

Rationalizing Chinese hegemony

by

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B.A., Tamkang University, 2006
M.A., University of Arkansas, 2010

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the Chinese style of imperialism in the early 21st century through China's self-justifying rationalization and strategic thought. It develops a theory called *Cultural Subjectivism* to explore the PRC's preferred world order. Specifically, it analyzes the characteristics of Chinese subjectivity and how Beijing shapes the roles of the self and others through the othering and altercating processes in order to justify the country's overseas expansion. The international order that Beijing espouses reflects a realistic assessment of world politics. This realpolitik, however, is denied in the narratives for public consumption. Several idealistic principles that China claims are guiding its foreign policy (and devoid of strategic calculations) create a false impression that Beijing is an altruistic actor occupying the moral high ground. Anchoring Chinese behavior to the inherent benevolence of the PRC underpins an unfalsifiable self-justifying logic that, regardless of shifts in policies, Beijing's behavior is always defensive, peaceful, non-expansionist and non-hegemonic.

In accord with Beijing's assessments of the post-Cold War peace, its narratives have grown more inclusive in that the opposing roles (the othering) between the self and others becomes less salient while the role congruence (the altercating) that indicates shared interests gets more prevalent. This is tailored to meet China's strategic needs of the attainment of material strength and international status in the era of post-Cold War globalization through engagement with countries around the world. Paralleling the increasing usage of inclusive rhetoric to rationalize Beijing's overseas expansion is the growing discursive assertiveness of a China-espoused world order in which Chinese institutions and Chinese culture are said, due to their innate benevolence compared to hegemonic capitalism, to bring the world peace and prosperity. After all, the inclusive narratives and the role (re)construction spin around the concept of

Chinese socialism, an embodiment of the PRC's self-centeredness, and how it is good for both domestic development and international community.

Beijing's role construction operates within a quasi-world-like "Asia Pacific" that includes the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Eurasian continent. Within this expansive geographical scope, China adopts the grand strategy of "winning without fighting" which consists of the strategies of "cooperation" and limited provocations. The purpose is to amass resources through the land to cope with the challenges from the sea. As the strategic logic of winning without fighting dictates, the PRC intends to achieve its political goals during peacetime while, through disarming enemies and strengthening itself in its overseas expansion, preparing for a possible future war if non-war solutions prove impossible for obtaining its goals. Accordingly, "active defense" needs to be understood as a strategic guideline that directs the generation of resources and abilities for both non-war and war solutions. From a Chinese perspective, regardless of the means adopted, China's behavior is always defensive and for the sake of peace wherever the activities occur. This unfalsifiable rationalization that relies on the benevolent nature of the self, rather than an admission of realistic calculations, to explain its own behavior functions on a global level and characterizes active defense.

From the perspective of discursive rationalization, China exhibits the height of imperialism. Compared to Japan and the US, Beijing shows an unprecedented degree and scale in claiming itself moral in that it is altruistic and inclusive, while firmly believing in its own claims. It is the gulf between complicated realities and the extent of the PRC's willingness to systematically deny such or cover up what happens on the ground and a lower degree of transparency in its strategic calculations for self-interests that make Chinese imperialism different from others.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Lenin, the highest stage of capitalism is imperialism. What is the height of imperialism then?

China has had a vision of the inclusion of peoples and their diverse institutions which never gets realized. The future in China's politics receives a predominant weight to a degree that the past and the present can be¹ *systematically* rewritten to preserve one's beliefs that are biased toward everything good about what one hopes for the country and one's convictions about the capabilities of the Communist Party and the morality of certain Party members for their sinicized socialist orthodoxy. Like layers of an onion, each logical thread of the Chinese narratives that defends the past and provides hopes for the future is further strengthened by an outer layer that is added later in response to another case of failed governance. A fully-grown onion is well shaped by the cohesiveness of the outer layers. The stories told by the CCP dazzle the minds of many, at home and abroad, in a way that numerous horrific incidents of anti-humanity seem unreal or still within the bounds of acceptability. As much as the PRC believes in its uniqueness, China's inclusive greatness never gets realized. And yet, the country remains in a constant state of such pursuit while, buying into its own account of historical inclusion, convinced that the self already has it. The past once was the future. Before it gets rewritten, it used to be the focal point of the hopes for the realization of a given political goal. The way the past is no longer the future is to become romanticized aspirations for another future. Thus, the Chinese narratives are constructed

¹ Lucian Pye had noted a Chinese emphasis on the future instead of the present and how this has consequences on things happening at the present. See Lucian W. Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture: The Escalation of Confrontation from Moralizing to Revenge," *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1990, pp. 331-347, specifically p. 332.

in a way to preserve and to continue the supply of the (false) consciousness filled with convictions and little substance. Such is the primary characteristic of the Chinese polity.

That multiethnic nationals are living cordially on the vast territories that are called China today is said to be a historical fact since the dynastic eras, except for changes in regime. The narratives continue that great misfortune however arrived when western imperialist powers came to exploit the country. Trials and tribulations would then prove that the Chinese Communist Party selflessly saved the country. To show how individuals are committed to the Party's causes with patriotism, heroic stories are constructed. According to Beijing's narratives, the PRC continues the heritage of governing the vast lands with multiple ethnic groups and shoulders the responsibility of restoring the past glory. So, this task of restoring Chinese greatness continues to today. This type of discourse sends a message that it is inclusiveness and altruism that characterize the Chinese polity. From Beijing's perspective, the CCP equates to the PRC and China; the Party also represents multiple ethnic groups. Through such equation and representation, every constructed positive characteristic is morphed into the multifarious morality of the CCP.

The PRC since Mao's period has harbored the ambition of developing global influence, first through revolutionary agendas and then economic nationalism in the post-Deng decades to today. When nationalism, i.e., reviving Chinese greatness, requires the development and consolidation of overseas influence, it has few differentiations from imperialism. The PRC now has claimed that its altruism and inclusion also apply to its global governance for diverse populations living with various institutions.

Imperialism is generally characterized by a discrepancy between idealistic rhetoric and complicated realities. Major powers' foreign policies are driven by realism, strategic and serving self-interests, but they tend to find justifications to make it sound like they are promoters of peace and justice. On this baseline, the nature of the narratives varies according to the composers' local contexts. From the perspective of discursive rationalization, systematic and multi-faceted construction along with a maintenance and revisions for refinement characterize China's imperialism. The presence of two factors---an authoritarian government with a single ruling party and the tradition of utilizing philosophies turned political ideologies to legitimize its rule---make possible consistent and persistent efforts to keep certain narratives alive. It is the institutionalization of a certain political culture that generates and supports Chinese discourse.

The main characteristic of the Chinese narratives, pre-modern and modern, is about a selfless monarch or polity-enabled governance of inclusion. Imperial grace emanated to each corner and cranny of the diverse world that the Chinese state knew of. Different peoples were all the people of the emperor. In the modern era, China had obligations to help lesser states, its revolutionary and non-revolutionary brothers, against the imperial capitalist US. More recently, the world has been plagued by diseases, poverty, environmental issues, etc., and China is willing to shoulder responsibilities to apply its domestic model of inclusive governance to international society. Needless to say, decades of suppression and ethnic cleansing of the non-Chinese population in Central Asian territories points to the disparity between involuntary sinicization and the rhetoric of multiethnic unity. Incidents of racism also constantly challenge the claim of non-discrimination. Numerous protests over the years belie the emphasis on harmony. Dam construction drains the Mekong River which many Southeast Asian countries rely on for their livelihood. It offers a counter example for Beijing's favorite term, win-win cooperation. Military

and quasi-military bases in Djibouti and the South China Sea respectively also challenge the PRC's claims that its activities are devoid of military purposes and for the sake of peace only. Nevertheless, the Chinese discourse of altruistic inclusiveness has been well-maintained and grows more sophisticated. Built upon the constant of discrepancies between words and deeds, it is the entrenched belief in the inclusive morality of the self with a blind eye to the governing failures that makes Chinese imperialism different. Such conviction is not merely conviction. It is an embodiment of a long-term political culture. The height of Chinese imperialism lies exactly in the profound degree of its conviction that, however horrendous the anti-humanity enterprise the government is engaged in, however blatant the lies it tells, it is always convinced of its moral authority.

It seems that the more (percieved) disorder, disconformity and discord occur on the ground, the more likely the PRC is to refine the narratives and make them more closely woven. The increasing gulf testifies to the belief that the self is always morally right; whatever it does, even when it does things contrary to its claims, the motives are selfless. There is nothing wrong to use excuses to shrug off one's accountability. It is the conviction of moral authoritativeness stemming from the claimed altruism that characterizes Chinese imperialism.

Operating from a Chinese way of thinking, the realization of inclusion depends on acceptance of and obeisance to the authority; because the authority is morally good whatever it does, as long as its wishes are fulfilled, there will be peace and prosperity. The high morality that China believes it has is the type of authoritarian inclusiveness. In the plain words, the Chinese way of altruism is, do as I say and you will get what you want, but whether you get what you need is not up to you to decide. Such a style of inclusion appears in the pre-modern interactions between non-Chinese and Chinese polities and in the contemporary narratives. The differences

are that, to be in line with the contemporary rhetorical norm, however hypocritical it is, that states are equal, Beijing's post-Cold War narratives have created an impression that equality regardless of the sizes of states guides its foreign policy. And yet, situated in the middle of producing webs of idealism, China believes itself to be what its narratives describe.

On the issue of the South China Sea, the PRC denies any involvement of strategic calculations for self-interest, while framing the issue as safeguarding regional peace and simply protecting its territories; from Beijing's view, its behavior in the Sea does not exemplify outward expansion. While China is militarizing the Sea, it remains adamant in defending its behavior as non-provocative, cooperative and for everyone's good. It is within the parallel contexts of a low degree of strategic transparency and the prevalent idealistic rhetoric that China's ultra-defensiveness stands out.

Policies are made according to changing strategic conditions. The US makes this clear when it comes to the Western Hemisphere, but China does not when it comes to South China Sea and military bases. The American Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary are examples in that both presidents publicly evaluated the world balance of power and came up with the US foreign policies accordingly. Monroe clearly mentioned that if conditions shifted, Washington's policies would alter as well. The non-intervention principle laid out by Monroe is self-justified, *but it is not unfalsifiable*, because he already indicated that this principle would no longer guide behavior when situations in the future changed in a way that they negatively affected Washington's interests. China's self-justifying logic, on the contrary, *is unfalsifiable*. It does not specify the realistic conditions for its remaking of policies as the US did. Instead, it argues that its policies epitomize and follow various idealistic principles, such as equality, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, etc. These principles in Beijing's discourse are perennially held and followed. In

China's public narratives, there is a denial that its policies reflect strategic intentions; these narratives do not create an impression that China strategically calculates situations to design policies for self-interest. In these texts, with the absence of realism, what is left and indeed the main body of the texts is idealistic rhetoric and claims about how peaceful the Chinese nation and polity have historically been. The question remains, what guides Beijing's policies? The answer is the innate good nature of China. This goodness is genetic as its narratives plainly state. Because it is inherently good, however policies change, Beijing's decisions and behavior always follow the above stated idealistic principles, and thus cannot be morally wrong. This type of self-justification that relies on a believed biological explanation is not falsifiable. The conviction behind such rationalization is that China's moral authority based on altruism---we never strategically gauge situations for our sole self-interest---can't be challenged whatever it does. Furthermore, the very fact that the texts are composed predominantly of idealistic narratives that aim to highlight the morality of the self, even though they are empty statements and lacking substance, can itself be evidence of what the PRC believes it is.

The deep-rooted conviction of the moral authoritativeness of the self takes place in the context where a single political party and China's political traditions provide conditions for persistent and conscious efforts to develop a discourse of inclusion, blended with Confucian terms and sinicized Marxist ideology. This is not a coincidence as the current narratives, Confucianism and Chinese Marxism all emphasize the selflessness of the Chinese polity. This historical consistency in utilizing similar reasoning to sanction one's rule and the growing tightness of connections among different logical threads in the discourse even highlight the PRC's entrenched belief of itself occupying a moral high ground. Chinese imperialism manifests the institutionalized culture of unfalsifiable self-justification.

Such imperialism that is characterized by ultra-defensiveness and morality politics unfolds on a global level. Chinese essays indicate that the world fans outward with the PRC at the center. The geostrategic center of gravity is the Eurasian continent. Bordering seas in the east and lands in the west and south, China aspires to possess both land power and sea power. By making the Eurasian continent its own strategic hinterland, it wishes to muster resources from the land to deal with challenges from the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, Beijing's intention to become a sea power cannot be underestimated. Chinese writings dissent that both Taiwan and the South China Sea concern China's domestic development and overseas expansion. The militarization of the South China Sea is not merely about the obtainment of that sea but also is designed to prepare for warfare, with Taiwan being a target. The narratives clearly indicate that once China can control the first island chain, it will have unprecedented freedom in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The scheme of becoming a land and a sea power on this scale is unprecedented in the world history. It is within this vast geographical scope that morality politics exerts influence.

Beijing's narratives cannot be understood at their face value. Analysts need to take a critical view and assess how and to what extent the Chinese discourse reflects the PRC's beliefs. To that effect, three layers of analysis are required. The first layer is the patterns in the narratives for public consumption and what they say, do not say and explicitly deny. The second one is the patterns in the writings that do not target a broad audience base. The final layer is to compare the first two and to take both together to understand how China's belief system functions. The analysis reveals multifold interesting phenomena. Narratives for the public audiences that are highly idealistic and moral can be designed according to what one perceives to be the needs of others, for instance, toning down the rhetoric of hierarchy and emphasizing equality. There is,

however, more to it than strategic deception. Discursive construction on a consistent and constant base reveals a belief in function that, despite some subterfuge, such maneuvers will not tarnish China's morality; its policies are still for the good of others, and to avoid or deny any strategic calculations is to avoid misunderstanding out of good will. The conviction that one is morally good is also indicated in the writings that are not for public consumption. These publications that have narrower audience bases spill ink on realpolitik and geostrategy. At the same time, they incorporate into the same texts similar inclusive narratives to defend their policy suggestions or uphold the current policies. The PRC does not appear to be strategically clueless as some may argue. It may also have a grand strategy. It is worth pondering whether a western perspective is relied on in evaluating whether China has a grand strategy. The issue areas which the PRC focuses on may not be the same as western countries do. If the beautified rhetoric is not believed in, why would it be included as a part of arguments in the essays that do not need to attract public attention? These writings overall reveal a logic that, however strategic one is in working for self-interest, the ultimate result is beneficial for many because, as Beijing reasons, it is innately good and thus will not accept blame regardless of what it does. Despite an involvement in ghastly violence, China has been building formidable fortresses to defend its high morality. It laments though: can an absolute obeisance prove so difficult that others refuse to accept my own benevolence?

This research approaches the Chinese style of imperialism from China's own strategic thought and self-justifying reasonings. The analysis is about how the PRC rationalizes its overseas expansion through role conceptions to define interactions, in a way that is materialized

in the grand strategy of winning without fighting and the strategies of “cooperation” and limited provocation, for the realization of strategic and political interests within a quasi-world-like “Asia-Pacific.” Andrew Scobell, in examining China’s use of force, coins the term, “Cult of Defense,” to describe the entrenched belief among Chinese political and military leaders that China’s strategic culture from the aspect of use of force is always defensive and for just reasons.² This study expands the term’s application to the PRC’s foreign policy in the pre-war stage. It shows that how China’s images shaping the self and others through the altercasting and othering processes highlight itself to be on the right side. China’s subjectivity functions on a global level in that wherever its activities take place, it will always defend them as peaceful, non-expansionist and non-hegemonic.

The PRC has aspired to be at the central position of world politics since its founding. With the exception of the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), its perception of world politics, its preferred world order and the orders built by other powers (as viewed from Beijing’s perspective) have all been materially based. Increased relative material strength can bolster this self-centeredness, but decreased material capabilities may not inversely affect it. Over time, the PRC strategically reshapes its own role and that of others to be in accord with the changing times. Generally speaking, it has framed its interactions with other countries in more inclusive terms, which is especially salient from the 1990s onward. This is tailored for Chinese engagement with the world, potential enemies and non-enemies alike. Paralleling the growing

² Andrew Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force: Beyond the Long March and the Great Wall*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell & Larry M. Wortzel, “Introduction: the Lessons Learned by China’s Soldiers,” in *The Lessons of History: the Chinese People’s Liberation Army at 75*, eds. Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell & Larry M. Wortzel, Carlisle, PA: The Strategic Studies Institute, 2003, pp. 3-14. Regarding the second book, especially see pages 6 to 8. The authors have an evaluation of the Chinese style of use of force that stands the test of changing times.

intensity of inclusive narratives is the increasing discursive assertiveness in implementing the PRC's preferred world order.

In Beijing's narratives, Chinese socialism and Chinese culture, both of which are associated in that traditional culture has come to be perceived as the foundation of Chinese socialism and sinicized socialism (or Chinese Marxism) has become part of the Chinese culture, are conducive to world peace and contain wisdom to reshape international order. Unlike the Soviet style of setting up clone regimes in Eastern Europe, the Chinese Communist Party argues that sinicized socialism is good because it has an inherently peaceful nature compared to aggressive capitalism. The growing discursive assertiveness in this regard is in sharp contrast with the fact that China's elite class, the Chinese families in the political circle at the provincial and event county level above, is actively involved in the capitalist world market to accumulate money.

Chinese justification takes place in a quasi-world-like "Asia Pacific." According to the PRC's geopolitical location, Chinese narratives set out geographical scopes which are deemed crucial for the realization of the PRC's interests. They also provide strategic logic for how the resources put into the development of land power and sea power can work together to fulfill China's political goals of gaining international status and influence through obtainment of economic, maritime and territorial interests. It seems that the PRC aims to obtain both land power and sea power with the (foreign) land serving as buffer zones and China will amass needed resources from the land to cope with the challenges from the sea.

China's overseas military and non-military activities bear military purposes of peacetime deterrence and use of force. The current literature that discusses "active defense", the strategic guideline of the People's Liberation Army, usually focuses on Chinese use of force. This

research will address the dimensions which have not been examined. It applies the strategic guideline to peacetime activities and argues that the self-justifying logic of active defense functions on a global level. In other words, as the Chinese narratives indicate, wherever the PRC's military activities (including but not limited to use of force) take place, they are always defensive and for the sake of peace. The strategic guideline is not merely about use of force. It is a concept that encompasses peacetime military and non-military preparations and their strategic logic in war deterrence and war preparations as well as the rationalization of one's own behavior in allocating resources for military use to achieve the set political goals. Active defense applies to both border regions and regions away from the East Asian subcontinent. This is seen in the PLA's activities in the first island chain, the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific. These peacetime maneuvers and the infrastructure projects of the Belt and Road Initiative are preparations for war

The PRC's trajectory to become a great power so far has taken a different route than other major powers in the history. Compared to the cases of Japan and the US, the Chinese narratives and empirical evidence on the ground show that Beijing has not followed the logic of consolidating its regional status first and then expanding outward, but rather is using the outer circle to obtain its goals in the inner circle, like a catch-all fishing net spreading as expansively as it can before closing, while simultaneously working on both outer and inner circles of strategic belts that it identifies. Chinese imperialism also differs from the American and Japanese versions in that it is highly coated with the pretension of inclusiveness. This is done systematically in public speeches by denying China's strategic intentions and its realpolitik understanding of world politics, and by advancing narratives that try to deliver the message that China not only takes the world's problems to heart but also has the capability to solve them.

Another difference between China and the US is that, on the issues of a long-term concern, the former adopts an unfalsifiable self-justifying logic for its changing behavior whereas the American rationalization can be falsified. China wants others to see itself as a carrier of idealism who, with the interests of mankind in mind, can make the world a better place, which is revealed in its own narratives with an emphasis on morality (such as five principles of peaceful coexistence, and a just and fair world order), instead of an actor who is constantly aware of the world balance of power and crafts policies accordingly. Beijing does not specify the conditions for the functioning of those idealistic terms, and they work more like eternal principles. As the result, the PRC self-justifies changing policies through discursive reconstructions so that it will never violate these principles. The US, on the contrary, was explicit about its perception of the world from a realistic point of view and made it clear how its interests were different from the Old World. The behavioral guideline that it adhered to could be overridden as circumstances changed, and Washington made it clear in the narratives that its behavior would change once situations changed.

Contributions to the Current Literature

The “rise” of China has led to many academic discussions and writings. From the perspective of international relations and world politics, the literature written in English can be generalized into two categories: those who argue for a future China as a benign and peaceful dominant power and those who argue that it will be an aggressive and expansionist global player. For the former, the literature that incorporates Chinese rhetoric often takes leaders’ words at their face value. These works are too quick to give the PRC credit for what it says in its foreign policy. There are also cases in which scholars use traditional Chinese philosophies to imply or indicate that China will be an inclusive actor and will treat others well. The gaps between

idealistic philosophies and operational political ideologies that in essence are realpolitik are not addressed. For the latter category, predicting Chinese behavior according to the existing theories of international relations--such as power transition, offensive realism, defensive realism, and liberal institutionalism, and many other secondary theories that aim to find (negative or positive) correlations and are not the previous stated grand theories--is not informative as to the way the PRC acts differently from other major powers, mostly western countries whose historical experience is the foundation for the IR theories. In fact, it is the differences that matter in explaining China's trajectory to become a great power.

Both categories have used traditional political philosophies as theoretical sources to build their arguments. However, a given philosophy, for instance, Confucianism, is often understood partially and is not examined by considering all aspects of it. It is modified to fit the current IR theoretical framework of causal relations, or correlations, and therefore the main gist of Confucianism as a self-justifying political ideology is lost. Another issue across the two categories is that the current treatments in both empirical evidence and in theory do not capture nuances and details that explain the Chinese perspective.

This study takes a different approach in using Chinese statements and Chinese philosophies (or philosophies-turned political ideologies) to analyze China's expansion. Instead of taking them partially, this research examines them systematically. Chinese political philosophies are theoretical in nature and remain sources for the PRC's statements and narratives. The borrowing of Marxism and its sinicization again reflect a cultural need of using some theoretical ideology to sanction Chinese rule. Chinese classics, military and non-military alike, dealing with strategic and grand strategic logics also are systematic and theoretical in nature. Therefore, in understanding the PRC's statements, narratives, reasonings and behavior,

they are the first theoretical sources to turn to as they are informative of the Chinese worldview including how the world runs, the role of the self and its relationships with others, a preferred world order and what constitutes that preferred order.

In general, the current literature has not looked into how the PRC strategically sees its geopolitical position, how it defines the world from its own perspective, and how it translates its perceptions of world politics and its position therein into foreign policy. It also has not examined the above aspects by applying and developing theories that are grounded in the Chinese experience. This research addresses these gaps.

The focus of this study is the analysis of official views. What it does not do is examine public opinion, debates or disagreements. The endeavor to explore the popular base of the Chinese ideology and what the debates are over the foreign policies will require further research. However, the public's views of the matter in general do not depart from the leadership's views. Michael H. Hunt has a nuanced argument about public rhetoric. It can be used to suggest the existence of a broad base of popular support for Beijing's official ideology. His words deserve to be quoted at length:

“Public rhetoric may seem peculiarly suspect as evidence to be taken at face value. The cynical would contend that carefully staged public appeals are occasions not for frank and nuanced expression but for cant intended to fool the gullible and mask true intentions. One may argue that rhetoric is a form of persuasion, that to treat it instead as confession would be profoundly mistaken.

But such a skeptical view may be too clever by half. Public rhetoric is not simply a screen, tool or ornament. It is also, perhaps even primarily, a form of communication, rich in symbols and mythology and closely constrained by

certain rules. To be effective, public rhetoric must draw on values and concerns widely shared and easily understood by its audience. A rhetoric that ignores or eschews the language of common discourse on the central problems of the day closes itself off as a matter of course from any sizable audience, limiting its own influence. If a rhetoric fails to reflect the speaker's genuine views on fundamental issues, it runs the risks over time of creating false public expectations and lays the basis for politically dangerous misunderstanding. If it indulges in blatant inconsistency, it eventually pays the price of diminished force and credibility.”³

This research develops a theory, called *cultural subjectivism*. It is built based on the current Chinese narratives and Confucianism and sinicized Marxism. It is a theory that explains how the PRC self-justifies its own behavior. Both sinicized Marxism and Confucianism provide idealistic blueprints. They depict an inclusive world where political leaders are altruistic and do not differentiate. These characteristics sanction the authoritativeness of the political leaders. While Confucianism does not explicitly advocate for the pursuit of material strength, its envisioned harmonious world requires material foundation. Beijing's pursuit of material capabilities is legitimized by sinicized Marxism that condones materialism and is further justified by the Confucian rhetoric of building a harmonious world. Since the purpose of this research is to understand Chinese behavior and thinking, cultural subjectivism is based on the Chinese experience and is not meant for generalization.

³ Michael H. Hunt. *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 15. via Ebook Central Academic Complete.

China's Cultural Subjectivism

The Chinese style of cultural subjectivism is defined by high idealism and a claim to a moral high ground, both of which are closely associated with the claimed inclusiveness toward multiethnic populations and different political and socio-economic institutions at home and abroad. There are two criteria to measure this ultra-idealism: 1) a widening gap between fragmented/complicated realities and the degree of willingness to *systematically* deny such or cover up what happens on the ground, and 2) a low degree of transparency in one's strategic calculations for the fulfillment of one's self-interests despite the utilization of lofty rhetoric of peace and working for all. Although it is relatively constant across major states to practice realism and to entice others to do one's bidding with beautified narratives, the PRC demonstrates a greater extent in publicly deny that it engages in such behavior and in stressing its capabilities in making true the rosy pictures it depicts for domestic and international audiences. Both denial and emphasis go beyond rhetorical and enter the realm of belief. The extent of this conviction about the moral authority of the self can be measured in cases where China uses inclusiveness-based idealistic and moral rhetoric, and where strategic assessments and intentions are intentionally omitted or denied.

On the basis of the universal phenomenon that states are self-centered and tend to defend their own deeds, the ways and the degrees this situation is manifested vary in different cultural contexts. In rationalizing foreign policies on the way to becoming a great power, the Chinese narratives for public consumption are made to be devoid of the impression that Beijing's foreign policies are based on realpolitik. In these narratives, aside from idealistic rhetoric (such as equity, fairness, mutual benefits, cooperation and non-zero sum relationships), China explicitly *denies* any intention for strategic competition with other major states. In other words, the PRC

colors its narratives with altruism and claims to occupy a moral high ground. This absence of strategic calculations paralleling the rhetoric of inclusiveness that is consciously constructed in the Chinese narratives characterizes Beijing's ultra-idealism and its conviction that it has higher morality than others. On its way to become a great power, the US, however, showed a different example. While defending its behavior, Washington did not intentionally hide its strategic calculations based on self-interest and did not conceal the fact that it tailored its policies according to its understanding of the world balance of power. Compared with the US, the realpolitik basis of Chinese decisions is not readily detected. One needs to look into sources which do not target a wider spectrum of audiences. In addition, while the PRC puts on a pretention of inclusiveness, the US recognized the differences among peoples but went too far in constructing a discourse of racism to justify its behavior. The gist of the matter in the comparison between the two countries is the degree of transparency in their realistic intentions and the degree of rhetorical cover-up as well as conviction in their constructed idealistic narratives. The combined differences explain the Chinese style of cultural subjectivism that is characterized by unrealistic idealism and self-proclaimed higher morality, both of which the PRC firmly believes in.

The Chinese emphasis on inclusiveness bears similarities to the Japanese case of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity. However, there are differences in degrees. In arguing that its inclusiveness applies to both domestic and international governance, the Chinese claim occurs in the context where there is a gulf between the narratives of multiethnic solidarity and forced assimilation and ethnic cleansing. Japan, however, has a higher degree of cultural, ethnical and political cohesion at home. The PRC demonstrates a more extreme case in that it believes there is nothing wrong in constructing an idealistic discourse that does not faithfully describe or is

opposite to what happened. In addition, compared to Japan, the Chinese polity also has a longer history, dated to dynastic periods, of building an inclusive discourse toward groups with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This may speak to an institutionalized tendency to believe in and build narratives that sound as if the self is the only one qualified to occupy the moral high ground.

The high idealism of the PRC cannot be dismissed as merely rhetorical. This does not mean that its narratives are genuine, but rather from Beijing's perspective, it believes in what it says and/or believes that discursive manipulations are merely minor cosmetic modifications and not major concealments. Since depicting a rosy picture for the people to look forward to is the norm in Chinese politics, what is the problem with that? Major policy and governing disasters may usher in different opinions and power struggles within the Party, but they do not alter fundamental convictions in the capabilities and authoritativeness of the CCP itself to make the country and the world better in the way it imagines. This dissertation relies on four examples to prove that this belief is on a relatively constant basis. First, the evocation of altruistic and idealistic rhetoric whose origins can be traced to Maoist Marxism and Confucianism but is nevertheless tailored to what China perceives as the needs of countries during the post-Cold War decades demonstrates the continuity of using philosophies turned political ideologies to shore up China's mentality of the self occupying the moral high ground. Chinese narratives indicate that the CCP's authoritativeness is derived from the claimed high morality. The second example is about the re-interpretations of Chinese socialism from Mao's period to the post-Deng decades and today (chapter 3). Revised socialism 1.0 and 2.0 as the result of major historical ruptures still confirm the ruling status of the CCP. The third case shows the increasingly sophisticated foreign policy discourse (chapter 4) that aims to persuade domestic and international audiences that "the

rise” of China will bring the world peace and solve many thorny issues. Here, the Chinese narratives trace the qualifications of the CCP to the innate goodness of Chinese institutions and culture. The last example is Beijing’s re-construction of the Wuhan coronavirus narratives (epilogue). It shows how the Communist Party reconstructs the event to cope with domestic and international pressures while maintaining itself to be on a moral high ground. However terms are defined and redefined, events are interpreted and re-interpreted, a belief in the authoritativeness of the CCP and the prospects that it will bring equality and harmony to human beings does not waver.

Based on the above discussion, China’s morality politics is characterized by a denial and a conviction in that its foreign policies are not based on realpolitik. Meanwhile, the Chinese politics of inclusiveness needs to be understood in the context of a constant self-belief that only the CCP is able to reshape the country and the world with its own selfless blueprints, despite the fact that the historical evidence of Chinese governance will undermine such confidence. On the basis that major states practice realpolitik (including China, as chapters 3, 5 and 6 show), the PRC denies that it is conducting such deeds and believes itself to behave with altruistic and inclusive principles. A large part of this dissertation studies how Beijing practices realism but denies it, while buying into its own denial. To put it another way, this study is mainly about how China intends to create an impression, with itself buying into the self-created discourse for domestic and international audiences, that it is a carrier and practitioner of idealism and morality, while its policies reflect the essence of realism. This ultra-defensiveness is not merely characterized by the prevalent inclusive rhetoric in a wide spectrum of the texts (public speeches, essays from think tanks and newspapers) whose audience bases vary, but also the belief that the self is inclusive and its behavior reflects this. The US, on the contrary, on its way to become a

great power, despite some lofty rhetoric in some cases, had made clear its strategic evaluation of world politics and how such assessments were affecting its foreign policies.

Lucian Pye, a sinologist who conducted in-depth and nuanced research on Chinese politics, accurately observed that even power struggle in the PRC is a competition for the moral high ground.⁴ This is not about actors competing to do the right things, but rather actors competing to employ moral language to justify their deeds which are really for self-interest (or actors employing moral language to justify their competitive deeds which are really for self-interest) with a conviction that their causes are right because *these causes are selfless*. One example used in this dissertation is Mao's competition with Moscow for leadership of the socialist camp. Mao accused Khrushchev of being a "revisionist" and defended his own competitive act as an adherence to orthodox Marxism-Leninism. From Mao's view, China was a true altruistic and inclusive revolutionary who took the revolutionary welfare of other lesser states to heart. Another example is China's swearing that, unlike the American power politics and hegemonic behavior, it will *never* (a word it uses) seek hegemony and expansion. Whether one is aggressive and expansive, from Beijing's view, is defined by the possession of military bases. The matter here is not whether the PRC practices realpolitik—it does (just like other major states) and uses rhetoric to cover its deeds (many other major states do so as well)—but rather it intends to use such narratives, in both military and non-military writings, to emphasize its own morality and to stress that only a major country like the PRC can show such moral high ground. This persistent conviction is reflected in how China has been doing things which it accuses others of immorally conducting and nevertheless still claim itself being moral. The examples are

⁴ Lucian W. Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture: The Escalation of Confrontation from Moralizing to Revenge," *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1990, pp. 331-347.

the military base in Djibouti and the quasi-military bases in the South China Sea. Despite the presence of these facilities, the PRC in the 2019 defense white paper still states that it will never seek hegemony and expansion. China does not recognize these facilities as military bases. It calls the base in Djibouti a logical support base purely for economic reasons. Accordingly, regardless of what Beijing does, even when it does things that it strongly condemns others doing, its moral authoritativeness cannot be questioned. Washington, however, did not show such a saint-like image in that whatever it does, it cannot be morally wrong. And if the US did, it is questionable that such a situation persisted throughout different administrations.

The Chinese style of cultural subjectivism is characterized by a self-believed inclusive way of doing things, and such belief is on a constant basis, which differs markedly from the cases of the US and Japan. On its way to be a great power, it was racism-informed exclusion that characterized the US in both western expansion and outward expansion. Washington did not use inclusive rhetoric to persuade other ethnicities into submitting to its authority. It is also questionable whether this sense of authority existed on a constant basis. Since the US at the time was not a state with a single political party, its foreign policies and rhetoric were not always consistent. As many similarities as there are between China and Japan, in terms of imagining oneself to be a selfless authority caring about different peoples, China exceeds Japan in degree.

In a plain explanation, if seeing major states' imperialism as an embodiment of an empire of systematic lies which espousers do not see major problems with, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the slightest, China is on 5. When the time demands it, narratives that govern the day can be overridden by a new discourse to shore up the legitimacy of the CCP. And the new discourse will be constructed in a way to delegitimize any attempt at using previous narratives to attack the Party. The past and the presence can always be rewritten and reconstructed to give hope to the

targeted audiences that the future will be better, while preserving the lofty status of the CCP. In Pye's words, "It is a politics of becoming, not of being."⁵ This also explains why systematic discursive manipulation is not an issue; the focus is on the future, and if manipulation of the past and the present can provide collective motives to work for a future goal, there is nothing wrong with it. That the past disasters are simply mistakes and a thorough examination into accountability and institutional flaws is not necessary is the assumption based on which the Chinese narratives are constructed to inform the domestic population and international society of a great future ahead. Although Maoist socialism did not work, despite the failures of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, from Beijing's view, Mao was still 70% right and he remains a great revolutionary and the founding father of Chinese socialism. Based on this positivity, the redefined socialism 2.0 laid out during Deng's period will continue to carry the people into a bright future by setting forth certain economic goals. Mounting social issues, numerous protests, a deteriorating ecological environment and corruption then give rise to the rhetoric of harmony since the mid-2000s. With 1.4 billion people under its control on territories the size of Europe, the PRC is unable to develop a sound economy. The solution is to excite another wave of nationalism to support outward expansion and to instill a hope in the international society that a future with a strong China will be better. On the recipient side, a great many Chinese citizens have been brought up to accept such a political culture and Beijing also finds a receptive international audience, including those who are willing to co-opted.

The fact that the PRC does not see issues with systematic lies is also manifested in its confidence in consistently claiming a moral high ground. China's cultural subjectivism in which it sees itself as right in whatever it does is shown through the gulf between

⁵ Ibid., p. 332.

fragmented/complicated realities and its willingness to interweave webs of fabricated or partial facts to create the impression that *Chinese inclusiveness is a historical continuity and will be so in the future, at home and abroad*. The PRC consolidates its legitimacy by stringing together the alleged 5000-years *continuously* great Chinese civilization and the claimed continuity in that, in the past thousands of years, multiple ethnic groups on the East Asian continent have worked in solidarity to build a country called China. Furthermore, Beijing believes that it will be able to reshape the world for the better by presenting “evidence” of such historical inclusiveness. Unlike the PRC, the US did not claim to be an inclusive country that was based on multiple ethnicities and the willingness to tolerate different political and social institutions at home and abroad. The multiethnic inclusiveness that is seen today is the result of the civil rights movements in the 1960s, education, and institutional reforms. Neither does the US nor Japan claim its domestic and world legitimacy derived from the historical continuity of its own inclusive civilization. Washington pales beside Beijing’s ultra-idealism. To put it in a non-academic manner, if this is a contest to see who the winner is in telling systematic lies of altruistic inclusion while firmly buying into them constantly, the US is not going to win, which also explains Chinese “Cult of Defense.”

Methods, Primary Sources and Spellings

This research utilizes publicly available resources found in Chinese official documents, such as the reports produced for the Party Congresses, and publications from think tanks and research centers affiliated with the government and the People’s Liberation Army. Publications of the Chinese Communist Party such as *Qiushi* are systematically analyzed to identify trends and logical connections in China’s preferred world order. Speeches of Chinese leaders and officials available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and articles found on the websites

associated with other government agencies will be utilized as well. Digital archives from the Wilson Center are also helpful in providing supporting textual evidence. Through qualitative and quantitative textual analysis of the above sources, this study identifies the Chinese perspective, strategic logic, and diplomatic rhetoric. It employs within-case historical comparison to identify patterns and changes on the issues of the PRC's worldview, its preferred world order and its way of constructing the roles of the self and others. Furthermore, it relies on a cross-case study to highlight the differences between China's imperialism and other variants.

Generally speaking, Chinese texts are differentiated into four categories: public speeches for international audiences, official Party documents, articles from think tanks and research centers, and official newspapers/websites. Public speeches aim for diplomacy and thus narratives are highly idealistic. They depict Beijing's visions of an ideal economic and political world order by laying out a list of principles which it claims to follow in its foreign policies *permanently*. These texts have two characteristics. First, the proposed agendas and policies within them reflect Chinese interests but are shaped as the shared interests of mankind or many other countries. Second, they utilize phrases and terms that other countries have used to cast their wishes regarding what the PRC can do more positively, for instance, "a major responsible power," to argue that China is doing everything right.

While English scholarly works and the English writings by China experts have analyzed the Party and official documents, a comprehensive and more systematic examination through comparison over many years, instead of just two or three years, has been lacking. A larger perspective will not be attained unless this approach is taken. In studying the PRC's trajectory to great power status, it is necessary to adopt this approach. Neither does the current literature explore the evolution of the Chinese worldview through these texts from a strategic perspective,

bringing together the shaping of the images of the self and others, the assessments of international climate, corresponding policies, and which actors are newly included and which are dropped from the list, etc. Together with the *Qiushi* journal and newspapers and websites, these texts can be propaganda and polemics, but they also contain the beliefs of the Chinese Communist Party. The making of propaganda is based on the understanding of the self and others and from that point, projects a picture--by interweaving together different pieces of information out of their contexts and which can also be fabricated or exaggerated, and partial facts as well as information that is believed to accord with the interests of the target audience--to create the reality in order to affect the perceptions of the target audience. The underpinning logic that supports an article therefore can be informative of the Chinese thinking.

While also containing the idealistic and defensive narratives, writings from the government-affiliated research institutions often provide strategic rationales which are not found in public speeches and receive very limited treatment in official papers. The relations between the input of research centers and official policies can be two-way influence. These essays follow the general official lines and also contribute to the reasonings behind Beijing's policies. Another source for strategic rationale or more substantial thinking can come from official newspapers and websites. These two sources can be useful beyond propaganda and the fundamental tenets of the Chinese worldview.

The study relies on a large quantity of texts written in Chinese. In the cases where Chinese characters are attached, traditional Chinese characters will be used when it comes to classical texts since simplified Chinese did not exist until changes made by the PRC. For materials produced by the PRC, simplified Chinese characters will be attached. In a few cases, sources from Taiwan will be drawn upon for arguments that do not aim to address the Chinese

perspective and China's strategic logic. Sources from Taiwan will use traditional characters. Regarding the spellings, sources from China will use the Romanized pinyin system as this is its official usage. Titles of publications, locations, and people's names from Chinese classics will follow the Wade-Giles system. Sources from Taiwan will use the Wade-Giles system without the tone marks. The Taiwanese learn the spelling of traditional Chinese characters through a different system composed of 37 symbols that does not use the Roman alphabet. The use of romanization in Taiwan is diverse and, reflecting Taiwan's history, mixed with the influences from the Taiwanese aboriginal languages, Taiwanese Hoklo and Hakka, Japanese, and Western romanization. In transcribing names into the Roman alphabet, the Taiwanese are free to choose their spellings. Since the Wade-Giles system without the tone marks is relatively popular, this system will be used in citing sources from Taiwan.

The Organization of This Dissertation

Chapter 1 is a background essay discussing how the PRC discursively builds a contemporary version of imagined community, domestically and internationally. It presents the gulf between historical realities and the history rewritten by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It downplays the war-torn realities and deep-rooted antagonism of the past of the East Asian subcontinent as trivial family feuds among different ethnic groups. This sets the tone for the type of impression that the official narratives are intended to create, that is, leaning toward cordial relationships and moving away from irreconcilable hostile interactions. The purpose is to rewrite history to fit the Party's needs of ruling various ethnic groups on the vast territories it controls. In a nutshell, in its national discourse, China, the Chinese nation, and Chinese culture are synonyms to one another in that the territories under the PRC's control have been called "China" since antiquity and different groups of peoples with their distinct cultures have worked

through a prolonged centripetal process to build a common Chinese culture and the shared community of a unified Chinese nation. Thus, in the CCP's view, the fact that it now rules a heterogeneous population inhabiting vast territories is a product of the natural and voluntary processes of human beings' interactions.

Fabricated historical cohesion on the subcontinent blurs the lines between domestic and foreign; without differentiations, different groups had a common goal of building a shared community. The chapter will then discuss how the official narratives further carry this sense of inclusiveness that, according to the PRC's claims, is enjoyed by the domestic population to the CCP's proposed way of international governance. On the basis that Chinese regimes occupying China Proper historically and contemporarily aspire to take the central role in international politics, the chapter concludes with a comparison between the dynastic world order and the version Beijing espouses today. The analysis will be conducted along the following aspects: geographical scope, economic incentives, the nature of external challenges, and the presentation and rationalization of preferred world order.

Chapter 2 builds a new theory that I call "cultural subjectivism," based on the ideas advanced by Chinese leaders to rationalize the PRC's overseas activities. The roots of these ideas are to be found in the historical experience of how Chinese regimes, dynastic and contemporary, used Confucianism and Sinicized Marxism as political ideologies to justify their rule. In discussing these two ideologies, the chapter focuses on how they were employed in *practice*, instead of what they are as pure philosophies. The analysis is about preferred power relations. China has historically opted for a central position in international politics. The underlying qualities used to portray the self remain the same, including authoritative, selfless and idealistic. In other words, the authority is altruistic and can provide public goods for all, for it knows well

what others need. The interaction from the side of the self is an altercasting process and an othering process. In some cases, interactions with a certain target can involve both processes simultaneously, with the aim to “persuade” the other to take a role in line with the self-desired outcomes, sometimes with coercion.

The process of interaction is to be described and rhetorically presented differently as applied Confucianism and Sinicized Marxism are products of different times. The former is more explicit than the latter in characterizing relations as hierarchical. The latter, however, is more explicit than the former in condoning material pursuits. Their differences work complementarily to support the PRC’s rationalization. Because historical backgrounds are different, conditions that allow interactions to be described and justified in a certain way also change. As the result, the building of cultural subjectivism as a new theory to explain how China rationalizes its overseas behavior, aside from the above self attributes and working mechanism (altercasting and othering) of interactions, also considers how the changing times affect the current Chinese rhetoric whose roots can be traced back to applied Confucianism and Sinicized Marxism.

Chapter 3 will then provide empirical evidence to the theory of cultural subjectivism laid out in chapter 2. By tracing the historical development of Chinese understanding of world politics after the founding of the PRC, it analyzes the role conceptions and power relations of the world order which the PRC has imagined. Specifically, this chapter discusses two types of Chinese worldview. One gives rise to the world order that the PRC favors. The other reflects its assessments of world politics while it was using this knowledge to formulate its preferred order. To explain the role conceptions of the Chinese self and its projected other(s) in the Chinese narratives, this chapter provides evidence of the altercasting and othering process laid out in chapter 2 as the mechanisms that the Chinese self evokes in interactions with others (including

countries from a wide range on the power spectrum) or in its perceptions of world politics. The task will be conducted along with China's evolving worldview, from vast zone (or intermediate zone), two intermediate zones, to three worlds and multipolarity, all of which are Chinese conceptions of world politics and inform or are in correspondence with the PRC's preferred order.

The analysis reveals a relatively consistent pattern in which, during Mao's period, the Chinese inclination for a central position was not hampered by relatively weak material strength and during the decades following Deng's reforms was further bolstered by increasing economic growth. Again, the economic downturn from 2010 onward has not affected Chinese discursive confidence in taking a leading position. The findings are consistent with theoretical stipulations of cultural subjectivism.

The chapter presents China's preferred world order in the form of a pyramid, a belief triangle, that explains how Chinese discourse links sinicized socialism to domestic development and world prospect. The pyramid over time evolved to have complete and reciprocal logical connections because of China's growing economic strength and with that foundation the desire to at least maintain the growth, through overseas expansion, if further dramatic increase in GDP proves impossible. This finding fits with the theoretical tenet of cultural subjectivism that a Chinese world order is supported by a material base. Chinese narratives set the pyramid against other orders which, according to Beijing's discursive construct, were/are espoused by the Soviet Union and the US. My analysis in this regard will only focus on the U.S.

With quantitative discursive evidence from both the Chinese and English versions of the journal *Qiushi*, chapter 4 measures the PRC's assertiveness in its intention to reshape the international order from the four categories: international order, Chinese institutions, Chinese

culture and a general group. Chinese institutions and Chinese culture are identified as vehicles that, according to Beijing, play conducive roles for world peace and prosperity. Aside from statistical results, this chapter will qualitatively present how the narratives are constructed. By so doing, it substantiates the othering and altercasting processes that the PRC evokes to shape its world order. Furthermore, mostly in the Chinese data, Chinese authors cite alleged statements from foreign ruling elites and intellectuals to prove that the PRC's political appeals and various proposals are persuasive.

The textual analysis of the Chinese data, spanning from 2005 to 2018, shows that there is a general upward trend across the four categories with some obvious fluctuations from 2011 onward. The general group that aims to capture the overall meanings of Chinese texts displays a smooth upward trend. The other three categories, which are more context specific, show a drop to various degrees, for one or two years. Regardless, the findings of Chinese discursive assertiveness are relatively robust, especially for the years of 2017 and 2018, based on the comparison across the four categories. The findings of the English texts in general are similar to the Chinese texts. They have a greater degree of fluctuations. The four groups have a drop in 2018. Nevertheless, in comparing the findings from 2015 to 2018 to those from 2009 to 2014, it is obvious that the trend shows increasing Chinese assertiveness.

Chapter 5 discusses the PRC's strategies and grand strategy. It first defines geographical scopes and regions which the Chinese writings of foreign policy and military affairs believe are crucial for the PRC's survival and outward expansion from a strategic perspective. The evidence of the Chinese discourse shows that the border regions have strategic values which the PRC's development and overseas expansion depend on, contrary to the conventional wisdom that these regions are peripheries with little strategic importance.

With the re-conception of “Asia-Pacific” as a quasi-world in Chinese eyes explained, the chapter moves on to analyze the grand strategy of winning without fighting. In order to spread Chinese influence across the expansive Eurasian landmass, oceans and seas, the PRC’s overall policy reflects the strategic thinking of disarming (potential) enemies before war, if war is still to be seen as necessary. Through the discussion of winning without fighting based on François Jullien’s theses about “situation” and its “potential,”⁶ it argues that China’s strategic culture is neither defensive nor offensive as argued over in the current literature, but rather about what the goals are to be and how they can be achieved. The post-Cold War peace is conducive to (or even dictates) accumulating one’s capabilities and influence through economic measures and non-war solutions. Chinese foreign policy has followed this line and where there are potential armed conflicts such as flashpoints in the first island chain, Beijing has not opted for a war solution. Both strategies of competition through “cooperation” with major powers and “cooperation” with lesser states within the spheres of influence of these major powers and limited provocation (militarization of the South China Sea) constitute the mainstay of China’s winning without fighting.

The PRC’s globetrotting activities in the peaceful age of globalization are not purely for economic purposes. They are informed by the strategic logic of weighting land power and sea power equally. The notion is implemented in the idea of consolidating its west (land) to meet the challenges from the east (sea). This point is illustrated with discursive evidence and the chapter

⁶ François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. New York: Zone Books, 1995; François Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004.

concludes with this larger geostrategic perspective. It is within this view that the grand strategy of winning without fighting and strategies of “cooperation” and “limited provocation” function.

Based on the geographical scopes and the strategic logics analyzed in the chapter 5, chapter 6 sets forth to discuss the military component of China’s foreign policy, specifically the PLA’s strategic guideline of “active defense.” Active defense is a multifaceted concept and goes beyond the use of force to incorporate peacetime deterrence and peacetime preparations for war. Chinese defense white papers and military journals (specifically, *Chinese Military Science*) indicate that economic, diplomatic and cultural activities lend force to military capabilities that can be used to achieve peacetime deterrence and to fight a war. The author provides a cognitive mapping to map out, according to the Chinese narratives, how the PRC has been developing and using military capacity to realize the political goal of gaining international influence and status through the mediation of the fulfillment of economic, territorial and maritime interests. The relationships between military and non-military interests are symbiotic as the former can be used to protect the latter and the latter can be converted to combat capabilities for both peacetime deterrence and war-fighting purposes.

This chapter further substantiates the argument laid out in the chapter 5 that, from a Chinese perspective, the resources put into the land and sea directions can work together to achieve the PRC’s political goals. It dissects Chinese strategic logics into the sea direction and the land direction before connecting them together. The analysis starts with the strategic value of the first island chain, especially Taiwan and the South China Sea (SCS). Chinese narratives indicate that Taiwan and the SCS concern the PRC’s own survival and outward expansion in that they hold the keys to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, with the militarization of the latter designed for the use of force in the Taiwan Strait. The chapter argues that the PLA’s military exercises in

the Western Pacific outside the island chain, militarization of the SCS, and peacekeeping missions in the Indian Ocean have been and may be designed to have accumulative effects on combat capabilities for warfare in the Pacific direction and possibly, pending further developments, in the Indian Ocean, with the political target located in the first island chain. In the land direction, overseas infrastructure projects that link China's inland provinces to the Indian Ocean and the SCS through Southeast Asian and South Asian countries provide peacetime energy supplies and locations for the PLA Navy's port calls. They will also provide wartime logistical support. From the military writings and the defense law of the PRC, Chinese overseas activities are concerted maneuvers to obtain both land power and sea power.

This chapter also examines the working of the self-justifying logic of active defense for China's peacetime military activities. It argues that wherever Chinese military activities are, the PRC will always rationalize them as defensive, non-expansionist, non-hegemonic and for the sake of peace. These four mutually associated characteristics from the Chinese view, when put into the perspective of geostrategic scopes of a quasi-world-like "Asia-Pacific," exemplify the extreme degree of the Chinese "Cult of Defense."

Chapter 7 compares the discursive constructs of three major powers, the US, Japan, and China, during their respective power transition periods. Comparison in this way is to minimize factors that cannot be compared and cannot be controlled due to different historical backgrounds and developmental stages. Along the line of imperialism are three aspects for comparison: differentiation versus inclusiveness, domestic-foreign linkage of governance, and falsifiable versus unfalsifiable logics.

Since this research emphasizes the special character of Chinese imperialism by focusing on a major pattern and China's persistent practice of building an inclusive discourse, to highlight

how different this is compared to the cases of other states, the study uses China's experience as reference points and to find out whether the major courses of historical practices of other countries reflect a similar vein. Japan and China are most similar cases. Through their comparison, the factor of a tradition, out of a need to compete with other powerful polities of different ethnicities, of relying on inclusion-based political ideology is identified to explain the differences in the degree and scale of self-believed morality. The US and the PRC however are different cases by nature. Regardless, the conditions that give rise to the factor that explains the differences between Japan and China also explain why Washington and Beijing developed entirely opposite narratives, with the former being about racist differentiation and the latter a pretension of unprecedented inclusion. The American racism, although a prevalent theme, was not necessarily related to overseas expansion. This indicates that Washington's discourse for outward influence had not been consistent. A different sort of polity, democracy versus autocracy, explains the American inconsistency and the Chinese consistency.

The chapter first discusses and applies John Mearsheimer's theory about the relationship between attainment of the status of a regional hegemon and that of a global hegemon.⁷ Mearsheimer's theory is important in two aspects. First, the dynamics of competition that he lays out between/among major powers on a regional level bears the characteristic of power transition which this chapter takes as a common parameter for comparison. Therefore, the summaries of the trajectories of overseas expansion of the US and Japan and their discursive constructs will conform to the time frame where each aspired to become regional hegemon before obtaining global influence, if they succeeded. Second, the case of the PRC fits Mearsheimer's theory that a

⁷ John Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company; Updated edition, 2014.

major power will use global resources to obtain regional goals, but unlike the past experience of other countries upon which Mearsheimer's theory is built, China may be more able to throw its weight around in some remote and less developed countries than among its immediate neighbors, since they are either major powers or states that have strong governments.

In comparing foreign policy discourse, the Chinese narratives share similarities with Japanese narratives in that they both emphasize inclusiveness and stress their abilities to bring peace and prosperity to all in the geostrategic space they define. Japan, however, clearly differentiated the white race as the Other and outgroup from the Asian ingroup. Despite the public political appeal of equality among Asians, Tokyo followed a racial logic to assess the abilities of different Asian races in the assignment of the role of political leadership and what industry to develop in each country, just as the US used racial logic to judge peoples' capabilities and accordingly decided whether to incorporate foreign territories into the union as federal states. China has tried to avoid racial language in its public narratives but certain events have shown that it is disguising its own racism. On the basis that people are different, Washington was honest in stating what it believed telling what it thought but went too far in using race to justify the power relations that it preferred; Japan was less honest, occupying an intermediate position between the US and China; Beijing however has coated its realpolitik with layers and layers of rhetoric to "persuade" others that it can be trusted and has the ability to address the most pressing issues that humanity is faced with.

Like the US which extended its domestic racial logic to foreign policy, China also applies politically constructed domestic harmony to argue that it will follow the same inclusive principles in treating others. However, if domestic inclusiveness is fabricated, can the appeal on the international level be true? Washington and Beijing have one major difference in how they

want others to know how they perceive and react to international politics. On the same footing of a lesser power working its way to become a great power, according to its strategic perception of world politics, the US specified conditions for its behavior and the rationalization for the stated principles could be falsified once situations changed and US behavior changed as well. On the contrary, the PRC wants others to have the impression that it does not assess situations strategically and does not act strategically. The idealistic principles that Beijing proposes are perennial and therefore are empty slogans without conditions specified. Ostensibly as behavioral guides, those principles are unfalsifiable because they are not subject to any conditions. Whether certain behavior is in accord with its own principles depends on its definitions and interpretations. The pattern is that the PRC self justifies its changing deeds so that they never violate the eternal principles. The contrasting examples of the American Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary and Chinese militarization of the SCS and establishment of a military base in Djibouti will be provided for illustration. They are chosen on the same footing that the Western Hemisphere had been the US concern and the SCS and military base are China's long-term issues.

Chapter 1

Continental History and China's Search for Greatness

“Now, everyone is discussing Chinese Dream.....I believe that by the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, the goal of achieving a moderately prosperous society in an all-around way will certainly come true. At the time of 100th anniversary of New China [People's Republic of China].....the great national rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will certainly be realized.”---*During a visit to the exhibition of “Road to Rejuvenation”, 2012.*

“To realize Chinese Dream requires socialist path of Chinese characteristics.” ---*First Session of the 12th National People's Congress, 2013*

“We will forever walk on the path of peaceful development and adopt the strategy of opening and mutual benefits. Not only are we devoted to the development of China, but also to our duties to the world and the contributions we can make to the world. [We] bring prosperity to both Chinese people and the people of the world.” ---*Joint Interview with Three Latin American Countries, 2013.*

“The dream of the Chinese people is closely related to those of the people in other countries.....” ---*The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 2017.*

The above is a chronological list of Xi Jinping's words at different occasions to either domestic or international audiences. It is not presented for propaganda purpose as the editors of the article where these entries are compiled intends.⁸ These statements, taken together however,

⁸ CPC News, “Xi Jinping Elaborates Chinese Dream This Way in the Past Five Years,” [五年来，习近平这样多次阐述中国梦], Nov. 29, 2017, <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/xuexi/n1/2017/1129/c385474-29673705-2.html>> accessed Dec. 22, 2017.

tell their audiences the goal of China, the means to get there, and the beneficiaries. A place to note is the PRC's emphasis on the congruence of interests between the Chinese people and the people of the world. China is creating an imagined community that blurs the lines between domestic and international politics. The above statements reveal the existence of a certain ideology whereby Beijing hopes to invite as many as possible to get onboard for its desired destination.

Over the years after Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening, China has grown to be an active global player, seeing its domestic and foreign interests intertwined. At the time of writing this research, Beijing already is in the 2020 target date, that is, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CCP, when "a moderately prosperous society in comprehensive aspects" will be achieved. As early as 2002, the PRC has sent its Navy on cruises outside of East Asian waters for military diplomacy. The long sought-for national rejuvenation by the CCP, a corollary to "Chinese Dream" that has been publicized officially under Xi, is meant to transform the Chinese state from a weakened regional hegemon to a global leading power.

Beijing's growing relative strength accompanied with economic development has opened opportunities for different interests to be addressed that would be less salient if the country were weaker. The belief that domestic prosperity relies on continuous opening and foreign markets drives China to expand outward. Investments in maritime power, while justified on economic grounds, are also driven by a belief that a blue-water navy serves the country's strategic interests in the Pacific and, equally important, to build Chinese reputation, an old cultural practice of drawing awe from the world. Bureaucratic interests cannot be ruled out in the calculation process either. Thus, the discourse of Chinese rejuvenation needs to capture the intersected dynamics of

domestic and international interests. To achieve this, Beijing falls back to Confucian-Taoist (C-T) rhetoric and reconstructs history to serve current political needs.

The discursive issue here is inclusiveness. The PRC unambiguously draws a parallel in the principles that govern the running of state affairs and foreign policies; domestic tolerance and diversity will also guide the world order that China prefers. Idealistic words such as harmony, peace, and coexistence of differences have discursive support of historical continuities in terms of people and territory. Behind this mask of idealism, however, is *realpolitik*. For instance, when policies result from the cold calculation of interests, they are rationalized as primarily serving the moral purposes. In the spirit of critical analysis, throughout this chapter are examples that highlight the gulf between construed idealism and historical realities. They also show the gaps between aspired greatness and historical facts. This chapter will also compare conditions for dynastic world order, for instance, Ming (1368-1644), and the contemporary version. The following is the layout of discussion.

This chapter is a background essay about basic parameters whereby the PRC builds a contemporary version of imagined community.⁹ After providing a history of continental politics, it explains how Beijing constructs a modern Chinese state based on myths by manipulating history to create a sense of historical continuities inherited by the PRC. The attention will then turn to the rationalization logic that is employed consistently for domestic and international affairs; the inclusive idealism in the propagated worldview has no borders. The last section of the chapter argues that different modes of economy and the modern nation-state system have

⁹ A term originates with Benedict Anderson. See, Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised ed. London; New York: Verso, 2006. via Ebook Central Academic Complete.

complicated the presentation and rationalization of the currently envisioned future Chinese world order, compared to the imperial version.

A Unified and Peaceful Continent?

The East Asia subcontinent historically can be differentiated into four geographical regions: China proper (combined areas of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers), the northeast, northern steppe, and Inner Asia in the west. The agricultural sedentary China proper where Chinese civilization originates differs from the rest in language, culture, socio-economic structure, and political system. It is not a historical anomaly that the Chinese dynasties historically were either threatened or conquered by tribal nomads from the steppe or semi-nomads from the northeast. They also had very limited influence over Inner Asia (approximately today's Xinjiang and Tibet). Aside from small-scale political organizations, the other three regions had seen the rise of empire or some kind of confederacy. Non-Chinese peoples in the north and northeast had taken over either Northern China (the Yellow River area) or the entire China proper. It had been under non-Chinese empires that dynasties had greater influence over Inner Asia while the natives of today's Xinjiang and Tibet kept their cultural and political institutions.

On the continent, territorial contraction and expansion can be irregular and drastic. One way to analyze territorial changes is to assess how successfully dynasties were able to control Northern China, especially the strategic "within the passes" (in today's Shaanxi) and the Yellow River region, and how successfully they could expand outward from Northern China, further to the northern steppe, the south, and the west. The Chinese dynasties, Eastern Jin and Song, were relocated to the South while nomadic and semi-nomadic people controlled Central Plain, in the north of China proper. Not only did Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing conquer the Central Plain,

they were also able to expand territory south of the Yangtze River and project influence to the west including Xinjiang and Tibet. Under Chinese regimes, Han and Tang had substantial control over Inner Asia, especially Xinjiang. However, during Song and Ming, the control of Inner Asia, the northeast, and the northern steppe was either none or limited over certain areas. The sizes of territories shifted according to relative military capabilities, including both land force and naval power.

War and violence made their frequent presence on the continent. When the land was a multi-state system with no obvious hegemon, such as the relations between Song and neighboring states and that between the warring states which mostly clustered in the north of the China proper, armed conflicts are ordinary. The formation of empires and great dynasties that ruled the north and the south and in the cases of Yuan and Qing projected forces to Inner Asia however did not bring violence to the end. Internal chaos, civil wars and revolts plagued the empires. Ruling houses also dispatched troops to borders for punishing, intervening, invading, and conquering other regimes (see Table 1.0).

Although dynastic attention had been devoted to the continent as it is where power competition grew most intense, the use of force was not unusual (albeit less frequent) in the outer periphery, in areas such as the Korean Peninsula, Japanese islands, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Sui and Tang were in constant armed conflicts with Koguryo on the northern Korean Peninsula. Eventually, Tang allied with Silla in the southeast of the peninsula to annihilate Koguryo. The continental history also saw military interventions. One example is Ming's troops in Korea against the Japanese invasion in the 1590s. Another example is Qing's intervention under Korean king's request to help quell a rebellion. Both Ming and Qing also intervened in Vietnam. While far-sea navigation sanctioned by dynastic imperium was not a tradition from a broader historical

perspective, Zheng He's seven-times naval expeditions commissioned by Ming's Yongle Emperor that reached as far as East Africa is a vivid example. During the third voyage, Zheng He overthrew the ruling regime in Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka).

Table 1.0 lists war and violence on the continent and between continental dynasties and non-continental powers. The modern system of sovereign states and national identities does not affect inclusion and exclusion of cases. Wars between dynasties and other regimes on the continent that no longer exist should be considered as well because such treatment places events in their historical contexts. The current PRC that covers territories of more than 9 million square kilometers, similar to but smaller than that of the Qing Empire, is the size of the European countries from Portugal to the eastern part of Russia. The political divisions on the European landmass make it easier to record conflicts, which lends to the thesis that Europe historically is not peaceful. Had the proposed geographical scope of Europe had been unified under a single authority, these international conflicts would all have become domestic unrest. Similar logic applies to the East Asian continent. Supposing the territory that an imperial power dominated had been divided, domestic rebellions would have become international conflicts. Neither of the hypotheses is true historically. But the point here is that the definition of peace should not be limited to international conflicts. To better address whether the continent was historically peaceful as the PRC claims—a claim Beijing propagates to bolster its current foreign policies, it is necessary to consider both external and internal events.

Based on the aforementioned, the tables have three purposes, presenting interactions between or among different regimes in a multi-state system and conflictual relations between ruling houses and subjects within the empire. Regarding the latter, it includes armed rebellions initiated by princes of the royal lineage and those by commoners. The third purpose is more

nuanced. It is about relations between political entities which were independent, but at the same time a certain political entity would lay the claim of superiority in a way that it hoped to define the inter-state relations to its favor. This is the case in the interactions between Tibet and Qing.

Table 1.0 spans from the mid-14th century to the 19th century to include Chinese Ming and Manchu Qing with the latter more of an empire than the former. Dynasties on the continent, especially those with large holdings of territories did not stop outward expansion after their founding. One of examples is Qing. Even after the Manchus entered the Shanhai pass (Shanhaiguan) and captured Beijing in 1644, they spent the next one hundred years to eliminate the hostile influence, including Mongols and Ming loyalists, before their territory exponentially expanded. The wars between Qing and other regimes which were later subdued will be considered as they determined territorial size at the height of imperial power.

The list is not exhaustive. And due to limited space, it is impossible to list every event, expeditions and armed clashes that occurred in the same place or involved the same parties when they should be treated separately and independently. The solution is to group them together in one column with year range, plural term and explanations in parenthesis. The list only includes events that occurred on the continent without considering overseas military activities. Since the Korean Peninsula and south(east) Asian countries are geographically directly connected to China, military ventures into these places will be considered.

Table 1.0

Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1644 AD)			
Red Turban Rebellions (1351 to 1368): military campaigns in different parts of China that eventually overthrew Mongol Yuan dynasty			
Year	Event	Year	Event
1371	Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of Ming, conquered Xia in Sichuan	1449	Tumu Crisis (about 20,000 mongols under the lead of Esen attacked Ming's 500,000 troops and ended with Zhengton Emperor captured (this come from Wang's book)
1388	Battle of the Kerulen River, Ming invaded Mongolia	1460s and 1470s	Miao Uprisings
1399-1402	Ming Civil War over succession	1550	Altan-khan's raid into the suburban areas of Beijing
1407	Ming's military intervention-turned conquest of Annam (present day Vietnam)		
1408-1411	Ming's Naval Expedition Invaded the Kotte Kingdom in Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka) and installed regime favorable to China	1510	Rebellion of Prince Anhua (armed conflicts took place; aborted attempt to usurp the throne)
1410-1424	Ming's punitive expeditions into Outer Mongolia, preventing a unified Mongol power (there are six campaigns and emperor Chengzu (Yongle emperor) himself led five invasions into Mongolia, in 1410, 1414, 1422, 1423, and 1424)	1519	Rebellion of Prince Ning (armed conflicts took place; aborted attempt to usurp the throne)
1427	Ming lost Annam in a revolt	1592-1598	Ming militarily intervened in Korea during Japanese invasion.
1438-1465	Chinese intervention in and invasion of Burma	1631-1644	Rebellions led by Li Zicheng and the capture of Ming capital city, Beijing
Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912 AD)			
Li Zicheng's attempt to overthrow Ming culminated in his conflicts with Wu Sangui. Wu decided to open the northeast pass for the Manchus. The Manchus established Qing in China proper and Li was defeated.			
Year	Event	Year	Event
1644-1662	The Manchus continued to fight against Ming loyalists in many southern provinces. At times,	1788-1789	Border war with Annam

	there are two capitals, one headed by Ming loyalist in Nanjing and the other by the Manchus in Beijing		
1673-1681	Three Fudatories Revolt (Wu Sangui and other two Ming generals)	1790-1792	Two campaigns against Nepalese invasion of Tibet
1696-1759	Qing's several major clashes with the Dzungar Mongols and brought Xinjiang under control (the defeat of Dzungar in northwest Xinjiang from 1755-57, and the defeat of Turkic Muslism in southern Xinjiang from 1758-59)	1795-1797	Revolt in Hunan and Kweichow
1720s	Manchu defeated Dzungars and extended influence to Tibet	1796-1804	White Lotus Rebellion (took place in central China)
1730s and 1740s	Manchus also had several campaigns along Tibetan frontiers against Dzungars, 1729-1735, 1747-1749	1850-1864	Taiping Rebellion (spread from southern province Guangxi to Nanjing, posed a major threat to Manchu Qing)
1755-1757	Qing suppressed Mongolian revolt in the Ili Valley	1851-1868	Nian Uprising
1747-1749	The Jinchuan Wars, subdue non-Chinese self-ruled regions in western Sichuan	1854-1873	Miao Rebellion in Guizhou
1765-1769	The Burma War	1855-1873	Hui Muslims Revolt
1770-1776	The Jinchuan Wars	1862	Revolts of Muslims in Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang
1781 and 1784	Revolt in Gansu	1900	Boxer Rebellion

Sources: David Graff & Robin Higham (eds.), *A Military History of China*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2012; David M. Robinson, "Princes in the Polity: the Anhua Prince's Uprising of 1510," *Ming Studies*, vol (65), 2012:13-56; Denis Crispin Twitchett & John King Fairbank. *The Cambridge History of China: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*. Vol. 7, Part 1. Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 380-381; Edward L. Dreyer. *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007; F.W. Mote, *Imperial China:900-1800*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp.583-597, 607-612, 824-840, 844-848, 901-902, 936-937; Feng Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony: Grand Strategy and International Institutions in East Asia History*. CA: Stanford University Press, 2015; Sechin Jagchid & Van Jay Symons, *Peace, War, and Trade Along the Great Wall: Nomadic-Chinese Interaction through Two Millennia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, p77; John W. Dardess, *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of A Resilient Empire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012; Richard Ernest Dupuy & Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 BC to the Present*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 4th edition,

1993, pp.480-481, 484, 558-559, 648-650, 715-717, 767, 769-770; Wang Yuan-Kang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 114, 119-121; Xiaobing Li (editor), *China at war: An Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2012.

The territories under the PRC's control today cover the China proper, the northeast, the west and part of the north. Altogether, they are called China and the term appears frequently in Beijing's discourse. This "China" and its corresponding geographical delimitation did not come close to a dynastic territorial boundary until Qing, the last empire on the continent. However, Beijing's narratives have sounded as if they can be further pushed back to previous dynastic reigns. In reality, the continent had seen coexistence of multiple regimes with different cultural and political institutions. At times, they were subordinate to a supreme imperial authority. During other times, they were equal powers. The element of independence from China and being non-Chinese in the fact that non-Han peoples enjoyed political independence and were (and still are) culturally different from the Hans received insignificant treatments in the historical accounts constructed by the CCP. In contemporary interpretations, non-Hans and Hans are all Chinese living under a territory called China since antiquity. In creating a false impression of multi-ethnic harmony and territorial unity, Beijing tries to popularize the idea that "China since ancient times is a peace-loving country." The issue with the PRC's rhetoric is twofold. First, it denies differences-correlated conflicts between different political entities that prevail in the history of the continent. These conflicts hardly validate the claim of continental peace. Second, it attempts to downplay political independence of non-Chinese by stressing the superior political status of dynasties. The example of Tibet-Tang relations will demonstrate the above points.

From the early 7th century to the end of the 9th century, the East Asia continent was by no means dominated by a single power throughout. Several players were active in competing for regional supremacy, including the Eastern Turkish Kaghanate, the Western Turkish Kaghanate,

the Chinese Tang dynasty, Tibetan Empire, the Second Turkish Kaghanate, and the Uyghur Empire. Tibet and Tang for a prolonged period, about 120 years, were in power parity. Not only did Tibet find itself in frequent conflicts with Tang for bordering territories to its northeast and southeast such as Gansu and Yunnan, it was also expanding northward and northwestward into today's Xinjiang. In general, the territories to the north and northeast of Tibet that passes from southern Gansu to Qinghai and into Xinjiang was much contested between Tibet and Tang for both had the same incentives to control transcontinental trade. Conflicts with Tang occurred over Kashgaria during the years from 665 to 678, 689, 692 to 694, 717 to 736, and 789 to 791; competition for the control over Yunnan from 688 to 694 and 751 to 754. Both sides had lost and regained contested territories. A caution here is that Yunnan, now a province of China in the southwest, was then an independent kingdom called Nanzhao, and conflicts from 751 to 754 were between Tang and allied Tibet and Nanzhao. Therefore, Tibet did not actually annex Yunnan but rather placed the kingdom under its influence for the next four decades. Tibet would also recover Tang-occupied Tibetan territories in 757 and had the Gansu corridor from 758 to 771.¹⁰ During the An Lushan rebellion (755 to 763 AD), Tibetans even captured the dynasty's western capital, but decided to withdraw.

Generally speaking, for nearly three decades after 756, Tibet was a major threat to Tang in two ways. First, many Tang-controlled territories including those inhabited by the ethnic Chinese in the China proper were occupied by Tibet. Second, the Tibetan empire was able to reconsolidate its influence in Central Asia. This means that Tang not only had difficulties in

¹⁰ David Wilkinson, "Power Polarity in the Far Eastern World System 1025 BC-AD1850: Narrative and 25-Year Interval Data," *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Vol V, 3, 1999, pp. 501-617 (specifically, pp. 555-562); Denis Twitchett, "Tibet in Tang's Grand Strategy," in *Warfare in Chinese History*, edited by Hans van de Ven (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 106-179 (specifically, pp. 120-121, 126-127, 132-133).

defending itself but also lost control over the trade routes. Under these situations, the Chinese dynasty had to seek alliances with Arabs and Uyghurs to check Tibetan power. The rise of the Uyghur Kaghnanate in Mongolia provided Tang an opportunity to form joint forces to defeat Tibet in the early 790s. Due to frequent warfare with Uyghurs, Arabs, the Chinese, and Nanzhao, with mixed success and defeat, as well as internal conflicts, the Tibetan empire collapsed during the period of the early 840s to 851.¹¹ The extent of the imperial reach at its zenith, including territories that it can demand tribute from is nearly half of the territories now under the PRC's control. Tibet was a powerful opponent that China's dynasty had to reckon with and yet contemporary Chinese histories dealing with the Tang period efface the war-fraught relations and ignore the power dynamics that put China at an inferior position.

A 2010 Chinese account of Tibet-Tang relations specifies that the two parties were in wars for 192 times, both major and small scales. However, it goes on to characterize the essence of these conflicts as nothing more than family quarrels. "Tang-Fan wars are inevitable *brotherly quarrels* during the historical evolution of a unified multi-ethnic Chinese nation state (emphasis original)."¹² According to the author, these conflicts resulted in "the alliance of peace" and "eventually..... a unified and harmonious family."¹³ International wars thus are distorted and trivialized as "domestic inter-ethnic wars (国内民族战争)."

¹¹ Christopher Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power Among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese During the Early Middle Ages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987, pp.143 to 172.

¹² "Fan" is a pejorative Chinese word referring to Tibet. It means uncivilized.

¹³ Ma Chao [马超], "The History of Tibet cannot be Rewritten," [西藏的历史不容篡改], *Tibetan Academy of Social Science*, TAR, Feb. 02, 2010, <www.xzass.org/newsinfo.php?id=878&pn=2> accessed July 27, 2019. (original text: 唐蕃战争的性质问题，具有中国统一的多民族国家历史演进中的国内民族战争的性质。唐蕃战争是中国统一的多民族国家历史演进中难以避免的“兄弟阋墙”。它导致的结果是“唐蕃和盟”，最终“社稷如一”“和同为一家”.)

Idealistic family-friendship relations in the PRC's narratives is also used to downplay the realistic calculations of costs and benefits in bilateral diplomacy. Take the inter-marriage between Chinese princesses and Tibetan kings, especially the marriage of Wencheng and Songtsen Gampo as an example.¹⁴ The 1992 White Paper describes bilateral relations as “solidarity bound with family ties” (团结友好的亲谊关系). Similar rhetoric also appears in other writings about Tibetan history. In generalizing Tang Taizong's intermarriage policy toward different non-Hans, the authors of *the Biography of Tang Taizong*, in the 2002 version published by concludes that it “reduced ethnic barriers, enhanced ethnic solidarity, and facilitated ethnic amalgamation (民族融合).”¹⁵ However, historically, intermarriages signified political equity and usually came when non-Chinese powers proved formidable enough that Chinese dynasties could not afford to wage military campaigns. In the case of Songtsen Gampo and Wencheng, the marriage was the result of bilateral armed conflicts.

Idealistic rhetoric is not just used to conceal realpolitik but also to create a false impression of Tang having superiority over Tibet. *The Biography of Tang Taizong* provides an example that contemporary Chinese histories describe ancient China as a benevolent power capable of subduing others and winning their loyalty through imperial morality. It argues that inter-marriage is evidence of the relatively open-minded and inclusive governance of the first Tang emperor (Tang Gaozu) because this policy applies to families that contributed to the founding of Tang regardless of their ethnic origins and foreign political entities. It goes on to say that inter-

¹⁴ The 1992 White Paper is one of the documents that cite the inter-marriage example. The 1992 White Paper, “Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation,” [西藏的主权归属与人权状况], English version <<http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/>> and Chinese version <<http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/1992/Document/308015/308015.htm>>.

¹⁵ Zhao keyao & Xudaoxun [赵克尧&许道勋]. *The Biography of Tang Taizong* [唐太宗傳] Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2002, pp. 258-260.

marriage aims to ensure the wealth and the status of generations of Han and non-Han peoples.¹⁶ Consider another example that discusses Tang's policies toward "frontier ethnicities", it writes that based on the principle of *si hui fu he* (思惠抚和), the policy of intermarriage with different ethnic groups such as Tibetans, Turks and others does not result from the military threats they posed but rather is an act of Tang's loose rein and *huai rou* (怀柔) for the purpose of good relations among different ethnicities.¹⁷ *Fu he* and *huai rou* means using political, cultural, and economic tools to solicit submission from an opponent one perceives to be inferior. The words carry a condescending tone and the connotation of "softness," with the latter indicating that whoever gives something (sending princesses and granting titles to minorities' leaders) is generous and kind. By using these vocabularies, China sees itself as a benevolent authority over actors that it deems as belonging to its dominions. In reality, however, China had to face the fact of power equity and foreign demands in the times of defeat.

Another example is different views regarding the Tibet-Tang peace treaty of 823. The PRC uses this treaty to rationalize its control over Tibet based on the claimed historical amity. However, in reality the treaty is one between equals and was concluded to put to rest years of armed conflicts over territories. As the following text will show, the Tibetans may even have believed that they were the ones who were superior. The signing of the treaty occurred against the background of the alliance between Uyghurs and China and Tibetans' raid against one of China's forts.¹⁸ Tang did not have an upper hand in this triangle power dynamics.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 260. Original text: (世代保辅，长享富贵)

¹⁷ Wang Shu-hui [王树暉], "An Outline for Basic Characteristics of Frontier Policies from Qin, Han to Qing Dynasties," [秦汉至清朝的历代中央王朝治边政策梳理及基本特点概括], *Xinjiang Philosophy Social Sciences Website* [新疆哲学社会科学网], <www.xjass.cn/dyzx/content/2012-12/27/content_258512.htm> July 27, 2019.

¹⁸ Beckwith, pp. 166-167.

The PRC's interpretation can be found in the 1992 White Paper about the ownership of Tibet. The Paper praises the solidarity between Tibet and Tang through political marriages and finalizes the paragraph with a sentence, from a part of the Treaty inscribed on a stone pillar in front of the Jokhang Temple in 823 AD: "the two sovereigns, uncle and nephew, having come to agreement that their territories be united as one, have signed this alliance of great peace to last for eternity! May God and humanity bear witness thereto so that it may be praised from generation to generation."¹⁹ This English translation is directly provided by the PRC for the English version of the white paper. Compare this with the translation based on Tibetan inscriptions from H. E. Richardson, "The great king of Tibet, the Divine Manifestation, the bTsan-po and the great king of China, the Chinese ruler Hwang Te, Nephew and Uncle, having consulted about the alliance of their dominions have made a great treaty and ratified the agreement. In order that it may never be changed, all gods and men have been made aware of it and taken as witnesses; and so that it may be celebrated in every age and in every generation the terms of the agreement have been inscribed on a stone pillar."²⁰

Two places stand out. First, while both the PRC's English version and Richardson's translation all specify the relations between Tibet and Tang as those between nephew and uncle, Tibet did not readily accept the connotation that as a nephew it was in a lower rank. Even though "nephew and uncle" frequently appears in the text, the narrative construction of the Tibetan inscriptions as a whole makes it insignificant. Elsewhere in the inscriptions, calling Tang "the

¹⁹ The 1992 White Paper, "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation," the State Council, <<http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/>> accessed, July 29, 2019. English translation original.

²⁰ H.E. Richardson, "The Sino-Tibetan Treaty Inscription of A.D. 821/823 at Lhasa," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2, 1978, pp. 137-162, (specifically, pp. 153).

country of Great China” and itself “the country of Great Tibet” also provides evidence to Tibet’s self-affirmation of its independence and equality with the eastern power.²¹ But there is more. The deification of Tibetan kings and their achievements in handling foreign relations signify the self-perceived central position and a superior status relative to Tang.

In calling the kings from both sides, Tibetan texts name Tibetan kings as “the Divine Manifestation” and when addressing China’s rulers, it uses kings with the Chinese titles. What is noteworthy is the effort to elaborate “the Divine Manifestation”: “...he [the king] came from being a god in heaven to be lord of men. By great wisdom and method he established a lasting dominion. By excellent religious laws he set right the ways of men. By loving benevolence he brought harmony to the affairs of the interior. Subduing external enemies through knowledge of the arts of war, he increased the extent of his dominion. Through the ever-increasing might of his helmet his wise order was immutable. He was great king of the Eternal Swastika of unsullied glory.” The Tibetan texts continue to name surrounding great kingdoms and writes “every inhabited region without exception” who came to “revere the mighty helmet and excellent customs” of Tibetan kings.²² On the contrary, there is no explanation for the titles of Chinese rulers. This contrast clearly indicates a central status of Tibet derived from the king’s divine presence in the bilateral relations.

The centrality of Tibetan king can be further highlighted by the description of the achievements of the king’s father, the Divine Manifestation, Khri lde-srong-brtsan: “...having taken a firm resolve in strict accordance with the relationship of Nephew and Uncle, knowing through the great profundity of his mind everything that pertained to religious law and

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p.145.

government, and by the grace of his conspicuous loving-kindness *embracing the eight directions without distinction of inner and outer*, came to agreement and made treaties with all the kings of the four frontiers (emphasis added).” Without the omission of China, the text mentions that “Nephew and Uncle being agreed in their thoughts, one with the other, he conferred about a treaty with the Chinese king, Zheng Shin B’un B’u Hwang Te. The old animosity was purged and cleared away.” From the Tibetan perspective, it was Tibet who “conferred” the treaty with Tang China, instead of the other way around.²³

The other place that deserves attention in the PRC’s English translation is “their territories (Tibet and Tang) be united as one.” In Fang-Kuei Li’s translation of Tibetan inscriptions, it reads, “their government be as one.”²⁴ In Richardson’s translation, it reads, “the alliance of their dominions.” Elsewhere in Richardson’s version, the text mentions that “kingdoms be united.” The Chinese version is embedded in the context (the 1992 white paper) in which the PRC propagates the idea that Tibet belongs to China historically. However, a closer look into the Tibetan text indicates that such usage of history does not conform to historical fact. Consider this passage: “...the Divine Manifestation, the bTsan-po, Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan himself, whose knowledge springs from supernatural inspiration, whose acts are in conformity with the ways of the gods, who with great kindness treats outer and inner alike, whose helmet is mighty and whose commands are strict, he together with Chinese king, B’un B’u He’u Tig Huang Te, Nephew and Uncle, agreed in their inspired thoughts; and, the kingdoms being united in prosperity, a great treaty was made to bring happiness to both Tibet and China for ten thousand

²³ Ibid., pp.145-46.

