rules, institutions, and possibly a new identity. Yes, indeed the international society is fluid, even its norms, and, therefore, they ought not to be elevated as prerequisite to integrating into the international society, as the solidarist perspective of the English School posits.

From the Chinese perspective, the solidarist perspective of the English School aliments the emerging Chinese scholarship in international relations. It gives reason to lament. Qin (2010), for instance, does not hesitate to see this premise as typically Western. It is taxonomic. It is deductive. It is taxonomic because it insists on putting labels to entities in order to decipher their properties, which produces a Manichean situation. Different entities behave distinctly, and potentially contradictorily, which often leads to exclusivity as a conclusion. What Qin deplores

is that the properties assigned to these entities, even when they are not natural entities, acquire an objective and therefore natural quality, which is misleading because such qualities of non-natural entities are not objectively natural. The process is valid for a natural object, like ascribing to water the propriety of fluidity. Yes, water is fluid as a matter of fact but there is nothing factual about constructed, unnatural objects, like states or the international society. Qin deplores such taxonomy because it gives to unnatural entities objective proprieties, which falsely disarms or strips agents from the capacity to question or alter the entities that have been deemed possessing object-like proprieties.

Here, like realism sees the international system as an objective entity, the solidarist perspective of the English School sees the value of the international society as an objective entity. Hence, integrating or incorporating the international society leaves no other choice but to adhere to its values. The values of the current international society are deemed as inherent to the international society itself. Applying the same taxonomy to state members means that they are entities of the international society whose proprieties (national identity) should explain their behavior. The difference in their identity or proprieties explains how and when their behavior harmonizes or collides. This approach predicts, therefore, harmonious behavior between state members who share the same proprieties and predicts conflicts between those whose proprieties dictates behavior that will likely collide. In other words, the United Kingdom and France are states with the same identity (shared values). Their behavior should harmonize, or converge to use the terminology of Buzan. He sees in this convergence a non-Western values converging to Western (Vanguardism). On the other hand, between Communist China and Sweden, whose national identities are simply non-shared values, conflict is expected. Qin sees that this reasoning does not take into account the possibility of cultural encounters. It does not take into account the synthesizing of various values (syncretism) to truly become international. Qin deplores this lack of ability to imagine syncretism. It is the inability to attempt to reconcile the ego with the alter, a mindset otherwise in practice in East Asia. *Alter* is not meant to be dissociated from *ego*, but both *ego* (one member's values) and *alter* (the other member's values) are parts of the international society. Qin laments and points to the conflict dialectic underpinning of Western intellectual and analytical processes (clash of civilizations, revisionist-status quo powers, etc.) and leaves no room for alternative scenarios or outcomes. Qin (2010:138) writes:

> Society is not a self-enclosed, self-contained entity. Rather, it is a process of complex social relations in motions. Rules, regimes, and institutions are not

> established to govern or restrain the behavior of individual actors in society, but to harmonize relations among members of society.

Qin (2010) simply opposes the understanding of the role of rules, norms, and institutions in society as not restrictors but as harmonizers. From this vintage point, the focus is not on the potentially disruptive difference or even the incompatibility of members' behaviors, but rather on harmonizing them while finding their expressions in society.

The solidarist perspective, emphasizing shared values, is being vanguardist in that regard in favor of liberal democratic values and norms. Such values and norms are the product of Western hegemonic leadership, precisely that of the United States. This perspective therefore must assume that, if and once the hegemonic leadership of the West loses its ability to influence the international society, its values may as well cease to be prevalent. This is the argument of realism with respect to hegemonic transition theory. It is an argument which must inherently accept the possibility of the demise of the prevalent values of the international society, if such values prevail because of the identity or political will of the hegemonic power. The solidarist perspective, therefore, is predicated on the notion of values of the hegemonic power, because, in order for such values to constitute the norms of the international society, they must have been elevated into that normative status by the hegemonic power. This explains why international orders live and die with the hegemonic powers that have instituted them. Given the chance of rising to such hegemonic status, any other power would take its turn. Should that state be China or another other, the world should gear up to an international society whose shared values and their norms would be those promoted by China. Predicating the functioning of the international society on the values of hegemonic powers is an inherent weakness of the solidarist perspective, unless it premises that the values promoted by the hegemonic power are inherently universal and consensual.

For now, the solidarist perspective expects integrating members to adhere to the republican and liberalist values while interacting with each other. This requirement in some ways defeats the purpose of liberalism, if indeed it is predicated on individual expressions of freedom of choices or decisions. The choice and decision to embrace liberalism ought to incumbent upon the individual or the nation, rationally entitled to that decision. Indeed, they are naturally free and they naturally (in the sense that they exist prior to that order, and because they are autonomous and sovereign) possess that right to choose. Not choosing the values of the international society is itself an act of liberalism because it is an expression

of rights and of the freedom of choice. Forcing the values of an international order onto prospective members is hegemonic. It undermines self-determination, resulting in an anti-liberalist outcome. Furthermore, those who self-determinately have refused to be pressured to subscribe to it often eventually resist hegemony. To render such a necessity of resisting hegemonic order, liberalist or not, is what the pluralist perspective achieves. The pluralist perspective says that it is not necessary for prospective members of the international society to be liberalist in their values, provided they agree to common rules for a common interest.

The solidarist perspective risks becoming hegemonic while trying to ensure that the international society does not become one in which sheep and wolves room in the same pasture. This means having an international society in which one finds communists, dictatorial governments, nondemocratic governments, tyrannies, and fascist together with republican, democratic, and liberalist states. The danger here is not primarily that the wolves will destroy the sheep, as realists argue. The solidarist perspective simply argues that sheep and wolves cannot be part of a same herd because of their nature. They would not properly function together. The dialectic process would require elimination of the contradiction through a production of a synthesis: either one will cede the ground (after annihilation or surrender) or they all become either wolves or sheep. From this perspective, as Buzan argued, China had better adjust or stay out.

For China, membership in the international society naturally makes more sense from the pluralist perspective. It assumes that potential members are not uniform, and that the international society is not homogenous. If it is international, it is necessarily heterogeneous with respect to the identity of its members. Erecting adhesion to norms that have been established without the consent of many of potential members and requiring that they subscribe poses a problem. Granted that norms governing the behavior of members already exist as new members integrate society, such norms ought to remain flexible enough to allow reflecting changes to occur within the society. And such changes can include taking into account the sensitivities of new members. If norms exist in the first place, they do because they have been constructed, not because they are objectively inherent to the international society.

Under the pluralist perspective, integrating the international society requires adherence to a code of behavior, which any rational state member would find acceptable. Such a code of behavior is essentialist. It does not require any shedding of an existing identity. In this scenario, France, like China or Malaysia, can become members with the distinctness of their states or national identities (corporate and collective). It means that shared identity is not a prerequisite but a consequence of

integrating into the international society. Indeed, each of these members has developed an additional identity to interact with others internationally. Interacting internationally produces cultural practices responsible for the formation of shared values, norms, and ultimately shared identity. In other words, the production of shared values, norms, interests, and identity in the international society occurs outside the national or state identity. The national identity of member states is less relevant because others only experience it internationally. Therefore, only its international behavior is relevant, and, unlike the solidarist perspective which sees the international society as an objective entity, the pluralist perspective sees the international society as a process.

Like the pluralist perspective, China argues that no society, national or international, is homogenous. The danger that heterogeneity of state members within the international society brings can be dealt with through adhesion to common rules, which China has demonstrated since 1978. It is the harmonization requirement. As we have established, adhering to the provisions of liberalism does not necessarily produce homogenization. The various provisions of liberalism can be applied with individual states' connotation and accents, just like most national economies today practicing economic liberalism do so with their own sensitivities, reflecting their own sensibilities. It explains why Sweden, Japan, and Italy have markedly different liberalist cultures than Singapore, Malaysia, the United States, and Germany.

China, while integrating into the international society and its liberal values, has made adjustments to its economic liberalism, which differs from those of other states. China has integrated into the international society, making the adjustments that are required to function as a member without caving in to all the expectations of the solidarist perspective. This is in fact the argument laid out by Buzan (2010), who argues that it was relatively easy for China to adjust and accept the Westphalia institutions of sovereignty, diplomacy, and balance of power, but it is not ready yet to accept the institutions such as Human Rights and democracy. From China's perspective, the pluralist perspective of the English School is accommodating. It agrees with China's desire to integrate into the international society while remaining the state whose identity cannot, and should not, become one with that of any European state in the name of a solidarist international society. China's understanding of the basis of the international society is acceptance of behavior-based institutions rather than value-oriented institutions (Qin, 2010).

China is not ready to renounce its historical, political, or regime identities simply because it has become a member of the international society. China believes, like the pluralist perspective of the English School, that there is no authority

given to determine eligibility for international society membership. It believes that there is no legitimate ground for expecting that such integration should require adhesion to norms that go beyond the essentialist rational code of behavior necessary for the functioning of the international society. Any requirement that goes beyond is vanguardist. It is hegemonic. It goes against the established notion of sovereignty and non-interference, which itself ought to be an integrant part of the functioning norms of the international society. China has integrated into the international society on the basis of the pluralist perspective. As member, it is called upon to participate in the always-in-motion process of establishing new shared values, norms, interests, and identity. And this process is dialectic.

Qin argues that China does not see any dialectic process as conflictual. It sees such a dialectic process as complementary. Qin sees here, again, a difference between the Chinese cultural intellectual tradition and the West. This means that China, like any other state member of the international society, can be different, culturally or otherwise, and that handling this process therefore consists of reconciling such differences rather than declaring them as causes of conflict. He argues that this Chinese perspective is relational and focuses on actors in those relations. Hall and Ames (1998) describe the same attitude or intellectual tradition as correlational. They focus on interactions that exist and must exist between entities that differ. Drawing from nature, Qin (2010: 138) states "even pairs of opposites interact in the world—in an interdependent and complementary way." The reason being is, he argues, that "one cannot exist without the other, because one creates conditions for the formation, existence, and transformation of the other."

Drawing from the existence of many opposing entities in nature that nevertheless interact, Qin suggests that their interactions created conditions under which they can be transformed. This notion of transformation is very Confucian. It is as well applicable to the social sciences. Constructivism and the English School agree that identity is fluid. It can be transformed, and the best way through which transformation of entities occurs is through interactions with others. Both constructivism and the English School speak of cultural practices that imply recognition and that create anticipation, and that is the process through which identity changes.

The Chinese perspective, therefore, is that, if a state transformation is going to occur, it does so by interacting with others. Here again, interaction with others precedes future change of identity, as such interactions are themselves venues through which values and interests are redefined or readjusted. And to interact one only needs to accept the person that they are interacting with. They must not fully be in agreement on their initial values before interacting. Such a requirement

can only be a prerequisite if no interaction is possible prior, but it must not be as entities, or states will influence each other while interacting and form a shared identity as a post facto outcome. As interactions and the relations they create are dynamic, so will be the identities they produce.

It is as well a fact that interacting members within a society do not do so from a clean slate. They are already part of an existing society with established norms. The integration of a new member, therefore, proceeds through a process of adhering to existing norms. The manner and intensity of the adhesion to existing norms is imperative and constitutes a ground upon which the English School has different views. There is as well in such society in which a member integrates pre-existing institutions. This means that the question of accepting and adhering to the existing institutions is as well part of the integration process. China's done just that since its reform. It has adjusted to harmonize its economic interests with those of the rest of the rest of the international society. But it has not harmonized its values; that, as the pluralist perspective argues, is not a prerequisite to integrate into the international society.

China sees itself as fully in the process of integrating the international society. China has changed since its reform. It may change again, but so could the other states as they enter in relations with each other. Indeed, relations imply adjustments to partners, and they even induce an anticipation of responses because of established precedence, culture, norms, practice standards, etc., that generally emerge in cases of engaging relationships. China is demonstrating how you integrate into the international society, as described by the pluralist perspective of the English School through improving the quality of its relations with the rest of the state members on the basis of essential features of the liberal institutional order. Here and there China contributes to the overall functioning of the international society and in a non-intrusive way with limited new idea proposals. But China relies more on its ability to make friends to improve its influence and institutionalize its role that China has made use of the international society. In this process, its success lies in its focus on the harmonization of differences rather than seeking homogenization. The West has been known throughout the modern history to seek homogenization, but it simply meant that other, non-Western members were expected to adjust. It occurred through processes of colonization, imperial conquests, exercises of hegemony, and through the use of international aid to spread the will of the West. As long as colonized societies were poor, weak, and less-advanced in many ways, they had reason to doubt their own abilities and worthiness, compared to the West. They could doubt their own values. The West, and the post-colonial and post–World War II liberal order have attempted to induce

their integration in the terms of the solidarist perspective, namely as liberally Western, in values and interest. China has integrated in interests but not in values.

Even in those historical circumstances during which the West was considerably more powerful, the values and cultures of the non-Western societies endured. And now they have learned to use the ability of the liberal economic system to generate wealth. The tremendous transformation that had occurred in a number of these nations is documented by their economic growth and their growing presence in the G20 and beyond. As some among them become wealthier, stronger, and more competitive, they grow consciously confident in their own judgment in selectively picking the values and policy to make theirs. This process will not reflect the solidarist perspective, but the pluralist perspective. A number of societies and states, the most important among them, as it is, are not participating in the international society homogenizing with the Western liberalism.

Interacting with the world under the assumption of harmonization means that China can live with the different national and state identities of the various members of the international society and can live as well with the norms of the current international society in so far as they are pluralists. Society does not need to fulfill the requirement of homogenization, which is implied by the solidarist perspective of the English School to function. After all, modern societies, and more so modern state societies or republican societies, are essentially pluralistic. They are in fact pluralist in the diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicity, life styles, and so on. It is such a plurality of human expressions that is both recognized by, and reflected in, the premise of liberalism. Modern societies are therefore republican, governed by the rule of law as they seek to reflect such premise of liberalism—namely equality of rights and innate freedom. However, as stated earlier, different states around the world are nationally republican and liberalist at various degrees.