²⁴ Fang-Kuei Li, “Inscription of the Sino-Tibetan Treaty of 821-822,” *T’oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 44, Livr. 1/3, 1956, pp. 1-99, (specifically pp. 55, 62-63).

generations.”²⁵ Given that Tibetan king was placed in such a high regard and the Chinese king received diminutive descriptive treatment,²⁶ it is unconceivable that Tibet would yield its independence and would think it should not be the one who directed bilateral affairs.

The Tibetan Empire and Tang were in power parity for an accumulated long period. The former also showed strong political and cultural consciousness. And yet, contemporary Chinese histories dealing with Tang claim Tibetans as well as other non-Hans to be “minorities,” a term that denotes marginality, backwardness, dependence and powerlessness. Consider the following narratives. In *the Military History of Tang*, the authors argue that through the silk road, “Tuyuhun and Tufan regimes on the Tibetan Plateau had absorbed large amount of culture from China proper, which greatly facilitated the feudalization of these regions where minorities resided.”²⁷ Another book that studies military thought of “the minorities in ancient China” unambiguously places Tibetans and Turks in the category of “minorities”, indicated by a subheading in chapter 3, “the main themes of military thought of the minorities during the periods of Sui and Tang.”²⁸ Even the chronology here reveals sino-centrism. From the perspectives of Tibetans and Turks, they would not use Chinese historical periodization to describe their reign.

²⁵ H. E. Richardson, p. 146.

²⁶ Fang-Kuei Li’s translations also match with Richardson’s in that, throughout the two main texts on the East and West faces of the stone pillar, Tibetan Kings are the ones whose holiness receives elaboration aside from the mentioning of the title, while Chinese emperor is respected simply by mentioning his title. See Fang-Kuei Li, 1956.

²⁷ Yang Xiyi and Yu Rubo [杨希义 于汝波]. *The Military History of Tang* [唐代军事史] (vol. 10 of *General Military History of China* 中国军事通史). Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1998, p. 240.

²⁸ Tong Lijun [同利军]. *The Analysis of Military Thought of Minorities in Ancient China*. [中国古代少数民族军事思想研究] Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 2013, pp. 126-136.

For the PRC, It Is

Sentences like “China since ancient times is a peace-loving country” or “*Zhonghua minzu* (the Chinese nation) since ancient times are peace-loving” permeate Beijing’s diplomacy, the official rhetoric, and the PRC textbooks. The expressions are not simply for propaganda but also convey the entrenched belief of Chinese political and military leaders and arguably a substantial number of both intellectuals and ordinary people. More than some catching sentence, the statement has the discursive support that justifies the PRC’s control over a multi-ethnic population in the vast territory, particularly its hold on the Central Asian Xinjiang and Tibet. The key point here is that, to reshape political and cultural consciousness, the CCP uses the contemporary territorial boundaries and a modern conception of *Zhonghua minzu* (the Chinese nation) to build a discourse of shared experience that according to the CCP’s framing is to be found in the past, the present, and the future; China, the Chinese nation, and the territories under the PRC’s control are synonyms to one another throughout history. The following analysis will focus on how this is done discursively.

The 1999 white paper about the PRC’s policies toward minorities released by the State Council states that “China since ancient times is a unified multi-ethnic country.” “Unification” as defined by the Party refers to centralized governance that was established by dynasties of Qin and Han and later became a political norm that lasts for thousands of years. The document gives the idea of China’s territorial boundary as it continues to trace the imperial administrative control over Xinjiang and Tibet. The territory of Xinjiang is dated to the Han dynasty. Tibet is included when the white paper gives the account of Mongol Yuan’s dispatch of a Pacification Commissioner. It comments that because of Yuan’s rule, “Tibet has ever since become an inseparable part of the territory of China.” The CCP reasons that even though the history of

China was separated by territorial divisions at times under more than one regime, unification has always been a mainstream. And such political unity has led to solidarity in other aspects: “Through a long-term process of great unification, economic and cultural exchanges closely knit together each ethnicity of China.....[and] create and develop Chinese civilization.....The mutual interdependence of each ethnicity in terms of political, economic and cultural connections leads to shared destiny and common interests in the long-term historical development.”²⁹

The reason for the PRC’s emphasis on the trend of unity is to justify its hold on Inner Asian territories. Despite the fact that the great expansionary powers of Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing which incorporated both Xinjiang and Tibet are not Chinese regimes, in the PRC’s narratives, they are. Yet both Mongols and Manchus retained their cultural and political identities, especially the former, when ruling diverse lands. In addition, “unification” historically does not equate to the current territorial size under communist control. Only Qing comes close. The Song and the Ming certainly had little influence over the west. On top of these variations, Uyghurs and Tibetans once built their own empires and when they recognized the supreme authority that ruled China proper (areas of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers) in the form of suzerainty, not sovereignty, especially in the case that they needed the eastern support to defeat their nomadic or non-Han opponents from the steppe and Central Asia, they kept their socio-economic and political systems.

²⁹ “The 1999 White Paper: China’s Policies Toward Minorities and Implementation” [中国的少数民族政策及其实践], *State Council*, Sept. 27, 1999, <<http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/1999/Document/307953/307953.htm>>.

The Meaning of China

“China” (*Zhongguo* 中國) refers to lands ruled by Beijing today. In the official narratives, the contemporary political meaning and territorial boundary of “China” also carry validity in the dynastic periods. In reality, the term first refers to the Central Plain in the north where Zhou ruled. Later on, it becomes associated with China proper as Chinese dynasties mostly did not rule beyond this territorial boundary. Take the *History of Ming* as an example.³⁰ The chapters 320 to 328 specify the titles as “Foreign Countries” (*wai guo* 外國). Japan, Korea, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Mongolia among others fall into this category. Chapters 329 to 332 detail Ming’s relations with Western Regions, that is, Central Asia. Although the Central Asia chapters do not carry “Foreign Countries” in their titles, their context (in 330, 331 and 332) which sees a juxtaposition between “China” (*Zhongguo* 中國) and places of western regions in the descriptions of bilateral political and economic affairs does not differ from the chapters that bear the designation of “Foreign Countries.” The following presents evidence from the *History of Ming*.

The chapter (323) about the islands in today’s first island chain of the Pacific details the regional dynamics between Ming China, the Ryukyu kingdoms, and Japan. Chinese historians described the visits by the kingdoms’ envoys as “paying tribute.” The record uses “three countries” (三國) to describe the kingdoms and identifies Shangbei of the Ryukyu Kingdoms as the weakest one. In the late 16th century, Japanese daimyo domain of Satsuma invaded the

³⁰ *The History of Ming* (明史) has 332 chapters, recording the histories of emperors, princes, geographies, rituals and ceremonies, carriages and clothing, selected officials, economy, finance, rivers and canals, military, punishment and law, literature, dignitaries, Ming’s relations with foreign countries, etc. Dynastic historians were to write, edit, and compile histories. The practice that historians were commissioned to compile the history of the previous dynasty by the current court was not uncommon. In the example of the history of Ming, the Han official Zhang Tingyu was the lead editor in the Manchu court. The texts can be found: <http://chinesenotes.com/mingshi.html>.

Ryukyus in 1609. Ryukyu would then become the vassal of both the daimyo of Satsuma and Ming. A paragraph describing domestic and regional dynamics substitutes Ming with China and clearly indicates that Ryukyus and China are different political units. In response to one of Islands kings' request of bestowing title, the Chinese official of proprieties expressed: "Ryukyus traditionally paid tribute once every two years. It then changed to once every ten years after the invasion of *woko* (Japanese pirates, 倭寇). Now the country (*guo* 國) had recovered a bit, the temporary plan for tribute is once every five years. This suspends further changes, till after a title is conferred to the new king." Following this quotation from propriety official, the historians continued to write that Ryukyus would pay tribute in the fifth year and again in the sixth year, but because "China was in the middle of many events," the conferring matter was put off. Another example is Korea. Regarding the Korean official request to have Ming recognize Yi Seong Gye as the Korean King, the Korean chapter (320) recorded the positive answers from Ming with a logic directly from the emperor that "Korea is located in the secluded eastern corner and is not governed by *Zhongguo*." Another event recorded in the volume is the interaction between Yi's son and the Ming court. After Yi Bang-won, now the king of Korea, expressed his gratitude for the rare medical ingredients obtained from China to treat his father and requested for Chinese royal items, the record wrote that because Yi "expresses his admiration for the proprieties and etiquettes of China (*Zhongguo Li*, 中國禮)", Emperor Yongle granted him many precious items including seal, jades and clothing. In the Western Regions, there are also similar political and cultural differentiations between China and other countries.

In chapter 331 (biographies of kings and leaders in Central Asia), the dynastic historians recorded the Hongwu Emperor as saying that "nowadays the *tianxia* (天下 the world) is unified, thousands of states (*wan guo* 萬國) from the four directions all come to pay tribute" but only

Timur (or Tamerlane) “does not submit to China.” Chapter 332 again shows the Chinese recognition of political units in Western regions as countries, for instance, “Yutian is a major country (*da guo* 大國) since ancient times,” while stressing the superiority of Ming under the Yongle Emperor, “thousands of states submitted to Chengzu’s (Yongle) aspirations and there were non-stop visits by envoys from the Western Regions” for trade. Here, “China” is also identified as *Zhonghua* (中華). The Hongwu Emperor equated the undisturbed trade relations between China and Western Regions to “*Zhonghua* greatly bestowing benefits to the countries of Western Regions.” *Hua ren* (華人) as a term to describe the people from Ming China landing in foreign territories, that is, the overseas Chinese, also makes its appearance in chapter 323 under the category of Foreign Countries when describing dynastic relations with Luzon (in today’s Philippines).

Based on the above discussion, in the *History of Ming*, “China” is not merely a geographical term, but also contains political, cultural, and territorial meanings. These four aspects together separate Ming from neighboring political entities. Furthermore, whether “country” or “state” (*guo* 國) is used to describe places outside of Ming China does not bear exclusive association with either of the two categories; in both Foreign Countries and Western Regions volumes, *guo* is applied to political entities beyond the Chinese territory. Accordingly, the equation of Ming to “China” (*Zhongguo* 中國) at this period still corresponded to the geographical delimitation of China proper. Not until Manchu Qing did the imperial power extend geographical and political definitions to Inner Asia and other non-Han territories. “Tibet since Yuan is an integral part of the territory of China” conveniently skips Sino-Tibetan relations under Ming and creates an imagined truth that Chinese territory covered the land that is out of the boundary delimitation of China.

Chinese scholars have argued that Qing also identified itself with China. For instance, based on the treaties, with Russia for instance, and court records of Chinese and Manchu origins, Gang Zhao shows that the successive Manchu emperors had identified the territories of Qing with the geographical scope of “China” and actually used the term *Zhongguo* interchangeably with or in equivalent to the Qing empire. Zhao however also argues that such equation was the product of political needs as it was not the case before the Manchus ruled China Proper and further expanded its influence to Central Asia.³¹ Assuming that non-Chinese scholars looking into primary sources also have the same conclusion and we accept Zhao’s findings, the meaning of China for Qing differs from that for the PRC. The “China” that the PRC refers to is the one which the Chinese (the Han) dominate politically and is the one the PRC uses to justify its contemporary rule over a heterogeneous population in the vast territory. The “China” that Qing refers to is ruled by the Manchus and the Chinese were targets of co-optation and the ruled. The differences are about power relations among ethnic groups as the case of Qing in Xinjiang below shows. Using the example of Qing to argue that Xinjiang belongs to China in the context of the PRC’s narratives is problematic.

Qing’s Relations with Xinjiang and Tibet

The Manchus basically set up a military government in Xinjiang, following their tradition of banner hierarchy system. This practice set apart the region from China proper where administrative structures were characterized by prefectures and counties governed by magistrates and made Xinjiang belong to the same group with Manchuria and Mongolia where the populations mostly are not Chinese (the Han people). The military governor had authority over

³¹ Gang Zhao, “Reinventing China: Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Modern China*, Vol.32(1), 2006, pp. 3-30.

the entire region and reported to the emperor and the Grand Council of the court. Below the governor, there were councilors and superintendents responsible for important sub-regions and cities respectively. These officials were dominantly Manchus and Mongols with a very few exceptions of Uyghurs and Manchuised Han.³² This ethnic composition in high offices lasted until the 1880s. Locally, there are three bureaucratic structures: *jasak* system, *beg* system and Chinese-style system. The former two are the products of co-optation between the Manchu and nomads and between the Manchu and Uyghurs respectively. The local leadership positions were occupied by the Mongol and Uyghur allies of the court as the rewards for their aid in the Qing's conquest. Chinese bureaucracies that imitate the administrative style of China proper applied to the colonies where Chinese farmers and merchants resided. Again, these areas were predominantly in the charge of Manchu and Mongol magistrates. Unlike Tibet, the stationing of Qing's troops in Xinjiang was on a permanent basis with more soldiers. The number of troops even increased from 40,000 to 50,000 by the mid-19th century.³³

Based on the above analysis, the political relations between Xinjiang and Qing had been mostly those between Uyghurs and resettled Mongols and Manchu and Mongol officials from the court. The Chinese ascent to the ruling class in the region did not occur until the 1870s when the Manchu banner military was unable to put down empire-wide unrest and gave way to regionalism characterized by the Han generals and the domains where they wielded power. Following Zuo Zongtang's (a Chinese general) reconquest of Xinjiang in rebellion, the court after a debate about the value of the region made it into a province in 1884. Zuo's administration

³² The Manchu can be an artificially created political identity formed from people of various ethnicities. From the perspective, a Han choosing to become Manchu was as much a Manchu as any other Manchu. See, William Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 2012.

³³ James. A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 97-102.

would start a sinicization process.³⁴ Thus, not until the last two to three decades of the declining Manchu empire did the Chinese political-military presence start to gain a foothold in Xinjiang. Xinjiang was part of the Qing empire in which the Manchus ruled and the Chinese were subjugates. There were differentiations in the ruling class but the PRC's narratives makes it sound like a unified whole.

Using the Manchu example to affirm that Tibet belongs to China in the context of the PRC's narratives is even more questionable, given that the Manchu reign on the Plateau from the administrative perspective, by itself and also compared to Qing in Xinjiang, does not quite substantiate the claim that Tibet is part of the Qing as it does for Xinjiang.

Qing's reach to Tibet was unfolding against the background of regional competition for supremacy; the bilateral relations did not evolve in isolation and other actors played influential roles. Continental politics in the late 17th century and the early 18th century basically was a contest for power under an (informal) alliance system. Internally, Tibet suffered divisions and had to deal with Mongols who took the seat of Tibetan King after their response to calls for help in the Tibetan sectarian power struggle turned into throne usurpation. To expel the influence of Qoshot Mongols, Tibet under Sanye Gyatso encouraged the Dzungars to unify all of the Mongols. The defeat of Eastern Mongols prompted the tribe to seek for the alliance with the Qing. The Dzungars however then lost to the Manchus in Inner Mongolia. But the defeat was not total and they still wielded influence in Tibet. Allies can become enemies in the eyes of those who sought for help if the strong act at their will unchecked. Following Qoshot's practice, now

³⁴David Christian. *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia. Volume II, Inner Eurasia from the Mongol Empire to Today, 1260-2000*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell 2018, pp. 300-301. via ProQuest Ebook Central; Dillon, Michael. *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Far Northwest*. London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004, pp. 19. via Ebook Central Academic Complete; James. A. Millward, *Eurasian crossroads: a history of Xinjiang*. Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 125-132.

the Dzungars appropriated the role of Tibetan King for themselves. Tibet thus was in a constant state of fighting the enemies that it invited first as allies to crack down on opposition forces. The Manchu emperor believed that the dynasty had a stake in the west, mainly to check the Mongol forces and prevent them from gaining power from religious relations with Tibet. Thus, the Manchus dispatched troops twice to intervene and succeeded in expelling Dzungars on the second occasion.³⁵

Since 1720s, Qing had at different times intervened on the issue of the governing structure and who would be actual rulers wielding the administrative power, either ministers or the Dalai Lama. It also sent troops twice to quell the civil wars in fear of a third party taking advantage of domestic chaos. However, the court was only willing to go so far to assuage its own concern about Dzungar Mongols' influence among Tibetan officials. Tibetans remained the people who made administrative decisions. Even after *ambans* (Qing's resident officials) were made to hold an equal political position to the Dalai Lama after a Nepalese invasion in 1788, the Manchu did not see it in its interests to make Tibet a province directly under Qing's control. Manchu influence however diminished especially after 1840 since Beijing was busy with the western powers and also suffered internal decay. The political consultation with ambans and imperial approval of official appointments became non-substantial. On the Tibet side, it made successful moves to secure Qing's agreements to withdraw and reduce its military presence on the Plateau after intervening in Tibetan civil wars. To advance Tibetan interests, Gyurme Namgye, after the death of his father (Pholhanas) in 1747 who was more tolerant with some presence of the Qing, had tried to muster strength by creating an army and sought overtures to Mongols to

³⁵ Melvyn C Goldstein. *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 10-14. Via Ebsco eBooks, EPUB version.

counterbalance the Manchus.³⁶ Thus, the official view that Tibet is part of China, now equated to Qing and the peoples of Qing are the people of China, is unilateral. Tibet intended to preserve its political independence from the Manchu interference whenever it could. In addition, there are gaps between the PRC's claim and the administrative realities that reveal the Manchu motives. Beijing's influence functioned within an empire system that saw the frontiers with ambiguities; it is a pity to let the territory go but not important enough to warrant full attention. The current official construct is an exaggeration.

The PRC's view of Chinese space expands to where its political interests lie, regardless of the historical contexts of the territories concerned. This is shown in the conscious molding of continental politics that focuses on the periods where dynastic authority reached to the lands that currently are parts of the PRC. The periods when those territories were outside of dynastic reign is recognized at times but nonetheless regarded as anomalous. Their meanings are downplayed to create the impression of temporal continuity. Even when imperial power is projected to remote areas, in the case of Manchu Qing for instance, there are questions about the nature of control, the size of the lands under control, the presence of native governments, and relations between native authority and imperial court. Continuity in territorial possession is one of the myths that the CCP relies on to rule a heterogeneous population.

Chinese Nation and Chinese Culture

One of the characteristics in China's discursive creation of national unity is that the narratives are comprehensive and hardly focus on a single aspect. Aside from territorial issues, the 1999 white paper also mentions the term, the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). *Zhonghua*

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-18.

minzu is only used when narrating aggregate experience of western aggression.³⁷ When mentioning non-Han groups as this document is primarily concerned with, the phrase is “the various ethnic groups of China” (中国各民族) and “minority groups” (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族), instead of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). *Zhonghua minzu* is meant to be comprehensive, standing for 56 ethnicities including the majority Han and the 55 officially recognized minorities. However, “nation” as a singular reveals that although subset ethnic identities, in theory, can exist, they cannot replace the overarching Chinese ethnicity and the Chinese national identity which happen to be most associated with the Han people. The fact that Chinese documents and propaganda publications constantly remind their audience about non-Han areas being integral parts of Chinese territory and CCP’s policy success toward non-Han groups indicates that minorities remain the “Other” in Beijing’s narratives, paradoxically, in parallel to the rhetoric of inclusiveness.

Another historical exaggeration is shared “Chinese culture” (*Zhonghua wenhua*) among all ethnicities. The term is not mentioned in the 1999 document but prevalent in the articles from *Qiushi, People’s Daily* and other official sources. The closest term in the white paper is “Chinese civilization” (*Zhonghua wenming*). Imagined historical community is again evoked to remind readers of unbreakable ties between Han and non-Han. “Through the course of intimate contact over several thousand years, China’s 56 ethnic groups were drawn together by their common lands, common goals and common cultural traditions. The integration of various nationalities culminated in the birth of the Chinese nation, a family of nationalities characterized by diversity

³⁷ While China tries to make it sound like all peoples suffered the same fate, as demonstrated in the Dalai Lama’s plea letter to London, Tibet may not see the Chinese invasion led by Zhang Erfeng in a different light from British aggression. See Melvyn C. Goldstein, 1999, p. 20.

in unity.”³⁸ The concept of inseparable parts constituting a whole that is seen in the definition of the Chinese nation also is reflected in the composition of Chinese culture. The logic goes that if all ethnicities live happily together, they also produce a shared culture. “Chinese culture itself is the common creation of many nationalities.....and an amalgam of diverse cultural elements, including not only the culture of the Han ethnic group, but also the cultures of dozens of other ethnic minority groups in the country.”³⁹

As much as the CCP stresses shared Chinese culture since antiquity, dynastic historians provide evidence to the contrary. The educated elites (the *shi* class) such as court officials denigrated non-Han cultures. Dynastic historians also labelled non-Han peoples as barbarians. *Man* (蠻), *yi* (夷), and *fan* (番) refer to those who did not submit to Chinese civilization. Chapter 332 of the *History of Ming* writes that “those who do not honor China’s institutions are foreign barbarians (*wai fan* 外番).” (should honor be replaced by follow according to the context? double check this translation) In chapter 331, several examples contrast civilized China and troublemaking barbarians. Peoples from Central Asia were depicted as “ignorant,” “foolish” (*yu* 愚), “stubborn” (*wan* 頑) and “unrefined” (*su* 俗). Two four-character phrases go that “the nature of barbarians is not of certainty. They are pacified during the day and revolt at night” (番性無常，朝撫夕叛). Dynastic historians further drew a causal linkage between these racial traits and the invasions of the Chinese frontiers. In a stroke to depict Ming emperors’ benevolence, historians rationalized the granting of state preceptors to the western Buddhist monks as an act of transforming their uncivilized nature. “In the beginning, Taizu (the Hongwu emperor) solicited

³⁸ Ma Qizhi, “The Pluralistic Unity of the Chinese Nation and China’s Ethnic Policy,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2011.

³⁹ Yun Shan, “Cultural Awareness, Cultural Confidence, Cultural Strength,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 3, no.1, 2011.

fan monks (番僧) and conferred state preceptor and great state preceptor to about four to five people in the hope that this will transform their ignorance and stubbornness and thus cease frontier troubles.” Another sentence stated that at the time of Chengzu, titles were also bestowed to the monks to “transform their disposition and provide them guidance so that they will altogether defer to China” (轉相化導，以共尊中國). It continues that, in so doing, western frontiers are free of barbarian troubles (以故西陲宴然，終明世無番寇之患).

An event during the reign of Emperor Zhengde reveals court officials’ contempt toward non-Chinese people and entities. Zhengde intended to meet monks from Wusizang (today’s Tibet, 烏斯藏) who were known as living buddhas and even sent envoys to deliver banners with transportation of horses and ships loaded with salt and tea. Before the journey, Ming’s ministers and officials admonished the emperor and expressed their opposition. In their reasoning, “the past practice of sending envoys by previous emperors is not an act of respect based on beliefs in the religion,” but rather a need to pacify [the region and the people] by transforming and guiding them out of ignorance and stubbornness.” In the eyes of the officials, “the religion of *western fan* is demonic and presumptuous as well as devoid of canonical laws” (西番之教，邪妄不經) and this placating act through non-use of force is necessary because the world order was just established with the founding of the Ming (蓋因天下出定). They continued, as the dynastic reign entered the period of prosperity and peace, the court granted foreign envoys gifts but did not send our people to foreign lands. The minister expressed shock upon hearing Emperor Zhengde’s decision. Considering bandits may once again become active in Shu (today’s Sichuan province, 蜀) and safety was a grave concern in the years-long journey on the roads outside the dynastic realm that did not have Ming’s posts, the court officials deemed it impermissible for

“China to take insults from foreign barbarians” (虧中國之體，納外番之侮).⁴⁰ The differentiation between the Chinese and non-Chinese casts a sharp contrast to the PRC’s accentuation of a historical sense of community. In addition to the educated elites’ contempt toward non-Chinese cultures and peoples, the historical trajectory of non-Hans to affiliate themselves with non-Han cultures also rebuffs the CCP’s claim of commonalities.

Voluntary assimilation occurred over time but not to the degree that the political and cultural independence of non-Han actors can be sidelined. History records that the attraction of Chinese civilization to non-Han peoples is limited. It has been a constant pattern of continental history that people to the north, the northwest and the west of China proper (areas of the Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers) have developed their own socio-economic and political systems that are different from Chinese institutions. Mongol Yuan tried to replace the Chinese writing system with the Mongolian writing scripts. Even during the last dynasty of Qing and in the era of the nation-state, Xinjiang and Tibet remained distinct from China proper. Tibet unquestionably has its own civilization. Given that Qing had more control over the region compared to Tibet and historically it had frequent contacts with eastern dynasties, Xinjiang presents an interesting case in which the ethno-cultural traditions sustained throughout the Manchu rule have continued into the PRC period.

⁴⁰ Original texts: (正德元年來貢。十年復來貢。時帝惑近習言，謂烏斯藏僧有能知三生者，國人稱之為活佛，欣然欲見之。考永、宣間陳誠、侯顯入番故事，命中官劉允乘傳往迎。閣臣梁儲等言：「西番之教，邪妄不經。我祖宗朝雖嘗遣使，蓋因天下初定，藉以化導愚頑，鎮撫荒服，非信其教而崇奉之也。承平之後，累朝列聖止因其來朝而賞賚之，未嘗輕辱命使，遠涉其地。今忽遣近侍往送幢幡，朝野聞之，莫不駭愕。而允奏乞鹽引至數萬，動撥馬船至百艘，又許其便宜處置錢物，勢必攜帶私鹽，騷擾郵傳，為官民患。今蜀中大盜初平，瘡痍未起。在官已無余積，必至苛斂軍民，鋌而走險，盜將復發。況自天全六番出境，涉數萬之程，曆數歲之久，道途絕無郵置，人馬安從供頓？脫中途遇寇，何以御之？虧中國之體，納外番之侮，無一可者。所齎敕書，臣等不敢撰擬。」帝不聽。禮部尚書毛紀、六科給事中葉相、十三道御史周倫等並切諫，亦不聽。)

Tang is one of the three dynasties (the other two being Han and the Manchu Qing) that had more extensive influence over Xinjiang, including some short-lived military garrisons⁴¹ and military settlements and administrative communications in the east. However, the dynasty was not the only actor interacting with the region. In general, Tibetan empire from the south and the emergence and reemergence of the Turkic states in the north constantly challenged Tang's holdings in Xinjiang. The establishment, abandonment, and reestablishment of Tang's four garrisons and Anxi Protectorate-General witnessed the area under changed hands.⁴² In addition to the angle of political relations, the people and their activities were primarily non-Chinese in origin.

From the 7th century to the 16th century, the Turko-Mongolian origins in population and linguistics gradually replaced Indo-European and Iranian origins and eventually became the dominant force in Xinjiang. During this period, despite contacts with Chinese dynasties, non-Chinese cultures dominated the region. When Tang reigned in the east, the major political, linguistic, and genetical influence in Xinjiang came from the Turks migration. Turkic and Mongolian states/empire that controlled Xinjiang also chose non-Chinese ruling systems. For instance, the Uyghur Kaghanate (744-840 AD) with its capital in Mongolia adopted Soghdian administrative model, Soghdian scripts and Manichaeism religion. When Xinjiang under the Qocho Uyghur state came to recognize the suzerainty of the Mongol empire, it not only preserved its cultural identity but also provided Mongols the Uyghur writing system and Uyghur officials to run imperial affairs.⁴³ Chinese influence from the angle of people and culture was

⁴¹ From 649 to 670, the "Four Garrisons" were Kashgar, Khotan, Kucha, and Karashahr. After 693, garrisons were reestablished at Kucha, Khotan and Kashgar (and a new one set up at Tokmak. More secure bases to the east were Karakhoja, Tingzhou, and Hami. (Note that Tokmak is now in Kyrgyzstan, not China.)

⁴² James. A. Millward, 2009, pp. 30-39.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 47.

relatively limited even in the case of Chinese dynasties which held greatest sway in Xinjiang. For instance, Tang's armies in the region were mostly Turkic soldiers commanded by non-Chinese officers.⁴⁴ Even though the empire in the east usually is categorized as a Chinese regime, the extent of its non-Chineseness, including the imperial lineage and ethnic composition in the troops, may warrant an analysis in its own terms.⁴⁵

Similar to Tang, the Manchu Qing before 1878 also left Xinjiang relatively undisturbed in terms of culture. The rising Chinese influence in the region and the ensuing provincialization however would begin sinicization. The high-ranking positions now would be filled by Zuo Zongtang's Hunan Army and people from Hunan province, instead of the Manchus. Bureaucracies would imitate the Chinese administration implemented in the China proper and the staff would be Chinese. This means that local Uyghur elites lost their prestigious status and became subservient to the Chinese officials.⁴⁶ Another major break with Qing's rule before Zuo's reconquest is sinicized assimilation, first through Confucian education and then "modern" education. Ideally, the latter departed from Confucian style under the Manchu reforms, but lack of instructors who specialized in subjects other than traditional curriculum call this "modernity" into question. Neither attempt was successful and there was strong local opposition to Chinese education. Islamic education however was embraced in terms of subjects and educational settings.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁵ Chen Sanping. *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, pp. 4-38. via Ebook Central Academic Complete.

⁴⁶ James. A. Millward, 2007, pp. 139-142.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 142-148.

The context of cultural disparities may provide explanations as to why identification with Chinese culture has particular appeals in CCP's narratives. Shared Chinese culture is part of the propaganda fabricated to create the reality. A common origin is described as the fundamental root for multi-ethnic solidarity and harmony as it connected hearts and minds by shared values; "insofar as the cultural identification is attained, identifications with the great motherland, with the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*), and with the CCP-led socialist path of Chinese characteristics will be consolidated."⁴⁸ In other words, a person regardless of ethnic background will ultimately identify himself or herself as a member of *Zhonghua minzu*, inherit the traditions of Chinese culture, carry the identity of being a Chinese and align the self with socialism of Chinese characteristics led by the CCP. For instance, one can practice, in theory, Muslim customs and speak Uyghur language but such ethnic identification cannot override the Chinese identity which is, from the CCP's perspective, deeply wed into the narrative of national unification of a multi-ethnic territory whereby Beijing promises that revived national glory will come.

Despite the gulf between realities and the discourse of historical territorial continuity and cohesion among peoples, the PRC sees its version of history as the correct interpretation. The Chinese phrase *cuan gai* (篡改) is often used to accuse others of committing grave moral sins in rewriting the history in a way that differs from the Chinese Communist Party's views. *Cuan gai* carries a stronger tone than the English word, rewrite, which is similar to Chinese *gai xie* (改寫). *Cuan* means usurpation of the throne. Thus, it denotes the meaning as strong as something that is orthodox and gets overthrown. *Cuan* in this context thus means the orthodox account of history

⁴⁸Hao Shiyuan [郝时远] "Consolidating the Correct View about the Chinese Nation" [牢固树立正确民族观], *Qiushi*, issue 18, 2015.

is unduly and unjustly overridden. Simply put, *cuan gai* (篡改) means usurping the right to write history. Beijing is appropriating the right-associated sense of righteousness to crown its historical view.⁴⁹

Patriotism

The PRC does not miss opportunities to frame the consciousness of a community with the appeal to patriotism. Chinese patriotism, another example of imagined historical continuity, is built upon the belief that different ethnicities and different cultures have been an integrated whole far before the modern conception of *Zhonghua minzu* and re-definition of Chinese culture and before the presence of fixed territorial boundaries under the nation-state system. “The Chinese nation has glorious tradition of patriotism.....Over the long course of our history.....patriotism is the source for development and progress of Chinese civilization in the past thousands of years.”⁵⁰ Sometimes the narrative does not explicitly emphasize the far past, but the phrase “profound” (深厚) or “long” (悠久) tradition seems to indicate such.⁵¹ After opening with the tradition of the Chinese people’s love for the country, the official narratives turn to modern-day nationalist experience from the mid-19th century onward. It is argued by the CCP that the establishment of the PRC in 1949 further transforms patriotism from “striving for the independence and liberation of [*Zhonghua*] *minzu* to realizing national rejuvenation and making the state strong and wealthy.”⁵²

⁴⁹ “Fan” is a pejorative Chinese word referring to Tibet. It means uncivilized. See Ma Chao, 2010.

⁵⁰ The CCP Committee of Beijing University, “Promoting the Spirit of May Fourth Movement” [弘扬五四爱国主义精神推进中华民族伟大复兴], *Qiushi*, issue 09, 2009.

⁵¹ Ministry of Education, “Patriotism is a Strong Force for the Realization of A Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” [爱国主义实现民族复兴的强大精神动力] *Qiushi*, issue 01, 2009; Qiu Shi, “The Current Theme of Patriotism: the Great Enterprise of Promoting Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” [爱国主义的当代主题：推进中国特色社会主义伟大事业], *Qiushi*, issue 01, 2010.

⁵² Qiu shi, 2010.

The official account of patriotic acts before 1949 includes dynasty-led reform and revolts within the Qing empire such as the Taiping and Boxer rebellions. Beijing's definition of patriotism apparently is very loose and it explicitly admits so in sinicized Marxist verbiage: "when the old regime and social institutions become impediments for the progress of the motherland, it is patriots' responsibility to struggle against such institutions. Patriotism in modern China's foreign policy is manifested in anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism while striving for national independence. Domestically, it is to fight against feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism to achieve the liberation of the people."⁵³ Accordingly, domestic events that occurred from the mid-19th century to WWII, the period of Qing's decline followed by internal power competition among parties with and without clear ideas of modern governing institutions (regionalism in the late Qing and the warlord period), are understood to be nationalist.

Rebellion as the result of imperial decline, part of a regular pattern of dynastic cycle, having more to do with local deprived conditions and inability of dynastic reign, nonetheless is interpreted as patriotism. As the official logic goes, the Hundred-Day Reform of 1898 that attempted to modify Qing's political system with no success also reflects the effort to save the country and people. It is doubtful that rebels had a clear idea of the nation-state. How far beyond saving the throne the dynastic reform was meant to go also challenges the interpretation. Last but not least, Beijing misuses "feudalism" that had long ceased before Qing to describe imperial socio-political institutions which in the CCP's view the rebellions and reforms were targeted against.

⁵³Ministry of Education, 2009.

The relaxed definition of patriotism and categorization of events into “isms” serve a larger purpose of highlighting the progressiveness of Chinese socialism under communist leadership and also affirming Maoist thought which survives the 1981 resolution⁵⁴ and remains guiding principles for the CCP. After recounting a series of failed endeavors, the argument then goes that the turning point for patriotism to take on a form of making the country great again is the adoption of Chinese socialism. The narratives interweave the choice of the people and the Party’s efforts to defend socialism under the CCP’s leadership as the only path to national rejuvenation. But, they mostly are to justify Beijing’s governance and to propagate the idea that patriotism should be exclusively identified with love for socialism defined by the Party. This is also proved by increasing assertion, as chapter 4 demonstrates, that Chinese socialism is better than western institutions. “Patriotism is to love socialist motherland and to embrace the communist party’s leadership.” Beijing makes no pretense of hiding the demand of political loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party and its ideological banner.⁵⁵

The Chinese nation, Chinese culture, territorial boundaries, Chinese civilization, and patriotism have close associations. Through the PRC’s reconstructing of history, they seem to gain temporal immortality. Discursive emphasis on the unified diverse lands under centralized government in the past makes the communist rule over the vast territory a continuous normality. The key element in sustaining this imagined community is the experience of western aggression. The created memory of ancient greatness contrasts sharply with officially exaggerated humiliation in the beginning of the modern era. This comparison provides the impetus to move

⁵⁴ The resolution concludes the Maoist period. While recognizing mistakes Mao had made, it generally reaffirms his contribution to the Chinese revolution. See chapter 2 for detailed discussion.

⁵⁵ for the absolute loyalty to socialism defined by the CCP and to the communist leadership, see chapter 2 in this research and discursive evidence in chapter 4.

the country forward to a revived glory in the future. And Beijing's blueprint for this goal is the demand of loyalty to "socialism with Chinese characteristics" crafted by the CCP. The discursive logic described above underlines Xi Jinping's speech at the closing of the Party's 19th National Congress in October 2017:

"The establishment of the People's Republic of China has been 68 years. Reforms and Opening has entered the 39th year. Our Party has led the Chinese people and the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*) out of miserable poverty and weaknesses, and thoroughly changed wretched conditions of the Old China since the Opium War. Today, more than 1.3 billion Chinese people are high-spirited and walk with pride. Our 9.6 million square-kilometers motherland is vibrant and vigorous. Our five-thousands-years Chinese culture is splendid and forever charming. Chinese people and Chinese nation has a promising future.....We have full confidence and meanwhile feel heavy shoulders.....The Chinese communists take rejuvenation of the Chinese nation to their hearts and.....will stride toward the grand objective of national revival with persistent and unprecedented efforts."⁵⁶

From Domestic to International Politics

The PRC also brands this imagined community with the permanent quality of non-conflictual propensity. Harmony, inclusiveness, and peace are concepts taken from Confucianism and Taoism to describe the nature and/or the pursuit of China and the Chinese nation for more than two millenniums. The stress on the culture of non-confrontation aims to serve a larger purpose of persuading other countries of the peaceful benefits of Beijing's outward

⁵⁶ See "Xi Jinping Gave a Speech at the Closing of the 19th Party Congress" [中国共产党第十九次全国代表大会在京闭幕 习近平主持大会并发表重要讲话], Oct. 24, 2017, <http://www.gov.cn/zhuanti/2017-10/24/content_5234120.htm>.

expansion. There is a growing trend in official rhetoric and academic writings by Chinese scholars to emphasize or infer the cooperativeness and inclusiveness of Beijing's external behavior and governance from the perspective of C-T ideology. In other words, the lines between internal and external affairs are blurred when the PRC stresses that non-conflict and common interests govern its state and foreign policies. It is rationalizing its behavior according to the same logic.

Domestic governing plans frequently contain Confucian phrases. Since 1996, *Xiaokang* or *xiaokang* society (小康社会), meaning a “moderately prosperous society”, has appeared either as a current developmental situation or a nationwide goal in the documents of the Party's Central Committee, the Party's National Congress, and the National People's Congress. The phrase continues beyond Jiang Zemin's era into Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. In an attempt to cope with mounting domestic problems and demands, a 2006 “Resolutions” declares the goal of constructing a “harmonious society” (和谐社会).⁵⁷ Underpinning the domestic blueprint is the emphasis that the upholding of the Party's leadership in all undertakings is the key to national success. Beijing's diplomacy similarly suggests that the CCP at the helm of China can be a modern undertaker of the Confucian mission in creating a peaceful world.

In a 2006 *Qiushi* article about China's international influence, penned by the head of China Institute of International Studies, a research institute of PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the author wrote: “Historically, the Chinese nation has been peace-loving and the Chinese culture consistently pursues peace. Desire for peace and the pursuit of harmony have always been the

⁵⁷ The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, “Resolutions of the CPC Central Committee on Major Issues Regarding the Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society” [中共中央关于构建社会主义和谐社会若干重大问题的决定], Oct. 11, 2006, <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64569/72347/6347991.html>>.

spirit of the Chinese people.” The non-violent tendency is argued to be evident in traditional philosophies. “Dialectically treating relations between people and society and between human beings and nature, and fully respecting ethics and lives are the fine thought of Chinese civilization.”⁵⁸ The article does not explicitly mention Confucianism, but it is no doubt the source of the relations and ethics in the text. The author continues to state that the fine thought “provides important inspirations for solving many issues in today’s world.”

The applicability of ancient philosophical wisdom to international affairs stated here is not randomly opined by the author. Hu Jintao’s 2005 UN speech that stressed building a peaceful and harmonious world is mentioned in the article and praised as a combination of Chinese traditional ideals and current development trends. Beijing’s adoption of phrases echoing Chinese philosophies seems to start from Hu’s first term. After his UN speech, analysis of related concepts in relations to traditional thought obtains growing space in official writings.

If the Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao administrations mostly utilized Confucianism for domestic purposes, then Xi Jinping’s period expands the scope of its function by associating the philosophy with international affairs. Xi’s 2014 speech at an international conference commemorating the 2656th anniversary of Confucius’ birth reflects similar logic to that laid out in the *Qiushi* article, but expands more in depth. According to Xi, the fundamental contributing factors to the pacific tendency of the country are the inclusiveness of Confucianism, its peaceful co-existence with other schools of thought in Chinese history, and the idea of “the world as one shared community with great unity” (天下为公、大同世界). Xi then applied domestic Chinese inclusiveness to the world affairs by emphasizing the principle of harmony with diversity, as he

⁵⁸ Ma Zhengan [马振岗] “Understand China’s International Influence with Rationality” [理性看待中国的国际影响力 求是], *Qiushi*, issue 5, 2006.

states: “Differences between the civilization of one’s own country and that of others should be handled rationally, with the awareness that every civilization is unique. We must seek common ground while reserving differences.....Don’t feel displeased or try to transform, assimilate or even replace other civilization when they are different from your own.” Regarding how the philosophy is relevant to governance, he continued that “some people of insight believe that the fine traditional culture of China, Confucianism included, contains important inspirations for solving the troubles facing us today.”⁵⁹ Accordingly, Confucian values hold the keys to the solutions of poverty and war because of their tolerance toward differences and altruistic motive to make the world a better place. The following year at the U.N., Xi Jinping noted that many of U.N. principles have not come true including justice, development, and peace, and cited a Confucian adage, “the greatest ideal is to create a world truly shared by all” (大道之行 天下为公) as the goal for global governance. He then proposed several guidelines for global issues and called for joint effort to realize a world that respects differences and enjoys co-prosperity.⁶⁰ Non-exclusion that is said to be practice in domestic affairs, according to Beijing’s narratives, also applies to the way that the PRC claims to follow in its foreign policies. China is providing an international version of imagined community and recommending itself as a preferred leader.

⁵⁹ Xi Jinping, “Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the International Conference in Commemoration of the 2,565th Anniversary of Confucius’ Birth and the fifth Congress of the International Confucian Association” (在纪念孔子诞辰2565周年国际学术研讨会上的讲话), Sept. 24, 2014

<<http://library.chinausfocus.com/article-1534.html>>. Chinese version access,

<http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-09/24/c_1112612018.htm>.

⁶⁰ Xi’s UN speech, see “Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind,” Sept. 28, 2015

<https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/70/70_ZH_en.pdf>; Chinese version, see Xinhua, [习近平在第七十届联合国大会一般性辩论时的讲话], <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-09/29/c_1116703645.htm>.

Xi's understanding of Confucianism which tolerates diversity does not fit historical realities that the Chinese elites looked down upon other cultures. The PRC re-interprets the political philosophy for its contemporary needs. Xi's emphasis on the coexistence of diversity without attempts of subjecting one to another originates in China's refutation of the democracy and human rights which it accuses the US of trying to impose on China in its own image. Chinese scholars will not concur with Xi's interpretations, however, despite their association of Confucianism with inclusiveness. Scholarly understanding, in presenting Confucianism as it is, draws an unfortunate conclusion of civilizing mission which the author of the article to be discussed may or may not realize.

In a 2015 English article, "Confucian Foreign Policy Traditions in Chinese History", published by *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* staffed with renowned Chinese and American scholars on the editorial board, Feng Zhang's argument reveals that inclusiveness in Confucianism is a synonym of cultural homogeneity.⁶¹ He differentiates Confucian exclusiveness affiliated with neo-Confucianism from Confucian inclusiveness in Classical Confucianism. Contrary to the exclusion thought which rejects the innate ability of barbarians to be transformed for the better, the inclusiveness school proposed that non-Chinese *can* become Chinese through cultural assimilation, specifically through "education and transformation" (教化) of barbarians. Zhang argues that as China's strength grows, there is higher likelihood of Confucian inclusiveness. Two paragraphs of his prove such. "Song neo-Confucians were extremely reluctant to acknowledge the transformative potential of the *yi* (barbarians). Furthermore, given the equality and even superiority the semi-nomadic regimes of the Liao and

⁶¹ Zhang, Feng. "Confucian Foreign Policy Traditions in Chinese History." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2015, pp. 197-218 (for quotations, see pp. 206, 207-209).

Jin were able to maintain vis-a`-vis the Song, they could not but recognize the difficulty of such transformation.” Another short paragraph goes, “Yet it was when the Mongols turned defiant and started raiding Ming frontiers that the emperors began to describe them as heartless beasts that must be punished. Thus, the early Ming also exhibited its particular cultural exclusivism. It, however, was never pronounced or enduring, *because Chinese strength enabled the emperors to launch successful military expeditions against the Mongols.....This is why Chinese material strength is an enhancing condition of inclusivism* (emphasis added).” This indicates that, to achieve Confucian inclusiveness, it is acceptable to use coercive measures to ensure compliance. The last section of this article is the suggestion for China’s current foreign policies with some key points from one of Xi Jinping’s speeches that borrows Confucian concepts of moral values. Judging from the overall context, the article implies that having foreigners become Chinese by enculturing them with Confucian values as the country’s national strength grows--and it indeed has become more capable than before—is recommended as the pathway for Beijing’s foreign policy.

Zhang’s argument amounts to cultural hegemony and favors cultural homogeneity. Although he praises non-existence of the Self-Other dichotomy in the inclusive conception of Confucianism (since others can be assimilated and become culturally Chinese as well), his argument remains sino-centric for the identity of the Other spins around “the Chinese” and depends upon whether it accepts Chinese view. When Zhang states that the idea that the Chinese are “more culturally advanced and trustworthy” is outdated,⁶² his emphasis on Confucian moralities such as humanness, mutual benefits, and trust as the pathway to harmonious foreign relations ironically retains the idea of sino-culture superiority, because these moralities function

⁶² Ibid., p. 212.

within Confucian cultural bounds. In other words, the requirement for this harmonious world to work is that others act in China's cultural terms or behave in a way that China interprets to its liking while others may attach different meanings. While Zhang tries to downplay the possibility of sino-centrism as a factor in informing Beijing's policies today and recognizes the self-rationalization of the court officials, it does not lessen the fact that the superiority of the Chinese culture governs the idea of Confucian inclusiveness. In fact, Zhang's writings contain an irreconcilable contradiction. The main bodies of his arguments contend that cultural superiority and utilitarianism underpin the Confucian world order but the conclusions evade these upholding columns of a Confucian community and simply stress a non-utilitarian idealistic vision.

Both official and scholarly interpretations of Confucian inclusiveness are equally problematic. The official version is not faithful to history as the elite often despised non-Chinese cultures; respect for diversity was lacking. Whether "barbarians" can be converted to Chinese in the Confucian literature during different dynastic periods is beside the point because the fundamental logic does not change; the Chinese way of doing things reigns above others. Benevolence, morality, and peace are present only when one acts according to Chinese terms.

Is History the Present and the Future?

The CCP has been building its modern version of Chinese uniqueness as shown in "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" blended with revived Chinese traditions and sinicized Marxism. It is as systemic as the Confucian ideology employed by the imperial court and similarly carries fundamental characteristics of Chinese political culture such as authoritarianism and the appeal to morality. As with imperial ideology, the theory appeals to domestic and international audiences that acceptance of the Chinese way promises benefits. The dynastic

world order however differs from Beijing's contemporary version as the modern economic mode and nation-state system add complications.

Industrialized China has a broader worldview in terms of space to which it can project influence than agricultural dynasties in which mobility of sedentary population is limited and security concerns mostly come from immediate neighbors. Beijing's demands for overseas markets and resources depart from imperial practice. Agrarian China proper attracted pastoral nomads and semi-nomads for its material wealth and to varying degrees sedentary Koreans and Japanese for its cultural inheritance. China was self-contained and, in some cases, others came. Now it has to rely on other countries as well in the quest for natural resources and in solving problems of domestic over-production and unemployment. Therefore, China's national interests in the era of globalization have extended to different parts of the world where activities sanctioned by the imperial court were rare. Economic interests thus play a weighted role in advocating for a Chinese order and providing additional reasons such as protecting commerce by building a blue-water navy. This differs from the imperial pattern that a Chinese order was mainly based on a relatively self-sufficient base.

Beijing's developmental needs coupled with the nation-state system complicate presentation and rationalization of a Chinese world order. The PRC is by no means a power on par with the US and not even a regional hegemon, but its official discourse speaks as if it is, especially in the sense that it will bring public goods of prosperity to the world. Blatant claims of sanction from Heaven and wordings directly conveying hierarchical relationships in addressing foreign states are absent in contemporary writings. They are replaced by professions of equality and mutual respect for sovereignty. As the chapter 4 about Chinese worldview will show, contemporary narratives make salient equity rhetoric but the idea of China taking a

regional/global leadership is not difficult to discern. The discursive presentation of hierarchy heavily shrouded with idealism to some extent parallels the hypocrisy of the modern state system in which it is said that each country enjoys sovereign equality, but it is not difficult to observe the governing position of material capabilities in the modern-day international hierarchy. China's idealist proposals remain instrumental to the end it desires.

The intersection of the imperial legacy of sino-centrism, nationalism and the contemporary nation-state system, and shifts in the mode of economy necessary to make a given country more powerful than others creates an interesting phenomenon that unlike the confident reaffirmation of resurrection of Chinese civilizational superiority over “the barbarians” in the aftermath of Ming's overthrow of Mongol Yuan,⁶³ the PRC has been working for decades for a revived national glory, intermittently in the form of economic nationalism. Mao's version of Marxism-Leninism intending to surpass all other advanced economies, including the USSR, the U.S. and Britain, proved a fiasco after the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) created famine on a large scale. The World Development Indicators (WDI) records -27.27 percent and -5.58 percent for annual growth rate in 1961 and 1962 respectively. Not until Deng Xiaoping's reforms and opening was China able to develop for a longer run. According to WDI, the average growth rate per year from 1980 to 2018 is 9.46 percent.⁶⁴ The association between nationalism and Beijing's material capabilities thus has increasingly gained momentum since the 1990s and become inseparable synonyms in the early twenty-first century, in comparison to Mao's era.

⁶³ Wang Gungwu, “Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background Essay” in John King Fairbank, ed. *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 34-62. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674333482>.

⁶⁴ World Development Indicators, World Bank, data last updated July 10, 2019. <<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>>.

Such nationalism in the two different periods is not merely for a country to return to its own “normalcy”, but also to demonstrate to the world that the Chinese state which used to be humiliated by western powers and Japan now is more powerful than or as powerful as they are, and that the Chinese system is superior to capitalist democracy and Moscow’s deviant socialism. Reaffirmation of self-worth requires comparison to an othered inferior party. Imperial Confucian scholar-officials wrote that because of the lack of virtue (*te*) and sole reliance on the use of force, the Mongols eventually lost the territory to Ming and retreated to the northern steppe.⁶⁵ Ming’s civilizational superiority has its modern-day analogy. As the analysis of the narratives in later chapters will show, underlying Beijing’s pursuit of economic growth is the motive to reclaim institutional and material superiority over the countries, especially the U.S., that have loomed large as threats in its modern national discourse.

In the dynastic history, it is believed that there was barely a rival to Chinese civilization. Chinese institutions and bureaucracies were exported to neighboring countries, especially the Korean Peninsula. The legitimacy of Son of Heaven claimed by the imperial house may not have been accepted by tribal groups from the north and northeast, but Mongols and Manchus used it to their advantage when they ruled the China proper. On the contrary, in the contemporary era, the U.S. poses great challenges to the PRC in material strength and in governing values. More specifically, the CCP may fear Western-inspired and orchestrated subversion in the form of “peaceful evolution.” This is self-evident in the CCP discourse that often criticizes the western system of democracy and human rights and long featured “American aggressive hegemonism”, while defending Chinese socialism and increasingly positioning it as an alternative. In the PRC’s narratives, western institutions are the root cause of international conflict whereas the inherent

⁶⁵ Wang Gungwu, 2013, pp. 34-35.

inclusiveness of Chinese socialism guides China's foreign policy toward peace. As chapter 4 demonstrates, the relationship between Chinese socialism and world peace is more about the restraints that socialism puts on the PRC, preventing it from aggression, and about the good impact brought by the innate good nature of China. It is less about creating peace by cloning Chinese institutions to other countries as Stalin installed the soviet regimes in Eastern Europe.

Unlike ancient times when whoever occupied the entire China proper could claim to be a regional hegemon, other powerful actors, especially the U.S., now complicate Beijing's aspirations. The Indo-Pacific where the PRC has become active economically and militarily is by no means a power vacuum for an easy fit-in. The countries on the Pacific Rim such as Japan and Taiwan have long had uneasy relations with Beijing. Australia has publicly voiced alarms about China's military development in 2009 if not earlier. India does not sit idle when the sailing of Chinese navy grows frequent in the Indian Ocean and Beijing's political and economic clout reaches deeply into South Asian states that traditionally have belonged to the Indian sphere of influence. In addition, China has to deal with the continuing presence of American power.

China attempts to and is expanding outward through routes that are either hostile to the country, or have diverse populations, or traditionally fall into other major powers' spheres of influence. In other words, residing hegemons do not deter Beijing from probing their bottom lines and building up its influence. The outward expansion is driven by domestic needs of economic growth, pursuit of international influence and prestige, and the desire to have the western Pacific and possibly the Indian Ocean as well cleared of other powers when China intentionally shapes and preserves a vivid memory of aggression from the sea. The mixed motives of ambition and insecurity coupled with the Chinese ultra-conviction of righteousness in claiming contested territorial interests and the sanction of Marxist materialism sweetened with

revised Confucian-Taoist (C-T) ideology of a world community set in motion the train of making a modern version of Chinese world order. The realities will certainly complicate China's design, but if that design is rooted in widely held beliefs, there is reason to expect that China is willing to challenge the (global) status quo.

Chapter 2

Cultural Subjectivism

Chinese newspapers, military writings, speeches, and publicly available texts in other forms have frequently evoked the image of Zheng He's naval expeditions in the 15th century that cruised from Southeast Asia to the Red Sea and Eastern Africa when celebrating the growing close ties between the PRC and the countries along the route. The script reads the same: the West enslaved and colonized Africa while Ming China did not, and the PRC inherits the good traditions of Zheng He's voyages in that the Sino-African cooperation is built on friendship and goodwill. The narratives built upon the myth are not intended to be rhetorical.

Among China's networks of infrastructure in Africa is the 300-mile long Standard Gauge Railway that links Kenya's capital city, Nairobi to the coastal city of Mombasa. The construction took about three and half a years before the service was launched in 2017. As with many other projects on the continent and elsewhere in the world, it was constructed by China (in this case China Road and Bridge Corporation) with imported materials from that country and financed by Export-Import Bank of China. According to the information available at the time of writing, the PRC also operates the railroad and reportedly will hand operation over to Kenyans after personnel training is completed.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Jevans Nyabiage, "Kenya's Chinese-built Railway is a hit with travelers, but is this safari line a massive white elephant?" *South China Morning Post*, July 23, 2019, <<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3019603/kenyas-chinese-built-railway-hit-travellers-safari-line>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019; Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, "'Kenyans Fear Chinese Backed Railway is Another 'Lunatic Express,'" *New York Times*, June 8, 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/08/world/africa/kenyans-fear-chinese-backed-railway-is-another-lunatic-express.html>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019; "Kenya opens Nairobi-Mombasa Madaraka Express railway," *BBC*, May 31, 2017 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-40092600>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

Aside from physical presence, the Chinese also decided to leave their cultural mark. At Mombasa terminal is a statue of Zheng He with a plaque stating: “Zheng’s fleet paid four visits to Mombasa, enhancing mutual understanding between China and Kenya, and strengthening Kenya-China friendly exchanges.”⁶⁷ An article published in the Chinese version of *the People’s Daily* praises Zheng He for the seeds of friendship, and the railway as the symbol of the revived prosperous trade and exchanges of the old Silk Road.⁶⁸

The Standard Gauge Railway serves a larger purpose for the Chinese by bridging Mombasa and, via other planned rail lines, connecting to inland countries to the west, northeast and east of Kenya (such as Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo).⁶⁹ The PRC already invests in Mombasa port, one of dozens of PRC-sponsored African ports with commercial and/or possibly military value.⁷⁰ Tanzania and Senegal are other coastal states, east and west respectively, where China invests in infrastructure to streamline transportation from inland states to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.⁷¹

Aside from being one of the focused countries in China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Kenya also becomes the center of the PRC’s soft power in Africa. Since 2005, the country has hosted four Confucius Institutes, one Broadcast Confucius classroom, and several Chinese classrooms. In addition, the capital Nairobi is home for the headquarters of Chinese media on the continent,

⁶⁷ Jevans Nyabiage, “Kenya’s Chinese-built Railway is a hit with travelers, but is this safari line a massive white elephant?” *South China Morning Post*, July 23, 2019, <<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3019603/kenyas-chinese-built-railway-hit-travellers-safari-line>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

⁶⁸ *People’s Daily*, May 30, 2018 <http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-05/30/nw.D110000renmrb_20180530_1-03.htm>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

⁶⁹ “Kenya opens Nairobi-Mombasa Madaraka Express railway,” *BBC*, May 31, 2017 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-40092600>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

⁷⁰ Judd Devermont, Catherin Chiang, and Amelia Cheatham, “Assessing the Risk of Chinese Investment in Sub-Saharan African Ports,” *CSIS*, June 4, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/assessing-risks-chinese-investments-sub-saharan-african-ports> accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, map link: https://www.merics.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/MERICS_Silk_Road_v8.jpg

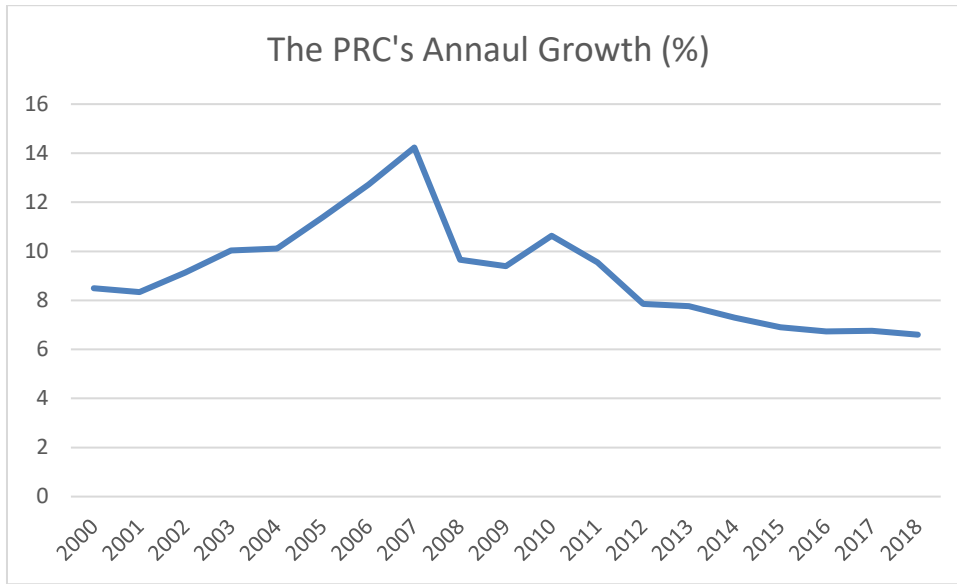
including China Central Television, Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International, and China Daily.⁷²

The PRC's approaches to individual countries vary but on the aggregate level are strategically comprehensive, ranging from economic and military to diplomatic and cultural. All of these are tied into the objective of so-called "national revival." The globetrotting is made possible by the possession of material strength that reaches to a certain level and propelled by the expectation of more gains to come. The slogan of "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" has not always seen economic growth upward since its debut under Jiang Zemin. The Chinese economy already reached its height in 2007 when annual GDP growth rated 14.23%. By using ten years as a measuring unit, the average growth rate from 2010 to 2018 is 7.79%, compared to 10.35% from 2000 to 2009, and even lower than the decade of 1990s. From 2010 to 2018, there was a decline in growth from 10.63% to 6.6% (see graph 2.0).⁷³ "Chinese Dream", the latest term embodying the slogan, took its form in 2013 during the economic downswing and continues to be propagated in state-controlled media. As chapter 4 shows, Chinese narratives become more articulated regarding how the PRC intends to reshape international order from 2012 onward, except for 2013. It was during the economic downturn that Belt and Road and supporting AIIB were proposed. The coupling of discursive confidence and policy initiatives may signal the determination and the belief that foreign markets and resources may provide opportunities for further economic growth or at least sustain a certain level of material capabilities.

⁷² Embassy of the PRC in Kenya, "Chinese Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Amb. Sun Baohong's Article Themed 'Build on the Progress and Make Joint Efforts to Open up a More Prosperous China-Kenya Cooperation' Published on The Nation Newspaper," December 14, 2018, <<http://ke.china-embassy.org/eng/xw/t1621982.htm>>, accessed Oct. 5, 2019.

⁷³ Graph created by author with data coming from World Development Indicators, World Bank, accessed August 9, 2019.

Graph 2.0



Overseas construction projects in Africa and elsewhere in the world benefit China in various ways. They provide employment opportunities for the Chinese and mitigate the problem of overproduction in steel. The PRC is using the global market to support its industries that otherwise might not exist because of limited domestic demand. In addition, China also expects to gain from repayment of loans with interest or in forms of other assets if default occurs.

Despite economic downturn, the PRC may still have enough material foundation by possessing access to international markets and resources for the foreseeable future to support cultural programs, finance military and technological development, and to build reputation and fame. Regarding the last item, trains, railways, ports and buildings constructed and sponsored by China are materials for propagating the greatness and generosity of the Chinese nation in helping the developing states. Visits by the PLA Naval escort fleet and hospital ship also serve the narratives of Chinese altruism and peace. Zheng He in statue and in text at the Mombasa train station symbolizes these messages. The evocation of the admiral's image mythologizes the

nature of bilateral interactions and rationalizes the PRC's pursuit of tangible and intangible self-interests.

The Nairobi-Mombasa Railway is one among a great many investment projects that the PRC has in Africa. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established in 2000 and has since held several conferences and summits to facilitate economic, cultural and political ties. The latest one was in 2018. Xi's speech (in English version) at the opening ceremony in Beijing provides an example of China's diplomatic narratives that are grounded in high idealism. It also showcases how the PRC constructs relations between itself and others.⁷⁴ The speech first focuses on the amicable and cooperative China-Africa relations by identifying their commonalities in the past and what they have in the future. "[W]ith similar fate in the past and a common mission, China and Africa have extended sympathy to and helped each other throughout all the years. Together, we have embarked on a distinctive path of win-win cooperation." Beijing claims that it "values sincerity, friendship, and equality in pursuing cooperation" and states that China and Africa "have worked in unity and forging ahead." To detail the spring of Chinese "good faith" toward the continent, Xi continued, "We respect Africa, love Africa and support Africa. We follow a 'five-no' approach in our relations with Africa: no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of our will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with Africa." Xi proceeded to say that other non-African countries should also apply these principles in dealing with Africa.

⁷⁴ "Full text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech at opening ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit," *Xinhua*, Sept. 3, 2018, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/03/c_129946189.htm>.

While making China-Africa relations the primary focus of his speech, there is a third party in the background that Xi insinuated. Beijing has long perceived that western countries have intended to remold China in a way that will undermine the legitimacy of the CCP, hence the Party constructs narratives that reflect its own perception of how others have been treating it “unfairly” and how it wishes that others do not impose their own institutions on China (which the Party equates itself to). The first three “non-interferences” reflects the CCP’s perception that others have “interfered” in affairs that it claims to be internal. Meanwhile, there has been growing criticism toward the Chinese practice of development and business in the developing countries. Questions have been raised about neo-colonialism, loan traps, destruction of ecological environment, reinforcement of authoritarian rule and dislocation of population. China’s idealistic narratives can be seen as its responses to the criticism. To reassure that Beijing’s agenda will proceed unhampered, Xi accentuated that, “No one could undermine the great unity between the Chinese people and the African people” and “[n]o one could hold back the Chinese people or the African people as we march toward rejuvenation.”

To show the PRC’s selfless motivation toward the countries of the continent, Xi addressed them as “our African brothers” and emphasized, “China follows the principle of giving more and taking less, giving before taking and giving without asking for return. With open arms, we welcome African countries aboard the express train of China's development.”

“Shared” appears 15 times in the speech including the speech title, “common” 9 times, “friendship” 6 times and “cooperation,” 56 times. By speaking to the African audiences about the shared interests regardless of changing times, as aforementioned, “with similar fate in the past and a common mission,” Beijing’s purpose is to promote the Belt and Road Initiative as Xi expressed, “We need to see to it that the Belt and Road Initiative and the AU Agenda

2063[African Union Agenda 2063], the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development programs of African countries better complement each other.”

The speech depicts a better future that waits for China and Africa and the world in general, if certain security challenges are overcome. According to Xi, the world “is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century,” as there is a “surging trend toward multi-polarity, economic globalization.....accelerated transformation of the global governance system and international order, rapid rise of emerging markets and developing countries, and greater balance in global power configuration.” Beijing intends to deliver a message that the world is experiencing a phenomenon unprecedented in the past 100 years and this phenomenon in fact creates opportunities for many countries to develop. To make China’s Belt and Road proposal sound legitimate and serve common goods at this historical juncture, Xi said, “[t]o respond to the call of the times, China takes it its mission to make new and even greater contribution to mankind”; “[t]o respond to the call of the times, China is ready to jointly promote the Belt and Road Initiative with international partners.” These Chinese efforts are to be seen in the context of Xi’s criticism about the current running of international affairs. According to him, “[h]egemony and power politics persist; protectionism and unilateralism are mounting; war, conflicts, terrorism, famine and epidemics continue to plague us.” While no specific countries were named, as evidenced in the narratives of other texts as well, it is clear that the PRC perceives that the current international politics dominated by the US manifests hegemony and power politics. Protectionism and unilateralism are also used to describe Washington’s attitudes toward trade and global governance. To frame the PRC as a positive contributor, Xi stated, China will “stay committed to the vision of consultation, cooperation and benefit for all.....”

Beijing's role/identity depends on how it perceives its relations with others. Its role construction usually requires a party whose interests, from China's perspective, are in accord with the PRC's and another party who goes against its agendas. By creating a perception to the international audience that globalization and interdependence is the unprecedented trend of the time, Chinese narratives that stress a convergence between the PRC's policies/principles and what the world needs marginalize the role and influence of other major powers, such as the US, whose policies are not beneficial to the PRC. In other words, the narratives indicate that China and the developing countries are riding with the tide of the history whereas hegemonic Washington is doing what contradicts to the wishes of many.

Based on the altruism indicated by the narratives, the CCP posits itself as a better candidate to bring the world peace and prosperity as opposed to other major powers. In the attempt to shape power relations to its favor, instead of an outright statement that conveys superior-inferior relationships, China utilizes the rhetoric of "equality", "consultation," "unity" and "cooperation" to persuade others into believing that its overseas activities do not aim for subjugation. By stressing the trend of the time, it tries to convince the international audience that its global initiatives mean nothing but answering the wishes of the world.

The PRC's efforts in shaping itself as the natural leader of the time were already evidenced in an English news report of a joint statement that wrapped up a high-level meeting between the CCP and political parties from around the world. The four-day event was held after the 19th Party Congress in 2017 and the joint statement it produced was dubbed by the Chinese media as "the Beijing Initiative." The official Chinese media was trying to create an impression that the world has echoed China's various initiatives. According to the English version, more than 120 countries express in the joint statement that "[China's] Belt and Road Initiative serves the

interests of people of all countries and provides a platform for building a community with a shared future for mankind.” To realize such a community, the participants called on “countries to stay away from isolationism and exclusionism and support a multilateral trade system.” They further agreed that “a new form of international relations” that is, “mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation,” has to be erected to build such a community. The participants had a leader in mind as they “hailed the CPC’s historical contribution and expect China’s further navigating role.” The report also cited the president of the Senate of the Republic of Congo as saying, “China fulfills its duties efficiently, promotes unity, friendship and safety among people in the world and works for enabling everyone to benefit from development. The Belt and Road is one of the best examples.” A correlation between Beijing’s economic power and a world leading status is clearly indicated by foreigners’ views mediated through a Chinese reporter.⁷⁵ What is intriguing is the concerted opinion about what an international order should look like. By forming a perception of wide approval for Beijing’s position and policy, the narratives create a climate that there is nothing opposing China’s global activities. Such narratives aim to foster an expected bandwagon effect in that other countries will also believe in the beneficial outcomes of deepening engagements with the PRC.

To justify its outward expansion, Beijing framed its overseas policies as answers to the needs of the time and with the endorsements from foreign dignitaries. The narratives shape the dynamic of interaction in a way as if China’s ongoing ascendance to a central position is a natural outcome due to the demand of the time. Diplomatically, it shapes the relations between the PRC and other countries in a way as if these are not power relations; instead, revealed by the

⁷⁵ Zhang Yunbi, “Shared Future Concept Embraced,” *People’s Daily*, Dec. 04, 2017, <<http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/1204/c90000-9299937.html>>.

narratives, Beijing is selflessly doing the right thing at the right time and is willing to consult with others to find common ground. It claims to rely on a “democratic” way for global governance.⁷⁶ By the appeal to morality, the CCP criticizes others’ policies that go against its interests as selfish and in contradiction to the trend of the world. Regarding the source of China’s benevolence, the narratives trace it to the genetic goodness of the Chinese polity and the Chinese nation.⁷⁷ Such rationalization that attributes one’s deeds to the self’s permanent good nature is unfalsifiable.

China’s self-justification is characterized by ultra-defensiveness and unfalsifiable logic. It is informed by a Chinese worldview which defines the world, the relations between the self and others, and the issues and their solutions. In other words, Chinese rationalization is systematically built and is a manifestation of cultural subjectivism. Cultural subjectivism has its roots in Confucianism and Chinese Marxism, both of which show that China has the tradition of utilizing political philosophies-turned ideologies to endorse governance. Meanwhile, cultural subjectivism also carries its own characteristics corresponding to the changing times and China’s

⁷⁶ Many Chinese articles use the term “democratization of international relations” (国际关系民主化) or relevant expressions to describe that the PRC is committed to the democracy of international relations. For instance see, Zhang Zhijun [张志军], “China’s Peaceful Development and International Society” [中国的和平发展与国际社会], *Qiushi*, issue 6, 2006; Wang Yi [王毅], “The Year of A Comprehensive Promotion of Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics” [中国特色大国外交全面拓展之年], *Qiushi*, issue 1, 2016.

⁷⁷The quoted examples appear in English speeches and written interviews. See, Wang Yi, “Toward Peace and Development for All”, Sept 21, 2017, At the General Debate of The 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1496244.shtml> accessed Jan. 5, 2019; Xi Jinping, “Written Interview Given by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Major Media Agencies of Four Latin American and Caribbean Countries, July 15, 2014, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1185623.shtml> accessed Jan. 08, 2019; Liu Zengmin, “China Remains Committed to Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in the South China Sea through Negotiations and Consultations,” March 25, 2016, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1350776.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019. Narratives in Chinese version also contain genetic explanations. See, Chen Shuguang [陈曙光], “Understanding the Methodology of the ‘China Model’” [理解“中国模式”的方法论原则], *Qiushi*, issue 12, 2014; “Resolutely Adhering to Peaceful Development” [坚定不移走和平发展道路], *Qiushi*, issue 18, 2014.

contemporary needs. This chapter explains this term. It first lays down the basic definitions and analyzes the role of Confucianism in the current scholarship. The in-depth discussion of the two philosophies and comparison will then follow. The analysis presents how the two thought systems are institutionalized power relations and their combined use create another form of power relations.

Defining Cultural Subjectivism

This study uses cultural subjectivism to analyze how the PRC self-justifies peacetime overseas expansion from a critical perspective. It is an theory that explains how China rationalizes the power relations that it prefers. There are two questions to be addressed when tracing the theoretical origins to Confucianism and Chinese Marxism: why focus on the two philosophies and what are their similar and complementary attributes?

Culture in “cultural subjectivism” mainly refers to descriptive features, such as the attributes of rhetorical rationalization that this research focuses on. The study will rely on Confucianism-Taoism (C-T) and Marxism-Leninism (M-L) political philosophies-turned ideologies to explain the characteristics. Confucian ideology is usually associated with the tributary system and dominated in the pre-modern era when the concept of sovereignty was absent. M-L has lost its appeal among the Chinese populace after Mao’s disastrous rule. In this vein, their application in the late 20th century and beyond seems anachronistic. Two reasons however make the theoretical choices ideal. First, since 1990s, official rhetoric has increasingly relied on Confucian terms to appeal to the domestic population and to shape a positive image for the international audience. While no public Party documents use the word “Confucianism” as Marxism-Leninism still reigns to this day, Chinese leaders in public speeches and Chinese scholars in academic writings as demonstrated in chapter 1 have drawn on Confucianism to

expound the discourse of non-conflict and inclusive unity in a PRC-envisioned community. Detailed breakdown of narrative construction in later chapters will provide more evidence that both are alive and well in Beijing's narratives and the authority also tries to revive them in the public mind. Second, the way Beijing justifies its behavior reveals a holistic Chinese worldview. Such a worldview informs the understanding of the world, the power relationships between self and others, what the world should look like, techniques to deal with problems, and the methods and pathways toward the realization of an ideal world. These are systematically formulated in Marxism-Leninism and Confucianism. As the PRC simultaneously employs both ideologies, it is their combined use, instead of individual, that explains the systematic characteristics of Chinese rationalization. The issue now is what cultural attributes they can explain.

A theory consists of different propositions and assumptions that show individual cultural traits and altogether they point to something larger. For instance, both M-L and C-T assume the altruistic nature of the authority. Both propose that the authority has legitimate rights to exert violence for the sake of peace. Both also assume the feasibility of a utopian world and make it as an appeal to the public. When connecting three propositions together, the logic goes that the selfless authority as it knows best the interests of the masses and identifies its own with others' will lead people to a peaceful and prosperous world, and anyone who acts to impede the process will risk deserved punishment for disturbing peace. At the unit level, the cultural traits are authoritarianism, altruism and idealism as each proposition shows. At the aggregate macro level, China's strategic culture is unfalsifiable justification and ultra-defensiveness with the latter the evidence for the former, as reflected in the idea that violence for the sake of peace, from the authority's viewpoint, cannot be taken as non-peaceful and unjust. In other words, what the authority does is always right and violence does not violate the claim of its peaceful nature.

Since both “isms” reveal a central role of the self in the interaction with others, it is necessary to bring into discussion subjectivity. Using one’s perspective to rationalize the behavior of the self as being right and for the good of others is “subjectivism.” Subjectivism involves the process of altercasting and othering. Altercasting, according to Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, “is defined as projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one is in interaction, which is congruent with one’s own goals.”⁷⁸ It is about persuading other(s), by assigning them a role that from the self’s view may be reflective of their wishes and thinking, to act in a desired way so that one’s goal can be achieved. This process produces role congruence in which the other acts in accord with the interests of the self. In the othering process, the identity of the self is defined with reference to the existence of the Other and the self-worth is measured against the worth of the Other. This process produces opposing roles between the self and the other.⁷⁹ The subjectivity is reflected in the self-assumed cultural superiority. When the mentality of cultural superiority interacts with material capabilities, it produces different conditioned and rationalized behavior. There can be positive correlations between material strength and behavioral assertiveness.⁸⁰ However, when one is relatively weak, one still can justify concessions as granting benefit to others.

⁷⁸ Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, “Some dimensions of Altercasting,” *Sociometry*, vol. 26, no. 4, Dec. 1963, pp. 454-466.

⁷⁹ Both altercasting and othering are parts of role theory. For literature that applies role theory to Chinese foreign policies, see Sebastian Harnisch, Sebastian Bersick & Jörn-Carsten Gottwald, eds., *China’s International Roles: Challenging or Supporting International Order?* London and New York: Routledge, 2015. The book is a compilation of articles by various authors about the PRC’s foreign relations. My study differs from the book in content and in perspective. My research sees more efforts to coherently and systematically explain variations in Chinese behavior. Another difference is that my study analyzes how these behaviors are rationalized.

⁸⁰ Chinese behavior discussed here is not dichotomously differentiated along the line of use of force versus non-use of force or war versus non-war. It considers a wide range of behavior and thus behavioral assertiveness can refer to the non-use-of-force type of coercion.

At the unit level, M-L and C-T also differ in several ways. After all, C-T and M-L are the products of different times when different economic modes (agrarian and capitalist) govern the development on the subcontinent. Marxism explicitly sanctions materialism whereas C-T does not make it salient. C-T allows more behavioral options than M-L which primarily condones violence. While hierarchy is explicitly expressed in C-T, M-L uses the rhetoric of equity. Where they differ does not necessarily weaken either of the ideological appeals. Instead, they work complementarily in the Chinese narratives in the current international environment.

The two “isms” are characterized by self-justifying logic. Both also systematically define power relations and how they function. In this light, self-rationalization is a manifestation of political culture and this political culture is structural as it intends to institutionalize a preferred hierarchical interaction pattern. The way China justifies its overseas behavior has the intention to institutionalize the power relations that it prefers.

Literature Review and Critique

Table 2.0 presents a list of current literature using Confucianism to explain China’s foreign policies. Many more from history and political science/IR disciplines are excluded, because they either receive cursory mention or have little to do with foreign policies. In general, regardless of how Confucianism is defined, the current scholarship has found that China has a *parabellum* culture. Three out of four in the table have associated Confucianism with pacifism or pacifist tendency and describe it as a defensive strategic culture. Three of them aim to establish causal relations and demonstrate that strategic cultures in their hypotheses have support of empirical

evidence.⁸¹ This research does not challenge the idea that use of force is prevalent in China’s history. It however questions the definition of Confucianism and how it is applied.

Table 2.0

Author	does Confucianism sanction use of force?	peacetime behavior as dependent variable	use of force as dependent variable	strategic culture	Confucianism as a thought system for self-justification in both cases of non-use of force and use of force
Johnston	no	none	yes	defensive	none
Wang	yes but only as passive, defensive last resort; antimilitarism is dominant Confucian culture	none	yes	defensive	none
Feng	yes but only for “righteous reasons”	yes	yes	defensive and peaceful	none
Zhang	yes	none	none	Confucian pacifism is a myth	none

⁸¹ Feng draws the defensive self-image of Chinese leaders who opt for accommodation and cooperation during peacetime as evidence of Confucian defensiveness. Johnston and Wang conclude that Confucian defensiveness has little empirical support. In general, regardless of how Confucianism is defined, the current literature has found that China has a *parabellum* culture. Instead of having use of force as dependent variable, Zhang differentiates the types of Confucianism-informed bilateral relations between dynastic China and neighboring countries. He finds exit relations in the case of Mongols as they usually rejected Confucian world order, instrumental relations in the case of Japan because Confucian interactions were often based on interests calculi, and cultural affiliations in the case of Korea because the peninsula accepted Confucian order based on its cultural identification with the Chinese. Alastair I Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Wang Yuan-Kang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Feng Huiyun, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership and War*. New York: Routledge, 2007; Feng Zhang. “Confucian Foreign Policy Traditions in Chinese History.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8, no. 2, 2015, pp. 197-218.

Scholars have used C-M (Confucian-Mencian philosophy, C-T) as a theory to hypothesize an accommodation policy when the dependent variable is use of force regardless of whether they recognize that C-M does not exclude use of force. The hypothesis itself has issues of definition. This research argues that Confucianism is better understood as a continuum that covers the pre-war stage and the decision to use force. However, the primary function of the ideology lies in the pre-war phase even though it also sees use of force as a viable and legitimate solution. In other words, Confucianism is ideal for explanation of peacetime behavior and there are more options available under Confucian auspices aside from accommodation. The means provided by C-M is wide ranging, from non-use of force to use of force. Non-use of force does not equate to accommodation; conciliation is only one of the options in the category. Economic, political, and diplomatic means can be employed for coercion that does not need to involve military means. Even when military tools are utilized, it does not have to be use of force. Show of force is often designed to intimidate the opponent. These non-war and non-use of force venues are by no means compromising and peaceful. They are options falling into C-M theoretical parameters. So is the use of force and war. A country does not have to solely rely on the military to be offensive and assertive.

Another issue with the theoretical application of Confucianism in the current literature is the equation of the philosophical ideology to defensive strategic culture. The key point with Confucian strategic culture is not its being defensive or offensive, but rather the logical sequences of justification within the Confucian thought system, as the Mongol-Ming case shows below, creates the impression that Confucian decision makers are defensive. Ming's reasoning on non-force measures and use of force will demonstrate how the justification is framed to shape the image of Ming as a defensive actor acting on just grounds. In other words, Confucianism has

a built-in cultural bias. This bias is twofold. First, the narratives of this type, while used for rationalization, also reflect an ingrained belief among Chinese leaders that their actions are always for defensive purpose on the strategic level. In using defensive rhetoric, it can be difficult to distinguish between its cover (and utilitarian) purpose and a genuine belief in it. Second, to associate Confucianism with defensive strategic culture is to take the Chinese perspective. The research needs to go beyond understanding the Chinese view and take a critical analysis of it. In modeling the political philosophy into a theory/hypothesis of political science and IR fashion—considering the first part of the hypothesis: according to Confucian pacifist tendency, China will refrain from use of force—the current literature does not apply Confucianism according to its nature as a theory or thought system about self-justification.

The binary distinction between defensive and offensive may also become less important, given that the nature of means in each category, non-use of force and use of force, depends on the subjectivity of actors (see table 2.1). Coercive non-use of force solutions is offensive from the views of others but may be rationalized as defensive from the perspective of the coercion initiator. Similar logic applies to use of force; the parties involved may see each other’s moves as offensive while justifying theirs as defensive.