To close the views of the English School with respect to China, I must as well invoke the world society sphere of its analysis. It sees a dimension of citizens of the world involvement in the conduct of the world affairs. They are involved through their ability to influence their respective governments, through their ability to interact with others around the world, and through their ability to form civil societies and non-governmental organizations with a stake in world affairs. In the process, they contribute to the emerging of cross-national values, norms, and culture. This revolutionist and cosmopolitan perspective is less of a factor in China, where citizens have only recently been enjoying the benefit of exposure to the rest of the world. The state itself is making its first steps in that regard after years of the self-imposed isolation of the Communist Party. Some aspects of civil

rights are still limited. Access to the Internet is still controlled by the government. The emergence of a civil society is co-opted and supplanted by the Communist Party. These constraints limit the ability of the people of China to freely exchange, participate, and contribute to the forming of values that ought to form the basis of a world citizenry. The idealism of the revolutionist and cosmopolitan perspective remains far from reality in the liberal world and its citizens that have been integrating for years.

Through its leaders, China has articulated a few ideas and thoughts that seem to embrace the idealistic views and perspectives of the world society and of a cosmopolitan world. Many pronouncements of the leaders of the Chinese government and Communist Party have spoken of democratic international relations. They have spoken of a peaceful coexistence. More recently, in November 2, 2017, during the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly's First Committee of Disarmament and International Security, the Chinese President Xi Jinping, like he already did at the Devos World Economic Forum, spoke on the subject of the arms race in outer space and expressed the idea of a shared future to all mankind. Although the speech sought to avoid an arms race, as the UN resolution was called "No first placement of weapons in outer space," the notion itself addresses a sense of shared responsibility for the future of the planet and its inhabitants. This is an additional thought in the edifice of growing consciousness in a shared fate for mankind. From there, following steps to cement such an idea can only be advancing the notion of a world society.

But whether the world will become one world society, in the cosmopolitan sense of the word, and in which all people enjoy the same rights of being world citizens, it appears to be, for now, an idealistic goal. Like any idealistic goal, it is left to the dreamers, those who are discontent of the roughness, imperfections, and shortcomings of the reality of the moment. However, time and time again, these dreamers have lived to see their idealistic goals become reality. There is a process underway—globalization—which may lead to such an idealistic one-world scenario. Should it happen, individual peoples of the world, the organizations they have created, the relationships they have produced, and the intensity of exchanges and the culture that will be induced will be the engine of such a cosmopolitan world. People will have to demand such a world. States would take steps to commensurate with the utility, and therefore meet the demands of their people. When such demands grow to require a world society, it will happen. States therefore are not thought to be the generators of a world society. States themselves will be but the facilitators of it. It is the reason that no state has been leading the way.

As established earlier, China is in a state of discomfort with the realist persecution of the international system while acknowledging the pertinence of its state of anarchy. It finds some comfort with the English School, which has the same degree of discomfort with realism but eases the discomfort with the addition of the notion of the international society. The English School alleviates China's discomfort as it speaks of shared values, norms, rules, interests, and identity among members who have integrated the international society on the basis of the pluralistic assumption.

The English School in international relations theory gives to China's scholarship and Chinese politics a lot to work with and a lot to like. It is primarily the second sphere of the English School, which views the international realm as a societal realm. And yes, in society there are reasons the selfish human nature, yet there is cooperation because of shared identity and shared interests. Also, despite anarchy that may induce predatory behavior in international relations, which realism warns about, states choose to cooperate because of its benefits. They do not spend their time starting wars against each other. Like the English School, China welcomes the possibility of cooperation through trade for prosperity that liberalism focuses on. Like the English School, China seems to view the international realm as an international society, as understood by the pluralist perspective, as a variety of its leaders call for a harmonious coexistence of states. China is aware, counts on the sociological attributes, and practices in the international society to advance its objectives. China utilizes tools of diplomacy, cooperation, and soft power—which imply interpretative communication, exchanges by representatives, and fostered sociological benefits of recognition, understanding, acknowledgment, expectations, friendship, and even consideration and affection. They are tools that differ from those utilized by states that view the international realm primarily as a system wrought in anarchy. Those who view the international realm as a system of states rather than a society utilize the tools of threat and incentives. Even diplomacy is a tool utilized to that end as Carl von Clausewitz (1832)[5] once argued.

By understanding the international realm as an international society, China counts on developing friendships, sharing interests, sharing norms, mutual respect, recognition, non-interference, sharing institutions, and harmonizing disputes. All of these aspirations are best achieved through diplomacy and soft

5. Carl von Clausewitz's original work published in 1832 but various versions exist namely the one published by the Floating Press in 2010.

power. Diplomacy and soft power imply interactions. They are, therefore, social practices in the international society. Through them, China has been making considerable gains—improving ties, recognition by peers, and influence among them. These are benefits that brings the perception of the international realm as a society. They are benefits that come without the entanglements that a realist binary view of the international realm. This binary view and its entanglements have been demonstrated the cases of the US foreign policy in Afghanistan, and Iraq. China seems to be in a process of developing an understanding of the international realm as a system that operate without ideological a priori. It is designed to increase the ranks of friends and reduce that of foes. China is cultivating the art of winning friends because, like the English School, it understands the international system as an international society.

China knows too well the significance of the societal dimension of the international realm. It was kept out of it a few times in its modern history. It was, at a few occasions, humiliated, excluded, isolated, and exorcised. As mentioned earlier, China was forced to sign eight extraterritorial treaties with Western colonial powers. China was denied full sovereignty until the end of the Treaty of Nanking in 1942. China was denied full representation of its seat at the United Nations until 1971. After the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, China was isolated and subject to condemnation. Until 2017, there were still twenty countries that recognized Taiwan as an independent state, a reminder of China's rejection. All these incidents remind us of how vulnerable China has been as a member of the international society. It carries scars. It has remained sensitive to them, and it will remain sensitive as long as it continues to be communist because its recent vulnerability has been driven by that factor. It is China's particularity that makes it a non-sharer of the democratic norms. These incidents also must explain the sense of gratification and even vindication that China feels today as it enjoys increasing recognition and respect. The basis of China's assault, from China's perspective, from the West, has been eroded or reduced. That basis was the concentration of wealth, power, technology, science, military capabilities, and intellectual property, as well as its ability to influence international institutions subservient to its values.

The reason for the erosion is not China. The reason has been the recent development in world history, leading to the paradigm of globalization. China has only been the prominent beneficiary of these developments, through a few skillful adjustments. Every incoming new paradigm produces a new epoch and each new epoch produces its leading powers. It was the case with Portugal in the early phase of mercantilism and as others, like Spain and the Dutch Republic, followed as they better adjusted. The process keeps producing new paradigms and new

epochal rising powers, like Great Britain in the Industrial Revolution, which was eventually supplanted by the United States. China is the rising power in the new paradigm and the globalization epoch it has produced. Others will certainly follow. For now, China's rise is to be understood in that historical perspective, and it is a vindication on China's part after years of vulnerable standing among states in the international society.

With increased wealth and capabilities come influence and power, as a consequence of this international society like it would be in any society. China is now on the winning side of the recent developments and is becoming less vulnerable. It is as well a vindication because China itself was longing to rekindle the sense of pride it once had. The fact that China has proclaimed to seek a peaceful coexistence of nations, as it seems to subscribe to the English School understanding of the international society, means that the consequence should be that it will not develop policy measures conducive to producing foes but rather to producing friends. There were worries about how the rise of China was going to affect international peace and stability. The hope that I dare formulate is that China's embrace of the English School understanding of the international society will not induce a militaristic, belligerent, offensive, or conflictual foreign policy.

Indeed, China's approach to interactional relations comes with a discourse that seems to agree with the English School. The English School approach is synthesizing, which reflects the Chinese syncretic view of the world. It is the Confucian and the Daoist idea of the world. In this world, things or entities are not all-or-nothing. They can be part of a whole, despite their distinctive nature. Contradictions are not cause for conflicts but incentives to harmonize. Like the Confucian mindset, the English School refuses to draw itself in false dichotomies, alternatives of power versus norms, materialism versus idealism, anarchy versus hierarchy, or reason versus causes (English School, Oxford Handbooks),[6] which leads to a dialectical process of confrontation in order to induce an outcome. The Confucian world sees this Western taxonomy and as highly confrontational, antagonizing, and ultimately belligerent, which opposes the quest for harmony, a culture of overcoming antagonisms. Naturally, such a quest for harmony appears idealistic to a conditioned mind of Western taxonomy. Both the English School and Confucian thinking recognize and do not minimize the ability of humans and states to produce conflicts, wars, and destruction, but they trust the same humans and states to realize the destructive end of them and to eventually prefer

6. http://ww.Oxfordhandbooks.com

the alternative solution of peace. The English School is idealistic at some level, as shown in its subscription to the possibility of a world society. It is familiar to the Eastern intellectual mind. This makes it a theoretical approach with which the East can use to converse with the West.

Confucianism, like the English School, believes that the international system, because it is an international society, can undergo change and reform just as societies and individuals within society can. It can morph into something that its members communally desire. The international society is a process, not an event, and actors within it are in relations, otherwise they are non-actors (Qin, 2010: 138). Unlike the English School, the international society is not essentially driven by dialectic process based on the differences of proprieties between its distinct members but rather by a relational process. One gears up for conflicts and the other for harmonization. In both cases, changes are possible, but they occur either dialectically or relationally. One cannot discard the fact that this process, as it reflects the evolution of the human social consciousness, has led to a move away from a world in which wars are the preoccupation of nations and people around the world into one in which peace and prosperity become the preoccupation. With this preoccupation, states and peoples will have a lot to live for and nothing to die for. They are developing interests that command preference for investing their reason or wisdom in a stable world rather than investing in its destruction because it was not worth living in. The Confucian perspective sees in this evolution one that is more relational (occurring through interactions) rather than dialectical (occurring through conflicts).

12

China's Rise and the Critical Theory

While we understand critical theory as the sum of all theories beyond realism and liberalism rationalist and positivist assumptions of the international system, and which include Marxism, post-modernism and feminism, we focus on the Marxism grounding approach of critical theory. And because of its criticism of the central role of capitalism in the international order, we associate to our analysis Wallerstein's world systems theory. Critical theorists propose their own viewpoint to explain the prevailing reality of international relations. As such, they have their own premise and rationale and present their argument, introducing a different perspective through which to view international relations. Primarily a social critical theory, critical theory addresses, identifies, denunciates, and confronts the forces that conspire to produce imperfect, unequal, oppressive, and exploitative social structures that can be found in the realm of the international system and its relations. Such forces can be of ideological nature, as some ideologies dominate others. Other such forces include resources and power capabilities as well as the ability of the elite in powerful states to entrench the reality in which they prosper through institutional structures and processes. The conditions of exploitative national social structures and its hierarchy are exported, internationalized through the creation of international institutions by the national elites that function duplicate their favorable standing onto the international realm. National conditions

of disparity, exploitation, and oppression are found in the international system structure. Hence, Yilmaz (2005) writes:

> Just as the tendency for localized social inequality and oppression is generated at the process of the distribution of resources and wealth, at the international level, too, systemic disparities and unfreedoms are of economic nature; which in turn facilitate the subjugation of mass politics.

Another critical perspective of the international order, in agreement with critical theory on the fact that it is grounded on dominance and exploitation, is Emmanuel Wallenstein's world systems theory. Wallenstein sees the international system as nothing but the reflection of the rapport de force existing among capitalist members of the system. The capitalist system has been acquiring new members over the years, China being the latest to adhere. Economically weak members in the system had been colonized (the periphery), find themselves economically sensitive and vulnerable in the system. They are now semi-colonized by powerful, economically stronger, and for the most part, former colonial powers in the core of capitalism. In a rationalist metaphysics that understands the social world materially, capitalism is a natural product, and the international relations in which capitalist trade occurs naturally dictate either or both neoliberalism and realism as the appropriate approaches to guide the behavior of members. In this context, capitalist liberalism and realism dictate taking advantage (or using leverage) of the opportunity found. This naturally means exploiting the weakness of either the partners, or the foe. The result has been that both international relations and international political economy meet to serve as a wrench around the neck of the developing nations.

The critical perspectives of both the world systems theory and the critical theory, therefore, question the foundation of the international society. Here it questions the foundation of the international order. This perspective brings into consideration the social causes of the societal disparity. Such causes found both nationally and internationally ought to be resisted and fought. Critical theory, therefore, seeks to improve actual conditions and increase the possibilities of the socio-political status quo order, which it views as often dissatisfying for many in society. The dissatisfaction of many in society exists because status quo orders are reflective of a rapport de force between or among the agents involved in its construction or structuration. Consequently, the status quo order serves and cements the interests of the most powerful forces of society. Critical theory is therefore critical of the status quo order—promoting awareness of the imperfections in the prevailing order and the struggle for reformation, transformation, or change

(Horkheimer, 2002). Because socially critical, critical theory brings into its analysis the social context. But, this social context is grounded in history. Hence, critical theory is both sociological and historical. Indeed, social injustice is grounded in history where it finds its beginning. To better understand the conditions under which it is produced and therefore to imagine the conditions under which to confront it, critical theory is historical and materialist. The social world it seeks to understand is grounded in the historical processes and the materiality of human existence. Both history and social order are constructed. They are not value free.

Critical thought rejects the traditionalist positivist premise on the ground that it takes social reality as value-free, as universal, and as an unchangeable truth (Yilmaz, 2015). Because social orders are constructed in that manner, critical theory finds itself justified to seek its deconstruction in areas where deconstruction may still be achieved. Grounded in historical materialism, it pursuits its endeavor of undermining the forces that sustain imperfections in societal orders.