Table 2.1

	non-use of force options	use of force
offensive	v	v
defensive	v	v

Despite much emphasis on ethics, rituals and humanness to develop socio-political stability, in examining historical records carefully, Confucius himself did not see use of force as

a passive last resort. When disciple Tzu-lu asked his master who he would bring to wage war, Confucius replied that he needed people who were strategic minded and acting with discretion and he did not need those with bravery but strategically clueless.⁸² Upon knowing that Chen Heng murdered his prince, the Duke of Ch'i, Confucius recommended to his ruler, the Duke of Lu, to dispatch troops and punish Chen on the ground that the proper relations between a superior and a subordinate had been violated.⁸³ From the conversation between the Duke of Lu and Confucius, the pretext of restoring proprieties belies the realpolitik motive of elevating the status of Lu which had suffered internal weakness and not been a comparable rival of Ch'i. Confucius fasted three days and proceeded to petition Duke of Lu to send troops.⁸⁴ The Duke replied to Confucius that since Lu has been weakened by Chi', what did you propose to do? Confucius said: "there are one half of the people of Ch'i who do not agree with Chen Heng in his murder of his ruler. If with all the force of Lu we attack one half of that of Ch'i, we shall conquer it."⁸⁵ It is unlikely that Confucius was not aware of the relative strength between Lu and Ch'i, considering his attentiveness to state affairs and aspiration for a public position to implement his governing blueprint. In his calculation, since a substantial amount of people of Ch'i were displeased with Chen's treachery, they would concur with Lu's punishing expedition or at least not rise against it. In other words, Ch'i temporary weakness brought by Chen was an opportunity for Lu to shift balance of power to its favor. The use of force in this case is not passive. Neither

⁸² In *the Analects of Confucius*, Book VII. See, Arthur Waley, trans. *The Analects of Confucius*. New York: Random House, 1938, pp. 124-125.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Book XIV, p.186.

⁸⁴ *Tso Chuan* describes the ritual that Confucius had before petitioning to Duke of Lu as *qi* (齊), which some scholars translates into "fast." See *Tso Chuan*, the chapter of Duke of Ai, the text is on <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=xwomen/texts/chunqiu.xml&style=xwomen/xsl/dynaxml.xml&chunk.id=d2.18&toc.depth=1&toc.id=0&doc.lang=bilingual>. In *the Analects*, the ritual is recorded as taking a shower (沐浴), or wash head and limbs in Arthur Waley's translation, p. 186.

⁸⁵ In *Tso Chuan*, the chapter of Duke of Ai, the 14th year.

is it a last resort. It is a calculated move that fits the then domestic and international conditions as perceived by Confucius.

According to *A Table of Major Events in the Annals of Spring and Autumn*,⁸⁶ the version written by a Qing scholar official, Ku Tung-kao, the suggested expedition was a strategic move that would have brought Lu's reputation above others if the Duke of Lu had decisively given a greenlight to Confucius' petition. According to its reasoning, because Lu acted with a righteous cause of punishing thief Chen, neighboring princes and states would echo and bandwagon (倒戈) with it. If the troops had been sent, the state's awesomeness (*guo wei* 國威) would have been revived thereafter. In the paragraph describing the event, a word such as thief (賊) is used to name Chen Heng; verbs of punishing such as *tao* (討) and *zhu* (誅) are used to describe action initiated by Lu and its possible allies to punish Chen and his followers. These words denote the roles of Chen Heng and Lu, with the former committing grave immoral crimes and the latter righteously restoring the moral order.⁸⁷

The ethical norms seen in the classical texts serve a utilitarian purpose of changing the weak status of Lu. They were evoked when Confucius judged that the conditions were right for action; the hearts and minds of the people in Ch'i created a favorable trend that Lu could utilize

⁸⁶ In the Chinese political culture, spring and autumn usually mean war, conflict, vicissitudes of international politics. They reflect realism and are by no means light-mood descriptions of events or books of weather.

⁸⁷ *A Table of Major Events in the Annals of Spring and Autumn* (春秋大事表), Chapter 45. Original text: 孔子之志宜奈何曰魯之兵權在三子而三子之兵權在家臣觀陽貨弗擾且能以其衆畔而再求季路獨不可出其兵以仗義討賊乎孔子能使由求墮費墮郈而三子靡然聽從豈孔子當日奉魯君之命命家臣出其卒而三子敢或梗令乎誠得哀公一言聽許委夫子以兵權空魯國之甲使家臣將之此時子路雖仕衛而再有自在也加以樊遲有若皆勇銳之士移檄遠近聲罪致討吾知四鄰諸侯必有聞風響應而齊之甲士且倒戈來迎縱不能梟陳恒之首亦當誅當日之推刃于齊君者而更定齊嗣如此則國威可振周道可興夫豈空言而不可見諸實事者哉宋之儒者以力為諱而但執正誼不謀利之說謂事第當揆于義不論其力之能不能如此則書所謂同力度德孔子好謀而成非矣孔明之成敗利鈍非所逆睹蓋謂其謀出萬全至事之萬有一失則聽之天耳夫豈僥倖以嘗試者哉余向惡夫世之詆訾宋儒者至先生此論心竊疑其有未然故備論之 (the text is to be located on: <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=982481>).

and other states could not find moral faults with Lu as a pretext for invasion. What Confucius proposed was a military intervention that would shift the winning tide toward Lu in the international politics. He did so with a strategic initiative of seizing the window of opportunity. Idealistic rhetoric in the *Analects* conceals realpolitik incentives that *Tso Chuan* and *the Annals* do not hesitate to disclose. Although *the Analects* tends to keep precepts out of contexts, which creates the impression of Confucian idealism, a utilitarian explanation in line with the then strategic environment is validated by Confucius' words that he acts cautiously and strategically with war.

There is another angle to question the equation of Confucianism with defensive strategic culture and accommodating policies. Civilian and military leaders in different states have cooperative and bellicose propensities. One does not need to receive Confucian education to be peace-minded. This leads to the question of what it is that makes Confucianism so unique that it has to be brought in for discussion. It is the structured cultural perspective of the philosophy that matters. This research argues that Confucianism is more about self-justification in a systematized way that gives the impression of defensiveness which others may have doubts about but Confucian followers or subscribers may genuinely believe in,⁸⁸ and less about itself being peace and defensive-oriented in nature. In the context of this research, for the philosophy to be meaningfully employed, a similar question needs to be answered. What is it that makes Confucianism unique that the PRC's leaders have publicly used the term or borrow phrases to

⁸⁸ One example of Confucian subscribers is seen in Feng Huiyun's argument. In defending China as a country with peaceful strategic culture, she writes, "...my reading of China's history indicates that in over 2,000 years of feudal rule the feudal empires of China seldom displayed aggressive intentions toward other countries nor made any attempts at expansion despite the capability to do so." She continues to cite the Great Wall and scholarly works to show that there is consensus on the pacific and defensive tendency of China's strategic culture. While she admits that Confucianism allows use of force, she defends that it is on the righteous grounds. See Feng Huiyun, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership and War*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 26-27.

appeal to the public? It is the appeal of self-rationalization and its accompanying belief that China has been peace-loving and defensive, even though coercion is used. The PRC hopes to structurally frame the consciousness of the public in a way that supplied information will be processed in conformity with the desired result that it favors.

Confucianism is a theory that considers both the pre-use of force stage and the decision to use force. As the classic texts and historical records demonstrate below, the main function of Confucianism lies in the pre-use of force stage; therefore, this study argues that the theory should be applied where it belongs, to explain peacetime behavior. There is a paucity of academic endeavors to examine Confucianism as a thought system and to apply the theory to peacetime policies. Feng's study of non-wartime behavior is one limited effort and this contribution still follows the conventional wisdom of Confucian defensiveness. This research fills the gap. In forging a new theory of cultural subjectivism, Confucian ideology will lend the constitutive element of self-justification for peacetime policies.

Confucianism and Historical Experience

This section has several goals to achieve. First, it lays out the basic tenets of Confucianism and explains why it is an institution of power relations. Second, the historical examples will demonstrate how a Confucian world order functions at the pre-war phase.

The upholding tenet of the Confucian worldview is moralities-guided hierarchical human associations. Chapters 3 to 9 of the *Analects*, a collection of conversations between Confucius and his disciples,⁸⁹ are devoted to moral cultivation of individuals and relationships between individuals and between monarch and subjects. Each person plays multiple roles depending on whom they interact with. Children show filial piety toward parents. Father shows paternal love

⁸⁹ Arthur Waley, 1938.

toward son. Individuals' obligations toward each other are specified and reciprocal. One can be inferior to some in his networks but superior to others. The inter-personal relationships follow differentiated moral principles guided by a hierarchical order. A father treats his son differently from his wife. A son does not treat his siblings the same way as he treats his father. The elder is always respected and obeyed.

The running of imperial affairs does not depart from moralities-based human relationships.⁹⁰ The analogy applies to state and international levels. In the Confucian hierarchy, the emperor (the Son of Heaven) is the patriarch and people in and outside of the dynastic state are his family. His authority comes from the Mandate of Heaven. As emperors' brothers and children, people in the dynastic state (mostly referring to Han people) and ethnic tribal groups from the North and Northwest, and the southern states such as Vietnam had to express their submission. In return, the monarch provides his people with material abundance and cultural enrichment. The reciprocal behavior is differentiated according to the type of relationship between emperor and subjects. Within a dynasty, officials show loyalty toward monarch. Monarch has trust in officials. A neighboring tribal leader who was defined by emperor as his younger brother or a relative of a lower rank would have a different exchange from that between emperor and peasants.

With the basic tenets of human relations laid out, the question now is how the inter-personal network gets enforced. It depends on punishment and reward. In foreign relations, the emperor can declare war by the mandate of heaven to restore peace and order. When foreign envoys come to the court to pay tribute, the emperor showers gifts and answers the call for trade

⁹⁰ Xiaotong Fei. *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

as a reward for their submission. Accordingly, a Confucian order requires solid material foundation to show imperial generosity and to inflict pain. With behavioral codes specified and an enforcement mechanism in place, if everyone acts according to the dictates of their positions, peace and order can be obtained. In this light, Confucianism is an institutionalized form of power relations.

Since not all events undergo the continuous process of negotiation and war and many of them stop at the pre-use of force stage, in theory and in practice, Confucianism is better seen to be capable of explaining both the peacetime phase and the decision to use force, with a focus on the former. Specifically, Confucian superiority rationalizes both peacetime behavior and use of force. Mediated by material conditions, Confucian logic serves different instrumental purposes. When China was relatively strong or when there was power parity, it came up with various means to entice, intimidate and force others into accepting Chinese world order. The justifying logic of applied Confucianism embodies both role altercasting and othering. The following cases show a wide spectrum of means sanctioned by Confucianism. They also illustrate how the roles of the self and others are shaped.

The overthrow of the Yuan dynasty by the Chinese did not sound the death knell for the Mongols' activeness. Bilateral relations were characterized by unstable dynamics of trade, war, and tribute. The competition between Eastern Mongols who produced legitimist Khans and Western Mongols (Oirats) for hegemony on the steppe had disturbed Ming's frontiers. Mongolian refusal to recognize Ming's reign was another concern for the dynasty. In response, the Yongle emperor sent envoys to urge the nomads to settle their disputes on peaceful terms and pay tribute to Ming in exchange for trade on the frontier. In the emperor's words, "the Way of Heaven" is the peace brought about by Mongolian submission to Ming in return for titles, gifts

and trade. The emperor's love is "like the bright sun" but whoever does not obey will suffer the consequences.⁹¹

The Oirats paid tribute to the court and their leader, Mahmud, was granted the title of *Shun-ning Wang* (prince of obedience and peace). Bunyashiri Khan of the Eastern Mongols however killed the Chinese envoys. Seeing this as outright disobedience, Ming fortified the frontier, prepared for war and allied with the Oirats to counter the Eastern Mongols. After the defeat in the 1410 campaign led by the Yongle Emperor, Arughtai, one of the leaders of the Eastern Mongols, sent tributary horses to the court as an act of submission. While it seemed that calmness eventually came to the frontiers, the killing of Bunyashiri Khan by Mahmud in 1412 that proved to Ming the worth of alliance ironically led the Oirats to demand more from the dynasty, from goods such as gold, silk and weapons, to control over the Eastern Mongols. Mahmud's increasing assertiveness did not escape Chinese sensitivity to any slight toward imperial authority. Two years after Bunyashiri's death, in perceiving a growing threat from Mahmud, Yongle decided to ally with Arughtai to punish the Oirats.⁹²

The Ming emperor rationalized military action, echoed by the court ministers, on moral grounds: "I inherited the Mandate of Heaven to nurture and govern the Chinese and the non-Chinese alike, *only wish to ensure peace*.....having depended on our court for rest, [the Oirats] reassembled a horde and immediately became arrogant and wanton, betraying [my] moral excellence and failing [my] grace, violating trust and appropriateness.....*They have left me no choice but to lead the Six Armies to punish them* [emphasis added]."⁹³

⁹¹ See Feng Zhang's translation of Yongle's rescript. Feng Zhang, 2015, pp.130-131.

⁹² Sechin Jagchid & Van Jay Symons. *Peace, War, and Trade along the Great Wall*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 135-137; Zhang Feng, 2015, pp. 133-134; Thomas J. Barfield. *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989, pp. 236-37.

⁹³ Zhang Feng, p. 135, adapted from the quotation originally used and translated by Zhang.

While the Oirats suffered defeat, Arughtai grew ambitious and aimed to expand influence into parts Mongolia just as the Oirats tried to do before. Yongle himself led three punitive expeditions against Arughtai.⁹⁴ After one of them, the emperor stated: “I respectfully inherited the Mandate of Heaven to become emperor and rule the Chinese and non-Chinese alike.....with no other purpose but to let the lives and souls of the world have their proper places.....Pursued by the Oirats and unable to protect his wife, he led his tribe to come to submit. Considering his anxiety and loss of dependence. I especially treated him with favorable care, granting him noble titles and allowing him to return to his own land to live in peace and happiness. But this caitiff.....has become willful and arrogant, breach the [Way of] Heaven, betrayed [my] moral excellence, failed [my] grace, violated [my] orders.....For the purpose of ensuring security and protecting people, I led the Six Armies to punish him.”⁹⁵

Relations between Mongols and Ming demonstrates that China’s peacetime policies and decisions to use force as well as rationalizations were informed by Confucianism. Interactions with both Eastern and Western Mongols evolved from conferring titles and bestowing gifts to the use of force. Granting titles and bestowing gifts were part of Ming’s strategy to check either the Eastern Mongols or Western Mongols so that they would not ally with or be absorbed by the other in a way that posed a greater threat to Ming. However, these policies serving self-interests were rationalized as manifestations of imperial grace and generosity, with the language and logic couched in the Confucian rhetoric. The title of *Shun-ning Wang* granted to Mahmud symbolizes his obedience to the emperor as the word *Shun* (順) indicates, and the emperor’s grace toward him. So long as the hierarchical relations are maintained and everyone behaves according to their

⁹⁴ Sechin Jagchid & Van Jay Symons, 1989, p. 77; Zhang Feng, p. 136.

⁹⁵ Quotation directly comes from Zhang Feng, p.136, with deletion of original Chinese phrases and redundant sentences and words that convey the meaning repetitively.

positions, as *ning* (寧) denotes, peace will prevail “Under Heaven.” There is much expectation on the behavior of subjects defined by the Chinese that it must be moral faults of theirs, that is, the subjects’, when relationships cannot be sustained. When it comes to use of force, Yongle similarly relied on the Confucian logic of restoring peace in that Mongols were the ones at fault because they violated heavenly grace embodied in the emperor. Ming’s policies tried to establish power relations that it preferred through rewards and punishments under conditions that it saw fit.

The Mongols-Ming case also demonstrates that the altercasting and othering process was in place. Knowing the economic needs of the nomads, Ming projected upon them an identity of subservient Mongols obeying the imperial wish that the Mongols would not invade and stay where they were in exchange for trade and gifts from tribute. The underlying reasoning that supports this type of interaction is a Confucian family system where the emperor would take care of his Mongolian younger brothers and sons. Another example is the relationship between Yongle and Arughtai. Yongle himself altercasted a miserable role to Arughtai who in Yongle’s view was in a desperate situation to get help. Yongle’s words, quoted above, indicated that since the Ming emperor answered Arughtai’s call as, again following Confucian worldview, father answered the needs of his son, and Arughtai was provided for, he should have stayed where he was in accord with Ming emperor’s wish.

The evidence of an othering process lies in Ming’s justification of use of force. The emperor casted an opposite role to the Mongols, ungracious Mongols versus emperor’s generosity and kindness. In Ming’s logic, lack of role congruence between itself and Mongols would severely challenge its own superiority if no measure was taken to address this issue, and thus to bring about role congruence, it was justified to use force. Contrary to altercasting in

which role congruence exists and a complied role will reinforce the identity of the self, role opposition in the othering process indicates the possibilities that the authority of the self can be undermined.

Other examples in which the self-assumed superiority is translated into action include intimidation and compromise in Chinese terms in the relations between Han dynasty and Hsiung-nu. Hsiung-nu proved to be a substantial threat that the Han court repeatedly answered to its calls for intermarriage and opening of markets. However, when Emperor Wu (Wu-ti) succeeded to the throne, he decided to change the terms of interaction by showing the nomads who was stronger. War waged against Hsiung-nu, although forcing them eventually to propose intermarriage to sue for peace, damaged Han financially and militarily as well. *Shih Chi* records that Han lost hundreds of thousands of horses on the battlefield. At the moment when both sides were exhausted, in response to the intermarriage proposal, Han court suggested to Hsiung-nu that they become a foreign subordinate (*wai chen* 外臣) to Han before peace would be possible. The Hsiung-nu rejected this and took the Han envoy as a hostage.⁹⁶ When both sides were in power parity, Confucian superiority still was vividly seen. War lasted for about two decades intermittently. After Wu-ti conquered Minyue and Nanyue, he led 180 thousands strong army to show Hsiung-nu, now retreating to the north of Gobi desert, Han's military awesomeness. The envoy sent the message to the Shan-yü.⁹⁷ that "the head of Nanyue king is hanging above the northern gate of the Han imperial palace. The Son of Heaven is waiting at the frontier if you

⁹⁶ See *The Book of Han*, written by Pan Ku, a Han court official. <<https://ctext.org/han-shu/xiong-nu-zhuan/zh>>. Original text: 初，漢兩將大出圍單于，所殺虜八九萬，而漢士物故者亦萬數，漢馬死者十餘萬匹。匈奴雖病，遠去，而漢馬亦少，無以復往。單于用趙信計，遣使好辭請和親。天子下其議，或言和親，或言遂臣之。丞相長史任敞曰：「匈奴新困，宜使為外臣，朝請於邊。」漢使敞使於單于。單于聞敞計，大怒，留之不遣。先是漢亦有所降匈奴使者，單于亦輒留漢使相當。

⁹⁷ The Shan-yü is the leader of the Hsiung-nu confederacy.

desire a war. If you cannot fight, then turn to the south and bow to Han. Why do you flee to this bitterly cold place where there is no water and grass?" The envoy hoped to solicit submission from the Shan-yü through intimidation and to shatter his defiance by pointing out the miserable environment surrounding him. The Shan-yü was outraged and again took the envoy as hostage.⁹⁸

By showing (ostensible) sympathy to the Shan-yü's situation in which he and his people could not prosper in the barren land, Wu-ti altercasted a role to the Shan-yü in hope that the Hsiung-nu would come to submit. This type of "persuasion" however came with the coercive power of an army 180,000 strong. It is an example of "coercive persuasion" that displays the parallel of altercasting and an othering process in one maneuver. While Wu-ti's rhetoric showed an expectation of role congruence in which the Shan-yü would comply and thus reinforces Wu-ti's imperial authority, given that the previous hostile interactions, Wu-ti also alienated himself from the Shan-yü because military intimidation showed a dichotomous differentiation of roles between the heavenly sanctioned Wu-ti and the troublemaker the Shan-yü.

The above examples of interactions between Chinese regimes and non-Chinese political entities demonstrate Confucian rationalization across a wide range of behavioral variations. Cultural superiority was a relatively constant factor in the cases examined, although relative material strength might affect behavioral assertiveness. Whichever options Chinese regimes opted for, enticement, use of force, intimidation or compromise, the justifying logic highlights the superiority of the self even though relative strength was not in its favor.

⁹⁸ See *The Book of Han*. Original text: 是時，天子巡邊，親至朔方，勒兵十八萬騎以見武節，而使郭吉風告單于。既至匈奴，匈奴主客問所使，郭吉卑體好言曰：「吾見單于而口言。」單于見吉，吉曰：「南越王頭已懸於漢北闕下。今單于即能前與漢戰，天子自將兵待邊；即不能，亟南面而臣於漢。何但遠走，亡匿於幕北寒苦無水草之地為？」語卒，單于大怒，立斬主客見者，而留郭吉不歸，遷辱之北海上。

Marxism-Leninism

Sinicized Marxism-Leninism shares many features with Confucianism, in terms of a predilection toward authoritarianism, emphasis on altruistic motives, and a utopian vision of an egalitarian world where rulers and the ruled have common interests. Furthermore, as with Confucianism, it demonstrates another form of institutionalized power relations. While the two differ in the role of material strength, the differences work complementarily to justify China's foreign policy.

Lenin revised Marxism in several ways. For Karl Marx, communism will be obtained only when a state's development follows the stages of agriculture, industrialization, and advanced capitalism. Lenin, however, believed that with revolutionary enthusiasm, a state of communism can be reached within a much shorter time span, even though a country is still largely agrarian. Lenin internationalized this idea on a world scale. For him, the success of a communist revolution depends on the success of the world revolution. If only one country succeeded, the achievements may not last. It takes the revolutionary success in other countries to sustain the movement and to thoroughly eradicate the capitalist institutions so that the lingering capitalism will not chip away the already obtained success. Lenin's ultimate goal is a world revolution, corresponding to his view that capitalism is a world system. Stalin would again revise Lenin's view in that he made Russia the primary country in the world revolution whereas Lenin was open to any country that had better chances in making a start.⁹⁹ Sinicized Marxism-Leninism would then incorporate both Lenin's and Stalin's ideas, but during Mao's era it put forward the PRC as a leader in the socialist camp.

⁹⁹ Rob Sewell "Lenin and Internationalism," *In Defense of Marxism*, May 28, 2019, <<https://www.marxist.com/lenin-and-internationalism.htm>>.

The materialist view of M-L is characterized by class struggle rooted in unequal distribution of resources. The economic structure of capitalism empowers the bourgeoisie and weakens the leverage of the working class by reducing the latter's abilities to accumulate capital and to control the means of production. According to M-L, the productive forces released by modern industry will eventually grow to the extent that it incorporates an unprecedented large mass of population into the capitalist system. Although there are different classes within the mass, modern machinery effaces all distinctions; they (artisans, shop owners, and trade people) all become the proletariat. In the Marxist view, machinery, while increasing productivity, strips workers of freedom and individuality and reduces them to merely a tool for accumulation of capital that ultimately benefits a few, the bourgeoisie. The wages of laborers only reflect the cost of production rather than the value, skills and characters of men and women. Based on the assumption that hostility between the capitalist and the working class will grow irreconcilable, M-L predicts the eventual overthrow of capitalism and the erection of communism led by the working class.¹⁰⁰

In a Marxist-Leninist view, to avoid the historical pattern that the previously oppressed class becomes the oppressor in the new society, in other words, to break the cycle of power relations,¹⁰¹ the erection of a communist leadership representing the proletariat provides the remedy as they will unselfishly distribute resources to the proletariat. In order to transform a

¹⁰⁰ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", in *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2d ed. New York: Norton, 1978, pp. 469-500.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, first chapter, pp. 473-483. In the Marxist worldview, economic activities explain history and show a consistent pattern of exploitation. Productive forces change social relations and propel the revolution of society. For instance, when the feudal society with its economic and social capacity cannot accommodate more progressive productivity, it dissolves and gives way to new social structure. However, in each new society, previously oppressed class had become the new oppressor. Class antagonism prevails throughout history between the oppressed producers and the oppressors who appropriate products of collective labor disproportionately for private gains and enlargement of personal power in social relations.

society where only the capitalist class has privileges to a society where everyone has equal treatment socially, economically, and politically, it is necessary to undergo the process of “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” The “dictatorship of the proletariat” refers to a type of political system that centralizes the means of production in the hands of state, including credit, property, lands, factories, and means of communication and transport. According to Lenin, within the Party, decisions regarding allocation of resources will be made through “democratic centralism”, a political process that allows freedom in discussion within the party before conclusions are reached and requires absolute unity and conformity in action.¹⁰² The underlying logic behind the state control is to ensure an equal distribution of resources. The feasibility of this blueprint, however, is based on questionable assumptions: identical interests between ruler and the ruled and inherently good human nature.

The first assumption deals with the issue of representation. The proletariat here refers to all classes of the population that belong to wage labor. Hence, it represents a majority of the population and their interests on a scale which previous classes never did. As Marx and Engels wrote: “All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in

¹⁰² Lenin, “Report on the Unity Congress of the R.S.D.L.P: A Letter to the St. Petersburg Workers,” *Marxists.org*, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1906/rucong/viii.htm>>. In the letter, when Lenin mentioned “democratic centralism” and pushed for more discussions about the Party lines in the Russian Social-Democratic Party, he already had the agenda of promoting the Left wing by ideologically struggling out the Right wing. However, he framed his motives in a way that fit the communist cause and that can attract more “true revolutionaries”. Democratic centralism as ideal as it may sound is a tool for power struggle and authoritarianism. For more details, see the discussion of Mao’s Cultural Revolution in the final part of this section.

the interest of the immense majority.”¹⁰³ The second assumption speaks of the altruism of a communist party as the spokesman of the working class. Here, although Marx and Engels differed from Lenin regarding what a party is and how it works, they all assumed a selfless nature of the party. For the proletariat engaged in the revolutionary enterprise, Marx and Engels describe them as selfless because “they have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.”¹⁰⁴

As to how the proletariat can change the fundamental conditions that privilege one class at the others’ expense, Marx and Engels made no secret that to eradicate the exploiting institutions which support bourgeois production and property, revolutionary means (as opposed to conservative or incremental measures), mainly by “despotic inroads,” are necessary to change thoroughly the political, social, and economic orders.¹⁰⁵ They wrote: “The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation..... *The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air* (emphasis added).”¹⁰⁶

In practice, the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few inevitably entails authoritarianism in which the interests of the ruling class are first served. To make things worse, the leadership privileges which Lenin appropriated to communist parties so that the

¹⁰³ Ed. Robert C. Tucker, 1978, pp. 473-483. See the first chapter of the communist manifesto, “Bourgeois and Proletarians.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 482.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., see chapter 2, “Proletarians and Communists,” pp. 483-491.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 482.

communists have means to create public goods have become avenues for ideological radicalization and tools for legitimization of perennial rule.

Following the M-L logic is the first type of institutionalized power relations in terms of economic exploiter and exploited. Marxist structuralism in the International Politics field adopts this logic and applies it to unequal interactions between developed and developing countries. According to this school, the structure of global economy is set as such that developed states are privileged to control technological know-how and have greater access to resources and markets. In the world system, these states are core states with capital-intensive industries whereas developing countries are the periphery who are relegated to labor-intensive economy providing resources for and importing manufactured products from developed countries.¹⁰⁷ In the case of China, the empirical evidence proves that the first type does not have close relevance to the Chinese experience during Mao's period. As chapter 3 shows, Mao Zedong used the ideology in strategic terms in China's foreign policies. This does not mean that Mao simply used M-L for cover purposes and did not genuinely believe in it. Mao believed in it in a Chinese way through his re-interpretation, just like Lenin re-interpreted Marxism to suit Russian needs defined by him. As chapter 3 will demonstrate, although the gist of M-L is unequal distribution of power from an economic viewpoint, the Chinese version morphed it into international politics in which economy is a factor among others in the overall strategic calculations that aim to obtain national security and international status. When it comes to economy, the exploitation is more of a result of internal issues than foreign factors.

¹⁰⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979; Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy: Imperialism and Resistance", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2011, 14, pp. 213–246.

China under Mao's planned economy, ostensibly conducted in the name of egalitarian Marxism-Leninism, ironically was a highly exploitative development mode. The period from 1952 to 1978 saw an increasing savings rate. From 1970 to 1979, the rate climbed up to the range between 29.7% and 33.2%. This is either comparable or better than its East Asian neighbors who also had high savings. Most of savings went to the state, however. In 1978, state savings accounted for 78% of aggregate savings, a combination of state, enterprises, and households. As income and state purchase of agricultural surplus were controlled to be at a low rate and in disproportion to individuals' labor, citizens' savings were pitiful. From 1952 to 1978, the rate was only 2.9%. Nearly all profits went to the Ministry of Finance.¹⁰⁸ The state was far better off than its citizens and was more willing to invest in heavy industries than light industries that produce daily necessities. And this shows the influence of Stalin's legacy.

If the first type aims to criticize the capitalist system, the second one questions M-L itself as an institution of power relations. The class struggle stipulated and advocated by M-L structures human interactions in a way that people are expected to follow certain behavior. The approach that groups every wage earner into the category of the proletariat assumes that each and every one of them has the same interests and these interests are identical with those of the communist party that waves the banner of overthrowing imperial capitalism. The effacement of differences in this regard and the dichotomous class labels of capitalists and the proletariat lay down the structure within which conformity in action and thought on the side of the working class is expected and will bring rewards; disconformity however can be seen as an immoral act

¹⁰⁸ Chang Jung-Feng (張榮豐), "The Evolution of China's Strategy for Economic Development During the Periods of Deng and Jiang," [鄧、江時期中國大陸經濟發展策略之演變], in Chang Jung-Feng, Yuan Lei & Wu Ming-Tse eds. (張榮豐、原磊、吳明澤著), *The Planning for the 12th Five Year and the Evolution of China's Strategy for Economic Development* [十二五規劃與中國經濟發展策略演變]. Chung-Hua Institute Economic Research, Taiwan, 2013, p. 117.

of capitalism and incur punishments. According to the theoretical dictates, the working class who truly aspire to communism should not side with capitalists, make compromises with them, and endorse actions short of annihilating capitalism.¹⁰⁹ Those who are deemed as non-pure communists can become objects against whom the alleged true communists conduct their struggle until the ideological line is rectified.

The ideological construct can easily become a self-serving instrument in practice while the belief side may not entirely disappear. After all, human beings' motives are complicated. Ideology can be a tool for pursuing power. Internationally, Mao used Chinese Marxism to compete with Moscow for leadership in the socialist camp from the second half of the 1950s to 1960.¹¹⁰ Domestically, who were the true socialists and who were capitalists disguised as socialists was used for political purges within and without the Party. The purge of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and others had roots in power reconfiguration after Mao retreated from the political center following the disaster of the 1958 Great Leap Forward of his own design. His reemergence to power in 1962 again set the course that would collide with other leaders' developmental visions. Mao's version would prevail and during implementation, he sent those whose opinions differed from him to prisons and labor camps based on the accusation that they

¹⁰⁹ Marx made clear this sense of absoluteness in his thesis. In criticizing "petty-bourgeois socialism", he commented that "this form of socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and exchange within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and Utopian." In Marx's view, petty-bourgeois socialism is not true socialism because it does not take a revolutionary stance of eliminating all capitalist institutions. Another example that shows Marx's adherence to ideological purity is his criticism toward "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism." In his view, this school of thought and its followers, despite the initial revolutionary objective, had tried to reconcile class struggle, instead of taking advantage of class antagonism for the true revolution. He labeled these people "reactionary." See Ed. Robert C. Tucker, 1978, pp. 491-499, for the chapter 3 of the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

¹¹⁰ Lorenz M. Lüthi. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. via Ebook Central Academic Complete.

were “capitalist roaders” because they were seen by Mao as “revisionists” pushing a policy line that would eventually lead to the revival of class society and the restoration of capitalism.¹¹¹

China then was an autocracy that encouraged a leadership cult. Once Mao released the force of ideological fervor on a national level through mass mobilization, different groups utilized his version of socialism for power struggle. This characterized the Cultural Revolution that ostensibly aimed to overhaul the society into a socialist one. Red guards raided people’s houses and scrutinized books and belongings to find any traces of “capitalist” thought. Those who were labeled as “counter-revolutionaries” or “capitalist roaders” by either interpersonal associations with someone already bearing such name or personal behavior that was intentionally defamed by others could end up with public humiliation. They received trials in the meeting halls where their “crimes” were numbered and made a showing of repentance by reading out scripts that admitted their own faults and stated their beliefs in and upholding of Maoist thought as part of the process to “redeem” their counter-revolutionary sin. Many would be dragged to the street for a public parade with a placard hanging in front of their chests reading “counter-revolutionary revisionists.” The most devoted followers of Mao were not exempted from political persecution either.¹¹² A substantial number of people would be publicly executed by their fellow countrymen on the same ideological accusations. The exact death toll is unknown and scholarly estimates vary widely. By using a “conservative statistical procedure,” Andrew Walder estimates somewhere between 1.1 and 1.6 million dead for the period 1966-1971 based on data compiled

¹¹¹ For a nuanced assessment of changes in political institutions and power struggle, and their interrelations in the PRC, see Lucian W. Pye. *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981. Despite changing times, the book captures the subtleties that matter in the changing dynamics of Chinese politics and how these changes affected policy outcomes.

¹¹² Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro. *Son of the Revolution*. New York: Vintage, 1984.

from local histories.¹¹³ In that socio-political milieu, political labeling determined one's life. People with and without the Party affiliations were punished once they were seen as betraying socialist causes. For people who managed to choose the right side that happened to win, they received rewards of honor for they would claim to be true revolutionaries following Mao's footsteps. Such "irrationality" is the product of structuralized power relations in which people are incentivized to conform through fear or eager to prove oneself to be in the right camp.

The altercasted role of the Chinese population under Mao's rule was to comply with the idea that one needed to act like a "socialist" and could not behave like a "capitalist, reactionary, or revisionist." If one failed to conform, he or she was to be labelled as an enemy and received the fate of defamation. Mao as a populist leader casted his agenda of maintaining revolutionary momentum to what the Chinese people would carry out in the next twenty years following the founding of the PRC. Popular excitement was aroused, the evidence of conformity, and resentment toward what occurred on the ground was also present. The irony is that just when people believed they were true followers of Maoist ideology, they were accused of wearing a different ideological badge, and were purged or punished. They were othered. In that volatile political environment, it seems that othering was more predominant in securing one's survival.

Comparing C-M (C-T) and M-L

Both C-M and M-L sanction authoritarianism. They all place power in the hands of a few. From the standpoint of the two ideologies and the messages that the CCP intends to deliver, Chinese authoritarianism carries the characteristics of morality, altruism, and ruling based on social contract. The linkage between authoritarianism and its defining features is puzzling but the

¹¹³ Andrew G. Walder. *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, p. 334.

theory makes it possible, by laying down conditions, in the case of Confucianism, for the ruled to accept and dwelling on unrealistic assumptions (such as those in power are selfless and the interests and identities of the people are the same), in the example of Marxism-Leninism, and is embraced by the communist regime. The belief in the virtues of an authoritarian political system is more evident in that the CCP rarely uses the word “authoritarianism” and instead describes its governance as “socialist democracy.” The PRC claims itself to be a democracy.

In Confucian ideology, the emperor has selfless affection toward his people by governing in the interests of the people. The underlying message is that as long as one accepts defined rules that govern human relationships, the monarch’s heavenly grace will bestow benefits upon the people and make them prosper. Offense against the Son of Heaven deserves punishment as it challenges social order, destabilizes society, and hampers the delivery of the common goods. In Confucian logic, rewards and punishments aim to ensure the system that allows imperial generosity to manifest. Altruism in Confucianism is what rulers make it appear to be. After all, “altruism” is not without conditions and when conditions are attached, it is not altruism.

Similar to C-M, moralities in M-L develop from the logic of positioning the CCP Politburo at the center of governance. Contrary to Confucianism in which selflessness is related to ethics that maintains human relations and thus the role of monarch, in M-L, altruism has more to do with identification of the interests of the rulers with those of masses and ethics is used to differentiate ingroup (the working class) and outgroup (capitalists) by dichotomous roles of good and evil. The M-L egalitarian principle, however, removes Confucian hierarchy in the state’s representation of people’s interests; the communist party and the masses share the same identity and common interests as well. Nevertheless, the Party has privileges to allocate resources just as a Confucian monarch does. The use of morality is less about creating a permanent orderly

society as Confucianism dictates than about justification for violence. To erect a just society for the proletariat (the good victims), exploitative imperial capitalists (the evil doers) and their institutions at home and abroad must be, as the above quotation from Marx and Engels suggests, overthrown by whatever means possible.

Another similarity is about the perception of self superiority. Both condone a central position that China assumed. In M-L, the communists' coming to power corrects capitalist power relations domestically and internationally. In the PRC's narratives, the textual pattern usually reads as follows: before the communist party came to power and expelled and eradicated imperialists and capitalists, the country was deprived and exploited by them; the image of the country is shaped to be weak and hopeless and the communist party is framed to be the savior. In September 1949 when Mao addressed the Political Consultative Conference after victory over "the American imperialism-supported reactionary KMT government", he announced that "the Chinese who constitute one fourth of the world population have stood up."¹¹⁴ In the post-1950 Party Congress (NCCPC) reports (when the government was functioning) and even in today's narratives, the texts continue to emphasize an oppressive hegemonic force (the U.S.) attempting to subdue other peoples and countries while China remains steadfastly unyielding and charts its own path for its socialist institutions that are superior to capitalism. Despite relative material weaknesses, the PRC has not perceived itself to be a political inferior.

Both thought systems espouse a utopian world and see violence as a legitimate means to that end. However, Confucianism sees more options other than violence as possible. Aside from enticement, coercive measures short of use of force and war, accommodation policies such as

¹¹⁴ Mao Zedong, "The Chinese People Have Stood Up" [中国人民站起来了], Marxists.org, Sept. 21, 1949, <<https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19490921.htm>>.

inter-marriages and frontier markets can be rationalized in a way as if they were out of imperial benevolence while they actually resulted from a comparison of relative strength.¹¹⁵ In the pursuit and maintenance of power, C-M is more flexible in terms of means and thus able to address a variety of situations.

Marxism and Confucianism have some important differences that work in compatible and complementary ways to address Beijing's interests. One example is material capabilities. Confucianism conceals their importance whereas Marxism emphatically places material strength at the center to explain the trajectory of history. However, it is important to note that even though morality is salient in Confucian ruling ideology, a realized Confucian governance requires a strong material base for the long term. The following paragraphs will explain the importance of material growth for contemporary China and point out complementary advantages of the two ideologies that are seen in how the PRC utilizes them to justify material pursuits with different audiences in mind.

Historical China was a self-sufficient agricultural economy with a sense of the world generally confined to bordering neighbors in Asia. The legitimacy of imperial rule did not come from economic growth as much as it did from Confucian rituals such as formalities and ceremonies that prevailed in inter-personal relationships, in the interaction between the emperor and his court members, and in the relationship between the emperor and the society. The contemporary era witnesses a different development. China has other major powers and superpowers to compare itself with, and it is impossible to increase productivity to the level of advanced economies through agricultural means only. As material achievements become primary

¹¹⁵ See the case about Altan Khan of Mongols and Ming in the final section of this chapter, Forging a New Theory.

measurements for national revival, the PRC uses Marxism to endorse its pursuit of economic interests. Although the material base supports a Confucian world order, the philosophy does not explicitly sanction material pursuit.

In addition, considering the needs of supply and demand created by the massive population, the continuing rule of the communist party depends on expansion of material power internally and externally. The augmentation of material strength as the source of regime legitimacy may alarm other states. To assuage concerns and justify such pursuit, Beijing has to make it part of greater shared good. Even though Marxism has the self-justifying logic of altruistic motive as Confucianism does, the international bankruptcy of M-L promises following the collapse of the Soviet Union does not allow the possibility of using it to persuade a broader audience, or at least not using it as the sole political appeal.¹¹⁶ It may not even have a great appeal to domestic constituents. While the CCP rationalizes material pursuits through Sinicized M-L in the Chinese texts, when the main audience is a non-Chinese population, it relies more on Confucian rhetoric of harmony to impart the image of co-prosperity and a non-conflictual international society that China's rise can bring.

Another complementary difference is the presentation of relations between states. C-M sanctions hierarchy and explicitly states so. L-M advocates equality but contains an escape clause that the communist party has monopolized authority. Today's world is more receptive to equity rhetoric than frankly stated unequal relations. To win the hearts of others, China's

¹¹⁶ Chapter 4 in this dissertation shows that the English texts of the *Qiushi* journal translated many articles about Chinese Marxism when they discuss why Chinese socialism and Chinese institutions are not just good for domestic governance, *but also the running of international affairs*. In this sense, the PRC does not shy away from affirming its claimed advantages of sinicized Marxism to international audiences.

narratives have stressed equal relations with other countries in its imagined new international order.

Forging a New Theory: Cultural Subjectivism

The above discussion of similarities and differences provides the foundation for a new theory, a theory that reflects the ideology advanced by political actors in order to gain practical advantages. This version removes from C-M (or C-T) and M-L the unpleasant theoretical constructs, such as explicit endorsement of hierarchy and class struggle, that the PRC does not find appealing to contemporary audiences. The new theory broadens the means to the end by retaining from Confucianism non-use of force options (enticement, accommodation, and intimation), aside from violence which both C-M and M-L condone. The reconfigured theory further keeps the shared traits of authoritarianism, self-described altruism, and the self-assigned leadership position. Despite the discursive effort to obscure hierarchy, the utilitarian purpose of moderated rhetoric of equity for public consumption remains.

To account for China's peacetime behavior and how the PRC rationalizes it, the new theory also considers two factors: dynamic process and material capabilities. The purpose of considering dynamic process is to capture the strategic calculations during the period of power transition between the U.S. and China. The strategic calculations informed by an awareness of a relatively peaceful international environment and of external accusations of China threat produce the result of moderate rhetoric compared to original C-T and M-L which sanction explicit hierarchy and class struggle respectively. It is conceivable that, based on strategic reasons, the PRC will act with caution, such as being discursively moderate, to persuade international audiences into accepting policies whereby it alters the international order gradually.

Material capabilities can have positive correlations with the mentality of superiority or the aspiration for a central position in the world, both of which cannot be separated and, as empirical evidence shows, the latter also can be present without the condition of material strength. In other words, material strength is not a necessary condition for superior mentality, but it can have contributing effects to the behavior that reflects a self-assumed central position. To elaborate their relations, it is necessary to first bring in the subjectivity of actors into discussion.

Actors' subjectivity needs to be considered, including how biases can affect interpretations of bilateral relations. The mentality of political superiority/leadership can come from two sources: material strength and culture. Culture is here defined as political culture, namely the preferred way of doing things in politics and the political reasoning that one believes is just (though others may not concur). Consider the following two scenarios: the party perceives itself as possessing cultural superiority while being materially weaker in a comparative term and the party perceives itself as possessing both cultural and material strength compared to the other actor. Note that culture can be a source of bias. The Chinese elite and the non-Chinese may see each other as the Other projected by the image of the self. Therefore, this study uses the word, *assume*. China assumes a superior position. This is to emphasize the subjectivity in the Chinese worldview, and meanwhile to raise the awareness that realities are more complicated as China may pretend to be superior, as the case of Han- Hsiung-nu relations shows, while relative material conditions do not allow so or others may not see themselves inferior, in conformity to the image projected by China which self-assigns a powerful role.

The mentality of superiority is relatively constant and may be reinforced by material strength. The case of Ming-Mongol relations, especially Yongle's punitive campaigns,

demonstrates a mentality of superiority informed by both culture and material capabilities.¹¹⁷ A more recent example is Mao Zedong's China from 1956 to 1960. Lenin's internationalization of communism in that developing states of the world can unite under a single central leadership across national boundaries moved Marxism out of its original orbit. The unfortunate adoption of this notion by Mao, as it fueled unrealistic revolutionary fervor to bring about disaster, or merely a coincidence with his revolutionary zeal, demonstrates China's historical aspiration for a top status. Within the socialist camp, Mao was competing with the Soviet leader Khrushchev for ideological leadership. While the CCP had followed Moscow's ideological tutelage when Stalin was alive, the death of Stalin, the growing pace of China's economy in the 1950s under the First-Five Year Plan (FFYP, 1953-1957), and Mao's ideological radicalization in the second half of the 1950s contributed to the Chairman's confidence in publicly challenging Moscow's interpretations of Marxism-Leninism.

Riding the initial economic success of the FFYP, Mao intended to accelerate the growth. His goal was to surpass Britain, the USSR, and the US in 15 years. The Great Leap Forward, starting from 1958, was designed as one step to that effect. However, Beijing and Moscow diverged on the methods with the latter seeing the plan as unrealistic and infeasible. The disagreement would only aggravate the discord whose seeds were sown in Mao's criticism of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization. For the matter of de-Stalinization, the Chairman had started to call the Soviets "revisionists," meaning those who did not follow the orthodox M-L doctrines as defined by Mao himself. The disputes over the second five-year plan sent bilateral relations into a further downward spiral. Before both countries had a major military confrontation in 1969,

¹¹⁷ Wang Yuan-Kang shows in statistics the positive correlation between grain production and military campaigns during the Yongle period. From the number of horses he provides annually from 1403 to 1423, they are also positively correlated with Yongle's military expeditions. Wang Yuan-Kang, pp. 109-112.

ideological disputes had already ended the alliance in 1960 when Moscow pulled out its advisors and economic-military support. China's public bid for the socialist leadership has positive correlations with its *aspiration* for economic growth.

When China was materially weaker or when parties reached power parity, it might still believe itself to be culturally superior. During the mid-16th century when Ming's military power was in decline, Altan Khan of the Right Wing Mongols repeatedly raided Ming frontiers to request trade and tribute, the venues where nomads obtained grain, silk, luxuries, cotton fabrics and other goods. The "barbarian" insult proved too much to bear for Confucian officials who believed that Ming was the "head" and the barbarian was the "feet." For the head to listen to the feet was against the nature of things. Some officials even suggested an expedition to punish the Mongols. The emperor eventually did not concur because of limited military strength. Ming also limited compromises to the opening of markets. The Mongol's request for tribute was left answered. Even the markets deal would be cancelled months later after initial agreement. Altan Khan would continue to raid and Ming would also cross the border to fight. It was not until twenty years later in 1571 that both sides made peace and Ming agreed to the Mongols' requests. The timing of peace is positively correlated with further decline of Ming in terms of its financial and military capabilities, but Altan Khan's grandson as Ming's hostage may be the reason why the dynasty finally opted for accommodation in 1571. A Ming governor-general rationalized conciliation in the following way: making peace was for the benefit of the people as years of war had burdened Ming's garrisons and the Mongols' needs were economic; granting titles to

Mongols and answering their needs would show the Emperor's heavenly grace and the barbarians would become civilized.¹¹⁸

Despite further decline of their power, if it had not been for the hostage issue, Ming might not have agreed on compromises. Altan Khan's grandson in the hands of Ming increased the latter's leverage. The hostage was a card for Ming to play, to ensure political equity, if not superiority for its side during negotiations. The Confucian justification from the governor-general that evoked imperial heavenly grace toward its people and the enculturing power of the heavenly Kingdom toward the less civilized were words to save face. Ming was materially inferior but was not willing to relinquish its cultural superiority.

Material strength in the context of peacetime expansion however matters in a different manner. It is the prospect to gain and the buttressing confidence in economic success in post-Deng reforms that propels a discursive assertiveness today. As chapter 4 shows, Chinese narratives are more articulated regarding how the PRC intends to reshape international order from 2012 onward, except for 2013. This discursive confidence overlaps with more materialized Chinese global footprints. China's confidence in this regard may reflect the decision to broaden its access to international markets and resources for continuing development during the economic downturn of the past few years. Even though economic growth slowed down during

¹¹⁸ The course of events and the Confucian view of the self and others comes from: Wang Yuan-Kang, pp. 131-142. Wang's interpretations differ from mine. He argues that Confucian superiority prevented Ming from making concessions during the 1550s and not until twenty years later when material conditions further deteriorated did the court finalize accommodation policy. Wang's overall argument remains that relative strength and the declining power of Ming is more crucial for conciliation. He is more concerned with the causal relations between material strength and use of force/compromise. My research however is interested in how dynasties used Confucian logic to rationalize their policies, be it war, coercion, intimidation or compromise, regardless of material conditions. In other words, whatever the policy outcomes are, they can be justified in a manner to serve superior mentality and to make the authority feel better. While Wang identifies declining material strength as the factor for conciliation, I argue that despite that fact, the real reason for both sides to reach agreement may be that Ming now had the hostage.

the 2010s, the PRC has a more solid foundation to be internationally active than was possible during Mao's period. Arresting the receding tide of economic growth, however, is not the only motive for globe trotting. Reputation and fame which affirm self-values are similarly important commodities that China expects to obtain during the process of building technological, cultural, economic and military capabilities through overseas expansion.

Cultural subjectivism is a theory of structuralized power relations with self-justification mechanism built in. In other words, it explains the unfalsifiable logic in Chinese reasoning. Before getting to how such logic works in the contemporary Chinese narratives, it is necessary to first introduce the discursive construct. As chapter 3 demonstrates, in the PRC's narratives, China and the developing countries which account for two thirds of the states in the world belong to the same camp that suffered from imperialism and has struggled for a just international order. This shared history and shared future is informed by sinicized Marxist universalism in which the PRC will lead the changes and create a better future for all. As chapter 4 shows, Chinese narratives examined from 2005 to 2018 still carry such logic, albeit without the revolutionary tone seen during Mao's period. The discursive construct frequently stresses equal relations in parallel with the indication of an assumed Chinese leadership. Equality mainly means that the PRC will not treat other countries in an imperial way as past powers did. Chinese discourse is shaping domestic consciousness and is trying to persuade international audiences that getting on board the Chinese train will deliver benefits and China will not exploit and suppress others. The message is tied back to the greatness of the Chinese nation in that "aggression is never in the genes of the Chinese."¹¹⁹ Since the authority is selfless and inherently good, treats everyone

¹¹⁹ Wang Yi, "Toward Peace and Development for All," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC*, Sept. 21, 2017, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1496244.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019.

equally and sees others' interests as its own, there is barely a reason to fault it and no reason to challenge what it does because what it does is always right.

Chapter 3

Chinese Worldview and A Projected Chinese World Order

The main purpose of this chapter is to analyze the role conceptions and power relations of the world order which the PRC has imagined. Specifically, this chapter discusses two types of Chinese worldview. One gives rise to the world order that the PRC favors. The other reflects its assessments of world politics while it was using this knowledge to formulate its preferred order. To explain the role conceptions of the Chinese self and its projected other(s) in the PRC's narratives, this chapter provides the evidence for the altercasting and othering process laid out in chapter 2 as the mechanisms that the Chinese self evokes in interactions with others or in its perceptions of world politics. The task will be conducted along with Beijing's evolving worldview, as chart 3.0 shows, from vast zone (or intermediate zone), to two intermediate zones, to three worlds and multipolarity, all of which are Chinese conceptions of world politics and either inform or correspond with the PRC's preferred order.

Chart 3.0

approximate years worldview	Starting year	End year
Intermediate zone (vast zone)	1946	Early 1960s
Two intermediate zones	1963	Early 1970s
Three worlds	1973	Early 1990s
Multipolarity	1992	Until today

The four worldviews are better understood through a longer timeframe, instead of specific time points. The timespan will include the duration they took to formulate and to transform into a

new version. During the period of intermediate zone, the PRC saw itself as following the Soviet lead, but gradually shifted to divide the world such that it would lead one of the three camps. Multipolarity would then sustain the leading role conceptualized at the stage of the three worlds. Thus, it was only for a short time, less than a decade following the founding of the PRC, that the country did not see itself in a leadership position. The role of the US had/has been the Other, with different degrees of salience at different historical points, against which the PRC formulated its preferred order. The four worldviews reflect three things from the Chinese perspective: the PRC's conceptions of world politics, the world orders which the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. laid the foundation for, and where the PRC saw/sees itself and the order that it led/will lead. Another noteworthy trait of the four worldviews is the underpinning of relative material strength that came to differentiate camps and poles. Views projected to understand the running of things may also reflect the self or what one deems important to the self. In other words, a preferred order that China projects also is informed by material capabilities.

Discursive evidence, from the reports of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCCPC reports) and other historical documents, shows that a projected Chinese order has sinicized socialism situated at the top of the pyramid that describes the PRC's conceptions of itself and its relations with other countries. This is in consistency with the stipulation of cultural subjectivism in chapter 2 that China assumes a superior central status and the world order it prefers is a hierarchical one supported by the material base. However, the material pursuit is not always constant, as seen in the rupture of the Cultural Revolution. Economic strength alone does not support a hierarchy. It is one facet of national greatness that the PRC intends to prove and thus needs to be understood in strategic terms. In the Chinese narratives, the material capabilities of the west are correlated with conflicts whereas a materially strong China contributes to world

peace. This difference, from the PRC's viewpoint, lies in domestic institutions which preside over both internal and external affairs. As the CCP considers itself the architect of sinicized socialism, claimed success resulting from socialism is the success of the CCP. The PRC's ultimate objective is the recognized and unchallenged legitimacy and power of the Party in the running of the state. Regarding the international affairs, on the issues that it finds it has a stake in, it frames them in a way as if they are the common concerns/interests of countries around the world and claims that it upholds idealistic principles, unlike some major powers, in conducting foreign policies in these issue areas. In so doing, it highlights its superiority and as the discursive presentation in chapter 4 will show, Beijing wants others to recognize its uniqueness and to pay it deference.

In the Chinese writings, a favored world order is discursively constructed in parallel with and in comparison to the order that the U.S. lays down the foundation for. In other words, the PRC's preferred version is a long-term pursuit and material accumulation in the post-Deng period has made it more possible than during Mao's time. This chapter traces this dynamic process and analyzes how it contributes to the gradual formation of a more complete pyramid which exhibits the power relations that China favors while denying its inequity. The discussion of the pyramid is against the background of an existing order that through a Chinese perspective is oppressive and unfair. The following will compare the roles of the self and others and their relations with the world constructed in the Chinese narratives at two different periods: Mao and post-Deng.

China's arguments presented here should not be taken as statements of fact. They are for propaganda and thought education aimed at Party members, the domestic population, and increasingly an international audience. In analyzing Chinese narratives, there are two goals to be

achieved. This chapter breaks down the techniques used in creating the narratives and explores the underlying ideas/beliefs.

Unless stated otherwise, the reports mentioned here are speeches given by Chinese leaders in the NCCPC (Party Congress) meetings that, since 1977, have been held at regular five-year intervals. There are 12 documents under examination as listed in Chart 3.1, 4 produced in Mao's period and 8 after Mao's death until today. These reports summarize domestic development and provide observations about international politics from a Chinese perspective in the past five years, lay out domestic objectives for the next five years, and project future international security trends. Therefore, they provide an authoritative guide into the PRC's worldview. Other historical documents will be drawn upon when needed.

Chart 3.1

Year	Document Title of the NCCPC Report
1956 (the 8 th NCCPC)	刘少奇作政治报告 (The Political Report by LiuShaoqi)
1969 (the 9 th NCCPC)	林彪在中国共产党第九次全国代表大会上的报告 (Lin Biao's Report on the 9 th Party Congress or NCCPC)
1973 (the 10 th NCCPC)	周恩来在中国共产党第十次全国代表大会上的报告 (Zhou Enlai's Report on the 10 th Party Congress)
1977 (the 11 th NCCPC)	十一大上的政治报告 (The Political Report on the 11 th Party Congress)
1982 (the 12 th NCCPC)	胡耀邦在中国共产党第十二次全国代表大会上的报告 (HuYaobang's Report on the 12 th Party Congress)
1987 (the 13 th NCCPC)	赵紫阳在中国共产党第十三次全国代表大会上的报告 (Zhao Ziyang's Report on the 13 th Party Congress)
1992 (the 14 th NCCPC)	江泽民在中国共产党第十四次全国代表大会上的报告 (Jiang Zemin's Report on the 14 th Party Congress)
1997 (the 15 th NCCPC)	江泽民在中国共产党第十五次全国代表大会上的报告 (Jiang Zemin's Report on the 15 th Party Congress)
2002 (the 16 th NCCPC)	江泽民在中国共产党第十六次全国代表大会上的报告 (Jiang Zemin's Report on the 16 th Party Congress)
2007 (the 17 th NCCPC)	胡锦涛在中国共产党第十七次全国代表大会上的报告 (Hu Jintao's Report on the 17 th Party Congress)
2012 (the 18 th NCCPC)	坚定不移沿着中国特色社会主义道路前进，为全面建成小康社会而奋斗 (Resolutely Walk on A Socialist Path with Chinese Characteristics And Strive for A Comprehensively Moderately Prosperous Society)
2017 (the 19 th NCCPC)	决胜全面建成小康社会 夺取新时代中国特色社会主义伟大胜利 (Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era)

From 1953 to 1977*Actors and Their Relations with the PRC in the Chinese Worldview*

This section explores China's evolving conceptions of world politics in which it defines the roles of itself and others. The ideology-charged Cold War climate did not dictate differentiation of political camps, except in the first few years after the PRC's founding. While the intermediate zone is characterized by two ideological camps, the two intermediate zones and three worlds are divided by material standards and were formed as the primary enemy shifted

from the U.S. to the USSR. Unlike its initial acceptance of being a junior partner, from two intermediate zones to three worlds the PRC rejected an inferior position to the Soviet Union and assumed a separate identity which eventually saw itself as the leader of the Third World. The third characteristic which ran through the period with consistency is the United Front strategy that supported the engagement with countries regardless of differences in ideologies and domestic institutions in a way favorable to the PRC for its larger move against the primary enemy. The fourth characteristic is related to the second and the third in that throughout the entire period, from 1953 to 1977, Chinese narratives formed a role congruence between the PRC and many (not all) developing countries on a relatively constant base and more ambiguous relationships with lesser capitalist states. Overall, China's view of international politics was more materially than ideologically based and its approach was strategic.

Three years after the end of the Korean War, the PRC was making economic progress out of the First Five-Year Plan. Against this background, the 1956 report made by Liu Shaoqi for the Eighth NCCPC (or the 8th Party Congress) criticizes American post WWII "expansionist activities" in Asia and Africa and deems military alliances and military bases as creating tension and preparing for war; the goal of the US was to "oppress the American people and control and intervene by all possible efforts in the intermediate zone between the socialist countries and the US." The report makes a role contrast: "American imperialism defends these activities as preventing communist aggression. However, ...socialism and aggression are entirely incompatible.....The people around the world see it very clearly: the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries actively seek for peaceful coexistence, development of East-West economic and cultural relations, and take the lead in downsizing armed forces and military spending." To depict the US as a belligerent destroying world peace as opposed to what China

was doing is not enough. The narrative adds “the people around the world” to increase the credibility of Chinese perspective.

The view that the U.S. intended to suppress countries around the world in the intermediate zone corresponded to Mao’s interview with Anna Louise Strong, an American journalist, in 1946. When asked about the possibility of a war between the US and the USSR, Mao responded:

“The United States and the Soviet Union are separated by a vast zone which includes many capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. *Before the U.S. reactionaries have subjugated these countries, an attack on the Soviet Union is out of the question.* The U.S. reactionaries say that the military bases they have set up and are preparing to set up all over the world are aimed against the Soviet Union. True, these military bases are directed against the Soviet Union. *At present, however, it is not the Soviet Union but the countries in which these military bases are located that are the first to suffer U.S. aggression* (emphasis added).”¹²⁰

The juxtaposition of evil Americans and good Soviets plus the people around the world is a role shaping process that links back to where the PRC stood at the time. In the 1956 report, opposition to Washington’s aggressiveness is the claimed (expected) result of aggregate efforts of promoting world peace formed by the USSR, the PRC and other socialist countries. Parallel with the othering of Washington’s role is the altercasted shared identity among Moscow, Beijing,

¹²⁰ “Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong,” August 06, 1946, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Mao Zedong xuanji), vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1996), pp. 1191-1192. Translation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China and the Party Literature Research Center under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, eds., *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), pp. 45-48. <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121327>>. Accessed through Wilson Center Digital Archive.

and many lesser states. Since the PRC's primary enemy at this time was the US, it projected to the identities of others its wishes of weakening American influence by describing the relationships among socialist countries (including the PRC) headed by the Soviet Union as "brotherly friendship and mutual help." In other words, it is saying that American imperialist influence is gradually offset by socialist power that advocates peace. "After the October Revolution, there was no second socialist country except for the one that the Soviets were building. However, the situation changed fundamentally when our people undertook socialist endeavors. After WWII,.....new socialist countries emerged in Europe and Asia. Now,.....people in the socialist countries account for 900 millions, one third of human population."

In the report, former colonies who were nationalists and were struggling for their independence also are altercasted as the PRC's allies "in weakening imperialist power." Beijing also satisfied its desire to be seen in a positive light by describing these countries as the recipients of Chinese assistance in their effort of national liberation.¹²¹ "The existence of socialist countries and the sympathy and support from the socialist countries will greatly expedite the development and victory of national independence movements." Aside from these nationalist lesser states, in Beijing's worldview, capitalist economies other than the U.S. often became

¹²¹ The Suharto Administration of Indonesia broke ties with China on the grounds that the latter had meddled in Indonesian domestic politics through its own revolutionary agenda eventually during the Gestapu affairs in 1965. See, See Seng Tan, and Acharya Amitav, *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*. Singapore: NUS, 2008; Ian James Storey, "Indonesia's China Policy in the New Order and Beyond: Problems and Prospects," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 22, no. 1, April 2000, pp.145-174; Ragna Boden, "The Gestapu events of 1965 in Indonesia: New evidence from Russian and German archives," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 163, No. 4 (2007), pp. 507-528; Justus M. van der Kroef, "the 1965 Coup in Indonesia: the CIA's version," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 4, issue 2, 1976, pp. 117-131.

candidates with which the PRC could cooperate in politics and in economy. But their role is ambiguous.

Although economic ties with socialist countries was a priority in the early years of the Cold War, trade with capitalist countries was not discouraged. This is especially true in the case of Japan, with which the PRC was eager to maintain relations even though in propaganda it presented Japan as an unforgivable oppressor during WWII.¹²² In China's plan, Britain and France were the other two ideal candidates to do business with as well, despite limited results due to the U.S. embargo.¹²³ In the 1956 NCCPC report, capitalist states except the U.S. were both a negative Other because they, such as Britain and France, had lingering imperial interests in Egypt on the issue of the Suez Canal and an altercasted potential role cooperator because they, in the Chinese view, had deepening contradictions with the US. Nevertheless, on a continuum with othering and altercasting positioned at the two ends, it seems that in the Chinese view lesser capitalist countries leaned toward altercasting.

Despite the stated Chinese allegiance to Moscow, the frictions between communist China and the Soviet Union would soon begin and competition for socialist leadership then followed. Beijing opposed Moscow's de-Stalinization and the policy of peaceful coexistence with the U.S. The Soviet opposition to the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and to the Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958) which Mao initiated to mobilize the Chinese people for the Great Leap also sowed the seeds of the discord between the two countries. Moscow further was disturbed by Mao's contempt of nuclear weapons and became less willing to transfer relevant technologies.

¹²² Amy King. *China-Japan Relations After World War Two: Empire, Industry and War, 1949-1971*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

¹²³ Shu Guang Zhang. *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Khrushchev's visit to the U.S. in 1959 did not sit well with the PRC either as the latter perceived Washington as its primary enemy and the Soviet overture as "revisionist." Mao then turned his discontent into an ideological battle with the USSR. In the eyes of the Chairman, sinicized Marxism-Leninism was the orthodox way to communism whereas the Soviet practice was revisionist. At the end of 1959, he decided that Moscow was more a competitor for the PRC's leadership position in the socialist camp than an ideological mentor that would guide and materially assist China.¹²⁴

While Beijing had growing tension with Moscow, it did not play down the American threat. In addition, in the early years of the Cold War, Mao already did not hold sanguine views about solidarity within both the socialist and capitalist camps. He long believed that solidarity within the capitalist camp would eventually collapse due to American dominance.¹²⁵ When meeting with Kikunami Katsumi, a Politburo member of the Japanese Communist Party, in January 1964, Mao mentioned that although the PRC and the Soviet Union are in the socialist camp and bound by diplomatic relations, the bilateral relations are not "as good as those between China and the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party or China and the Ikeda faction." In Mao's view, the contradictions did not only exist between Beijing and Moscow; they also applied to relations between the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe. In explaining the odd phenomenon that China had better relations with capitalist Japan which in theory belonged to the imperialist bloc, Mao said to Kikunami that the reason is because "the U.S. and the Soviet Union both have nuclear weapons and want to dominate the world."¹²⁶ By 1964, Mao already began to

¹²⁴ Lorenz M. Lüthi, pp. 46-156.

¹²⁵ This is also evidenced in the 1956 NCCPC report. It observed the receding influence of the U.S., Britain and France and noted that imperialist expansion after WWII in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America does not win the minds and hearts of the people.

¹²⁶ "Mao Zedong: 'There are Two Intermediate zones,'" September 1963; January and July 1964, Wilson Digital Archives, <<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121207>>. This document contains three

place the USSR in the same category where the U.S. was because both had material capabilities and imperialist ambitions. The Chairman's theory of "two intermediate zones" maturing from 1963 to 1964 thus reflected the evolution of events in previous years, including Beijing's deteriorating relations with Moscow, Mao's observations about eroding cohesion within the two blocs, and his belief regarding how world situations would evolve.

Against the above backgrounds, in the conversation with Kikunami, Mao continued to spell out what he meant by "two intermediate zones." "The vast economically backward countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute the first. Imperialist and advanced capitalist countries represented by Europe constitute the second. Both are opposed to American control. Countries in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, are against control by the Soviet Union. This trend is quite obvious."¹²⁷ Unlike Mao's 1946 interview and the intermediate zone in the 1956 NCCPC report, both of which are similar, by 1963-64, Mao further divided the world by the standard of material strength in two ways. First, the seeds of disputes and discord among both socialist and capitalist camps were sowed by the major states' ambitions aided by unequal distribution of material capabilities. Second, the differentiation between capitalist countries other than the U.S. and developing countries was based on relative strength.

Chinese perception of the Soviets would become worse. First, Beijing came to believe that Moscow's military supplies to Hanoi during the Vietnam War posed a security threat to Chinese territory.¹²⁸ Second, the border skirmishes between the PRC and the USSR over the years eventually culminated in the 1969 border clash. By 1973, Beijing already saw the Soviets as the

entries. One of them (January 1964) is the conversation with Kikunami. Mao's expressed eroding cohesion within two camps and clarifications about two intermediate zones were already laid out in the Sept. 1963 talk at the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Lorenz M. Lüthi, pp. 302-339.

PRC's primary enemy. In addition, the views articulated during 1970s indicate that material capabilities became more salient as a grouping standard in the Chinese worldview. The self-role conception shifted from a country in the socialist camp to a socialist country belonging to the Third World whose collective identity is that of "developing countries" regardless of their ideologies.¹²⁹

The new addition of Moscow to the evil camp perceived by the Chinese in which the US had once been the sole member theoretically accentuated the role of the Third World in the PRC's foreign relations. Zhou Enlai in the 1973 NCCPC report addressed the competition between Washington and Moscow for world domination with increasing emphasis on the Soviet expansionist threat, and China's role in the race. "Internationally, our Party upholds proletariat internationalism.....enhances solidarity among the proletariat around the world and oppressed peoples and nations, strengthens solidarity among countries that suffer from imperialist aggression, sabotage, intervention, control and bullying. *[The goal] is to form the most expansive United Front against imperialism and new and old colonialism, especially the hegemonism of two superpowers, the US and the USSR* (emphasis added)." Zhou was projecting Chinese loathing of both Washington and Moscow to the views of those opposing the US and the USSR in order to show that Beijing had allies against two imperialist powers. The split with the Soviets had led the PRC to readjust its allegiance, from both the USSR and economically backward countries to an emphasis on political alliance with the developing countries.

The PRC's relations with the Third World, the two superpowers, and other developed capitalist states had its final formulation two years before Mao's death. The Chairman's worldview remained materially informed and this time it left no confusion between developing

¹²⁹ Many of these countries were nationalist, instead of communist.

countries and lesser capitalist powers. In a 1974 conversation with Zambia's president Kenneth Kaunda, Mao threw out questions about who belongs to the First and Second Worlds after both agreed with the expectation of solidarity among Third World countries. Kaunda replied that the exploiters and imperialists belong to the First world and the revisionists (such as the Soviets) to the Second world. His answers were ideology-based, but Mao's own answers differentiated countries based on the quality and number of atomic bombs. "The U.S. and the Soviet Union have a lot of atomic bombs, and they are richer. Europe, Japan, Australia and Canada, of the Second World, do not possess so many atomic bombs and are not so rich as the First World, but richer than the Third World."¹³⁰ The alliance with developing countries no doubt has its material foundation, at least in theory. The "Three Worlds" theory has strategic implications for the PRC's foreign relations.

The NCCPC report of 1977 specifies how the Three Worlds can guide China's international struggle. The Third World countries (including the PRC) are the main revolutionary forces against capitalist and socialist imperialist enemies, namely the US and the Soviet Union. The countries of the Second World who are both oppressors of the developing countries and oppressed by the two superpowers can be potential candidates for the PRC to form a United Front with in the struggle against the First World. Beijing affirmed its role, as the document states: "China is a developing socialist country of the Third World. We unswervingly stand together with developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin American and other regions. And we resolutely support their just struggle" in maintaining national independence and economic

¹³⁰ "Mao Zedong, "On the Question of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds," February 22, 1974, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Translation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the Party Literature Research Center under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, eds., *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), p. 454.

<<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119307>> accessed March 7, 2018.

development. The PRC's self identification could not exist without imagining that others were willing to identify their goals with that of Beijing.

The evolving worldview has implications for what informed China's strategic calculations and Chinese perception of the self. Regarding the former, ideological alliance did not stand the test of sino-centrism and security interests. The Sino-Soviet split is the evidence to both reasons, and rapprochement with the U.S. resulted from the latter. Furthermore, the PRC was flexible in cooperating with others regardless of their ideological affiliations so long as it did not perceive them to be the main security menace. As early as in 1950s, the PRC already expressed that regardless of social systems and ideologies, it would work with others. There was a brief period in which Zhou Enlai was implementing such a strategy through diplomatic and economic venues.¹³¹ In fact, the United Front strategy articulated in 1977 resembles the strategy of co-optation between the periphery and the semi-peripheral capitalist stated in Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems theory.¹³² Compared to domestic policies,¹³³ in foreign relations, the PRC was no less strategic than ideological, if not more strategic than ideological. But the question remains: did ideology matter? If so, in what way? After all, despite shifting alliances,

¹³¹ During the Bandung Conference (1955), Zhou Enlai stated, "Now first of all I would like to talk about the question of different ideologies and social systems. We have to admit that among our Asian and African countries, we do have different ideologies and different social systems. But this does not prevent us from seeking common ground and being united." See, "Supplementary Speech of Premier Zhou Enlai at the Plenary Session of the Asian African-Conference," April 19, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 207-00006-02, 1-13. Translation from *China and the Asian-African Conference (Documents)* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1955), pp. 21-27.
<<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114673>>. accessed through Wilson Center Digital Archive.

¹³² Immanuel Wallerstein, 1979.

¹³³ From highly centralized planned economy to the Cultural Revolution, in terms of economy, the state owned nearly every means of production and monopolized the distribution of resources, profits, and workers' incomes. Even prices were set at flat rates.

the PRC had insisted that it was a socialist country,¹³⁴ and there were reasons why it adhered to a socialist identity.

Whether the other party that it associates with is a socialist state from a Chinese perspective is irrelevant to the PRC's socialist identity. The core constitution of China's socialist identity rests on how it rationalizes its own policies as being socialist and how it over time re-interprets Marxism-Leninism and makes it the spring of sinicized socialism. It also rests in Chinese leaders' belief in the ideology as they define it. Therefore, the use of socialism is both instrumental and results from belief. At the fundamentals, the repeated appearance of the term delivers a message that it wants others to recognize the difference and uniqueness of China and that such uniqueness is related to the expressed superiority of Chinese socialism in the PRC's narratives. The demand of deference to the CCP/PRC in domestic and foreign affairs underlies the usage of socialism however it is defined. This will bring the discussion to the second implication, the PRC's definition of the self.

Conception of the Self and A Projected New Order

While perceiving itself as a target of aggression, the PRC's self-perception was not of powerlessness at the inferior end of the oppressor-oppressed relations. In the pre-1982 narratives, it discursively rejected conformity to the hierarchy which it claimed was the design of imperialist powers. Instead, the PRC affirmed its self-worth and believed that time would show socialist institutions are superior to capitalism. From the Chinese perspective, institutional advantages would be manifested in economic development and in the values carried to build national infrastructure and conduct foreign policies, such as the five principles of peaceful coexistence. In

¹³⁴ The state is not a unitary actor. There was domestic opposition when the PRC shifted alliance from the USSR to the U.S., since it directly challenged the long-held doctrine that the U.S. was imperialist and China's archenemy.

the 1950s, the PRC already associated sinicized socialism with both domestic development and world peace. However, the interrelations and the causal mechanisms among the three of them had not received detailed treatments as they would in the late 2000s. The pyramid below that describes their relations reflects how Chinese superiority functions in practice. Within this framework, the following paragraphs also address two issues about the development of material capabilities.

The first one is about the salience of material pursuit in a highly ideological context. Ideological radicalization in Mao's China was an instrument to many goals. This is the case in both domestic and foreign policies. Using ideological zeal to achieve material objectives was especially salient before the Cultural Revolution when the country was able to focus on its foreign relations and pay more attention to international politics. This can be seen in that the highlighting of material development took place in the discursive context of competition with capitalist countries. Material strength factored in China's perception of the self when it came to its status in world politics, even though during the 1950s, the PRC mainly divided the world in line with ideological fault lines (intermediate zone). The Chinese leaders understood the importance of material capabilities and they believed that these were indispensable if the superiority of Chinese socialism was going to be fully manifested. This was the case before the end of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

China's less than suboptimal economic development during Mao's era had more to do with policy decisions and how those decisions were made in the echo chamber at the expense of field expertise and bureaucratic suggestions than with the belief, if such belief was ever the case, that the country did not need a material base to be strong. Second, the PRC was aware of its material weaknesses, but this did not affect its perception of the self as a superior actor versus the

US and the USSR. This awareness further contributed to more investment into heavy industry when it was the agricultural and light industries that required more attention. The prospect that things would get better motivated the Chinese assertion that it was ideologically superior to other major powers. The discussion of material factors is important because it mediates the relations in the pyramid between domestic development and world peace which would not come into full play in the Chinese discourse until the late 2000s. A comparison of the NCCPC documents in 1956, 1973, and 1977 along with other supplements will illustrate the above points.

China's finalization of the First Five-Year Plan (FFYP1953-1957) occurred simultaneously when the new economic programs were already implemented after the Korean War. Domestic official discussions surrounded a necessity to make the PRC politically influential with a strong material base. The CCP understood the rationale that the economy is the basis for political, military, and cultural strength. In addressing the work meeting of the CCP's National Organization in 1953, Zhou Enlai connected the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) to a greater strategic goal. "We have many tasks in our plate. Why do we take the economy as our main working line and main task? Because it is the foundation. Chairman Mao said, the economy is the foundation; politics is the reflection of economy in concentration; military struggle is the highest level of political struggle in its most extreme form. Therefore, political, military, and cultural work all depend on the economy. Without it, we cannot have the foundation for socialism."¹³⁵ The economy Zhou had in mind undisputedly is industrialization.

Among different sectors, Zhou placed developmental emphasis on heavy industry. In a 1953 meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, he reasoned that "if the

¹³⁵ Zhou Enlai. *The Selected Works of Zhou Enlai's Views on Economy (Zhou Enlai jingji wenxuan)* [周恩来经济文选] Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998, pp. 157.

industry is underdeveloped, an independent country can become a satellite state (or dominions?) of others. Can we depend on socialist countries? For instance, the Soviet Union develops heavy industry and we will specialize in the light industry. I do not think so. If China does not strive for developing industry, especially heavy industry, *it cannot stand tall in the world* (emphasis added).¹³⁶ The primary concern for Beijing is the country's relative status to others, and a developed heavy industry becomes the very symbol of that goal being achieved. The light industry that produces consumer goods will not help China leap upward on the power ladder because it does not modernize the military.

The military purpose is clearly indicated later in the same year when Zhou said to the attendees of the CCP's National Organization, "military modernization is possible only with heavy industry."¹³⁷ He continued to explain the necessity of being able to produce modern equipment. "You once saw a car at an industrial exhibition. The car is made by others. We assembled the parts. We did not make it. Since we cannot make a tank, an airplane, an advanced cannon, and a car, we do not have powerful defense capabilities."¹³⁸ Defense industry no doubt had a significant share in overall investment in heavy industry. In his report to the CCP's Central Committee in 1954, Chen Yun noted that "defense industry receives most attention, oil industry is lagging behind, and coal and electricity is under supply strains. There is no way to improve this situation."¹³⁹ His conclusion was to execute the plan that had already been designed. The language in the final version of FFYP that came out in 1955 does not specifically single out

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 152-153.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 159.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ National Development and Reform Commission documents, <<https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fggz/fzzlgh/gjfgzh/200506/W020191104614879526481.pdf>> accessed Feb, 2019. The pdf compiles several documents under different headlines with no page numbers. Page numbers provided here is the numbers generated by the pdf's own format. See the document, "Regarding the Report of the First Five Year Plan" [关于第一个五年计划的汇报] Jun. 30, 1954, pp. 4-5.

defense industry in comparison to others, but it does not leave any ambiguity regarding its importance in China's overall strategic goal either.¹⁴⁰

The realpolitik thinking behind heavy industry first is further colored by the reasoning of “a shared wish of developing the economy together.” In Zhou's view, if China concentrates resources on light industry, it will increase the burden for the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Focusing on heavy industry which also was suggested by Moscow, however, would make possible “developing the economy together, and creating solidarity and consolidating [the socialist camp].”¹⁴¹

Zhou's rhetoric shows a blend of plain admission of the country's world aspirations and pretentious humbleness and inclusiveness. Even though a focus on light industry is more realistic according to the domestic conditions at the time, for the Chinese leaders, to increase material capabilities of the country within a short time span in a global context outweighed other considerations. According to Zhou's logic, not to develop light industry first is to avoid burdening Moscow. This thought serves as a cover for the real motive of “standing tall in the world” which Zhou did not try to hide anyway. The expressed intention to contribute to international public goods and to develop the economy together no doubt is to justify the pursuit of heavy industry. The message goes that only when China gets to develop heavy industry, which it sees as a gateway to become one of major powers, can the goal of “developing the economy together” be realized. In other words, things need to go in the Chinese way so that public goods defined by the PRC can be provided.

¹⁴⁰ People's Daily, “Regarding the First Five Year Plan” [关于发展国民经济的第一个五年计划的报告] March 06, 2008, <http://www.gov.cn/test/2008-03/06/content_910770.htm> accessed Feb. 27, 2019.

¹⁴¹ Zhou Enlai, 1998, pp. 158.

The relative success of the FFYP and a future prospect of continuous growth conditioned Beijing's perception of itself. This is evidenced in the 1956 NCCPC report. Meanwhile, despite the economic documents linked China's domestic development to the world in that the success of the former would contribute to the later, the 1956 report and other NCCPC reports throughout Mao's era do not have the discursive connections between the two.

In the 1956 NCCPC report, the PRC believes that its "international status has been elevated" because of the country's participation in the peaceful socialist camp headed by the USSR and its victory over the American aggression in the Korean War. It is the juxtaposition of a peace promoter who won the war versus an imperialist evil doer who lost the war that underlies China's self-perception of a higher status that it now enjoys compared to the years before 1949. In the Chinese narratives, the time before was a period of imperialist humiliation. Liu Shaoqi's 1956 report thus is a continuation of Mao's line.

Liu further stated Chinese self-affirmation from the angle of governing and developmental institutions. "The institutions of our country show a combination of a greater degree of democracy and a greater degree of concentration (高度的民主和高度的集中的結合). This institution has displayed its superiority in the past years." In the text, the PRC did not claim that the national development already demonstrates the "superior qualities of socialism" (社会主义的优越性), but it believed that it was taking the right path toward that objective. This resulted from initial economic success in the past years, as Liu stated that "the first five-year plan (1953-1957) has obtained gigantic achievements which even our enemy cannot deny," though he also recognized that there was much to be done in the upcoming second five-year plan.

In discussing international relations, Liu's report compared socialist and capitalist institutions to highlight the advantages of the former to create a better world. The report shows a confidence in winning the competition between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp. It observes that imperialist expansion after WWII in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America did not win the minds and hearts of the people. Because of the receding influence of the US, Britain and France, the possibility of "permanent peace in the world" starts to emerge. It is in the context where China and the socialist camp headed by the USSR are said to be peace makers, specifically referring to the adherence to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and the aggressionist West is believed to be on the losing side that Liu stated in the same section, "we believe in the superiority of socialist institutions, and are not afraid of peacefully competing with capitalist countries." Accordingly, "superior qualities of socialism" in the PRC's rhetoric are not just good for domestic development but also good for world peace.

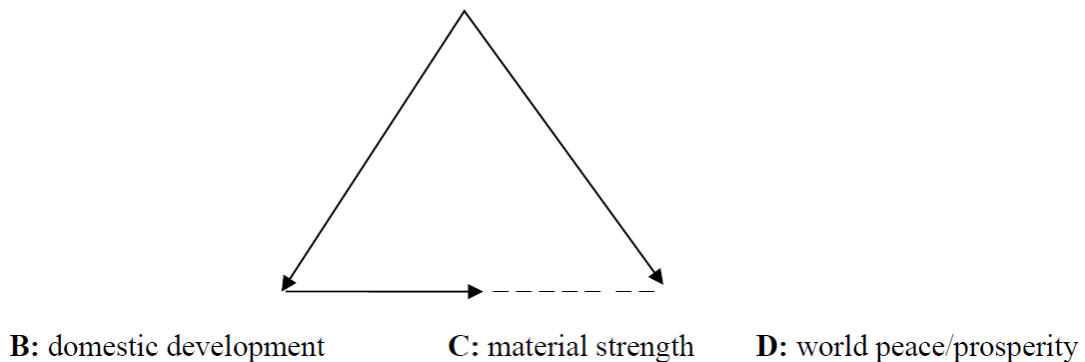
Pertinent to the above analysis is how material strength adds to the equation of Chinese institutional superiority in international politics. Specifically, what are the connections between domestic development and world peace, if there are any? The 1956 report characterized the relations between the PRC and the world through economic development in comparative and competitive lights. It indicates a belief in industrialization through "socialist institutions" to solve the problem of its "economic and cultural backwardness compared to the advanced development of the world." In other words, through state ownership, eventual eradication of private enterprise and planned economy, the PRC would be able to develop its material base and compete with other major powers. At this point, the narratives were more concerned about proving the country as a materially equal and competitive peer to its capitalist counterparts than claiming that a

strong socialist country with material wealth can make the world better compared to what capitalist states can do. Such an assertion would not take place until the late 2000s.