Critical theorists feel morally empowered to right a historical wrong. This perspective, which is primarily an observation made about the social order, is transposed onto international relations, where they make the same analysis. Critical theory echoes constructivism, as they each see the realm of international relations as not functioning according to immutable social laws. Because the social order is not objective, it is not value-free. It is subject to inclinations of its constructors. Here is where both constructivists and critical theorists see their point of entry for their attempts to explain international relations behavior and processes. Critical theory sees an opportunity to seek change to a status that is neither naturally given, nor a discovered object. In its rejection of a positivist attitude vis-à-vis international relations, and unlike positivist theory that simply focuses on solving the problems it finds in the world as it sees it by accommodating to it, critical theory seeks to change the status order for a better order, in a quest for progress, and is therefore emancipative (Cox, 1981).

Critical theory goes beyond the characterization of the international system in which the state or sub-state or supra-state entities are the main international actors with which to consider the state as an emancipative agent. It confers to the state an emancipative role. Critical theory "offers a critique of realism for ignoring sub-state dynamics and of orthodox Marxism for being negligent of the state capacity to function as a progressive force" (Yilmaz, 2015).[1] In its emancipative role,

1. Serafettin Yilmaz: "China's Foreign Policy and Critical Theory of International Relations." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 20, no. 2 (June 2015), online publication.

the state is a promotor of ideational goals—namely justice—and even removal of social imperfections, seeking a "higher state of being" (Yilmaz, 2015) next to a material goal of economic progress. Where Marxism is purely materialist, critical theory is materialistically idealist. Its materialism is grounded in history, while its idealism is grounded in the quest for constant improvement of the status quo order. It is what prompted Cox (1996) to see in critical theory an element of historical utopianism. Critical theory embraces the gigantic task of removing historical imperfections. The goal is to rid societal structural order from domination by the elite. As an expression of this view by China, it has established its five principles of peaceful coexistence since 1954, as mentioned in previous chapters.

China is a Marxist state in its political ideology; it is Gramscian in its anti-imperialist and anti-hegemonic stands. Such a stand seems to be a contradiction in the international system, in which there are small and weak states and powerful states. The former must kneel before the altar of the latter. The functioning of such a reality then produces an order and a system, cemented by institutional infrastructures, or better yet, a supra-structure. In this system, one can find dissatisfied, potentially revisionist states, in front of the satisfied, status quo powers. This is clearly a state of contradiction, as seen in social orders across history. It is full of injustices, oppression, and exploitation. As a Marxist state, China must stand critically in the light of such a reality. The idealist dimension of those ideologies that embraced this analysis of historical processes, known as dialectic, from Hegel to Marx and critical theory, compels one to seek the resolution of the contradictions presented by history in social processes. States embracing this approach seek to resolve such contradictions that the international system presents in the form of powerful versus weak states, and satisfied versus dissatisfied states. China has been, in its recent history, in this mode.

As a Marxist state, China embraces this anti-domination stand in social structural constructs. This attitude transpires in China's foreign policy as a communist state since the 1950s. From its embrace of Marxism, China sees the state's primary role as an agent of change against internal and external domination. Translated into international relations, China cannot be expected to accommodate a conservative international system order if it sees in it elements the domination of the some actors over others. However, China has to be careful. China is no longer suffering from the conservative status quo of the international system, but it is progressing within this status quo. China is not a dominated entity as it once was in the international system. It is benefiting from the international status quo order. In other words, how can it fight a system in which it strives? And how can it avoid fighting and still claim allegiance to Marxism? Here is where China's

foreign policy resourcefulness is needed. China has been creative in its foreign policy design, embracing the consequences of its economic reform success while attempting to remain politically faithful to the expectations of a Marxist worldview. China has been forced to be critical. China has been forced to take liberty and to use agential capacity to become an emancipative agent for progress in the international system. Its foreign policy choices and articulations become the venues through which to detect the emancipative agential role it intends to play.

China has advocated for more democratic international relations and has sought to promote international relations in which power politics is not the driving principle. China has articulated its disdain against hegemonic exercises and has argued against interventionism. It rejects the positivist approach of the West and its taxonomic epistemic culture as the only lens through which to approach the social world, which China views as a form of cultural imperialism. China has argued against interference in internal affairs. Additionally, China has kept and even increased its purveyance of economic assistance to the developing world. Through trade, investments, and infrastructure building, China has engaged itself in the world.

All these examples of China's foreign policy choices align with the emancipatory premise of seeking change, inducing progress, and confronting domination, as Marxism would want, while recognizing its own fate as a new economic liberalist power. China, through its foreign policy choices, has been attempting to remain faithful to the Marxist worldview, while fully becoming committed to its new flame, neoliberal economics. As long as it remains driven by Marxist ideology—with Chinese characteristics as leaders of the Communist Party likes to add—China will have a foreign policy sensitivity that sets its foreign policy apart from non-Marxist powers. Its foreign policy will reveal a critical theory approach to international relations simply because of its political identity. With its identity, it will have ideological divergence in areas where the application of political liberalism in society differs from political Marxism. One such area, for instance, is interventionism based on Human Rights violations, or the state central role as opposed to state minimalism of neoliberalism. Every time such divergences of philosophical nature arise, China, as a Marxist state, can find recourse in the argument according to which collective well-being transcends individual pursuits.

While recognizing the benefit of economic liberalism, China is not ready to cede the ground for hegemony into culture and politics. In fact, it believes in the moral superiority of both Marxism, in its purpose of combating domination, and Confucianism, in its holistic wisdom, which it prefers over the taxonomic, analytic, and Manichean model of the positivist heritage of the West. The embrace of

the Marxist ideology by the Communist Party of China is, in that sense, idealistic. China's foreign policy therefore can only be critical of the international system's order. If that is its perspective of its actions in the international system, China must have an action plan to induce historical progress or fight forces that keep such a historical progress from taking place. Such forces can be dogmas, power structure, and ideology. It gears up to be critical to them and to induce emancipation and even revolutions, when need be. This is the perspective that makes Marxism and critical theory non-conservative, unsold to what they consider to be the erroneous positivist approach to the social world. This is the attitude to expect from any critical approach since any critical inquiry aims to reveal the "possibilities that contrast with actual conditions" (Kompidis, 2005: 332). China is critical since it behaves with emancipation, in the sense that it is sometimes bound by the dominant reality (actual conditions of the international system) and sometimes takes liberty to charter new courses. It creates, for instance, new and parallel institutions and venues of commerce. It organizes its foreign aid in ways unfamiliar to the West. It distances itself from the threatening use of hard power as an instrument of foreign policy through economic embargo and sanctions. It pursues foreign direct investments with a gusto and posture that outcompetes the West while leaving alone and undisturbed other aspects of the international system with which it has no quarrel.

China's rising economy has improved China's status, granting it increased influence. This influence has resulted in China's ability to enact change. There was a time when China, under Mao Tze Tung, had the will to use its state as an engine of change, helping revolutionary, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperialist movements in Africa and Asia. China wanted to be the state through which the revolution of the proletariat worldwide would happen. China's approach to international relations was informed by that ideology. However, China lacked the capabilities to be effective. Under Mao Tze Tung, China despised the very foundation of the international system. Then came the reform of 1978 under Deng Xiao Peng, designed to give China a taste of the fruits of economic prosperity. Under Deng Xiao Peng, China was essentially pragmatic, which did not mean the rejection of communism. In its pragmatism, China found a way of rejecting the inability of communism to foster economic prosperity for the individuals, and by extension for the masses, as China's own recent history has documented. China opened up to the free market economic system. It soon after integrated into the international liberal institutional order: the IMF (1980), the World Bank (1998), and the WTO (2001). China's foreign policy has to reflect that pragmatism. The goal of the international proletariat was abandoned. Seeking to engage the world, whose

member states were now needed as economic partners, China wanted to reassure them of its friendly intentions, as its identity as a communist state was inherently menacing. It claimed and proclaimed its intent to be peaceful and proceeded with caution as its economic reform continued to show signs of obvious success, which now explains its rise as an economic power.

After Deng Xiao Ping's leadership of the China's communist power structure, came Jian Zemin, Hu Jin Tao, and Xi Jinping. Of those leaders, Xi Jinping stands out for a number of reasons. He presides over China in the era of economic prosperity and military modernization. Unlike Deng Xiao Peng, who was cautious about China's rise, President XI embraces China's newfound place in the ranks of world's states economic elite. He welcomes the status it confers and the influence it brings, and he articulates his ambitions for China. Xi Jinping promotes a "China's dream" and evokes a Chinese nationalistic sentiment that, like all nationalism, feeds from the sentiments of the pride. Xi Jinping wants to use China's status and influence internationally, connecting China's national ambition with world prosperity. The ambition will be supported by the Belt and Road Initiative. Xi Jinping's central proposition is prosperity for all, which is often encapsulated by "win–win" cooperation.

Xi Jinping seeks these ambitions while reaffirming his and China's commitment to communism. China therefore remains committed to the essence of Marxism and, consequently, of critical theory in the sense that it seeks to improve the fate of many in the world through means, methodology, and commitment that do not hesitate to hustle the existing order. It does so by looking beyond the existing order and by bringing states entrenched in a pattern of distant relations—kept distant for reasons dictated by the incumbent hegemonic power—into a network of trade. It is the result of a critical attitude vis-à-vis the status order in the sense that it takes liberties of imagining new ways of reorganizing the international system, unbound by previous patterns of relationships. China seeks to improve the existing international system in which it has become an integral part. China no longer seeks its replacement and no longer drums up the support of the international proletariat to that end. China is focused, still, on resisting the hegemonic features of the current international system and still intends to stand against hegemonic power exercises, only in much more subtle ways that the complexity of today's global world dictates. China does not seek the dismantlement of the international system, but the dismantlement of its extensions to all of its member states.

China remains reflexive of the Marxist and critical premises that consist of surpassing the limitations of the reality and the conditions of the existing social

system. In the new relationships it has forged, China may very well play a pivotal role and therefore influential. However, China does not intend to be hegemonic in the traditional sense, as that would negate its political identity. Yet half of the Chinese Marxist identity has changed by partaking in the free market system in the name of pragmatism. China has become a red, capitalist state.

Recently, after becoming even economic liberalism's most ardent supporter and promoter, China can no longer pretend to induce fundamental change to the international system. Yet China has remained politically Marxist.

As a politically Marxist state, China continues to embrace the possibilities of further positive change against the constraints of existing reality, which itself reflects the historical reality of a dominant West. China is aware of the international system as an expression of Western expansion and of the hegemonic nature of the system in which it operates. It is sensitive to it. It does not hesitate to denunciate the limitation of China's own or any other actors' potential for progress. China can play this role now, better than when it had the will but not the means. China's rise as a superpower offers that opportunity. It is an opportunity to cease power on behalf of those states not able to play the same role. It is an opportunity to seek positive change in the system on behalf of all those states that are oppressed, subjugated, exploited, and voiceless in the system. Critical theory says that the existing reality and conditions limit the potential of these states. Likewise, critical theory theorizes that the conditions of the existing reality must be expanded for these states to reach their potential. China will keep this critical attitude as long as it remains Marxist and communist.

As a solution, China could suggest an alternative role of the state. While such a role is under assault by neoliberal policy preferences, China has rejected the pressure to sideline the central role of the state over the market. China's success as a state favoring the state as an agent of change seems to daringly suggest a new element that it could bring onto the table. Despite all the good things that can be said about liberal democracies, the ability of some among them to function is about to be swallowed by the forces of the market and corporate interests, thanks to deregulation. Therefore, "it appears that China's emergence allows to think about the potentialities for a higher international order in which the cause of human liberation is greatly assisted by the state" (Yilmaz, 2005). Just as this quotation may sound almost unbearable for the liberalist, it may be just as welcome in many circles around the world, and, increasingly, in all places, even in the United States where the resonance of candidates during the election reaffirms the role of the state.

If, however, China ceased its commitment to the Marxist political ideology, there is no guarantee that it would keep that critical approach to the international relations theory, just as Russia's abandonment of Marxism lost the ground upon which to ideologically present an alternative to the prevailing status order and a justification for a new one. Russia currently just has objections and frustrations with the liberal international system it has hoped to enter as a peer and was even offered a seat at the table of the G7. The G7 symbolizes the dominant forces of the status quo in the international system. Whenever in disagreement with the policy directions they take under the aegis of the United States, Russia lacks a deeper ideological grounding for its complaints beyond the purely material interests of its state. Grounding its identity and policy in the ideology of Marxism, China uses that perspective in international relations to view the state in an emancipative role of agent for change and progress, as well as for confronting imperfections. From this critical theory perspective, China finds itself morally legitimized to stand its ground in case of principled divergences with its non-Marxist peers. While Russia, as a result, may very well probably be reduced to a revisionist state status, China's increase of material capabilities, combined with ideational principled ground, sets the stage for its status as a contender state to induce the necessary changes and improvements that the status quo international system needs. Since Xi Jinping's presidency, China seems to have adjusted its Marxist essence to its growing influence. Jinping, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Reform Initiative of 1978, has recently declared that China intends to actively act as an agent of change in the global governance.

China's choices and behavior, as an actor in the international system, are certainly informed in a fundamental way by a critical theory approach. From this perspective, China's choices and attitude can be explained and understood. In that sense, the perspective of critical theory in explaining international relations behavior and choices of actors in international relations is vindicated in the case of China.