Pyramid 3.0 cognitively presents the relationships among concepts based on the NCCPC reports. The arrows mean positive contributing effects of socialist institutions, which is to be understood in a comparative light with the effect of capitalism. The contributing effect of B to D is mediated by C. However, since the PRC was building an economic foundation during the 1950s and remained so in the 70s, the distance between C and D was not addressed in the narratives and thus is presented by the dash line. Placing A on the top of pyramid reflects its primary and foremost central position in the Chinese discourse. Economic, military, social, political, cultural and ethnical narratives all develop out of this ideology.

Pyramid 3.0

A: advantages of socialism (a proxy of or channeling China's superior mentality)



Chinese confidence at the time only went so far as stating that the comparative superiority of socialism in international politics would be demonstrated by the incoming economic success. It fell short of saying such institutional advantages would eventually translate to world peace through national material capabilities.

The Great Leap Forward launched in 1958 epitomized leaders' ambitions to prove that the PRC would be materially superior to the world powers. It aimed to promote the country to the third place in the world and, with further effort, to surpass the two superpowers by 1964. At the September 1958 meeting of the Supreme State Council, Mao said:

“We should strive to produce eleven million tons of steel, doubling last year's output.....Three years of hard efforts, fifty million tons of steel. At that time, we will occupy third place in the world, next only to the Soviet Union and the United States.....by 1962, it is possible [for us to produce] eighty to a hundred million tons [of steel], approaching the level of the United States..... [At the end of] the second five-year plan, we will approach or even surpass America. In another two years, in seven years, [we may] produce a hundred fifty million tons of steel, and surpass America to become the number one in the world.”¹⁴²

Mao's statement displayed his earnestness to develop the country into a socialist state with a strong material base within an unrealistic time span. The Chairman at this moment still divided the world according to ideological fault lines. However, when it came to the status of the PRC, the judging criteria also included material conditions. During the Great Leap Forward, to meet the production goal under the situation of resources scarcity, the PRC relied on ideology to mobilize the masses.

¹⁴² “Speech, Mao Zedong at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Supreme State Council (excerpt),” September 08, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong on Diplomacy (Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan)* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1994), pp. 348-352, via Wilson Center Digital Archive.

Strategically staking out heavy industry as a primary sector for development did not make the task easier and the objective more achievable. The country lacked material foundation and professionalism. Normally, agricultural surplus can be used to invest in and develop industrial sectors. In the case of China, it would go to the payment of imports of machinery, equipment and plants from the USSR. Since the PRC remained largely an agricultural state and lacked the ability to develop heavy industry on its own, imports and reliance on the Soviet technicians and advisors were the shortcuts to the goal. The country was even willing to invest more on heavy industry than agriculture. When the latter did not receive sufficient investment and in the meantime had to support heavy industry, the country was faced with the problem of resources scarcity. It then turned to rely on the will power of the people. By staging a crisis in the Taiwan Strait to create a sense of immediate danger, the PRC mobilized the population to participate in agricultural collectivization and production of steel by backyard furnaces. The productivity fell short of expected goals, which would translate into the reduction of citizens' daily rations. A vicious cycle then formed. Without the material rewards, people were less incentivized to work. Ideology was used to achieve material ends, but its positive effect was short term.¹⁴³

The Great Leap ended with disaster immediately just one year after the experiment began, but Mao insisted on continuing the policy into 1960 despite bad results that were already clear in 1959. The temporary economic revival between 1960 and 1962 would then be overshadowed by Mao's return to the political center and his ideological radicalization as well as the domestic power struggle. The coming Cultural Revolution would further retard the growth of the economy. The goal of surpassing the superpowers by 1964 never got realized.

¹⁴³ Alexander Eckstein. *China's Economic Development: The Interplay of Scarcity and Ideology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977.

Beijing's self-assertion would continue to be correlated with a positive prospect of future gains, despite the apparent gaps between its capabilities and other major powers. One example came in the early 1960s after the GLF fiasco. Despite the abruptness of the Great Leap, China's preoccupations with industrialization and its relative status in the world economy did not recede. On December 24 1959, when speaking to the party members who also held the titles of provincial bureaucrats at Heilongjiang, Zhou compared China's situations with the Soviet Union and voiced again the possibility that China would be able to speedily build an independent economic system to cope with a future war. "Our current conditions, ten years after the founding of the nation, are much better than the Soviet Union in 1927. Our production index, basic infrastructure, and science show that we have more advantages than the Soviets.....If we can build an independent economic system with speed by 1972 (during the Fourth FFYP), it will be beneficial for the socialist camp and for the anti-imperialism struggle. Such a strong country will be able to handle war because we have an independent economic system."¹⁴⁴ In the aftermath of obvious failure of the GLF, Zhou was saying that China's economy was still doing better than that of the USSR after the latter's founding and there were still hopes for the PRC to do better in the future.

Mao's re-emergence at the political center in the second half of 1962 also meant the resumption of the Sino-Soviet polemics after a respite in 1961. This time, the Chairman found fault with Moscow over its seeking a relationship with "revisionist" Yugoslavia. A proposal drafted by the PRC that stated its positions regarding the principles of the international communist movement eventually led to a bilateral meeting at Moscow in July 1963. The proposal opposed a Soviet rapprochement with the U.S. and submitted Chinese views regarding

¹⁴⁴ Zhou Enlai, 1998, p. 404.

how true Marxism-Leninism should be implemented; instead of seeking a reconciliation with the Americans through nuclear disarmament, according to the Chinese, the Soviets must uphold a revolutionary agenda and communist states' support for national liberation of the oppressed people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America should come as a priority in foreign relations. The PRC was accusing Moscow of abandoning true communism. In its view, "resolute revolutionary struggle" by uniting socialist countries and the international proletariat was the way to create world peace. Seeking peaceful coexistence with the U.S. would foster imperialism. The document in the beginning stressed that "the general line of the international communist movement" must adhere to Marxism-Leninism. Beijing's definition of M-L was based on its understanding of the Moscow documents of 1957 and 1960. It was legitimizing the authoritativeness of its interpretation of M-L by stating a continuity between its current position and what had been agreed in the documents. When the Proposal stressed in the beginning that the general line of the international communist movement must adhere to M-L, it meant that the PRC's position, rather than the Soviets', as orthodox interpretations, should be the guiding principle. Beijing's intention to compete with Moscow for the socialist leadership was apparent.¹⁴⁵ This mentality of Chinese superiority was channeled through ideological competition.

¹⁴⁵ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 3: *The Coming of the Cataclysm, 1961-1966*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 349-354, accessed through ACLS Humanities E-Book. Roderick MacFarquhar detailed the events that led to the Moscow meeting in 1963 in Chapter 16. He also summarizes the points laid out in *the Proposal*. For the original document of "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement," see Sino-Soviet Split Document Archive in Marxists Internet Archive, <<https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sino-soviet-split/cpc/proposal.htm>> accessed October 17, 2019.

In the PRC's original plan, by 1967, the end of the Third Five-Year Plan, the country will meet the basic requirement of industrialization and set the stage for expansion of production and economic upgrading. Domestic production of machinery and consumer goods will then be made possible. In Zhou's words, a complete industrial system is especially important because "from the perspective of domestic demands, we need to quickly change the situation of economic backwardness; internationally, our strong industry can promote the economic growth of all socialist countries and enhance the force that safeguards world peace."¹⁴⁶ Beijing's economic deadline was not fulfilled due to the disruptions of the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution. Following interruptions, changes were made to the deadlines when the set economic targets are to be met. The final three years of the second FFYP (1958-1962) ended up with handling the consequences of mismanaging the economy in the aftermath of the Great Leap. The succeeding Cultural Revolution would then postpone the third FFYP to 1967, and the year of 1980 would become the new official deadline to build an independent economy after at least twice consideration of some certain year during the 1970s.¹⁴⁷ During the re-planning period, Zhou repeatedly expressed the hope and possibilities for the PRC to leap forward. For instance, a successful development of "an independent national economic system" "will contribute more to the revolutionary movement in the world," so did Zhou say when he spoke with the party members about the issues concerning industrial development.¹⁴⁸ The Chinese leaders believed that, since they had "knocked down the basis of seemingly powerful imperialism, feudalism, and

¹⁴⁶ Zhou Enlai, 1998, pp. 288.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 519, 563.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 518.

capitalism at home” and had detonated an atomic bomb, such leapfrog advance is entirely possible.¹⁴⁹

Although economic documents frequently connected China’s future economic success to the world peace and prosperity, probably because the performance had been lackluster, the linkage continued to be absent in the NCCPC reports (the Party Congress reports). The Chinese leaders’ linking the country’s material development to a full display of socialist advantages internationally would not occur until the late 2000s. Meanwhile, to understand Beijing’s expectations of gains and what to gain, an analysis of the resources devoted to heavy industry and other sectors can be more informative than the statistics of average GDP growth. The Chinese way of developing the economy under Mao was different. Instead of fostering a solid economic foundation that would first support the basic necessities and the overall wealth of the country, the CCP hoped to develop heavy industry first and thereby lift the overall economy of the country.

Despite the economic plunge during the Cultural Revolution, the priority of the Third Five-Year Plan (1965-1970), originally designed to meet the requirement of daily subsistence by focusing on agriculture, was shifted to heavy industry, represented by the Third Line policy (三线建设). This was due to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations rooted in the border clashes during the first four years of the Cultural Revolution. To meet the goal of “active preparation for war”, the third FFYP focuses on production facilities, such as local steel factories, small-scale chemical factories, and warehouses, and materials for the making of weapons and military equipment.¹⁵⁰ The Fourth FFYP continued to carry out the goal of the third FFYP and not until

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 565-567.

¹⁵⁰ National Development and Reform Commission documents, <<https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fggz/fzzlgh/gjfgzh/200506/W020191104614879526481.pdf>> accessed Feb, 2019.

1973, after China completed another round of power struggle, did agriculture become a priority.¹⁵¹ Starting from 1965 and probably even earlier, producer goods had surpassed consumer goods in terms of production. By the constant 1952 prices, when setting total industrial production as 100, producer goods made up a 35 percent whereas consumer goods had 65 in 1952. By 1965, producer goods accounted for 53 and consumer goods dwindled down to 47 out of 100. In 1974, producer goods claimed 62 out of 100.¹⁵² Accordingly, during the Cultural Revolution, it was the prospect of future gains in heavy industry, measured against what one had at the moment, that drove the sense of one's superiority.

By 1973, the great hope of surpassing advanced countries in 15 years (from 1949 to 1964) had long been dashed since the disastrous Great Leap Forward. From the Chinese perspective, the external environment had not changed for the better. Despite the rapprochement, the US remained a threat, but China's nemesis now shifted to the USSR. Under these conditions, the

The pdf compiles several documents under different headlines with no page numbers. Page numbers provided here is the numbers generated by the pdf's own format. Documents include: "The Discussion About the Initial Ideas for the Third Five-Year Plan in the Work Meeting of the Party" [中央工作会议讨论第三个五年计划的初步设想], May, 1964, p. 34; "The Discussion About The Principles of the Third Five-Year Plan in the Meeting on the Level of the Party Secretary" [中央书记处讨论第三个五年计划的方针问题] May 28 1964, p. 36; "The Guidance from Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping Regarding the Work of National Planning Commission" [刘少奇、周恩来、邓小平对国家计委工作的指示], Dec.1, 1964, p. 37; "The Discussion Plans with Various Regions and Areas from National Planning Commissions and the Initial Ideas About the Third Five-Year Plan" [国家计委向各地区座谈长期计划和“三五”计划初步设想], June 1 1965, p. 38; "Mao Zedong's Directive Regarding the Planning of the Third Five-Year Plan" [毛泽东关于编制“三五”计划的指示], Jun. 16, 1965, p. 39; "National Planning Commission Report to Zhou Enlai Regarding the Revised Initial Ideas for the Third Five-Year Plan" [国家计委向周恩来汇报修改后的“三五”计划初步设想], July 21, 1965, p. 40; "National Planning Commission Report to the Party Regarding the Outline of the Arrangements for the Third Five-Year Plan" [国家计委向中央报送“三五”计划安排情况的汇报提纲], Sept. 12, 1965, p. 41; "The Planning for the Development of Local Small-Scaled Steel Factories" [地方小钢铁厂发展规划], Jun. 7, 1966, p. 43; "The Development of the Three Line and Future Improvements for the Next Three Years" [小三线的建设情况和今后三年的补充规划], Nov. 13, 1967, p. 44.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 50.

¹⁵² Alexander Eckstein. *China's economic revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 219.

PRC continued to hold the view that Washington and Moscow would not win the game and time remained on China's side.

In the 1973 NCCPC report, according to Zhou Enlai, "the ambition of the US and the USSR is one thing. Whether [their ambition] can be realized is another. [They] want to swallow China but do not have teeth for it. They do not have teeth for Europe and Japan as well, let alone the vast Third World. American imperialism has walked down the hill since the failure in a war of invading Korea. It publicly admits that it has grown weaker gradually and thus has to withdraw from Vietnam. The revisionist Soviet ruling clique, in the past twenty years from Khrushchev to Brezhnev, has transformed the socialist country into a socialist imperialist one.....The more bad things and scandals it does, the quicker it will be sent to historical museum by the Soviet people and the people of the world." Zhou continued to emphasize a need for China to unite with countries oppressed by imperialism and "make greater contributions to mankind by building the country into a strong socialist one." He recognized that China remains "a poor and developing country." After Mao's death, the PRC reaffirmed its ideological superiority. While directly stating that "China and the US have fundamental differences in social institutions and ideology," the 1977 NCCPC report focuses on the USSR. "The Soviet ruling clique betrays Marxism-Leninism...we insist on confrontational struggle with its hegemonism."

During Mao's period, the U.S. and the USSR were imperialists (or, in the latter case, socialist imperialists) that exerted destructive power on world peace, whereas the PRC which was a true inheritor of Marxism-Leninism revolutionary doctrines brought peace to the world by struggling against imperialist powers and aided the Third World, which collectively was a victim of imperialism in its struggle for national liberation. The positive self-image of the PRC built upon the negativity of the aggressive roles of the US and the USSR through an othering process.

It also relied on what it could contribute to the world by bringing the Third World and some capitalist countries into the equation of amassed forces against China's enemies, as shown in the United Front strategy in the 1977 NCCPC report. Through an altercasting process, Beijing imagined that developing countries were in need of its help in obtaining national independence and, in the process of fostering a world peace, they were also the PRC's allies against Washington and Moscow who, from Beijing's view, were declining powers anyway and would not win the contest with the rising Third World of which the PRC claimed to be a member. It was casting its wish to developing countries to form a discursive role congruence to increase narrative credibility.

From the post-Mao period until today there would be a lesser degree of negativity in the shaping of opponents' images and a greater emphasis on as well as a more sophisticated construction of China's positive role in world politics. These changes occur within the framework laid out in Pyramid 3.0. China still requires a negative Other to affirm its self-value, albeit with a toned-down rhetoric that reflects a less intense rivalry. Chinese superiority still manifests itself through institutional comparisons with western capitalism, in both domestic and international domains. In the narratives, the country continues to emphasize relationships with developing countries and sees an informal political alliance with them. Entering into the mid-2000s, the relations between B and D would turn to a solid line mediated by material strength. China's gains in material foundation after Deng's reforms and its need of continuous material pursuit to maintain the country at a certain level of capabilities supply the confidence behind a more elaborated causal effect of A to D. The developing countries as well as developed economies provide venues to secure material ends. However, material pursuit does not come from pure economic motives. As shown in Pyramid 3.0 that cognitively connects B, C and D

back to A, it is tied to a larger purpose of proving the superiority of Chinese socialism over the liberal, capitalist model championed by Western countries, which will place the PRC at the center of the world. The United Front strategy that had developing and capitalist countries as potential allies in the 1977 document also was to serve the Chinese purpose of struggling against the enemy that it identified. It also was about proving Chinese superiority, in the confrontation with Moscow. The strategy would continue to manifest in the post-Deng period and with more success as the result of changes in domestic politics and the end of the Cold War.

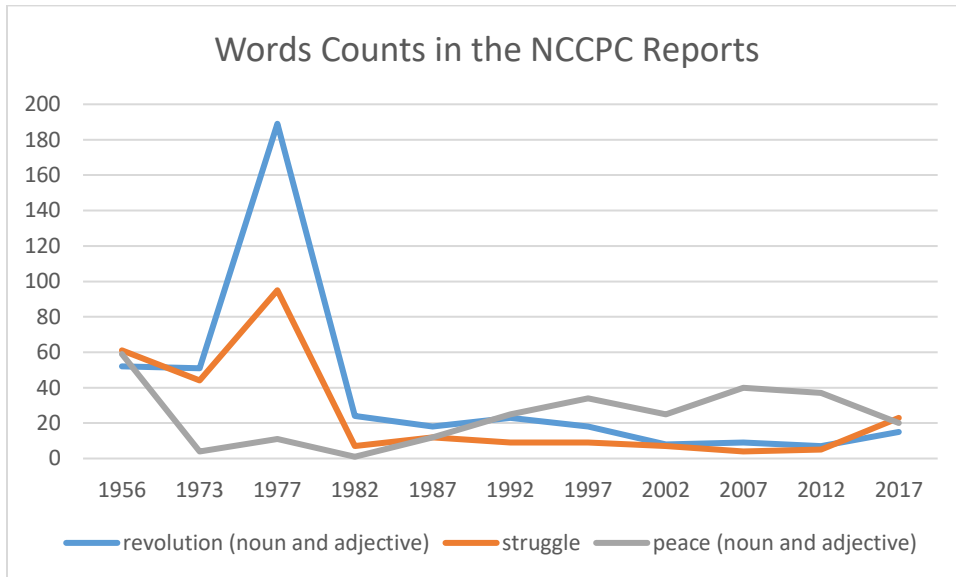
From 1982 to 2017

In conceptualizing the identity of the country (including the mentioning of important revolutionary figures), national development, the country's relations with the world, and the international environment, "struggle" and "revolution" prevail in the texts from 1956 to 1977 (see graph 3.0).¹⁵³ Because the 1977 report concludes national development and foreign policies under Mao, there is a drastic spike in the count of revolution and struggle.¹⁵⁴ Following Mao's death, ideological zeal was attenuated and the two words make fewer appearances from 1982 to 2017, compared to the previous decades. The question is how these changes are informative of China's identity. Because the concept of multipolarity would not be incorporated into official documents until 1992, as the result of the end of the Cold War, and due to shifts in domestic political dynamics, the redefinition of sinicized socialism already took place before changes in international politics; therefore this section will first discuss the Chinese self before elaborating actors and their relations with the PRC in its post-Cold War role conceptions.

¹⁵³ Graph created and data collected by the author. Revolution not in the sense of Chinese socialism does not count. Words such as "technological revolution" will be excluded.

¹⁵⁴ The report blames certain people in the Communist Party for policy catastrophes and praised Mao in his overall leadership.

Graph 3.0



Redefining the Self

Definitions of identity may vary according to the issues and time frames under examination. It could be argued that the PRC's identity changed as it became less revolutionary and ideological. It could also be argued that the embrace of capitalism changed the country's socialist identity. This research poses the question in this way. Will the definition follow the line about ideology, or changing (economic) means to the end, or the end itself? Which of these explanations best fits the observed changes? From a strategic standpoint that addresses the long trajectory of the rise of a major power and from a Chinese perspective indicated in the narratives as well, this research argues that the identity is based on the CCP's governing position and its symbiotic aspiration to become a modernized country which is both externally and internally strong. Both have stayed relatively constant except that the Cultural Revolution evolved against the second goal. Various means are to serve both ends. Changes in the means and methods, for instance re-interpreted socialism and the adoption of capitalist measures, do not affect the end,

that is, a Chinese identity, as defined by the CCP, that only the Communist Party has the capability and the right (with the “right” stemming from its claimed past success of its revolutionary struggle) to lead the country to national greatness as it adopts “socialist” doctrines, however defined, which it considers most suitable for China.

The re-consolidation of the CCP’s ruling position and economic re-interpretation of M-L in the post-Mao period eventually led to the coining of the term, “socialism with Chinese characteristics (SWCC).” In politics, SWCC means single-party “democratic” rule and governance through consensus and cooperation, instead of competition, with multiple non-communist parties but with the CCP remaining the only ruling party.¹⁵⁵ In economy, it is a combination of public ownership in the main and private ownership as auxiliary that releases and develops productivity. And most importantly, as seen in the narratives of stability, the overall national development cannot happen without the leadership of the CCP; political guidance from the Party is indispensable at present and in the future to create a stable environment for economic development. It is not difficult to conclude that the core of Beijing’s national discourse is about the CCP.

¹⁵⁵ The 2005 white paper about democracy in China states that “Chinese democracy is people’s democracy under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. Without the CCP.....there is no people’s democracy.....The development and perfection of Chinese democratic institutions is undertaken under the leadership of the CCP. The CCP’s stewardship fundamentally guarantees that the Chinese people is the master of their country.” The relationship between the CCP and other political parties is described as partnership with the former being a ruling party and actively consulting with the latter regarding the making and implementation of major policies. From Beijing’s perspective, such institution allows a democratic process of political participation and check and balance while one-party rule ensures stability and order, a prerequisite for long-term development. The white paper writes, “the leadership and governance of the CCP guarantees political stability. Because China is a populous vast territory.....maintaining political stability is particularly important. Only when stability is attained can concentration on development become possible.” See, “White Paper on Political Democracy” [中国的民主政治建设白皮书], Oct. 19, 2005, <http://www.gov.cn/2005-10/19/content_79553.htm>.

The Communist Party justifies its historical and continuing ruling position from three aspects. First, by affirming Mao's "achievements" and neglecting his mistakes, the CCP does not dissociate itself from the revolutionary past. It intends to keep that identity, even though it necessitates the downplaying of past disasters. Second, by re-interpreting Chinese Marxism in the economic realm, the CCP provides new ideological impetus for national development. This will be a new stage in which the Party again sets forth objectives in its self-described centenary mission, which continues the unfinished business of building a materially strong country from Mao's era, and lays out a prospect for people to look forward to. Related to the second point, the narrative of stability pivots upon the role of the CCP as an irreplaceable vehicle to carry out the mission of national revival. If Mao's period was redefined socialism 1.0 (RS 1.0), the 1980s and the early 1990s was the transitional period from RS 1.0 to RS 2.0. The following paragraphs will illustrate changes and continuities in the practice and definition of sinicized socialism through the 1981 Resolution and the 1987 NCCPC document.

The 1981 Resolution is a watershed document that assesses Mao Zedong's historical status and the Party's governance in the first 30 years of the PRC.¹⁵⁶ It is important to note that the evaluation is conducted in the context of affirming the pre-PRC revolutionary success of the Party in line with Marxism-Leninism and stressing that, during the twenty-eight years of struggle from 1921 to 1949, the CCP is "the vanguard of the proletariat, wholeheartedly serving the people without seeking its own interests." The confirmation of the CCP's status at the very

¹⁵⁶ English translations of the resolution in this research are the author's. For the English version of the entire resolution, see, "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," June 27, 1981, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Translation from *Beijing Review* 24, no. 27, 1981, pp. 10-39.

< <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121344> >; for the Chinese version, see [关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议], *Xinhua*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151123222207/http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-03/04/content_2543544.htm>.

beginning of the document, the recounting of the nation's fundamental makeover to be in line with socialist economic and social structures after entering a "socialist society" as the Party claims following the communist victory of the civil war, the listing of statistics showing economic growth, and the reassurance of Mao's overall contributions, which is not to be negated due to some mistakes, altogether set the tone and parameters for correct political thought in the post-Mao decades.

First, based on the historical success and the correctness of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist fundamental guidelines in building a "modernized and strong socialist country", the CCP will remain the only governing political party and is capable of realizing "the historical mission of communism." "The Party's leadership will inevitably make mistakes.....no one is allowed to use past mistakes to weaken, get rid of, and even sabotage the leadership of the Party.....[To do so] will incur severe catastrophe.....As long as we insist on and constantly improve Party's governing abilities, our Party can better undertake the great historical responsibility." Second, based on the lesson of the derailment of socialist democracy and neglect of productivity during the Cultural Revolution and the unrealistic economic plan of the Great Leap Forward, the Party will now reform itself in line with "democratic centralism" to prevent power concentration in the hands of a single man and to undertake the correct path of "developing productivity" while remembering the Great Leap Forward lesson that economic development has to consider Chinese conditions under which policies take place, "step by step realizing modernization at different stages." In other words, according to the document, the principle of political guidance to overhaul the society and economy---in reality, it is conducted by force---has overall been correct. The only times that the country swerved away from Marxism-Leninism and the actual conditions of China was during the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward. The belief in the

Party's capabilities and the reason for its continuous governing is further strengthened by the idea that it is aware of its own mistakes and now with experience it knows better how to govern. "Through the success and failures in the past thirty-two years after the founding of the PRC, via repeated comparison of correctness and mistakes, our party's understanding of socialist revolution and the building of a socialist country exceeds any period after the founding of the nation." The document continues to stress that setbacks are temporary and after trial and error, "our socialist enterprise has a great promising future." Despite a revision from single-man rule to collective leadership, Chinese discourse continues to operate in the framework of authoritarianism while appropriating M-L language to endorse the governance.

The economic focus of the 1981 document is further developed in Zhao Ziyang's 1987 report to the 13th Party Congress. Zhao's report reflects notable changes in the economic narratives of Chinese Marxism in the post-Mao era. The assessment of future national development becomes more realistic. In the past blueprint, the country would undergo a transitional period to build the foundation for socialism after 1952, then move on to continuous development of socialism and finally communism. The transitional period would include, first the transformation of economic and social structures—agricultural collectivization and state-owned enterprises--and increasing heavy industrial and agricultural production. The plan was to spend about 15 years at this stage.¹⁵⁷ However, the 1958 Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution that lasted from 1965 to the mid-1970s severely hindered the projected goals of production. To make up for the lost years would have to wait until Deng's reforms; in Zhao's report, the developmental stages are revised to include a particularly long period of "primary stage of socialism" (社会主义初级阶段) between the transitional period, which is now redefined

¹⁵⁷ See the 1956 NCCPC report, < <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64560/65452/4526551.html>>.

to simply include the completion of transformed production relations, i.e. from private to state-owned economy, and the modernized stage of socialism(社会主义现代化). In other words, it was originally believed that socialism would be attainable during Mao's period, but it turned out to be a more arduous task that required a prolonged period. This newly defined primary stage that will take one hundred years from 1950 onward, according to Zhao's evaluation, contains theoretical foundations for the means and pace to develop productivity.

The primary stage addressed mistakes from Mao's era and set the guidelines for post-Mao economic development. According to the report, the Cultural Revolution that placed productivity as secondary was based on the mistaken assumption that China could "go through the primary stage of socialism without greatly developing productivity."¹⁵⁸ Although the GLF recognized the importance of productivity, the policy was the result of blindly and rashly pursuing high productivity through mass mobilization without considering that China was still in need of capitalist development. The key issue here is ownership. The report concludes that maximization of commune, that is, township and village enterprises, and state-owned enterprise does not help in releasing productivity. The GLF failed because it carried the wrong idea that a full development of capitalism is not necessary before reaching socialism. Here, in setting forth a future plan, Zhao put China's situation in a comparative perspective: because China's "productivity lags far behind developed capitalist countries, we need to undergo a prolonged primary stage to realize industrialization and commercialization, socialization, and modernization of production." The proposed solution to release and develop productivity is to adopt multiple types of ownership (including private) while collective or public ownership

¹⁵⁸ See the 1987 NCCPC report, < <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64566/65447/4526368.html>>.

remains the main institution. This will facilitate socialization of production and develop the commodity economy and domestic market.

The economic and political narratives of sinicized Marxist socialism set forth in the 1981 and 1987 documents still have validity today. In the official rhetoric, China is developing a “socialist market economy”, combining both planned economy and capitalist market economy with the latter serving as a means to socialist ends.¹⁵⁹ Regarding political institutions, socialist democracy develops around the idea that the CCP remains the only ruling party. China is reversing the order of developing socialism. In theory, one will have an advanced economy followed by political revolution. The PRC’s experience is to nominally create the political conditions first and then play the game of economic catching up.¹⁶⁰ This reverse order leads to a problem that the country claims to follow a Marxist socialist line without the required economic foundation. Thus, an interesting phenomenon emerges that the CCP is trying to substantiate the economic precondition while arguing that it adheres to socialist political institutions that simply do not have economic grounds.

The CCP recognizes this problem but justifies itself on the grounds that this is “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, not Marx’s Marxism or Lenin’s Leninism. Zhao’s report states: “the situation that we are faced with is not building socialism based on highly developed capitalist economy as the founder of Marxism designed to be. Nor is our situation the same as other socialist countries. It will not work either if we do things according to books or by transplanting foreign models.....[We] have to combine the basic principles of Marxism and the

¹⁵⁹ For instance, the 1992 NCCPC report describes the economy as a socialist market economy

¹⁶⁰ This was not a new problem in the history of world communism. The Bolsheviks confronted the same problem after their seizure of power in Russia, and Stalin’s forced-draft industrialization (emulated in China in the 1950s) was the solution.

realities in China. Through practice and implementation, [we] will chart a path that is socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

Reinterpreted M-L after Mao’s death is used to rationalize the Party’s ruling position and policies. Meanwhile, it is unlikely that ideologies only serve as instrumental endorsement. Philosophical systems can be loose or complex enough for different interpretations and re-interpretations; the act of selecting certain parts of the theory for justification may not contradict the belief of the CCP that it is a genuine follower of M-L, however the Party defines it. The use of political philosophy can change but it still serves the end of affirming Chinese uniqueness and the Party’s way of doing things.

The official publications in the early twenty-first century that propagate correct political thought also argue that only under the combination of single-party “democratic” governance and the utilization of a capitalist market economy can the economy develop in China and the country see today’s national success. To be precise, the regime attributes decades-long economic growth to the advantage of China’s socialist political system over its capitalist counterpart in that the former “provides maximum possibility of releasing productive forces.”¹⁶¹ It is a recurring theme in the official rhetoric to emphasize that economic success does not come without the country’s unique political institutions. In forming continuous needs of economic reform for future growth, emphasis also is put on the prerequisite of political reform. And Beijing makes clear the premises for reform of political institutions: “political reforms should serve to strengthen and improve the leadership of the Party, and should never be allowed to undermine or remove its leadership.....Without the Communist Party of China and socialism, China would be thrown

¹⁶¹ Chen Hongtai [陈红太], “Effective Governance and Orderly Participation : the Characteristics of China’s Political Reforms” [有效执政与有序参与：中国政治体制改革的特色], *Red Flag Manuscript*, issue 23, 2009.

into turmoil and chaos.”¹⁶² In other words, political stability, order and the CCP’s rule are priorities before anything else. The narratives especially weave together stability with the fate of the CCP and its symbiotic socialism.

Following Deng’s reforms there was a relaxed political climate in which various social and political demands flourished in China. The protests that started with a commemoration of Hu Yaobang’s death eventually culminated in the 1989 Tiananmen massacre.¹⁶³ Deng had consistently expressed the view that thought education was needed to harness the population. In March 1989, months before the Tiananmen massacre, he talked to comrades about the methods of controlling political situations in a way to stabilize society for foreign investment and the Four Modernizations. He saw the need to restrict “establishment of organizations, parades, demonstrations, journalism, and publishing” and that “violators need to be punished.” Despite Deng’s framing the issue with economic motives, his main concern was the correctness of thought that cushioned the CCP’s governing legitimacy with conformity. He said, “...in the past ten years, education is our biggest mistake. Education on political thought among the youth is insufficient.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Wen Ping, “Great Economic Success Testifies to China’s Political Success,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2011, <http://english.qstheory.cn/magazine/201102/201109/t20110920_111481.htm>.

¹⁶³ Hu was the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party from 1982 to 1987. He was trying to conduct economic and political reforms during the 1980s. However, there were strong waves of opposition within the Party and eventually he was forced to resign. Hu passed away in April 1989. A commemoration of Hu was later on followed by a large-scale demonstration in front of the Tiananmen Square that included students, intellectuals and workers who demanded reforms. The event in the following weeks culminated with the crackdown by the People’s Liberation Army under Deng Xiaoping’s order.

¹⁶⁴ Deng Xiaoping, “It is not allowed to have disorder in China” [中国不允许乱], in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan)* [邓小平文选], March 4, 1989, <<http://www.71.cn/2008/0407/500993.shtml>>.

From the CCP's perspective, the pluralist demands of the Chinese people were evidence of the infiltration of western ideas and values with which capitalist countries took advantage of the transitional period to advance their agenda of remaking China in their own image. This also was a sensitive, politically charged time as Beijing already observed the uncertainty surrounding the problems created in the USSR by Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. In November after the event, Deng mentioned to the chairman of the Revolutionary Party of Tanzania that western countries were waging a third world war of "peaceful revolution" against socialism without actual fighting. "[What happened in] Eastern Europe is not surprising. Sooner or later it will happen. The problem that Eastern Europe is faced with is mainly internal ... Western countries treat China in a similar way. They dislike the fact that China insists on the socialist path. The turmoil [Tiananmen demonstration] that took place this year in China likewise sooner or later will emerge." The root cause of instability that Deng saw was countries wavering on socialism and adopting western democracy and capitalist political institutions. He similarly saw the problem of China as internal: "our two general secretaries [Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang] also foundered on the question of capitalist [political] liberalization. If China does capitalist liberalization, turbulence is certainly to come. Our set policies.....and three-stages strategic goals of development go for naught." Deng did not have any problem believing in the monopoly of power by the CCP. In his defense, stability, socialism and the Party are synonyms to one another, and thought control serves best to secure their long-term presence.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Deng Xiaoping, "Resolutely Adhering to Socialism and Prevent Peaceful Evolution" [坚持社会主义防止和平演变] in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan)* [邓小平文选], Sept. 23, 1989. <<http://www.71.cn/2012/0423/612905.shtml>>.

For the CCP, if Tiananmen embodies the invasion of western values, the resistance to economic reform and opening is another opposition that adds uncertainty to the transitional period. Jiang Zemin's 1992 report to the 14th Party Congress reveals domestic doubts and uncertainties, the basis that can brew instability. The report repeats what was laid out in the 1982 document that emphasizes "planned commodity economy based on socialist public ownership", a combination of planned economy and market economy. It highlights the success of special economic zones on the southeast coasts and argues that they are socialist, not capitalist, as these zones serve as means to socialist ends. Jiang aims to counter the doubt that a turn to capitalist market economy violates the belief in the superiority of socialism. He continues with the "Two Hands Grasp" principle, one hand firmly grasps material civilization, the other firmly grasps spiritual civilization, in the context of reflecting on the Tiananmen demonstration. The purpose is to stress the necessity for "a strong guarantee in thought correctness and in politics" while developing the economy.

RS 2.0 lays out theoretical foundations and includes stability to preempt any perceived attempt to undermine the CCP's ruling status and economic policy. The re-interpretation is about self-rationalization as well. As the Tiananmen massacre demonstrated, through RS 2.0, the CCP punished those who deviated from the revised ideology and yet their forces were released by the post-Mao revisions in Chinese socialism. RS 2.0 overthrew RS 1.0 that was characterized by the inflexible socialist doctrine of a planned economy and counteracted those who adhered to it. The (re)generation of ideological orthodoxy and accompanying justified internal purge characterize Chinese politics. The shaping and reshaping of the PRC's identity is a discourse of institutionalized power relations centered on the CCP. At one level, it can be argued that China's identity was changed as it changed economic policy. At a higher level of analysis, its identity

persevered because whatever changes came into play, they still aim to reconsolidate the CCP's monopoly of power.

Actors and Their Relations with the PRC in the Chinese Worldview

From its founding, the country's worldview has been global and it has prescribed itself a role of making the world a better place. The issue for analysis after 1979 is how engaged China "can" and will be with others. Domestic reforms beginning at the end of the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s already started the process. Rapprochement with the USSR also began in the second half of the 1980s. Therefore, the end of the Cold War did not bring about these changes but created a new international climate which facilitates China's long-term growth and interactions with other countries. The PRC describes the post-Cold War politics as multipolarity. Under this perceived framework, China readjusted the images of itself and others and put on the pretension of inclusiveness in describing the relationships. Discursively reshaping the nature of interactions conditions the PRC's engagements with countries around the world to bolster its economy and political influence. Materialization has fulfilled the discursive links between C and D. Moreover, further material pursuit has conditioned a two-way causality in the pyramid and makes it a self-sustained, mutually reinforced logical cycle.

The PRC characterizes post-Cold War politics as multipolarity. The 1992 and 1997 reports correlated the term with a relatively peaceful environment, i.e., lack of a major war. It is unclear whether the debate in IR about what poles can lead to peace informs the Chinese conception.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ In the field of international relations, scholars hold different opinions as to which type of world balance of power is conducive to war. Some argue for bipolarity whereas others multipolarity. The disputed point is about whether uncertainties that multipolarity generates have positive correlations with war. See Mearsheimer, 2014; Bruce Bueno De Mesquita and David Lalman, "Empirical Support for Systemic and Dyadic Explanations of International Conflict," *World Politics*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1988, pp. 1-20 (specifically p. 4); Thomas J. Volgy and Lawrence E. Imwalle, "Hegemonic and Bipolar Perspectives on the New World Order," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1995, pp. 819-834.

Regardless, it is under a relatively peaceful environment that China adjusted role conceptions of itself and those who it expected to interact with. Differentiation still exists but has become less explicit, especially regarding the role of the US. The rhetoric overall gets the pretension of inclusiveness in that now it says peace and development is every country's wish with which it also identifies and can contribute to.

The NCCPC reports from 1992 onward on the issue of international relations contain three types of actors: those who practice "power politics" and "hegemonism", the vast developing countries to which the PRC considers itself belonging, and countries around the world. Since 1990s, "American imperialism" and "the US" have not appeared in the NCCPC reports. The need to have an enemy in order to affirm a positive self-image as a peace promoter is now fulfilled by "hegemonism" and "power politics." China continues to have the U.S. as the Other because the latter's negative role serves as a contrast to highlight the public goods that the PRC says it can provide internationally and to accentuate China's engagement in world affairs. However, the U.S. is now implied between the lines without being singled out by name.

Developing countries continue to take a role commensurate with the spirit shown in the narratives of Mao's era in that, from a Chinese perspective, their aggregate growing power and influence (including that of the PRC) help direct the world balance of power toward peace by offsetting unpeaceful forces. The differences are forms of expressions. Wordings in Mao's period were coated with ideological labels whereas NCCPC documents from 1992 onward are not. While dropping "Soviet revisionism" and replacing "American imperialism" with "hegemonism" and "power politics" as the targets against which a different force will come to balance, the 2012 report states, "the aggregate capabilities of the new markets and developing countries have increased and international balance of power moves toward the trend that is

conducive for maintaining world peace.” In other words, the growing strength of China and other lesser states are said to be conducive to peace. Additionally, developing countries will remain the targets to which China projects its desire of being seen as a benevolent and generous actor and “friend” who provides developmental and economic assistance. “We will continue to strengthen the solidarity and cooperation with the vast developing countries, deepening traditional friendship.....provide assistance within our bounds of abilities, and safeguard the legitimate demands and common interests of developing countries.”¹⁶⁷

China’s efforts to build its own image as a non-discriminate and altruistic actor occupying a moral high ground reach a climax when the narratives depict a country concerned with world affairs and are able to translate the concerns of the world into the principles which China claims to follow in its foreign policy in the context of decreased discursive ideological antagonism. The 1992 report stated, “peace and development remain the two major themes in today’s world. Development requires peace and peace is unalienable from development. The existence of hegemonism and power politics have always been the major obstacles in solving the issues of peace and development.....The universal concerns in the current international society is what kind of international order to build.....We propose an international order that is based on the principles of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference, equality and mutual benefits, and peaceful coexistence. Countries should be treated as equal members of international society regardless of their sizes, capabilities, and wealth.....Building a new international order is a long-term task. The Chinese people will make continuous efforts together with people around the world for that goal.” The narratives in

¹⁶⁷ See the 2007 NCCPC report. Another example is the 2012 NCCPC report, “China is dedicated to minimizing the gaps between the North and the South and supporting the enhancement of the development of developing countries on a base of their own self-sufficiency.”

the NCCPC reports after 1992 are of the same gist. They repeat the same principles and the Chinese vision for the world.

The attempts to create role congruence are seen in the Chinese projection of its own perceptions of what characterizes the world and what the world needs to what other countries think and need. The principles proposed accordingly may reflect the PRC's own anxiety about the self-identity in that it does not feel it was treated equally in the past and the CCP regime often senses threats of being undermined by external forces, such as "peaceful evolution." The exaggerated victim mentality¹⁶⁸ and regime insecurity parallel with the desire of affirming self-worth through the prospect that it can change the world together with others on the idealistic principles that it proposes. Despite the inclusive rhetoric, after all, it is about the PRC itself.

The less extreme and less dichotomous role conceptions in a, according to the PRC, peace related post-Cold War multipolarity are in line with the Chinese policy of engagement with countries around the world. The international climate makes it relatively easy for China to form complex and multi-layered relations with other countries with no concerns about the consequences of antagonism seen during the Cold War. As indicated in the 1997 NCCPC report, multipolarity presents China with opportunities to participate in the international regime.¹⁶⁹ Years later, it also has become active in establishing new institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Forum of China-Africa Cooperation, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Belt and Road Initiative. It is important to note that in these organizations

¹⁶⁸ The standard practice in the CCP's historiography is to depict China before the coming to power of the CCP as a victim of Western imperialism and Japanese imperialism in order to highlight its claimed capability to lift the Chinese people from misery. See Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

¹⁶⁹ Jiang spoke in the 1997 NCCPC report that "the trend of multipolarity on regional and global levels has attained new development in political and economic realms." He then connected multipolarity to the flourishing of regional and continental organizations. It is obvious that participation in the international regimes was China's objective.

developing countries are the prime targets which the PRC intends to have the designated tasks accomplished in or with.

Multipolarity is not only about the opportunities for engagement. It is also about competition. Multi-poles refers to China, Russia, Japan, India, and the US. While the Chinese narratives often stress cooperation and diplomacy with major powers, they also are explicit about fundamental divergence in interests, especially in the bilateral relations with Japan and the U.S. The PRC's economic and diplomatic initiatives have entered the traditional spheres of influence of other powers. With inclusive rhetoric in the reshaped role conceptions, nevertheless, these activities are strategic and their ultimate goals are political in producing a complete and reciprocal pyramid.

A key component that RS 2.0 sanctions is economic development with relaxed state control. Thirty years after its founding, the PRC still found itself with a shaky foundation. Its situation in 1982 was comparable to 1956 in that the country remained materially weak but there was hope for economic growth. After the GLF failure, the NCCPC reports have again featured the importance of relative material capabilities since 1982. Hu Yaobang in 1982 had the goal of production set to be 2800 billion (RMB) by 2000, more than three times the 1980 figure. He further stated that “the realization of this objective will bring China's national income and industrial and agricultural production to the first ranks in the world.” Five years later, Hu argued in the NCCPC meeting that if the country could not be competitive enough in terms of technology and market share, it would “not gain status in the world.” The PRC was humbled by the fallout of its earlier ideology-driven development mode. While it experienced growth by 1976 with fluctuations, largely boosted by heavy industry, inefficiency and widening inequality plagued the nation. Mao's goal of becoming number one in the world remained a pipe dream.

The 1956 rhetoric that indicates a backward state compared to other major powers finds its embodiment in different expressions twenty-six years later. During the two decades following the beginning of Deng's economic reforms, however, the PRC would undergo rapid economic growth.

As graph 2.0 shows, even though there was a small jump in China's economic growth rate between 2009 and 2010, the overall growth rate has been in a gradual decline slope between 2007 and 2018. Four changes in the narratives, appearing in the reports of 1992, 2007 and 2017 respectively, roughly correspond to the development at two different stages: the initial fulfillment of material pursuit and with that foundation the attempts to arrest the receding tide to at least maintain material capabilities at a certain level through overseas expansion.¹⁷⁰ If the first two changes are about developing the material foundation, the last two will be, if not creating another growth wave, the attempt to harness more that the country can spend without weakening the foundations that it already has.

First, against the success of economic reforms,¹⁷¹ the 1992 NCCPC report for the first time explicitly expressed China's interest in taking the role of an international norm builder, with an emphasis on "a new international economic order", aside from the five principles of peaceful coexistence that had been mentioned in Mao's time. None of the reports before 1992 had stated this economic ambition. Ever since, the NCCPC reports have made explicit China's intention to change the world both politically and economically.

¹⁷⁰ This assessment is similar to Lenin's theory that Western imperialism was driven by the need of European capitalist economies to extract super-profits overseas to compensate for the declining profitability of domestic industries.

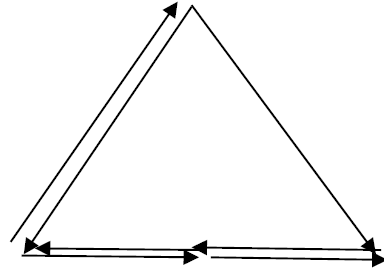
¹⁷¹ According to World Development Indicators, the average growth rate of GDP from 1980 to 1989 is about 9.74%, higher than 5.47% in the 1970s.

By the mid-2000s, China was ready to change its rhetoric to reflect its (inter)dependence with the world and newly gained economic status. The 2007 NCCPC report fulfilled the link between C and D and has the relations between B and D become a two-way causality. In the report, the PRC prides itself with the achievements made under the leadership of the CCP. “Our Party implements modernization plan.....Our economy.....jumped to the fourth largest economy in the world and the third rank in combined amount of exports and imports compared with other countries.....China’s development not only leads its people steadily toward wealth and wellness but also makes significant contributions to the world economy and human civilization.” The rhetoric in this paragraph shows heightened confidence in Beijing’s ability and external influence. On one hand, there is a domestic/international distinction when it comes to development. On the other, “human civilization” blurs the line; from the text, the CCP is claiming that it makes contribution to the entire human race. What Beijing does not explicitly state is that, with its economy wedded to a world capitalist system without its domestic institutions being free-market oriented, the PRC is dependent on others for continuous growth. The 2007 document writes that “[China] will develop itself through maintaining world peace, and maintain world peace through developing itself.” Now, the arrow is not only pointing to D from B, but also from D to B, and eventually to A¹⁷² (see pyramid 3.1).

¹⁷² For further discursive evidence. Jiang Zemin stated in 1992 report that “socialism is an entirely brand-new institution in mankind’s history and it will inevitably replace capitalism.....The flourishing of socialist enterprise with Chinese characteristics will make major contributions to the progress of mankind.” This set the pyramid in comparison with the western institutions. See Chapter 4 for more examples of institutional comparison. For the mutual influence between B and D, the 2012 report writes, “develop the self through seizing and creating the opportunities of a peaceful international environment, maintain and promote world peace through self development.” (通过争取和平国际环境发展自己，又以自身发展维护和促进世界和平) The 2017 report writes, “...insist on building a shared community for mankind, The dream of the Chinese people and the dream of the peoples in different countries are interconnected. The realization of the Chinese Dream depends on a peaceful international environment and a stable international order. We must have the view that considers both domestic and international chessboards at the same time, forever walk on a path of peaceful development and uphold the opening strategy of mutual benefits and win-win.....forever be the

Pyramid 3.1

A: advantages of socialism (a proxy of or channeling superior mentality)



B: domestic development

C: material strength

D: world peace/world economy

Instead of seeing the 2007 report as a signal that China's growth rate will continue to climb, the expression that links B and D symbiotically together may actually reflect (unstated) Chinese needs to depend more on foreign markets; with its economy deeply wedded to a world capitalist system without its domestic institutions being free-market oriented, it can only sustain the growth through expansion because of saturation in domestic consumption.

The jump in growth rate between 2009 and 2010 however was not lasting and did not change the trend that all growth has been in decline between 2007 and 2018. As the result, the

promoter of world peace. (坚持推动构建人类命运共同体。中国人民的梦想同各国人民的梦想息息相通，实现中国梦离不开和平的国际环境和稳定的国际秩序。必须统筹国内国际两个大局，始终不渝走和平发展道路、奉行互利共赢的开放战略.....始终做世界和平的建设者、全球发展的贡献者、国际秩序的维护者。) Accordingly, the mutual influence of B and D are present. The report also exemplifies the pyramid 3.1. under the first sub-headline, several paragraphs explain China's newly gained socialist achievements in the past five years, in the areas of economy, diplomacy, thought education, other domestic issues, and military. Diplomacy is directly linked to the building of a shared community for mankind and world peace. These achievements are said to, as the third section under the sub-headline, "the guidelines for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era," demonstrates, reflect socialist spirits and follow socialist guidelines. Therefore, the links between A and B and A and D are present. In addition, this section identifies "the leadership of the CCP" as "the biggest advantage of Chinese socialist institutions." (中国特色社会主义制度的最大优势是中国共产党领导). In other words, "a shared community for the mankind" embodied by the mutual connections between B and D will be the result of Chinese socialism and the claimed ability of the CCP.

third discursive change came in 2017. Rarely do the publicly available Party documents convey direct connections between Chinese institutions and China's international influence. This changed in 2017. According to the text, "Chinese socialism has entered into a new era.....This means that China's socialist path has continued to develop. So have relevant theory, institutions, and culture. *[Chinese experience] expands modernization options for developing countries that wish for rapid growth..... [Chinese socialism] contributes Chinese wisdom and Chinese measures in the solution of mankind's problem* (emphasis added)." The PRC's political, economic, and social institutions have become one of the selling points for the Chinese Dream.¹⁷³ The idea that "socialist institutions" of Chinese style are not just good for China's domestic development but also a mechanism that will help solve many issues human beings now face is not entirely new. The 1956 document analyzed above carries a similar point. After hibernating for 60 years, the connections between A and D are now reemphasized. The change is that the new version goes one step further in narrative sophistication and affirms Chinese determination in overseas expansion.

Another change in 2017 is about means and methods in Xi Jinping's plan to make the country great again, which was also the national objective in previous decades. However, there are some noticeable differences in means and methods. As graph 3.0 shows, following Mao's

¹⁷³ Building upon "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" that originally appears in 2002, the Chinese dream is a new phrase included in the 2017 document. It comprehensively captures every aspect of national development including economy, military, and political and social institutions. Its realization is two phased with fifteen years in the interval, from a moderately prosperous society in all-around way in 2020, to socialist modernization in 2035 and a strong and modernized country characterized by socialism in 2049. The word "rejuvenation" indicates a return of assumed past glory that was the aggregate result of both internal and external strength. The Chinese Dream thus by no means is inward-looking, as the 2017 text states, "[China] will persistently promote a community of a shared future for mankind. The dream of the Chinese people is closely related to that of the people in other countries. Realization of the Chinese Dream depends on a peaceful international environment and a stable international order.....[China] will always be a promoter of world peace and a contributor of global development."

death, ideological zeal was attenuated and “revolutionary” and “struggle” make fewer appearances from 1982 to 2017, compared to the previous decades. “Peace” saw an upward trend from 1982 to 1997 before a drop in 2002. Hu Jintao’s years again witnessed another mild increase in use of the word. However, in 2017, “peace” decreases to 20 times, the lowest point after 1987 and even lower than the 25 times in 2002. Another phenomenon that makes 2017 different from previous years is the increased use of “revolution” and “struggle.” What usually accompanies these two words are the policies that set major changes in the society, in the polity, in the Party, in the economy, and in governance. The implementation of these policies has high positive correlations with domestic power struggle. In the post-Deng period, “struggle” in the text has often referred to anti-corruption struggle and military struggle. The former already appeared in Jiang Zemin’s NCCPC reports and has been used ever since. That “struggle” rises to 23 instances in 2017 indicates a higher level of power play in the Chinese politics, which was heralded by intensified anti-corruption campaigns and various reforms under Xi Jinping. Twenty-three times is the highest in the entire period after Mao’s death. Not even the years of 1982 and 1987 when the country underwent revolutionary economic reforms had such a high count. Meanwhile, 3 out of the 23 instances refer to “military struggle.” The term first reappeared in 2007, only once. The 2012 document mentions it twice. “Military struggle” is about both peacetime deterrence and wartime fighting capabilities beyond the homeland.¹⁷⁴ Since NCCPC reports summarize development in the past five years and set out basic guidance for the next five years, military expansion, including outposts for military uses and activities short of war, is predicted to persist. To make the country great again, the PRC under Xi takes a two-

¹⁷⁴ For detailed explanation, see chapter 6.

pronged strategy; one struggles against internal opponents and the other against external enemies to spread influence. A drop in the “peace” count is commensurate with strategic offensiveness.

The above four discursive novelties are related to deeper changes in China’s economic structures. The policy of “Bring in, Go global” (引進來，走出去)¹⁷⁵ that officially appeared in the 2002 report (double check this fact) and was already made public near the end of the 1990s is designed to foster domestic industries and encourage them to invest overseas. This policy took place after foreign direct investments brought the initial success in economic growth and building trade networks in modern-day commerce. Therefore, by 2007 and entering into 2010s, despite its slowing economic growth, the PRC already has the dual motors, FDI and domestic enterprises that have sizable and growing shares in the world market, to fuel the economy. Despite the fluctuations in GDP, China has improved its economic structure in a way that allows it to at least sustain material strength at a level that makes possible military modernization and technological advancement at a lower cost. Accordingly, the increasing assertiveness in the Chinese narratives, from adding the reshaping of world economic order to the agenda to specifying the causal relations of economic development to the world and a resurrection of Chinese institutional advantages to mankind, has more to do with economic structure, instead of GDP growth, that requires global interdependence to sustain the economy, and reflects the PRC’s conviction that it will be a global actor unswervingly. The first two changes are related to developing material foundation and the last two are, based on the foundation that it already has, the attempts to muster more from global resources for the country to utilize.

As the improved pyramid shows, material strength is only one node, a means, in the belief triangle that, in essence, is about the greatness of the Chinese nation and the CCP. Material

¹⁷⁵ Many articles in the English *Qiushi* journal uses the translation of “going global”, instead of “going out.”

amalgamation is to serve the desire to have others' respect. China's global activities need to be understood through the pyramid that is based on the PRC's discursive construct. As to how they are strategic, the reasons for why China's behavior has not met with greater resistance across the globe can be informative. For a country which intends to spread influence, multi-poles in a peaceful environment may not pose great challenges as it would in a tension-charged climate. Because of the peaceful climate, it may not even require military solutions to obtain markets and resources in foreign territories. As cooperation and economic development attract the widest spectrum of audience in both developing and developed countries, the PRC is using economic means, also a lower cost venue, to stake out shares in different parts of the world. It is not merely minimizing the cost but also maximizing gains. Military operations extract finance while economic means cost little and may accrue earnings. An imperfect and simplified example will do the explanation. If economic deals can add 15 millions to the national savings, a military operation that costs 5 millions will incur 20 millions loss because not only will earnings from economic deals not come true, but the country also has to pay for what it spends.

The narratives of the NCCPC reports about international politics from 1992 onward were formed with a belief that the world is moving toward multipolarity. In them, multipolarity, peaceful international climate, and less extreme role construction are associated, which indicates that the advocacy of multipolarity may change depending on changing conditions. The PRC emphasis on it stems from Beijing's view that the term is highly correlated with the post-Cold War peace which will help the country develop. That Chinese narratives often state the need to seize the strategic opportunities offered by the post-Cold War environment while making efforts to prolong such climate indicates that the PRC is highly conscious about the international

security dynamics.¹⁷⁶ As long as China perceives that situations are changing, it may also change the rhetoric and readjust the roles of the self and others to rationalize policy shifts. All these can be done through an othering process to produce dichotomous and opposing images of a righteous self versus the immoral other; to justify Beijing's policy shifts, others, in China's framing, are to take the blame for a deterioration of relationship or international cordiality. The PRC had indirectly cast a negative role to the US without directly pointing out the US in the post-Cold War period. This discursive insinuation has in recent years shifted to a direct labeling. A discussion of and a comparison among the 2017 foreign policy white paper (*China's Policies on*

¹⁷⁶ Discursive evidence is presented as below. "The report to the Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC states that China is still undergoing an important period of strategic opportunity for development, and therefore needs to accurately judge the changing nature and conditions of this period, seize all available opportunities, and respond calmly to challenges. *At present, the international situation is generally stable, and the balance of power between countries is tilting in a direction that is favorable to the preservation of world peace. This, together with China's increasing national strength and global influence, has placed China in a more favorable position to seize and make the most of an important period of strategic opportunity for its development. However, we also need to realize that our development is coming up against increasing risks and challenges, and that the task of preserving and making good use of a second decade of important strategic opportunity will be an arduous one.* In order to gain a correct understanding of the changing nature and conditions of this period, the key lies in understanding that opportunities and challenges are both mutually complementary and mutually interchangeable. Therefore, we need to be adept at finding opportunities amidst complex conditions, at seizing opportunities in changing situations, and at creating opportunities in response to risks and challenges (emphasis added)" See, "A New Milestone for the Socialist Diplomatic Theory with Chinese Characteristics," English *Qiushi*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2013. English translation original; Another *Qiushi* article writes, "We have worked to maintain the important period of strategic opportunities for China's development by actively promoting and managing relations with various parties. We regard the first two decades of the 21st century as an important period of strategic opportunity for China's development. Under this new situation, the fundamental task of our diplomatic work must be to secure this period of opportunity." The author continues to laud various Chinese efforts in diffusing regional tension, managing some world issues and facilitating international cooperation as contributions to stability and peace. The above views and assessments are laid out in the context that the years before had been peaceful and the prospect of peace in the future remains. The article writes, "The international situation has remained predominantly peaceful over the past year." With a recognition of challenges ahead, it nevertheless states, "However, on the whole, the opportunities will outweigh the challenges. We must adhere to the path of peaceful development, pursue an open strategy of mutual benefit, and promote the building of a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity." The author sees the making of a future harmony and peace, when he discusses the prospect of 2012, to be interlinked with China's development that requires deepening ties between the PRC and other countries. See, Yang Jiechi, "China's Diplomacy in 2011," English *Qiushi*, vol. 4, no.2, 2012. English translation original; the associations between China's development, strategic opportunity and peace can also be found in many Chinese *Qiushi* articles. For instance, Zhang Yunling [张蕴岭] "Have A Thorough Understanding of the International Environment That Overlaps With Our Period of Strategic Opportunity." [深刻认识我国战略机遇期面临的国际环境], *Qiushi*, issue 24, 2015.

Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation), the 2015 defense white paper, and the 2019 defense white paper will show how this process takes place when the PRC perceives an environment with growing tension without sensing the immediate arrival of a major war even though the climate revealed by the narratives tilts *a bit* toward that direction. The discursive evolution that is about to be presented demonstrates the subtleties of a Chinese realpolitik view of world politics.

The 2017 foreign policy white paper came out against the background of the American deployment of THAAD in South Korea and the decision made by the 2016 UN Arbitration regarding the South China Sea that favored the appeals of the Philippines, one of the claimants on the SCS issue. Paralleling Beijing's perception of growing regional tension is the view that international peace remains the main trend for the future and/or is obtainable.

The paper expresses direct opposition to the deployment of THAAD and points out the U.S. and South Korea are guilty of "severely destroying the regional balance of power." The reading on this part does not contain the slightest possibility about cooperation and compromises. The narratives on territorial disputes however are more nuanced. While the PRC states its ownership over the Senkakus (the Diaoyu islands) and the SCS, the wording regarding the former slides toward dialogues and coordination to reach consensus but regarding the SCS, China sees the possibility of conflict. The prospect that China will be able to create a *fait accompli* in the SCS by island reclamations and the establishment of military facilities due to a favorable regional balance of power compared to the East China Sea where it competes with Japan may explain the differentiated discursive treatment of these territorial disputes.

After stating China's undisputable sovereignty over the SCS, the paper goes on to emphasize a peaceful resolution of the disputes, continuous negotiation on the SCS Code of Conduct with neighboring countries, and close dialogues with ASEAN (Association of Southeast

Asian Nations). “Mutual benefits” and “win-win” do not mark the final note for this issue. The tone shifts to address a (possible future) conflictual scenario and China’s reaction to it. Because the narratives are typical of Chinese rationalization, it deserves a lengthy quotation:

“China resolutely opposes certain countries’ provocations of regional disputes for their selfish interests. China is forced to make necessary responses to the provocative actions which infringe on China’s territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and undermine peace and stability in the South China Sea. No effort to internationalize and judicialize the SCS issue will be of any avail for its resolution, it will only make it harder to resolve the issue, and endanger regional peace and stability.”¹⁷⁷

The PRC assigns to itself the role of an actor which exercises restraint and opts for cooperation and conciliation while blaming others for stirring up troubles in a way that forces it to react to the event. Through an othering process, China defends its action by framing the dispute as a moral issue with itself on the right side. By incorporating the latest events, China recognizes the rising tension. Meanwhile, it maintains the discursive consistency of peace, either as an assessment of future world politics or as a public good that China believes it can deliver. The question is what informs this optimism. To answer this question is to analyze how the PRC defines peace. The paper embodies the idea of multipolarity and its associated peace connotation. This can be seen in the identification of the five poles and an overall cooperative tone that the paper carries. In the Chinese narratives, whether the international climate is projected to be peaceful depends on the

¹⁷⁷ Original text: 中国坚决反对个别国家为一己私利在本地区挑动是非。对于侵犯中国领土主权和海洋权益、蓄意挑起事端破坏南海和平稳定的挑衅行动，中国将不得不作出必要反应。任何将南海问题国际化、司法化的做法都无助于争议的解决，相反只会增加解决问题的难度，危害地区和平与稳定。

assessed likelihood of use of force with at least two major powers involved and taking the opposite stances. The official documents in the post-Deng period have followed this logic in evaluating the foreseeable development of world politics.¹⁷⁸ The nature of threats that the 2017 white paper identifies is not the possibility that major powers are likely to end up with armed conflicts in the course of competition. It is about the wrestling between actors whose material capabilities are asymmetrical, for instance, North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues, or disputes that involve major powers and whose nature is long-term.

The strategic landscape that Chinese documents present is the concurrence of multiple poles and peace defined by the lack of armed conflicts between at least two major states in the post-Cold War period. The 2017 security paper further clarifies that the geographical center where major powers interact is and will be Asia-Pacific.¹⁷⁹ Even though such idea is recently written down, it predates the paper's publication. According to the PRC, in this prolonged period (post-Cold War decades and first decades of the 21st century), its primary policy is peaceful development. Very often, this goes hand in hand with the promise that China will never take an expansionist and hegemonic path as the U.S., Japan, and the rest of the colonial powers did historically. In the PRC's definition, so long as the means is not a military solution of aggressive and offensive nature which it uses to describe the deeds of the west, its behavior is not expansionist and hegemonic and thus is peaceful. Seeing this logic in the discursive context of

¹⁷⁸ For instance, the defense white papers explicitly contrast “informationized limited war” against a major war or a world war. These white papers indicate a Chinese view that a major war or a world war is not likely to occur in the near future. See detailed discussion in chapter 6.

¹⁷⁹ The 2017 paper writes: “To promote peace and seek stability and development is the strategic goal and common aspiration of most countries in the region. Political mutual trust among countries has been strengthened, and major countries have frequently interacted and cooperated with one another. To address differences and disputes through negotiation and consultation is the major policy of countries in the region.”

maintaining a peaceful environment for domestic development, China will prefer non-military solutions to spread influence but it does not rule out use of force. When the use of force becomes an option, it will be rationalized as self-defense and restoration of peace, to avoid the labeling of aggression.

From a Chinese perspective, peace in a multipolar world equates to the lack of war between major states. This definition may explain why the 2019 defense white paper adheres to the tone that the world is “increasingly multipolar” and “peace, development and win-win cooperation remain the irreversible trends of the times”, even though it recognizes the growing tension and does not refrain from listing the deeds of other major states for their contributions to growing international competition. A comparison between the 2015 and 2019 defense white papers highlights this point.

Both white papers share two similarities in their assessments of the security landscape.¹⁸⁰ First, the Asia-Pacific is becoming “the world economic and strategic center [of gravity]” and is where major powers compete for their interests. Second, in describing the world politics, hegemonism and power politics are placed in parallel with the rising trend of world peace. However, the latter overrides the former and as the 2015 paper writes, “in the foreseeable future, a world war is unlikely.” Within this broad framework, the 2019 paper is more detailed and organized in terms of threat perceptions and identification of unstable factors. The eventful years before the paper’s publication may explain why the sections dealing with international security dynamics receive more elaboration. In addition, it reflects a shift in China’s perception of power dynamics in that major power competition has kicked off and entered the first stage. In the 2019 version, security assessments are divided into four parts: “the international strategic landscape”,

¹⁸⁰ Quotations used here come from the English version of the two white papers.

“the Asia-Pacific security situation,” “China’s security risks,” and “global military competition.” In 2015, all of them are grouped under “national security situations.” The difference goes beyond a simple formality matter of labeling.

In the 2019 paper, specific countries and their deeds are identified, instead of generalized phrases and statements, to form the narratives suggesting that they are responsible for international tension. Aside from the US and Japan which have frequently appeared in the text, Russia, NATO, EU, India, Australia, Germany, France, and UK are included as contributors to rising competition. Unlike previous white papers, Chinese criticism of the US is straightforward. It writes, “The US has adjusted its national security and defense strategies, and adopted unilateral policies. It has provoked and intensified competition among major countries, significantly increased its defense expenditure, pushed for additional capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defense, and undermined global strategic stability.” This contrasts with the discursive construct that implies the PRC is a cooperative actor. Take the section of “the Asia-Pacific Security Situation” as an example.

The U.S. and Australia are identified as countries who try to enhance military alliance in the region with the latter also aiming at a greater role. Japan is included in the same paragraph but with more emphasis on its attempts to act with fewer restraints and to become “more outward-looking” through “circumvent[ing] the post-war mechanism” that limits the operations of its Self-Defense Forces. These trouble-making states are discursively juxtaposed with a community that aspires for stability and inclusiveness and in which China plays a role. In the beginning paragraph of this section, it writes, “Asia-Pacific countries are increasingly aware that they are members of a community with shared destiny.” Following this sentence are the cooperative examples of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China-ASEAN Defense Ministers’

Informal Meeting and other ASEAN related forums. This paragraph continues, “SCS is generally stable and improving as regional countries are properly managing risks and differences,” despite the facts to the contrary. Without mentioning the increasing tension in the SCS, the PRC creates a false consciousness by indicating that Southeast Asian countries and China are in the same boat as they all belong to “a community with shared destiny.”

China does not directly state that it leads regional cooperative efforts, but it is a major player in the aforementioned multilateral platforms and on the SCS issue. Meanwhile, unlike the 2015 defense paper that frames the SCS as a matter between Chinese sovereignty and provocations from neighboring countries who are not specified but apparently refer to Southeast Asian states as well external countries’ interference, the opposing images of self-rights protector and intruders are removed in the 2019 paper. The main actors, China and Southeast Asian countries, both of which however are not specified in the text, but rather implied by “regional countries” (except for the U.S. who is “the external country” and is not even considered to be an actor on the SCS issue), now become cooperators. The puzzle is why the narratives state what entirely contradicts the reality, especially deteriorating relations with the U.S.

The fact that the PRC does not acknowledge the actions and counteractions between itself and the U.S. against the unstated and ongoing background of itself being able to create *faits accomplis* without effective countervailing measures from opposing countries in the past years creates the momentum for it to exclude the U.S. from the picture and frame the issue as a matter that is under the “cooperative” control of regional countries. To refrain from explicitly declaring further advancement of its interests in the SCS and to make the issue sound like it has been temporarily settled based on coordinated management fit the rhetoric of inclusiveness that China has been propagating. Furthermore, it seems that the PRC is framing its interests as the common

interests of all. China does not directly state that it leads regional cooperative efforts, but it is a major player in the aforementioned multilateral platforms and on the SCS issue. By silencing opposing voices and distorting international perceptions of territorial disputes, China provides a façade of peace for its expansion and, as an unstated but implied statement, altercates to the role of Southeast Asian countries its own wish that these countries will acquiesce to its interests in the SCS, as shown in the sentence that countries are aware of themselves belonging to a “community with shared destiny,” a phrase that was coined by the CCP.

What Chinese documents show is an evolving international politics from a Chinese lens and the role of the PRC therein. While recognizing that destabilizing factors have gained more force, the 2019 defense paper nonetheless states that the force for peace is on the rise as well. The result is a temporary equilibrium. The opening sentences of the international strategic landscape section state, “As the realignment of international powers accelerates and the strength of emerging markets and developing countries keeps growing, the configuration of strategic power is becoming more balanced. The pursuit of peace, stability and development has become a universal aspiration of the international community with forces for peace predominating over elements of war. However, international security system and order are undermined by growing hegemonism, power politics, unilateralism and constant regional conflicts and wars.” Emerging markets and developing countries including China are representatives of the international community who aspire for peace whereas major states are sources of security challenges. The unstated differentiation between the camp of China and developing countries and that of other world powers is indicated by this paragraph and the organization seen in the section of “the Asia-Pacific Security Situation” where the positive Chinese role is implied by the paragraph that mostly focuses on the claimed cooperation between the PRC and countries in Central Asia and

Southeast Asia versus the collective negative image of the U.S, Japan, and Australia in a separate paragraph. This power equilibrium is not seen in the previous defense white papers. More importantly, the paper hints that China is leading these “irresistible trends” of peace and development with smaller states in the Asia-Pacific. The height of the trade war with the U.S. and diplomatic tension with other major powers did not discursively reduce Chinese confidence in its abilities to shape the world order to its favor. Despite the assertive rhetoric and deeds, China may not see itself involved in conflicts with the US and/or other powers in the coming years. Not until it is prepared to use force will the evaluation of continuous peace change and, according to its history of image shaping, the PRC most likely will, consistent with its past practices, blame its opponents for creating the conditions that make it impossible for it to refrain from using force itself.

The Chinese narratives contain many nuances and the logic is not always straightforward. Even though China perceives that there are increasing unstable factors changing the international climate, the writings nevertheless emphasize that international peace remains the main trend for the future and/or is obtainable. This may indicate less about China’s confidence in the continuous peace and a Chinese view that the current disputes in East Asia can be easily solved in the foreseeable future than about an attempt to shape international perceptions with the view¹⁸¹ that the PRC, a representative of the forces for peace, is on the right side and the peaceful force that it leads is on the rise because many other countries are siding with it, as shown in how Beijing has framed the positions of smaller countries in the region (i.e., a community) in a way that opposes the collective aggressive role of the US, Japan, and Australia, as viewed from a

¹⁸¹ These three white papers have their English translations and thus it is safe to argue that Beijing intends to convey this message to foreign audiences.

Chinese perspective. Meanwhile, a role construction that *explicitly*, contrary to the post-Cold War indirect practice, separates the self and the Other by opposing roles, clearly indicates a Chinese perception of a less peaceful international environment. This seeming oxymoron in the Chinese perception of world politics when understood in the context of a more solvent Chinese economy compared to its Maoist past, however, reflects the PRC's view that the gap in capabilities between Washington and Beijing has narrowed and, from the latter's official standpoint, bilateral relations is about power transition.

A Chinese article authored by a researcher of the Contemporary World Research Center captures the dynamics of absolute and relative increase of Chinese influence and strength. The article first briefs the history, from a humiliated state situated "at the margin of the international system" to the current success that moves China "to the center of the world stage". Followed by examples of the country "pro-actively shouldering responsibilities of a permanent member of UN Security Council" is the Chinese version of world order and the comparative roles of the U.S. and China regarding their international influence. The author continues to assess that the U.S., albeit still the only superpower, is in decline and this situation parallels with "rising and unstoppable voices of constructing a new equal and reasonable international political economic order." Here, the contextual indication is that multipolarity has gained one more step and becomes the "irresistible trend of the time" and the Washington-dominated world system will become history. To further shore up one's psychology, the essay argues for Beijing's rising influence and reputation as the Chinese socialist path attracts many developing countries and instills "fear in the hegemon" who exports western democracy around the world.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Yu Sui [俞 邃] "The Profound Changes in the Relationships between China and the World" [中国与世界关系的深刻变化], *Qiushi*, issue 23, 2015.

As much as multipolarity is stressed, caution is required in seeing it as China's preferred world order permanently. In the beginning, the term was a response to the collapse of the USSR, based on which China started to project a future of the coexistence of multiple poles. Meanwhile, post-Cold War narratives, military and non-military alike, also condemn an order with the US as the sole superpower and see Washington in decline.¹⁸³ Therefore, the advocacy for multipolarity aims to free the PRC from the perceived threats from Moscow and Washington. Since the term was proposed as the result of Beijing's evaluations of world politics, multipolarity may be more a temporarily preferred balance of power in which the PRC believes that it has more room to maneuver in obtaining material strength and spreading political influence.

The Old Is New, The New Is New

The pyramid that is seen today is made possible by the initial fulfillment of material conditions and the need to continue the pursuit. However, the ideational framework dates to the 1956 report. Despite the fact that the two triangles were produced at different times, the most fundamental logic of power relations did not change. Sinicized socialism that channels the mentality of Chinese superiority, which is shown by a discursive comparison with the negative effects of capitalism and western democracy on both internal and external affairs, has the

¹⁸³ Another discursive example that juxtaposes a declining US and a rising China can be found in an English *Qiushi* article. According to this article, the 2008 financial crisis has made "positive changes to the international balance of power" by shifting toward multipolarity." The reason is that the US-led west has decreasing grip on global economy whereas China and other newly emerged developing countries continue to grow. Although modern capitalism is not "on the brink of collapse", its golden age already passed. On the contrary, the article continues, "socialism with Chinese characteristics has captivated the world with its incredible achievements, demonstrating the superiority of the emerging socialist system." The essay cautions that since "the capacity of capitalism to make self-adjustments cannot be underestimated", "the replacement of capitalism by socialism on a global scale will involve a drawn out, bitter, and complicated struggle." Nevertheless, the article carries a raised tone in declaring the verdict of the fates of two systems: "The reality is that there are two basic systems in the world at present, one being capitalism, and the other being socialism. The conflict between these two systems and two paths constitutes one of the major conflicts in the world at present, and the struggle between them will decide the future of the world." Ru Xin, "Two Paths, Two Futures," English *Qiushi*, May 28, 2013. <http://english.qstheory.cn/magazine/201302/201305/t20130528_234925.htm>.

commanding height however it is interpreted. Changes affect the means to the end, not the end itself. The act of re-interpretation of Chinese socialism along with new economic policies aims to re-assert the self and re-consolidate the status of the CCP. The ideology in the political realm has not changed.

In the Chinese worldview, there is always some Other to be compared with. In the role casted by the PRC, the Other wreaks havoc in the world whereas China is a peace maker and promoter of harmony. At the beginning, the enemy was “American imperialism”. It then shifted to the Soviet Union during the 1970s after ideological polemics and border clashes. The US again become the number one nemesis following the collapse of the USSR. In the post-Mao era, however, the Party documents do not explicitly single out the US, but rather use “hegemonism” and “power politics” as surrogates. The framing of the PRC as the leader of the developing countries continues the line established during Mao’s period. The difference is a greater degree of engagement in all aspects that has come as the result of wealth accumulation. Despite an attenuation in the negativity of the opponent’s role and an accentuation of the positiveness in the self-image in the post-Mao decades, changes occur within the same ideational structure of the triangle.

The sense of cooperativeness revealed in the reimagination of the roles is associated with a greater implementation of the United Front strategy in the post-reform decades that originally was spelled out in Mao’s years. In the post-Cold War decades, Beijing has altercasted to the identity of other countries its own preferences that peace and development are universal priorities. In so doing, China hopes to persuade others to adopt policies that play to its advantage by framing issues as shared interests, and China’s outward expansion is meant to facilitate that end. Through the construction of role congruence, Beijing engages with countries around the

world, including advanced economies, developing countries and even its erstwhile enemies as well. Cooperation however is not the end. Proving and having others accept the idea that the PRC is more capable and more ethical than other powers is as the connections pointing back to A demonstrate. Cooperation is a means in the realpolitik of competition. The developing countries remain a primary locus of the PRC's foreign policies. They are the destinations of diplomatic visits, homes to Chinese military bases and logistical outposts, and the recipients of Chinese aid and investments.

The triangle shows the beliefs of the CCP which are evidenced by its narratives. The Party not only aims to spread its ideas to the domestic population, but also an international audience. The second version of the pyramid applies to the English texts as well. Chapter 4 will draw evidence from the English textual pool of *Qiushi* to show that information aimed at non-domestic and non-Chinese speaking audiences follows the same ideational structure. In other words, the PRC delivers a message that sinicized socialism is good for both China and the world. For the latter, it is not about exporting the Chinese institutional model to developing countries in the same way that Stalin installed soviet-style regimes in Eastern Europe, but rather the restraining effects of the Chinese institutions to prevent the PRC from being aggressive at others' expense and a reflection of the innately good nature of the Chinese nation to bring harmony and prosperity to mankind. The ultimate objective is to have both the domestic population and other countries pay deference to the PRC and recognize the undisputable top position of the CCP domestically and internationally. Socialism is situated at the top of the triangle, as the source of material and spiritual goods, and often equated to the CCP and Chinese superiority in a comparative light over against the inability and destructiveness of the west, demonstrating this political goal. Despite much emphasis on equity and on cooperation instead of confrontation, the

fundamentals of the Chinese worldview conveyed through pyramids 3.0 and 3.1 remain the same and are further reinforced by expanding material capabilities. The language of equity masks the hierarchy that the country prefers. It serves as a better strategy for enticement than outright expression of hierarchy.

In the case of China, the need for domestic development and a global aspiration occur simultaneously. Even though domestic issues demand much attention, it does not mean a reduced possibility to be outward-looking. On the contrary, not only do the Chinese narratives link the fates of both together,¹⁸⁴ the main lines revealed in the 2017 report that internal struggle and external military struggle will take place simultaneously for the long run also provide another confirmation.

The Chinese narratives are not just for the sake of self-defensive reassurance; they provide evidence about the value of proactiveness in strengthening the country and competing with other major powers. If the PRC's goal were purely defensive and its actions passive, linkages between A and D, either direct or mediated by B and C, would not exist in a comparative and competitive context. In other words, the pyramid would not have come to form.

¹⁸⁴ For instance, in laying out how a revived Chinese nation will come true, it is common to see statements like: "We must have the view and the policy to that effect that considers both domestic and international chessboards at the same time." (必须统筹国内国际两个大局).

Chapter 4

Reshaping the International Order: Measuring Assertiveness

The PRC's identity is defined by the historical mission that the CCP will achieve a promised "revived glory" of the Chinese nation. In the realm of foreign policy, the prospect is to make the international order run in a way that China advocates. This new order allegedly will be more peaceful, just, inclusive, and equitable than the current order. The ensuing questions include how to make it happen. The examined narratives suggest three vehicles to deliver the outcome. One is through economic ties with China. Another is "the nature" of Chinese socialism. The last one is the "inclusiveness" of Chinese civilization (or culture). Since economic cooperation has been a constant factor in the texts under analysis and functions more like a self-evident link, this chapter will focus on the latter two mechanisms. Regardless of actual material capabilities, the narratives create an impression that China is ascending while the West is in decline. The Chinese discourse displays a perceived narrowing of the gap between the US and China. It is at this juncture of perceived power transition that there is a rhetorical assertiveness suggested by the "tightness" among different nodes in the belief system.¹⁸⁵ To be specific, the addition of the three vehicles as transmission agents makes the narrative more sophisticated. In measuring discursive assertiveness, the study examines both Chinese and English texts of the *Qiushi* journal. There is no 100 percent overlap between the two versions. The English version

¹⁸⁵ The idea of tightness in the belief system comes from sociology literature and originally refers to group cohesion. However, it is used differently in this research. Sociologist John Levi Martin defines tightness as "the degree to which holding some belief implies holding or not holding other beliefs." This definition works in tandem with the degree of consensus in a certain group. To simply put, higher degree of consensus means higher level of tightness in the belief system. Lower degree of consensus means lower level of tightness. John Levi Martin, Power, "Authority and the Constraint of Belief Systems," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 107, No. 4 (2002), pp. 861-904.

however selects a good amount of articles from its Chinese counterpart while incorporating articles from official newspapers and other official journals.

Qiushi is a journal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It is a biweekly magazine that theorizes Chinese socialism and explains national and foreign policies. The journal encompasses a wide range of topics, from domestic development (economy, culture, military, and governance) and international economy, to world politics and foreign relations. *Qiushi* has advantages when it comes to analyzing the PRC's national/international discourse building and rhetorical sophistication. The main target audiences are the ranking officials of the Party and the People's Liberation Army, the Party members, the leadership groups of enterprises, and educators and propagandists who disseminate the CCP's ideas. The domestic circulation varies, with 1.26 million reported for 2010 and 1.8 million reported for each issue in 2018. Since October 2009, *Qiushi* has published articles in English and the official website claims that the circulation is in more than 100 countries of different regions. In addition, the PRC has digitalized the magazine since 2009 and makes it available at different platforms of social media (*weibo* and *wechat* for instance) to widen the audience base.¹⁸⁶

The journal provides a relatively ideal corpus of texts for the research purposes in this dissertation. As an official organ of literature for thought education, it is theoretical in nature across domestic and foreign affairs. Therefore, the treatment of ideas and logic are to various degrees systematic. This is line with the theorization of Chinese way of justification laid down in the Chapter 2 and with the actuality that Chinese politics always require an endorsement of a

¹⁸⁶ "Introduction of *Qiushi*" [《求是》简介], *Qiushi*, August 20, 2018, <http://www.qstheory.cn/qssyggw/2018-08/20/c_1111961498.htm>; "About the English Edition of *Qiushi* Journal," *Qiushi*, Sept. 19, 2011, <http://english.qstheory.cn/about/201109/t20110919_110886.htm>.

systematic political philosophy-turned ideology. In dealing with internal and external affairs, *Qiushi* also has both Chinese and English versions which other theory-oriented publications do not have. In other words, to fit the purpose of this dissertation, i.e., how the PRC justifies its deeds based on a set of logic(s) that it carries over from its domestic governance to international governance, three elements need to be present in the pool of texts: both domestic issues and international relations are dealt with, having both English and Chinese versions, and it is theoretical in nature. A survey of the PRC's publications shows that *Qiushi* is a relatively ideal choice.

Considering the large volumes of articles publicly available, it is necessary to narrow down the scope of the search. Articles are selected based on the inclusion of “international” (国际) and “order” (秩序). The main theme of an article does not have to be about international order itself. Because international order can appear in different contexts, such as domestic development, maritime interests, economy, diplomacy, military reform, etc., as long as the two words appear in the article separately or jointly with international as adjective, it counts. Not every article with the two words is necessarily relevant to international order, however. It requires reading through each of them and deleting the irrelevant ones. The methods of collection apply to texts in both Chinese and English. Among 593 articles sorted out by CNKI with full-text in the search field,¹⁸⁷ 164 are valid and the rest irrelevant and thus invalid. CNKI does not have the years from 2016 to 2018 but they are available on the *Qiushi* website. Accordingly, from 2005 to 2018, there will be 263 valid articles under examination. In the case

¹⁸⁷ CNKI refers to China National Knowledge Infrastructure. It is an online database where Chinese newspapers, non-academic and academic journals are located.

that the same article appears twice in the same issue,¹⁸⁸ it will only receive the coding once. The English version, however, will only include data from 2009 to 2018 because the English publication was not launched until 2009. There are 94 essays included in the English pool.

In quantifying the textual data, this study differentiates four groups: international order, Chinese institutions, Chinese culture, and general group. Altogether, they inform readers of the interrelations among different concepts/ideas and the degrees of logical tightness and logical assertiveness. Each group contains different labels that code certain phrases and ideas. The article will receive the value of 1 if it fits the definition of a given label. Otherwise, it will have 0. The study incorporates qualitative reading into quantitative coding process and thus it is not merely a test of word frequency which counts the times a certain word/phrase appears. For example, in the general group, a label will count the frequency of the idea that the impact of China's rise will be more peaceful than other powers. The comparison can appear in different forms, in one single or consecutive paragraphs which discuss the negative consequences of other powers' involvement in world affairs and what the PRC can offer. When the article contains such comparison, it will have the value of 1 under that label. For the discussion below, following the definitions of each group, the study will first present and explain statistic results before discursively presenting selected articles from the datasets.

Chinese Texts

In the PRC's narratives, the relations among Chinese institutions (Chinese socialism, Chinese Marxism), Chinese culture (traditions, civilization, philosophies), and a better world

¹⁸⁸ The situation usually occurs in this way. A given article will reappear in a collection of different articles under a new headline. The reason for double appearance is unknown.

order can be summarized in this way. Chinese socialism is rooted in Chinese culture/traditions and Chinese culture is also influenced by the sinicized Marxist culture. Both Chinese socialism and Chinese culture are characterized by their peaceful, inclusive and harmonious nature. Because of their innate goodness, according to Beijing's narratives, Chinese institutions are superior to aggressive Western capitalism and democracy. Compared to Western institutions, the Chinese way of "democratic" governance and the Chinese way of economic development (together called the Chinese path or Chinese model) are said to not only fit the Chinese conditions, but also to be good for the world. Both Chinese institutions and Chinese culture are said to endow the CCP/the PRC with abilities to solve many issues that human beings have been faced with.

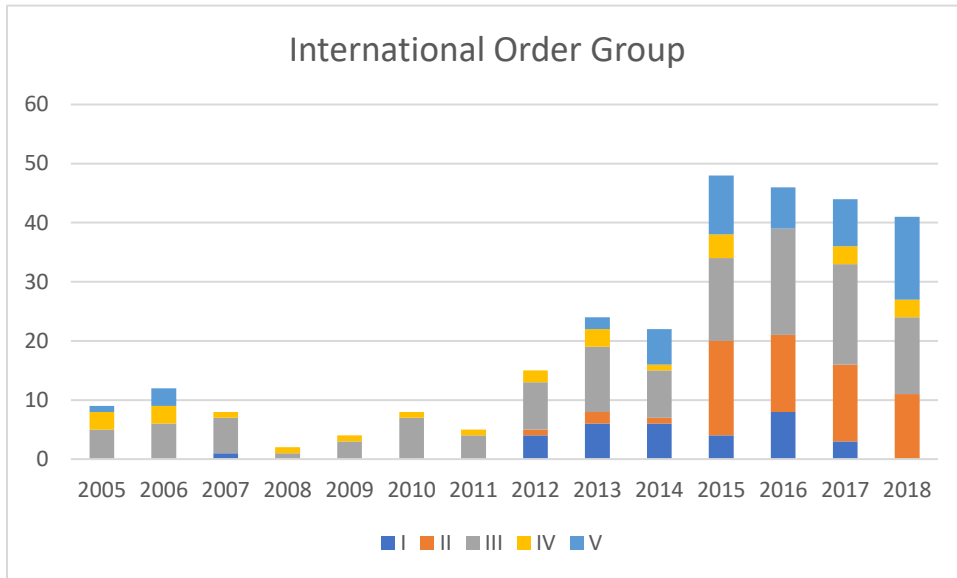
When the PRC's narratives mention "Chinese/China Proposal" (中国方案) as a way to deal with issues ranging from the world economy, ecology, climate change, international relations, war and peace, etc., it is the same justifying rationale, mentioned above, that underlies different policies that Beijing proposes to cope with a variety of issues. For instance, the Belt and Road Initiative as a Chinese foreign policy is justified by the CCP's capabilities to make more equal and mutually beneficial trade relations; the Chinese way of doing business and investment is claimed to be fair and equal. As for the sources of such characteristics, the PRC claims that they come from the peaceful and inclusive nature of Chinese institutions and Chinese culture. Beijing's ambition to reshape world order is reflected in the term, "Chinese proposal," which is rationalized and made as a means for the desired result of a new world order by the claimed inherent goodness of Chinese institutions and Chinese culture. The following analysis will break down each logical node stated above with discursive evidence presented in quantitative and qualitative ways.

International Order

China has used different verbs, such as “reshape”, “reform”, and “build,” to express the intention of making international order run in a way that it advocates. At times, it wraps such intention in the narrative that contains a sense of togetherness, as if a different international order is a common wish of many countries with the PRC as their spokesman, and China and others will work hand in hand for such a goal. It is also the case that, in some texts, while Chinese intention is expressed, the author adds that Beijing does not intend to overhaul the international norms (cite 2016 为引领世界和平发展合作共赢贡献中国智慧), but rather to improve them. In other words, China does not hide its aspiration, but it consciously and tactically tones down the language by which the aspiration is expressed (see graph 4.0).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ X axis is the count of articles and Y axis is year, which applies to the 8 charts in this chapter. The definitions of the four labels are as follows. I): new type/new model of major country relations (新型大国关系); II): new type/new model of international relations (现代国际关系/新型国际关系); III): words that contain the meaning of building, facilitate, promote, reform, rebuild, improve, reshaping international/world order. This label is exclusive to I and II, and the statement is not expressed through foreigners’ voices; IV): same with III, but indicates togetherness with other countries; V): safeguarding/upholding international order or verbs that do not indicate a change of status quo. This label however cannot be understood as the PRC is not intending to change the status quo. It needs to be understood in the following context. When Beijing perceives that certain policies of other major states contravene its interests, it frames the narratives in a way that shapes its role as an actor who upholds the international order and shapes the role of others as a troublemaker who intends to change the post-WWII order.

Graph 4.0



The new type major-power relations primarily refers to relations between the PRC and the U.S. It starts gaining currency since 2012 against the background of relatively cordial bilateral relations before the Trump Administration. This historical context allows China to construct narratives in a way as if international relations is moving toward the direction it formulates and prefers. The policy shift and trade war under Trump remove the contextual premise and thus explain the dwindling number and complete disappearance of the term in 2018. However, lack of amity may not severely hamper the Chinese belief of itself being on a par with the US as the term suggests or how the country intends to continue shaping domestic perception of China being a great power since Xi Jinping’s ascendance to the presidency, despite the consequences of trade war and mounting internal debt problems preceding the trade issues.

Reshaping international order experienced a drop in 2018, but closer examination into the texts reveals no reduced confidence on the Chinese side. In the context of a growing rift with the U.S., the narratives stress that China will safeguard international order which, in the Chinese narratives, is under siege due to American hegemonism related to unfair practices on trade

issues. Guarding international order is an old rhetorical ploy that China evokes when criticizing Japan's past military expansion and alleged "revived militarism" in recent years.¹⁹⁰ It was also used in defending China's position in the 2016 international arbitration case of territorial disputes with the Philippines. What appears to be new in the American context is the additional emphasis on the declining power of the US and the identification (sometimes insinuated) of Washington's policy as the root cause of deteriorating bilateral relations. The PRC blames what other countries are doing as, not explicitly stated in Beijing's narratives, their policies contradict China's interests. It also tries to create the impression that the country is already in an advantageous position to direct international affairs, by protecting international order from these troublemakers. Furthermore, 8 out of 14 articles that have a value of 1 in the column of "safeguarding international order" also have a value of 1 in the column of "the new type of international relations" that China advocates. This means that the PRC still seeks to foster the belief that it is a better candidate to reshape world order. In addition, in 2018, the number of articles that have values of 1 in both columns of "safeguarding international order" and "new type of international relations" that China advocates exceeds the years of 2017 and 2016. By aggregate count, the year of 2018 does not see a diminished trend of Chinese confidence, but rather a growing tendency.

Generalization

The CCP's determination to reshape the world order can be further measured by certain general phrases and ideas. This section aims to capture the overall meanings of the Chinese texts from two situations. First, overall Chinese texts or certain terms can express general meanings

¹⁹⁰ The PRC perceives the domestic discussion of a relaxation of Article 9 within Japan and the policies that relax Japan's involvement in overseas military operations in recent years as attempts to change the post-WWII order which Beijing claims to have helped establish.

that are not captured in the measurements in the groups of Chinese institutions and Chinese culture. For instance, without specifying explicitly a context for comparison (such as institutions or a direct naming of certain countries which the PRC compares the course of its own rising trajectory to), many articles convey the meaning that the impact of China's rise will be peaceful compared to other powers. The narratives may also draw upon foreign voices on a variety of issues or simply a statement without specification of issues to support its own views that the PRC will and needs to undertake a greater leadership role in the world. Second, there are phrases that succinctly represent a set of complex and inter-related ideas, such as "Chinese path" (or Chinese model)¹⁹¹ and "Chinese proposal".

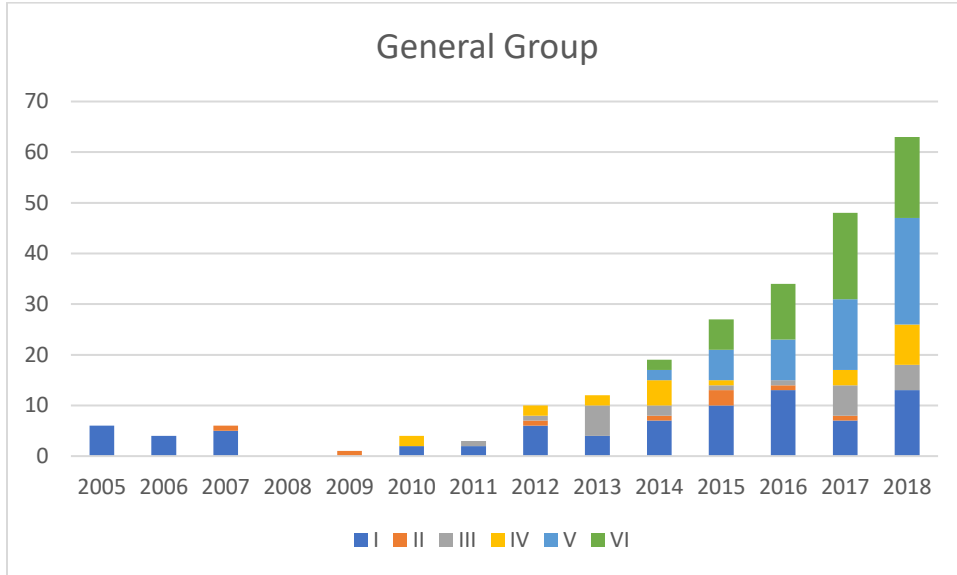
According to the statistical results of the label "international impact of China's rise,"¹⁹² the rhetoric that the rise of China will be more peaceful and beneficial to the international community compared to other powers already started in 2005. However, it is not until 2012, that there is a steady trend in the increasing number of articles that emphasize the international benefits that China can bring through comparison (see graph 4.1).¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ For both Chinese and English datasets, even though "Chinese path" and "Chinese model" are synonyms, Chinese model is not counted. The label of "Chinese path" receives the value of 1 only when "Chinese path" appears.

¹⁹² international impact of China's rise: a strong and growing China behaves differently from other powers. When the narratives mention colonialism, hegemonism, Cold War mentality, and power politics, all of which are the symbols of the West and Japan in the Chinese narratives, in comparison to the peace, harmony, equality, and economic prosperity that the PRC can bring to the international society. Or when China is shaped as a symbol of international peace and the west as source of international conflict. Or when the narratives only generally compare the PRC and other past powers and current powers. This label does not consider the international implications of domestic political and economic institutions in a comparative light.

¹⁹³ The six labels are as follows. I): the international impact of China's rise is different from other powers. The behavior of other powers can be current or past; II): foreign assurance 3 (positive comments that encourage or expect China's leadership, while sometimes not specifically saying "leadership", it expects greater role of China). This is NOT an exclusive label to foreign assurance 5; III): foreign assurance 5 (foreign countries praise china's regional/international proposal about economy, governance or the international norms or foreigners echoes China on all kinds of international issues); IV): Chinese path (中国道路); V): Chinese wisdom (中国智慧); VI): Chinese Proposal (中国方案).

Graph 4.1



The labels of “Chinese path”, “Chinese wisdom”, and “Chinese proposal” aim to measure the PRC’s assertiveness. In a nutshell, these three terms in the examined data pool allegedly are conducive to world peace and development. “Chinese path” usually refers to Chinese socialism, sinicized Marxism, and Chinese institutions. It sometimes also refers to the peaceful development of Beijing’s outward expansion. “Chinese proposal” can be defined as Beijing’s proposed policies or measures, in the fields widely ranging across global issues such as economy, finance, climate change, environment, and counter-terrorism. Global economy and finance are particularly important. For the time span under study, an uninterrupted and dominant theme is the PRC’s emphasis on how its economic strength and initiatives, such as bilateral and multilateral platforms for economic and developmental cooperation, can fuel global growth and provide solutions to the problems in today’s world. “Chinese proposal” does not merely refer to policies, but also embodies a set of idealistic principles that are said to characterize Chinese socialism and Chinese culture, with the latter, according to the CCP’s redefinition, being influenced by sinicized Marxism, and that underpin how Beijing’s proposed policies will be

implemented internationally. Those idealistic principles are about inclusiveness, equity, mutual benefits and harmony, all of which define “Chinese wisdom” and are said to be rooted in Chinese culture and Chinese socialism. Therefore, “Chinese proposal” alone carries three layers of meaning: the cultural traits of the Chinese way of doing things as the PRC describes, Chinese institutions (or Chinese socialism) that materialize these cultural traits, and the proposed policies. In other words, because of all these idealistic benefits reflected in the CCP’s governance, Chinese proposals initiated by the CCP will make the world better, just as Chinese socialist institutions which embody these idealistic principles have created domestic developmental successes. In this sense, “Chinese proposal” can include the meanings of “Chinese path” and “Chinese wisdom.” According to Beijing’s discursive construct, as the section on Chinese institutions will demonstrate, the “Chinese proposal” will make the world a better place, better than that shaped by Western institutions. The PRC’s determination to reshape the world order, as the chart of the international order group shows, is also confirmed by the increasing usage of “Chinese proposal” in the narratives, along with “Chinese wisdom.” The appearance of the term as a catch phrase indicates a growing confidence in the ability of the self and Beijing’s assertive intention to play a more active role of leadership.

The PRC’s needs for overseas markets and resources to maintain material growth along with its concerns about border security have spurred various international initiatives. To create the impression that the world echoes the Chinese view and supports Chinese plans, the narratives have drawn upon foreign assurance more frequently since 2013. A 2017 article shows how the author weaves the narrative of foreign assurance together with Chinese culture, Chinese proposal, and better behavior from the PRC compared to other powers.

Under the subheading of “Chinese Proposal Leading World Changes,” the author claims that Chinese wisdom derived from the Chinese cultural idea of “the world as a community” and its manifested inclusiveness are embodied in the Belt and Road Initiative. In the same paragraph, the author concludes that “the Chinese proposal shows the fundamental directions [for the future] in the face of contemporary global challenges. It fits the common wish of the international society regarding peace, development and cooperation, and thus has won world acclaim.” The narrative again contrasts China’s ethical behavior with the old practice of “zero-sum game” and “the old logic that a strong country will inevitably end up becoming a hegemon.”¹⁹⁴

With the examination of phrases and ideas for the overall directions of the narratives completed, the next two sections, Chinese institutions and Chinese culture, discuss in detail how the logical nodes are connected together through a presentation of the narratives.

Chinese Institutions

To discursively self-assure the superiority of Chinese socialism, the narratives have both stand-alone evaluation of Chinese institutions and comparison with western institutions. Chapter 3 already points out that institutions in the NCCPC reports have internal and external significance. Since the effects are both domestic and international, questions about the importance of Chinese institutions are asked differently. In a domestic context, the question is whether they are good for China. In a global context, the questions are whether they are good for the world and whether other countries can learn from the PRC’s experience. Accordingly, in breaking down the narratives, the research focuses on the findings of the following four combinations:

¹⁹⁴ Qiu Yuan [秋原] “China is the main force that promote stability, development and peace of the world” [中国是促进世界和平稳定发展的中坚力量], *Qiushi*, issue 11, 2017.

1. domestic context X domestic audience
2. domestic context X international audience (this will be mentioned but not analyzed in detail through English texts)
3. global context X domestic audience
4. global context X international audience (this will be studied through the English texts)

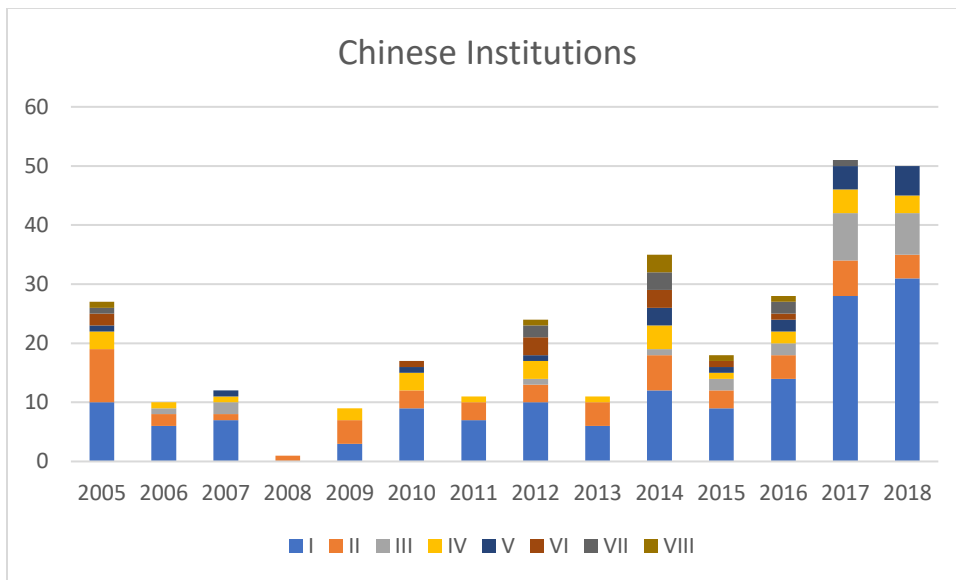
The combinations can further increase to eight if adding stand-alone evaluation and comparison into each equation. However, the sub-categorization would make the discussion trivial. In the first equation, the CCP addresses the domestic population that Chinese institutions are good for national development, either by comparing them to western institutions or not. In the fourth equation, the CCP addresses foreign countries that Chinese socialism can solve global issues and/or other countries can learn from China's governing experience. This again can be done either by comparison with western institutions or simply through self-affirmation.

The findings show the following patterns. In assessing the combined result of the first and the third equations (without differentiation between domestic context and global context), based on the eight labels in the dataset of Chinese *Qiusi* that traces the discursive treatment of Chinese institutions from 2005 to 2018 (see graph 4.2),¹⁹⁵ a steady rhetorical assertiveness about the advantages of Chinese institutions begins from 2014. The discussion here concerns the results of labels 3, 4, and 5. Labels 3 and 5 are exclusive, which means when either of them gets the value of 1, the other will be 0. The articles that get the value of 1 under the labels of either 3 or 5 by

¹⁹⁵ The eight labels are: I) institution: mentioning "Chinese socialism" or Chinese political, economic institutions; II) criticize winstitution: criticizing western institutions including practices of democracy and economic system; III) cinstitutions good for the world/other countries: correlations between Chinese institutions and world peace, prosperity, harmony, etc.; IV) self-compare institutions: which type of institutions fits China, V) self-compare institutions on international level: Chinese institutions can better serve the world/other countries compared to western ones. VI) foreign assurance 1: foreign positive comments about Chinese socialism; VII) foreign assurance 2: foreign comments about the downside of western institutions; VIII) foreign assurance 4: foreign countries see China as a model that they can learn in terms of domestic governance and/or development.

meeting the label descriptions concentrate in the years from 2014 to 2018. Although the idea that Chinese socialism is superior to western capitalism in advancing the interests of the world is not new, China under Xi Jinping has further specified Chinese political and economic institutions as the transmission agents to that effect. The articles that get the value of 1 under the labels of both 4 and 5 also concentrate in the same time span. While the annual statistical result shows that the CCP has been relatively consistent, and with increasing trend, in re-assuring its institutional superiority for domestic governance by comparison, comparing with western institutions in terms of which system will do better for the world is more recent and drives the outcome to cluster in the years from 2014 to 2018.

Graph 4.2



The purpose of quantifying data is to obtain word counts, trace evolution over time, and to assess the overall associations among keywords and logics. Since quantification may not capture the meanings that can only be attained through textual reading based on the assessment of sentences, their relations to paragraphs, and their relations to the entire article, to analyze nuances and details in the Chinese discourse requires coding by reading through each relevant

text. Consider this case: the CCP is using its own voice, not the voices of foreign politicians, experts, or scholars, to argue that Chinese institutions (or Chinese socialism) work better than western institutions (political and economic) in terms of serving the interests of the world (such as promoting international peace and creating economic benefits). This type of case is labeled as “self-comparing institutions on international level” in the codebook. To have a positive value (that is, 1) under this label usually requires passing through some thresholds of logical sequences. First, positive comments about Chinese institutions and negative comments about western ones exist. Second, the impact of institutions, both Chinese and Western, on the world or other countries is specified. Since not every relevant article contains a sentence or consecutive sentences which directly express that Chinese socialism works better than western democracy and capitalism in facilitating world peace and economic prosperity, and because the structure of each article varies, the above two thresholds can appear in various ways. Positive impact of Chinese institutions and negative impact of western ones can find their direct expressions in one sentence, or in the paragraph, or the overall context of the article. Considering the structural variations, to judge whether the text meets the two thresholds requires perusing the contents.

The following examples come from the pool from 2014 to 2018 where self-comparing institutions on the international level has the value of 1. The correlation between Chinese socialism and world peace and prosperity is not new, but over the years, the connections have been further specified and mechanisms laid out. In some articles, the merits of Chinese institutions are directly linked to the self-acclaimed abilities of the Chinese Communist Party. For instance, a 2014 article penned by a socialism research center at the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party unequivocally equates the following phrases: the Chinese path, socialist institutions, combined economy in terms of types of property ownership, and the

leadership of the CCP. To be specific, in the text, the Chinese path is defined by the rest of the terms. After criticizing capitalism for failing to help developing countries develop, it offers a Chinese solution by stating in an opening sentence that “the Chinese path is a path of peaceful development and it can push forward the building of a new world order... The more China gets developed, the more opportunities and leverage developing countries will have in breaking down the old international political economic order.” In other words, according to the Chinese narratives, the stronger the PRC is, the better the world is. In another opening sentence of a different paragraph, the author writes, “the Chinese path upholds the leadership of the Communist Party...this is the fundamental reason for maintaining China’s political stability while conducting fast development.”¹⁹⁶ In other words, the CCP leadership makes a strong China possible and thus makes world peace possible.

Another example is a 2018 article. It describes the CCP as a Party capable of realizing the wellbeing of the people during the modernization process and a Marxist Party which makes hard efforts for the progress of mankind. The same paragraph continues with additional praises about what the CCP can do and concludes that “socialist China...has confidence in building a better world through the China Proposal.”¹⁹⁷ “Socialist China” and, elsewhere in the article, “Chinese

¹⁹⁶ Research Center of the Theory of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics of the Central Party School [中央党校中国特色社会主义理论体系研究中心], “Chinese Path Solves A Series of Difficulties Which Developing Countries Are Faced With In Modernization” [中国道路破解了一系列发展中国家现代化难题], *Qiushi*, issue 5, 2014.

¹⁹⁷ Zhuo Shuchun [周树春], “Let the World Understand China” [让世界读懂新时代中国], *Qiushi*, issue 22, 2018. Original text: 在深入解读中国共产党“为中国人民谋幸福”“为中华民族谋复兴”的初心和使命时，讲清楚全心全意为人民服务，坚持人民主体地位，致力于人的全面发展，与人民同呼吸、共命运、心连心，把人民对美好生活的向往作为奋斗目标，在领导现代化的历史进程中实现民族复兴和人民幸福等，正是中国共产党生存发展的根基和宗旨。阐明面向世界、面向未来的胸襟和气度。忠实描绘始终走在时代前列、为人类进步事业而奋斗的马克思主义政党形象，讲清楚中国共产党是善于借鉴人类文明有益成果的世界最大的“学习型政党”，是不仅能够带领人民进行伟大社会革命、也能够进行伟大自我革命的新型政党。讲清楚社会主义中国坚持对外开放，始终把自身发展同世界发展紧密联系在一起，始终注目于人类发展进步的未来，有信心为建设更美好世界提供中国方案。

socialism” thus refers to the self-defined identity of the CCP that characterizes China’s political institutions. In a 2017 article that comments on the negative global consequences of western capitalism, the author stresses the advantages of the “China Proposal” for the international community and traces the “inclusiveness” of the proposal to the governing idea of the CCP that allegedly has wholeheartedly worked for the people. The ending sentence of this article writes, “in the competition with capitalism, Chinese socialism is showing strong vitality and unique institutional superiority.”¹⁹⁸ In other words, judging from the context, the alleged Chinese capabilities to make the world better originate with socialist institutions that in the Chinese narratives are inalienable from the rule of the CCP. According to the PRC discourse, the CCP will make the world a better place.

Chinese institutions can also be defined in economic terms, such as “socialist market economy” or “the preliminary stage of socialism”, types of property ownership in China, and “release and develop productivity” as well as explanations of how the Chinese economy runs. “Release and develop productivity” unmistakably refers to the socialist economy defined by the PRC. Regarding western institutions, common phrases in the Chinese narratives are neo-liberalism, aside from capitalism, and western type of democracy. The prevalent narrative in many articles that compares two institutions goes like this. The western style of democracy, economic privatization and capitalization create an anarchic world leading to either domestic or international chaos as well as widening gaps between haves and have-nots. Chinese political and economic institutions however have stabilizing effects, create global economic opportunities, and lead to more equal political relations among countries. Under this specified context, articles have

¹⁹⁸ Yang Guoliang [杨国亮], “How To Interpret the Current Anti-Globalization Trend” [如何看待当前的“逆全球化”思潮], *Qiushi*, issue 10, 2017.

asserted that Chinese institutions can contribute positively to the world and other countries, mostly developing ones.

A 2014 article details the drawbacks of western institutions and the implications of the advantages of Chinese “democratic politics” for the world.¹⁹⁹ The article traces people’s discontent to the 2008 global financial crisis and writes that “people’s reflection on the failure of western democracy has reached to capitalist institutions. Among disappointments and dissatisfaction with contemporary capitalist democracy, international intellectual circles have started the shift to and the trend of ‘looking east,’ in search for the eastern wisdom that can help the world out of difficulties. The Chinese style of governance and democratic political institutions begin to receive more and more attention.” The author further quotes the words of some foreign intellectuals to demonstrate the frustration. And, by quoting their words, the narratives also try to prove the merits of Chinese socialism. After elaborating China’s “democratic system”, the author concludes that “based on its pursuit of democracy in domestic affairs and foreign policies, socialist China can provide Chinese wisdom and the China Proposal for the world which is now situated in the intersection.”

A 2017 article penned by a dean at Fudan University concludes that “ the significance of China’s rise is not merely about the breadth and depth of the international impact of leading one-fifth of the world population to wealth, but also about the beneficial experience and invaluable wisdom that China’s political, economic, and social systems can provide for building a better society for mankind.”²⁰⁰ Consider the beginning paragraph of another article in 2018:

¹⁹⁹ Su Changhe [苏长和] “Affirming China’s Position in Democracy” [确立民主政治的中国坐标], *Qiushi* issue 11, 2014.

²⁰⁰ Zhang Weiwei [张维为], “The Reasons for the Chaos in the West and the Order in China” [西方之乱与中国之治的制度原因], *Qiushi*, issue 15, 2017.

“...Chinese socialism enters into a new era. This means that the path, the theory, the institutions and the culture of Chinese socialism is constantly developing...It provides a brand-new alternative to countries and nations who hope to accelerate development while keeping their independence. It also offers Chinese wisdom and the Chinese Proposal to solve the issues which mankind is faced with.” The article goes one more step to assert the comparative merits of “the Chinese path” when it states, “today, China’s political and economic systems are more complete, learnable, and sustainable than the American model which dominates the post-WWII international order. China’s success has charted a new path for developing countries that account for three-fourths of the world population. It is going to have a deep model effect among the vast developing countries.” In a different paragraph, the author writes, “...the great implementation and achievement of Chinese socialism declares the end of the hegemonic history of western modernization.”²⁰¹ Aside from the PRC’s developmental model as an alternative to western institutions for other countries, in these two articles as well as others in the data pool, the connections between domestic institutions and their impact on the world are also tightened by the constant mentioning of the “Chinese Proposal.”

In evaluating the eight labels from 2005 to 2018 as a whole, a discursive assertiveness starts from 2012 onward with the exception of 2013. Most of the articles that have values of 1 for at least five labels by meeting their definitions are in 2012 and years after. These articles assure the advantages and/or superiority of Chinese institutions, including the CCP’s leadership, through foreign voices mediated by Chinese writers.

²⁰¹ Zhou Wen and Fang Qian [周文方茜], “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Widens the Path for Developing Countries on Their Way to Modernization” [中国特色社会主义拓展了发展中国家走向现代化的途径], *Qiushi*, issue 6, 2018.

To support the Chinese thesis, a 2014 article cites Immanuel Wallerstein's argument about the world system as saying, "the creation of capitalism is not a glory but rather a cultural humiliation. Capitalism is a dangerous anesthesia. In the entire history, most civilizations, especially Chinese civilization, have been stopping its development. The Christian civilization of the west, however, succumbs to it at its weakest moment. Thereafter, we have been suffering the consequences."²⁰² A 2012 article presents a good example of how the PRC diversifies foreign sources to affirm self-value. The president of Senegal is quoted as saying: "it is not only Africa but also the west who need to learn from China." The author also cites the alleged views of western Caucasian scholars, in the US and Britain, who either have reputations in China studies or teach in highly renowned academic institutions, to endorse the rule of the CCP. "It is the Chinese Communist Party which guides China forward. The CCP is different from the Soviet communists. Chinese reforms differ from those of the USSR. China insists on the socialist path and the leadership of the CCP, which guarantees the success of opening and reform." Another quotation claimed to come from an American scholar reads as follows, "the political institutions of China solve international crisis effortlessly and the Chinese path should be regarded more highly than western democracy." It continues to quote the words from the then ruling political party of Ethiopia and the former US ambassador to China to prove that foreign countries and dignitaries hold the same view with the PRC's in that the rise of China is good for world peace. Last but not least, according to the author's claim, a renowned Mexican economist describes

²⁰² Su Changhe [苏长和] "Affirming China's Position in Democracy" [确立民主政治的中国坐标], *Qiushi* issue 11, 2014.

China's development as "unprecedented" and a "great success" that "should be a learning model for Mexico and all of Latin America."²⁰³

It is important to know that the above examples come from examined data by the selecting criteria of two keywords, "international" and "order", and only from those that have a value of 1 for at least five labels. There is however a larger body of texts about Chinese institutions when the criteria change to "capitalism", "socialism," and "democracy." These use the same techniques of discursive structure to argue for the superiority of Chinese institutions. The following are examples.

For the PRC, "the basic ideals and values of socialism do not disappear with drastic changes in the USSR and Eastern Europe. They prove successful in China's reform and development." An article in 2012 states so. Carrying the economic success, the CCP argues that it is providing an alternative for "the future of mankind's civilization", by "reshaping the world's perceptions toward socialist theory and practice."²⁰⁴ The Chinese development, from the PRC's viewpoint, has international appeal because "[economic and other] achievements bring attention and admiration from many developing countries. They are trying to learn from the experience and the laws of the unique 'China Model'."²⁰⁵ The International Liaison Department of the CCP claims that by November 12, 2012, more than 800 congratulations letters had been received regarding the 18th Party Congress. It notes, "foreign parties and politicians highly assess the

²⁰³ Kong Genhong [孔根红] "Chinese Path in A Global Perspective" [全球视野中的中国道路] in Chinese Path in Global And Comparative Perspectives [国际比较和全球视野中的中国道路], *Qiushi*, issue 21, 2012.

²⁰⁴ Zhu Lijia [竹立家] "China Provides New Alternative for Mankind's Civilization" [中国为人类文明提供新的选择] in China Provides New Alternative for Mankind's Civilization and Other Five Articles [中国为人类文明提供新的选"等 6 则], *Qiushi*, issue 3, 2012.

²⁰⁵ Li Gang and Wang Zaiwen [李刚 王再文] "The International Influence of China Model" ["中国模式"的国际影响] in Western Political Model Cannot be Copied and Other Five Articles [西方政治模式不可复制等 6 则], *Qiushi*, issue 22, 2010.

historical achievements of the Chinese path and express that the CCP has conducted correct political lines at different periods.” The author canvasses statements from foreign politicians to support the idea that “China has been successful in building socialism with Chinese characteristics.”²⁰⁶ Another article penned by a member of the policy planning staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains three-and-a-half pages of foreign acclaim of Chinese development and institutions that are again tailored to what the regime wants the population to believe and/or what it believes.²⁰⁷

Chinese Culture

The narratives starting from 2012 also use Chinese culture/Chinese civilization to further elaborate why the PRC will do better than other powers. Despite a drop in 2013 and a minor decrease in 2016, the overall trend climbs upward (see graph 4.3). It is important to know that Chinese culture is mentioned throughout the years under examination, but when it appears in the context of reviving Chinese culture or promoting Chinese culture overseas, with no connections to how and why the PRC can make the world better, they are not coded in the dataset. This research is interested in two functions of Chinese culture. First, the label of culture (I) receives the value of 1 when Chinese culture/traditions/civilization is defined as inclusiveness and evoked as the principle which the PRC claims to follow in its foreign policy. Second, the label of culture (II) receives the value of 1 when Chinese culture/traditions/civilization is defined as the root source for Chinese socialism, which in the text is linked to how and why China will make the

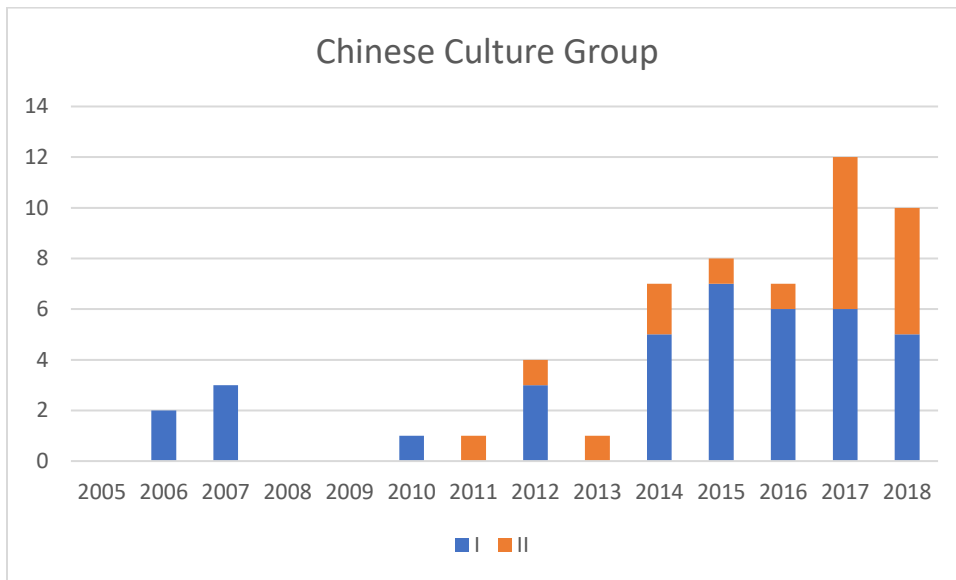
²⁰⁶ The International Liaison Department of the CCP [中共中央对外联络部研究室], “The New Realm of Chinese Path: Chinese Path in the Eyes of Foreign Dignitaries” [中国道路新境界——外国政党政要眼中的中国道路], *Qiushi*, issue 23, 2012.

²⁰⁷ Zheng Xiwen [郑熙文], “How Do Foreign Dignitaries See China” [外国政要看中国], *Qiushi*, issue 19, 2014.

world order better. The two labels are mutually exclusive. The following are discursive examples taken from the data pool.

Graph 4.3 shows that historically Chinese culture/civilization is more associated with the peace principle that the PRC claims to follow in foreign policies. From 2011 onward, its affiliation with Sinicized socialism starts to emerge and reached a record high in 2017 and 2018.

Graph 4.3



A 2014 article argues that the concept of “correct ideas about righteousness and interests” (正确义利观) embodies the essence of Chinese traditional culture of ethics.” It then moves on to use the concept to bridge socialism and Chinese culture, and eventually links to what the PRC can do for others. “Upholding the correct idea about righteousness and interests realizes the socialist core values on the international level.....It means that China links its own development to that of the world, links its own interests to the common interests of people in other countries, and makes connections between the Chinese dream and the dream of the world. The concept provides a criterion for building a more just and reasonable world order.” Such a world order that the PRC imagines is presented in the context of China’s opposition to bullying and power

politics that refers to the behavior of the west, especially the US.²⁰⁸ Another example is a 2016 article. In one paragraph, it first defines Chinese socialism from theoretical, institutional and cultural aspects. The author then writes, “The Chinese socialist path...is rooted in the heritage of the 5000-years long history of the Chinese nation.” The article continues to state that “peaceful development is the necessary choice derived from Chinese socialism.....This path differs from the old logic that a strong country will inevitably end up becoming a hegemon. It avoids the old path of building a colonial system, competing for spheres of influence, and expanding outward through use of force as capitalist imperialism did.”²⁰⁹

A 2018 article traces the two proposals (building a “new type of international relations” and building a “shared community for mankind” (人类命运共同体)) China has for the world to the Chinese culture with a claimed 5000-year-long history, specifically the idea of “the world as a community.” (天下为公) It further details what this world will look like: open, inclusive, cooperative, and just.²¹⁰ Another 2018 article also uses the term, “the world as a community,” along with “harmony without sameness” (合而不同) and “finding common ground within differences” (求同存异) to describe the ideas that Chinese culture emits. In the same paragraph, the author suggests the need to explore how the ideas of governance and the way to behave in the Chinese culture resonate with the needs of today’s world. The author argues that these cultural

²⁰⁸ Qin Yaqing [秦亚青], “The Correct Ideas About Righteousness and Interests: Ideational Innovation and Principles for Implementation in China’s Diplomacy in A New Era” [正确义利观：新时期中国外交的理念创新和实践原则], *Qiushi*, issue 12, 2014.

²⁰⁹ Qiu Shi [秋石], “Continue to Search the New Realm for Governance” [不断开拓治国理政新境界], *Qiushi*, issue 5, 2015.

²¹⁰ Wang Yi [王毅], “Chart A New Realm for Major Country’s Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics” [开辟新时代中国特色大国外交新境界], *Qiushi*, issue 1, 2018.

ideas are conducive to promoting the peaceful and inclusive world that China intends to build, as opposed to the way of hegemonism and power politics.²¹¹

English Texts

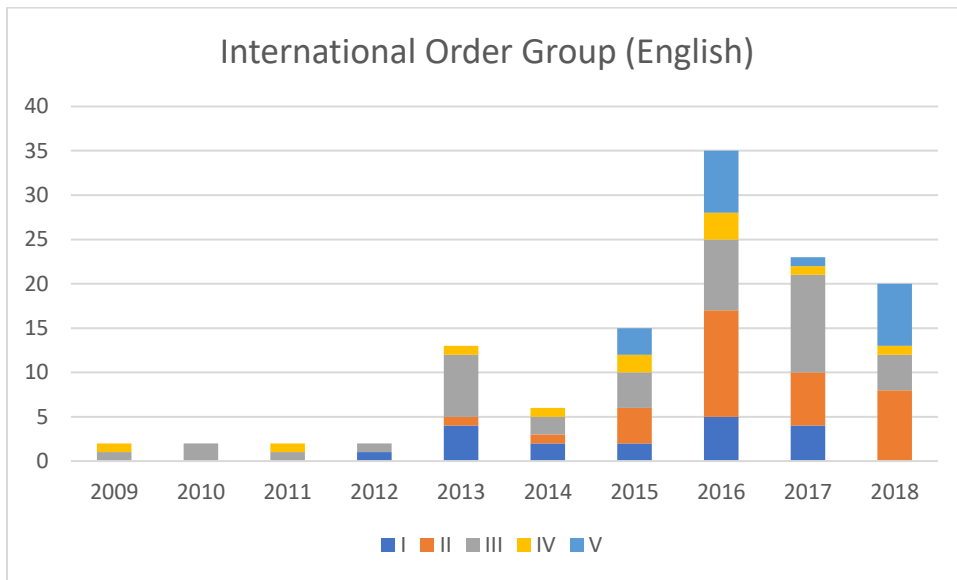
The collection of English essays includes the years 2009 to 2018. Except for 2009 which only has the beginning issue, each year has four. As with the Chinese version, the majority of English articles are about domestic politics (Chinese “democracy”), economic development, social issues, ethnicities and population, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theory, and national defense. Articles about foreign relations and/or world politics and economy, although not a dominant theme, can be found in the majority of issues. For both internal and external affairs, theorization, affirmation of the CCP’s or China’s capabilities, and praise of achievements are prevalent frameworks as they are in the Chinese version as well. It is also not strange to find a recognition of setbacks and needed improvements as is the case in the Chinese texts, but that the CCP or China remains on a good footing with promising prospects and the world can rely on the PRC for growth and a more democratic governance set the overall tone for the journal.

The articles in the English dataset whose texts contain “international” and “order” and the texts are in part or in their entirety relevant to international order are 94. The graphs are presented below. The colors of each label in the English charts may not be same with those in the Chinese charts. Readers can get the definitions through Romanized numerical labels which have the same meanings in both the Chinese and English charts. Different from the Chinese texts, the English texts do not show a smooth upward trend. The year of 2018 experienced a drop across the four groups. The international order group also had a drop in 2017 compared to the statistics

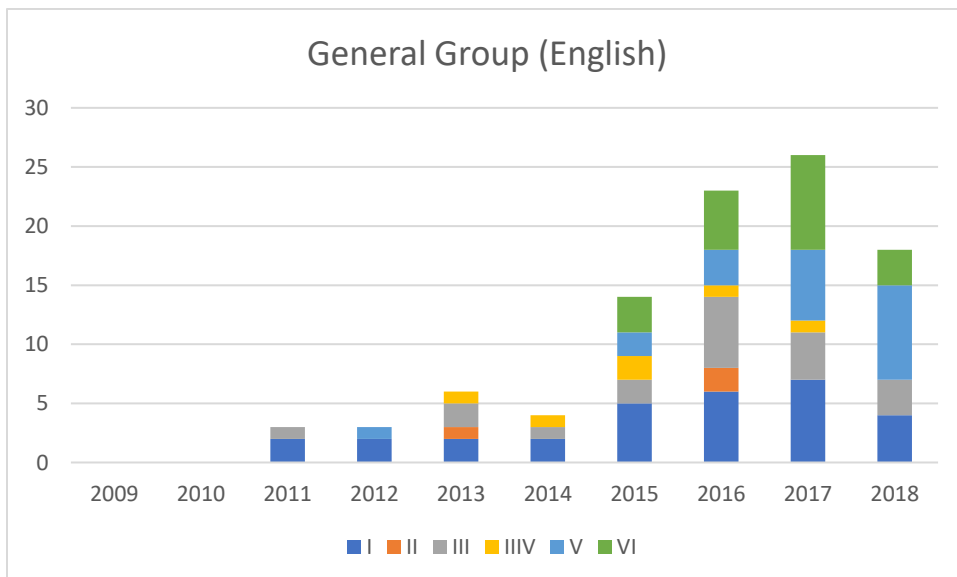
²¹¹ Zhang Xiaojun [张晓君], “Respect the Authoritativeness of International Law and Maintain International Order” [尊重国际法权威 维护国际秩序], *Qiushi*, issue 20, 2018.

of 2016. Unlike the Chinese texts which show a drop in 2013 except for the international order group and the general group, the English dataset only has one apparent drop in the international group. Overall, in each given year from 2015 to 2018, the numbers are higher than those before 2015. Accordingly, it is safe to conclude that in general China was more assertive in the period of 2015 to 2018 than that from 2009 to 2014.

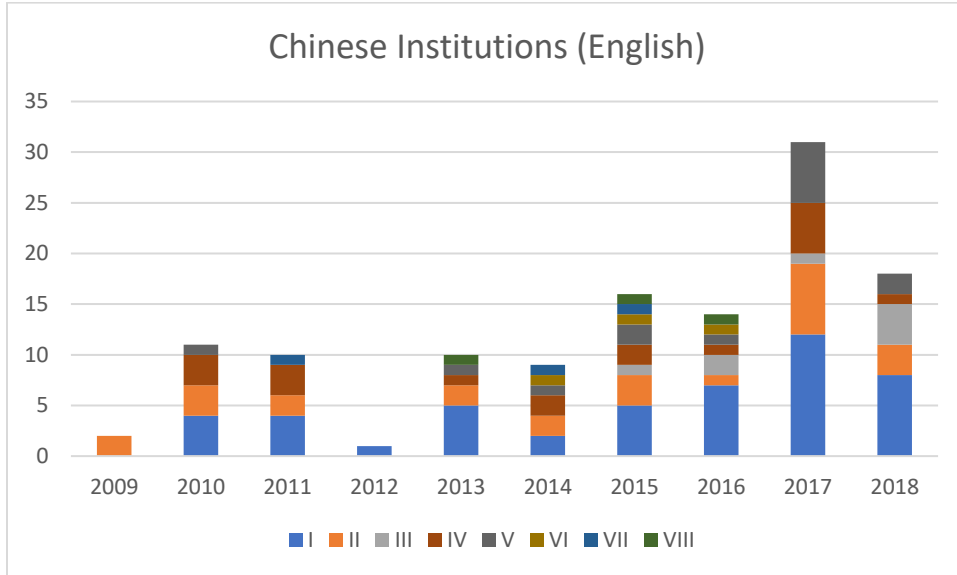
Graph 4.4



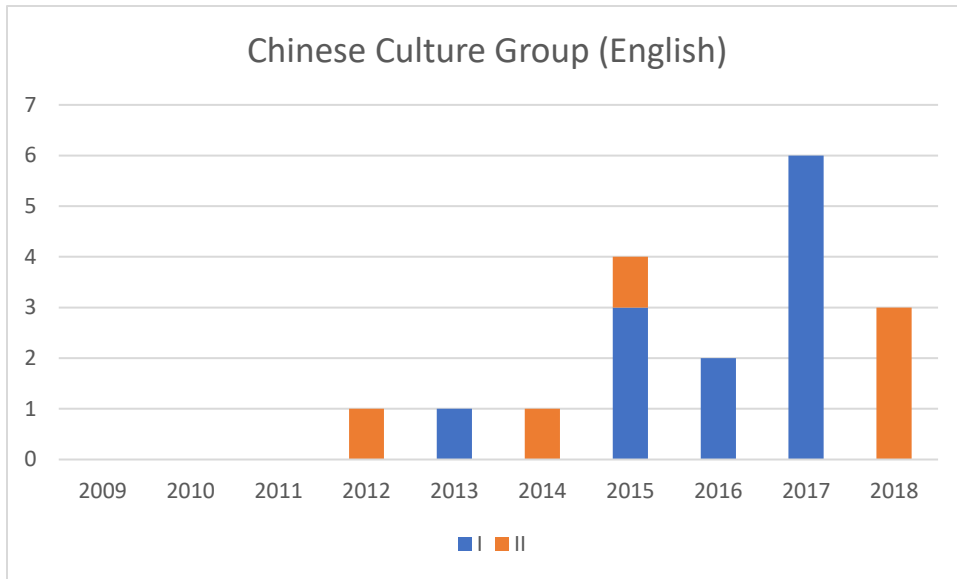
Graph 4.5



Graph 4.6



Graph 4.7



A good number of English articles are translations from the Chinese version of *Qiushi*. Sometimes they appear in the same year and sometimes after a one-year lag. Others come from *Red Flag Manuscript*, *People's Daily*, *Learning Times*, *Study Times*, *Xinhua News Agency*, and other platforms. The Chinese government disseminates the same messages to domestic and foreign audiences: Chinese uniqueness in running a different kind of “true” democracy and

celebrating diversity in one unity. In English *Qiushi*, foreign relations are grouped under the sectional title, “International,” or beginning in 2015 “China’s Peaceful Development,” to disseminate Chinese views and defend Chinese positions on the PRC’s preferred world order, values, and territorial claims based on its historical interactions with other major and non-major countries. The institutional comparison, within and outside the pool of articles that contain both “international” and “order”, between the Chinese and the American or western systems also appears in the English version in a way that highlights the benefits of “the Chinese model” (Chinese socialism, Chinese institutions) for the world. In other words, the PRC is saying to audiences at home and abroad that since it can govern well at home, it can do so on the international stage as well because of the spill-over effect of the values and Chinese traditions that it inherits. Similarly, in the English texts, it is the term “Chinese proposal” which explains the interrelations between Chinese socialism and Chinese culture, and how they benefit domestic governance and the running of international affairs under a “better” world order that Beijing espouses. Since the meanings in the English narratives are the same, this section will not repeat the presentation of the narratives that has already been done in the section on the Chinese texts.

It is important to note that the presented statistics and trend is a sample of a larger pool of articles that are not included in this study for analysis, because they do not contain both “international” and “order” in a single text. This does not mean that those articles are irrelevant. In many cases, the texts use “world order” or “international (financial, economic, trade) system.” In some cases, it is clear that the main theme of articles is about the international order, for instance, essays about a community of a shared future for mankind or essays that dissert Beijing’s approaches and policies for world economy and international politics. This type of essay can include keywords such as “global governance” and “Chinese proposal.” Although

these articles fit the analytical purpose in this study, they are not included in the dataset because they do not contain “international” and “order.”

Another important thing to take note is that within the dataset, some phrases may be expressed in different ways but were left out of the statistics. For instance, in describing the Chinese way of doing things or any measures coming from China that are helpful in dealing with world issues, aside from “Chinese proposal”, “Chinese wisdom” and “Chinese path”, the essays also use “Chinese solution” (a synonym of “Chinese proposal”) and “Chinese/China model” (a synonym of “Chinese path”). Those which use “Chinese solution” and “Chinese model” are not counted under any labels.

Another situation is that in some cases phrases do not appear in the text the same way the coding labels show but are expressed in a grammatically different form. Take “Chinese proposal” and “Chinese wisdom” as an example. It can be written as follows: “Building a community of shared future for humanity to unite efforts at creating a peaceful, tranquil, prosperous, open, and beautiful world is the great proposal that the CCP and the Chinese people have put forward in accordance with historical trends and the demands of contemporary development. This proposal thus put the solution and wisdom that China can offer for promoting the progress of humanity on display and demonstrate its sense of responsibility in this effort, while also serving as a powerful manifestation of China’s confidence in the path and system of socialism of Chinese characteristics.”²¹² Such cases do not receive the value of 1 for the labels of “Chinese proposal” and “Chinese wisdom”.

²¹² Hu Yuexing and Zhao Cengzhen, “Building A Community of Shared Future for Humanity: the CPC’s Grand Mission,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2018, pp. 134-136, (specifically p. 136). English translation original.

Another English article of *Qiushi* also demonstrates that “Chinese path” and “Chinese wisdom” are expressed in grammatically different ways and does not receive the value of 1. Meanwhile, this essay provides the example showing how Beijing uses othering and altercasting to shape the role of itself and others, with a goal of highlighting its own capabilities and altruism. After all, it is about itself. The essay criticized the protective measures taken by “some developed economies” and continued to add, “this has upset the regular order of international trade,.....increased the international community’s misgivings about the future of free trade, and added a great amount of uncertainty for a global economy that is still in the process of recovery.” What follows the criticism is China’s offer to solve such problems. It writes, “The pilot free trade zones and free trade port.....are China’s main platforms for meeting international high-standard trade and investment regulations, and for making active participation in the process of globalization an integral component of China’s own reform and opening up. China will thus explore a new path and offer its wisdom for the healthy and sustained development of globalization.”²¹³ The message that the PRC delivers to the international audiences is that, to put it explicitly, “I understand many of you are victims of some countries’ selfish policy and I can provide you a solution.” Beijing is projecting onto others of its own interests and perception that globalization of its own version is still needed for one’s development, and presents itself as an ideal candidate to continue offering such public goods.

A Myriad of Stars Cluster around the Moon

Chinese traditions/culture and Chinese socialism are enablers in the PRC’s narratives to create a better world order that Beijing imagines. The question then is what the relations between

²¹³ Institute of international economic studies of the Chinese academy of macroeconomic research, “China’s Expansion of Opening Up Is Brining Great Opportunities to the World,” English *Qiushi* vol. 10, no.4, 2018, pp. 26-31, (specifically pp. 28-29). English translation original.

the PRC and other countries look like, as indicated or implied by the narratives that Chinese culture and Chinese socialism are good for the world. What kind of relationship must be in place for Chinese institutions and Chinese culture to be good for the world?

According to the Chinese claim, even though the Chinese experience is “a model” or “an alternative” to western institutions for other states, it does not export China’s socialist/Marxist institutions to other countries.²¹⁴ As indicated by the Chinese narratives, what the PRC wants other countries to learn from China’s experience is that countries’ development needs to be tailored in accord with the local conditions and that there are other ways of development, aside from the western model. This is what the narratives mean when they mention that the Chinese way of development provides an alternative to the Western model for developing countries. In addition, as indicated by “Chinese proposal,” Beijing is proactively pushing through some agendas for global governance. Therefore, the type of relationship that describes the interactions between China and other countries, as the narratives reveal, needs to consider both inactiveness and proactiveness. An unstated but preferred way of interaction is the type of “a myriad of stars cluster around the moon” (*zhong xing gong yue* 眾星拱月). The brightening of the moon itself attracts numerous stars to appreciate its extraordinariness. This is demonstrated by the discursive evidence within and without the dataset examined.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ For instance, see A 2018 article about forming consensus among political parties around the world. It concludes, “China will not import foreign model, nor will it export the Chinese model. It will never demand that another country copy Chinese methods.” Song Tao, “Toward the Common Goal of a Brighter Future: Building Consensus among the World’s Political Parties,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2018, pp. 127-130, (specifically p. 130). English translation original.

²¹⁵ The following discursive evidence thus will draw upon articles within and outside of the database under analysis.

According to the *Qiushi* narratives, the PRC's logic goes this way: the CCP's successful domestic governance is based on the Chinese path/model that is characterized by the innate good and peaceful nature of Chinese institutions (Chinese socialism or Chinese Marxism)²¹⁶ which has high associations with Chinese traditions and Chinese culture. The superior qualities of the Chinese model have drawn admiration from and made the Chinese experience an example for many outside China, and to share the benefits with others that Chinese Marxism endows to the Chinese population, the PRC will altruistically take on the responsibilities of a major power and run international affairs the same beneficial way as Chinese socialism and Chinese culture allow it to do in the domestic realm. When the narratives mention "Chinese proposal," it carries the following meanings: for various policies proposed in the fields of world economy, environment and international politics, they embody the inclusive Chinese way of doing things.

"[A]s the theoretical fruit borne of the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions, the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, and is a reflection of the wishes of the Chinese people."²¹⁷ In other words, sinicized Marxism is compatible with and reflects to the certain degree Chinese traditions/culture. While it may seem, under the title, *Promoting Chinese Culture with High Degree of Confidence*, that sinicized Marxism is secondary to the traditional Chinese culture that the PRC has been eager to incorporate in the national and foreign policy discourse in recent years, the emphasis is really on Chinese Marxism, i.e, Chinese socialist culture that mixes

²¹⁶ While Beijing's propaganda about Chinese inclusiveness and harmony strikes a Confucianist tone, the narratives for foreign consumption do not shy away from affirming Chinese practices of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism despite its international bankruptcy. Instead, the writings about the CCP's governance in English *Qiushi* when translating their Chinese versions also include many that feature the benefits of Chinese Marxism to today's domestic "successes" and to the world. Both domestic development-oriented and foreign policy articles contain correlations between the inherent goodness of Chinese Marxism and benefits to the world.

²¹⁷ "Promoting Chinese Culture with A High Degree of Confidence", *Qiushi*, issue 3, 2015, pp. 109-113, (specifically pp. 111). This article is outside of the database under examination.

traditional culture and imported Marxism. “In order to give full play to the distinct advantages of traditional Chinese culture, we must work to promote cultural transformation and innovation under the guidance of Marxism.....ensuring that our culture can become an important source of nutrition for the cultivation of socialist values.” Chinese culture now is represented by sinicized socialism as the article writes, “the theoretical framework of Chinese socialism embodies our culture’s rich heritage and ethos.”²¹⁸ The rest of the article centers on a need to enhance governance through thoroughly implementing socialist values.

Omitting the intentional destruction of Chinese culture during Mao’s years, a practice also seen in other articles about relations between sinicized Marxism and Chinese traditions, a 2016 article titled, *How the CCP Views Traditional Chinese Culture*, defends, idealizes and rewrites the CCP’s history by the argument that the Party “combines revolutionary spirit with scientific spirit, attempting to unite the two in its approach to traditional culture.” In other words, Sinicized Marxism absorbs both revolutionary and traditional spirits as the article concludes, “the CPC (or CCP) has always been committed to the creation of a Chinese form of Marxism through the integration of Marxism and China’s fine traditional culture. By blending the two, it has succeeded in developing Chinese theories of Marxism that conform to contemporary needs.”²¹⁹

In disserting how the CCP will “build a community of shared future for humanity,” a 2018 essay writes that this idea “*succeeds and builds upon Marxist concepts of community.....*The appeal that the CCP has made to humanity on the basis of this concept of shared future not only

²¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 111-112.

²¹⁹ This article is outside of the database under examination. Shi Zhongquan, “How the CCP Views Traditional Chinese Culture,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 8, no. 4, issue 29, 2016, pp. 72-75, (specifically p. 75). English translation original.

represents an innovative development of Marxist theory, but also *a solution for solving the contemporary issues that we are now facing* (emphasis added).” The author further connects the idea of this community to Chinese traditions. “The idea of community of shared future for humanity is rooted in China’s rich cultural traditions. Chinese traditional culture advocates harmony that spreads to every corner of the world, unites humans and nature, brings peace between all nations, and bridges all forms of diversity.”²²⁰

In comparing Chinese socialism and western institutions in the sense that the former fits China’s domestic governance better and will benefit the world more,²²¹ another 2018 essay writes, “ Chinese socialism inherits traditional Chinese philosophical concepts such as the unity of humans and nature and harmonious coexistence, and is guided by Marxist ideas about the full and free development of every individual, advocating harmony between people and people, between people and society, and between people and nature.....making China become an important contributor to and leader for global ecological civilization.” It comments that China’s “unique, inclusive and fair path of modernization” is not “based on the expansion of territory” and “*sets an example and provides experience for other developing countries* in striking a balance between independence and openness and rapidly getting rid of their marginal status in global systems (emphasis added)” The PRC is projecting what it perceives of itself and

²²⁰ Hu Yuexing and Zhao Cengzhen, “Building A Community of Shared Future for Humanity: the CPC’s Grand Mission,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2018, pp. 134-136. English translation original.

²²¹ Discursive evidence is as follows. “the historic achievements of Chinese socialism demonstrate China’s institutional advantages.” “On the relations between the state and society, Chinese socialism breaks the typical western understanding and pattern of thinking characterized by binary opposition and a tradeoff between the state and society, creating a novel system and pattern of social governance. On relationships between countries, Chinese socialism surpasses the hegemonic ‘winner-takes-all’ logic, and the ‘zero-sum’ Cold War mentality, advocating and promoting the establishment of a new model of international relations characterized by mutually beneficial cooperation.....” See Research Office of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, “International Significance of the Theories and Practice of Chinese Socialism,” English *Qiushi*, 2018, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 129-136, (specifically pp. 131-133). English translation original.

corresponding needs to what other countries wish by assuming they all shared similar experiences in the past and feel the same as well as want the same thing.

Chinese Marxism mentioned above is the essence that upholds “the Chinese model”, a synonym for “Marxist political economy”²²² and the “Chinese path,” that endorses one-party rule for China’s national development. A 2015 article, *The Chinese Model: Spurring China Forward and Benefiting the World*, frames Chinese influence as if this is the common wish of many, instead of what the PRC needs.²²³ It presents a Chinese way of development “enlightening western countries” and “encouraging more and more developing countries to give up their blind faith in the Western model and follow a path that is more suited to their national conditions, with the ultimate aim of achieving modernization.” It then goes on saying, after citing alleged praise from an Israeli president, how the Chinese model can provide “inspiration and thrust for the resolutions of many problems in the Middle East, such as poverty, unemployment, education and lagging science and technology.” This newly found influence is portrayed as “the Chinese model is *unexpectedly* assuming the responsibility of justifying the development models of emerging countries (emphasis added).” To further strengthen the idea that Chinese influence is “a natural outgrowth” of China’s rise, the author comments that “China has no intention of exporting its development model to other countries. However, it must be acknowledged that while the Chinese model paves the way for China’s success, it is also exerting an increasingly large influence on regional and global governance.”

²²² The term appears in this essay. Xu Guangchun, “Comprehensively Developing Marxism for 21st-Century China,” English *Qiushi*, issue 3, 2016, pp. 28-35.

²²³ Wang Yiwei, “The Chinese Model: Spurring China Forward and Benefiting the World,” English *Qiushi*, vol, 7, issue 2, 2015, pp. 17-21, (specifically pp. 20-21). English translation original. This article is outside of the database under examination.

The PRC is saying that it welcomes other countries to learn from China but it is not actively promoting its way of development. “A number of foresighted people in the West have already begun rethinking their development models, and have started to place their hopes in China;”²²⁴ “some western commentators have noted the sense of admiration that was felt in the West upon witnessing how China was able to quickly read the situation, formulate the policies, and take action in the wake of the financial crisis.”²²⁵ The type of interaction and influence inferred here is the one of “the myriad of stars cluster around the moon.” In the PRC’s discursive context, the logic goes that China is important, not because the CCP proactively advocates such, but rather others recognize its contributions, goodness and ways of doing things. Beijing’s narratives imply that because of the merits in Chinese governance and its inherent moral goodness, such as the inclusive tendency rooted in the Chinese culture, the PRC is like a radiant sun emanating light to enlighten all, and others come willingly to learn, which upholds the PRC’s central position. This is the working mechanism between Chinese institutions, Chinese culture, and a claimed better world to come under the CCP stewardship. Such form of interaction in which Chinese influence flows also functions behind the disseminated idea and a Chinese belief that as long as China is powerful under the CCP’s leadership, the world is peaceful.²²⁶

²²⁴ Ibid., pp. 20. English translation original.

²²⁵ Zhan Dexiong, “History Tells Us That China Must Follow Its Own Path,” English *Qiushi*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2014, p. 118. English translation original.

²²⁶ “In fact, the more China develops, the stronger the position developing countries will be in to end hegemonism and power politics.” See Chen Shuguan, “Interpreting the Chinese Model,” English *Qiushi* vol. 7, no. 1, 2015, pp. 64-67. English translation original.

Chapter 5

A Discussion of Strategies and Grand Strategy

This chapter analyzes the methods that the PRC uses to attain the goal of “a revived Chinese nation” deferred to by others. Chapter 3 demonstrates that Chinese aspirations have been global and material capabilities are its main yardstick in gauging the world balance of power. The discussions here further elaborate the strategic importance of regions surrounding the country and the geopolitical re-conception of the world. In the context of China projecting the self as a prospective global power, strategic orientation shifts to be outward-looking. Border regions now take on strategic significance beyond fending off invasion of the homeland (and defense against invasion has dropped as the priority of national security) and preventing migration of so-called “terrorists” across borders. Neither are border areas mainly about territorial disputes and sovereignty as, from the Chinese perspective, the legacy of colonization and unresolved business left from history. They have strategic value, militarily and/or non-militarily, to the country in its design of obtaining grand political objectives during its globetrotting age. As with the past practices of other major powers, the PRC conceptualizes the world by placing itself at the center. Asia-Pacific for the PRC is an ever-expanding concept that spatially marginalizes Western Europe and the Atlantic.

With geopolitical and geostrategic redefinitions of the world discussed, this chapter moves on to analyze winning without fighting as China’s grand strategy. François Jullien’s thesis about Chinese efficacy that focuses on situations and how to make most of them, i.e. how to use, create and maintain favorable tides (*shi* 勢) at minimized costs in a given environment (*xing* 形), provides insightful theoretical understandings of this idea based on a broad range of literature across military and non-military classics. China’s strategic culture is about how to conduct a

protracted silent warfare of transformation which simple dichotomies of defensive versus offensive, passive versus proactive, cannot address. China's strategic culture is neither defensive nor offensive, but rather about how political objectives can be realized.

How the PRC makes use of a situation falls into three categories. First, the post-Cold War environment has been relatively peaceful and this predisposes Chinese behavior in some aspects to be or appear to be in accord with existing norms (*using* the situation). The ensuing strategy based on the evaluation of a given situation is "cooperation", one of the most prevailing words in the Chinese discourse, to create the impression that it is doing things which everyone is doing and what it does is compatible with others' interests and thus there is no need for objection. Second, another dictate of strategic thinking is to redirect things back to preferred tracks without inviting hostility to the degree that makes impossible the attainment of political goals (*creating* the situation within the bounds of but not exactly in accord with the existing norm with the goal of eventually changing that norm by building the momentum for the situation created). This is evidenced in the strategy of managed confrontation in the case of militarization in the South China Sea. The third rationale is to reinforce the situational tendency once it is established in the first and second cases (*maintaining* the favorable situation). The Belt & Road Initiative that materializes the geostrategy of consolidating China's west, by further expanding the PRC's strategic hinterland to the Eurasian continent beyond Xinjiang and Tibet, and thereby dealing with the challenges from the east, is such an example. The above three propositions concern fulfillment of self-interest within the framework of winning without fighting.

Grand strategy, in the case of China, is about how a state utilizes all available resources, including economic, military, cultural, political and diplomatic, to achieve the grand political goals of national security, which in the case of the PRC refers to the obtainment of international

status and influence supported by material capabilities. Beijing's grand strategy so far operates according to "winning without fighting." This phrase does not mean that China averts war. The PRC merely tries to make the war easier, if it ever judges that the situation requires such a solution in the future. According to Chinese strategic thought, peacetime maneuvers and war should be seen as a continuum, an uninterrupted evolution of events. War may be relied on if peacetime measures prove ineffective. War may not be relied on if peacetime measures prove effective. This thread of logic is reflected in Beijing's efforts to expand Chinese influence through Confucius Institutes, global and regional economic initiatives, military diplomacy, military activities, paramilitary actions in the South China Sea, head-of-the-state visits, etc. With Chinese influence getting entrenched in different parts of the world, resistance from smaller states will get weakened and over time the influence of other powers may also recede. When the situation evolves to this stage, there is no need to fight. China's post-Cold War emphasis on a peaceful international climate, i.e., no major war/world war, aims to enable the implementation of this scheme.²²⁷ Meanwhile, it is realistically preparing for war through many of its activities. Therefore, grand strategy in the case of the PRC needs to be understood from a broader timeframe.

The obtainment of international influence and status depends on the fulfillment of various interests, including economic, territorial, military and maritime. The realization of these interests requires strategies, rather than grand strategy. Strategies function on a much narrower geographical scope, for instance, strategies for the South China Sea, whereas grand strategy functions on a more expansive geographical space because it considers how the interests in

²²⁷ Chinese narratives do indicate that a relatively peaceful international environment means no major war and no world war. For the discursive evidence, see chapter 3 and chapter 6.

different places can work together to realize the grand political goals. Strategies for the fulfillment of a wide range of issues need to work within the bounds of the grand strategy. In other words, since “winning without fighting” as a grand strategy corresponds to a relatively peaceful international environment, strategies employed to obtain, for instance, territorial and economic interests, cannot create conflicts to the extent that war is required to solve disputes. Managed provocation in the SCS thus is a strategy, instead of a grand strategy.

China’s grand strategy and strategies follow the subjective evaluations of *xing*, or international environment(s). They speak to the PRC’s positions about war and peace as tools of statecraft, both of which are conditioned in Chinese decision making and do not reflect some innate qualities of a polity. Winning without fighting operates within the geopolitical scope of Asia-Pacific, which in China’s definition is a quasi-world. Grand strategy and strategies are supported by both strategic reasoning and cultural rationalization, with the latter justifying whatever the PRC does according to the publicly unstated strategic reasoning as being always right, mutually beneficial and defensive. The fact that this rationalization takes place at the level of global expansion speaks to a high degree of “cult of defense” as defined by Andrew Scobell.²²⁸

Geopolitical Re-conception of the World

Multipolarity in China’s view is an anticipated trend and prospect for future power dynamics in that the world is moving in that direction. The timing of its final arrival is uncertain. What is certain in the Chinese narratives is that the PRC is the main driving force in the reconfiguration of the world balance of power. In a 2013 CMS article about the “international

²²⁸ Andrew Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force: Beyond the Long March and the Great Wall*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

strategic situation,” the author sees China and the U.S. as the main actors that will decide the future power structure. “Multipolarity is expected to take shape in the next 10 or 20 years as the world power dynamic becomes more balanced..... Changes have occurred to the relative strength of developed countries and developing countries. Particularly, major changes have taken place in the relative strength between China, the biggest developing country, and the US, the biggest developed country.....The overall capabilities of the New Markets and developing countries have increased and are becoming an important pole capable of checking and balancing hegemonism.” It further discusses “the reconfiguration of strategic forces” by elaborating three major international regimes: the western alliance led by the U.S., BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and SCO and ASEAN.²²⁹ In these three groups of organizations, China has been active and attempts to play a bigger role in the latter two.

The narrowing gaps between the developed and developing camps that underlie the possibilities of a multi-polar world are discussed in detail in a 2013 article from *Contemporary International Relations* (CIR 现代国际关系)²³⁰ In assessing what has changed and what has not, the essay dissects the relative strength from different developmental aspects. According to the author, about 8 to 10 years ago, the U.S., Europe and Japan accounted for 60% to 70% of the world economy while the percentage at the current stage has dropped below 60%. Despite the narrowing gap between developed and developing camps, the article argues that it will take at least ten or more years to see a decisive shift of balance. The author however contends that the gaps in terms of the quality of the economy, technology and culture are wider and may take 20 to

²²⁹Qi Jianguo [戚建國], “Understanding of and Consideration on the Evolution of International Strategic Situation”[對國際戰略形勢演變與思考], *Chinese Military Science (CMS)*, no. 4, issue 130, 2013, pp. 56-61.

²³⁰ This is a journal issued by China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations affiliated with the Ministry of State Security of the PRC.

30 years to be able to compete or replace the influence from advanced economies. The above comparison similarly applies to the relations between China and the U.S. According to the article, China's aggregate economic volume has ranked second in the world, but the rest lag far behind the US. It will take another 10 to 20 years for China to "become a great power which is internationally recognized, persuasive, and respected" (中国在今后一二十年内成为世界公认的、信服的、尊重的大国、强国).²³¹ Under the framework that the current and future world politics at its core is about the U.S. and China, Chinese narratives however do not unanimously agree on the length of time it will take to realize multipolarity and whether the U.S. is in decline.

A 2017 article from CIR writes, "the fundamental characteristic of the current international strategic situation continues to be one superpower and multiple powers (一超多强) and the process of moving toward multipolarity is unbalanced. Due to a revival in the comprehensive national capabilities and the power to set rules and regulations, the status of the US as a superpower will remain in the next 20 to 30 years."²³² Individual authors' points of view, changing bilateral relations, major international political and economic events, and endorsement of the official positions can all lead to variations in the assessments. Regardless, the prospect of a multi-polar world in the future hardly changes.

In the Chinese texts, a correlated phenomenon with multi-polarity that the rise of China contributes to is the shifting center of global strategic gravity. In a 2010 CMS essay that summarizes Chinese researches about the country's grand strategy, one author takes the Eurasian

²³¹Chu Shulong [楚树龙], "The Changes and Constant in International Politics and China's International Strategy" [国际格局的变与不变及中国国际战略], *Contemporary International Relations (CIR)*, issue 4, 2013, pp. 3-5, (specifically p. 5).

²³²Feng Yujun [冯玉军], "Changes in International Environment and China's Strategic Choices" [国际形势新变化与中国的战略选择], *CIR*, issue 3, 2017, pp. 9-15, (specifically p. 11).

continent as the geographical center of the PRC's foreign policies. It writes that "promoting multi-polarity is China's primary international strategy and a significant part of China's geostrategy. The strategy of multipolarity aims to have the central force of the Eurasian continent play a more important role in world affairs to counter the American plot of itself being a hegemonic superpower. China during the Cold War was in a subservient status. Its rank in the geopolitics of the Eurasian continent however has been elevated markedly since the end of the Cold War."²³³ Not only do the narratives reveal a China-centered worldview in that the country is the main driving force behind positive changes in international politics, they also highlight the strategic importance of the vast continent. The relations between the two in many other articles is that the PRC is the center of this new geostrategic and geopolitical arena where a multi-polar dynamic is forming.

The key connecting idea here is that the center of strategic gravity has moved to the East, appearing in the texts by various forms of expressions. For instance, a 2012 CIR essay writes, "the Greater Asia-Pacific is geographically endowed. Its economic scale and unlimited prospect of development are decisive in replacing the Europe-Atlantic Region as the center of global geopolitics."²³⁴ A 2013 CIR article brings in more actors to stress the region's importance. "East Asia is a region where major powers interact most frequently and where they find their interests are." The author identifies the American "pivot to Asia" and its plan to create "a Pacific Century," Russia's "looking to the East" and its "Eurasian Economic Union," India's "Look

²³³ Xia Zhennan [夏征难], "A Summary of Researches in China's Grand Strategies"[中國大戰略研究綜述], CMS, vol. 6, issue 114, 2010, pp. 132-139, (specifically p. 139).

²³⁴ Lin Limin [林利民], "China and Changes in Asia-Pacific's Geopolitics for the Next Five to Ten Years"[未來5—10年亞太地緣政治變局與中國], *CIR*, issue 4, 2012, pp. 8-16, 62, (specifically p. 10).

East,” and the new efforts from Australia and New Zealand.²³⁵ Another separate 2013 CIR essay states that “Asia-Pacific is growing to be the center of the world geopolitics and China is the center of Asia-Pacific.”²³⁶ The underlying message in these writings is that the PRC is an unmistakably new center of geopolitics as the result of its rise and the ensuing adjustments of foreign policies of major powers. This begs the question of the geographical scope for China’s overseas activities and how it names this space that has the PRC situated at the center.

The Eurasian continent, though the clearest among all, remains vague in terms of a definite geographical space as countries may draw different demarcations. East Asia cannot capture the true scope indicated by the above supplementing details. The East no doubt demands more clarifications. The term Asia-Pacific can be misleading and, as the official white paper in 2017 as well as the narratives before that year will demonstrate, the PRC defines it differently from conventional wisdom. Over the years, there has been no lack of essays discussing the geographical possibilities for the PRC’s overseas interests. Although there is hardly an agreed version and any specific terms require further territorial delimitations, by naming the countries for instance, for them to be concrete, the fundamental which most articles agree on, either advocating it explicitly or accepting it as an assumption, is that Chinese national interests extend beyond its immediate territorial boundaries into the far seas and non-contiguous lands. This discursive overseas expansion is not necessarily the result of Xi’s ascendance to power as the essays before 2013 already rationalized such action.

²³⁵Wang Shen and Luo Xiao [王生罗肖], “The Transformation of International System and Changes in China’s Zhou Bian Diplomacy: From Stability Maintenance to Interests Protection” [国际体系转型与中国周边外交之变: 从维稳到维权], *CIR*, issue 1, 2013, pp. 9-15, (specifically p. 12).

²³⁶Li Yonghui [李永辉], “Proactively Building Zhou Bian Strategic Supporting Belt to Form the Supporting Wing for China’s Rise” [积极打造周边战略依托带, 托升中国崛起之翼], *CIR*, issue 10, 2013, pp. 35-37, (specifically p. 36).

Before a discursive analysis on the spatial possibilities for Chinese footprints, it is necessary to first discuss how the PRC has officially employed “Asia-Pacific”. Before official pronouncement of the term in the 2017 white paper, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, essays from think tanks already attempted to define Asia Pacific. In a 2012 CIR article, the author argues that the definition of Asia Pacific is expanding because more and more extra regional countries (the U.S., Russia, India and Canada) claim to be Asia Pacific countries as the result of the elevated geopolitical status of the region. Other reasons include the expanding membership of ASEAN+N and APEC. According to the essay, the term thus does not exclusively refer to Asia, nor the Pacific; Asia plus Pacific Rim also fails to capture its true meanings. The author characterizes Asia Pacific in three ways: it is not a pure geographical term; it means openness; its geographical space is ever-expanding. Details regarding which region will be included in “the Greater Asia Pacific” and its relative strength are then discussed. According to the essay, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Oceania and the Americas will be parts of Greater Asia Pacific. “The number of the countries is about twice that of EU, no less than 50; the entire population is close to 4 billions, 8 to 10 times that of EU; it has the world’s four largest countries in terms of territorial size, including Russia, Canada, China and the US; it has the four most populous countries, including China, India, the US, and Indonesia; the US, China and Japan, the three most powerful economies, are here as well.” The essay continues to characterize Greater Asia Pacific with geopolitical and military importance from the numbers of permanent members in the U.N. Security Council, nuclear-armed states, and the most powerful militaries in the world. Economic weight does not lose its attention as the essay writes that the aggregate GDP of the 21 APEC countries account for 54% of the world GDP. Despite the recognition of influence from other major powers, the narratives nevertheless see the PRC

and the U.S. as the primary players. “Although there are numerous factors affecting the possibilities of conflict in the geopolitical structure of the Greater Asia Pacific, the core confrontational factor lies in the geostrategic relations between China and the U.S. Other confrontations are contingent on Sino-American relations.” The author proceeds to argue for the importance of the PRC in this new geopolitical configuration. “The rise of China comprises the main substance of the rise of Asia Pacific. The former drives the latter. On the other hand, the rise of Asia Pacific provides a conducive environment...for China’s rise.”²³⁷

The official white paper also provides information as to how the PRC defines Asia Pacific. If there is any law of physics governing countries’ strategic priorities, geographical pull is one of them. In the white paper published in 2017, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, countries that belong to the region include, from Beijing’s perspective, the US, Russia, Australia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. The definition of Asia-Pacific is more geopolitics than purely geography. The Paper summarizes the focuses of China’s foreign policies over the years so the ideas are accumulative. China is aware of the regional balance of power and makes relations with major states priorities. Under the heading of “China’s Relations with Other Major Asia-Pacific Countries,” it devotes sub-sections to relations with the US, Russia, India and Japan respectively. Other sections in the Paper are the regional hotspots, Beijing’s participation in multilateral institutions and non-traditional security cooperation. Sub-regional countries (non-major powers) are mentioned here individually or grouped together under the name of a multilateral platform. It is clear that Beijing’s definition of Asia Pacific is different from what is usually understood and covers more territories.

²³⁷Lin Limin, 2012, pp. 9-11.

In the paper, multipolarity refers to Russia, U.S, Japan, India and China. The narratives do not state this explicitly but, judging from how the paper discusses issues by going through Beijing's relations with each major power, it is clear that neighboring multiple major states does not deter the PRC from expansion. China's footprints are present in each sphere of influence of the four other powers. Neighboring world powers premises that one's expansion will inevitably overlap areas in the spheres of influence of other states. Russian influence extends to Central Asia and Eastern Europe; the US to the first island chain including the South China Sea to the further east of the Pacific, the Middle East and Latin America. Japan's influence extends to East Asia and the South China Sea as well. India has to do with South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The PRC does not use the term "spheres of influence" in the paper to describe the above areas, but the fact that states other than major powers are either specified individually or grouped together under a multilateral organization when it discusses China's bilateral relations with an individual major country indicates its way of thinking functions according to this logic. Although the title of this document reads like a regional policy, the way China defines Asia-Pacific and the expressed intention for involvement in regions where the four powers and the smaller states in their spheres reside makes the PRC's policies global. Accordingly, Asia-Pacific by geopolitical definition is a global, not a regional term that contains the Chinese perspective of the world and its center.