13

China's Rise and Idealism

State interests, pursued through foreign policy, translate and express their material needs and priorities. They are utilitarian. States, however, are anchored in specific cultures from which derive a specific political culture. These political cultures have their own identities and embody specific values. States have what Neack (2019: 83) call a "self-image." That self-image is defined as "the story a people in a country tell about who they are as a people, who their country 'is' in the world, and what their country does in the world." A culture may as well adopt a positive act by subscribing to an new identity whose underlying values they consider to be most noble, and whose ideals are worthy of pursuit. Just as such values are worthy of pursuit, they are as well worthy of export. States choose to export their values through foreign policy. Foreign policy is consequently about action and idea.

The noble ideas that people identify as worthy of adopting and even exporting are those that apply to humanity. We have, therefore, a number of humanity-related ideals that are shared by states around the world. These include peace, justice, freedom, equality of rights, and happiness, which all derive from norms such as Human Rights, non-aggression, non-interference, and reciprocity. The focus on such goals in the realm of the international system is what idealism is about. However, idealism in international relations has not articulated a distinct paradigm, unlike other approaches (Wilson, 2011). It has no tradition as a

self-conscious school of thought in international relations, despite the fact that the international realm offers itself as a theater wherein plenty of idealistic opportunities are given. Around the world, there are cases of deficiencies and shortcomings in the fulfilment of ideals such as freedom, justice, and equality. There are also cases of oppression and poverty, but these idealistic goals often subside in favor of the most material interest of states, or they are pursued only to further the material interests of states and the system, but not for their intrinsic worth. For instance, economic assistance to developing nations become instrumental to achieving material interests of donors states.

In the reality of the international system, just as the case in the philosophical debate, idealistic goals must compete against materialistic ones. Materialist goals of states are known as their interests. The anarchic nature of international relations has tilted the debate between idealistic goals and realist goals in the favor of the latter. Consequently, the nemesis of idealism in international relations is realism. This does not mean that idealism is not present in the function of the international system. Idealistic goals diffuse. They can be found everywhere, even in materialist interests of states. The dimension of idealism is imbedded in ideologies underlying social systems. In fact, they tend to morally justify their *reason d'être* and their goals. In international relations, that dimension inspires the foreign policy choice and behavior of actors. Political ideologies, such as communism, liberalism, and Confucianism, entail ideals such as justice, equality, freedom, and prosperity, which inform the foreign policy of states that adopted them. An idealist dimension can even be built in the most realistic endeavors. For instance, the hawkish US foreign policy of regime change, which seeks the spread of Human Rights and democratic values through force, becomes driven by idealism. This is the case because regardless of whether idealism or materialism came first, one is often used to justify the other.

The absence of an idealist approach to international relations has not kept states, China included, from developing a norm-based international system. The norms are those deriving from the ideals and values found in liberalism since World War II. The order of the international system is therefore known as institutional liberalism. It entails the norms of liberalism as an approach to international relations. These norms compete with the view of realism to form the two most prevailing cultures of international relations. Both these cultures have put idealistic goals behind those of national security and trade. This is the context in which China will act. Does China place third for its idealistic goals and values in the international system in favor of national security and trade? Or does China have a special role for idealism in its choices and behavior as an international actor?

Looking at idealism as a stand-alone school of thought, in the sense of the German philosophical movement, one fails to see its equivalent in China. However, what one can find is the existence of idealism imbedded in a variety of political ideologies and worldview expressions that characterizes China's political historical history. They are the many normative schools of thoughts from Confucianism and Buddhism to legalism and communism. Liberalism has yet to achieve a breakthrough in China. It failed in the 19th century, and a renewed attempt by students was crushed in 1989 at Tiananmen Square. The ideals of liberalism therefore are not part of political China. But, if idealism is primarily driven by a normative perspective, the existence of the many normative schools of thought in China suggest their relevance and influence in China's worldview. Such a worldview would then entail a dimension of idealism. Considering that worldviews inform cultural values and political culture, their normative values naturally spill over into political deliberations. Normative values of Chinese schools of thoughts should then inform, in some ways, the value basis of China's sense of self as a state and an international actor. Feng (2017) stated that idealism has been imbedded in Chinese constitutional law, theory, and practice since its very first constitution of 1908, before China was communist. The same idealism existed in its constitution of 1954, after China turned communist. This is to say that idealism has been a feature of Chinese political culture and, in China like anywhere else, such an idealist dimension often does not stand alone as an objective, but is embedded in its practices alongside realism. It is blended in foreign policy action. For instance, China proclaims and claims to seek a peaceful rise, yet it has increased its military spending and modernized its army. The former goal is idealist, while the latter is realist. The former promotes civility, while the latter promotes security. The former derives from the Confucian culture of civility (*Wen*), which cultivates peace, harmony and respect, while the same pragmatic Confucianism promotes an act of defensive realism, relying on material capabilities (*Wu*). It is the Chinese strategic culture. From its own culture, China has blended idealism and realism. Between these values, China has historically ranked civility above materiality (Feng, 2017).

Internationally, normative values in the Chinese culture constitute the moral compass of China's foreign policy. China's foreign policy derives from its most influential ideological schools of thought. Two of the most influential ideological forces of the Chinese political history are Confucianism and communism. Confucius is as traditionalist and realist, as he is idealist. His support for Chinese traditional social hierarchy has caused his rejection by the communist China. If his values have been rehabilitated, it is because of the new pragmatism of contemporary political China, which has allowed Chinese authority

to consider the moral value and compass he provides for a nation eager to sell its worldview, now that of communism has shown their limitations. One can, therefore, expect China's foreign policy choices and behavior as an international actor to be guided and informed by the values of Confucianism, in addition to those of communism and socialism. With respect to communist values, political China still believes in the societal values of communism, which it sees as morally superior to those of any other political ideology. Its ideology is moral as it aligns with the ideal of non-exploitation. It sides with the oppressed against the oppressors. Its goal of a society that has rid itself from such rapport of domination in favor of equality is a worthy, moral cause. With an anti-hegemonic stand, China pursued the mission of opposing the international elite of the elite states against the weak states. It is the prolongation on the international level of the same logic of domination, prevailing on national levels. Communism, Socialism, and Marxism dictate standing against domination. This attitude also reflects Confucian teaching, found in the *Analects*, in which the master cautions against pure use of force. He cautions against the use of force from morality and civility (Nylan, 2014). With peaceful existence, China seeks and proposes a normative basis for a peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect and cultivating harmony, which are key notions of Confucianism to counter the Hobbesian culture of anarchy, fear of others, and relying on power and force. With statism, China reflects its adhesion to communism and reaffirms the central role of the state as the catalyst for societal change: the role of the state as an agent for good, in opposition to the preference toward neoliberalist minimalism. China refuses to relinquish such a goad of agency for the good of the private sector and the market, which can be easily dominated by the economic powerful elite, whose interest soon become the interest of the policy makers to the detriment of the proletariat. With isolationism, as the policy choice of a developing China in the 1950s and Cold War era, China sought to avoid corruption by external forces of imperialism, active in the international system, for the purity of the ideals and goals of communism.

Today, a few things have changed. The Cold War has ended. Classical colonialism has ended. China has initiated reforms to negate its commitment to a collectivist and statist economic system. China has ceased to fight capitalism and private property and wealth. China is no longer committed to the advent of an international proletariat, but rather to the prosperity of all. And China is no longer isolated, but engaging. China is affirming its power status and even showing signs of asserting itself. Xi Jinping's speech during the Chinese Communist Party's 19th Congress framed this new attitude. His speech was about adjusting

ambitions to China's power status and consequently positioning China to play its role. Although Xi Jinping did not negate China's old ideological foreign policy commitments, his speech affirmed the ambition of becoming an undisputed superpower. This has led many to worry that China may become just another realist superpower, abandoning the moral high ground it claimed to have in the past, as Shih worries when he writes (1993: 8): "The relative weight of ideology, morality, and justice seem lessened." As plausible as this fear may be, China remains a state with a traditional culture (Confucian) and an ideological identity (Communist) and its own historical experience. These factors are determining Chinese identity as a state. Chinese foreign policy, even as a superpower, should continue to reveal sensitivities that reflect these factors. Some of the Chinese foreign policy objectives, choices, and attitudes derive from these features and the morality they commend. They will continue to provide the perimeters of what Chinese objectives are and that which is acceptable in negotiating outcomes between China and the world.

China has some normative cultural values that are seen as "indivisible," to use the terminology of Fearon (1995). Recently, for instance, the US government, through the Trump administration, imposed tariff measures against products coming from China with the aim to get China to change its ways. The bolder the Trump administration becomes, the more China identifies these tariffs as an attempt of force. However, owing to its cultural historical experience during the Humiliation Treaties, signed in the late 19th century, China has elevated to indivisible value, not to allow another nation direct its actions. This attitude may very well prevail. The reaction of China, expressed by Xi Jinping during the 40th anniversary of the country's economic reform, was that no one could force China to do what it did not desire to do. This is how normative, and therefore idealist stands, interfere in foreign policy.

China remains committed to the ideals of communism, which seems to suggest that its foreign policy choices and behavior will still deviate from a typical realist superpower. Realism had developed a dual menu of offensive and defensive realists to choose from. China, it seems, is more comfortable with the defensive option because of the deterring effect it provides and has therefore sustained its military capabilities to that effect. While doing that, China remains on the idealist side because it is a legitimately normative and moral value to be able to defend one's self. China has also rehabilitated Confucianism, which suggests that China will display the pragmatism known of Confucianism and entailing dimensions of idealism and a cautious reliance on the military and raw power. As an illustration, China has shown signs of preferring the use of soft power instead, and it is no

coincidence that the many cultural centers it has opened around the world to promote its culture are called Confucius Institutes.

China has started using Confucius institutes and other soft power endeavors to export its culture and its value system. The United States has done the same. The only question remaining is this: How much hard power will China be willing to use in support of its value system? For now, China claims it does not want to follow the example of the US and attempts to achieve the objectives of its foreign policy through the military. Confucian ethics seem to stand in the ways of that policy preference. However, the realism of the international system and China's own pragmatism precludes any affirmation that China will never develop an appetite for hard power now that its interests are growing around the world. Its interests around the world are the result of its adhesion to liberalism. China, at the same time, remains committed to communist ideals. Can China, under these circumstances, be idealistic in its pursuit of foreign policy? As a liberalist power, China's foreign policy is essentially materialist. As a communist state, China's foreign policy is dedicated to improving existing historical conditions of the international system. These goals, as noble as they are, fall short of the idealist threshold, which consists of seeking higher possibilities, not just better conditions.

14

China's Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory

A Historical Perspective

A nation whose history has been continuous since more than two millennia has been a central state with empire status, and has had contacts and relations with others is bound to have a history of foreign policy with a repertoire to draw from in a segment like this. A closer look at the Chinese political history, however, does not present a tapestry of a continuous ideas, texts, developments, and views and thoughts on its foreign policy commensurate with its long history. What we have is a fragmented picture under a number of topics, which Fairbank (1969)[1] lists as dealing with border control, frontier trade, expeditions, tributary embassies, imperial benevolence to foreign rulers, and so on. In all fairness, China's history, unlike that of Greek city-states has not compelled a sustained preoccupation with comparable rivals, closely located and in a semi-permanent state of engagement. It is the same constellation and confluence of factors that has later explained the rise of international relations theorizing in 19th-century Europe. China did not have to worry constantly about neighbors that could cause its annihilation or subjugation. Its "politics revolved around the struggle to achieve or to maintain unified

1. "China's Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective" in: *Foreign Affairs*, April 1969.

control over a large, populous, and multi-ethnic land" (Roy, 1998: 8). Its central power had to worry about the many organized rebellions. Its wars were essentially caused by internal factors, the Chinese feudalism with vassal states competing for territories, hence the many wars.[2] These wars exerted a centrifugal pressure. From its neighbors, many were tributary states (today's Vietnam, Koreas, Laos, Burma, Tibet, to name a few). The situation been used by scholars of strategic studies, among them Luttwak (2012), to argue why China lacked what is referred to as "strategic culture." Strategic culture is linked to the existence of similar and relatively equal nation-states, with comparable capabilities and levels of functional abilities and potential for rivalry. For most of its history, China lacked comparable peers. However, fortune was not always on China's side. Some of these neighbors, every now and then, acquired ambitious rulers who set their eyes on the prosperous China. They had eventually become a source of threat. Among them, there were the Mongols and the Manchus. Each of them inflicted pain to the middle kingdom, China. China was by far the most prosperous, but it was more its culture that served as the source of pride. Conscious of its cultural superiority, China developed a nationalism, which Zhimin (2005) calls culturalism and which was based on China, not as a nation-state but as a universe. Using the word of a philosopher in the Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao writes: "Chinese people tended to regard China as a universe" (p. 37). Chinese nationalism, he argued, distinguished between China or "Xuaxia" and the Barbarians or "Yidi." The latter was expected to join the former, surrender or submit.

Neighboring principalities that felt for this scheme constituted the basis of the tributary system, which, it should be mentioned here, was not formal, nor official, nor even systematically practiced during the entire imperial China's period, as Perdue (2015) and Westad (2012) have recently argued. Perdue, indeed, pushed back against the idea of a China that practiced the tributary system as an organizing principle of its foreign policy, as many recent Chinese scholars have argued, and naming David Kang (2012), as one. These scholars have presented the tributary system as conducive to a more peaceful regional relations among neighbors, and which could possibly serve as a model in the larger world of international relations; as opposed to the Westphalia model in Europe which did not do much to keep the many European wars from happening.

2. The book titled: *The Art of War*, written around the 5th century by Sun Tsu, whose true identity remains somewhat mysterious, is the reflection of that time, and cause of the popularity of the book both in China and beyond.