The above analysis is a combination of how the policies of the PRC and other countries, responding to China's rise as described in the Chinese narratives, altogether define the geographical scope of Asia Pacific and argue for its strategic significance. Aside from the 2017 white paper and before 2017, Chinese military journals and the writings from government-affiliated think tanks have spilled much ink in arguing for a spatial expansion of China's strategic views. The concepts in focus here are *zhou bian* (周边), the areas/regions surrounding

the PRC, and strategic supporting belts (战略依托带). Most of the territories covered by these two concepts overlap with the boundaries of “Asia Pacific.” Despite minor variations, it is clear that geographical expansion of Chinese footprints simultaneously takes place with expanding national interests, and that the safeguarding of national interests, which can be differentiated by importance in degrees, requires the extension of Chinese influence away from the border regions. As a result, the PRC’s strategic views for its national security go beyond the border areas, into the region and the globe.

Strategic Supporting Belts

A 2011 CIR article that discusses Chinese overseas interests incorporates the reasons for the PRC’s foreign expansion and proposes mechanisms to safeguard overseas national interests along with a differentiation of these interests. This article sees foreign expansion as “a natural outgrowth of the scale of the Chinese economy and its influence.” Another reason is the “unreasonable domestic economic and societal structures.” Of the latter, the author argues that capital surplus and limited domestic demand due to unequal distribution of wealth and limited consumption lead to a large quantity of overseas investments including acquisitions and “a reliance on foreign markets.” To elaborate on such dependence, it further breaks down the industrial chains of production. According to the essay, despite its fame as “a world factory,” the PRC does not control the supplies of raw materials, product designs, and selling markets as well as prices for raw materials and final products. It is western countries who created and control the current global economic structure including the structures of energy and raw materials supplies. The author rationalizes China’s close relations with Libya, Sudan, Iran and other places with high political risks as alternatives to the reliance on the existing structure of oil and natural resources markets. The point here is to chart a new path that reduces Chinese dependence on the

international order built by the western countries. Still holding the view that China needs to be engaged in the markets where western countries already set rules and regulations, the essay further proposes several mechanisms to protect Chinese overseas interests, including participation in rule setting, finding “strategic partners and allies,” and enhancing military power projection.²³⁸

While the article recognizes that there is a need to address the reliance resulting from the deficiencies of domestic economic structures-induced overseas expansion, it still supports expansion through reducing risks and costs, which can be done by the proposed mechanisms and “controlling production chains”. It is important to note that when the author discusses foreign reliance and (political) costs and risks, this is more about the lack of measures (as the author perceives) in place that allow the PRC to have production chains and markets in its control, and less about the outcome of the need for the country’s globetrotting, as the essay also states that foreign expansion is “a natural outgrowth of the scale of the Chinese economy and its influence.” The essay itself and as an embodiment of many other articles provides the evidence that the PRC’s national interests cannot be separated from its overseas expansion, which is necessary and “natural” as the narratives write, and to participate in rules setting and develop military power projection are recommended to protect its interests. To develop a country by a spatial expansion of activities is reflected in the narratives that also indicate expanded strategic views and boundaries for national security. In addition, to capture this logic, Chinese literature has disserted the concept of *zhou bian*.

²³⁸Tang Hao [唐昊], “Strategic Thinking Regarding the Protection of China’s Overseas Interests” [关于中国海外利益保护的策略思考], *CIR*, issue 6, 2011, pp. 1-8.

Zhou bian (周边), as popular a phrase as it is in the Chinese foreign policy writings, nevertheless does not have a clear definition. It can refer to border regions and also regions in the outer rings that do not immediately border the PRC. For some Chinese researchers, the term Great *zhou bian* (大周边) imagines three circles surrounding the PRC. The innermost is the 14 neighboring countries immediately neighboring the PRC on land. The middle circle includes bordering maritime states, the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, and the parts of Central Asia and Russia that do not share boundaries with the PRC. The outer circle is Europe, the Americas, Africa and the two poles. The relations between *zhou bian* and the globe in Chinese narratives are nuanced and no dichotomous differentiations can address their essence. “Because of the ‘central’ status of China in the world and its world economic expansion and global demands of natural resources and energy under the condition of globalization, we need to have a greater horizon regarding *zhou bian*. We need to analyze the relations between China’s *zhou bian* and the world from both perspectives of the whole and the parts.”²³⁹ The narratives do not equate *zhou bian* to the world but do not separate them either. They are interrelated. “*Zhou bian* and the world should be seen as a whole. This is the gist of ‘Great’ in the ‘Great *zhou bian*.’”²⁴⁰ Other Chinese researchers differentiated *zhou bian* into small *zhou bian* (小周边) and Great *zhou bian* (大周边). The former includes countries directly bordering the PRC such as Mongolia, Russia, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and South Asia. The latter “goes beyond traditional geographical scopes and includes countries and areas who share similar

²³⁹Yuan Peng [袁鹏], “Regarding the Strategic Thinking of China’s Zhou Bian Strategy in A New Era” [关于新时期中国大周边战略的思考], *CIR*, issue 10, 2013, pp. 30-32, (specifically p. 31). Original text: 因中国在世界版图中特殊的“中”国地位，以及全球化条件下中国经济的世界性扩展及资源能源的全球性需求，使得我们应对周边要有更大视野，要从整体与局部的视角看待中国周边与世界的关系。

²⁴⁰Ibid, p. 31. Original text: 周边与全球两个大局始终应被视为整体，这是新时期“大周边”战略“大”之要义所在。

strategic interests with China, including countries and areas of small *zhou bian* and *regions of [China's] strategic extension* such as Western Asia and the Southern Pacific (emphasis added).²⁴¹ Therefore, translating *zhou bian* into “periphery” hardly captures its strategic connotations.

Among the PRC's immediate neighbors are both small and major states. While the border regions around the PRC fit into the definition of *zhou bian*, in the context of a Chinese belief that global geostrategic gravity has shifted to Asia where the PRC is situated at the center, these areas, especially the smaller states whose roles once were relegated, now gain strategic salience. They act like conveyer belts to extend Chinese influence further outward while transmitting back much needed natural resources and reinforcing China's position. Another issue with equating *zhou bian* to periphery is that the PRC has identified the major powers along its borders as its primary targets in its design of national security. In the Chinese foreign policies, the importance of countries to the PRC in order is major powers, countries of *zhou bian*, and the developing countries. According to the Chinese narratives, major powers are the main players in international politics and *zhou bian* countries concern the PRC's national interests including core interests. The developing world does not substantially affect China's interests but it has been the foundation of China's international political support since Mao's period and has in recent years become the main supplier of natural resources and new markets for Chinese capital and products. Since major powers and *zhou bian* countries can be the same, in the case of Japan, Russia, India

²⁴¹Wu Zhicheng [吴志成], “More Strategic Planning Is Needed for China's Zhou Bian Diplomacy” [中国周边外交需更加重视战略谋划], *CIR*, issue 1, 2015, pp. 25-27, (specifically p. 26). Original text: 而大周边则超越传统的时空地理范围，涉及与中国有相同战略利益需求的海陆国家和地区，既包括小周边国家和地区，也关系战略延伸地区，比如西亚和南太平洋地区

and the U.S. at the other end of the Pacific as well, these are overlapping categories. At this level, *zhou bian* diplomacy can be major power diplomacy.²⁴²

Is *zhou bian* the world? The regions along the PRC borders do not exist in isolation. Nor do they exist against a historical background when overseas expansion was not in every aspect, economic, diplomacy, military, and cultural, essential to the Chinese regime. Countries from the inner to the outer circles altogether form transmission belts that are to serve Chinese interests. The border areas can be seen as a strategic extension of the PRC and the outer regions are a further extension. If the PRC can successfully deal with multiple major powers including the U.S., as it is also a *zhou bian* country in the Chinese narratives, by having them agree to respect its interests or reach agreements on controversial issues in or away from China's neighborhood,²⁴³ it can clear obstacles to the pursuit of other interests.²⁴⁴ A successful diplomacy with major states also eases the way to outer expansion where small states or the interests of major powers reside. Economic and security cooperation with countries, regardless of relative strength, in the Chinese view will mitigate the possibility of conflict and increase the opportunities for access to markets and resources. As the foreign policy writings indicate, *zhou bian* can either refer to the border states or regions away from the Chinese borders. In these two cases, states may have varied strategic values, in degrees and by the natures of issues, to the PRC

²⁴² Wang Guifang [王桂芳], "National Interests and Choices of China Security Strategies" [國家利益與中國安全戰略選擇], *CMS*, vol. 1, issue 19-1, 2006, pp. 76-83; Yuan Peng, 2013, p. 31. In this article, Yuan writes, "major powers are the key; *zhou bian* are the primary targets of China's foreign policies; developing countries are the foundation" (大国是关键，周边是首要，发展中国家是基础……)

²⁴³ It is common to see in the Chinese narratives that the PRC proposes peaceful coexistence of major powers on the Eurasian continent or in Asia Pacific along with a demand of respect to Chinese interests. In other words, the former is conditioned on the latter.

²⁴⁴ Wu Zhicheng, 2015, p. 26. In the paragraph that focuses on developing "new type of *zhou bian* relations" between the PRC and the U.S., after listing several flashpoints in the first island chain, the author concludes that "improved Sino-American relations undoubtedly will facilitate the implementation of China's strategy of *zhou bian* diplomacy." *Zhou bian* in this article refers to both border regions and territories far away from the PRC.

(the parts), but altogether they are designed to support Chinese maintenance of economic growth at a certain desired level if not the high-speed growth seen before 2007 (the whole). The strategic employment of the geographical landscape of the Eurasian continent to the PRC's advantage makes *zhou bian* the world.

The way the PRC understands its geo-position and the surrounding environments can also be explained by “strategic supporting belts” (战略依托带). A necessity to build supporting belts and the methods and means to that effect seen in the Chinese foreign policy writings are based on the lessons and experiences of major powers, including Germany, the U.S., the USSR, and Japan. In the Chinese view, the U.S. succeeded in building its own strategic belts whereas the other three powers failed. Washington is able to bend the north and the south of Americas to its influence while being shielded by the Atlantic and the Pacific. Its strategy of providing public goods, both in economy and in security, to its neighbors further maintains the strategic belts.

These narratives recommend that the PRC rely on cooperation, manage conflicts, and offer public goods to create its own belts, instead of resorting to use of force as the USSR, Japan, and Germany had once done and failed. Where the PRC's strategic belts extend echoes with the regions aforementioned. “Asia-Pacific is growing to be the center of the world geopolitics and China is the center of Asia-Pacific.....China can create strategic supporting belts around more than 20 countries bordering China by lands and seas, and the far-neighboring countries of the Middle East, Oceania, and the Indian Ocean. The former can be named the first strategic supporting belt and the latter the second strategic supporting belt. With these two belts, China can stand tall in the global competition.” It is further argued that the geostrategic location of the US which once was an advantage has become a disadvantage because of its distance away from the geopolitical and economic center, i.e. Asia Pacific and China. Accordingly, from a Chinese

view, the PRC is in a better position to build its own supporting regions in the new historical conditions.²⁴⁵

Strategic Culture

With the redefined geographical arenas and the strategic reasoning behind the method (i.e., reduce dependency by creating one's network) to obtain tangible and intangible means (i.e., material resources and political influence) within those spaces discussed, the next question is what the Chinese strategic culture is which can explain its behavior on a global level. This question is important because it lays out a theoretical framework for the grand strategy (winning without fighting) and strategies discussed in the next section. Previous literature addresses this question mostly through the lens of defensive or offensive and through the cases of use of force, and in some examples in line with whether it is about homeland defense, which sees border areas merely as territories for the purpose of Chinese defense. This study has more complicated answers.

Strategic culture, defensiveness and offensiveness do not refer to military operations in this study. They are to be explored in the Chinese strategic context that the evolution of events goes through a non-use of force stage to use of force with an emphasis on the former; the process

²⁴⁵Li Yonghui, 2013, pp. 36-37. Original text: 亚太正在成长为世界地缘政治中心，而中国则是亚太的中心。……中国不但能以周边20多个陆海近邻为战略依托带，还能以包括中近东、太平洋岛国等环太平洋、印度洋远邻国家为战略依托带。前者可称之为第一依托带，后者可称之为第二依托带。以这两个依托带为战略依托，中国就可在全球竞争中立于不败之地。Other citations include Lin Limin, 2012; Wu Zhicheng, 2015, p. 27. In Wu's article, the author writes, "*Zhou bian* is the primary supporting force for China's path toward a responsible world power. Faced with the problem of insufficient supplies of public goods and the common expectation of *zhou bian* countries, China should more proactively provide public goods, especially in terms of security and economy, according to its core interests and actual capabilities, promote its own discursive influence in the building of regional institutions and order, so that it can fully demonstrate itself being 'a responsible major power.'" (周边地区是中国走向负责任世界大国的首要支撑与依托。面对地区公共产品的供给不足和周边国家的共同期待，中国应从自身核心利益与实际能力出发，更加积极地提供地区公共产品尤其是安全和经济公共产品，提升在地区制度和秩序建构中的话语力，充分展现“负责任大国”的责任担当。)

is a continuum. Accordingly, strategic culture cannot be sliced down to mere use of force and needs to consider peacetime measures as well. Clausewitz's notion that war is the other means of politics indicates an ongoing process. But, this continuing process is not brought into the analysis of strategic culture and the understanding of strategic culture is often equated to the study of use of force. In addition, strategic culture here does not apply to the evolution of a single event for a short term, but rather a state's trajectory on its way to great power status, which consists of a series of events. Therefore, strategic culture in this study is related to the grand strategy that the PRC employs through political, cultural, economic and military resources to achieve the goal of a revived Chinese nation.

An assessment of Chinese strategic culture can start from strategic thought. Chinese classics about strategic thinking elaborate on both peacetime policy and military solutions. Even when it comes to arts of war, they do not merely apply to use of force, but also areas of non-military operations. Despite different contexts, the fundamental principles in utilizing what one has and creating what is desired are the same.²⁴⁶ Strategic thought can further break down into four components: self-evaluation of environments, ensuing behavior, methods in conducting behavior (i.e. strategies), and rationalization of behavior. Accordingly, strategic culture reflects the reasoning of certain behavior to preserve one's interests in response to perceived reality that is constructed subjectively through social interactions. Since the types of behavior are subject to one's judgements of external and internal conditions, strategic culture contains bias that from the viewpoint of the self (collectively speaking, i.e., the CCP, Chinese leadership, or even across political, social and academic sectors) is rational and right while it may not be from others'

²⁴⁶ Sun Tzu's *Art of War*; Ralph Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993, kindle version.

perspectives. This subjectivity is reflected in the rationalization of one's own behavior as being just and defensive.

When the PRC disseminates the idea that China has been peace loving and its strategic culture is defensive, which is echoed in some English-language scholarship, this is about Chinese justification of and belief in the characteristics of its deeds, rather than what its strategic culture is. Similarly, when the literature finds that during a given period of time, China exhibits offensive and parabellum propensities, they are products of certain domestic and perceived international conditions and do not present what China's strategic culture is. The Ming dynasty was more bellicose than Song, partly because the latter was a weak state who eventually could only occupy southern China proper. But, Song also initiated naval offensives against the Jurchen Jin when the latter was retreating north.²⁴⁷ When defensiveness and offensives can be found, albeit under different situations, strategic culture is something else. Its definition needs to be able to explain variations in Chinese behavior, including non-use of force, use of force and, not least important, how they are employed (methods or strategies) and why (rationalization). The rest of the analysis in this section will focus on how *xing shi* (situation and the potential) can provide answers in defining China's strategic culture.

Situations, Types of Behavior and Justification

So often in Chinese classics (dealing with statecraft, diplomacy, war and down to the deeds of individuals), there are theories and abstract precepts and concepts which by nature are strategic in instructing actors how to achieve their goals. These philosophies provide frameworks to understand a spectrum of behavior under different conditions. One example is “the

²⁴⁷ Peter Lorge, “Water Forces and Naval Operations,” in *A Military History of China*, eds. David Graff and Robin Higham, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012, pp. 81-96.

propensities of things” or *shi* (勢). Outcome and change will come of their own accord, as the result of the continuation of the process and no arbitrary intervention is needed to change the course of things to one’s advantage, for such action only prompts resistance from one’s enemy and is self-defeating. François Jullien’s theses, *A Treatise on Efficacy* and *The Propensity of Things*, elaborate well how such process occurs and how such process contains the above stated four components that altogether explain what China’s strategic culture is.²⁴⁸ The same relations of conditioning and consequence that structure the Chinese concept of efficacy, i.e., how to strategically do things in a way that desired results can be realized with the least amount of costs, can be found across the literatures that he surveys, including Taoism, legalism, Confucianism, and Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*. The following discussion is based on Jullien’s works along with my application of his works to world politics and China’s developmental course, and an explanation of why strategic culture is neither defensive nor offensive.²⁴⁹

The Chinese phrase *xing shi* is a key term whose analysis will solve the puzzle of how a desired outcome will come into place. *Xing* (形) means a situation or “a relation of forces” in the surroundings. In world politics, it can be understood as a configuration of balance of power among/between major states/political camps. *Shi* (勢) can be translated into the “potential” of a situation or “a position of strength” in a situation. Without *xing*, *shi* will not exist and thus *shi* always reflects the tendency of *xing* and the “position of strength” varies according to different situations. In the PRC’s post-Cold War narratives, international politics is structured as being more peaceful as the antagonism of two superpowers has dissipated (*xing*) and countries around

²⁴⁸ François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. New York: Zone Books, 1995; François Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

²⁴⁹ Words and phrases in the quotations marks in this section are from Jullien’s book.

the world prefer economic development rather than conflicts in an era of globalization (potentiality). From the Chinese perspective, to “obtain the potential” in this situation is to reorient China’s (internal and external) policy to be focused on economic growth rather than ideological struggle and steer the country away from being in a constant combat-ready condition where war is perceived to be imminent.²⁵⁰ The desired outcome is that economic growth will eventually drive other aspects of national power (military, political and cultural) and together with them bring about a rejuvenation of the country. In a very broad and general stroke, what the PRC’s narratives say is that to realize the ultimate political objective, it will do things that fit the general trend.

The assumption here is that to bring about desired effects, it is more effective to behave in a way that fits the dynamics of the course of things, instead of acting against it and encountering opposition. However, one does not passively react to situations and simply coast along with the tide. The activeness is displayed in the constant vigilant observation of the environment and the corresponding behavior or initiatives to elongate the duration of or enhance “the propensity of things.” When the tendency of a situation is detected to be swerving away from one’s preferable course, one needs to bring it back on track, keep it ongoing and consolidate it.

The measures taken to create and sustain favorable situations are not melodramatic performances, like war, that can be defined in time and in space and that can be easily detected. Drastic action that disrupts the commonly held sense of how things should run delivers a message that one intends to change status quo and thus invites opposition which may increase the cost and make the desired goal impossible. The gist here is to do things imperceptibly and

²⁵⁰ In fact, this process already started before the end of Cold War and the CCP already cast a dim light on the Soviet reforms in the 1980s. The post-1991 narratives continue to follow the same discursive direction.

have others think that where they end up is a natural outcome without human intervention. A more efficacious solution is that one molds one's behavior to suit the existing way and reshape the structure of a situation from within. This is deception at a higher and more skilled level. Although the Chinese classics emphasize "situation" and conditions, in reality it is human beings who make things work and manipulate the courses of things.

In Chinese thinking, the propensity of things in a situation, aided by (imperceptible) human intervention that strengthens its directions, can naturally create irresistible and inevitable trends that lend legitimacy to the desired outcome. Chinese narratives as seen in *Qiushi* and official newspapers often reflect such logic. For instance, they frequently identify major events in the current political economic order, such as the 1997 financial crisis, the 2008 financial crisis, and the American retreat from globalization, and frame them as structural opportunities in a power vacuum for China to provide public goods which the world still needs. Because the world's still needing public goods is the propensity of things in a situation, according to the Chinese reasoning, what China does is simply to give what others want and thus what it does fits the trend. As the logic goes, the expanded Chinese influence is a natural outcome of this irresistible trend. China is framing its desired result as legitimate through focusing on the conditions in the environment and thereby arguing that the outcome which it prefers, but may not always be explicitly stated, is objectively reached without subjective and self-interested human intervention, while it is exactly Chinese intervention that creates the environment and forms the impression that the trend is irresistible and inevitable. The Belt and Road Initiative is another

example in which economic outreach is framed to create and sustain globalization which the PRC says is needed for the benefit of the world.²⁵¹

Imperceptible manipulations to create and maintain conditions favorable to one's development should be understood with a relaxed standard. In reality, it is next to impossible that others will not detect the changes in the balance of power, especially when their interests are violated. In this circumstance, the move to bring the course of things back onto the track that one favors will not go unnoticed and may invite counteraction. China's maneuvers in the South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS) show that without changing the greater *xing* dramatically (as the measures fall short of war), it is incrementally creating a new status quo, a new situation in which others play the new game that the PRC creates. The counter measures such as patrols and FONOPs have failed to change Chinese island building and military installations.

In Chinese philosophy, the structure of an environment also characterizes one's deeds. Accordingly, behavior is not inherently passive or active, defensive or offensive. These adjectives are constructed and given meanings by the situation one is in. The emphasis on the conditions in the environment makes an interesting contrast to the claim that China has been peace-loving, an innate and active quality of an agent. Describing behavior as inherently peaceful and desired effects as inevitable and natural results of the trends provides justification and legitimacy to what one prefers, while in fact the agent has kept a watchful eye to subtle changes in the environment and accordingly makes necessary adjustments and reinforces favorable trends or creates favorable conditions.

²⁵¹ The above discussion is about the application of *xing shi* in the Chinese discursive construct. Whether Chinese descriptions of events and described effects of its policy fit the realities require further examination and are out of the scope of this research.

Situations, Non-War and War

The ancient military classic *Liu T'ao* includes conversations between King Wen and T'ai Kung about how to subdue their enemies; one strategy that T'ai Kung offered is called "civil offensive" (文伐).²⁵² There are twelve measures of civil offensives. They are "civil" because of their non-military nature. The purpose is to disarm the enemy without the enemy knowing that it is being disarmed, stripping the available resources that it can mobilize in a war, before one initiates the attack. The twelve measures in general are three-fold. Toward the enemy itself, do what the enemy likes and corrupt the enemy with licentiousness and women so as to foster its arrogance and lower its guard. Toward the associates of the enemy, get close to them and win their hearts and minds through bribes and gifts so as to divide their loyalty. Toward the self, accumulate one's resources and plan strategy secretly so one's true intention will not be known. Under the situation that the enemy is not prepared and never imagines that it is being plotted against, the attack will be easier because those who had been closest assistants and officials now are at the enemy's command and because of long-term secret planning, the relative capabilities now are very clear in favoring the self. This is how the victory is obtained. It does not involve fighting in a way that future literature will celebrate commanders' brilliancy on the battlefield or lament their failure.

T'ai Kung finished the conversation by saying, "when these twelve measures are fully employed, they will become a military weapon. Thus when, as it is said, one *'looks at Heaven above and investigates Earth below' and the proper signs are already visible, attack him* (emphasis added)." In Chinese political philosophy, disasters and rebellions within a state are signs from heaven and earth that the rulers are immoral and incompetent and whoever aspires to

²⁵² Ralph Sawyer, Loc 835 to 858.

establish a new regime is justified to overthrow the old. According to T'ai Kung's strategy, the signs of heaven and earth are in fact the results of conditions created by human beings who intentionally try to corrupt the enemy and make the enemy's governance lax, leading to popular dissatisfaction and compounding the difficulties brought by drought or flood. "Righteous war" fought on the claimed just grounds can be based on man-made conditions.

Chinese strategic thought is about efficacy, utilizing the least amount of resources to achieve the greatest effect (minimizing costs and maximizing benefits). This also translates into obtaining goals without fighting a war and when a war is to be fought, ensuring victory is already at hand so one does not get consumed by the waste of resources. As the example of T'ai Kung's strategy shows, with the bulk of work being done before war, waging a war becomes effortless. This continuous process makes it impossible to understand Chinese strategic culture by separating non-military measures and use of force. They are not events that can be examined in isolation from one another. Instead, they form a continuous process that "transforms the situation," as Jullien describes, without dramatically altering the course of things, to bring about desired results. Since transformation takes time, China's strategic culture is long-term. This warrants a study that focuses on peacetime evolution.

War as a continuation of politics has different interpretations and practices in western and Chinese traditions. The former accentuates devoted resources and personnel whereas the latter tries to prevent war from upstaging the importance of political manipulations in the statecraft. The idea that the PLA should be able to fight and win a war, which has gained more media attention under Xi Jinping, can be traced back to Jiang Zemin during the post-Deng period. To understand what this idea means, consider one section in a 2017 CMS article about war and politics. In the context of stressing "the political nature of war" (战争的政治属性) as "from a

Marxist point of view, war is the continuation of politics”, the author quotes Xi’s words from a book compiling documents for military leaders to learn basic guidelines laid out in the 18th NCCPC (the 18th Party Congress) : “Understanding and planning war [is to be done] within the governing objective of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Strategic mistakes cannot be tolerated. If the military cannot win a war on the battlefield, it will have serious political consequences!” This means, in the author’s paraphrases of Xi’s statements, that failed wars such as the US in the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the USSR in Afghanistan, and the US in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 21st century diminished the major powers’ influence politically and economically. To win a war however is not the ultimate goal of strategic thinking. From the Chinese view, politics rises above military affairs. The author concludes this section with another quotation from Xi, “the questions of fight or not fight, when and how to fight, and fight to what degree are in service to politics. In the case that the military can get an upper hand but political conditions do not allow, action cannot be taken. On the contrary, if political conditions allow but there are military risks and difficulties, action will still be taken resolutely.”²⁵³ Fighting on the ground will stop if the political goal has already been reached, even when the future prospect of battlefield success looks promising. Troops will still fight for political goals even when battlefield success is uncertain. The true capabilities may only be known to the self. What is not explicitly said in the essay but may be possible, in accord with deception, is that by militarily engaging the enemy, it may mislead the enemy to believe that one is more capable than it actually is. If the enemy reasons according to the logic that since the self is the weaker side, it is

²⁵³ Zhang Shude and Xia Zhihan [張樹德 夏志楠], “A Study of Xi Jinping’s Outlook on War” [习近平战争研究], *CMS*, no. 6, issue 155, 2017, pp. 27-38.

better to concede than to fight, then the side who is willing to use force can attain bargaining power to extract concessions from the enemy.

The admonition to the PLA to win a war is to have battlefield success, but that success will take place in the presence of political conditions that political leaders judge to be conducive to their political objective and with the PLA following political dictates. Politics reigns. As a result, whether there will be a war depends on leaders' evaluations of political situations and less on whether the military is fully equipped for the job. This conclusion however is not invalidated by the fact that the PRC tries to make the PLA qualified for war. China may fight under the conditions that the PLA is not fully ready for the task.

On the macro-level, the military strategy is the political strategy. At one level, the PRC may develop its operational strategy. At the level of military action obeying political dictates, what matters is not so much battlefield success, but whether negotiation can exploit the military's willingness to fight and reap the benefits from the created impression, real or unreal, that it has chances to win. Winning without fighting predisposes actors to rely on non-war solutions (with military means still being utilized), but does not renounce war; it only tries to make war easier by relying on political manipulations.

War and non-war all depend on subjective assessments of political situations. The PRC is saying that it prefers non-war solutions, which have so far fit its peacetime expansion---if economic growth and globalization have the potential to achieve political goals under a relatively peaceful environment, why wage war and rock the boat? But it is also willing to wage war at a time that it deems politically propitious, which may come when it judges that the international environment is no longer favorable to its national development.

China's strategic culture is about how to wage a prolonged silent warfare. Whether there is a war does not define "silent" and even the occurrence of war does not disqualify the word as long as the authority judges that its deeds do not contravene the mainstream of the time and accordingly construct a discourse, i.e., propaganda, to shape the public's consciousness. The lengthy period in which desired effects will be born out is about what situations offer and what players can do to evoke the potentiality in *xing* so that favorable forces are maintained, enhanced and created to predetermine the outcome. The interactions between environments and agents are nuanced and altogether define strategic culture. Characterizing strategic culture according to binary distinctions as either being defensive or offensive based on deeds neglects the fundamental assumption that preferred results are the "consequences" of transforming situations in a lengthy period by only capturing a snapshot of the entire evolution. It also neglects that strategic assessments of environments, the activeness of human beings, play indispensable roles in determining the type of action to take or not to take. Therefore, whether behavior is defensive or offensive is not the point in analyzing what China's strategic culture is. China's strategic culture is about how and to what extent objectives can be reached. In this sense, subjective evaluations of situations, types of behavior taken in response, and justification of behavior need to be considered altogether.

Doing things according to *xing shi* heavily relies on players' judgements of situations. In theory, it requires a sage-like person to comprehend correctly the interlocking relations in the layered situations and manipulate what will and will not happen in a way that from others' perceptions remain within the bounds of the existing order. In practice, the PRC may not have all the situations under its control and may act in a way that provokes more countermeasures, due to misjudgments or beliefs that are far from the realities that others have constructed.

The above overview concerning the utilization of *xing shi* (situation and its potential) provides a theoretical framework for the following discussion of grand strategy, that is, winning without fighting, and varied strategies in the bigger environment (post-Cold War relatively peaceful political climate) that allows winning without fighting. Chinese narratives evaluate external and internal situations, recommend policy options accordingly, and rationalize the behavior that is taken.

Grand Strategy and Strategies

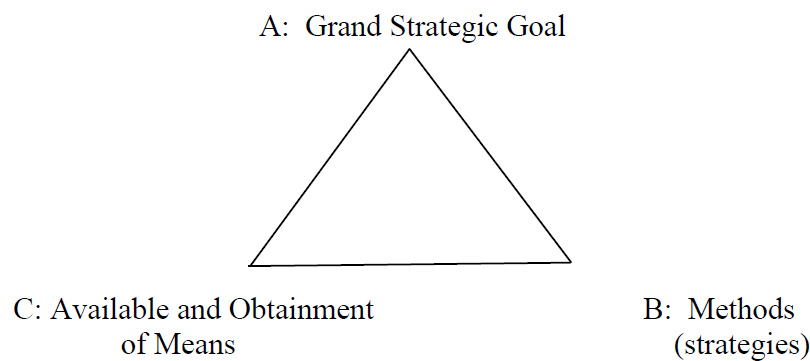
Without neglecting that a military solution remains a legitimate means, the issue in focus here is *strategically conditioned* Chinese preference to use non-war solutions to reach a great power status. In both Chinese military classics and the contemporary narratives, war and non-war approaches come to form because of certain conditions.²⁵⁴ As much as China's foreign policy and military narratives like to argue that the country has a cultural distaste for war and is inherently peaceful, its discourse also indicates that non-war measures are favored because of the post-Cold War international climate. In deciding what measures to take, the assessments of external and internal conditions may weigh more than the cultural belief which is subjective and serves the purpose of justification.

It is under both conditions of a peaceful international environment and the PRC's needs for economic development that the narratives propose means and methods to achieve grand strategic goals. In abstract, the PRC's grand strategy of winning without fighting can be presented through a triangle (graph 5.0). The grand strategic objective is to achieve the status of "a trans-regional great power that can wield global influence." Some authors also use "a regional

²⁵⁴ See Ralph Sawyer. Also see the example in chapter 2 about Confucius' suggestion to wage a war against the state of Ch'i.

great power that can wield global influence” and “from a regional great power that has global influence and its influence is ever increasing to a world great power.” Chinese researchers differ over whether the PRC is a regional or trans-regional power, but they unanimously hold that it will exert influence on a global level.²⁵⁵ This objective fits ongoing Chinese foreign footprints in the stated regions and countries of strategic importance from inner to outer circles surrounding the PRC.

Graph 5.0



Because Chinese expansion is an ongoing process and foreign activities that aim to arrest or create another wave of growth are based on material capabilities accumulated since the reforms began, C needs to reflect not only the available assets that can be invested for additional returns, but also the newly gained resources. The resources at C point are economic, cultural,

²⁵⁵ See Xia Zhengnan. Other articles explicitly stating that China has global influence and/or such influence is growing include: Huo Zhengde [火正德], “Disserting the Strategic Relationships between China and Europe [論中歐戰略關係], *International Studies (国际问题研究)*, issue 2, 2005; Cui Liru [崔立如], “Evolution of International Politics and the Building of the Order Under the Era of Multipolarity, Part II” [国际格局演变与多极时代的秩序建构(下)], *CIR*, issue 2, 2016; Li Yonghui [李永辉], “Power Transition and Transformation of International Order” [权力转移与国际秩序转型], *CIR*, issue 7, 2014, pp. 4-5; Niu Xinchun [牛新春], “A Discussion on China’s International Identity: A Horizontal Comparative Perspective” [中国国际身份刍议——国际横向比较视角], *CIR*, issue 12, 2014, pp. 10-16; Yang Jiemian [杨洁勉], “The Direction for Building the Theory of Major Country’s Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics” [中国特色大国外交理论的构建方向], *CIR*, issue 3, 2017, pp. 1-8; Ren Xiao [任晓], “Study About the Sino-American Relationships Requires the Breakthrough of the Two Bottlenecks” [中美关系研究有待两个超越], *International Studies*, issue 2, 2007, p. 13.

political and military. They are employed in combination with one another to generate more assets, or to increase CNP,²⁵⁶ to realize A. The process is a complicated one. For instance, finding foreign territories and markets, including Chinese acquisition of land in foreign countries in order to build factories or other economic assets, land to be used for Chinese naval bases, and the acquisition of natural resources as well as to solve socio-economic issues such as unemployment and shortage of grains may require diplomacy and cultural influence. Material gains may translate into political and cultural assets which then allow the accumulation of further material gains. This self-feeding process is not perfect and can lead to increasing opposition from other countries. For the investments to bear fruit, it requires strategies. The gist of those strategies is to have others cooperate willingly, minimize the degree of resistance, and manage conflicts on issues where countries' interests diverge. What has been unfolding in the PRC's foreign policies in the last two decades or more is this protracted process of the employment of B to get C.

Cooperation and Managed Confrontation

The strategy of cooperation has dominated in the Chinese military and foreign policy narratives and it is the product of the evaluation of objective and subjective conditions. "On one level, since the countries usually have conflicts of interests, it is necessary to seek common grounds among differences so that the interests of our country can be safeguarded. On another level, *competition between major powers no longer displays solely in the form of confrontation,*

²⁵⁶ In Chinese narratives, to achieve the grand strategic goal requires the enhancement of material capabilities and comprehensive national power (CNP). The latter is characterized as the central feature of contemporary competitions among major states. CNP is a Chinese term cited in the vast foreign policy writings. It uses nine metrics to measure states' power, in general including economic resources, energy, human resources, military capabilities, technology, capital, international resources, government resources and information. Some Chinese researchers have characterized the current major power competition as "a world war waged through a competition of CNP without shedding blood." See Xia Zhengnan, 2010, p. 133.

but instead through cooperation... This is because globalization limits the objective conditions for confrontation. Countries in the post-Cold War have made their primary objectives economic development and maintenance of stability. The chances of obtaining [one's] interests are greater through cooperation and necessary political and economic means than through military conflicts... Therefore, [China] should practically strengthen constructive cooperation, strategic coordination, and strategic partnership with world powers.....through multilateralism and bilateralism to reach the balance of interests [among major states] (emphasis added)."

Accordingly, cooperation is a strategic choice based on domestic needs and international politics. Present along with the assessment of the security environment in the narratives is the factor that Chinese culture and traditions are biased toward cooperation and mutual benefits as long as the condition that "national security strategy can safeguard core interests" is met.²⁵⁷ The above narratives are made with the belief that it is necessary to interact with major powers if China wants to secure its core and primary interests.²⁵⁸

The strategic prominence of *zhou bian* stems from the situation in which China's reaching outward requires pathways through the smaller states which are in the spheres of influence of other major states. Surrounded by the geostrategic landscape where both major and small powers reside, the PRC's foreign policy cannot but deal with both. In considering the geopolitical complexity of Eurasia, military and foreign policy writings that advocate for a more proactive approach in forming cooperation and partnership also heed the necessity of adroit diplomacy and maneuvers in order to play a protracted game. The grand strategy here is "winning without fighting."

²⁵⁷ Wang Guifang, 2006, p. 81. Original text: 国家利益的客观诉求，均要求国家安全战略在维护国家核心利益的前提下，首选合作，谋求互利共赢。

²⁵⁸ Wang Guifang, 2006, p. 80.

Consider the following narratives that appear in a 2010 CMS article. “China needs a brand new and holistic grand strategic thought that enables continuous economic growth, modernization of technology, and strengthening of the military while this grand strategy does not incur confrontation policies from other countries. Such grand strategy requires an orientation of thought in...seeking winning without fighting.” After laying out this fundamental logic, the author specifies what can be done in each aspect of national power. “In the political arena, [China] should vigorously promote the meanings to the world of the strategy of peaceful development and counteract the discursive hegemonism of great powers...;in the economic arena, [China] should protect and consolidate economic gains through globalization and seek the commanding height of technological development; in the cultural field, using the universal values of Confucianism to start dialogues and exchanges with western civilization, and cultivate the world influence of the Chinese culture through openness and inclusiveness;.....;in terms of the military, [the goals are] to prevent war through effective deterrence and accelerate revolution in military affairs so that China can seize the initiative in a future war.”²⁵⁹ The work done in the political and cultural fields is to obtain material capabilities in the economy and military and to reduce the degree of resistance, if there is any, to that effect, by creating a shared belief among the members of the international community that the rise of the PRC brings the world peace and prosperity. Without forsaking the war solution, the preferred measure is to use force to deter and coerce others, both of which are two sides of one coin, to do one’s bidding.

It is said in a 2013 CIR article that many cooperative measures are the precedents to the PRC’s building of strategic supporting belts, including China’s assistance to Asian countries in the 1997 financial crisis, ASEAN+N, economic and trade relations between China and countries

²⁵⁹ See Xia Zhengnan, p. 135.

of *zhou bian*, the Six-Party Talks regarding North Korean nuclear issues, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Boao Forum, promotion of Sino-Russian relations etc.²⁶⁰ As the logic goes, other multilateral and bilateral mechanisms not listed in the essay and/or were established after 2013 such as Belt and Road are conducive to the formation of strategic belts as well. In a separate article about establishing land strategic belts, especially referring to western expansion to Central Asia and Europe, but also including Indochina, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, through platforms of security and economic cooperation, the author argues that states nowadays have more options, aside from war, to realize their national interests; although they are strategic detours compared to direct use of force, these less straightforward measures have better chances to reach their objectives because they are in accord with “changes in the [international] security dynamics.”²⁶¹

Cooperation for the PRC is not for cooperation’s sake, but rather to equip oneself with abilities for competition. Through participation in the current international institutions, one can take advantage of whatever is beneficial to the self and change international regimes to one’s favor. Consider the following paragraph: “China should prioritize free riding and surpassing as its foreign strategies.....Free riding is to coast along the world trend and mentality...try as much as possible to join international organizations and follow the international rules, try as much as possible to learn advanced technology, management, political maneuvers,...and international norms. Free riding is not passive dependence..., but aims to develop more shared common interests, rules and working mechanisms as well as to attain the opportunities in the current environment we are situated in in exchange for necessary and bearable compromises that we

²⁶⁰Li Yonghui, 2013, p. 37.

²⁶¹Tang Yongsheng [唐永胜], “Proactively Pursue the Strategy of the Westward Movement”[积极推进西向战略], *CIR*, issue 11, 2010, pp. 19-20, (specifically p. 20).

make. [To avoid the complications] of security dilemma, China needs to incorporate the strategy of surpassing in the first years of the 21st century, that is, participating in international security institutions whose benefits outweigh the costs for China...and to play a lead role in these organizations.”²⁶² Accordingly, the PRC prefers to finalize the power transition process without war.

Cooperation also needs to be understood in the strategic context of “building the *zhou bian* order.” In the Chinese narratives, whether the geo-position of the PRC is disadvantageous or advantageous depends on the policy designs. They caution about the possibilities of increasing “contradictions” as interactions grow and favor the policy of “befriending neighbors, bringing peace to neighbors, and enriching neighbors” through economic, cultural and security exchanges. “Economic growth has enduring spill-over and expansion effects. [The Chinese government] should guide domestic capital to invest more in *zhou bian* countries and convert economic benefits into political trust toward China. The goal is to mitigate the concerns or strategic agitations from *zhou bian* countries about China’s rise and relieve strategic pressure from the American rebalancing [toward Asia] and the strengthening of alliance between the US and Asia-Pacific countries.” Engagement with neighbors, according to the narratives, aims to create strategic conditions favorable for the PRC to be on top of the overall geostrategic balance. “China can build vast and solid support for its national security and development and shape regional security dynamics favorable to itself by guiding more Asian countries to proactively seek relations with China.” This passage reveals a Chinese worldview in which it is the center of new geostrategic gravity and an expectation that others come for benefits with a recognition of the PRC being capable of providing them. In addition, the word, “guiding” (牵引), indicates an

²⁶² See Xia Zhengnan, 2010, p. 137.

attitude of strategic pro-activeness which appears in many foreign policy and military writings and, when understood in conjunction with the public narratives that managing and building relations with other countries is a long-term process, shows that the PRC intends to shift subtly the structure of world politics to the order that it prefers and during the process ease the mentality of others to be receptive to Chinese ways of doing things through the assumption, shared by many however, that cooperation and exchanges are mutually beneficial and reduce conflicts. The product of interaction between guiding and long-term processes is the concept “accumulation of strategic advantages” (积累战略优势), which also has frequent presence in the narratives, albeit with different forms of expression.²⁶³ The PRC is practicing these discursive recommendations and is building “propensities of things” to its favor through economic enticements and minimization of resistance.²⁶⁴ Once the trends get institutionalized, they become new norms which few will challenge as they are seen as the natural orbit of things.

The strategic reasoning discussed above aims to serve the political objectives of self-aggrandizement and the weakening of opposing forces. As the *zhou bian* countries are shored up to be the PRC’s strategic support, the country’s “accumulated strategic advantages will lend influence to regional affairs and gradually enhance the centripetal force centered on China from Asian countries including the allies of the US”, such as Japan and South Korea. “As long as China keeps the state of development and progression, and has effective deterrent capabilities, any *zhou bian* country needs to carefully and practically treat its relations with China. Even the American allies will find it hard to join the U.S.-initiated strategic gamble against China. Over

²⁶³ The analysis in this paragraph is based on this article. Tang Yongsheng [唐永胜], “Make A Good Use of Geopolitical Advantages and Proactively Shape the Order of Zhou Bian” [发挥地缘战略优势，积极塑造周边秩序], *CIR*, issue 10, 2013, pp. 34-35.

²⁶⁴ François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. New York: Zone Books, 1995.

time, the increasing contradictions between control and anti-control will render alliance less useful.”²⁶⁵ Accordingly, cooperation is not always inclusive and mutually beneficial. It is strategically used in the hope that in the long run the American power will recede, and the Chinese influence will consolidate.

Despite the prevailing rhetoric of cooperation, the PRC also shows its willingness to get involved in limited confrontations, or the strategy of managed conflict. In the case of territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, China has employed limited use of force to occupy disputed islands and has conducted island building. Its use of force can be described as gray zone action in which conventional military force may or may not be involved in the course of action and the measures taken fall short of triggering a formal military response from an opponent. For instance, militia forces can be used on the sea to intimidate the fishing boats of other countries and outmaneuver their protecting vessels in a way that over time one gets to occupy a disputed sea territory without a direct military conflict. Essays from think tanks have recognized a shift in foreign policy from a cooperative stance, that is, joint exploration of resources and shelving disputes, to Chinese assertiveness in using “hard power.”²⁶⁶

A 2013 CIR article explains how the shifting rationales are in accord with changing international politics and China’s national capabilities.²⁶⁷ In order to fully capture the rationalization of changes in strategies, it is necessary to discuss the essay at length. The author characterizes China’s foreign policy in the past 20 years of “strategic opportunities” (战略机遇期), since after the 16th NCCPC in 2002 to 2013, as primarily “diplomacy of stability

²⁶⁵See Tang Yongsheng, 2013, p. 35.

²⁶⁶ Shi Yinghong [時殷弘], “The Newest Changes Regarding China’s Foreign Strategies” [中國對外戰略的最新變遷], *CIR*, issue 1, 2015, pp. 21-23.

²⁶⁷ Wang Sheng and Luo Xiao, pp. 9-15.

maintenance” (维稳外交). Such diplomacy aims to “create favorable *zhou bian* conditions for China’s peaceful rise...in a relatively favorable international climate.” The strategy is to seek “common grounds among differences,” “gloss over disputes,” (淡化争议) and “forge shared political interests through economic means” (以经促政) among other measures. These cooperative approaches, according to the author, will create a stable *zhou bian* environment conducive to the success of China’s reforms and modernization. The 1997 financial crisis and 9-11, the article continues, further provided the PRC opportunities to deepen regional interdependence. “The American strategic focus shifted to counter-terrorism and the Middle East after 9-11, its attention to East Asian affairs has decreased, which greatly reduces strategic pressure on China and the obstacles to implementing *zhou bian* policies. All of a sudden, peace, cooperation, and development become consensus [shared by the countries in the region].” According to the narratives, China’s peaceful rise hinges on whether it perceives the environment to be peaceful (and whether it can achieve the goal through means other than war). The perception however can be highly subjective. From a Chinese perspective, peace is obtained when other major powers wield less influence in China’s *zhou bian* and the PRC has more say; it believes that it has more abilities to create prosperity for all than other powers as it states that it could push through *zhou bian* policies because of a distracted U.S. As the narratives further indicate, if the international environment is not peaceful, it is others’ fault and China is justified to take confrontational measures.

This essay adds to a list of foreign policy and military writings which pinpoint troublemakers while depicting the PRC as defensively protecting its rights from incessant infringements. Writing during the increasing tension since 2009 and in the aftermath of the Scarborough shoal dispute, the author identifies the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan in the case

of the SCS and the ECS, and argues that they have disturbed regional peace to the degree that China has to take countermeasures. A list of actions regarding islands disputes is provided to show “major changes in China’s *zhou bian* diplomacy from excessive emphasis on the maintenance of stability to the moderate protection of rights,” including domestic demonstrations, economic sanctions on other countries, military exercises, domestic law and regulations revisions, unilateral exploration of natural resources on the Chinese side and regularization of maritime patrols. These measures are described to “safeguard the relations with *zhou bian* countries and stabilize the regional balance of power based upon resolutely protecting national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.” According to the discursive logic, policies in line with Chinese interests are stabilizing forces for the region whereas those who contradict destabilize it. These measures are further justified by the idea that ungrateful smaller states deserve punishment.

The same article depicts the PRC as a “good-willed” power wishing to “mitigate maritime disputes with *zhou bian* countries through close economic ties.” The provided benefits to ASEAN countries include imports of non-tariff agricultural products, unconditional aid, loans and trade agreements. When it comes to the Philippines and Vietnam, the PRC expects to “economically pacify” both countries in exchange for their concessions on the SCS. The author then lists promised Chinese investments worth 13US\$ billions and 60 US\$ billions of bilateral trade agreements to the Philippines and indicates that China has been particularly gracious toward Manila since “pro-US Philippines does not have traditional friendship with China like Cambodia and Laos do. Nor does it have abundant oil, gas and mineral resources like Sudan and Zambia. It does not have significant geostrategic value to China either, like Pakistan and Myanmar do.” The conclusion is that these countries have not shown gratitude and instead are

“emboldened” by the American support to “provoke” China and encroach on its rights with “the intention to force China into accepting an illegal *fait accompli*.” To restore stability and to prevent China from being busy with “putting out fire from four directions,” “it needs to forsake delay and blocking strategies that reflect the thought of maintaining stability and instead... resolutely use China’s interests as the main benchmark to measure how well the relationships with *zhou bian* countries are.” “Those who are friendly to China or at least will not be provocative on the sensitive issues will have priority to share the abundant dividend of China’s rise for the long term whereas those who are provocative on sovereignty and security issues will lose from Chinese punishments.”

The narratives continue to endorse China’s hardline policies and argue that “only by effectively safeguarding rights can the maintenance of stability through forceful measures and resolute will be possible.” The article then recommends comprehensive measures, from economic, military, and diplomatic means to administrative presence and propaganda, to protect China’s maritime rights, with additional passages emphasizing military deterrence. In addition, it is clear that, based on the above discursive analysis, from a Chinese view whether stability exists depends on whether Chinese interests are fulfilled. The policy turn after 2010, from a focus on stability to protection of rights, is rationalized by the belief that the PRC with its increased relative strength, facing growing competition from other major powers in Asia in the context of weakened American global influence, has assets and bargaining leverage to carry out its objectives with a stick. The 2008 global financial crisis is marked as a watershed point, with which many other foreign policy articles including those in *Qiushi* also concur, where uni-polarity started to give way to more equal distribution of power. In other words, according to the

article, the US is in decline and “non-western market economies represented by China “are on the rise.”

The authors of this article do not merely provide justifications for policy shifts. They take one more step to argue that the PRC should change its position from being defensive, in line with the diplomacy of stability maintenance, to taking initiatives in proactively shaping regional dynamics according to its interests. This suggestion is made based on the premise that changes in the international system including a shifting global strategic center and the reshuffling of powers’ ranking due to the rise of China are ongoing and long-term. Therefore, the policy reorientation is likely to stay.

The 2015 white paper was the first defense document to state the need “to strike a balance between rights protection and stability maintenance, and make overall planning for both.” It should be read in association with “safeguard national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.” It seems to indicate a strategy of managed confrontation with countries who also have stakes in disputed islands and relevant waters of the South China Sea. In other words, the PRC is relying on military means short of war to achieve its goal without jeopardizing a relatively peaceful environment that it needs for continuous development.

Have Your Cake and Eat It?

Both overseas investments since the 2000s under the “going global” policy (走出去) and a series of administrative, diplomatic and military actions along with discursive construction about the ownership of the SCS since 2009 aim to utilize and create a favorable balance of power for the fulfillment of the PRC’s interests. To maintain the momentum, the Belt and Road Initiative was announced in 2013. Serving both economic and military purposes, based on the accumulated effort of past engagement with other countries, the Initiative forecasts more infrastructure

projects to come along two routes. The maritime route extends from China's east coast through the South China Sea, Southern Pacific, and Indian Ocean to East Africa. The land route runs through Central, South and West Asia to Europe. Concurrent with the disharmony with countries in Southeast Asia over territorial disputes is the Chinese attempt at economic enticements. The military balance of power in the SCS that favors the PRC and economic dependence will tie the hands of Southeast Asian countries on issues where they have stakes but China wants to dominate. Except for India, China does not have major disputes with countries in the Indian Ocean and those in Central Asia. Although Russia has been on good terms with the PRC in public, their relations may be more complicated and deserve separate research. Economic incentives plus diplomacy and international propaganda may suffice to influence the ruling elites in these countries to adopt policies compatible with Chinese interests. The Initiative carries a strategic rationale of consolidating the west while dealing with challenges in the east that aims to sustain favorable *xing* during the power transition.

China's strategic rationale is derived from how it perceives its geopolitical position. Situated between lands and seas, the narratives concern how to make the most of it while avoiding simultaneous attacks, not necessarily in the military sense, from both fronts. The policy is to weight maritime and land security equally (海陆兼备 or 海陆并重), instead of sacrificing one for the other. The 2013 defense white paper wrote that "China is a major maritime as well as land country." On a constant foundation of weighing land and maritime security equally is the changeable direction of "strategic gravity" (战略重心) in accord with varied/variable *xing shi* at different directions. The sea front is where the current strategic gravity lies. To attend to both sea-born and land-born threats, the solution is to consolidate the west and use it to support the challenges from the east. The implementation of this idea does not equate to simultaneous

aggrandizement of the army and the navy. As the current policy of Belt and Road indicates, multifaceted approaches including economic ties and diplomacy exist alongside the naval buildup.

The Mahanian idea that whoever controls the sea dominates the world is modified in the PRC's military writings. This is the result of China's geopolitical position and reflects a need to find a solution when the country sees the U.S., a sea power, as the primary adversary. A 2014 CMS article opines that the real reason for sea powers' victory over countries bordering both land and sea lies in the strategy of "balance of power on the land and maritime supremacy on the sea" (大陆均势+海洋优势).²⁶⁸ According to the article, the English (British) historically had managed to ally with France's neighbors (in the nine-years war from 1688 to 1697 and Napoleonic wars) while preserving their sea command to assail French expansion. What matters is the overall power equilibrium (*xing*) that favors the sea power, instead of the obtainment of sea power itself capable of winning the war. Other countries which had similar geopolitical features and suffered the same fate of defeat from attacks coming from both land and sea were Germany, Russia and the Qing dynasty. The author then prescribes the presence of three conditions that can prevent the formation of an unfavorable *xing* (a sea power allying with land powers to attack a state neighboring land and sea). They are domestic stability and unity, obtainment of maritime benefits, and international support.

With regard to maritime interests, the author advises that China needs to develop massive exports based on the foundation of "resourceful economic strength, highly advanced credit system, vigorous business, accumulated capital and large amount of shipping." Export by sea has

²⁶⁸Zhang Yongchao [张勇超], "A Historical Review of How Major Land-Sea Powers Resolved Security Dilemmas" [海陆兼备大国破解安全困境的历史考察], *CMS*, no. 1, issue 133. 2014, pp. 110-115, (specifically pp. 1112-113, 115).

high correlation with a strong commercial shipping industry which contributes to naval development. According to the article's reasoning, both naval capabilities and maritime trade will sustain the country and prevent it from being enervated by insufficient benefits accrued through land because the latter only suffices to support a certain strategic direction.

Another suggestion to prevent the exploitation of geostrategic vulnerability is voiced in this paragraph that embodies the spirit of winning without fighting: "A major power that borders land and sea, when it comes to strategic orientation, should uphold self-defense and [the principle] of defensiveness as well as opposing expansion. Only by the policy of peaceful coexistence, and the avoidance of hegemonism and expansion through land and sea can it attain support from neighboring land countries and prevent their alliance with a sea power." As discussed before, hegemonism and expansion in the Chinese definition only apply to war. China's militarization in the South China Sea falls short of this qualification and thus from the PRC's view is entirely defensive and does not contravene the principle of peaceful coexistence. The message of the paragraph is that as long as a non-military solution is used, China can win the hearts and minds of others. The example is overseas investments in Belt and Road projects. Despite growing criticism mostly from developed countries, the Initiative has gained solid ground in the developing countries. The solution is to disarm, figuratively, the enemy by removing political conditions for (informal) alliance, for instance, alliance between the U.S. and countries to the west and south of China, through economic dependence. While this essay is a piece of military writing, the strategic logic goes beyond military operations and belongs to grand strategy.

The final suggestion in this article is to closely observe *xing shi* and shift the direction of “strategic gravity” (战略重心) as soon as subtle changes in the situation are detected. The fundamental principle is to ensure security from either direction while engaging in all-out effort to deal with the enemy during both peacetime and wartime. In demonstrating how to obtain security at both fronts, the author cites the example of rapprochement with the US, when the latter was in a quagmire in Vietnam, to alleviate pressure from the sea so as to tackle Soviet hostility without distraction. As the logic goes, the contemporary engagement with countries from Central Asia, South Asia and Russia, with India sometimes an exception, aims to consolidate China’s west and ensure supplies of resources when dealing with challenges from the east.

A good amount of Chinese writings devoted to the idea that the PRC can be a strong maritime power are more about weighting land and sea directions more equally than about a sole emphasis on the latter. The space dedicated to sea power discourse is to address the gap between the fact that China traditionally had been a land power and the prospect that its future development also and not exclusively depends on the sea. In other words, the positive cases that advocate naval power are the result of previous bias toward the land in practice.

The idea to balance two directions or to think about the PRC’s strategic environment from an integrated grand strategic view, that is, how the land and the seas work together for self-benefit, does not only appear in the military writings as the above analysis of a 2014 CMS essay shows, but also in foreign policy journals. One example is a 2015 CIR article with a focus on the “maritime silk road”, the maritime component of Belt and Road.²⁶⁹ The authors build their

²⁶⁹ Fu Mengzi & Lou Chunhao [傅孟孜 楼春豪], “Some Thoughts on the Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” [关于 21 世纪海上丝绸之路建设的若干思考], *CIR*, issue 3, 2015, pp. 1-8, (specifically pp. 2-4).

arguments by connecting together infrastructure on the land and cooperation with countries bordering or on the sea. “The rise of a strong maritime power requires the support of land power. China needs to rely on the inland development to become a sea power. An integrated effort is needed to have the Maritime Silk Road and Land Silk Road exert synergetic influence.” It goes on to say that “the historical success of Portugal, Spain and Holland was ephemeral because they had scarce land resources whereas the US was first a land power and then moved on to become a naval power with an expansive territory for back up.” The authors then describe China’s geo-position and the narratives indicate that the Chinese development is a replica of the U.S.

The outward expansion to seas and lands aims to address the imbalanced development within China and to reduce Chinese dependency on the coastal economy. The authors recognize “domestic economic imbalance between the coast and the inland due to a more effective utilization of external resources by the coastal regions.” “The coastal economy reinforces China’s high dependence on overseas markets and foreign capital as well as sea lanes.” Recognizing the need to solve “the Malacca Strait Dilemma” by creating alternative routes through Pakistan and Myanmar for energy supplies, from the authors’ view, they “cannot replace maritime shipment.” “In order to ensure that China has enough substitutes for maritime shipping, it is necessary to broaden maritime cooperation with other countries.” The article further provides the example of the Indian Ocean, which was not a Chinese priority before, to demonstrate the need to develop maritime routes. According to the authors, the Indian Ocean has become an important energy and trade corridor that matters “in China’s overall development and security.” The logic here is to expand China’s influence far away from the coast so that its vulnerability can be reduced. Meanwhile, it is clear that the PRC does not intend to sacrifice one strategic direction for the other.

While this article is about the maritime silk road, because many countries on the sea route border both lands and seas (aside from Indonesia and Sri Lanka which are island countries and from the authors' views are more about maritime values with their seaports' potential), the article also emphasizes the connectivity between sea and land routes, and how the former works to its best with the latter. The issue is tied back to the PRC's attempts to develop its west and central-southern provinces. "Through the two Corridors (the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor and the China-Pakistan Corridor).....Xinjiang and Yunnan and other inland provinces can more effectively attract elements of production.....For instance, Yunnan can have access to the Indian Ocean through the corridor in the southwest and transform from an inland province to one that indirectly has coastal advantages." It is particularly noted that the two corridors have both land and maritime functions that add developmental incentives to China's inland regions. To be specific, the authors pinpoint Pakistan, Myanmar and Thailand as locations for Belt and Road because they border lands and seas. As chapter 6 will discuss, the PRC has been investing in the seaports in Pakistan and Myanmar along with land infrastructure that links to China's western regions.

Other domestic developmental issues stated in the article include over-production and economic upgrading. Countries on the Belt and Road are believed to provide help for the PRC in solving these problems. "The developed countries such as the US, Europe and Japan traditionally are China's export markets. But the markets have saturated. Developing countries along the Belt and Road however have huge market potential and can help digest China's production surplus and industrial upgrade because of the backwardness of manufacture in these countries."

The admission of Chinese reliance on the world is not always made explicit. In the public statements addressed by Chinese leaders to international audiences, for instance, speeches

published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is rare to find passages that admit so. This is in line with official rhetoric that China has always relied on itself. The standard script that the country has overcome obstacles big and small and remains an economic giant even during the most difficult times for the international community runs through these speeches. The message is that even though members of international society are suffering and China also has received some impact, it remains not only capable of standing tall but also altruistically providing public goods; it is a reliable partner. However, when canvassing articles from wider sources, for instance, articles for policy making purposes and even essays from *Qiushi*, a Party organ for political indoctrination, Chinese authors do not shy away from acknowledging China's dependence on the world.

The way that China deals with its security concerns and developmental imbalance is to expand outward, by incorporating *zhou bian* countries into its orbit. For public consumption, the underpinning strategic logic discussed above is replaced by the discourse that depicts the PRC as a just and altruistic benign power that treats the small as its equal and brings mankind peace and prosperity.

Chapter 6

I Come for Peace and the World Is My Playground

To gain international influence and status, the PRC has relied on peacetime measures. Peacetime maneuvers are supported by the logic of winning without fighting and combine military and non-military means. Meanwhile, as Chinese official documents indicate, peacetime preparations are to prepare for “informationized local war” (to be exact, “informationized limited war”) Both non-war and war solutions are justified by the same logic that the self is on the right side and the other will take the blame. This logic applies to wherever Chinese activities take place. Active defense as a strategic guideline for the PLA has the above multifaceted and yet interrelated meanings.

Although active defense is usually understood as a strategic guideline for war, Chinese official documents indicate that the emphasis is also on peacetime maneuvers and preparations. This is not to dismiss its war function, but rather to point out that without peacetime activities, there are no combat capabilities for war and aside from war, China also aims to achieve political objectives by deterrence.

Active defense is not merely about where war most likely will occur. The prevailing definition of the concept from a sole “strategic direction” (from the sea) and from a war perspective is too narrow. A better approach will consider how the PRC understands its external environment from both land and sea directions and what designs it comes up with accordingly to cope with security challenges. The measures taken are for both peacetime deterrence and eventual use of force if the latter is judged to be necessary.

Active defense can be understood by the logic of winning without fighting. Winning without fighting does not separate the pre-war stage and war. Instead, both phases are considered

together and war becomes an option when peacetime maneuvers fail to achieve desired effects. However, instead of seeing war as a last resort, which seems to be accepted by the current literature, war and non-war are conditioned. Winning without fighting does not mean that China dislikes or avoids war. It simply means that it focuses on pre-war preparations to make use of force easier. The PRC does not have real combat experience since the 1979 war with Vietnam and it takes time for the 2016 military reform that aims for capabilities of joint warfare (联合作战) to have an effect. To modernize the military, it takes advantage of global interdependence and creates a relation of symbiosis between economic expansion and military training required for combat abilities. Moreover, it is stated in the Chinese narratives that what will be ideal is to elongate the peacetime period to benefit military development. The PLA's capabilities in joint warfare remain questionable. Aside from unqualified armed forces, the official assessment of the international environment *so far* does not see an imminent war coming. Neither do domestic conditions that are still heavily oriented toward economic development favor a war. Accordingly, China intends to perfect its military capacity and use it in tandem with non-military influencers (culture, economy and diplomacy) to shift world power dynamics eventually to its favor, which will render a war unnecessary. Alternatively, it hopes to accumulate as much capacity as possible before it fights, which means sometime in the future the impossibility of a much-anticipated protracted peace period due to external or internal reasons or both. Another scenario is that war becomes an option when the country perceives itself to be on par, militarily, with the adversary and there are domestic factors favoring that route. Whichever way it may be, approaches to reach goals are conditioned. War as the last resort, indicated by statements like "because of others' provocations, the self is forced to do something," contains a cultural bias that justifies one's behavior. It does not explain why certain measures are or are not taken.

In the context of the informationized local war that China expects to fight, active defense functions on a global level. The meaning of global here involves interactions between land power and sea power indicated by Chinese writings. Regarding the sea, open seas (the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean) are training grounds and battlefields, both of which aim to realize offshore-waters defense. Although the campaign is to be waged within the first island chain, the PRC also is looking for adding strategic depth in the sea direction to obtain its political target within the first island chain (or within offshore waters regions). Increasing strategic depth will allow it, as its writings indicate, to minimize wartime homeland destruction by having the battlefield in the open seas. Preparation for such during peacetime also facilitates outward expansion. Open-seas operations such as MOOTWs, in the direction of the Indian Ocean, do not just serve the protection of maritime economic interests, but also lend force to the accumulation of combat capacity that can be used in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans for the purpose of offshore-waters defense. Military exercises in the Western Pacific beyond the first island chain no doubt serve the same goal. On the land side, China's investments in the contiguous and non-contiguous territories are expected to assist in dealing with the main challenge from the sea. In other words, even though the political target is located within the first island chain and the campaign will take place there, "informationized local war", or a better translation, "informationized limited war" also expects battles will be fought away from offshore waters, in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

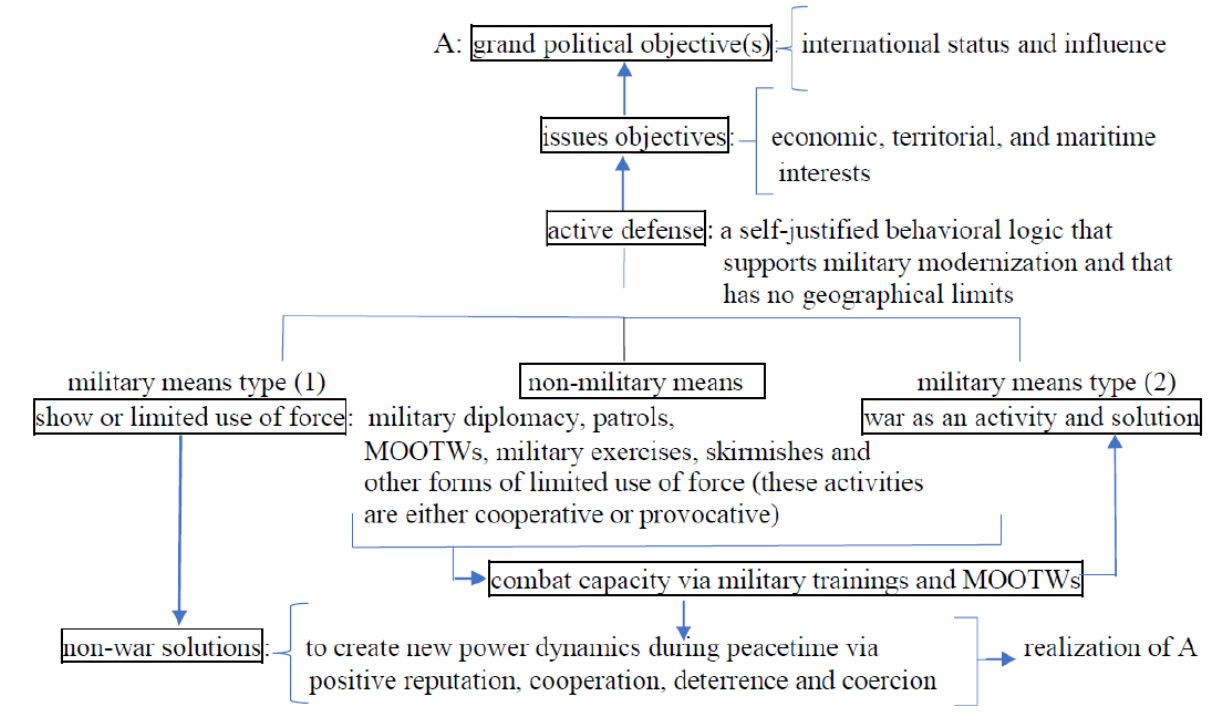
The above stated preparations on the land and sea are on a global scale. Therefore, the self-justified rationale of active defense, that what the self does is always right and for the sake of peace, is to be applied to wherever Chinese activities are present to create favorable *xing shi* to achieve political objectives. Similar to the historical experiences of other major powers, the PRC

is extending its foreign influence. However, it does not call its own behavior “expansion.” In the Chinese discourse, tangible and intangible influence and resources obtained through use of force is “expansion” whereas means short of use of force is not. That a materially superior state imposes terms on an inferior counterpart, instead of relying on moral appeals and reciprocity, in the PRC narratives, is called “hegemonism,” because again a military solution is resorted to. The Chinese discourse nevertheless does not have a clear-cut distinction between force and non-force means when it comes to the acceptability and legitimacy of Chinese behavior. Full-scale war can be sanctioned as being defensive and on just grounds, which are subjective interpretations. The same rationale applies to display of force and use of force short of war.

This chapter first explores active defense as a multifaceted strategic guideline for the realization of the PRC’s grand political objectives. The theoretical tenets laid out here apply to the period from the second half of the 2000s or the time around the publication of the 2004 defense white paper and Liu Huaqing’s memoir. It then moves on to historical discussion of active defense in practice before and after Deng’s reforms. Through comparison, it brings out major differences in that active defense after Deng’s reforms is tied to expansion and the synergetic workings of land and maritime power. The analysis then focuses on China’s strategic reasonings, activities and rationalization in both sea and land directions. Through the presentation of interrelations between offshore-waters and open-seas activities and how the land and the sea can work together in the Chinese view, it argues that the self-justified logic does not merely apply to the war scenario and the location of its occurrence, but also to the non-war scenario in which both military and non-military activities regardless of their distance from Chinese territory are used to achieve political objectives.

Theoretical Foundations of Active Defense

Graph 6.0²⁷⁰



Based on the discursive evidence from official documents and essays affiliated with the PLA,²⁷¹ graph 6.0 presents a military approach to fulfill the PRC’s grand political goal(s), with arrows standing for contributing effects. The “rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” by the attainment of international status and influence can be the result of multifaceted approaches and it demands success in foreign policies as well. The grand political objective(s) are linked to the realization of issue objectives. As indicated by the Chinese narratives, their attainment requires military support, either through means of type (1) or type (2). For both war and non-war solutions, the narratives indicate that the country needs military strength to credibly coerce others

²⁷⁰ Graph is made by the author.

²⁷¹ Defense white papers, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2019. Quoted texts are from English translations provided by the Chinese government.

to conform. Various activities short of war will foster combat capacity (especially via military training and MOOTWs in graph 6.0) and shape a good image that plays into the PRC's advantages. This chapter thus contends that active defense is not merely a military strategy about war and where war will take place from a Chinese viewpoint. It also informs peacetime activities and how they are designed to contribute to political objectives without fighting. Analysis based on either of them will lose the forest for the tree.

According to the 2015 document, in the chapter *Strategic Guideline of Active Defense*, aside from “winning local wars under conditions of informationization,” other goals of active defense include “war prevention, rights protection and stability maintenance, deterrence.....” These goals serve a larger political purpose beyond military; it is about peacetime operations that have accumulated effects on warfighting abilities that can either be used during wartime or peacetime, through deterrence and coercion, to achieve the grand political objectives. In other words, use of force and military means short of use of force can have, in theory, the same effect on the realization of political goals.

A related question is the geographical scope of military activities. The space where the PLA is active has expanded according to China's evolving interests. This is best demonstrated by the concepts of “offshore waters defense” and “open seas protection.” The 2015 defense white paper discusses them under the headline of “*Building and Development of China's Armed Forces*” while previous white papers approach the topic in a less organized way. It wrote, “In line with the strategic requirement of offshore waters defense and open seas protection, the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from ‘offshore waters defense’ to the combination of ‘offshore waters defense’ with ‘open seas protection,’ and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. The PLAN will enhance its capabilities for strategic

deterrence and counterattack, maritime maneuvers, joint operations at sea, comprehensive defense and comprehensive support.”²⁷² It is unclear why the English translation uses *marine*. The Chinese version however means maritime combat force structure (海上作战力量体系), instead of marine combat force structure. Nevertheless, the passage indicates the integrating efforts in place of operational abilities in the offshore-waters and in the open seas. Open-seas operations and training in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans are indispensable for joint warfare conducted in the offshore waters (or “near seas,” 近海防御 *jin hai fangyu*, as the Chinese characters should be directly rendered) and open seas, with the latter aiming to prevent key enemies’ forces from the two oceans entering the offshore waters theater. Meanwhile, offshore waters and open seas activities also work together for peacetime deterrence.

According to the same white paper, the mission of the armed forces is to “foster a strategic posture favorable to China’s peaceful development.” The strategic posture (战略态势), including preparations for war (military trainings and MOOTWs), displays of force, military exchanges and formation of regional security frameworks, is to shape the situation and foster a trend within, or *xing shi*, with the aid of justifying narratives to shape international perceptions and accumulated combat capabilities which lend force to deterrence and coercion, favorable to the PRC in the sense that other countries will not oppose its overseas activities, but instead willingly cooperate or involuntarily acquiesce. These military activities are to fulfill economic, maritime and territorial interests which then will be transformed into the PRC’s international status and influence. For instance, military installations on the artificial islands of the SCS coupled with

²⁷² English translation original. Chinese text : 海军按照近海防御、远海护卫的战略要求，逐步实现近海防御型向近海防御与远海护卫型结合转变，构建合成、多能、高效的海上作战力量体系，提高战略威慑与反击、海上机动作战、海上联合作战、综合防御作战和综合保障能力。

required abilities for joint warfare, such as organizational coordination, personnel training, trials of equipment and weapons systems, intelligence gathering and naval formation in the open seas, whose obtainments are made possible by peacekeeping and anti-piracy missions that also aim to safeguard China's overseas commercial interests, may deter regional countries from taking steps which Beijing sees infringing on its territorial interests. Because war is not used during the process, China claims that its development is peaceful and as a result it is not practicing hegemonism. In international politics, the literature is dominated by the dichotomy of peace and war, with one defined by the lack of the other. The complexity in the case of Chinese expansion and ways of intrusion will challenge the idea that peace is defined by the lack of war.

The evidence that the PRC intends to finalize power transition during peacetime can be found in the official documents, including the 2015 white paper. To “create a security environment favorable to China's peaceful development” usually comes after the assessment that the international climate remains generally peaceful and such peace provides opportunities for China to develop. Judging from the frequent appearance of the parallel between the two sentences in which China is both a beneficiary and a creator of peace, it is not difficult to grasp that active defense is a long-term strategy to realize China's political objective, i.e. creating a new status quo in the world balance of power, during peacetime, a goal which otherwise would have to be attained by war.

The intention to prolong the current period of peace does not contravene the fact that the PRC is preparing for war. It is simply to have more time to perfect its fighting potential. The logic of “winning without fighting” goes that it will be better to have political objectives come true with the presence of military capabilities but without war, but since the future is

unpredictable and the day may come that Chinese leaders see a necessity to use force, the longer the period of peace, the narrower the gap of power asymmetry.

Active defense, although closely associated with military activities, is not exclusively military. To deter war, it dictates a coordination between military and non-military means. In the defense white papers of 2002, 2006, 2008, and 2015 within the framework of deterrence, the narratives indicate a realization of political objectives without war through a combination of military and non-military struggle. While the Chinese version uses “struggle” (斗争), the English version reduces its frequency and uses “means”, “endeavors” or “work”. The Chinese texts contain more hostility and a greater sense of competitiveness than English translations. The following examples are the English translations of the defense white papers provided by the PRC. The 2002 paper wrote, “ In accordance with the needs of the national development strategy, the PLA, by employing military means flexibly and in close coordination with political, economic and diplomatic endeavors, improves China’s strategic environment, reduces factors of insecurity and instability, and prevents local wars and armed conflicts so as to keep the country from the harm of war.” The 2008 paper wrote, “This guideline lays stress on deterring crises and wars. It works for close coordination between military struggle and political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and legal endeavors, strives to foster a favorable security environment, and takes the initiative to prevent and defuse crises, and deter conflicts and wars.” The 2015 paper stated, “to foster a strategic posture favorable to China's peaceful development.....persevere in close coordination of political, military, economic and diplomatic work.”²⁷³ The guideline also singles out non-military struggle to help deter war. Therefore, when it comes to realization of

²⁷³ For the 2002 white paper, see <<http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20021209/II.htm>>; for 2018, see <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/publications/2017-04/11/content_4778231_4.htm>; for 2015, see <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/WhitePapers/2015-05/26/content_4586711.htm>.

political goals without fighting, active defense is about both military and non-military means. The question then is about the type of coordination among different realms that the papers refer to.

Deterrence is not solely for the sake of maintaining a non-war environment. As the statements quoted above indicate, it is for China's development and about galvanizing combat capabilities before the outbreak of war, especially the ability of joint warfare operations. The type of coordination between military and non-military struggle (a combination of means type (1) and non-military means in the Graph 6.0) thus is to foster national comprehensive power and translate it into political assets and military capacity to deter war. Take China's interactions with *zhou bian* countries as an example. The state media reports diplomacy and heads-of-states meetings especially with developing countries in a way to highlight the PRC's international popularity. Overseas infrastructure investments and trade are made high-profile events. But these deals are not simply to solve Chinese problems of production shortage and surplus. Some of them are also strategic and military as the Chinese writings elsewhere indicate. A certain level of economic solvency and infrastructure support military buildup. The Belt and Road Initiative is such an example in that it provides needed resources and markets for the PRC's economy and invested infrastructure may be used during wartime. China's dealings with the SCS are another example of utilizing various ways, including military facilities, public discourse and legal warfare, to validate its territorial claims. From a Chinese viewpoint, military presence in the SCS deters other major powers in the surrounding areas. These multifaceted approaches feed the realization of issue objectives as illustrated in the Graph.

In Graph 6.0, the relation between issue objectives and means type (1) is symbiosis. It is a two-way effect that means type (1) contributes to issues objectives and vice versa. Accumulation of combat capacity is made possible against the background of pursuing overseas economic interests; the PRC takes advantage of peacekeeping and anti-piracy missions, both of which aim to secure Chinese commerce and are framed as cooperative and conducive to world peace and economy, to do training required for joint warfare capabilities. Territorial interests are another example. Their realization in the South China Sea through island building creates an environment that serves both peacetime deterrence through military presence and wartime fighting by force deployment and regular military exercises, both of which are practiced and accustomed to the sea terrains and the presence of other countries' navies. Therefore, issues objectives have contributing effects to combat abilities as well.

The Chinese narratives (in the PLA-affiliated publications) explicitly indicate that offshore region(s) the PRC believes to be crucial to its national security are strategically linked to its global activities and economic interests which tie back to national security that is conceptualized to include but not limited to (maritime) territories along the national boundaries; in other words, the coastal maritime regions are not merely about national security, but also bear strategic importance for the possibilities of the PRC's global status. These regions are one of places where “informationized local war”, a type of warfare that the PLA believes it will fight, is most likely to take place—a limited war that has global consequences from the Chinese perspective.

The geographical space of an informationized local war extends beyond the PRC's border areas. While the first island chain is identified as the most strategic region for the country's security, to achieve its political objectives in the first island chain, Chinese discourse indicates that warfare in the outer areas is necessary in a “local war”, to deepen strategic depth by pushing

the war outward. Therefore, local wars can include but do not equate to wars fought in the offshore waters or places along land borders between China and neighboring states. The PRC's defense white papers in their English version often translate *jubu zhanzheng* (局部战争) as "local wars." However, the Chinese *jubu* (局部) actually refers to "limited," instead of locations within a fixed geographical range close to the PRC-controlled territories. The more appropriate translation of *jubu zhanzheng* should be "limited war."

"Limited wars" or the misleading translation, "local wars" needs to be understood against the lesser likelihood of "a massive war of invasion"²⁷⁴ and the lesser likelihood of "worldwide, all-out and large-scale wars for a relatively long period of time."²⁷⁵ This is because the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of China have moved the world toward multipolarity and thus large-scale homeland invasion and world war have become less likely.²⁷⁶

Based on the above discussion, graph 6.0 functions on a global level and so does the self-justified logic of active defense. The PRC's discourse rationalizes both cooperative and confrontational activities of types (1) and (2) as being defensive, mutually beneficial or conducive to peace.²⁷⁷ Considering this and the fact of China attempting to realize its

²⁷⁴ See the 1995 English defense white paper

²⁷⁵ See the 2008 English defense white paper. The 2014 white paper uses "world war."

²⁷⁶ The white papers of 2008, 2010, and 2014 have multipolarity and local wars (or local conflicts, 局部战争, 局部冲突) in the beginning paragraphs of the same first chapter, the *(National) Security Situation*. 2008 and 2014 also see a world war included in the same section. The 2014 document stated, "...the global trends toward multi-polarity and economic globalization are intensifying...The forces for world peace are on the rise, so are the factors against war. In the foreseeable future, a world war is unlikely, and the international situation is expected to remain generally peaceful.....Small-scale wars, conflicts and crises are recurrent in some regions. Therefore, the world still faces both immediate and potential threats of local wars (*jubu zhanzheng* 局部战争)." Accordingly, the relations between world war and *jubu zhanzheng* are about whether war is on a worldwide scale. "Local wars" in the Chinese white papers means that war does not occur in the form of WWII in that there are multiple theaters made possible by major states' global interests and trans-oceanic alliances.

²⁷⁷ Post-1949 cases include the Korean War and the 1962 border war with India. When it comes to war, the Chinese concept of "righteous war" provides a range of reasons to defend the action, including self-defense, helping the weak, being forced to take action, and fending off aggression. In the border clash between China

multifarious interests in a re-conceptualized expansive geographical space where its activities take place, it is not difficult to conclude, and empirical evidence does show, that the PRC justifies its behavior as being non-expansionist and for common goods wherever military activities occur. In other words, the application of active defense is dynamic and not bound by geographical limitations as long as China is able to continue expansion.

Active defense as a strategic guideline does not solely function as a principle for military operations, in terms of whether forces should take a defensive or offensive posture. Neither does it solely provide guidance for the active buildup of armed forces, not in the simple sense of arms stockpile but rather the overall combat capabilities based on qualitative and quantitative measurements, to deter or to fight adversaries for identified national interests. It is both. The “defensive nature” or “defense” of active defense refers to the fact that the PLA is prepared to

and India in 1962 that is dubbed “the Border Self-defense Counterattack War Against India,” China exonerates itself by the excuse that it did not aim “to use force to recover the territory illegally seized by India, but to create conditions for peaceful settlement of the border dispute by means of war when China had no alternative.” The narratives frame armed conflicts with neighbors as the result of no other choices left for Beijing and it is forced to go to war. In the Chinese view, the war solution that it adopted is justified because it would create conditions for peace. The PRC also has used the Korean War as a prototype of “righteous war.” “In the Korean War..... [we aided] the neighboring country [North Korea] in danger to resist foreign aggression [American imperialism], and to consolidate our national defense.” But the narratives that Kim Il Sung secured a greenlight for invading South Korea from Moscow and Beijing under the assessment that the US would not intervene and China already made military intervention possible on its side three weeks after the outbreak of war are lacking. For Mao and the CCP leadership, war in Korea served good purposes for communist revolution and could further consolidate the political legitimacy of the CPP, domestically and internationally. Domestically, by propagating the threat from the American “imperialists” and the “reactionary forces”, especially the KMT in Taiwan and its remnants in China, Mao was able to mobilize the Chinese population in his design of transforming the country from the stage of democratic revolution to that of socialist revolution. Internationally, Chinese victory in driving the Americans out of the peninsula would boost the country’s position as a regional leader of the communist revolution. Beijing was eager to restore its central status by exporting revolution to developing countries. The PRC framed its role as someone who had duty to liberate people whom the U.S. aimed to oppress and expand its influence over. For Mao, if China sat idle when the U.S. acted in Korea, it would put its reputation at risk. In short, the war was half-encouraged by China and the Chinese intervention in the Korean War was ideology driven for self-interests. This proactiveness in motivation is in a sharp contrast with how the PRC wants the event to be remembered, a victim who tried to protect the self and the other victim as well. See Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi. *Science of Military Strategy*. Beijing: People’s Liberation Army Publishing House, 2005, pp. 458-459 (for the quotations in this footnote); Jian Chen, *China’s Road to the Korean War: the Making of Sino-American Confrontation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

deter or fight for national interests as fighting for national interests is defensive in one's subjective interpretation. It is less about whether operations are defensive. In fact, on the operational level, both defensive posture and offensives are encouraged so long as they are judged to facilitate victory.