Advocates of the tributary system argue it was peaceful, and this exactly is the point that Perdue (2015: 1004) vehemently refutes, arguing "the Chinese Academy of military science estimates that Chinese states fought 3,756 wars from 770 BC to 1912 AD, for an average of 1.4 wars per year." China has been indeed, at times, imperialist, most recently in the 19th century during the time of the Manchu occupation and the Qing Dynasty. In Restless Empire, Westad (2012: 25) writes: "The empire was vast and contained people of different skin colors, different languages, and different faiths. Although its physical borders were ill-defined, China's political power covered much of Asia from the Korean peninsula to the Transhan Mountains in central Asia and from Lake Baikal in Siberia to the coasts of Burma. Immediately outside the main circle of imperial control were the tributary states."

A more nuanced view is presented by Zhang (2015), examining the influence of Confucianism in Chinese foreign policy and argues that it presented both features of inclusionism and exclusionism and included the legitimate use of force, contrary to the erroneous notion of Confucian pacifism. Following is a nuanced defense of those arguing from an apologetic perspective of the tributary system. While not being convinced about its viability today and much less about its implicit call for smaller states to submit to the hierarchical international order, the tributary system did indeed exist, even though not to the extent and not in the significance advocates portray. But, their main argument, besides hailing the system itself, is essentially that imperial China was after all not so imperialistic. In fact, China built walls rather than expand. To this end, Xue (2016: 31) writes: "China feared invading barbarian nomad cultures and subsequently commercial empires from Europe." The most positive implicit argument of the tributary system should be the notion of benevolent leadership.

Beyond its neighbors, China had developed little interest to developing a systematic foreign policy. China's nationalism was the cause. Considering itself more advanced, civilizationally and otherwise, what it knew from the neighbors and the outside world was underwhelming. None of the neighbors surpassed China in grandeur. So much so that it believed it did not have much to gain, engaging them. Once again, it was after all the middle kingdom. When interest and curiosity did strike again, as demonstrated by Zheng He's explorations around the 1400s, it quickly died out because of fears of what might come of it. The fear was triggered by few harassments from Japanese pirate ships on the coastal lines. The Ming Dynasty's famous retrieve from explorations put a lid on what would have become a source of China's potentially rich foreign policy history. That said, China had remained a hub of commerce, from the mainland and within the Asian

continent land mass. The years of a sense of superiority and sufficiency will come to haunt China. In the 19th century and subsequently, its tributary system came to encounter the Westphalia system. Indeed, China had to suffer from foreign invasions a number of times, from the Manchus, Japan, and the West. These foreign political presences in the middle kingdom have left scars. They humbled the Chinese. They took away some of their pride. They affected the collective psyche, and encroached their Chinese self-image.

It was the reason China transitioned from its cultural nationalism to a nation-state's nationalism.[3] The time was the 19th century, the height of political colonialism and imperialism. China had become victim of political change occurring internationally. China itself was changing politically. It morphed from feudalism into imperial rule, and later into a republic form. It struggled between embracing capitalistic nationalism of the Kuomintang and the communist nationalism of the Chinese Communist Party. Regardless of which one of these political ideologies and identity China was to pick, it was going to pay attention to foreign policy, more and better than it did in the past. Its once sense of cultural superiority that has caused a rather systematized interest in foreign policy has been shattered. It was shattered because China had not paid attention to outside developments. It had paid the price. All this time and events have allowed the rise of a new leadership in China. It was the time of Mao Tze Tung. The time of communist China, in the making since the late 1930s. Any interest in Chinese foreign policy would now find what to scrutinize, because Mao's China was active. The Chinese nationalism became socialist. The Chinese foreign policy become dedicated to international socialism.

One must therefore make a great leap forward, leaving imperial China to reach Mao's China to scrutinize a sustained and consequential existence of foreign policy engagement, and the influence of self-image inherited from events both relatively recently past, and others that were still to come. The Mao years coincided with a historic epoch of modern political ideologies, and the existence of a world made of fully formed nation-states both around China and abroad. China had to have a sustained foreign policy. It was one centered, as stated in a previous chapter, on the defense of its sovereignty against imperial powers; the extension

3. The notion of transition emanates from Joseph Lovenson, whose book titled: "*Liang Chichao and the Mind of Modern China*," 2nd edition. Berkeley University of California Press, 1959, p. 110, cited by Zhimin in: "Nationalism, Internationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy." *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 42 (February 2005): 35–53.

of its support to those dealing with the same fate, around the world, and the promotion of the ideal and objectives of a Marxist worldview internationally. Its foreign policy was anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. It developed an independent attitude vis-à-vis both its fellow communist neighbor, the Soviet Union, and the United States in whose league it aspired to play the international game. China succeeded despite its humble capabilities, to gain international stature and a reputation as an independent and influential actor.

However, during the Mao years, China never really and satisfyingly articulated its conception of the international world worthy of bearing the name theory. It did produce a number of official publications in which its views of the world are expressed. In one of such publications, China spoke of a world constituted of three different worlds. It called the first that of the super powers. The second was the world of intermediary powers. And the third was that of the developing nations. By all accounts, China's views of the international world was a poor attempt to articulate what critical theory of the Frankfurter School, for instance, or the world systems theory of Emmanuel Wallenstein later more coherently described. As stated in Chapter 12, China's view of the international system was critical. As a result, its foreign policy articulations aligned with those of critical theory of international relations. China was then in the rejection and revolutionary modes. But, it did not end there. Mao's era since the late 1940s was to end in 1976, and China was to change, and initiate a reform program that partially rescinded its disdain of capitalism, private property, and the rejection of institutional liberalist order. It became part of it. It was the era of Deng Xiao Ping, since 1978, and reinforced by Jiang Zemin. Since the reform initiative of 1978, the pace of change both within and outside China has been almost frantic. China has entered the era of open-door policy.

Internally, China adjusted concomitantly to transitioning its economic system to free market system, transforming its bureaucracy, its laws, and creating new institutions. Externally, China embarked on multiple initiatives and activities, to integrate the institutions of neoliberal order. It joined security regimes, initiating new organizations, promoting trade, seeking access to markets, and ubiquitous investment opportunity, suggesting a new vision of international politics, away from power politics, building alliances, strategic partnerships, as its performance in all these initiatives seemed to bear fruits, China stabilized its international presence. It increased its wealth and standing, and influence. Chinese nationalism had turned friendly toward the rest of the world. Chinese nationalism had become linked to interdependence. Zhimin (2005) calls this new nationalism a "positive nationalism." As positive as it was, it was nationalistic, but for a few reasons. And

these few reasons, both past and contemporary, have affected China's self-image and defined its foreign policy.

In 1980s, the Chinese foreign policy had developed a new guideline—it was peaceful development. Both Deng Xiao Peng and Jian Zemin, eager not to awaken the fear of neighbors in the rise of China, made sure they reassured them. Any disruption of the peace was a disruption of China's own development. China timidly articulated a need for a new international political and economic order in the 1988 which, however, did not go beyond the pronouncements. All these changes, transformation, and the dynamics they induced, have not made it easier for any who followed Chinese foreign policy to develop a sense of guiding principles underneath.

Chi-Yu Shih (1993) identifies five majors Chinese foreign policy objectives and behavioral attitudes in the international system since the 1950s as socialistic, anti-hegemonic, peaceful coexistence, statist, and isolationist. They all find their moral grounding in the ideals of either Confucianism or communism. Shih argues that these values have guided China in its relations with Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States, as well as with the developing world. These five major foreign policy objectives needed revising today. While China remains anti-hegemonic vis-à-vis the West, it is the one that today has to worry been labeled hegemonic. China still stands by the foreign policy goals of peaceful coexistence and still remains statist despite the adopting of free market economic system, because it is still socialistic. China is today anything but isolationist, unlike in the past. Coincidentally, someone has revisited the five foreign policy objectives identified by Shih. Madeiros (2009) came up with his own repertory of China's foreign policy objectives a few years later. He interestingly also identified five China's foreign policy objectives. They were fostering economic development, reassuring the world of it peaceful intent, countering constraints from anyone who would want to reduce its ability to project and defense its interests (as the case of China's claim of the South China Sea demonstrates), diversifying access to natural resources, and reducing Taiwan's international space, an issue that China considers a casus belli.

If one was to establish what seems to be China's foreign policy objectives, based on the pronouncement from the Communist Party, its official media outlet, but most importantly, based on what can be observed in the diplomatic field, they will have to be: promotion of trade, prosperity and peace, and promotion of its own security. This has been the picture of China's foreign policy until the new millennium. China's foreign policy was cautiously engaging the world. It became a share and stakeholder, after integrating and contributing to the institutional

liberal order, continuously since the 1990s. With respect to foreign policy and international relations theory, China cautiously navigated its rise, its integration in the free market processes, its fulgurate success in it, while unsure how to manage it. China underwent a reexamination of its own attitude vis-à-vis the international system. While in this transitional phase, it was guided by the heritage of the political wisdom of Deng Xia Peng, aware of the dangers articulated by realism and neo-realism about the nature of the international system. Deng had urged to keep low profile. Later, in 2003, Biejan and, after him, other leading figures of the Chinese Communist Party spoke of a peaceful rise. China was still figuring out what it was to make of the international system, in light of the many changes, and the still old identity it has. China's preoccupation with international relations theorizing had to be articulated through its foreign policy.

Soon, in the 2000s, it seemed as if China had figured out what it wanted, and where it needed to go. Indeed, after the Hu Jintao years (2003–2013), which retrospectively looked like a consolidation era, after the stabilizing years of Jiang Zemin and what was to come; China's foreign policy picture became less fuzzy, although the dust of the rising China had not yet settled around all the changes. China started to better articulate its objectives clearly, and even an attempt to move past the earlier practices of formulating foreign policy goals through slogan, bullet point guidelines or principles. Some of them have been peaceful coexistence, peaceful rise, harmonious world, shared destiny, and national rejuvenation, the meaning of each, argues Madeiros (2009), changes over time and their application remains flexible.

Although Hu Jintao, in 2005, articulated the guideline of "harmonious world" in the 17th Congress of the Communist Party, unlike in the past, he did not leave it there. He went further proposing a departure of world politics based on power politics, and the quest for hegemonic status. Hu presided over China's growing economic interests, which necessitated increased exchanges, communication, and more intense engagement with the world. Hu Jintao initiated the new era of China's highest leaders' direct involvement abroad. Hu Jintao continued the open-door policy of his predecessors, extending it with a vigorous economic diplomacy, in the quest for resources and new markets in Africa and elsewhere. This new era of active diplomacy was known in China as all-around diplomacy. It is best articulated by Medeiros (2009: 47) writing that it was "meant to signal the degree to which the Chinese leaders support a highly international and non-ideological foreign policy."

Chinese foreign policy has become comprehensive. With the extension, and a more compressive foreign policy activity, came the need for more coordination

of its foreign policy. Party leaders, governments officials, Chinese corporations increasingly active internationally, and elements of what should be called public diplomacy were now echoing the discourse and the objectives of the nation. Chinese foreign policy had become a tool of national economic and political goals. Then came the era of Xi Jinping, since 2013. China's involvement in international affairs has been often referred to as an offensive diplomacy. Since 2012, Xi had visited thirty countries. In the year 2015 alone, he visited fourteen countries. Since Xi's presidency, China has grown more defined, some would argue more assertive, and others again would argue even potentially confrontational. Less reserved, and less discrete, Xi Jinping lifted the veil on the question of what China was up to, and what was its foreign policy going to be like as it ascended. Xi Jinping delivered a speech on October 2017, during the 19th national congress of the CCP. In his speech, there were everything that observers of international relations and foreign policy produce scholarships about. China has national objectives that reflected and mirrored the neo-realist reflection on international relations. There were objectives that mirrored the reflection of neoliberalists. There were objectives that mirrored the reflections of idealists, and so on. Xi Jinping spoke of a Chinese military second to none. He spoke of international trade with a win–win objectives. He spoke of "building a community of common destiny for humankind". He spoke of leaving behind the old practices of power politics and the embrace of a democratic international relations.

His speech during that gathering needed to entail the direction of the country's foreign policy objectives. And, in that regard, President Xi did not disappoint. Xi's speech during the 19th Party Congress touched on the following points, all of which had foreign policy implication: First, he promised to restore China's greatness by 2049, the centenary anniversary of the People's Republic of China. It is nothing but a nationalistic goal aiming to erase the years of humiliation that the century encompassed. It is nothing but a goal designed to help the Chinese reconnect with their sense of grandeur and pride. And, in the quest to regain such a grandeur and pride, China wants to be second to no one, even militarily. President Xi expressed the goal of great rejuvenation, which entails the goal of fully mechanizing the army by 2020, fully modernizing the army by 2035, and making it a world class by 2050.

The second goal that was expressed in President Xi's speech during the 19th Party Congress (2017) was that it would take responsibility on global governance. This particular goal is clearly evidence of the leadership role that China will welcome as soon as it believes the time is right. The willingness of China to don the mantle of leadership in matters of global governance became obvious during

President Xi's Davos Speech (2017), as mentioned earlier. Beyond promoting globalization, President Xi knows that it implies measures to support multilateral trade, which in turn is possible only if and when international order is secured and other surrounding issues of concern to humanity, such as the environment, are forcefully addressed. Global governance encompasses all of these and much more. China, under the leadership of President Xi seems more and more at ease with the idea of embodying global leadership. It is, as others have noted, a departure from the more subtle rise, the more discrete navigating of the waters of international affairs, suggested by the late leader Deng Xiao Peng. The challenge is that China will have to seek to accomplish these goals without causing any disruption to its own rise.

The third goal that was articulated in President Xi's speech was to assert leadership in China's own backyard. The backyard, which is Far East Asia, has its number of unresolved issues, dormant issues, and unsettled issues that can erupt at any time—among them: the China Sea issues, Taiwan, the US presence, Japan, the north western border with India, and so on. No one wants that to happen. China wants to make sure of that. But, that task as well comports risks. China hopes that its economic leadership may have enough drive to divert belligerent zeal away from matters of war and focus on those of prosperity. Many in China believe that the world has begun to move from focusing on war to focusing on prosperity.

Prosperity, indeed, seems to be the focus of President Xi's foreign policy objectives. His speech lacked then, and China still lacks the value, vision, and purpose as components expected from those embodying and exercising a leadership position. But maybe China does not need this dimension, if it chooses to be content with the ideals of liberalism as long as they allow pluralistic expressions of choices. China has signaled and expressed its adhesion to key principles and norms deriving from the liberal value system, and its main dissenting argument was that such principles and norms ought to be essential to allow the integration of many into the system without encroaching their sense of identity. It is the argument of the pluralistic perspective of the English School with which China's pronouncements and behaviors as an international system actor agrees.

China, through foreign policy, is currently working to attain the many national objectives articulated in Xi Jinxing speech. If it succeeds, it will restore the "once upon a time" now grandeur of the empire of the middle. It will fulfill the goal of a nation to never again succumb to pressure, or cave to the power of foreign powers, who have once humiliated its pride. It seeks no revenge but a restored pride. The question still is what purpose and sense will China give to

restore its position of worldwide influence, beyond basking into the sun of its restored pride. After all, we still live in a world characterized by anarchy. This world still needs those states with the most capabilities to help fashion a future ground for peaceful coexistence. This justifies the need to understand how China views the international system.

China's Self-Image and Foreign Policy

To know how China, or any other state actor for that matter, acts in the international realm is to know its foreign policy. To know China's foreign policy is to know China's national interests. And to know China's national interests is to know what China thinks for itself and about the world. And to know what China thinks for itself is to know China's self-image. While knowing what China thinks of the world is the reflection of that self-image. This is what justifies the interest in self-image with respect to foreign policy. In the case of China, this notion of self-image is more valuable and revealing of its foreign policy in more than one way. China until recently has been cautiously engaging the world; and it still is, essentially. There is a particular reason for that cautious attitude above many others—China's self-image. Let us consider in which ways such self-image explains China's foreign policy approach.

Fei-Ling Wang (1998: 21) wrote: "China has a self-image that is filled with contradictions." He notes at the same time further, "An increased self-confidence of the Chinese nation and a peculiar persisting sense of insecurity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership have deeply colored China's strategic considerations." The contradiction of which the author speaks is about China's sense of pride and insecurity at the same time, a sense of confidence but with a cautious attitude as China articulates and pursues its interests. The observations in these quotes are correct; they necessitate, however, a clarification. The clarification to be made is that of separating China as a historical nation and its communist leadership. The distinction is justified by the fact the interests of the nation are not in the same priority, always, symbiotic. The historical Chinese cultural pride and source of its nationalism is not naturally symbiotic with communism. This explains the dilemma that Wang (1998: 32) further observes and expresses in the following quotes: "The ruling CCP regime demonstrates a peculiar mentality that mixes an ambitious sense of mission with a strong fear of being under siege". The Chinese communist leadership finds itself in this dilemma because it wants, on one hand, to reflect the expectations of historical proud China, in quest for

regained sense of once lost cultural superiority, but on the other hand, the political communist leadership knows itself to be subject of a skeptic, suspicious, antagonistic international climate. Once again, the quote stems from a time of the aftermath of China's isolation by the West, after Tiananmen. This means, it is not China that was under siege but the Communist Party. In other words, China was under siege through the Communist Party. Although intertwined, the fate of China and that of the Communist Party are not identical. They are not identical, for instance, the way Christian conservatism of Bavaria, in Germany, is with the culture, the people and the politics of the region, or the Torries in United Kingdom, or the Republicans in the United States. There is a symbiosis here, which explains the absence of the dilemma that communism deals with in China's foreign policy. And the rehabilitation of Confucianism, which has started to serve as the source of ideational values in which China should be seen as an attempt to remedy the lack of symbiosis. China's claim to exceptionalism is grounded in the Confucianism worldview and value system rather than in communism.

While the Communist Party leadership serves the national interest, it has its own interest distinct from that of the nation, namely the preservation of its power. Chinese national interest can be served by any other regime beside the Communist regime. This means, while the Communist Party in power tends to China's interest, it must tend, at the same time, to its own. It approaches issues from both these lenses. The consequence is that, it does act in ways that secure its power, which may or may not always be symbiotic with the interest of the people or even the nation. As a matter of example, was the Cultural Revolution implemented in national interest or in the party's interest? And, there are demands from the people that are not heeded by the Communist Party simply because they may threaten its standing. The case of the democracy movement and the above-mentioned Tiananmen Square massacre is an illustration. The same disjunction can be found in China, vis-à-vis the world. Internationally, the West for Human Rights violations scorned China; but this scorn was primarily directed more to the Communist regime than to the nation of China; because the people of China would welcome more rights. Isolating and scorning served to weaken the Communist Party, but potentially benefit the people. Indeed, the interests of the Communist Party are not necessarily identical to those of the people of China. Often, however, these two objectives, those of the Communist Party and the people, coincide; and sometimes, one conditions the other. One recent example is the goal and the sense of rejuvenation chanted by President Xi Jinping. This sense of rejuvenation speaks to the pride of the Chinese nation and people, but also serves the Communist Party. By ensuring rejuvenation, the Communist Party demonstrates its ability to

deliver on political goods to the Chinese people and at the same time reinforces its standing internationally, and increasingly ceases to be the lap dog of the West. And recent China's assertiveness, as in the case of the, once again, South China Sea, reflects both the gained confidence of the Communist Party and the (cultural) nationalist fervor of the people of China. In order for the Chinese Communist Party to secure its power, it must legitimize itself through satisfying the need of the people and the nation. The Communist Party uses its ability to deliver on Chinese political goods as a way of legitimizing its hold to power, since such a hold has never been tested through the will of the people.

Right now, as China does well economically, it serves both the nation and the communist power. And this is an illustration of what Wang (1998) rightfully notes, that the Communist Party often uses the mantra of national interest as cover. The distinction between China's national interest and Chinese Communist Party interests is necessary. The former is the depository of China's national pride. The Chinese nation, its people, culture, and history have remained a source of confidence, despite the century of shame. We have stated that the century of shame has succeeded in transforming Chinese cultural pride into Chinese nationalism. The Chinese nation is today satisfied to have regained its sense of pride through what President Xi Jinping has called "rejuvenation." Its nationalism is well and alive. But it does not naturally and symbiotically translate into the Communist Party leadership. The Chinese Communist Party is cautious because, until recently, it was insecure. It was insecure for a number of reasons. Political China has not always had the means and capabilities commensurate with its sense of pride. It was forced to hold back, and to do the most despite its modest means, during the Mao Zedong years. Political China has had a communist identity that kept the regime in Beijing from unfiltered relations and cooperation around the world. Until recently, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, China was still subject of isolationist policies from the West's anti-communist stand. And even for its own security, China did not have the dissuasive power, with the exception of its nuclear capabilities to secure its own shore, or Taiwan, against the West. China was vulnerable by its geography to the same types of invasions it has endured in the 19th century. And naturally, both China's political and national pride could not bear risking another humiliation. While the Chinese nationalism is bolder, the Chinese communist leadership is cautious. All these were reasons enough for caution.

But they were as well reasons, good enough to sustain the fervor of nationalism in China, alive today. Fei-lin Wang wonders why China, in 1998, was not assertive enough, when he thinks it should have. He writes (p. 21): "Likely to be

more assertive and even nationalistic demanding, the PRC, under the current political regime, appears to prefer a conservative foreign policy for the sake of its political stability." His observation begs the suggestions of the following two remarks. First, it confirms the need to distinguish between historical China from its communist leadership. The historical national pride of the Chinese would suggest a more assertive foreign policy but the experiences of the Communist Party suggest the need for caution. Second, this cautious attitude is thought to spare the Communist Party any potential source of international debacle, which might weaken its grip to power domestically. What is telling here is that Wang observations are made in the time of Jiang Zemin's tenure as China's president. From 1978, the Deng Xiao Peng era, and subsequently Jian Zemin, and until Hu Jintao, Chinese foreign policy was informed by the mantra of low profile. China was then not yet as confident as it has become. And confidence is the other factor that explains the contradiction that Wang has felt observing China's foreign policy, or strategic choices. China simply waited to be confident enough. That confidence was built on the back of sustained economic growth. With gained confidence, China could now afford to project its confidence. This happened through and in the rise of Xi Jinping to party and nation's leadership, since 2013. China had gained more stature. China was more confident. The rejuvenation was underway. The pride lost during the century of shame was been dissipated. And nationalists in China became more vocal. Chinese foreign policy became assertive. The case in point used for illustration is China's aggressive move in security access and use of the South China Sea. China's self-image is more confident. But how much higher will China's confidence rise? And should it rise, will its assertiveness rise along? Traditionally, and by some international relations theoretical approach, namely realism and neo-realism, they would assume such an assertiveness to rise. But, the earlier chapters, about China's foreign policy behavior, objectives, and goals do not suggest such intent. China's own pronouncement and declaration argues to want to move past an understanding of the international system grounded in a Western social metaphysics that is essentially binary and often produces conflicts that naturally are not apodictic. The assumption about China's future behavior should be to expect something different in its understanding of the world in which it will have a larger role to play. And Wang, again imagining China's future attitude, seems to suspect that its attitude will not change much while China will still have the communist leadership. He writes: "China's self-image and strategic intentions are likely to sustain a conservative and pragmatic foreign policy for the PRC in the near future" (p. 32). What has changed is that China has become assertively pragmatic, since the Xi Jinping era. Pragmatism suits China's cultural

history. Its foreign policy is often not strictly, analytically, and deductively argued. This is the Western style. China is purposefully vague in its conceptualization, using normative principles and guidelines, leaving room for flexibility, change, the dynamic flow of relations, and of changing reality. China accommodates changes. It is less stressed out by the consequences of analytical approaches when reality deviates from logic and reason. Indeed, reason and logic come second to reality. China operates comfortably in contradiction, while in the West, where contradictions are found, they are often conveniently left unspoken, ignored. In Confucian thinking, contradictions are features of nature. They demand to be reconciled but not necessarily to be fought.

Foreign Policy and International Relations

Foreign policy is a venue of state involvement with peer states. It is a venue in which states' interests and intention come to bear. They come to bear in the international system, which has constraints. The debate in foreign policy research revolves around the weight of such constraints in the behavior of actors and in the materialization of states' interests. On this weight, heavy or light, depends on whether the decision-making process and power lies in the system (system level) or in the state ability to induce action (agency or state level). Naturally, the debate has produced a clear demarcation of two perspectives. On one hand, those who see such weight considerable enough to give to any observer the necessary tool to explain what we see happening internationally. They believe in the structural explanation of international relation behavior. On the other hand, there are those who in the necessary framing of the international system, as any system, which, however, in no way determines the behavior of international actors who still keep their identity, intent, views that find expression in the international system. They believe in the purposive explanation of the functioning of the international system. On this question depends the determination of whether foreign policy is more driven by conditions in the international environment or by conditions within states; and, therefore, whether decision-making was to be found inside the state (based on state unique characteristics) or outside the state (based on pattern of interactions that the system allows) (Roy, 1998). The answer, naturally, is not simple. Foreign policy decision-making is certainly influenced by both the inside and the outside environments. This internal and external dynamic is what led Robinson et al. (1998: 2) to write: "All nations' foreign relations are shaped as much by the international environment as they are by domestic inputs." Foreign

policy successes are a testimony of a successful use of its tools and a successful navigation of contextual constraints with which it is exercised. In other words, it is the effectiveness of the actor/agent (state) to achieve its goals in a specific context/the system (structure).

Whether or not states are constrained depends on what the states intend to do. It depends on what "causes the state to act in the way they chooses" (Roy, 1998: 227) and this means that states, therefore, approach foreign policy with different mindsets. States develop a variety of mindsets vis-à-vis the international system, which ultimately is reflected in their foreign policy. They may see the international system as a finished product, and object in which they have no choice to navigate. They endure its constraint and seek to benefit from its opportunities. Others may be discontent but not have any other choice but to bow to what the system brings. They are often small states, that, ironically, as Stein (2006) observes, are the ones that the debate about systemic constrains never talks about. And their foreign policy is consequently overlooked. Overlooked because their foreign policy is bound not to produce waves susceptible to affect the shores of other states. And, in that logic, the foreign policy of the United Stated regarding any matter of interest is worth knowing and scrutinizing because of its potential implications, due to the importance of the state in the international system.

Some states, although small or relatively small, are not willing to bow. Among them is where we find rogue states, and revisionists. Some others, with more capabilities, may not choose to bow to the system's constraints. They are those whose foreign policy carries the seed of a great power conflicts. There are those that despite their great capabilities may choose to improve, through foreign policy action, the conditions, norms, rules, and institutions of the system. Those states that develop the mindset of acting in the system and for the system mindset put the decision-making about foreign policy, primarily in the hands of the state, and not depending on the condition of the international environment. They believe in the purpose of the state. They believe in the construct of the international system as subordinate to the will of its forming entities, the individual states. They place the onus of system onto the lap of individual states' political will to act for the system, through foreign policy. They can play a role that allow them to influence the international system. Their ability to influence depends on what Rosenau (1967) has called influencers of foreign policy, namely: the size, in term of population, their economies, in term of GNP, their political system, measured by whether it is a democracy or not.