“Active” means to actively conduct military training and MOOTWs to prepare for war and for a preferred non-war peacetime balance of power. The Chinese texts call such activities “preparation for military struggle” (PMS). The “military struggle” that prevails in the official documents was not explicitly defined until 2015 through an independent chapter. The term may simply refer to a situation in which force on various scales is used to solve disputes and does not include peacetime military activities. This is indicated by “preparation for military struggle” in that peacetime activities including military exercises and MOOTWs (military operations other than war) are the preparations for future use of force as they foster combat capacity.²⁷⁸ In the 2015 white paper, the first paragraph of the chapter, *Preparation for Military Struggle*, wrote, “preparations for military struggle (PMS) is a basic military practice and an important guarantee for safeguarding peace, containing crises and winning wars. To expand and intensify PMS, *China's armed forces must meet the requirement of being capable of fighting and winning,.....and do solid work and make relentless efforts in practical preparations, in order to enhance their overall capabilities for deterrence and warfighting* (emphasis added).” It is within this context that the same chapter discusses MOOTWs along with military training. The last

²⁷⁸ The idea that the armed forces can be used during peacetime and wartime already appeared in 2006 white paper. It identified the diversified employment of the military as a pathway to “effectively respond to crises, maintain peace, *deter war and win war in all kinds of complicated situations* (emphasis added).” The term however did not receive full treatment until 2013 with the entire document devoted to that. Not until 2008 did the white paper use the term, MOOTW, that includes “active participation in multilateral and bilateral joint military exercises,” to specify what peacetime diversified tasks the PLA may perform. Other MOOTW missions are disaster relief, counter-terrorism, maritime stability maintenance, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance.

paragraph states that MOOTWs are “an important approach to enhancing [China’s armed forces’] operational capabilities.” The Chinese version of the white paper however uses a more expressive term, “combat capabilities” (作战能力). Accordingly, from the Chinese view, through developing combat capacity from military training and MOOTWs, the PLA’s primary objectives of peacetime deterrence and warfighting capabilities can be achieved.

Another way to understand “active” is from the strategic level of the preparations work. The underlying logic is that however security dynamics change, the PLA has to be prepared and will be ready to go to war when it comes. It is about actively planning and preparing for “informationized local war”(信息化局部战争). To that effect, this will involve constant assessments of geostrategic situations and corresponding adjustments of organizational responsibilities and force deployments. The goal is to prevent the country from passively reacting to changing conditions and to enable it to “seize the strategic initiative.” The 2015 white paper provides descriptions about active defense that conform to the above interpretations. “In view of China’s geostrategic environment, the security threats it faces and the strategic tasks they [the armed forces] shoulder, the armed forces will make overall planning for strategic deployment and military disposition in order to clearly divide areas of responsibility for their troops, and enable them to support each other and act as an organic whole.”²⁷⁹ The security environment that the quoted text mentions specifically refers to outer space, cyber space, and the geographical areas where China’s overseas interests are located. Accordingly, active defense does not merely apply to the PRC’s core interests but also general national interests including those overseas.

²⁷⁹ For more detailed treatment of this passage, see the sub-section, *open seas operations*.

The “defensive nature” of active defense is not about how the campaign is waged or who initiated the attack, but rather regardless of that, actions are taken for self-believed defensive purposes on the political level. “Defensive nature” is related to whether the war is fought to secure specific political goals, including “safeguarding national unity, territorial integrity and maritime rights and interests”²⁸⁰ which Beijing defines according to its perspective of history and interpretations of international law. From the PRC’s viewpoint, since these goals are entirely justifiable and righteous, its engagement in combat for the stated purposes is purely defensive, regardless of whether the campaign is offensive or defensive. According to the Chinese logic, so long as issues are placed under the category of national interests, its actions receive immunity from the accusation of aggression. China’s narratives put this “defensiveness” in the perspective of expanded space for military and non-military activities in line with evolving national interests. The 2015 white paper is an example where open-seas maritime interests are seen as national interests and discussed within the framework of active defense. In other words, the PRC justifies its deeds as legitimate and righteous wherever they take place.

The PRC As A Land and Sea Power?²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, 2005, p. 459; the 2015 defense white paper.

²⁸¹ Unless footnoted otherwise, references for this section, especially history in Mao’s period and the transitional period under Deng’s reform, come from the following sources. Dennis J. Blasko, “Always Faithful: the PLA from 1949 to 1989,” in *A Military History of China*, eds. David Graff & Robin Higham, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012, pp. 249-266; Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, 11-13, pp. 95-104; Paul H.B. Godwin, “China’s Defense Establishment: the Hard lessons of Incomplete Modernization,” in *the Lessons of History: the Chinese People’s Liberation Army at 75*, eds. Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell & Larry M. Wortzel, Carlisle, PA: the Strategic Studies Institute, 2003, pp. 15-58; Bernard D. Cole, “The People’s Liberation Army Navy after Half a Century: Lessons Learned in Beijing,” in Burkitt, Scobell & Wortzel, pp. 157-192; Huang Yingxiu [黄迎旭] “The Development and Revision of China’s Active Defense Strategy” [中国积极防御战略方针的确立与调整], *CMS*, vol. 15, issue 1, 2002, pp. 57-64; Liu Qing [刘庆], “A Review of Revolution of Chinese Strategic Thinking in the 20th Century” [二十世纪中国战略思想演变述略], *CMS*, issue 2, 2000, pp. 38-46; Chen Zhou [陈舟], “On the Development of Defensive China’s National Defense Policy in the New Situation” [试论新形势下中国防御性国防政策的发展], *CMS*, no. 6, issue 108, 2009 pp. 63-71; Jiang Tingyu [姜廷玉], “Deng Xiaoping’s Inheritance and Development of Mao

During Mao's period, the main defense focus was military preparations for a homeland invasion that would come from either the sea or the land, or both at the same time. From the PRC's perspective, the US could launch attacks from the Korean Peninsula or southeast coastal areas in coordination with KMT offensives. The US also posed threats from the south as it had been fighting in Vietnam since 1964. Meanwhile, from the 1960s to 1970s, following a deterioration in bilateral relations, the Soviets had grown aggressive in the Chinese eyes. Being sandwiched between two superpowers and lacking a modernized army, despite the possession of nuclear capabilities, the strategy was to orient economic development to fit the military needs for a war that in Chinese leaders' assessment mostly likely would not be limited but rather full-scale (全面战争) People's War.

The People's War aimed to mobilize nationwide resources to fight in more than one way. In such a war, the PLA would lure enemies deep into the interior, annihilate them when they were in dispersion through force concentrations, and directly confront the enemies' main fighting forces only under certain conditions. It was a combination of guerrilla and regular warfare. The goal was to enervate adversaries by removing their fighting potential. Facing formidable enemies whose military prowess far surpassed a country whose inventory and training were imported, Chinese leaders transformed the country to be constantly on a high alert for war. To fight the war, developmental priorities in industries and investments were readjusted; enterprises, infrastructure, science and technology, transportation and telecommunication were primarily to serve military needs. The result was that the country did not have a normal economy to support the overall wellbeing of its citizens. The "Three Line" (or Three Front 三线建设) policy in 1964

Zedong's Military Strategic Thought" [鄧小平對毛澤東軍事戰略思想的繼承與發展], Aug. 13, 2014, <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/n/2014/0813/c69113-25459367-3.html>>.

further relocated people, factories and research institutions from the coastal regions to the hinterland. It aimed to make northwest and southwest provinces the bedrock of military industry that could sustain combat needs. Mao's People's War thus was continental-oriented, to be fought mainly by the army with the navy and air force relegated to an auxiliary function.

Passing with Mao's death was the Maoist worldview about war that had informed national development and defense strategy. The resulting ideational changes about the interrelations of war and state building were also influenced by the rapprochement with the US during the 1970s that mitigated Chinese concerns of taking thrusts on two fronts simultaneously and further reduced the fear of a Soviet invasion since Beijing's capabilities now were augmented by improved relations with Washington. The PRC also utilized the newly gained freedom of action to war against Vietnam. Bilateral relations with Hanoi worsened in the later stage of the Vietnam War as Beijing abandoned its communist "brother" for a second time since the 1954 Geneva Conference. The closer relations between Moscow and Hanoi, in the eyes of Chinese leaders, lent a hand to the former's strategy to encircle China; Vietnam's drive for regional hegemony and Moscow's antagonism toward Beijing would create another sandwich situation for the PRC. Washington's weak response to Hanoi's aspirations did not curtail such a possibility either. Consequently, Deng Xiaoping, the then paramount leader of the PRC, decided to go to war. The war that started in 1979 and extended into the mid-1980s aimed to improve and consolidate China's geopolitical position. It also sent a message to the USSR that the communist brother that it supported was punished by its immediate neighbor whom it wanted to subdue, and the Vietnamese defeat was an assault to Moscow's expansionist ambition.²⁸² Adding to the PRC's

²⁸² Xiaoming Zhang, *Deng Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict Between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

relief were Moscow's setbacks in the Afghanistan invasion and the sluggish Soviet economy. In the mid-1980s, Chinese leaders set the tune for a better relationship with the northern neighbor in the years to come.

A series of upswings led Deng to believe that China's external security had changed for the better. What contributed to the PRC's confidence included reduced negativity, i.e. alleviated or removed threats, and the input of positivity, that is, the victory in the 1979 war with Vietnam as well as trade flows with the U.S. It was against this backdrop that Deng announced in the first half of 1980s a need to drop the mentality of expecting an imminent full-scale war and to concentrate resources on the Four Modernizations that would elevate economic development to the first place and relegate military development to the fourth in priority. This did not mean a slight toward the military in its role of state building, but rather a shift to a more sustainable way to develop coercive power by ending the subordination of the economy to military needs, severing the relation of economy serving military.²⁸³ The meeting of the CMC in June, 1985 set the tone that the country was no longer in a state of imminent war and the nature of the PLA's development would be peacetime modernization. Not until 1988 did the enlarged meeting of the CMC reorient "the preparation basis for military struggle" (军事斗争准备的基点) from a full-scale war of homeland invasion to a limited war (or local war).

Another important change was the replacement of coastal defense with offshore-waters defense (or near seas defense). Throughout Mao's period, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN)'s responsibility of coastal defense was inward-looking. Despite the stated need to build

²⁸³ As a norm of countries' successful development, economic growth would at the end allow for expanded military budgets if initial priority was given to the economy that support the general well-being of the population, especially the civilian light industry. Mao's period however contravened this pattern. Chinese leaders then tried to develop the economy primarily for the development of heavy industry as it paved the foundation for a modernized army. The result was the sacrifice of the livelihood of its citizens.

a strong navy, People's War with its continental orientation relegated the navy to an auxiliary role of supporting the army in securing the home front. Deng Xiaoping in the mid-1980s voiced the need to develop the capabilities of offshore-waters defense. Measures were taken for a more balanced development among the services of the armed forces, although the PLA would remain a continental-oriented army for the following decades. In 1979, the 13 military regions were reduced to 11. The 1985 enlarged meeting of the CMC in June announced a one-million personnel reduction. In the late 1980s, military regions again were reduced to 7 along with reductions of three million personnel.²⁸⁴ Aside from downsizing the army, Deng Xiaoping made Admiral Liu Huaqing the Commander of the PLAN. Since the PLAN Commander usually did not require a rank higher than lieutenant general or vice admiral, Liu's takeover of the position indicated the elevated status of the Navy in Deng's reforms.²⁸⁵ Liu would also serve as the vice chairman of the CMC until 1997. He earned a reputation for his strategic thought about offshore-waters defense and his efforts in naval modernization. The newly gained attention and greater budget allocations would serve three purposes, reverse engineering, foreign procurement and indigenous construction.²⁸⁶ The decade of the 1990s should be seen as providing the foundation and setting the tone for naval expansion from the 2000s to today, in both geographical space and armaments buildups.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Zhang Xingxing [张星星], "Deng Xiaoping's Contributions to the PLA's Reform with Chinese Characteristics" [邓小平开创中国特色精兵之路的历史贡献], *Research Center for the History and Documents of the Chinese Communist Party* [中共中央党史和文献研究院], Oct. 12, 2014, <<http://www.dswxyjy.org.cn/n1/2019/0228/c423730-30921558.html>> accessed, Jan. 5, 2020.

²⁸⁵ Bernard D. Cole's article in Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell & Larry M. Wortzel, pp. 179-180.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Toshi Yoshihara & James H. Holmes, *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*, second edition, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018, pp. 106-133.

Deng's reforms would make China's economy dependent on globalization in the following decades. Maritime interests thus also offer impetus for naval expansion. "Local war" as the new type of warfare for the PLA to master has inseparable connections with naval capabilities and force projection. The passing of Maoist ideology that valued manpower over machines in the People's War made possible the recognition of modern technology. Evolving names for local war reflect the elevated status of technology. In the late 1980s and 1990s, it was "local war under modern high technology conditions." Entering the 21st century, the name changed to "local war under the conditions of informationization." In recent years, military writings have used "local war under the conditions of informationization" and "informationization local war" at the same time.

To fight a People's War, resources were to be generated in the vast home territory and destruction in parts of the homeland was expected. These activities barely occurred outside the landmass. Local war takes on a different logic. It will still rely on the land power to create and mobilize warfighting resources. However, Chinese dependence on the world market and territorial contiguity with other states in the west and southwest directions make the generation of land resources qualitatively different. First, land power will rely on the concept of land extension that is made possible by transportation networks under BRI projects and infrastructure investments before BRI. China's (strategic) hinterland further extends to Central Asia, South Asia and Indochina. Second, related to the first point, instead of indigenously strengthening itself on a weak foundation as was done in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, the PRC is using global resources to develop its national economy and to strike a balance, through investments in the western and southwestern foreign states, between the inland and the coast. Unlike the People's War and its historical conditions, local war over the years has pushed outward the

defense line in the sea direction, away from the coast to minimize homeland destruction. Meanwhile, it is augmenting naval power in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. While the People's War carried the continental mentality, the informationized local war in the 21st century is premised on the idea that the PRC is both a land and sea power.

Active defense in the context of local war differs from that in the context of the People's War in terms of political goals and the methods for their realization. Because of a relatively peaceful post-Cold War environment, the attainment of grand political objectives through a non-war type of power transition theoretically becomes possible. Peacetime military activities and economic engagement that can be transformed into military assets may make war unnecessary during the process of power transition. This was unthinkable during Mao's period because of the country's backwardness as well as its international isolation. Despite the stated goal of surpassing developed countries through technological and economic leaps within a short period of time, this was unrealistic and severely hampered by ideological radicalization. Achieving power supremacy was impossible and military preparations for a drawn-out People's War built upon weak material conditions could only secure self-survival, not expansion. In addition, active defense in the context of informationized local war also has different geographical meanings that go with expansion.

Active defense is not to be defined solely by where the primary strategic direction for the PRC is. It is to be defined by the following aspects taken altogether:

1. The primary strategic direction for the PRC concerning BOTH its survival and its outward expansion.
2. Where it draws resources to support its efforts in the primary strategic direction.
3. Since it is a strategic guideline for peacetime military activities and use of force, both of which are pathways for the realization of grand political goals, it is imperative to take a strategic view about how Chinese peacetime military and non-military activities in the places stated in points 1 and 2 can, according to Chinese narratives, shift the world balance of power

and how they can be transformed into combat abilities when China decides to use force in the future.

It is under the expanded geographical scope, especially taking into account the second point, and the consideration of both peacetime activities and use of force that active defense should be understood. A central logic of active defense is that Chinese deeds are innately defensive, non-expansionist and peaceful, purely for technical and logistical needs, and beneficial for others as well. In understanding this logic from the perspective of Chinese globetrotting, the PRC will always defend its behavior as being defensive wherever it goes, and this is exactly the line for its commercial and naval expansion.

In the context of China's strategic reasonings for both the sea and land directions and how it intends to transform them for its own use, the next section will show that the self-justified logic is not affected by distance and that Chinese rationalization reveals the power relations that the PRC prefers. To that effect, the analysis will include two main sections, the sea direction and the land direction. In each of them, strategic reasonings, activities and Chinese rationalization of its own behavior will be presented. Chapter 5 has discussed the Chinese strategy of consolidating the west (the land direction) while preparing for war in the east (the sea direction). It is based on this view that the rest of the analysis in this chapter unfolds.

The Sea Direction

3 Million Square-Kilometers of Maritime Territories

Between 1984 and 1985, Liu Huaqing read a report produced by a research institute of the State Council that advocated for China having both "continental vision" and "maritime vision." Liu was in the middle of contemplating China's naval strategy as the military was undergoing a transition from wartime to peacetime operation. In his memoir, Liu cited a paragraph from the report to justify why it was necessary for China to devote resources to naval development. The

first sentences read as follows: “our country is the first to invent the compass and has a long coastline and long history of sea-faring. It is a major state with natural endowment of oceans. Therefore, the navy should be an independent strategic branch of the armed forces.”²⁸⁸ The late admiral was not the only one who believed that China has potential to become a maritime power because of its geographical location. This idea has gained currency within the PLA. The 2013 White Paper, *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*, wrote that “China is a major maritime as well as land country.” Another example is the 2015 white paper that reads, “The seas and oceans bear on the enduring peace, lasting stability and sustainable development of China. The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests. It is necessary for China to develop modern maritime military force structure commensurate with its national security and development interests.”²⁸⁹

While it is a popular notion in the military writings that China is naturally endowed with the potential for both sea and land power because of its location, the narratives also see its surroundings as obstacles to the control over the ocean. “China’s neighboring seas are surrounded by the island chains of the neighboring countries. Japan, North Korea, and South Korea surround the maritime areas from the sea mouth of the Tumen River to the southeastern coast. From the southeast to the South China Sea, the region is circled by the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand. Regarding maritime transportation and other maritime rights, [China] is a country with geographical disadvantages.....”²⁹⁰ Some authors

²⁸⁸Liu Huaqing [刘华清]. *Memoirs of Liu Huaqing (Liu Huaqing huiyilu)* [刘华清回忆录]. Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2004, pp. 435.

²⁸⁹ English translation original.

²⁹⁰ Zhang Shiping [張世平]. *China’s Sea Power* [中国海权]. Beijing: People’s Daily Publishing House, second edition, 2009, p. 219.

also argue that geographical blocks extend to the second island chain. After affirming the geostrategic advantages of China, that is, situated in the inner crescent of the Eurasian continent according to the author's understanding of Halford Mckinder's thesis,²⁹¹ the author of a 2004 CMS article continues, "nevertheless, the country remains half-closed since its pathways to the oceans are interrupted by the two island chains."²⁹² This geographical disadvantage is translated into desires to control the Senkaku islands (Diaoyu islands), Taiwan, and the South China Sea.

According to Zhang Shiping, a researcher in the Academy of Military Science when his book was written, "if Japan-North Korea-South Korea and the Philippines-Malaysia are the two doors to the Pacific Ocean located in the north and south respectively, Taiwan and the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea are the latches to the doors; if Japan-Taiwan-the Philippines and Malaysia-Singapore-Indonesia are China's two doors to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, then the South China Sea is the latch to the doors. China can navigate the two oceans with ease if it has both doors and latches."²⁹³ For Zhang, Taiwan holds the key position to the Pacific and the SCS to both oceans. Meanwhile, the CMS has carried the perspective that Taiwan and the SCS also concern China's domestic development and national security.

The Chinese publications imagine that Taiwan can provide strategic depth for the PRC. In a 2007 CMS essay that devotes the entire space for the strategic significance of Taiwan, the author links it to China's security and outward expansion. "For China and the entire East Asia, Taiwan and its surrounding areas is an invaluable outpost from the military perspective.....By

²⁹¹ Halford Mackinder (1861-1947) was a British geo-strategist who argued that a "heartland" power on a Eurasian continent can have potential for world dominance once it is able to defeat a potential competing country and utilize resources on the Eurasian landmass to muster industrial and military capabilities. When this situation is materialized, a land power has opportunities to defeat a sea power.

²⁹² Xu Qi [徐起], "Sea Geostrategy and the Development of the Chinese Navy in the Early 21st Century" [21世纪初海上地缘战略与中国海军的发展], *CMS*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2004, pp. 75-81, (specifically p. 79).

²⁹³ Zhang Shiping, *China's Sea Power*, pp. 219

connecting Taiwan to the Zhoushan Archipelago in the north and the Hainan island in the south, China will have a strong coastal defense....., safeguarding the six provinces and cities in the southeast and the military strategic depth in the area.” To be geographically specific, the Chinese narratives imagine that “Taiwan situated in between can provide coastal defense for the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta, both of which carry the hope of the Chinese nation to surpass the world advanced standard” and have been the most prosperous regions after the reforms. The Taiwan Strait is also believed to hold economic and transportation lifelines for China and other countries. “Three out of China’s four major trade routes are southbound” and Taiwan provides them a shortcut between the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Furthermore, “most of the air and maritime traffic from the far east of Russia, Japan, the Koreas, and China passes through areas around Taiwan to Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, the other side of the Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe.” Finally, the author sees the island nation as a gateway to the Pacific. “China is a major country endowed with both land and sea.....but the first island chain separated China from the ocean.....The 21st century is the century in which the Chinese nation faces toward the ocean and the world.....Realizing the unification will change the situation that China’s sea area is half-closed.”²⁹⁴

The CMS articles also address Taiwan solely in terms of its importance to China’s national security. In a 2010 essay that summarizes different researchers’ views about China’s grand strategy and how it should be devised, the author lists Taiwan along with the SCS and the border relations between the PRC and neighboring countries as geostrategic focuses in Beijing’s foreign policies. The specific reasons of including the Island are follows. Taiwan is believed to be the

²⁹⁴ Zhu Tingchang [朱听昌], “An analysis of the History and Reality of the Geostrategic Position of Taiwan, China” [试析中国台湾地缘战略地和现实], *CMS*, vol. 20, no.1, issue 1, 2007, pp. 14-21, (specifically p. 20).

“center of China’s maritime strategy in the Chinese sea area” that consists of “four offshore waters regions, Bohai, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the SCS.” “They form an organic whole with close relations to one another in China’s geopolitics. The Taiwan Strait is an area of utmost strategic significance..... If it is in the enemy’s hands, the connection between the SCS and Bohai and the Yellow Sea will be cut off, which poses a major security threat to China’s southeast coastal region. On the economic front, the Taiwan Strait is an important sea lane for China as well.”²⁹⁵

The Science of Military Strategy, which provides military theories and strategies for the People’s Liberation Army, also contends that Taiwan is “directly related with the overall situation of China’s survival and development” from a geostrategic perspective. Situated in the middle of the first-island chain, Taiwan is believed to hold “the key to the southeast coastal area of China and the fence to the seven provinces in the center of China.” “It is a sea transportation hub” which “the sea route from the West Pacific to the Middle East, Europe and Asia passes” through. The book issued a warning if China fails to control Taiwan. “Not only our natural maritime defense system would lose its depth, opening a sea gateway to the outside forces, but also a large area of water territory and rich reserves of ocean resources will fall into the hands of others.....our line of foreign trade and transportation.....will be exposed to the surveillances and threats of separatist and enemy forces, and China will forever be locked to the west side of the first chain of islands in the West Pacific.” The authors believe that Taiwan is “where [the PRC] can breach the chain of the islands surrounding [it] in the West Pacific to the vast area of the Pacific, [and] a strategic key area and sea barrier for defense and offense.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Xia Zengnan, p.138.

²⁹⁶ Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, pp. 442-443.

The strategic value of the SCS similarly is also about both national security/development and outward expansion. There are at least four stated motivations propelling Chinese militarization of the Sea. First, reserves of natural resources (fishery, minerals, oil and gas) for national development. Second, the concerns about cargoes and energy supplies being intercepted in the Strait of Malacca are translated into the desire to control the SCS. On a Chinese website that collects articles from newspapers and journals regarding the SCS issue, one essay with posting date marked 2011, in the context of recognizing the possibility that its oil supplies from the Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East will be halted in the Strait of Malacca, writes in the same paragraph, “ the SCS situated between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans has geostrategic advantages because all the maritime and air routes that transit through the SCS need to pass the Spratly islands. In discussing traditional security, from a geopolitical perspective, occupying the Spratly islands can directly or indirectly control most of sea lanes from the Strait of Malacca to Japan, from Singapore to Hong Kong, from Guangdong to Manila, and even from East Asia to Western Asia and from Africa to Europe.”²⁹⁷

Another article from the same website with posting date marked 2011 which originally appeared in *Ordinance Knowledge* (兵器知识), a Chinese magazine, is more detailed about the military purpose of the SCS for the PRC.²⁹⁸ It first writes that “the Spratly islands is an important security belt for our national south. Effective control over the Spratly and the relevant waters can extend our military’s strategic depth to a thousand kilometers, which allows more room for

²⁹⁷ Zhao Yanke [赵彦科], “Strategically Important and Resources Abundant South China Sea and the Issue of the South China Sea”[战略地位重要、资源丰富的南海及南海问题], Aug. 25, 2011 <http://www.qstheory.cn/special/5625/5674/wzdzs/201108/t20110810_101071.htm> accessed Dec. 22, 2017

²⁹⁸“South China Sea Is Important in Terms of Economic Resources and Military Strategy” [南沙群岛经济地位可观具有重要军事战略地位] Aug. 25, 2011, <http://www.qstheory.cn/special/5625/5674/dyzi/201107/t20110708_92152.htm> accessed Dec. 22, 2017.

maneuvers for our air and naval forces. It will also help with defending the country from an enemy's strategic bombing and provide cover for troop movements on the land." This reasoning apparently is to support the other two reasons that motivate Chinese behavior in the region. "Effective control over the Spratly and the relevant waters can increase integrated deterrence capabilities, seize strategic initiative, and can directly control and influence the international maritime oil lifeline. *It can become a sharp knife that directly threatens foreign forces and deters western countries that have forward presence in the surroundings of the SCS* (emphasis added)." The last reason has to do with Taiwan. In the case of a conflict in the Taiwan Strait, "the Spratly is [China's] forward presence that can prevent foreign military intervention, provide reinforcement, implement sea blockade, provide air cover and enable unannounced inspection and detention." These two strategic motives were laid out in the context that the Spratly "is an important support for our Navy breaking through the first island chains to the Pacific and Indian Oceans." The lines between national security and outward expansion are thin.

China's claims go beyond Taiwan and the SCS and it believes that the size of coastal regions under its jurisdiction is 3 million square-kilometers, running from the Yellow Sea, to the East China Sea, to the South China Sea. These maritime territories "provide resources for our country's survival and development and are our safety shields."²⁹⁹ Upon the discovery that China has an additional maritime expanse one-third the size of its land territories and the country is larger than conventionally understood, Zhang Shiiping's wordings are expressively enthusiastic: "when taken together, land territory and sea territory, the geographical landscape of China is more than a rooster. It is a brightly burning torch erected in the east of the Eurasian continent. The land of 9,600,000 square kilometers is the raging flame. The 3,000,000 square-kilometers

²⁹⁹Zhang Shiiping. *China's Sea Power*, p. 436.

sea territory from the Bohai, to the Yellow Sea, the maritime area to the east of Taiwan, James Shoal of the SCS, Hainan island and Gulf of Tonkin are the blue tray and the handle of the torch.”³⁰⁰ This sense of entitled vanity has its translation in the concept of “offshore-waters defense.”

Offshore-Waters Defense

The “offshore-waters defense” was developed based on the notion of the first island chain.³⁰¹ Liu Huaqing’s memoir and a good amount of military writings have confirmed that the main strategic area for China’s defense where military campaigns will take place has extended, since after Deng’s reforms, from the coast to offshore waters regions including Bohai, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the South China Sea and part of the maritime areas to the east of Taiwan.³⁰² Liu’s memoir set the goal of breaking the first island chain that naval development is to follow. According to him, the Navy should aim at “effectively controlling the important maritime routes connected to China’s sea regions within a necessary timespan.”³⁰³ Regularized

³⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³⁰¹ A curious thing is the English translations provided by the PRC. The defense white papers of 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008 use “offshore defensive operations” for *jin hai fang yu* (近海防御) whereas the papers of 2015 and 2019 use “offshore waters defense” or its synonym, “near seas defense”. The latter version is correct and the previous one is misleading. A plausible explanation is that the PRC may feel confident enough about the development and prospect of offensive capabilities that it shifted to use a different translation to reflect the nature of national defense which “offshore waters defense” in its definition belongs to and that encourages both defensive and offensive operations to secure political goals.

³⁰² For instance, in a *CMS* article dated 2004, the author wrote, “China’s maritime territories are vast. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea and China’s positions, the sea territories under the Chinese jurisdiction is 3,000,000 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 20 Shandong provinces or 30 Jiangsu Provinces.” The author continues that “our strategy is to wage military campaigns in the near sea. [The area will] include China’s territorial seas and islands that fall into Chinese sovereignty and the entire sea area under China’s jurisdiction according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The near-sea defense also applies to the southernmost of the SCS which is 1600 nautical miles away from the Chinese mainland but it remains within the first island chain.” The offshore waters defense based on the above defined space is expected to prepare for “maritime limited wars” and “prevent enemies from invasion” from the sea. See, Xu Qi, 2004, pp. 79-80. Others include Liu Huaqing, 2004, pp. 434-438; Song Liangjiang, Wu Diming and Meng Meng [宋连江 吴迪明 孟蒙] “On Deng Xiaoping’s Thought on Building A Powerful Navy,” [论邓小平建设强大海军思想], *CMS*, issue 137, no. 5, 2014, pp. 53-59, (specifically p. 54).

³⁰³ Liu Huaqing, 2004, p. 438.

and patterned military exercises in recent years demonstrate the policy in practice. China defends its military activities as rightful deeds for protecting its rights and for self-defense. Furthermore, this act of defending is imagined to be something that creates peace and stability. In other words, China links the fulfillment of its interests to the public goods of the international society. The logic that what is good for the PRC is good for others is the gist of active defense through military manifestation. Overall, justifications for these activities reflect a type of power relations that the PRC prefers.

Based on the data from 2016 to 2017, the Navy of the PLA has built a record of passing through waters and straits between Japan's main islands and between its offshore islands that connect to Taiwan. Aside from the Soya and Tsugaru Straits, China probes different routes in Japan's southwestern island chain, including the water between Amamioshima and, to its west, Yokoatejima, the Miyako strait between Okinawa and Miyako, and, further south, the Osumi Strait between Nakanokami and Yonaguni which is about 224 kilometers away from the northeast coast of Taiwan.³⁰⁴ Intelligence gathering vessels also sail Japan's territorial waters near Kuchinoerabu and Yakushima, both of which are offshore islands near Kyushu, the southernmost main island of Japan. Another example is the contiguous zone north of Kitadaito, to the east of Okinawa.³⁰⁵ More information however is needed to analyze why these routes are taken and what roles they play in Beijing's routine training as well as whether they will be

³⁰⁴ Japan's 2017 Defense White Paper, pp. 98-99, <https://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2017.html>; Japan's 2018 Defense White Paper, pp. 103-107, <https://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2018.html>; Ankit Panda, "Chinese Navy Type 815 Intelligence Ship Transits Tsugaru Strait in Northern Japan," *The Diplomat*, July 04, 2017, <<https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/chinese-navy-type-815-intelligence-ship-transits-tsugaru-strait-in-northern-japan/>> accessed July, 2019.

³⁰⁵ Japan's Ministry of Defense, "Movement of a Chinese Navy Vessel," Jun. 20, 2016, <<https://www.mod.go.jp/e/press/release/2016/06/20b.html>>; Ayako Mie, "Chinese spy ship enters Japan's territorial waters for second time since end of WWII," *Japan Times*, Jun. 15, 2016, <<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/15/national/politics-diplomacy/chinese-naval-ship-briefly-enters-japans-territorial-waters-off-kagoshima/#.XqeBWWWhKj4c>>. accessed Jun., 2019.

determined to be useful in any kind of military maneuvers. Nevertheless, regional geography reveals that waterways and airspace from the East China Sea to the Pacific may be more preferable than a detour through Tsushima before passing the Soya and Tsugaru Straits. This is corroborated by the official statement that passing waterways in Japan's southwest offshore islands is part of "routine" or "regular" training and China will continue to do so.³⁰⁶

In one press conference, a journalist asked for comment about an alleged Japanese news report that Tokyo is analyzing the intention of the PLA Navy's passing through the Miyako Strait. The spokesperson from China's Ministry of Defense expressed that Japan was "hyping up Chinese military's legitimate training activities" and "this is due to the fact that Japan has not come to terms with reality, and has not adopted the right frame of mind." He then diagnosed the symptom and came up with the cause and a prescription. "Maybe it's because the Chinese military vessels have not passed the Miyako Strait frequently enough. Then, we should pass the strait more often in the future. *When the Japanese side gets used to it, everything will be fine* (emphasis added)."³⁰⁷ China does not hide its intention to have neighbors acquiescence to its interests.

Moving south, there are two routes for China's Navy and Air Force to enter the South China Sea. First, along the first island chain from the Miyako Strait to the area east of Taiwan, and the Bashi Channel, between Taiwan's Orchid Island to its southeast and the Philippines's Y'Ami island, before entering the South China Sea. Second, taking the route of the Taiwan Strait

³⁰⁶ The PRC's Ministry of Defense Press conference, Sept. 29, 2016; Dec. 01, 2016; Dec. 30, 2016. http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-09/29/content_4740052.htm; http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-06/30/content_4685171.htm; http://eng.mod.gov.cn/HomePicture/2016-12/01/content_4765259.htm.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., March 30, 2017, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2017-03/31/content_4777097.htm.

after navigating through the East China Sea. The PLA has displayed a pattern of sailing through these two pathways and conducting military exercises within and outside of the island chain.

The PLA's behavior demonstrates China's intention to familiarize itself with areas surrounding Taiwan by making its regular presence from four directions. The 2016-2017 data published by Taiwan's Ministry of Defense shows that the PLA has navigated outside of the Island's eastern Air Identification Zone (ADIZ) before entering the Bashi Channel.³⁰⁸ After its commissioning to the Navy in 2012, China's first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, and its accompanying vessels have tested the waters around Taiwan. In 2016, the carrier group for the first time navigated the waters east of Taiwan from the Miyako Strait for far-seas operation in the Western Pacific. Not until 2018 did the PLA hold the first "confrontation" exercise to test long-range combat capabilities in the western Pacific. In 2013, 2017, 2018 and 2019, *Liaoning* accompanied by destroyers, frigates, other vessels and aircraft also sailed south and north through the Taiwan Strait to the South China Sea and/or the Western Pacific for training and/or drills. In the waters and airspace south of Taiwan, the Bashi Channel is a chokepoint for China to enter the Pacific and possibly during wartime to keep its adversaries out of the South China Sea and other parts within the first island chain. The PLA has frequently passed the channel for training and drills in either the Western Pacific or the SCS. In November 2017, in a training of simulating the route of attacks, bombers, fighter jets and other aircraft that provide intelligence and logistical support flew right on and along the outer edge of Taiwan's ADIZ when passing the Channel to the Pacific.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ Taiwan's 2017 Defense White Paper, p. 38.

³⁰⁹Ou Hsi-Fu and Huang Tsung-Ting, eds. [歐錫富、黃宗鼎]. *The 2018 Assessments of China's Political and Military Development* [2018 中共政軍發展評估報告] Institute for National Defense and Security Research, Taiwan, December, 2018, pp. 86-89, <<https://indsr.org.tw/Download/%E4%B8%AD%E5%85%B1%E6%94%BF%E8%BB%8D%E7%99%BC%E>

It has become a pattern for the PLA to simultaneously take the northern and the southern routes for far-sea training outside of the island chain. One example occurred in November 2017 when H-6 bombers and other aircraft flew through the Miyako Strait and the Bashi Channel at the same time to meet with destroyers and frigates for a confrontation drill in the sea area southeast of Taiwan.³¹⁰ Simultaneous maneuver to circle Taiwan from different directions also takes place. One example occurred in November 2016 when two formations of bombers and fighter jets passed through the Miyako Strait and the Bashi respectively before meeting in the airspace south of Miyako and continuing flying back to China via the East China Sea.³¹¹ Another example is in May, 2018 when China sent out two groups of H-6K bombers from Eastern Theater Command and Southern Theater Command respectively. One formation flew clockwise around the Island through the Miyako Strait and the other counter-clockwise via the Bashi Channel during a long-range patrol.³¹²

In the South China Sea, aside from military exercises, the PRC has conducted reclamation but denies the existence of any man-made or artificial islands.³¹³ It recognizes the construction of

[5%B1%95%E8%A9%95%E4%BC%B0%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A.pdf](#)> accessed July, 2019; Franz-Stefan Gady, “China Sends Aircraft Carrier Through Taiwan Strait,” *The Diplomat*, March 22, 2018, <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/china-sends-aircraft-carrier-through-taiwan-strait/>>; Ankit Panda, “Taiwan Scrambles Fighters as China’s Aircraft Carrier Enters Taiwan Strait,” *The Diplomat*, Jan. 11, 2017, <<https://thediplomat.com/2017/01/taiwan-scrambles-fighters-as-chinas-aircraft-carrier-enters-taiwan-strait/>>; Ralph Jennings (AP), “China aircraft carrier fleet passes near rival Taiwan; says American and Japanese ships followed,” *Navy Times*, Nov. 17, 2019, <<https://www.navytimes.com/flashpoints/2019/11/17/china-aircraft-carrier-fleet-passes-near-rival-taiwan/>>.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Chieh Chung and Li Chiu-Fen [揭仲、厲秋芬], “The PLA Flew Around Taiwan Twice in 16 Days. What Message Did It Intend to Deliver? Whom Did It Talk To? [解放軍戰機 16 天內兩度飛繞台灣，傳達什麼信息？又是對誰說話？], *Initium*, Dec. 11, 2016 <<https://theinitium.com/article/20161212-taiwan-PLA/>> accessed July, 2019.

³¹² Franz-Stefan Gady, “China Flies Su-35 Fighters Over Bashi Channel for First Time,” *The Diplomat*, May 12, 2018, <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/china-flies-su-35-fighters-over-bashi-channel-for-first-time/>>; Ou Hsi-Fu and Huang Tsung-Ting, eds., 2018.

³¹³ Statements by Spokesperson of Ministry of Defense in press conferences on March 30, 2017, “there is no ‘man-made island’” and Feb. 25, 2016, “we have repeatedly expounded that there is no such a thing as

facilities but argues that “what we do and how we do that are within our sovereign rights.”

“Since [the islands of SCS] is Chinese territory, China has the legitimate rights to deploy weaponry on its own territory in the past or at present, temporarily or permanently, and to decide the kind of weaponry and equipment to be deployed.” There is a good amount of awareness of foreign opposition and concern but they are dismissed as coming from ulterior motives.

“[Outsiders] are fond of sensationalizing the South China Sea issue and create tensions. Their intention is worth thinking about.” Knowing that anxiety exists in the international community, the government insists that the development in the SCS is moving on the right track and such comment usually follows after a reiteration that the building of facilities is to exert Chinese sovereignty. “*The situation in the South China sea is generally stable and it is making a positive turn* (emphasis added).”³¹⁴ For the PRC, its action brings stability for the region while regional countries may not believe so.

The facilities serve “mainly” civilian purposes and “necessary” defense needs, as the official rhetoric states. This recognition of the presence of military facilities however in Beijing’s view “is by no means the expansion of military deployment.” The reason goes, “China has indisputable sovereignty over the islands and adjacent waters in South China Sea. It is fully justified and lawful for China to strengthen the construction of necessary defense facilities.....” As long as Beijing associates certain issues with its sovereignty rights, it will not admit “military expansion” which has the connotation of aggression and acquisition of territories through illegitimate means. In China’s rhetoric, the construction serves the “common interests of various countries,” is to “provide better public services to the international community”, and “helps

‘artificial island’”. <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2016-02/25/content_4644801.htm>; <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2017-03/31/content_4777097.htm>.

³¹⁴ The PRC’s Ministry of Defense Press conference, Feb. 25, 2016 and March 30, 2017

China fulfil its international responsibilities and obligations.”³¹⁵ China tries to persuade foreign countries that it does not use military means to expand its influence at others’ expense and on the contrary, it is advancing everyone’s interests. In other words, the Chinese logic goes that what it does is justified and for the common good and thus the fulfillment of its interests is the realization of prosperity and peace for all.

In a 2015 joint press conference with the US president Barack Obama, Chinese president Xi Jinping expressed that “China does not intend to pursue militarization” of the SCS.³¹⁶ The military installations built on the reclaimed islands and reefs in the following years however have led many to believe that Beijing has reneged on its promise. For instance, in a talk at the Brookings Institution, the US General Joseph Dunford stated that “what we see today are 10,000 foot runways, ammunition storage facilities, routine deployment of missile defense capabilities, aviation capabilities, and so forth. So, clearly, they have walked away from that commitment.”³¹⁷ In reality, Beijing did not break the promise. It tells others that it will not militarize the region but it does not say it will not construct military facilities and install weapons there. The two, from the Chinese perspective, are not the same thing. During the press conference, Xi already provided detailed reasons as to why China’s behavior in the SCS would not amount to militarization and these reasons were reiterated officially on different occasions before and after

³¹⁵ The PRC’s Ministry of Defense Press conference, Sept. 24, 2015; Feb. 25, 2016 and March 30, 2017. <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2015-09/24/content_4622201.htm>.

³¹⁶ Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by President Obama and President Xi of the People's Republic of China in Joint Press Conference,” *the White House*, Sept. 25, 2015, <<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-peoples-republic-china-joint>> accessed July 2019.

³¹⁷ The Brookings Institutions, “A Conversation with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph F. Dunford.” May 29, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/fp_20190529_dunford_transcript.pdf>.

Xi's visit to the U.S., including the defense ministry's regular press conference. The following is an excerpt of his talk:

“China is committed to the path of peaceful development and a neighboring foreign policy characterized by good neighborliness.....*Islands in the South China Sea since ancient times are China's territory. We have the right to uphold our own territorial sovereignty and lawful and legitimate maritime rights and interests. We are committed to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea, managing differences and disputes through dialogue, and addressing disputes through negotiation, consultation, and peaceful manner..... Relevant construction activities that China are [sic] undertaking in the island of South—Nansha islands do not target or impact any country, and China does not intend to pursue militarization (emphasis added).*”³¹⁸

Xi was evoking the familiar rhetoric of sovereignty rights based on the CCP's interpretations of history, which the country has tirelessly repeated for years to the extent the statement may sound like cliché and is easily dismissed. From a Chinese viewpoint, since the construction of facilities is a sovereign right, it does not target or impact any country and is solely for defensive purposes. Thus, militarization that denotes aggressiveness does not fit the context. Xi also did not forget to frame the issue by China's commitment to a peaceful path of development and peaceful solution of the dispute. Since militarization is not an issue from

³¹⁸ Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by President Obama and President Xi of the People's Republic of China in Joint Press Conference,” *the White House*, Sept. 25, 2015, <<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-peoples-republic-china-joint>> accessed July 2019.

Beijing's view (as it simply exerts its rights), the logic goes that China does not disturb the region but rather adheres to its peace principle, and it is others who are militarizing the SCS.

The above discussion does not defend Beijing's perspective, but rather argues that Chinese narratives, terms and phrases often carry meanings of Chinese style that are not to be interpreted from a western perspective. The PRC does not always hide its intention in publicly available sources. When carefully analyzed, these materials reveal a good amount of details about its political culture, worldview, and interests. Chinese narratives on the SCS are often consistent. It is others who fail to grasp their true meaning. The discourse has indicated that China has different interests which are not compatible with others. With the knowledge of foreign opposition, the PRC still adheres to its interests and rationalizes deeds accordingly. Misunderstanding and mis-interpretation therefore is more an issue for others. Through interactions with the world, China may be less likely to be changed than is believed. It defines words and phrases from its worldview and interpretations of history which in turn are expected to be realized through Beijing's actions.

Open Seas Operations

1. Discursive Evidence

The PLA's open-seas operations do not merely serve the purpose of offshore waters defense, but also reflect the ambition of outward expansion. According to the earlier discussion, the first island chain concerns both the PRC's survival and outward expansion. Naval capabilities in the far seas simultaneously fulfill these two purposes. "Informationized local war" (to be exact, informationized limited war) can occur in the border regions and away from them. As previously discussed, "local war" should be understood as "limited war" as the Chinese characters denote and thus it is not to be defined by the distance from the territory under the

PRC's control. Open-seas operations such as peacekeeping and military drills are preparations for war on the high seas and within the offshore-waters regions as well. Where naval activities take place, such as the first island chain, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, are where informtionized local war is likely to occur. China may intend to deny access to the first island chain from the directions of the two oceans while conducting campaigns within the island chain. The key concept here to link offshore-waters regions and open seas is the increase of strategic depth.

Liu's memoir, the military journal, and defense white papers carry the same idea that the open seas provide vast space for PLAN maneuvers which otherwise cannot be done in the first island chain due to geographical limitations. For Liu Huaqing, combined arms trainings (合同訓練) that can be translated into wartime combat capabilities will take place in the open sea. He specified the need for open-seas operations outside the first island chain (出島鏈远航).³¹⁹ Open sea is believed to be "advantageous for force concentration (兵力的集結), mobility, projection, and surprise offensives of armed forces." Not merely a training ground, the vastness of the open arena is itself a battlefield. "To threaten important political, economic and military targets within the [enemy's] strategic depth, [we] can take the first-island chain as the starting point to implement multi-dimensional precision attacks from the far-sea."³²⁰ The multi-dimensional attacks refer to land, seas, air, space and electromagnetic space.³²¹ Accordingly, it is to push the battlefield outward beyond the first island chain to create more strategic depth for the self and shorten it for the enemy.

³¹⁹ Liu Huaqing, 2004, pp. 491-496.

³²⁰ Xu Qi, 2004, p. 80.

³²¹ Zhang Chengshu, [张成书] "On China's Strategy of Active Defense and Its Innovative Development" [论中国积极防御军事战略及其创新发展], *CMS*, issue 134, no. 2, 2014, pp. 34-39, (specifically p. 38).

The notion of fighting the battle away from the main territory in a high-tech local war also gains resonance in the 2005 version of *Science of Military Strategy*. The book advocates “strategic counterattack on the exterior lines.” It pictures an active release of energy to counterattack any invasion by hostile forces of the territory that Beijing considers to be its own in a battlefield that is away from China’s “border regions, coastal regions and related air space”. The *Science of Military Strategy* further sees the possibility of China pushing the battlefield so far as to “lead the war to the enemy’s operational base, even to its source of war, and to actively strike all the effective strength forming the enemy’s war system.”³²²

China’s defense white papers over the years also explicitly point out that it is using the geographical space outside the first island chain to achieve its political goal within the island chain. The 2000 paper states that the Navy already has “the combat capability for offshore waters defense” (已具备了近海防御作战能力). The 2004 paper reads, “the Navy expands space for operation and extends strategic depth for the purpose of offshore waters defense. (海军扩大近海防御作战空间和防御纵深) Preparation for the maritime battlefield is intensified and improved while the integrated combat capabilities are enhanced in conducting offshore campaigns, and the capability of nuclear counter-attacks is also enhanced.”³²³ The 2006 version again stresses strategic depth. “Taking joint operations as the basic form..... the Navy aims at gradual extension of the strategic depth for offshore waters defense and enhancing its capabilities in integrated maritime operations and nuclear counterattacks (海军逐步增大近海防御的战略纵

³²² Peng Guangqian, and Yao Youzhi, 2005, pp. 459-461.

³²³ The second half of the translation comes from English version of the 2004 white paper. The first half is author’s translation. Instead of using “offshore waters defense”, the English version provided by the PRC uses “offshore defensive operations,” which is misleading. See footnote 301 for detailed discussion about this issue.

深，提高海上综合作战能力和核反击能力)。³²⁴ Although the primary political target is located within the first island chain, the utility of outer areas “including turning them into another battlefield to minimize damages within the first island chain, as the most prosperous regions are located in the Chinese coast” does not make offshore waters defense simply a war along the border. The Chinese strategy on the sea may be what the US analysts term “anti-access, area denial.” The strategic depth mentioned here bridges together operations in the offshore waters and the open seas. However, such linkages have not been made more straightforward until 2015.

Defense white papers usually separate discussions about open-seas military exercises which usually take place in the island chain and the Pacific, and open-seas MOOTWs in the Indian Ocean. This creates the impression that activities in both Oceans are irrelevant to each other and only the former is relevant to offshore-waters defense; in other words, the potential battlefields do not involve the Indian Ocean and MOOTWs have no combat implications. Depart from previous defense papers, the 2015 version that identifies the two functions of the PLAN, offshore-waters defense and open-seas protection in the same paragraph, seems to indicate that military trainings in the two Oceans are related to offshore-waters defense, but it remains ambiguous. It wrote that “In line with the strategic requirement of offshore waters defense [near-sea defense] and open seas protection, the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from ‘offshore waters defense’ to the combination of ‘offshore waters defense’ with ‘open seas protection’ and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient maritime combat force structure.” From the wording, the navy has two goals and it needs to develop force structure to realize these goals. It does not say anything that operations for open-seas protection can

³²⁴ Parts of the English translation come from English version of white papers provided by the PRC. Another part is translated by author. This is necessary. The specific reason is laid out in the previous footnote.

accumulate combat capacity for wartime needs and for offshore-waters defense. Since MOOTWs usually take place in the Indian Ocean and they are grouped into an “open-seas protection” category separate from offshore-waters defense, this creates the impression that military activities in the Indian Ocean have nothing to do with offshore waters defense in terms of transferring of combat ability and that the Indian Ocean will not be another battlefield in an informationized limited war.

Although there are less straightforward connections in the defense white paper, to see China, the first island chain and the two Oceans altogether in the strategic thinking of peacetime deterrence and wartime use of force has its evidence in the 2013 version of *the Science of Military Strategy*.³²⁵ The particularity about this book is that it links together the concepts and ideas dispersed in different documents and articles discussed so far in this chapter. Under a larger framework of managing and stabilizing relations with *zhou bian* countries (which as chapter 5 discusses do not merely refer to countries bordering China) to create favorable conditions for the PRC’s security interests, the authors see Taiwan as a pivot in affecting whether Beijing’s goal of a revived Chinese nation can come true. They write that Taiwan “still constrains the overall situations of China’s domestic affairs and foreign policies (台湾问题仍然长期制约中国内政外交大局).....If the Taiwan problem is delayed and not solved, it will become an important factor that constrains and consumes our strategic resources in the political, economic, diplomatic and military realms. It will become a long-term hindrance to the realization of a rejuvenated Chinese nation.”³²⁶

³²⁵ This book has 35 authors. The Department of Strategic Studies of the PLA Academy of Military Science [军事科学院军事战略研究部]. *The Science of Military Strategy* [战略学], Military Science Publishing House, 2013.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80. Original text: 台湾问题仍然长期制约中国内政外交大局。[.....]台湾问题久拖不决，成为牵制和消耗我国政治、经济、外交、军事等战略资源的重大因素，成为阻碍中华民族实现伟大复

The 2013 book continues to emphasize the inter-connectivity of China's military activities on the seas. "According to the strategic demands of offshore-waters defense and open-seas protection, [there is a need to] integrate military deployment and preparations of battlefields in the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and to organically connect three strategic regions, including sea areas close to the continent, near seas and far seas." In dissenting this strategic view, the authors see the continent and islands of the first island chain as its bases to project force outward when the PRC is fighting within the first island chain.³²⁷ This idea matches with Beijing's island building and militarization of the South China Sea.

The "strategic spaces and setups" within those spaces needed to win a future war and to "deter and control *zhou bian*" receive further treatment regarding the political target and the exact geographical space that will be relied on to facilitate the goals. Based on the logic of "expanding defense space outward" (or increasing strategic depth) and "forward deployment of combat forces" (靠前部署作战力量),³²⁸ the book identifies three goals: to deal with the opponent's Air-Sea Battle strategy, to maintain stability and protect China's interests in the vast maritime space surrounding the country, and to cope with the "large-scale warfare" when it comes to Taiwan. To conduct a large-scale war, the book recognizes a need to push outward China's strategic frontline. In the sentences immediately following, the authors state a need to establish strategic supporting points overseas (海外战略支点) in the two Oceans because they

兴的长远隐患。

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 214. Original text: 按照近海防御和远海防卫的战略要求, 统筹黄海、东海、南海兵力部署和战场建设, 搞好濒海大陆、近海、远海三个战略区域的有机衔接, 北固南拓、重心南移、适度靠前, 基地支撑和前沿预置相结合, 逐步构建依托大陆、凭借岛礁、力量前伸的大区域海上防卫体系, 创造在第一岛链内作战, 并对外辐射的有利态势。加强以战略母港为重点的大中型港口和骨干机场建设, 满足航母、战略核潜艇和大型驱护舰编队驻泊补给的需要。

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 254. Original text: 要适度靠前部署作战力量。着眼应对战略对手"空海一体战"的威胁, 着眼在周边更大空间范围特别是海洋方向维权维稳, 着眼未来彻底解决台湾问题可能进行的大规模作战, 将主要作战力量的部署由内陆地区适度向沿海沿边地区前移, 将战略防卫的前沿逐步向外延伸。

“can support overseas military activities or serve as forward bases for overseas military power to exert political and military influence in the relevant regions.” The authors put this strategy in the perspective of having homeland strategic arrangements and overseas military assets form “a situation of mutual support.”³²⁹ The meanings here can be open to different interpretations. Military activities in the Indian Ocean may not necessarily be related to a war in the Indian Ocean with Taiwan being a target; it can be about protection of maritime interests. However, in a different section that discusses a proximate geographical space where a war can take place, corresponding military preparations during peacetime, and how different geographical spaces can be utilized, the authors do incorporate the northern Indian Ocean as China’s strategic frontline in a war scenario. The idea laid out here is to rely on resources generated by the Chinese homeland and to develop a sense of geographical space fanning out from the homeland to *zhou bian* countries. It is within a much broader space that authors consider strategic preparations for the accumulation of capabilities to attend to one’s interests on the land AND on the sea. As to the spatial demarcation, the authors write, “Henceforth, for a certain period of time in the future, the strategic frontline needs to be extended outward along the maritime directions of northeast, southeast and southwest so as to form a curve of strategic belt that covers a limited region of the Western Pacific and the northern Indian Ocean.”³³⁰

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 254. Original text: 要构建依托本土、辐射周边、走向两洋的海外战略支点，为海外军事行动提供支撑，或作为部署海外军事力量的前进基地，在相关地区发挥政治军事影响力，与本土战略布局形成内外兼顾、远近衔接、互为支撑的态势。

³³⁰ Ibid., pp. 106-107. Original text: 特别是强敌将凭借其海洋方向的综合远战优势，从较远距离威胁我本土，企图使他打得着我，我够不着他，平时对我保持威慑，战时快速破击我作战体系。在这种情况下，就本土守本土、就近海守近海的难度会越来越大，甚至可能守不胜守，因而必须考虑在更大范围内实施外向防卫作战。[……]当前，基于国土防御的战略方向划分的局限性日益凸显，要从根本上回答未来仗在哪里打、建构一个什么样的军事力量体系、形成一个什么样的战略布局等重大问题，都有必要在空间范围上作出更加宏观、更具前瞻性的总体筹划。[……]新型战略空间观，由本土向周边、由陆向海、由空向天、由有形空间向无形空间外推战略前沿，扩大战略纵深，逐步形成拱卫本土、辐射周边[……]平时支撑利益拓展，出现危机时能够有效应对，战时采取攻势防卫。今后一个时

For its global ambitions, that the PRC is not only turning both Oceans into its zones for deterrence, but also may plan to turn both Oceans into battlefields, when a war occurs in the first island chain, is further evidenced by two paragraphs in the 2013 book. “In the future, our military needs to form a highly effective and stable command and control system. It needs to possess the capabilities of joint warfare in different strategic directions and the sea area within the second island chain, and the abilities of effective command and control in the [...] warfare in the Western Pacific and the northern Indian Ocean.” Regarding the strike capabilities, it is expected that with a reliance on the informationized system, the PLA can compromise enemies’ defense systems and destroy fixed and mobile targets. The realization of this goal has a timeline. “[I]n the short time, [such capability] can reach to the first and the second island chains. Followed by a gradual extension, for a long run parts of the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific will be within the striking ranges.”³³¹

China’s military strategists are aware that active defense now is operating in the spaces which are not the traditional active zones of the country. They do not see the incompatibility, however. From their view, it is entirely justifiable to push outward strategic frontlines to where the PRC’s national interests are and still call the strategy active defense.³³² This supports the argument that since this strategic guideline is a self-rationalizing logic, wherever the PLA is present, it will always defend its behavior as peaceful and righteous.

期，需要重点考虑将战略前沿从东北、东南、西南三个方向的沿海沿边地区向外延展，形成涵盖西太平洋和北印度洋有限区域的弧形战略地带。(emphasis added).

³³¹ Ibid., pp. 265-266. Original text: 未来我军要形成高效、稳定的指挥控制体系，具备对各战略方向和第二岛链海区内的联合作战、西太平洋和北印度洋的海上巡一防卫作战进行有效指挥控制的能力，以及对战略武器系统实施可靠指挥控制的能力。[……]我精确火力打击手段，应能突破敌各种防御系统，对其陆上固定目标和海上移动目标实施有效毁伤，近期内有效覆盖第一、第二岛链，并逐步扩展，中远期应覆盖印度洋和西太平洋部分地区。(emphasis added).

³³² Ibid., pp. 104-106. Original text: 前沿防卫与积极防御的基本精神并不相悖

Despite a discursive separation in the 2015 defense paper of general national interests (maritime interests in the far seas) from core interests (political targets within the island chain) through categorization of “offshore-waters defense” and “open-seas protection,” in the longer run, resources devoted for general interests may be translated into those to facilitate the claimed ownership of territories and waters in the first island chain. As of January 2020, the PRC dispatched 33 escort task forces for anti-piracy missions around the Gulf of Aden and Somalia. Chinese media often boasts that the PLAN has escorted more than 6,000 vessels, foreign and domestic, since 2008 when the first mission embarked.³³³ The standard narratives run that these missions stabilize the region and the world. They “manifest our country as a responsible major power who proactively fulfills its international duties”; they also “fully manifest the proactive attitude of our military to maintain international and regional peace.”³³⁴ Discursive evidence from Liu’s memoir and defense papers as well as *CMC* essays supports the notion that combat abilities accumulated through peacetime military activities can be transferred to wartime use. As with military exercises in the Pacific, anti-piracy missions in the Indian Ocean similarly involve basic training that is required for joint operation abilities in a war, such as personnel training, intra and inter-services coordination, different types of naval formation, logistical support and familiarization with open-sea navigation. Given that world politics is in a peacetime state, anti-piracy and even peacekeeping missions in African nations provide the best real-life opportunity for the PLA which has not had combat experience since 1979. Aside from a naval fleet

³³³ Li Jiayao, “Chinese naval 33rd escort taskforce escort eight Chinese fishing boats,” *Chinese Military Online*, Jan. 08, 2020, <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-01/08/content_9712435.htm> accessed Feb. 23, 2020; Xinhua, “Chinese naval fleet escort over 6,600 vessels in Gulf of Aden, Somalia over past 10 years,” *Chinese Military Online*, April 19, 2019, <<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/19/WS5cb9a617a3104842260b73c6.html>> accessed Feb. 23, 2020.

³³⁴ China Youth Daily [中国青年报], “China’s Peacekeeping Fleet Sail Toward Gulf of Aden for Peace” [为了和平 中国护航军舰驶向亚丁湾], Dec. 27, 2008, <http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2008-12/27/content_2487861.htm> accessed Jan. 18, 2018.

comprising guided missile frigates, destroyers, supply ships and amphibious landing ships, China also sends nuclear and conventional submarines into the Indian Ocean.³³⁵ Experience accrued in the Indian Ocean applies to the Pacific as well.

A war in the Indian Ocean cannot be ruled out. Amid China's ongoing expansion is the emerging evidence that it is shaping regional dynamics to its favor. Chinese proactiveness in fortifying SCS and constructing infrastructure that is both for civilian and military uses along the coasts of Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan indicates the possibility of waging a war in the Indian Ocean. It awaits future development to see whether these deep-water ports will turn into some kind of military facilities, including bases, that will work in tandem with China's base in Djibouti. In deepening its strategic depth, the PRC may not only intend to push the battlefield outward away from the island chain to the Pacific, but also into the Indian Ocean. From China's perspective, if the first island chain is its inner defense line, the two oceans are the outer defense line.

Open-seas operations are further enhanced by the development of aircraft carriers and the first military base in Djibouti that came into being in tandem with Chinese involvement in peacekeeping operations. Because the PRC had publicly pledged that it would never have military bases overseas and developed a discourse to criticize those who have them in order to claim the moral high ground, to justify the Djibouti base, it has developed a set of narratives in a way that criticism applying to others does not apply to itself. The power relation shown through the alter casted roles before and after the establishment of the military base remains the type of moral goodness of the self versus the immorality of others. The rationalizing case of aircraft

³³⁵ Sandeep Unnithan, "China positions submarine and rescue vehicle in Indian Ocean," *India Today*, Oct. 15, 2018, <<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/china-positions-submarine-and-rescue-vehicle-in-the-indian-ocean-1368286-2018-10-15>>.

carriers, however, is more expressive of preferred power relations because it explicitly demands deference from the world.

2. Force Projection and Justifications

2.1. Military Base

China constructs narratives in a way that it is nearly impossible for it to admit “militarization” and “military expansion”, not merely on issues regarding territorial interests which usually are categorized as “core interests”, but also on those of general national interests. The following example will show that, on maritime interests, even though China recognizes the existence of overseas military facilities, it has overturned its previous verdict that military bases serve aggressive expansion.

In the Chinese narratives, “military expansion” gives meanings to words such as hegemony and power politics and phrases like military base, all of which are used to criticize other powers and become something that Beijing pledges it will *never* do. These words altogether form a discourse of China as a peace-loving country. The PRC’s first military base in Djibouti however breaks the logical links. A discursive re-construction thus is necessary, and the example of Djibouti showcases how the words are redefined and meanings reconfigured while maintaining that spreading Chinese footprints is inclusive and conducive to world peace.

The example of a military base is important because it crystalizes many aspects in the Chinese narratives which provide parameters in explaining why certain policies are made. To be specific, Chinese writings spend much ink on the military development of foreign powers and other countries’ foreign policies, particularly from the viewpoints of the use of force, geo-strategy, geopolitics, expansion of strategic interests, and national security. The narratives highlight areas where Beijing can learn from other powers and provide justifications for actions

which it begins to take but had earlier denounced and criticized foreign powers for doing. China sees military bases as a reflection of American hegemony, but it has its own military base in Djibouti now. The following analysis will trace the evolution of the Chinese views.

Li Jijun, a Lieutenant General of the People's Liberation Army and the then Vice President of the PLA's Academy of Military Science, was at the U.S. Army War College in 1997 to give a speech, *Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China*.³³⁶ Li's purpose was to persuade the American audience that China since ancient times has been a peaceful country adopting a defensive strategy and that "the common interests that we [the US and China] share are greater than our differences." His speech begins with Zheng He's mission of crossing the Indian Ocean in the 15th century. "Even earlier than the period of 'geographic discovery' in the West, a great Chinese sailor named Zheng He led the largest fleet the world had known on seven voyages westward. These voyages, reaching as far as the eastern African coast and the entrance to the Red Sea, took Zheng He to more than 30 countries and regions. Unlike later Western explorers who conquered the land they discovered, this fleet did not subdue the newly-discovered lands by force.....Zheng He's task, as decreed by the Emperor, simply was to convey friendship and good will and to promote economic and cultural exchanges between China and other Asian as well as African nations." Li however missed the details that the ships were armed and there was a military intervention in Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka). He further summarized the history of China to provide evidence of defensive strategic culture, but the history was not properly contextualized and his descriptions contained contradictions that reflect the essence of

³³⁶ Li Jijun, "Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China," August 29, 1997, <<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/china-li.pdf>>.

active defense. To fully grasp how the narratives are constructed, it is necessary to quote at length:

“China is a nation that has withstood the vicissitudes of over 5000 years of history. During those 5 millennia, more than 6000 wars, both large and small, have been fought. A majority of the wars have been fought for the unification of the nation and the harmonic coexistence of the various nationalities. There have also been a number of wars against foreign invaders and to stop the aggression of others against us. At any particular time, no matter how divided the nation might be and how antagonistic different peoples might feel toward each other, the final result would invariably be the emergence of a more comprehensively reunified China, with reconciliation among different nationalities.”

According to the statistics Li provides, China was fighting war at least once a year. This highly war-prone tendency however is justified as self-defense and for the greater goal of national unification. Thus, it does not violate defensive strategic culture; however territories or influence expand, it is always for legitimate self-defense. As the doctrine of active defense reasons, the use of force to protect China’s interests is not aggression. Regardless of the accuracy of his numbers, it is important to analyze the logic based on Li’s statistics because it shows what China’s political and military leaders believe in. Leaders’ preferences may have more influence on policies than facts. Meanwhile, it is worth analyzing history according to the then situations because it reveals the gaps between realities and myths and thus the scale of the Chinese “Cult of Defense.”³³⁷

³³⁷ Andrew Scobell, 2003.

That China has 5000 years of history is an exaggeration and depends on how “China” is defined, either as a geographical term or a modern nation-state, the length of its history varies. In the case of the latter, the history starts in the 20th century. Li was using the contemporary lens of the PRC’s political needs, that is, ruling different nationalities on the vast landmass, to see the past. Dynastic wars are characterized by military conquests of territories and peoples instead of national unification. The examples are the Yuan and the Qing dynasties “The emergence of a more comprehensively unified China” that incorporated different nationalities and controlled expansive land as the two dynasties demonstrates did not result from voluntary reconciliation but military conquests. The degree of “harmonious coexistence” out of voluntariness therefore is questionable and debatable. After the PRC’s founding, the territories of Xinjiang and Tibet were acquisitions from conquest followed by forced assimilations and ethnic cleansing.

Li Jijun continued to describe the contemporary history in which China has the military but does not use it for aggression. “Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, no matter how the world situation changed, China’s military strategy always remained defensive in nature. *China has not occupied a single square inch of foreign soil, nor has it possessed any overseas military bases. Furthermore, China has not retained any military presence beyond its own territory.* Instead, even though parts of Chinese territory are still occupied by its neighbors, China has shown great restraint and patience as it calls for peaceful solutions.....(emphasis added)”³³⁸ It is in this context of military defensiveness that Li expressed, “[China] will never seek hegemony, and it opposes any form of power politics and does not seek external expansion.” Therefore, military bases, overseas military presence,

³³⁸ Li Jijun, “Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China,” August 29, 1997, <<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/china-li.pdf>>.

hegemony, and power politics become synonyms to each other and from Beijing's perspective they are defined by military expansion that denotes aggression. Li's audience was the American military and he was contrasting American militarism with Chinese peacefulness.

It is officially written into the 1995 and 2000 white papers that "China will not seek military expansion, will not station its troops overseas nor build military bases." White papers in 2002 and the following years however no longer contain the pledge of no military base. The phrase is not even mentioned. The reason for removal is unknown. However, it is possible that some debate may already have been taking place. The 2009 version of Zhang Shiping's book, *China as a Maritime Power*, advocates the abandonment of the decades-old policy of not stationing troops outside the country. It is unclear whether his 1998 version already raised this issue. For Zhang, the main reason to station China's armed forces on foreign soil is to respond to changing situations of expanding national interests. China did not do so in the past because "[it] was very poor and did not have abilities to shoulder international responsibilities." Zhang continued that things have fundamentally changed today. "China's economy is interdependent with the world economy. It has become inevitable to deploy armed forces overseas.....If a country cannot protect its overseas interests,.....how is it qualified as a major power and a great power?" Zhang's goal is to persuade the domestic audience to change their mentality after a decades-old national policy of condemning the US and the USSR for stationing troops in foreign countries. He argues that "the policy of seeking hegemony requires military deployment overseas but the latter is not always the result of the former." In his view, international rescues and peacekeeping are the responsibilities of China in keeping world peace and their fulfillment requires the dispatch of troops outside the country temporarily or for a longer term. The official rhetoric will follow the same line of motivations to characterize overseas military presence: non-

expansionist and non-hegemonic, peacekeeping for the sake of world peace and economy. In other words, the PRC is saying that what it does is not just good for itself but benefits the world. Overseas military presence starts to take on a positive meaning when its advocates see it as conducive to Chinese interests. Zhang declares that “from now on, it is inevitable that [China] will project and employ its armed forces on a global scale.”³³⁹

Others would continue to study the strategic value of military bases. In a 2013 CMS article,³⁴⁰ Liu Xinhua analyzes how military bases can exponentially extend national influence in terms of geographical distance and intensify such influence by using the case of the US. The bases, according to Liu, “overcome the obstacles of waters and mountains, and make it possible for a major power to become a global and a regional hegemon.” Liu continues to elaborate how the physics between bases work to make uninterrupted the projection of power. The key concept here is “force field (力量场).” It refers to the range within which each base can project power. In choosing locations, countries need to have force fields of bases from one point to another overlap so that power can be projected far from the home shore. To minimize the risk of joints being cut off, the solution is to establish “base clusters”, namely bases at different locations in a certain area. According to Liu, the American pattern has followed this logic. For instance, in the Asia Pacific, the cluster in Northeast Asia centers on Japan’s Yokosuka naval base. In Southeast Asia, it centered on the Philippines’ Subic Bay. And Guam is the main post for the US presence beyond the second island chain. Liu further provides examples of exact distances between main bases to different regional countries and bomber flight duration to show the efficacy of military

³³⁹ Zhang Shiping, pp. 260-262.

³⁴⁰ Liu Xinhua [刘新华], “Geographical Distance, Law of Distance Attenuation and Overseas Military Bases” [地理距离、距离衰减规律与海外军事基地], *CMS*, no. 3, 2013, pp. 144-152.

bases to national interests. He concludes that, in general, the US bases in the Persian Gulf, Europe and Asia Pacific uphold Washington's leadership in the Eurasia continent.

The discussion of technical and practical necessity in Liu's article does not serve any purpose if it was not for the analysis from a geostrategic perspective. When studying China's situations, Liu similarly incorporates technical and strategic meanings at the same time, but the bigger picture is on the latter. He notices the difficulties of the Chinese navy in the Gulf of Aden peacekeeping mission: "in the first peacekeeping mission that lasted for four months, without calling at any port, the Navy did not have sufficient supplies of necessities and medical resources. Even though the Navy later on partially solved the problem by stopping at ports for supplies, due to the lack of fixed locations, the supplies are limited to basic necessities. Calling at the port on an ad hoc basis cannot substitute for the function of permanent bases." Liu continues to write that "to overcome the negative impact of distance attenuation, states can choose to station bases on foreign soil." The technical needs however are not purely technical. They come with geostrategic interests. "The function of overseas military bases has gradually transformed from a tool for hegemonic competition in the traditional sense to maintaining national strategic interests, reach balance of power, and maintain regional stability by creating force fields. Through overseas bases, states can achieve their strategic goals by exerting power far from the homeland."

There are two points to made here. First, to paraphrase Liu's arguments, the world is better off because of China, a stabilizing force who now plays a major role and whose actions change the meanings of military base. Secondly, the idea of creating a balance of power among major countries echoes the official position in favor of multi-polarity. A large body of literature concerning the hierarchical order of the world surfaced in the 1990s. Ever since then Beijing has

criticized the Cold War bipolarity in which its role was marginalized and believed that the coexistence of several major powers including itself creates peace. The Chinese writings link the technical issues at the micro-level to national interests, China's role in the world, and how world affairs should run at the macro-level to build a different discourse that casts a positive light on overseas military presence, because now China needs it.

Beijing confirmed in 2015 that discussions to set up support facilities were ongoing with Djibouti.³⁴¹ Nineteen years after Li Jijun's speech, China signed a military agreement with the country, allowing the Chinese navy to use its port. The confirmation of construction came in 2016 from China's Ministry of Defense.³⁴² Before the deal, Beijing had devoted resources to peacekeeping missions in the Gulf of Aden since 2008. The expansion of Chinese influence beyond Asia where it historically enjoyed dominance requires some explanation of Beijing's intention and purpose. In answering questions about the base, the official rhetoric has stressed technical necessity and linked it to China's contributions to world peace and the prosperity of other regions. At a press conference in November 2015, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense expressed that, during escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and waters off the Somali coast, "the Chinese naval escort ships have encountered a lot of difficulties such as personnel recuperation, and food and POL replenishment during performing escort missions. It is indeed necessary to have effective and near-the-site logistical support." He then connects the solution to greater public goods: the facilities in Djibouti "will ensure better support for the Chinese military in carrying out UN peacekeeping operations, escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and waters off

³⁴¹China's Defense Ministry's Regular Press Conference, Nov. 26, 2015, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/HomePicture/2015-11/26/content_4630604.htm>.

³⁴² China's Defense Ministry's Regular Press Conference, Feb. 25, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170518022718/http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2016-02/25/content_4644801.htm>.

the Somali coast, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. It will play a positive role for the Chinese military to effectively fulfill its international obligations and maintain international and regional peace and stability.”³⁴³ The expansion of the base in 2018 again drew media attention. Aside from the similar rhetoric, the spokesperson of the Defense Ministry added, “it will also be a boost to local economic and social development there.” Last but not least, to downplay the negative connotation which the government has long associated military bases with and to highlight its altruistic contributions to the world, Beijing describes the location as “logistics support facilities” instead of a military base.

The official reframing of military bases still follows the basic tone of defensive strategic culture. Through a carefully chosen term, logistical facilities instead of military base, motives that do not sound strategic and calculated, and the characterization of the mutually beneficial and peaceful nature of the base, China’s self-image of a harmless and benevolent actor remains even though its behavior has changed. The domestic discursive construct for policy suggestions that Zhang and Liu’s essays show retains the above elements but is more calculated and explicit in the intention to reshape power dynamics of the world by material capabilities that a military base embodies. Within the two sets of narratives is the commonality that the possession of military bases does not change the defensive and peaceful role of China versus the warmongers of western countries. Accordingly, the defensive strategic culture is sustained regardless of behavior. Chinese narratives of public speeches and interviews including English versions provide biological explanations as to why this is so: “aggression is never in the genes of the Chinese, and acts of colonizing or plundering others are nowhere to be found in China’s track

³⁴³ China’s Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference, Nov. 26, 2015, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/HomePicture/2015-11/26/content_4630604.htm>.

record”; “It is not in the genes of the Chinese nation to invade other countries or seek world hegemony”; “Harmony without uniformity and good neighborliness are in the genes and blood of the Chinese nation and its culture.”³⁴⁴ Beijing’s logic is straightforward: whatever has been done and regardless of policy changes, China’s motive is always selfless and it is the nature of the Chinese polity that makes it so. Such reasoning that relies on biological explanations is unfalsifiable.

The biological reason is to be understood in a broader context. China, harmony without uniformity, and the Chinese nation and its culture that appear in the above quoted texts, according to Chapter 1, bear historical continuity in the PRC’s discourse; co-inhabitants of multi-ethnic groups with diverse cultures on the different territories that from the PRC’s view are called China since ancient times altogether form a nation, instead of nations, and despite conflicts, international wars were not international and were simply family feuds and thus did not weaken the foundation of solidarity. This understanding that distorts history corresponds to the PRC’s needs of political legitimacy. By making Chinese the discursively foreign and independent political entities who once conquered or competed with regimes in China proper, the narratives seek for a logical consistency that endorses genetic explanation.

³⁴⁴ The quoted examples appear in English speeches and written interviews. See, Wang Yi, “Toward Peace and Development for All”, Sept 21, 2017, At the General Debate of The 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1496244.shtml> accessed Jan. 5, 2019; Xi Jinping, “Written Interview Given by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Major Media Agencies of Four Latin American and Caribbean Countries,” July 15, 2014, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1185623.shtml> accessed Jan. 08, 2019; Liu Zengmin, “China Remains Committed to Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in the South China Sea through Negotiations and Consultations,” March 25, 2016, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1350776.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019. Narratives in the Chinese version also contain genetic explanations. See, Chen Shuguang [陈曙光], “Understanding the Methodology of the ‘China Model’” [理解“中国模式”的方法论原则], *Qiushi*, issue 12, 2014; “Resolutely Adhering to Peaceful Development” [坚定不移走和平发展道路], *Qiushi*, issue 18, 2014.

It is in the blurring of foreign and domestic in the narratives that lessons can be drawn regarding the foreign policy of today's China. By making the foreign domestic, the narratives explain away the PRC's invasion of Tibet and Xinjiang. Today, the Chinese government's vision of creating a world community for mankind straddles between independent sovereign states and a world community allegedly benefiting from peaceful Chinese genes. The PRC may be less a modern state and close to a quasi-empire, with its territorial ambitions in the first island chain and with its use of a genetic-cultural discourse of defensiveness to sanction the outward expansion which it denies.

2.2. Aircraft Carriers

Because of their mobility, aircraft carriers may, with surfacing textual evidence and waiting for future developments including the number of carriers and the areas they operate, become an important indicator of China's armed forces operating in various interrelated aspects of active defense, from general interests to core interests, from near seas to far seas, and from peacetime deterrence to wartime operations.

The carrier history in China is again attributed to the ideas proposed by Liu Huaqing. From Beijing's perspective, the carrier will send a message to the world that China is a major power to be reckoned with since the ship symbolizes the "comprehensive national powers" of a country. The fact that major countries such as the US, the USSR/Russia, the UK, France and Italy all have carriers also made it necessary for China to claim such capability. Aside from "promoting military and national awesomeness," carriers also serve the purpose of strategic deterrence.³⁴⁵ In addition, the carriers will solve the problem that land-based military aircraft cannot travel beyond their combat radius. Given that warfare on the sea requires air cover, a large quantity of aircraft

³⁴⁵ Liu Hauqing, 2004, pp. 477-479.

and airfields are required to meet the demand. The carriers however can move aircraft around beyond areas the latter normally cannot reach. In Liu's view, carriers are "the core of maritime combat force structure" (海上作战体系核心).³⁴⁶ In his memoir, he indicates the importance of carriers in the military struggle against Taiwan, in solving disputes in the SCS and in safeguarding China's maritime rights.³⁴⁷ Taking together Liu's views about near-sea defense, future naval ability to conduct military campaigns in the second-island chain, and the core function of carriers in the combat forces along with corroborating evidence from other sources, the narratives suggest that China plans to prevent other powers from entering the first-island chain by engaging its enemies in the open seas, the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.

The *Liaoning* battle group has conducted several rounds of training that aim to develop its combativeness, which will make peacetime deterrence more credible. In April 2018, the PLA had counter-clockwise "cross region" confrontation exercises from the SCS, to unidentified waters in the Western Pacific and finally the East China Sea. The Chinese official media reported that the drills encompassed several joints during the simulated combat. Carrier-borne fighter jets were engaged in the interception of shore-based fighters. The battle group's striking capabilities, including destroyers' and frigates' capabilities of launching anti-aircraft missiles, were also tested against air, surface, and land targets as well submarines. The *Liaoning* formation also exercised its reconnaissance and early-warning system in the simulations.³⁴⁸ Before the drills, Beijing had not admitted any combat abilities *Liaoning* has acquired but rather stressed "it is perfectly reasonable and legitimate for the Chinese navy to constantly improve its combat and

³⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 477.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 479-480.

³⁴⁸ "Chinese aircraft carrier formation stages cross-region exercises," *Chinese Military Online*, April, 24, 2018, <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-04/24/content_8013887.htm>.

deterrence capability.”³⁴⁹ The recognition came after the drills. Responding to a journalist’s question about Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo’s comment on combat abilities of *Liaoning*, the spokesperson of the Defense Ministry confirmed that the trainings over the years have tested “the comprehensive offense and defense system of the aircraft carrier group,” and also “improve combat operation in the open sea.” “It is fair to say that the aircraft carrier battle group has *initially* formed system combat capability (emphasis added).”³⁵⁰ The response has two points for analysis. First, the relevance of naval presence to war-fighting capabilities in the open sea and second, a bigger context of the PLA’s cans and cannots in which the battle group is situated.

A 2017 article carried by *Global Times* republished on *China Military Online* places the carrier in the multiple aspects that allow a general assessment of what may already be gaining currency.³⁵¹ The expressed views are ambitious but recognize the current deficiencies China has. The two are not in contradiction. Instead, the author presents the maturing process as “a long journey” with limitations now and farther reach of the Navy in the future. After commenting on the expansion of areas of operations the *Liaoning* group is capable of, the author continued that the carrier still “lags behind the US main aircraft carrier fleet in terms of fighting capacity and experience.” Nevertheless, it “represents a necessary step as the Chinese navy advances.” In the author’s view, *Liaoning* cannot be “confined to military technological experiments”, merely used for “scientific research, experiment, and training” for the incoming new carriers. It should bear strategic meanings to test China’s geopolitical role and responses of other major powers. The view is strategic in terms of scale and purposes and thus it is worthy of quotation at length:

³⁴⁹ Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference, Oct. 26, 2017. <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2017-10/27/content_4795936.htm>.

³⁵⁰ China’s Defense Ministry’s Regular Press Conference, May 31, 2018. <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-06/01/content_4815785.htm>.

³⁵¹ Global Times, “China’s carrier fleet must sail beyond offshore zone” *Chinese Military Online*, Jan. 01, 2017, <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-01/01/content_7432857.htm>.

“Aircraft carriers are strategic tools which should be used to show China’s strength to the world and shape the outside world’s attitude toward China. It is [sic] not built for war only. Chinese aircraft carriers must set off on a long journey. China’s core interests are mainly offshore, but the range of aircraft carriers must go beyond offshore areas. The rivalry must be extended to wider areas so as to ease China’s offshore pressure.”