But what about China's mindset and attitude vis-à-vis the system, the purpose and the role of the state in the system through foreign policy? China's imperial

history is one that believes in the purposeful state; its centrality in ordering lives. China has a healthy self-image. China is acquiring capabilities. China is developing a global ambition. China has the pragmatism of Confucianism that thrives and embraces change. China has a neo-Marxist identity that is naturally eager to rectify whatever historical class biases and exploitative entrenched mechanisms one can find in any status quo order. China is skeptic of the expansive tendencies of the West. All these factors suggest a political heritage and cultural background that presages a state whose mindset will be that of an active state. China should not bow down to the systemic constraints that will be deemed to have been caused by either one of these above-mentioned heritages and backgrounds.

Chinese foreign policy exercise is currently demonstrating that fact. It is adaptive, as it is pragmatist. It adapts its foreign policy to its success, capabilities, and ambitions. Indeed, China's objectives have morphed, from integrating the international free trade to becoming one of its important participants, and even to become its most influential organizer. And, while rising, China is integrating a number of states and regions around the world to its success as demonstrated by the Belt and Roads Initiative. It is demonstrating a degree of coordination of all its various foreign policy endeavors, activities, and initiatives. China seems unbound in exercising foreign policy. It is not restrained by a priori of ideology, national particularities, and political cultures of states around the world. It is about engaging nations that become relevant to its strategic objectives. China has a grand strategy. A grand strategy is a mark of an influencing actor in the system. China, as a state, does not concede the ability to fully control, decide, and execute its objectives, not bowing to powerful international actors, both sub-national, such as corporations or supra-national such as international institutions. This is what Yilmaz (2015) observes when writing:

> Generally speaking, traditional theories either ignore the state while giving priority to sub-state or supra-state structures or, albeit the state as the principle international actor, do not recognize its potential to function as an emancipatory agency. It is observed, however, that the contemporary foreign diplomacy of the Chinese state departs considerably from both of the above postulations.

China is a state with a purpose, when it comes to foreign policy. It leans on the side of the state agency, and state level in answering the question of where does the decision-making lies between the state and the international system.

Some states, indeed, are more active than others in utilizing the venue of foreign policy to identify, construct, and articulate their interests, and possibly

export their worldview. China has substantively both. Like any other state it has multiple venues and tools of foreign policy to use, and it has been doing that mightily both incisively and extensively. Chinese diplomacy is on the verge of becoming the most numerous and the most ubiquitous. Its unique political culture allows China to blend and enlist in the middle of foreign policy diplomacy, public diplomats, who are any non-state actors, such as personalities, corporations, lobbyists, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, citizens, and even public opinion in an indirect and sometimes direct fashion, as contributors. These non-state actors are what Alden et al. (2016: 3) call "sub-national sources of influence." They can influence from within states foreign policy but also be contributors of it from without. Together, they constitute the drivers of foreign policy. These tools are used differently by different states. They are used effectively by China. China's political system, a non-democratic one, allows a streamlined decision-making, for better or for worse; and to the chagrin of political liberalists around the world. China can use this advantage as it vies for a greater role. It has started aligning with its growing influence. By all accounts, with a short learning curve, China has demonstrated its willingness to present itself as a willing and reliable partner to an increasing number of nations around the world, and even to entire continents, as shown in the cases of Africa, Latina America, Eastern Europe, and East Asia. To reflect this awareness of growing international clout, China pays more attention of foreign policy as discussed below.

Construction and Shaping of China's Foreign Policy

China's foreign policy is a product of a domestic vision. It is increasingly shaped to induce China's wealth, power, commensurate with its newly gained status and with its self-image. And because foreign policy starts at home, its main actors in China are the party leaders and the bureaucracy (Luis, Kung, 2014). The bureaucratic structure and China's decision-making bodies consist of the politburo of twenty-seven members; a standing committee (a group of seven members, chaired by Xi Jinping); the China Communist Party Central Committee of 200 members; leading small groups (LSG) for comprehensive and deepening reform and created to facilitate both quick decisions and consensus between agencies and led by high-level officials from both the party and the military; major commissions, among them the National Security Commission, the party congress, foreign ministry, and other ministries. In this institutional architecture, President Xi Jinping plays a central role. He either heads them or they report to him. He heads the

party chairmanship, the nation presidency, the military command, the politburo, the standing committee, the party congress, and the small groups, committees and ministry-level decisions are reported to him. Xi Jinping's does all that in the closest proximity and collaboration of the seven members of the standing committee who are, beside him, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan, Zhang Gaoli, and Yu Zheng Sheng.

Like anywhere else, foreign policy decisions involves many agencies. It is a product of bargaining and compromises. And like anywhere else, calculations of any kinds and driven by all kinds of interests and motivations animate participants. As China's status continues to rise, a number of adjustments were made, and are still been made at all levels of power, in all relevant institutions of statecraft for efficiency purposes. These adjustments include creation of new institutions, new chains of command, reshuffling of decision-making processes, appointing of new personnel, and so on. The adjustments increased, for instance, the number of high-rank officials in charge of foreign affairs. The Chinese Minster of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, has been promoted to a position as a state counselor while remaining at his current post. The significance is that the latter post is ranked higher than the former. In both these capacities, he is more influential in affecting the Communist Party's policy decisions. Further reforms are currently underway—for instance, the creation of a special portfolio focusing in China's relations with the US, now held by Wang Qishan, or the authority over embassy personnel, which is in the hands of the foreign minister (Legarda, 2018). To underline the upgrade of the minister of foreign affairs, its budget for 2018 has been increased, although nowhere near that of the defense minister. Although, as Legarda rightfully notes, any comparison with the United States, as the only competitor, is still difficult for reason of Chinese accounting practice, she nevertheless notes that whereas the United States was pulling back, China was upgrading its diplomacy. Legarda[4] writes:

> What is clear is that while the United States is downgrading the State Department, China is giving substantially more power to its diplomats. Beijing's budgeted 60.07 billion renminbi ($9.49 billion, a 15.6 percent increase from 2017, and about 40 percent higher than the 2013 budget, the first proposed by the new Xi administration), stands in contrast with US President Donald Trump's 2018 federal budget request of 28.2 billion for the State Department and other international programs, which represented a 29.1 percent decrease.

4. Helena Legarda: "China Upgrades Diplomacy While the US Pulls Back." From *The Diplomat*, March 20, 2018.

The trajectory of these two approaches, by the US and China, to financing the institutions of foreign policy denotes on one hand, a peak or exhaustion of the United States in the role of the State Department, while denoting on the other hand a boost and reenergized role of China's foreign affairs. What this trajectory also suggests is a reduced efficiency gap for these institutions of foreign affairs for both states. This means an opening for China to increase influence through the venue of diplomacy closer to that of the United States. And, because the rise of influence has been considerable, it only rivals that of the United States. This rivaling diplomatic effectiveness is a reflection of China's awareness of its new gained stature. The upgrade of foreign affairs, the reform of its foreign ministry for purposes of helping to achieve China's interests around the world, is a consequence of that new gained stature. There is a status-specific behavior. The scale and scope of its adjustment to its new stature produces a flow of expanding, second only to the current hegemonic leadership of the United States. And because China continues to expand, it may eventually no longer remain second.

The adjustments also include provisions in place about the roles, competence, authority, expectations, and requirements of actors within. Adjustments are needed as well in information collection, as China's foreign policy interests grow in scale and scope. The adjustment here is about coordination of activities undertaken by various agencies and various agents, from researchers, diplomats and intelligence, to minimize negative effects of bureaucratic parochial interests (Xue, 2016). And finally a part of these adjustments is the increasing depersonalization of decision-making and their institutionalization. Once the domain of Mao Zedong has gradually become more bureaucratic since the 1980s to respond to the many needed changes. With the depersonalization came the slow erosion of a culture of secrecy and opacity for which all communist nations are famous. China could not rub shoulders with the international system and trading in free market world economy and at the same time remain secretive; at least not at the same extent as before its reform of 1978. The process has started since Hu Jintao's tenure, as president; and China gets more and more comfortable with its new status and role, openness and transparency will be more and more fostered because they simply needed to cultivate confidence and dismantle suspicions and mistrust. Although the mechanism of China's foreign policy decision-making, from collection of information, analysis, screening, policy recommendation, and policy decision remains less sophisticated, it has the advantage of being streamlined (Xue, 2016).

The internal dynamics has further contributed to the interest in foreign policy. More and more elements in the populations at large find reason to understand,

partake, and influence, if possible, China's foreign policy. These new foreign policy stakeholders are various interest groups, businesses, the military, non-political elite, intellectuals, public opinion, as well as the students and the regular Chinese political-minded citizens. Each harbor a particular preference with respect to foreign policy. While nationalists, some of whom may be ultra-nationalists, may push for a more aggressive foreign policy, students and intellectuals are likely to push for more conciliatory foreign policy. While communist ideologues are wary of more liberalization, reformists and wealthy Chinese are more open to them. As for the last social entities relevant to foreign policy are the Chinese political-minded citizens. They constitute the pool from which public opinion emerges. Such public opinion is due to become more and more important as the middle class continues to grow, if lessons from elsewhere can apply to China.

From the intellectual elite in China is springing an increasing number of publications, discussing the role of China as an international actor, the policy it should adopt, and what vision it should stand for, and so on. This means that there is an emerging pool of sub-national actors of foreign policy in China. Naturally, among all the emerging poles of interested entities in China's foreign policy, the most important remains the Communist Party and within the Communist Party, the leader, who happens to be President Xi Jinping. The party and its president remain the principle actors in China's foreign policy. Therefore, I first browse through the debate on foreign policy from the sub-national actors' perspective and focus and secondly on the speech by President Xi, which articulates what China foreign policy will be in the next few decades.

On the sub-national poles of interested actors, the debate around foreign policy in China revolves around the following, non-exhaustively, major questions: What should the country adopt as foreign policy attitude? Is the country's relationship with North Korea detrimental? Is China's assertiveness with regard of the South China Sea the right policy or not? What should be China's attitude vis-à-vis the United States? What should China's response be regarding the imposition of higher tariff by the United States? Should China continue to follow the advice of the late Deng Xiao Peng on matter of foreign policy conduct and attitude (which was *taoguangyanghui*[5])? Or is Xi Jinping's more defined, assertive foreign policy more reflective of China today? (Wang, 2013).

To these questions, opinions and reactions naturally vary because one can find in China moderate communist party members, reformist, and even those

5. Loosely translated should mean: keeping low profile.

with liberal and liberalist tendencies. One can find in China hardliner communist party members, still believers of Mao's revolutionary ideals. One can find in China the rising corporate elite, patriots but open to new ways. One can find in China nationalists whose presence and views are explained and even justified by the years through which China was humiliated in the many wars fought and lost against the invading foreigners. One can find in China liberals on China's coastal cities, who dream of a liberally democratic China. There are as well those who ponder over the question of China's values and moral compass beyond the material interest of the state—its national security and prosperity. To them, this ideational component, which underlines the vision of a leading power, is relevant simply because China's pursuit, activity, and behavior as a potentially influencing state in the system ought to be guided by some kind of a moral compass. They seek to articulate the content of what should constitute such a moral compass. This is where China's pragmatism faces the need for principles. Pragmatism implies dynamics, and relies on process; which reminds us of Qin's notion of relationalism, discussed earlier in Chapter 3. Chinese pragmatism, reflective of Confucian relationality privileges relations and the trust and reliability factors that they cultivate. They differ from principle-led approach that implies rules, norms, and relies more on structure rather than processes. It is the rational approach. This brings us back to the Western-versus-Eastern model of fostering international relations. To the need for principles to govern international relations or to the need to use principles to guide foreign policy China seems not to relay on rationality but on morality. It seems to suggest that morality rather than reason should guide the conduct of international affairs and foreign policy. This does not mean that one exclude the other but rather that one is privileged over the other. China, and the Eastern Confucian mind, worries that rationality produces the reliance on materiality of relations namely the distribution of capabilities and power among those in relations, and eventually produces abuses observed in the international system. A focus on morality will remedy that tendency of the international system. Indeed, as stated earlier, Confucius cautions about the use of power without morality. In China's involvement in foreign policy, its new partnerships around the world and its participation in international organizations, it emphasizes processes rather than rules. The ASEAN as an Eastern regional organization has been pointed to illustrate this preference for processes, while the European Union has been used to illustrate the Western preference for rules (Qin, 2016)

Morality, as it appears for now, seems to be the answer to those seeking to find China's vision of world politics. The established view is that leadership is best embodied by principled behavior. Pragmatism in a leadership position appears as

boundlessness and opportunism. It is not reassuring. It is a factor of insecurity. Those holding this view seek to find a visionary component in China's pursuit of foreign policy, as an important international actor. It is a question of less relevance for any other foreign actor. It is a question of some importance for those playing a leadership role. Leadership must have a purpose beyond the exigencies of the material existence. China seems to respond that virtues of relationality foster the morality necessary for the conduct of world affairs. Anything else is about processes, not too narrowly defined sense of purpose or direction that brings along rigidity in the conduct of foreign affairs. It is a rigidity produced by rules. It becomes a source of other issues when such riles are induced and produced in a non-relational manner. The relationality focus on processes implies the contribution and participation of all in the creation and elaboration of rules that are designed to apply to all. This universal application of international rules is not predicate don implication of all in its production. This is the construct that makes both Confucian, and Marxist China critical and suspicious of the existing international system. This Confucian relationalist model is a social theory. It is built on the same assumptions and other social theories, namely that interactions foster specific behavior, shape roles, and induces expectation. In the end, they bring about virtuous social being, mindful of others, of consequence of their actions and behavior onto others, and the cost for deviation. These social theory assumptions are, in their core, about processes. They are relational. Once again, this does not mean that they lack principles. It simply means that principles come after processes. And after social order is principled, it still needs to be pragmatic because relations are ever changing. Through some evidence of reliance on process in its foreign policy practice, China seems to reflect this mode.

Will this be China's voice in the international arena? And this leads us to the Communist Party and its leaders, as they are primary source of such a voice. It is incumbent upon the Communist Party and its leader, as China's national foreign policy actor, to articulate such a voice. China used to be content with articulating its foreign policy objectives and vision in white papers, in three or five bullet point phrases, which it called principles of China's foreign policy, but that method is simply no longer adequate. China needs a full-blown articulation of what it is about. Whatever it articulates must be commensurate of the immense changes happening within, the complexity of the changing global dynamic, and its take on the world, reflecting its newly gained stature. For now, China's action globally is telling. Its foreign policy revolves around achieving the national objectives articulated by Xi Jinping. And in this pursuit of the motional goals is where China's pragmatism and the focus on relationships seems to be manifest.

Indeed, China is active in every region of the globe making new friends, creating relationships and does not seem to be concerned, hindered, think twice, need a priori, or preconditions to engage. It is by now clear that China functions differently than let us say the United States, or the West in general whose model of engagement distinguishes a priori between friends and foes, those embracing the demands, requirements, expectations of the West and those that do not. The West talks about conditionalities to engage with potential partners or foes. The West uses incentives or threats. The threat is carried out in the form of embargoes, sanctions, withholding of economic assistance, and isolation to punish those that do not heed its lead. The West functions with assumptions, categories, classification, and deduction. The West establishes criteria, or properties that need to be checked and scored. The West is taxonomic, analytical, positivist, and rationalist. Confucian China is contextual. It is about meaning and the interpretation of it. It is about evaluation, appreciation, and synthetizing. All this translate in a foreign policy attitude and disposition inductive rather and deductive. In addition, China, during its anti-colonial years, used to clearly articulate its affinity with non-Western world as a victim of imperialism and colonization, a feature it shared with them. This perspective played on differences and with time bearer of a racial tone, which imperialism, inevitable eventually and easily, lends itself to.

Today, that dimension is no longer in use. What has remained is the implicit message that China does not come with a priori, namely seeking to transform or change in any ways, the ways of those with whom it is striking new relationships. This is the currency of Chinese diplomacy today. Chinese engagements with new friends start with that type of psychological advantage. It might just be one of the drivers of China's diplomatic successes. It then continues through its relational, process-driven and one that does entail elements of trade-offs, but no a priori the like of "you must first respect Human Rights." The noble ideational goal and ideal goal of respect for Human Rights becomes then often entangled in matter of material interests to states. Not to say that the goal of respect for Human Rights does not have a place in diplomatic negation but it is to say that it belong to a different domain, namely that metaphysics, or cultural perspective. Differences of ideational nature, naturally require more time to produce agreements than differences, material in nature. In addition, when it comes to determining which of the Western requirements should be first met, between the ideational ones such respect to Human Rights and any material ones, such as access to resources, for instance, the West has found itself in predicament as it often chooses to privilege its own material interest over its ideational ones. China's approach spares itself such a dilemma. China is flexible, as a result, in the exercise of its foreign policy.

The institutional mechanisms of the Chinese governments, and foreign policy decision-making, however, still have a few characteristics, setting them apart for those of liberal democracies. The first characteristics that imposes itself is the authoritarian rule, which implies a different kind of decision-making process than in liberal states. Decision-making processes may be collegial, consensual, streamlined, horizontal or vertical, involving many influencing personnel or social forces, purposefully distributed, balanced, or diluted to avoid tyranny, or just be concentrated under the authority of one individual. Brief, they can be either democratic (horizontal) or hierarchical (vertical). Just as in the democratic decision-making there are various modalities for deciding, in hierarchical decision-making, which include both authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, one must distinguish between degrees of accountability and consultation in the decision-making. Such decision can proceed in seclusion of the authority and in exclusions of counselors or relevant bodies or in consultation and inclusion of such counselors and relevant bodies. The first modality is autocratic, the kind that produces tyranny. The second recognizes to the authority the privilege of the last word, but such a last word is a product of consultation. In China, the standing committee, the LSGs, and the Communist Party play the consultative roles. The decision-making is authoritarian, in the hierarchical sense, and not in an autocratic sense.

Conclusion

The rise of China to the role of an important actor in the international system triggered my interest in writing this book. The particularly interesting features of China are its territorial size, its immense population, and its long history and traditions that have produced a unique worldview in Confucianism. This worldview has adopted Marxist communism and the free market liberal economic system. China has combined both antithetical ideologies, using one for political governance and the other for economic governance. After World War II, China fully integrated liberal international institutionalism. It created its economic success in 1978 and beyond, making China an important actor in the international system today. Under those circumstances, it becomes of interest to scrutinize what kind of international player China will be. I attempted to explain just that using a variety of theories to review state actor behavior. I then juxtaposed these theoretical analyses against the actual policy choices, preferences, and behavior of Chinese foreign policy.

No one theory suffices to capture or explain China's choices and behavior as an international actor. China's choices and behavior in the international realm reflect the templates of some theoretical explanations, while rejecting and questioning others. It combines and crosses through approaches to international relations proposed by various theories. With respect to the realist approach, China

acknowledged the consequences that the state of anarchy induces while rejecting to see in such a situation the invitation to elevate power and the use of force to an imperative category. As a result, China is uneasy with offensive realism and its tendency to make those with power capabilities the dominant oppressors of the system. Given China's history, in which it was victimized by such a behavior, China has tended to shy away from that model. It is supported in its attitude by a Confucian worldview and a culture more comfortable with the use of defensive power and force. The adoption of Marxist communism in 1978 has reinforced this perspective, as this ideology is grounded in a historical analysis according to which social systems and the international system are the products of a dialectic process in which social forces and interest compete. The outcome of the rapport de force in this competition underlies the structure and order of the society they produce. Consequently, their respective weight is reflected in the social order they create. China sees the international system as a product that came to exist as a result of a rapport de force that went hegemonic. Communist China sees itself as antithetical to that process.

After voluntarily extricating itself from the economic limitations of communism, China embraced free market economic system with an intensity that has made it an economic power in just a few decades. China has seen in trade the ideal tool to foster its own economic prosperity, to achieve integration and acceptance with other states, and to achieve recognition and status while its economic importance grew. To those ends, China has fully integrated the institutional architecture of liberalism. It participates and contributes to functioning liberalism in the international system. As China's economic importance grows, it has become a pillar of global liberalism, while remaining communist. Its success has benefited from a globalized economic liberalism, making China a power that has risen in the realm of global liberalism. As such, China supports liberalism as an international relations theory. The only reserve lies in the fact that the liberal institutional order is a product of a historical process that reflects the hegemonic will of the United States. As a communist state that rejects political liberalism, it remains sensitive to hegemonic behavior and has had the choice, as realist theory expects, to either challenge the supremacy and influence of the Unites States in these institutions or to surrender. Here, like on other occasions, China has been resourceful and creative in displaying unexpected choices and behavior. In this case, China has found a way to not challenge the influence of the United States in the institution of liberalism. Such a challenge comes with some risks of resistance, of antagonizing the incumbent, of "rocking the boat" prematurely. China instead has chosen to create alternative and

parallel institutions in which it can play the same influential role as the US does in the older institutions.

China's behavior seems to also subscribe constructivism's central proposition: We live in a social world that differs from an objective one, a world that is the product of agency. Unlike the positivist approaches that tend to present the international system as objective and immutable, constructivism posits that it is subject to the changing will of agency and that everything is changing, even the identity of the agency. China agrees with constructivism because it opens the door to pragmatism. It opens the door to the Confucian pragmatism that foresees the eventuality of change due to the imperfect nature of human beings and the societies they create. This imperfection dictates that which humans create is subject to change, improvement, and adjustments. This alone implies the inherency of change. About change, Confucius writes (*Analects*, 17: 2) that one will have to be either wise not to need any change or foolish not to recognize the need to for implementing change when the time calls for it. It opens the door as well to the newfound pragmatism of the reform era. Deng Xiao Ping declared that it did not matter whether the cat was black or white as long as it caught mice. Both the international system and its agents are subject to this attitude. The existing basis, norms, and agreement of the system ought to be questioned when needed, just as the actors themselves ought to be able to question themselves and change when needed. China has changed its identity and therefore does not intend to be pigeonholed. China's pragmatism, displayed in its foreign policy, relates to the premise of constructivism.

China embraces the pluralist perspective of the English School of thought, while rejecting the solidarity perspective. In its sensitivity to foreign imposition and interference, which it views as expressions of imperialism and hegemony, China rejects the solidarist perspective of the English School, which stipulates that the integration to the international society occurs through adhesion to shared values. Such values were defined and established by the West prior to the integration of new members. There are, however, degrees of divergences between the Confucian and communist value system and the Western value system. China does not intend to relinquish its ideological and cultural value basis. Under such a condition, China cannot integrate into the international community without denying the idea of self. That sacrifice, it argues, should not be expected—especially given the fact that there was no state or power habilitated to demand it from others. This way of conceptualizing the international society by the English School is not consensual. Within the English School, there is another perspective which argues that such a degree of expectation for shared values was not indispensable

for the functioning of the international society. Indispensable values create mutual respect: the assumption that the other likewise aspires to and desires the same social good as one's self, in regard to namely security, prosperity, and happiness. This perspective of pluralists argues that it suffices for any aspiring member of the international society to agree to share a minimum of functional principles. Individuals, neighbors, and states can coexist even with distinct identities.

China cannot but adhere to the premise and analysis of critical theory. Such adhesion is explained through the Marxist grounding of critical theory approach to international relations. China's political identity as a Marxist communist state shares the historical perspective of critical theory and its analysis of how societal orders came to be established. Imbalance between the dominant and oppressed social actors always produces a social order. The society created is therefore a product born with a congenital leaning towards the interests of the dominant parties. This congenital deficiency has to be rectified. China, since the 1950s, used this critical approach to the international system. Its foreign policy throughout the years has reflected it. China has sought ways to counter any expression of domination, while expanding possibilities for the weaker members of the system. Now, China is attempting to achieve the same goals through the free market system. From this perspective, critical theory seems to capture China's attitude vis-à-vis the international system (Yilmaz, 2005).

The Chinese culture and traditions are shaped by a number of normative schools of thought, like Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and legalism—in addition to communism. Together, they constitute the normative pillars from which derive the moral compass guiding the choices of the state beyond the materiality of their interests, both nationally and internationally. Whatever idealist goals the state might have, they may stand alone as foreign policy objectives or they are immersed in such objectives. However, they sometimes collide with material objectives of states, as the case of the United States foreign policy practices demonstrates. So far, China has managed to align its foreign policy objectives with both its materials interests and the ideals it has of the world. To do this, China follows a set of simplistic foreign policy guidelines, which are shown to be effective. They consist of treating other states as equals, seeking win–win cooperation agreements, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for territorial integrity. These objectives are laid out in the five principles of peaceful coexistence. They are idealistic because they seek peace. They are idealist because they provide the normative ground for behavior susceptible to inducing that peace. They coincide with stipulations of the Westphalia Treaty of 1648 and even the United Nations Charter. And they are in agreement with China's own moral tradition, drawn

from its various normative schools of thought. China, as an international system actor, is idealist in that sense.

States often fall short of pursuing purely idealist goals because they are bound by the practical historical and actual conditions in which their foreign policy is exercised. Such conditions provide the justification under which realism keeps weighing down idealism. Both critical theory and idealism refuse to be held back by the pessimism of realism. They argue it "lacks the moral will to fight for truth and justice" (Wilson, 2017). Whatever idealistic goal states have, they have designed them to transcend such historical materiality of the current world. Idealist goals are not designed to improve the conditions of the world in which we live by extending its possibilities but by seeking one in which high possibilities, such as the absence of wars and poverty, the presence of equal justice, and the absence of domination are its norms. China is near idealist in this sense. China is creative in its attempt to improve or even elevate the conditions of the exiting status quo order. China finds ways to act by taking liberties and using its agency as a state to imagine new venues of improvements. China indiscriminately befriends states around the world, creates alliances linking traditional "enemies," proposes holistic trade-offs, and creates new spaces for trade and new institutions with the claim of benefiting the world.

China, by using its agential capacity, can impact the system in ways that may defy the existing canon of the international relations theory. China has already pushed such canon in political science by defying the duality of capitalism and communism. China uses this same pragmatism in the international system, as it remains unbound by prevailing ideas if and when they do not square with the China's international ideals. This explains why China's attitude is, at times, illusive to the Western mind, which has been trained to apprehend and comprehend the world in a taxonomic and analytical manner. China has a different style or attitude in the conduct of foreign policy. It is easy to understand such a style when it is motivated by the purely material interest of the state. In that case, the attitude can only be rational as explained by the rational choice theory. In the world of international affairs, there are as well ideational motivations. Therefore, to understand in order to explain the attitude of actors, one must know what a state's ideational motivation is. This becomes difficult when such intentions are not revealed, when the state is discrete or their motivations implicitly codified. There are cultures around the world that prefer discretion over explicit and Manichean approaches to interactions.

In addition, some cultures are analytic, while others are holistic in their approaches to interactions. These cultural preferences in interactions and negotiations

often compete in the field of diplomacy. This is to say that culture permeates communicative exchange. Its norms and references are imbedded in the goals and expectations of communicating agents. In the diplomatic field, historical cultural values in general, and political cultural values in particular, underlie the foreign policy objectives of states, despite the materiality of such objectives. However, China has recently affirmed its quest for leadership in world affairs. It will have to be more explicit and elaborate as to which idea it has for the world we all share.

In the end, however, China is indeed an actor in the international system whose particular features and heterogeneous worldviews (Confucian and communist, as opposed to Western and liberalist) could break new grounds in approaching the international system and in understanding the behavior of its actors. As an important actor that happens to combine three political identities (Confucian, communist, and institutionally liberalist), China must be pragmatic and should be able to display unpresented attitudes and behaviors in the making of its choices.

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