Each sentence in this paragraph deserves emphasis in italics. It asks for the world’s respect to China through military awesomeness short of use of force. Meanwhile, the carriers’ war purpose is clear. The space in which, according to the author, the battle group(s) should operate to ease offshore pressure will extend to areas outside the locations where actual training cruises of Liaoning currently take place. To be specific, “the Chinese fleet will cruise to the Eastern Pacific sooner or later. When China’s aircraft carrier fleet appears in offshore areas of the US one day, it will trigger intense thinking about maritime rules.” South America is another region that, as the article states, “China needs to think about setting up navy supply points.....right now.” The expressed ideas in this article embody active defense in terms of the goals of the military and the expanded geographical space to apply the doctrine. The carriers link offshore defense and far-seas operations. The PRC has two carriers so far and they have not yet travelled to the Indian Ocean. More carriers are to come and whether they will be used in the Indian Ocean to ease offshore pressure remains to be seen as it depends on whether the PRC is able to continue its naval buildup.

A 2015 article published on *China Military Online*, an official website sponsored by the *PLA Daily*, is an embodiment of how the PRC aims to achieve hegemony during peacetime.³⁵² The narratives contain similar logical sequences to those laid out so far in this section. First, the article draws linkages between offshore and open-seas activities against the background of naval buildup. Second, it understands the interactions between the PRC and other countries in the context of the first point from the perspective of power relations.

After summarizing foreign media reports and studies about China's progress in building naval vessels including guided missile frigates, surface ships, corvettes, and nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles, the article supplements this with more details about naval development and cites Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo as saying that "such a rapid momentum [of the equipment development] will continue for a long time. Yet, the PLAN still lags far behind those modernized naval giants in the world and its development speed is far from sufficient considering the fast expansion of maritime security interests and economic interests." Yin Zhuo identifies three areas for equipment improvement, including the aircraft carrier fleet, nuclear submarines, and information-based combat forces (such as satellites, large airborne early warning aircraft, electronic reconnaissance aircraft, electromagnetic interference aircraft, and anti-submarine patrol aircraft).

Against this general assessment of China's naval forces compared to other countries, the article writes, "The PLAN is bound to become ocean-oriented, or else, its equipment performance cannot be truly tested, and the combat capability of the PLAN in the open sea cannot be verified." According to the article, escort missions in the Gulf of Aden, the Atlantic,

³⁵² "PLAN to focus on developing aircraft carrier and nuclear submarine," Jan. 09, 2015, <http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2015-01/09/content_6303017.htm> accessed July 2019.

and the Indian Ocean are conducive to the realization of this goal. What is more worthy of attention is the linkage between offshore waters defense and open-seas operations. “The offshore area is the core of China’s strategic interests. *But to safeguard its offshore realm, China has to go to the open sea areas* [emphasis added].” The Indian Ocean is both a training ground and where the battlefield is, both of which aim to realize offshore waters defense.

While recognizing China’s deficiencies, the article reveals a determination to be on par with other major powers. It cites a Major General who is also a professor of the National Defense University on deterrence as saying, “If 3 to 5 nuclear submarines are deployed on the sea for patrolling all the time, no one dares to launch preemptive nuclear attacks against China.” The development of submarines and other equipment will center on the carrier fleet and “*the world is bound to adapt itself to the inevitable trend of the PLAN’s entry into the pelagic realm* (emphasis added),” so does the author comment. Regarding Japanese and Indian concerns about China’s military exercises in the open seas, it cited Yin Zhou as saying, “If any still feels uncomfortable about this, we have to continue open-sea trainings to make them comfortable.”

The Land Direction

Considering the mounting domestic debts each province has been accumulating including coastal provinces which traditionally had surpluses, the overseas investments do not necessarily reflect the economic logic of finding more markets for unused capital. When China’s economy is slowing down and the real number for annual growth may in fact be lower than official statistics, so long as foreign markets are available and expandable, the country may persevere despite debts and reduced foreign reserves. The BRI projects that in essence are to augment China’s land power do not necessarily contain lower risks and costs, compared to maritime shipment, and whether it is more efficient timewise depends on cases. Militants in disputed Kashmir, local

protests and popular unrest in Southeast Asia and Central Asia can disrupt cargo delivery. The idea of Eurasian connectivity through rails that link Europe, the Middle East, Western and Central Asia to the PRC's Xinjiang Autonomous Region does not emerge based on the premise of guaranteed economic profits. Land may not eventually outweigh maritime shipments for China's economy. Like business investment, each deal has pros and cons and estimates of risks and returns are not absolute. With these uncertainties, why is the PRC willing to venture into business at this grand scale with injections of state funds and string these projects together with a coherent logic that the world can prosper together with China? Why will overseas investment become an officiated theme of China's foreign policy, instead of a phenomenon of global economic activities?

The answer is that the BRI is strategic in nature. If successfully developed, the PRC can leverage it against American sea power. It is an alternative route, with some degree of overlap though, to the markets and countries where the US already wields influence. As discussed in chapter 5, Chinese narratives suggest the incentive to reduce the dependence on the networks provided by western countries. The BRI can be seen as an attempt to allow China to act more independently while, from the continental direction, preventing (informal) alliance between smaller states and the US. Invested ports and facilities in the coastal regions of foreign countries are dual use, i.e., civilian and military. They can facilitate shipment of energy from the Middle East and inbound and outbound freight. Since economic and political relations can have positive correlations in cordiality, the prospect is to strengthen bilateral and regional ties to the PRC so that peacetime interaction itself can be deterrence working in tandem with military presence in the two Oceans and may be transformed into wartime capital as well. Compared to the east coast and the Pacific direction, despite historical border clashes, the prospect for major international

conflicts in the west is relatively low. Investment to connect inland, border and coastal towns/cities in the region with suppressible unrest, which means manageable risks at affordable costs, to buy wartime security, i.e., energy and material supplies, through friendly *zhou bian* countries may be worthwhile from the Chinese perspective, in case cargoes are to be halted in wartime by hostile forces including the American Navy in the Strait of Malacca.

According to Chinese policy analysis, one of motivations behind the Belt and Road is to develop central and western China to alleviate strategic pressure on the east coast where economic development has mostly concentrated and which is the direction where the main security challenges lie. The idea is to make the inland China's strategic hinterland (内陆战略腹地), without changing the primary strategic direction which is the coastal and maritime east. It is a policy of mutual support between different strategic directions (不同战略方向的相互支撑). The underpinning logic is to consolidate the west and to rely on the resources and security generated by the landmass to deal with maritime threats. Three directions, Central Asia, South Asia and Indochina, are believed to provide pivoting forces that enable this blueprint because of their prospect for development and their proximity to western and southwestern China.³⁵³ And they are indeed recognized regions in the Chinese writings where the PRC can exert influence and build security measures to benefit itself. In other words, China is making countries in these three directions its strategic hinterlands. Meanwhile, it does not need to shoulder responsibilities of defending these foreign lands and for itself, invasion from them is not likely. These strategic

³⁵³Tang Yongsheng, 2010; Tang Yongsheng, "Strengthening the Management of Zhou Bian by Making Good Use of Geography" [利用地缘优势，强化经营周边], *CIR*, issue 8, 2012, pp. 30-31; Li Keqiang "On Deepening Economic Reform," English *Qiushi*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2014, pp. 5-27.

reasonings align well with the PRC's propagation of bringing economic opportunities to others and its position of non-alliance.

The investment in the “China-Myanmar Economic Corridor” (CMEC), as the PRC calls it, has not been smooth sailing. The concerns about loan trap and instability and protests in Rohkine State have delayed port construction and the establishment of a Special Economic Zone at Kyaukpyu, a seaport town in Rohkine. As with other Chinese investments in developing countries, progress nevertheless is made and the PRC has been persistent in reviving previously announced projects suspended or cancelled by the host country due to domestic opposition or changes in the country's leadership. For instance, construction of oil and gas pipelines linking Kyaukpyu to Kunming, capital of China's southwestern Yunnan province, despite local opposition, was completed in 2015 and operation started in 2017. Beijing also expects to build a Kyaukpyu-Kunming high-speed railway whose prospect has been revived by the Aung San Suu Kyi government after the 2014 cancellation under Thein Sein. The CMEC exemplifies the Chinese design to link overseas infrastructure to its domestic networks of transportation.³⁵⁴ Other examples include Chinese investments in other Southeast Asian countries, Central Asia and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

³⁵⁴ Thompson Chau, “China-led port project inches ahead in Myanmar,” *Asian Times*, July 15, 2019, <<https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/07/article/china-led-port-project-inches-ahead-in-myanmar/>> accessed Jan. 14, 2020; Jon Emont and Myo Myo, “Chinese-Funded Port Gives Myanmar A Sinking Feeling,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 15, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-funded-port-gives-myanmar-a-sinking-feeling-1534325404>> accessed Jan. 14, 2020; Yuichi Nitta, “Myanmar cuts cost of China-funded port project by 80%,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, Sept. 28, 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/Myanmar-cuts-cost-of-China-funded-port-project-by-80>> accessed Jan. 14, 2020; Shang-su Wu, “Myanmar: A New Pattern of China-Japan Interactions?” *The Diplomat*, Feb. 13, 2019, <<https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/myanmar-a-new-pattern-of-china-japan-interactions/>> accessed Jan. 14, 2020; Debby Chan Sze Wan, “China-Myanmar high-speed railway quietly back on track,” *Myanmar Times*, July 6, 2018, <<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/china-myanmar-high-speed-railway-quietly-back-track.html>> accessed Jan. 24, 2020; Bertil Lintner and Chiang Mai, “Full steam ahead for China-Myanmar highspeed Railway” *Asian Times*, Feb. 21, 2019, <https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/02/article/full-speed-ahead-for-china-myanmar-high-speed-railway/>> accessed Jan. 21, 2020.

Kunming again serves as a transportation hub connecting domestic railways to Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore, through upgrading the existing rails or new constructions.³⁵⁵ The Chinese blueprint is not unprecedented, however. British, Japanese, and especially extensive French colonial railroads are historical examples, although not every single plan bore fruit, to connect the continent and Southeast Asia. Unlike in Central Asia, railroads in Indochina will run standard gauge that is used in China.³⁵⁶

The CPEC connects Kashgar in PRC-controlled Xinjiang through the Khrunjerab Pass, the northern end of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir Gilgit-Baltistan, to the southern seaports of Gwadar and Karachi, two exits to the Arabian Sea. The projects include railways, highways and oil and gas pipelines. They facilitate Chinese export of goods to the Middle East and Africa and secure the PRC an alternative route of energy transportation aside from the Malacca Strait.³⁵⁷ In Central Asia, energy pipelines run from Turkmenistan to Khorgos, a border city of Xinjiang, with connecting points in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Khorgos also serves as a dry port that

³⁵⁵ Wu Shang-Su, "Belt and Rail: New Vietnam-China Trains Aim to Put Relations on Track," *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute, Jan. 15, 2020, <<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/belt-and-rail-new-vietnam-china-train-aims-put-relations-track>> accessed Jan. 24, 2020; Puyam Rakesh Singh, "China spreads wings across Indochinese Peninsula," E-Pao Manipur, Dec. 29, 2018, <[e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=leisure.Essays.China_spreads_wings_across_Indochinese_Peninsula_By_Puyam_Rakesh](http://pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=leisure.Essays.China_spreads_wings_across_Indochinese_Peninsula_By_Puyam_Rakesh)> accessed Jan. 24, 2020; Xie Yu, "China's US\$7 billion railway link to Laos is almost half done, on schedule to begin service in 2021," *South China Morning Post*, March 21, 2019, <<https://www.scmp.com/print/business/banking-finance/article/3002518/chinas-us7-billion-railway-link-laos-almost-half-done>> accessed Jan. 24, 2020; Mitsuru Obe and Marimi Kishimoto, "Why China is determined to connect Southeast Asia by rail," *Nikkei Asian Review*, Jan. 9, 2019, <<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Cover-Story/Why-China-is-determined-to-connect-Southeast-Asia-by-rail>> accessed Jan. 23, 2020; Pechnipa Dominique Lam, "Will Thailand's Chinese High-Speed Railway Be Worth It?" *The Diplomat*, March 6, 2019, <<https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/will-thailands-china-built-railway-be-worth-it/>> accessed Jan. 24, 2020.

³⁵⁶ Wu Shang-Su, "China's One-Track Mind In Kazakstan," *Asia and the Pacific Policy Society*, Feb. 13, 2018, <<https://www.policyforum.net/chinas-one-track-mind-kazakhstan/>> accessed Jan 23, 2020; Catherine Putz, "Can China Fix Central Asia's Soviet Rail Legacy?" *The Diplomat*, Jan. 14, 2016, <<https://thediplomat.com/2016/01/can-china-fix-central-asias-soviet-rail-legacy/>> accessed Jan. 30, 2020.

³⁵⁷ Kinling Lo, "Five biggest Chinese investments in the Pakistan arm of the Belt and Road Initiative," *South China Morning Post*, Nov. 22, 2017, <<https://www.scmp.com/print/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2120990/behind-five-biggest-chinese-investments-massive>> accessed, Jan. 14, 2020.

transfers cargoes from Chinese standard gauge railways to the Soviet broad-gauge system in the region before reaching Europe. China already runs train services from its inland and coastal cities through the Eurasian continent and has developed routes to Iran and Turkey.³⁵⁸

Along the southern rim of the Eurasian continent are several deep-water ports, one military base in Djibouti, military installations in the South China Sea, and ongoing construction at Cambodia's Ream naval base. The American naval base in Singapore at the mouth of the Strait of Malacca does not deter China from competing for regional influence. In the South China Sea, China has fortified Subi Reef, Mischief Reef and Fiery Cross, three artificial islands that form a triangle shape in the middle of SCS. These islands have airstrips, hangars, radar, mobile surface-to-air and anti-ship cruise missile systems, fighters and bombers. Woody Island, located to the northwest of the triangle, also has the same list of assets and will become a "national key strategic service and logistical base" following a directive from the central government in April 2018. Most Southeast Asian countries are within China's combat radii.³⁵⁹ Beijing would take additional steps to strengthen its territorial claims. According to the announcement on April 18, 2020 made by China's Ministry of Civil Affairs, under the approval of the State Council, the Sansha city of the Hainan island will establish the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands administrations. The Paracel administration will be stationed on the Woody Island and in charge

³⁵⁸ Wataru Suzuki, "China's Belt and Road hits a speed bump in Kazakhstan," *Nikkei Asian Review*, April 24, 2019, <<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/China-s-Belt-and-Road-hits-a-speed-bump-in-Kazakhstan>> accessed Jan. 23, 2020; "First train from China to Europe makes 'Silk Railway' dream come true in Turkey," *Daily Sabah*, Dec. 20, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/2019/11/06/first-train-from-china-to-europe-makes-silk-railway-dream-come-true-in-turkey>> accessed Jan. 23, 2020; Catherine Putz, "First Direct Train from China Arrives in Iran," *The Diplomat*, Feb. 16, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/first-direct-train-from-china-arrives-in-iran/>>accessed Jan. 30, 2020.

³⁵⁹ Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative "Chinese Power Projection Capabilities in the South China Sea," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, < <https://amti.csis.org/chinese-power-projection/>>, accessed Jan. 26, 2020; Zhenhua Lu, "Beijing plans 'strategic service and logistics base' on Woody Island, two islets in South China Sea," *South China Morning Post*, March 18, 2019, < <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3002229/beijing-plans-strategic-service-and-logistics-base-woody>> accessed January, 2020.

of affairs related to the Zhongsha islets as well. The Spratly administration will be stationed on the Fiery Cross Reef (or Kagitingan Reef).³⁶⁰

Cambodia is another possible place for China's military outposts before sailing the Strait of Malacca to the Indian Ocean. At the Ream naval base, China reportedly will have a 30-year renewable lease. Possible development includes pier construction and the stationing of military personnel. Satellite imagery shows that ground in the forest-covered land was cleared for construction. To accommodate Chinese needs, the two U.S.-funded facilities there were asked to relocate. China also has a 99-year lease at Dara Sakor, where it is constructing a new airport, 40 miles northwest of Ream. From the evolving changes in landscape revealed by satellite images, the two-mile runway can accommodate long-range bombers and military transports. The runway turns design will allow fighters' takeoff and landing. It also has an airport apron with space for about a dozen aircraft.³⁶¹ It awaits future development, but Burma's Kyaukpyu, Sri Lanka's Hambantota, and Pakistan's Gwadar with their deep-water features have potential for military utilities.

BRI is designed to develop China's central and western regions. Yunnan and Xinjiang with their networks of transportation linking to other provinces of the PRC and to Indochina and the western Eurasian continent are the two main hubs in the border territories that direct inbound and outbound goods. Through the Initiative, more access to open seas is created by connecting China's inland regions to coastal areas of foreign countries that are not blocked as its east coast

³⁶⁰ Ministry of Civil Affairs of the PRC, the announcement on April 18, 2020, <<http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/xw/tzgg/202004/20200400026955.shtml>>.

³⁶¹ Jeremy Page, Gordon Lubold and Rob Taylor, "Deal for Naval Outpost in Cambodia Furthers China's Quest for Military Network," *Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 2019, <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/secret-deal-for-chinese-naval-outpost-in-cambodia-raises-u-s-fears-of-beijings-ambitions-11563732482>>, accessed Jan. 26, 2020.

is by the island chains. The sea ports and invested coastal regions are both inward looking as they transport resources back to China and consolidate its west wing, and outward looking as the military logistical support that they provide enhances force projection.

A 2017 CMS article by four co-authors explicitly dissects the military purpose of BRI from the view of, as its title reads, “the building of strategic projection system.”³⁶² It states that the PRC’s “strategic frontline” (战略前沿) has been pushed outward, from homeland to far seas. The change is in accord with geographical expansion of China’s national interests. As the strategic frontline extends outward, so does strategic depth. Based on this ideational foundation, the essay argues that force projection needs to reach to wherever Chinese interests are, and the developed projection system will support both war and non-war purposes in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

According to the essay, to build uninterrupted projection chains to far seas requires “airports, sea ports, railway hubs and overseas bases as the supporting points.” Highways, railroads, aviation and commercial vessels will possess both civilian and military use. The transportation networks as the basis for force projection that the authors describe are the continuous ones linking domestic to overseas infrastructure. “In the past, development of transportation was mostly within China. Force projection was also about mobilization among different war zones. As the strategic frontline pushes outward, to ensure that military power goes global, the strategic projection system needs to develop outward as well.” To do so, the article sees how overseas projects can “lead the development of facilities, equipment, technology and personnel needed for developing a force projection system.” It further argues that island building

³⁶² Zhong Fei, Xu Yao, Chao Yun and Cao Yalei [钟飞 徐瑶 晁云 曹亚蕾], “A Study of the Building of Strategic Projection System” [战略投送体系建设研究], *CMS*, No. 3, Issue No. 153, 2017, pp. 102-110.

in the SCS and MOOTW operations have provided opportunities and created *shi* for building the system. In addition, the high-speed rails that the PRC is eager to export in the BRI projects, so far with more luck in Mainland Southeast Asia, so that they can connect seamlessly to domestic railways are identified as a key pillar in building the system because of their speed. Suggested overseas military facilities come in various forms, ranging from permanent and temporary land bases to mobile offshore bases (MOB) on the high seas.

It is the PRC's policy to "include national defense transportation construction in the national economic and social development plan."³⁶³ In other words, transportation infrastructure, vehicles, delivery platforms, and loading and unloading equipment developed for civilian use and overall economic growth are also for military use.³⁶⁴ The State Council, the highest organ of civilian administration, and the Central Military Commission (CMC), the highest organ of the PLA, are the superior institutions of local governments and relevant agencies of the PLA respectively, both of which will participate in the designs and technical standards of projects with dual use. Local governments have responsibilities to report to military institutions regarding the progress of construction projects to ensure that military needs are met.³⁶⁵ Big and medium transportation enterprises are the main pillars in developing strategic force projection. Companies engaging in overseas investments are required to provide logistical supplies and inbound and outbound goods for overseas military operations.³⁶⁶ Military-civilian fusion (军民

³⁶³ The Law of the People's Republic of China on National Defense Transportation(中华人民共和国国防交通法), effective 2017, Article 15. This idea however has been in place for years. For instance, in the Regulations on National Defense Mobilization of Civil Transport Resources (effective Jan. 1, 2004), to ensure a smooth mobilization of "civilian vehicles and relevant equipment" during wartime, Article 7 puts governments on the county level and above in charge of preparations work, including production of dual-use vehicles and equipment, and places them "into the national economic and social development plan."

³⁶⁴ The Law of the People's Republic of China on National Defense Transportation, Article 22.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., Articles 4, 15, 21, 26, 27, 29.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., Articles 35, 36, 38.

融合) realized in this form as a way to prepare for military struggle applies to both domestic and overseas force projection, and a certain degree of technological standardization or compatibility between domestic and overseas infrastructure is something which the PRC is working on. From this perspective, BRI projects have undeniable military purposes. This long-term preparation conducted during peacetime by riding the wave of global economic engagement and without separating civilian from military goals is an integral part of active defense. Force projection, according to the previously mentioned 2017 CMS article, is for both “non-war employment”(非战争运用) and rapid mobilization and deployment for large-scale joint warfare. (大规模联合作战快速布署).

China has tried to create *shi* that will incrementally tip the inter-regional balance of power in its favor through investments on the land, quasi-military bases in the South China Sea, and military exercises and presence in the maritime directions. It is the workings of multiple forces, neither economy, politics nor military alone, whereby it hopes to shift international power relations without a major war. Meanwhile, China is preparing for war. It intends to become a major state with capabilities of traditional land power and maritime power. The PRC’s aspirations to become a maritime power hinge on whether it has free movement in and out of the first island chain. Removal of (potential) adversaries here, through force or not, provides a safety belt for the homeland and furthers outward expansion with little security concern in the rear. The first island chain in the next decades remains the most likely place where a major conflict will take place. The infrastructure that BRI lays out, from a grand strategic perspective, serves multiple purposes. In the short term, it is for domestic regional development, overall economic growth, and domestic material supplies. In the long run, the PRC is using global resources to prepare for war.

The 2019 defense paper wrote that China will “never seek hegemony, expansion and spheres of influence” (坚持永不称霸、永不扩张、永不谋求势力范围). In the Chinese view, the three terms are associated with war and the use of force and since it is not relying on war, its overseas activities do not fall into these three categories and thus are peaceful. Meanwhile, it also justifies its own use of force as being defensive and not expansionist. Since positive and negative cases of use of force are irrelevant to the definition of hegemony and expansion, the expression serves as justification, but it goes beyond rhetorical and reflects Chinese leaders’ beliefs, the conviction that both means are justified as they manifest China’s high morality of bringing other parties into an inclusive and peaceful world that Beijing designs. This swearing expression permeates official statements, domestic newspapers, articles from think tanks, and essays on the websites which are not as known as official media outlets. The 2019 defense white paper is one of the latest examples. As with the widespread notion that China has a 5000-year civilization, the expression is a believed myth that China is inherently good, rather than a proven fact. The PRC carries this belief to wherever its activities are, and the belief now functions on a global level. When ideas are not pure instruments for justification and mix with beliefs, they provide the impetus for certain policies, i.e., Chinese expansion, to continue.

Chapter 7

Discursive Comparison: the U.S., Japan, and China

This chapter puts China's quest for great power status in a comparative light. Since the jury about its future is still out, the analysis presents and compares historical processes in which lesser powers made their way to become regional and/or global hegemon. It specifically looks into the discursive constructs in the cases of the US, Japan and China during their respective power transition periods. One of the goals is to analyze and compare how rising powers use narratives for expansion that serves strategic and political interests. Another goal is to compare the degree and scale of idealism and morality found in these narratives across different countries. This comparison also indicates differences in how ingrained the belief in the self's high morality is. It will further identify factors that make differences.

One issue is about the definitions of idealism and morality. In line with the rest of this research, both are synonyms to the claimed inclusiveness based on the coexistence with multi-ethnic groups and various socio-economic and political institutions. Meanwhile, both terms also take on a cultural meaning in that the narratives of inclusiveness are constructed systematically (including the roles of the self and others, the understanding of the world and how the world should run), and such practice has been a tradition and become a given country's political culture. Definitions as such are derived from the Chinese experience detailed in chapters 1, 2 and 4. Therefore, a country's claim that it will bring the world peace and material benefits through whatever means does not suffice as the evidence of idealism and morality defined in this research. Three criteria are to be met: 1) the definition of inclusiveness as explained above, 2) whether the inclusive discourse is systematically built, 3) whether discursive consistency exists to sanction foreign policies, and 4) whether the practice of the points 2 and 3 is a tradition and

has become an institutionalized political culture. When the case passes these four thresholds, it can join the club of the “cult of defense.”³⁶⁷

The findings in this chapter show that neither Japan nor the US shows the degree and scale of high idealism and high morality that is seen in the case of the PRC. Japan somehow met the first requirement, but not the other two. Despite its inclusive claim under the scheme of Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperty, unlike China, Japan’s domestic demographic was more homogeneous and more cohesive. It did not tolerate diverse institutions abroad either. The US failed in each requirement. Washington’s foreign policies follow the logic of differentiations, not inclusiveness. Nevertheless, the racial logic was not a necessary condition for overseas expansion and in some cases even worked against expansion. This indicates that there were other factors shaping Washington’s narratives and, unlike China, the American discourse for foreign policy had not been consistent.

To avoid possible bias, this chapter utilizes another measurement, transparency in one’s strategic calculations, for robust check. When a state has a greater degree of transparency and lesser degree in consistently upholding a similar set of idealistic narratives, it confirms the finding that this country does not belong to the category of ultra-defensiveness. When a state has a lesser degree of transparency and a greater degree in playing morality politics, it belongs to that category.

Although the focus here is to identify the major patterns in various types of imperialism through the descriptive analysis of discursive rationalization, this chapter also briefly explores the causal factors that explain differences. One fundamental reason is the historical presence of equally/comparably powerful political entities of different peoples and how the countries have

³⁶⁷ Andrew Scobell, 2003.

historically institutionalized, through political ideology, their interactions with other peoples. The other reason is about the polity; autocracy tends to produce more consistent discourse than democracy. Thus, the prevalence of inclusive rhetoric in the Chinese discourse is not only preserved by authoritarianism but also is a type of authoritarian inclusion in which the so-called altruism is to bring others into the inclusive world as Beijing designs and the meanings and practices of altruism is not open for discussion but depends on China's definitions.

This chapter will first discuss the factors that explain differences in producing varied patterns of imperialism, after a brief overview of a general history of three countries. It then moves on to specify the criteria for comparison, including the timeframes, measurements and issue areas. With this chapter mainly about the descriptive analysis of the respective discourses, what then follows is the summarization of the histories of the US and Japan. This aims to show the critical junctures when they became or failed to become regional hegemon and when they turned into global powers. The final section will focus on the ideas supporting their (proposed) new orders. Because the Chinese narratives have received detailed analysis in the previous chapters, the study here focuses on the American and Japanese cases before comparing the three countries in their differences and similarities. Along the line of imperialism are three aspects for comparison: differentiation versus inclusiveness, domestic-foreign linkage of governance, and falsifiable versus unfalsifiable logics. A table of findings is presented as below.

Table 7.0

Countries Issues	China	Japan	The US
Inclusion	V	V	X
Differentiation	X	X	V
Other powerful political entities of different peoples	V	X	X
Inclusion or differentiation as a consistent discourse for expansion	V	-----	X
Democracy	X	X	V
Unfalsifiable justification	V	-----	X
Domestic-foreign linkages of governance	V	X	V

The Fundamental Factors That Make Differences

The previous chapters show that Beijing’s different worldviews, corresponding preferred world orders, and the overseas activities in the past years are underlined by realpolitik. Paralleling this is the construction of the increasingly sophisticated narratives of morality. The rhetoric of equality and mutual benefits is not simply designed to meet the needs of the post-Cold War environment in which the hypocrisy of stating that sovereign states are equal has become the norm, but also reflects China’s conviction that it has the abilities to realize the idealistic goals and its easy dismissal of the contradictions between what happens on the ground and the idealistic narratives. Beijing’s high idealism and the claimed moral high ground define China’s

ultra-defensiveness in a degree unseen in the cases of the US and Japan. This ultra-defensiveness is characterized by the inclusive narratives.

Japan similarly had an inclusive discourse but paled in degree. Despite the lofty rhetoric to care for all with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the Greater East Asia, the institutionalized political culture of building inclusive discourse that underlines the defensiveness is lacking because historically Japan does not have persistent practices in this regard. The Chinese regimes however have been doing similar things since dynastic periods. They claimed to provide public goods for both Chinese and non-Chinese peoples so long as the latter adopted the Chinese way. As chapter 2 shows, the Ming's emperor wished to pacify the Mongols through extending his heaven-mandated benevolence, either by bestowing gifts or granting titles. When the nomads went against Ming's wishes, Emperor Yongle justified his punitive expeditions by the reason that the Mongols had betrayed his grace. After the founding of the PRC, Beijing has continuously relied on the discourse that contains the same message that regardless of the differences, China is able to address the needs of many. During Mao's period, the narratives were that regardless of institutional differences, Beijing worked and was on the same side with less developed countries. Entering the 1990s and the 21st century, the discourse of inclusiveness applies to both domestic "multiethnic cohesion" and overseas activities that, according to China's claims, respect and treat different peoples and their institutions equally. No other country rivals China in having the ambition and the audacity to claim to be able to address issues for all in a non-discriminating way. The US was not inclusive and did not claim to be before the twentieth century. For most of the twentieth century, it remained racist at home. Its democratic institutions however kept it relatively honest in not stating the opposite. Unlike the PRC which derives its legitimacy from the fabricated historical continuity of civilizational greatness,

multiethnic unity, and territorial unity, Washington has its legitimacy rooted in the rowdy crowd. The US cannot compete with China in terms of the tenacity to produce and believe in the uninterrupted history of the world in a harmony under the Chinese leadership that in Beijing's narratives effortlessly comes into being.

China exceeds Japan in degree regarding the discursive substance of inclusion and the extent of belief in its own narratives. The substance of the Chinese narratives, however, has no similarities with the American discourse. What explains these differences? To identify causal relations, the comparison here will not meet each requirement laid out in the scientific procedures. The fundamental reason is that each country is different, even though they may share some similarities. When it comes to the *major patterns* in the variants of imperialism, it inevitably will be the aggregate results of differences, instead of similarities, that explain one's type of imperialism.

Despite some cultural similarities between China and Japan, the extent and the scale of this ingrained belief in one's moral authority have differences amounting to a gulf. Because perfect homogeneity in the cross-case study is not possible, heterogeneous factors can be minimized for maximum homogeneity. Since this study argues that Beijing's belief in its moral authority is a phenomenon of institutionalized political culture, the pool of cases should be limited to countries that share some cultural similarities. The other two barometers are that states have a history of overseas expansion and authoritarian government. Accordingly, Japan stands out as an ideal case compared to other Asian countries. Through a comparison of similar cases between Japan and China,³⁶⁸ the factor of a tradition of political ideology/narratives that the authority is altruistic

³⁶⁸ For most similar cases study, see Jason Seawright & John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2008, pp. 294-308.

and inclusive is identified to have explanatory power. The reason conditioning this traditional practice is that historically the Chinese polity has interacted with powerful entities of different ethnicities on the East Asian continent. To consolidate its own legitimacy, it over time develops an ideology that aims at both internal and external audiences in a way to persuade others that it does not differentiate. Such a condition has been relatively absent in the Japanese islands.

The PRC and the US are different cases in nature. On the standards that gauge the relationships between Japan and China, from culture to the polity, Washington did not share any similarities with Beijing. Although the US once coexisted with the American natives and European influence, native tribes and states were not comparably powerful and Europeans after all were Caucasians even though they could be powerful actors. Washington did not need to develop an inclusive discourse to sanction its presence in a competition with powerful players of different peoples as China did. This also explains why it was racism-based exclusion that became a dominant pattern in the American narratives. While racial logic could be related to annexation of territories and extension of one's influence, it was not a necessary condition and in some cases racism worked against expansion. In addition, unlike China, being a democracy Washington did not maintain a coherent political ideology to condone its overseas influence, let alone a consistent view of inclusion.

The persistent, systematic and institutionalized efforts to generate and maintain the discourse of inclusion is a major characteristic of Chinese politics. The discursive comparison in this chapter thus tests the presence and the scale of inclusiveness in the cases of the US and Japan. In addition, this chapter will measure the degree of idealism and a conviction in the self-claimed morality by the rhetorical tolerance and inclusiveness toward those identified as belonging to different "races" or ethnicities. To strengthen the findings, the degree of strategic

transparency will be analyzed. A lesser degree of transparency and a greater degree of denial of realistic practices confirms the tendency to believe the self is selfless and thus moral.

Criteria for Discursive Comparison

Comparison requires a specification of benchmarks for measurements. Since this research is about the PRC, cases for comparison should follow closely the conditions under which China is working its way to great power status. China's experience will be reference points for comparison. To deconstruct the title of this dissertation for a moment, the first part is about "rationalizing." As the first four chapters show, Chinese justification is not merely a rhetorical cover, it is systematic and institutionalized and thus carries a good amount of conviction within. The question then is, do other major powers display a similar degree and on a similar scale? The second part is about "Chinese hegemony." The related question is, is there any existing theory about the making of a (potential) hegemon and how do the cases of other major powers fare according to this theory? Standards for the timeframes and examples are to be explained along with the following three specifications of these two major guides. It is important to note that the discursive comparison among three countries should be evaluated by taking together the three specifications below as they are also interrelated.

First, as of today, the PRC is not even a power that dominates the region. It has been dealing with multiple major states in its neighborhood and the US. Accordingly, this chapter is interested in states' foreign policy discourse in an environment where the self needs to compete with multiple powers. Second, the second part of the title of this research is "Chinese hegemony." The existing literature already theorizes the trajectory of the making of a hegemon in terms of the geographical areas where one needs to dominate first. To open a dialogue with the current literature, selected cases including China will be tested against John Mearsheimer's

theory that a major state needs to consolidate its power in the region before it can wield global influence. In other words, to become a regional hegemon is a prerequisite for global influence. Unsurprisingly, the case of the US fits the theory as Mearsheimer develops this idea based on the American experience. The Japanese example also confirms the theory as Mearsheimer mentions. This chapter, however, demonstrates that the case of China does not fit the theory. Because of its geopolitical location and corresponding geostrategy, Beijing's policies show that the PRC is working on the regional and global scales simultaneously to become a hegemon. In combination with the first condition, the discursive analysis will focus on the period when a state strives to dominate its region. In comparing cases, it is necessary to trace the origins of modern-state building, because the boundaries of national territories have direct impact on national capabilities and identification of security threats as well as the scopes of defense perimeters. If it was not for the territories acquired after independence which compose most of the national boundaries that it has today, US hegemony in the region might not be the case. If the PRC had not invaded East Turkestan and Tibet after its founding, the outlook of China's foreign policy and domestic dynamics would be very different. Therefore, the timeline for the summaries of territorial expansion begins after the establishment of a modern-state government. In the case of the US, it will include western expansion. The Chinese case includes the invasion of Central Asian Xinjiang and Tibet. Japan however shows a different situation. Annexation of territories that constitute today's homeland was on a much smaller scale. Japan's focus was largely on overseas territories, and these lands combined are much larger than Japanese homeland. Inevitably, the summaries of some countries such as the US will cover a longer timeframe.

Third, what are the territories that major states intend to obtain or to exert influence over? This question is raised according to the second point. Mearsheimer's theory is about one's own sphere of influence and thus the obtainment of or influence over territories in a certain geographical area/region becomes the main direction for analysis. In this sense, the selected territories/geographical areas need to be seen as strategically important by a major power and constantly receive that power's attention. The case of the US will focus on the Western Hemisphere. Regarding China, it will be the South China Sea. Since the Chinese trajectory and strategic intention do not match the order of becoming a regional power first, the narratives for its activities in other regions need to be examined as well. In line with the standard that certain strategic issues have constantly received the attention of a major power, the military base in Djibouti is another example for comparison. Since the Djibouti case is illustrated in chapter 6, it will not be repeated here.

As to the exact content of the discourse for comparison, since this research argues that China's ultra-defensiveness is shown through inclusiveness-based morality politics with a conviction in the motives of the self being selfless and moral, and the abilities of the self to realize rosy blueprints in the future, the American and Japanese narratives will be tested against the Chinese style of systematic idealism. This research does not merely argue that Beijing plays a politics of high idealism, but also that such culture is institutionalized as its practices date to dynastic eras and continue to today. It also argues that such culture is reflected in systematically built discourse that links domestic and international governance; as chapter 4 and many places scattered in other chapters show, the narrative of inclusiveness is based on a respect for diversity (multiethnic unity at home, respect for different political and socio-economic institutions abroad) and is embodied in Chinese socialist institutions and Chinese culture that is partially influenced

by sinicized Marxism. As to where this benevolence and inclusiveness come from, Beijing offers a biological explanation of the Chinese genes. The PRC's claimed high altruism and morality politics needs to be understood by considering the above characteristics together. It is the combination of these traits that explains China's cultural subjectivism. Neither the US nor Japan demonstrates defensiveness and claims to have the moral high ground at this level and at this scale.

There are two criteria to measure the quality of high idealism and high morality as "self-privileging":³⁶⁹ 1) a greater gap between fragmented/complicated realities and the degree of willingness and conviction to *systematically* deny such or the degree of showing no issues with covering up what happens on the ground, and 2) a lesser degree of transparency in one's strategic intentions for self-interests despite the utilization of lofty rhetoric. The first criterion is to be evaluated by the presence of systematic and institutionalized effort to construct idealistic narratives of morality. Since it is not possible to do psychoanalysis, whether a persistent and systematic effort exists to keep certain political culture alive and functioning can be a good alternative to measure the extent of belief, or how entrenched such belief is. The second criterion acknowledges that major states tend to use beautified rhetoric to justify their deeds and, based upon this constant, this chapter gauges the degree of strategic transparency. These two yardsticks need to be considered together. The second standard can function as a robust check to confirm the extent of ultra-defensiveness proved by the first standard when the degree of the strategic transparency is low.

³⁶⁹ This is not to measure the *real* high idealism and the *real* high morality. This is to measure the degree of "full of oneself," which is not the same as being actively hypocritical, in one's belief that the self possesses the quality of high idealism and high morality.

The first four chapters in this research have demonstrated that inclusion-based morality politics and ultra-idealism are institutionalized political culture and systematically constructed, which supplies evidence for China's persistent belief in its own morality. On the basis of factoring in the diversity of peoples and governing institutions across different countries in one's narratives, Washington's outward expansion was built on racism-related exclusion. This differs from the PRC's claimed inclusiveness. As the logic goes, the US did not have an institutionalized culture of pretending to have undifferentiated compassion, let alone generating relevant discourse systematically. Tokyo utilized inclusive rhetoric, but this was more obvious during the inter-war period and WWII. It does not have a history of building and employing narratives to stress one's own morality versus the immorality of other ethnic groups in the territories that it now governs. China, however, has such history and traditions. Accordingly, the discursive comparison will focus on inclusiveness versus differentiation.

Regarding strategic transparency, the Chinese narratives about the South China Sea and the American narratives, such as the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, about the Western Hemisphere will be compared. The matter here is not about whether a certain doctrine or speech is effective as a deterrent, but rather about transparency in one's strategic assessments. In fact, it is exactly the minimal effectiveness of the Monroe Doctrine that highlights the transparency in making public the American strategic intentions and the conditions it laid out as the temporary guidance for certain foreign policies. Compared to the Roosevelt Corollary, the Monroe Doctrine is a least likely case, to provide evidence of strategic transparency. If this least likely case also shows the expected result, it provides an even stronger piece of evidence. When Monroe made that announcement, the US was still surrounded by the colonies of many European powers in today's US homeland and in the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless,

Monroe made it clear that the non-intervention and non-colonization principles which sought coexistence with European powers that were still stronger than the US would change once conditions shifted to negatively affect Washington's interests. Despite being a weaker state, Washington was explicit that it would play *realpolitik* as any other major state did, which indicated that it had its eyes on the Western Hemisphere. China, on the contrary, denies in public its strategic ambitions, and fills the narratives with lofty words for public consumption to dazzle people's minds. As Lucian Pye put it, "one of the risks of being a student of Chinese politics is that prolonged immersion in the language of Chinese politics may dim one's wits to the point that it becomes impossible to recognize fuzzy thinking."³⁷⁰ China's politics is full of and *is* words, rhetoric and reading between the lines. There are more convictions than practical substance. The denial of any strategic calculations and a conviction that such denial is entirely sincere adds another layer to China's ultra-defensiveness.

From Regional Hegemon to Global Power

Using the United States as a reference point, John Mearsheimer argues that a major power's global status is not possible before achieving a status of regional hegemon with the abilities of excluding others from exerting influence in the region. After regional dominance is obtained, the regional status can be further ensured by preventing another rising power from gaining dominance in another region of the world. A power is free to operate and meddle in other regions when it faces no serious threats in its own backyard. Therefore, a world of bipolarity with two powers achieving dominance in two different regions is more dangerous than a world of multipolarity with one securing hegemony in one area and two or more than two powers

³⁷⁰ Lucian W. Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture: The Escalation of Confrontation from Moralizing to Revenge," *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1990, pp. 331-347, (specifically p. 336).

competing in a region for supremacy. In the case of the former, two great powers are free to intervene in each other's backyard. In the case of the latter, states will be busy with checking each other's strength in the region where they reside and thus have no spare capabilities to grow their influence in other regions. Accordingly, for Mearsheimer, a power is less likely to gain global dominance when it still needs to deal with other powers residing in its own region. Meanwhile, Mearsheimer's argument is not that a global hegemony is achievable. To subordinate distant countries is costly given that projection of power is limited over long distances. He concludes that the ultimate goal a state can attain thus is regional hegemony.³⁷¹

Mearsheimer's theory is also about the dynamics of power transition. Power transition, while focusing on the relations between relative strength and the timing of war, does not specify the dynamics of competition on the geopolitical and geostrategic levels. Mearsheimer's arguments about how a state can consolidate its power in the region by considering inter-state interactions on both the regional and global levels provide the dynamics of competition that substantiates power transition theory. Accordingly, the summaries of the trajectories of overseas expansion of the US and Japan and their discursive constructs will be in accordance with the time frame in which each one aspired to become regional hegemon before obtaining global influence. This study finds that the cases of the US and Japan conform to the theory. China's course of overseas expansion, however, does not follow theoretical expectation.

The US

During the eighty years from the Monroe Doctrine (1823) to the Roosevelt Corollary (1904), European powers were either retreating from the Americas or growing overstretched and exhausted from imperialist competition. By the time the Monroe Doctrine that asked non-

³⁷¹ John Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 2014.

intervention from Europe in the Western Hemisphere and promised no American involvement in Europe was announced, it would take another 23 years to complete western expansion on the continent, with Texas and California annexed after the war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848. The further expansion into Latin America during the 1840s and 1850s, such as acquiring rights to build a canal and establishing a naval presence, was aided by British withdrawal. For London, continental politics demanded full attention and as relations with Russia deteriorated, both sides ended up fighting the Crimean War (1854-1856).³⁷² Washington's external environment would again improve as Europe turned its attention to East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East with the wave of revived imperial colonialism in the 1880s.

The US already had an eye on Hawaii after the completion of continental expansion and had wished to build a trans-isthmus canal protected by the US Navy in Central America. The Spanish-American War in 1898 made the long coveted territorial acquisitions come true and allowed Washington to control strategic locations. Engulfed by domestic crisis, the aged imperial monarchy was no competent rival. The US took Spain's Cuba in the Western Hemisphere as a protectorate, Puerto Rico, the Philippines as colony, and Guam. The Pacific possessions formed a strategic line serving American interests in the Pacific. Five years later, the Roosevelt Corollary would make it clear that Latin America was an American sphere of influence and the US had duties to police the region.

The US under Teddy Roosevelt would grow interested in participating in international affairs beyond the Western Hemisphere. Regardless, it did not enjoy privileges in other parts of the world while it was tightening its grip on Latin America. This was the case when the scramble

³⁷² George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. foreign relations since 1776*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 207- 210, 218-221.

for Africa was nearly complete at the end of 19th century and China, after losing the 1894 war with Japan, became the pie from which European powers and the US alike wanted to have a share. As a latecomer in the club of global powers, its best bet was to ensure its own access to the market in China and what it already had in the Pacific and tried to ensure that others' gains did not come at its expense. During the inter-war years, the US participated in international politics, but remained one among equals. In addition, a retreat to isolationism, meaning the hesitancy to interfere in European politics and to take positive actions to prevent Japanese expansion in East Asia, also characterizes its foreign policy. Not until 1941 did the US along with Britain and the Netherlands impose economic sanctions on Japan to cut off its oil supplies. The emergence of the US as a superpower did not come until after two world wars. The UK was enervated, and Europe and Japan were devastated.

Japan

From the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868) to the early 1940s, the opportunities for Japan to obtain regional dominance came and went. The incumbent power in the region and the western powers that came to the region were either troubled by domestic crises or imperial disintegration or engulfed in the continental wars. In this regard, Japan shared similarities with the American case. However, unlike the US who was one among equals with consolidated regional influence, Japan was not able to drive out extra-regional powers, although it gained from western inaction. Tokyo was one among equals but arguably the weakest one in the club. The western colonizers still guarded their interests in the Pacific. Following growing concerns in the 1930s and Japan's occupation of southern Indochina in the summer of 1941, the west imposed economic sanctions on Japan, especially oil supplies, and the US had updated its war plan for the Pacific theater. Washington and Tokyo already saw the possibility of war before it

arrived.³⁷³ The regional order would remain dynamic until Japanese defeat. Tokyo's defeat not only led to the loss of all colonies and protectorates but also disarmament of the nation. Its regional dominance was ephemeral.

The 1894 war against the Manchu Qing empire would mark the beginning of Japan's overseas expansion. With Japan emerging as a victor, the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki gave Tokyo Taiwan where its interests dated to the 1874 failed expedition and severed tributary relations between Korea and the Qing after two decades of meddling in Korean politics and competition with the Qing for influence on the peninsula. Due to its declining imperial power and the recent defeat, the continental power was permanently removed from the list of competitors that Japan needed to outmaneuver for regional dominance.

Japan's primary enemy now would be Russia. The two countries went to war in 1904. Caught by a revolution back home and a defeat in the Tsushima Strait, Russia was ready to settle. Tokyo might not have been able to fight long either because of heavy casualties and high military spending. Playing the British card³⁷⁴ and reaping the benefits from Russia's domestic turmoil, along with battlefield successes, Japan got what it wanted, including freedom of action in Korea and Russia's privileges in the Liaodong Peninsula. The erstwhile enemy could even become a temporary ally. In 1910, Tokyo and Moscow signed a secret deal to divide Manchuria between their spheres of influence. As the geostrategic logic dictated, Russia had the north and Japan had the south.

³⁷³ Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945*. Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1991; W.H. Honan, *Visions of Infamy: The Untold Story of How Journalist Hector C. Bywater Devised the Plans that Led to Pearl Harbor*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

³⁷⁴ Due to the perceived growing Russian threat, the British and the Japanese signed an alliance treaty in 1902. The treaty stipulated that if either party was attacked by a third party, the other party would not intervene. However, if either of the parties was attacked by more than one third party, the other would come to its aid. As the result, the British did not intervene in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

Japan's gains in Shandong during WWI however would be reversed by the Washington Conference (1921-1922). The Conference further limited the firepower of capital ships and set the ratio of tonnage among powers. The treaty of alliance between Japan and Britain was replaced by a Four Power Pact in which the US, France, Japan, and Britain promised to respect each other's rights and to consult each other in times of crisis. These agreements reined in Japan's expansion and restored power equilibrium in East Asia.

In 1931, the Kwantung Army defied Tokyo's order and invaded Manchuria on the pretext of a railway bombing incident engineered by army officers. The next year, Manchukuo, a puppet state of Imperial Japan, was established. Suffering from the Great Depression, the west did not take counteraction, aside from condemnation. During the 1930s, Tokyo reneged on the promise of armament reductions and sought for territorial control. After Manchukuo, the Imperial Army continued to advance on the continent and expanded in Southeast Asia. On the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack, Japan already controlled a good amount of territories in Asia and faced no threats from extra-regional powers as Europe itself was at war. The attack however drew strong American reaction and starting from the second half of 1942 after losing the battle of Midway, Japan's newly gained but fragile status as regional hegemon would soon be gone. The Asia Pacific has not yet seen the total withdrawal of the west.

China in Comparison

The American experience provides the foundation for Mearsheimer's theory. The case of Japan further conforms to the theoretical predictions that without obtaining a status of regional hegemon, one cannot have global influence. The example of the PRC differs according to the development seen so far. As chapters 5 and 6 discussed, from both China's experience and

strategic logic, it seems that the PRC is working on the regional and global levels simultaneously. From a Chinese viewpoint—consider its geopolitical location and the strategic logic that Chinese narratives come up with, that is, inner and outer strategic belts in the context of a quasi-world “Asia-Pacific”—it is difficult to draw a clear line between regions and the globe. Unlike the past experience of Japan and the US, China may be more able to throw its weight around in some remote and less developed states than in its immediate neighbors since they are either major powers or states that have strong governments. While attempting to fulfill its agenda in the South China Sea where it will meet formidable enemies such as the US and Japan and probably others, China also is working on the outer rim of “Asia-Pacific” of its definition, including Western Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Africa, for its goal in the first island chain. It is casting the fishing net wide to obtain as many as possible.

Ideational Bases of New Orders

China, Japan, and the US are no exception to the law that major powers’ expanding strategic and commercial interests require some justifications to uphold. In the American construct of relations with others, there were clear distinctions between the self and the other. The differences were racial. Racism had underlined westward movement, domestic slavery, and overseas expansion. In the case of Japan, Asians were similar as opposed to the white West—as the objects of western colonialism who shared the aspiration for independence—and yet they were racially different and treated as such in the context of a Japan-led Greater East Asia. Neither aspect can be ignored, for dropping either of them fails to capture the contradiction in Japan’s new order. China shows the other end of the spectrum. It puts on the pretension of inclusiveness with a belief in it, seeing differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, and race as no barriers for the world to become a family. The logic that others are part of the self while their

differences are respected is seen in the discursive construction of the Chinese state and its foreign policies as well. In dealing with heterogeneity, the US admitted differences among peoples in the narratives but carried them too far in identifying differences with racial (in)capabilities and from there it further derived what different races deserved. But Washington did what it said. It honestly stated its contempt for peoples of color and treated them accordingly. China however creates the impression of equal co-existence with mutual respect while its behavior proves the contrary. Neither case is better. They both serve imperialist goals.

The US

The logic of American racism applies to both domestic governance and foreign policies. However, American racism did not necessarily lead to continental and overseas expansion. People with racist views could oppose that as well. Regardless, they all shared the same logic that the races of color alike were inferior and were innately incapable of self-government. Domestically, this logic was in the system of slavery before the Civil War and then, following the Reconstruction Era, segregation and restricted voting rights and civil liberties. Since the blacks were considered a degraded race, many did not have rights for political participation.³⁷⁵ Many whites believed that the superiority of the US democratic institutions could only be upheld by the whites. Similar racial logic underlined Washington's foreign relations in both the territories the US annexed and the countries in which the US intervened. The post-1898 territorial arrangements, including Hawaii which later became a state because of the very large scale of white immigration there, present the result of compromises between white supremacy and imperialist ambitions. The population would not gain citizenship and these territories would

³⁷⁵ The blacks' rights for political participation depends a lot on where and when. A more extreme example is the differences in laws and popular attitudes in Mississippi and Massachusetts in 1930.

not be elevated to statehood because they would contaminate the American polity and the peoples of color could not be Americanized easily. The US however would extend its protection over these territories since they were understood to be racially incapable of self-government and defending themselves from foreign threats. These territories instead became colonies and protectorates in the imperialist chapter of American history. A similar racial logic underlined the intervention in Latin America. The non-white races' capacity for self-government was doubtful and they needed American help to stabilize their countries. In US foreign relations, racism did not lead to expansion but rather rationalized the imperialist schemes that served the purpose of strategic and commercial interests.

In the case of continental expansion, racism facilitated territorial annexation. On the issue of Texas, Northern Whigs, as much as they held an antislavery position, did not support the idea of treating blacks as equals. The anxiety that slaves would inundate the North if they were set free prompted Northern Whigs to support Texas annexation in 1845. Instead of migrating to the North, blacks would disperse into the west and enter Mexico and Latin America where colored skins would make them equal among Latinos. Northern Whigs' desire to preserve institutions and the way of life in the North and the southern scheme to have Texas as a slave state to increase political representation in national politics eventually led to expansion. But the expansion had limits. For the Southerners, the acquisition of territories beneath the Rio Grande would destroy the white institutions. For Northern Whigs, it would continue the slavery system that they were opposed to.³⁷⁶ Racism was one of reasons for continental expansion in the sense that it provided temporary relief from the slavery issue and slavery-related sectional power

³⁷⁶ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 23-38.

struggle. The slave logic would continue to function regarding overseas expansion. However, the case of Cuba shows that the logic did not affect whether territorial acquisitions took place or not.

Against the background of diminishing seats in Congress, the Southerners would continue to link slavery to the purchase of Cuba. The strategy of abolitionists was to turn the table against slaveholders by arousing racial fears. Whig President Fillmore in his 1852 message to Congress expressed that incorporation of Cuba into the Union would bring “the Confederacy a population of a different national stock, speaking a different language, and not likely to harmonize with the other members.” He considered incorporation of Cuba “a hazardous measure.”³⁷⁷ In response to Southerners’ \$30million bill in 1859 for the island’s purchase, John Bell, a Tennessee Whig, stated that “when you shall have extended your dominion over the state of Mexico and Central America, you will have added twelve million of a population for the most part perfectly imbecile.”³⁷⁸ At the same time, Spain made absolutely clear that it had no interest in selling Cuba to the United States.

The slavery incentive disappeared after the Civil War but racism by other definitions remained one of the governing tenets in U.S. foreign relations. The territorial annexation following the 1898 Spanish-American War primarily served Washington’s commercial and strategic interests, with the latter evidenced in military bases in the Philippines and Cuba. The political status of the new territories as colonies and protectorates however would be subject to racial discrimination. The racial logic would justify the political relations between the US and these territories. Anti-imperialists loathed the idea of incorporating these people into the US for fear that they would contaminate American institutions. Imperialists wanted the territories for

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

strategic purposes while they too looked down upon races of color. Nevertheless, politicians, both for and against territorial expansion, agreed that peoples of color were unfit for self-governance. The result was the denial of their statehood (as states in the US federal system) and the postponement of their independence.

The dominant rationale of the time for the imperialists was that peoples of color were incapable of governing themselves and thus it required the intervention of the US to ensure a functioning government and a stable society so that American commercial and strategic interests could be protected. In responding to the Cuban revolution following the 1898 war, President McKinley favored the solution of turning Cuba into a US protectorate so that a stable government under Washington's supervision could duly pay its international obligations and ensure the protection of American interests.³⁷⁹ In deciding who would be eligible to vote, Secretary of War Elihu Root was happy to learn that "whites so greatly outnumber the blacks" and the population that drove the country into chaos would not have a say.³⁸⁰ On the Philippines, McKinley appointed the Schurman Commission to conduct first-hand research. A part of the Commission report reads as follows: "the Philippine people were not capable of independent self-government, and that independence, for which some of them said they were fighting, was...an idea at present impossible, *not only because of their unfitness for it, but because of their inability to preserve it among the nations even if it were granted* (emphasis added)." The report concluded that "the Philippine Islands, even the most patriotic declare...need the tutelage and protection of the United States."³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 135-137.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 145.

³⁸¹ Rubin Francis Weston. *Racism in U.S. Imperialism: The Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893-1946*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972, pp. 99-100.

Anti-imperialist politicians at the same time continued the old rhetoric that the incorporation of peoples of color would endanger the American institutions and civilization. Their version of racism was about American exceptionalism in terms of white supremacy. Senator Tillman gave his reason for opposing the Philippines deal. “It is to the injection into the body politic of the United States of that vitiated blood, that debased and ignorant people, that we object.” But he did not oppose the American protection, as he expressed that “we give them whatever necessary protection they may need to keep other nations from gobbling them up, and thereby relieve ourselves of any obligations.”³⁸² In Congressional debates about Puerto Rico, several representatives rejected making Puerto Ricans American citizens because of their racial incapability in self-governance. Some cited failed republican government in mixed-blood countries as evidence; some used geography and climate as the reasons—“the tropics seem to heat the blood while enervating the people who inhabit them.”³⁸³ For Carl Schurz, Senator Henry Teller, Senator John McLaurin and others, the Philippines, and, for some, Cuba and Puerto Rico, could not be admitted to statehood because people there were half-civilized and had nothing in common with the Americans in terms of language, religion, and culture. For anti-imperialists, the mere thought that races of color would direct state affairs via elected offices was unbearable and the independence of newly gained territories such as the Philippines would be preferred to keep the US white.³⁸⁴

³⁸² Ibid., pp. 94-95.

³⁸³ Ibid., pp. 194-196.

³⁸⁴ Eric Tyrone Lowery Love. *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, pp. 159-195.

While racial language ran afoul of the political narratives, those acting on the reason that American institutions should remain in the governing hands of the whites were anti-expansionist. Territorial acquisition, justified by the reason that because of others' racial inabilities the US had to act, primarily served economic and strategic interests. For instance, on Cuba, the Platt Amendment specified that the U.S. had rights to intervene for the protection of life, property and individual liberty. To enforce the Monroe Doctrine and prevent European meddling in the Caribbean, it also prohibited Cuba entering loan contracts with foreign powers. For the amendment to have enforcement power, Washington would also secure two naval bases at Bahia Honda and Guantanamo Bay.³⁸⁵

After the 1898 war and the securing of land to build the Panama Canal by supporting Panama's secession from Colombia in 1903, Washington found that its interests could be safeguarded by means other than territorial acquisitions. American expansion through intervention was formally formulated in Roosevelt's message to Congress in 1904, which was later dubbed the Roosevelt Corollary. The birth of the new doctrine again came in the shadow of possible European meddling over the Venezuela debt crisis. Roosevelt's message carried the racial logic of civilization versus barbarism. He stated:

“If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and *in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the*

³⁸⁵ Lars Schoultz. 1998, pp. 148-149.

*Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power (emphasis added)."*³⁸⁶

The message to Latin America and Europe is direct: if the southern neighbors were incapable of governing themselves and fulfilling their responsibilities in a way that jeopardized US security, the US would intervene. The northern giant exonerated itself from any accusation by stressing the reluctance to use force. Meanwhile, Roosevelt lamented that there was no international law and no tribunal to bring to justice the wrongdoers who violated the rights of another nation. He did not agree on total disarmament of the nations. "Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers...to disarm." Because the civilized countries had "the most sense of international obligations" and "the keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong," they should keep "a sufficient armament" "under any circumstances" to "serve the purpose of international police." The power of force would keep the world distant from "an immediate recrudescence of barbarism." "International police", "civilized," and "obligations" appeared in this context of general foreign policy and in the text specifically about Latin America. This textual arrangement found its testing ground in Latin America.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "December 6, 1904: Fourth Annual Message", *Mill Center of the University of Virginia*, <<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-6-1904-fourth-annual-message>> accessed May 4, 2020.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

Cuba in the hands of President Tomas Estrada Palma was in a state of rebellion in 1906. After Palma and his Cabinet resigned, the country was in anarchy. Roosevelt ordered Secretary of War William Howard Taft to restore order. Taft went to Cuba with nine U.S. warships. Upon learning that Cuba had about \$13.6 million in the Treasury (and thus the US funds were not needed), Taft established a provisional government by the authority of the US President. Now, Charles Magoon and the US Army were in charge of Cuba. In commenting on the reason for Cuban unrest, Magoon said, "Like all other people of Spanish origin they are hot blooded, high strung, nervous, excitable...They are suspicious of everyone." Regarding the future prospects of Cuba, Magoon stated that "we cannot change these racial characteristics by administering their Government for two years or twenty years, nor would they be changed by a military occupation."³⁸⁸

Japan

Ostensibly a Japanese blueprint to help Asian nations expel colonialism and become independent, the slogan of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity, promulgated in 1940, first aroused nationalist excitement in the Western-controlled colonies and then brutally crushed their false sense of hope and misplaced trust. In a nutshell, the ideal espoused by the concept was an international hierarchy based on racism of a Japanese version when it came to political and economic order. No country would truly gain independence since Japanese would compose the ruling class of the territories and local economies were to be structured according to Japanese needs. In figuring out how human resources could be useful for the empire, peoples of Asia were categorized along the lines of racial deficiencies and capabilities. Pan-Asianism was the cloth for Japanese colonialism, and equality and brotherhood were veneers of racism-informed inequality.

³⁸⁸Lars Schoultz, 1998, pp. 198-202.

Japan saw its relations with others in racial terms. In an article written by Colonel Ishiwara Kanji and Miyazaki Masayoshi, both argued for a new construct of regional order in East Asia that would reject the racial inequality in the Western-built order. “We Orientals know that such Western ideas as freedom, equality, democracy, etc. are based on the concept of racial and class differences. For example, the free societies of the British and French white peoples are built on the foundation of the slavery of billions of colored people...It is like the democracy among the nobility of ancient Rome which was conjoined with use of slaves of many difference races.” A new order realized in an East Asia Federation with Japan at the center would manifest a different culture, “a culture of the rule of righteousness” that would respect the choices of East Asians.³⁸⁹ The slogan “Expel Western imperialism” from the Pacific that gained currency in the 1930s thus was directly related to the injustice of racial inequality that Tokyo intended to address. According to *General Principles of National Defense Policy* from Army General Staff Headquarters, Japan’s national policy was to become a protector and a leader by possessing “the power to expunge the pressure of the white races in East Asia.”³⁹⁰

Tokyo’s political appeal was the liberation of Asian nations from colonialism and to build “Asia for the Asiatics”. Within the community, there were cooperation, co-existence of states, mutual dependence, and respect for distinctive cultures and traditions. The equality prevailing in the narratives was subject to racial differences, however. Relations among Asians after all were not equal. In the Japanese logic, equity could be achieved only when the peoples of different nationalities performed roles in accord with their racial capabilities. This delegated the leadership role to the Yamato race and relegated others to supporting Japan’s political,

³⁸⁹ Joyce C. Lebra. *Japan’s Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in World War II: Selected Readings and Documents*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 3-8, specifically, pp. 7-8.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

economic, and social needs. Ishiwara Kanji, the officer responsible for the 1931 Mukden Incident, wrote in 1930 that, “The four races of Japan, China, Korea and Manchuria will share a common prosperity through a division of responsibilities: Japanese, political leadership and large industry; Chinese, labor and small industry; Koreans, rice; and Manchus, animal husbandry.”³⁹¹

With the two colonies, Taiwan and Korea, and the war being waged in China, Professor Kamikawa Hikomatsu, specialized in diplomatic history and a graduate from Tokyo Imperial University, compared the Monroe Doctrine and its Japanese counterpart in a 1939 article. Kamikawa was defending Japan’s regional policy and asked for understanding and sympathy from the Americans. He saw resemblances on both sides in that the principles of non-colonization and non-intervention are the policy toward the home region with reference to each side’s relations with extra-regional powers; Europe would withdraw from the Americas and leave the region to US, and the West from East Asia and leave it to Japan. Kamikawa further argued that Japan was not interested in European affairs as it left the League of Nations, just like American isolation from the Old World. He concluded that the policies of the two countries met their developmental requirements at the initial stages.³⁹²

The professor denied that Japanese imperialism was ongoing. He turned the accusation against the American continental expansion and intervention policy in Latin America. In defending Japan’s footprints, he described them as “a joint movement of the East Asiatic peoples” who shared “racial, cultural and economic solidarity” and whose differentiated economic structures, with Japan’s economy industrial and the rest agrarian, are “mutually harmonious and accommodating.”³⁹³ According to Kamikawa, Japan’s Monroe Doctrine was

³⁹¹ Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War: 1931-1945*. New York: Random House, 1978, p. 12.

³⁹² Joyce C. Lebra, 1975, pp. 25-30.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-30, specifically pp. 29-30.

necessary for “defense and preservation of East Asia”. Any western transgression will be “construed as disturbing the peace and order” of the region and Japan would oppose that.

In reality, Japanese expansion was buttressed by racial inequality. The *Global Policy with Yamato Race as Nucleus*, a report circulated within the government and written by about forty researchers during the heyday of the Pacific War, contains specific demographic and economic policies and supporting racist ideas. According to the report, Japan is superior to other Asian countries because the Yamato race is pure whereas others have mixed blood. The cultural, spiritual, and material superiority derived from racial purity grants Japan the privilege of a leadership position. Because only the Yamato race can strengthen the region as a community, the continuation of a pure Japanese race in the leadership position is the cornerstone to regional development. To that effect, the suggested policy toward other Asian nations is the migration of Japanese population to designated countries (including Korea, Taiwan, Manchukuo, China, Indochina, Burma, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the East Indies, and Philippines). There would be no intermarriage with local peoples and the Japanese migrants would be in charge of institutions in the occupied areas. Regarding the roles of other races, the resilience of the Koreans and Formosans (the Taiwanese people) would sustain the protraction of war by conducting hard labor, based on their record of strong resistance to Japanese rule and strategic locations; Southeast Asians are generally lazy and do not have business sense; the Han Chinese were good at business but were flunkies.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ John W. Dower. “Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus,” in *War Without Mercy*. New York: Georges Borchardt, Inc., 1993, pp. 262-290.

China in Comparison

Unlike the American narratives which saw clear differences between white Americans and other races, rhetorical inclusiveness characterizes Chinese and Japanese worldviews. The polemical language for public consumption incorporates others as part of the self or sees the other and the self as an organic whole in which different national units work together for the same goal. Both Japanese and Chinese narratives identify certain countr(ies) as enemies against which the rest of the world will unify. For Japan, in appealing to Asian countries, the object for resistance is western colonialism. For China, it is American hegemony which developing countries led by the PRC will target. Both China and Japan are framed to be selfless leader-aspirants capable of raising up the suppressed states who share commonalities with them. The PRC sees itself belonging to the club of developing countries and because of its past of foreign “humiliation,” its narratives claim that it understands what others had been through and thus will not treat them unequally. Japan saw itself sharing racial kinship with other Asians and also understood how it felt to be a target of western aggression as the rest of Asian countries did. Both countries share strikingly similar lines. They attempt to win political allegiance by appealing to sentiment, denouncing others’ evil doings and providing hope of a future shared community in which the have-nots can all become the haves. While rhetorical inclusion is used to facilitate expansion for China and Japan, racist narratives did not necessarily lead to expansion in the US case. As previously demonstrated, the US differentiated peoples on racial grounds and domestic groups used variants of racial logic to obtain their political goals within and without the country.

Chinese and Japanese pretensions of inclusiveness belie the differentiations that matter in the new order to be established. Other Asian races would serve the Yamato race and contribute

their resources for the Japanese economy while remaining politically inferior. Although Chinese narratives condemn racism, the behavior demonstrates otherwise. An example is a controversial televised show on CCTV, a nationwide broadcasted official media outlet, during 2018 Lunar New Year that featured a Chinese woman wearing blackface in an event about her daughter's inter-racial marriage and an African man with monkey suit. The show aimed to highlight Sino-African cooperation and friendship, but the actors' lines and the racial connotations of their costumes reveal a racial hierarchy.

The scene was set in Kenya. The blackface Chinese woman who played the role of an African mother with oversized body and female features was accompanied by an African man with monkey suit who handed over a basket of fruit to a Chinese man who played the role of her future son-in-law. When asked how the couple got to know each other, they answered with gradually raised voices at the tail of the statement, "it is the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway that connects us together." A young Chinese woman who turned out to be the real bride of the Chinese man then showed up and revealed that the inter-racial marriage was a fake deal and the African daughter used it to escape the arranged marriage that her mom had planned. The mother now realized that her daughter did not want to get married at an early age because she wanted to go to China to study. The daughter acted by a black woman expressed the desire to "be the same as the Chinese people---roll up sleeves and be industrious, win the praise from the intellectuals and elite of the world." Responding to her daughter's concern and wish, the mother said, "how can I say no [to your plan to go to China]? When I was young, it was China's assisting-Africa medical team who saved me. Now the Chinese young generation come to Africa to build

railways for us.....I love Chinese people. I love China.”³⁹⁵ Racially objectifying others to fulfill one’s desire to be deferred to does not live up to the narratives of non-differentiation.

In fact, China’s relations with Africa have been nothing short of racism. Since Mao’s period, many educated Chinese citizens have embraced the view of international hierarchy rooted in racial capabilities. The logic goes that the Chinese race is as superior as the white whereas the black is the inferior one, down at the bottom of hierarchy. It is deplorable for a Chinese woman to have a relationship with a black man. Such a relationship invokes the inferiority complex that some Chinese men have toward the idea that a black man is more muscular than a Chinese man. Discussions on the internet and some local news reports consider the presence of the black as the source of socio-economic problems as the black population has no sense of law and order, is a less developed race and less intelligent. Cyber messages justify such a view not as racial discrimination, but rather a biological fact. Those who have work experience in Africa in recent years due to Beijing’s overseas investments also translate the differentiated treatments they received, partly as a result of dishonesty in China’s business practices, into information that feeds racism at home. This fuels domestic views that hard power is necessarily to be used on Africans so that they will bend to the Chinese, just like they show more respect to the whites now because of past colonization.³⁹⁶

Chinese and Japanese inclusiveness are identical in rhetoric but differ in geographical scope. The Japanese version was limited within the bloc of Greater East Asia. As Kamikawa’s article demonstrates, the West including the US should retreat and leave East Asia to Japan. This

³⁹⁵See the video, between 3:18:50 to 3:29:30. CCTV, “2018 CCTV Spring Festival Gala,” *Youtube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeRi86DcfyA>>.

³⁹⁶ Yinghong Chen, “From Campus Racism to Cyber Racism: Discourse of Race and Chinese Nationalism,” *the China Quarterly*, no. 207, 2011, pp. 561-579.

was in accord with the political appeal of expelling colonialism. The Chinese version however is more universal. Consider the following three examples, one Japanese and two Chinese. In response to western criticism about Japan's regional aspirations, Arita Hachiro, a professional diplomat and a foreign minister in the Hirota, Konoe, Hiranuma, and Yonai Cabinets wrote an article in 1941, when the war was raging, to defend the country's policy:

“Considerable misunderstanding seems to have arisen abroad regarding Japan's project for the creation of a sphere of common prosperity in East Asia. It is generally charged that Japan has suddenly seized upon this plan as a means of establishing her exclusive control over East Asia and that within this sphere Japan alone shall enjoy all benefits by virtue of monopoly. The idea of spheres of common prosperity, however, is not a Japanese invention. Nor is it an expedient by which Japan aspired to monopolize this part of the world to the exclusion of all others.....The present form which this historical process is assuming in East Asia is something *devoid of national selfishness, aiming as it does at the universal welfare of East Asia* and ultimately at bringing the movement into accord with the spirit of universal brotherhood... (emphasis added).”³⁹⁷

Arita continued to explain the Greater East Asia Sphere as a *bloc* that was not exclusive in nature but rather conducive for human beings' progress:

“One of the common misunderstandings regarding the establishment of such *blocs* is that they are exclusive in nature. But it is utterly impossible to build a number of smaller worlds within the world.....the establishment of *blocs* is the stage or method through which war is to be done away with and peace maintained, thereby assuring *the advancement of world civilization and culture in general*. Freed from economic

³⁹⁷ Joyce C. Lebra, 1975, pp. 73-77, specifically pp.73-74.

pressure by other nations, the *blocs* will be able to develop economically, and, as they progress, they will naturally come into closer economic and cultural relationships with other *blocs*, thus making possible universal advancement in the economic and cultural fields.....the blocs system as proposed by Japan for East Asia certainly *promises greater security, because it proposes not competition, but co-prosperity and co-existence.....*It is a step forward for world peace by abolishing those grave economic disparities which have so often been the source of conflict.³⁹⁸

In defending its overseas activities, China similarly stresses inclusion, cooperation, and co-existence. It also draws a connection between its policies and progression for mankind. The difference is that “Greater East Asia” is a bloc with limited geographical scope compared to China’s globalized view of “Asia-Pacific.” Consider the narratives from two different speeches given by Chinese officials. The first one is about the concept of “Asia-Pacific Security” which the PRC has propagated internationally. Based on the analysis in chapter 5, “Asia-Pacific” is defined as a region but the discursive content makes the term a quasi-world. This article contains the basic parameters laid out in chapter 5 that are used to decide the geographical scope of the term. The second speech addresses a general world audience and is representative of a large pool of public speeches on an international level.

In a 2016 international seminar in Beijing about security arrangements in Asia-Pacific, the PRC’s vice foreign minister Liu Zhenmin first described the changing balance of power in the region and then argued for a place in the region with no intention of excluding anyone. The

³⁹⁸ Emphasis added except for blocs. See Joyce C. Lebra, 1975, pp. 77.

speech was given in the context that mankind has historically searched for “common security” and peace and China’s proposal is conducive to this goal:

“China and other developing countries are growing stronger and playing an even more constructive role in regional and international affairs. We need reasonable development space, an appropriate say in the world, and a new regional security structure that is reflective of the reality of the region, consistent with the interests and needs of various parties and acceptable to all.”

“Both important members of the Asia Pacific, China and the US shoulder great responsibilities for peace and prosperity in the region. The two countries are building a new model of major-country relations featuring no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. This is in line with the common expectation and aspirations of the countries in the region as well as the fundamental interests of themselves. The two sides need to develop a correct understanding of each other’s strategic intention. China does not want to be the predominant power in the Asia Pacific, or build spheres of influence and military alliance. It has no intention to replace the US or exclude the US from the region.”³⁹⁹

A conciliatory and accommodating tone is also seen in the speech targeting the world audience. In a 2017 China Development Forum hosted by Beijing, foreign minister Wang Yi laid out several principles in itemized manner (marked in bold) followed by explanations which by their nature remain abstract slogans:

³⁹⁹ Liu Zhenmin, “Actively Practice the Asian Security Concept and Jointly Create a New Future of Asia-Pacific Security,” *the PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, July 09, 2016, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1379376.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019.

“pursue peace and cooperation. The type of partnership which China proposes does not target an imagined enemy or any third party. It advocates a win-win approach instead of a zero-sum game approach to state-to-state relations, and stresses the importance of seeking common interests.....**treat each other as equals.** Countries may differ in size, strength and wealth, but all are equal members of the international community. China advocates a partnership which follows the principle of equality of nations, respects all countries’ sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and respects each other’s core interests and major concerns..... **benefits for all.** In the world today, the winner-takes-all approach and seeking self interests to the neglect of others is both obsolete and counterproductive. Those who want absolute security will only find themselves less secure. Those who only care about their own development will eventually run out of steam and lose space of progress. The partnership that China strives for aims to make the pie of common interests bigger through cooperation, so that more fruits of success and common development and prosperity can be shared.”⁴⁰⁰

The intention to change the status quo usually does not get treatment in the Chinese narratives. This differs from the American practice. Consider the two examples, the Monroe Doctrine and Chinese foreign policy statements. After the defeat of Napoleonic France, European politics would continue to be the prime factor influencing how Washington oriented its foreign policies. Russia would take the lead in gathering forces across different European countries to check continental revolutions ignited by the Napoleonic wars. It also made the

⁴⁰⁰ Wang Yi, “Work Together to Build Partnerships and Pursue Peace and Development,” *MOFA*, March 20, 2017, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1448155.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019

restoration of the Spanish monarchy an allied commitment. If efforts could be attempted to unravel the results of the Napoleonic wars, the fate of Latin America might be reversed to become colonies again. In addition, Russia's colonies in Alaska and a small part of northern California for about three decades also made the Americans uneasy. Tsar Alexander's imperial edicts in 1821 regarding maritime resources caused American concerns about freedom of the seas and colonial activities in the Pacific Northwest. Meanwhile, within the US, leading political leaders were debating what the American position should be regarding Greek independence from the Ottoman empire. Against this background of the Russia-invoked specter of European colonization in the neighborhood and the emerging aspiration for the US to be involved in international affairs, the Monroe Doctrine was born in 1823.⁴⁰¹

Washington saw itself as a rising power whose interests the colonizers of the Old World would have to come to recognize while the country remained vulnerable. Within the US, debates were not just about Greek independence but also relations with Latin America. Should it encourage independent states there to adopt republicanism or leave them to be monarchies?⁴⁰² Meanwhile, America's perception of itself as a rising power was also confirmed by the British proposal of a joint statement to deter European intervention in Latin America. Appropriating the British idea, the US president James Monroe unilaterally made the statement when he addressed the Congress.⁴⁰³ Monroe's message reflected the then *de facto* balance of power in the Americas, with the US as a newly emerged stakeholder demanding Europe to recognize Washington's interests in the New World. The president stated:

⁴⁰¹ George Herring, *From colony to superpower U.S. foreign relations since 1776*. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, pp. 151-154.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, pp 160-163.

⁴⁰³ Office of the Historian, "Monroe Doctrine, 1823," *the US Department of State*, <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/monroe>>.

“[T]he occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and the interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by free and independent conditions which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power.”⁴⁰⁴

“With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power, we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But, with the Governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain, we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we had adhered, and shall continue to adhere, *provided no change shall occur, which, in the judgement of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change, on the part of the United States, indispensable to their security* (emphasis added).”⁴⁰⁵

The message recognized Europe’s lingering interests in places which had not yet wrangled themselves out of the colonial yoke, and Europe for the moment could keep them. On the other hand, it emphasized no meddling from the Old World in the newly independent states, for “any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere” would be seen “as

⁴⁰⁴ President’s Annual Message, in *History of Congress*, p. 14, <<https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=041/llac041.db&recNum=4>>, the Library of Congress, accessed July 2020.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

dangerous to our peace and safety.”⁴⁰⁶ In return, Washington promised no interference from its side in European politics. Monroe’s speech was bounded by power reality. As one of the new independent states, the US could not compare to established powers in Europe. The result was a proposition of two spheres of influence in which major actors from each sphere kept a healthy distance from each other so that their individual schemes would go unhampered. The US recognized that a European sphere still extended to parts of the Americas. With a recognition of power realities, the idea of creating a new order different from colonialism, conveyed by the word “their system”, had taken root, albeit geographically limited at the moment.

Monroe made it explicit that the then US position was a product of the time and would not be constrained from changes once circumstances shifted. Washington was neutral in the independence wars of the Latin American countries and would remain so, provided conditions did not alter to endanger the security of the United States. Monroe did not shut off the option that the US might in the future intervene in the affairs between Latin America and Europe, leaving the matter to the judgement of future governments. Meanwhile, the speech reveals an optimism that Europe in the long run would not win the game. “If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them.”⁴⁰⁷ The non-intervention and non-colonization principles laid out in the speech were thus subject to conditions and specific to the relations between independent parts of Americas and Europe.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 21.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 23.

As a lesser power working its way to become a great power, the US laid out conditions for its behavior and the justifying logic for the principle could be falsified once circumstances shifted. Even though it remained a weaker state compared to European powers, the US made its strategic calculations clear. The Monroe Doctrine provided a clear picture of the American perception of the world balance of power and indicated that once the US interests were not served, non-intervention in Latin America might not be the guiding principle anymore. As Washington consolidated its gains in the Western Hemisphere, Roosevelt then directly stated that intervention embodied the fulfillment of American duties to make its southern neighbors civilized and to keep Europe away. There was a greater degree of match between words and behavior. Despite the fact that compared to European power, the US remained a weaker state when the Doctrine was announced, it already made its strategic calculations and intentions clear. The Doctrine, therefore, provides a stronger piece of evidence to Washington's strategic transparency compared to the Corollary.

China however does not express the intention and conditions for its desired changes in status quo. For instance, official narratives for public consumption do not justify military bases by admitting changes in strategic circumstances. Instead, as chapter 6 demonstrates, the PRC uses "logistics support facility" to create discursive ambiguity to avoid the accusation of violating its own principle. Official explanations also adhere to purely technical and practical needs. Compared to the US, strategic reactions to world politics are not readily detected in official Chinese narratives; they do not indicate that military bases form an attempt to address China's perceived imbalance of power. In addition, the PRC did not actually spell out the conditions for the non-military base principle during the years when it propagated its defensive strategic culture by using the possession of zero military bases as an example. Having a base in

Djibouti was not publicly admitted until it became a done deal and infrastructure construction was underway. The PRC justifies the move as keeping the region safe for its own and others' economic activities. It uses an altruistic motive to appeal to the international audience. Relying on the innately good qualities of the self to explain policy decisions sends a message that whatever it does, it is always good. In the case of the US, principles are falsifiable whereas the Chinese principles are not because they do not contain specific conditions and their functioning depends on the inherent goodness of a government that claims to always behave right.

Contrary to the American strategic clarity, China denies its strategic intention. From Monroe Doctrine to Roosevelt Corollary, Washington did not pretend generosity in tolerating European interference. The Western Hemisphere was not big enough to have more than one major resident power. However, for China, “the Pacific Ocean is broad enough to accommodate the development of both China and the United States.”⁴⁰⁸ The background of this statement is island building and militarization of the South China Sea. From a Chinese perspective, its words and behavior are not in contradiction. The 2016 talk by Dai Bingguo at an event co-hosted by the US Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and China's Renmin University provides an example of how the narratives reconcile the gaps between words and deeds.

Dai once was a state councilor and deputy minister of foreign affairs. He had already retired from government service when he gave the talk about the South China Sea in Washington D.C. However, his speech was publicized on the website of the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What Dai said is representative of a large pool of speeches by Chinese leaders and

⁴⁰⁸ See “Remarks by President Obama and President Xi Jinping in Joint Press Conference,” *the White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, Nov. 1, 2014, <<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/12/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-jinping-joint-press-conference>> accessed March 4, 2020. The expression has been used in the past few years. Because of translation issues, sometimes broad is replaced by big or vast and “development of both” is omitted. Both English news with and without origins in China have reported the use of the expression by Chinese president Xi.

officials and publicly available essays in terms of how China frames the SCS issue. Dai expressed a need for “the US heavy-handed intervention in the South China Sea issue” to “be scaled back” because “there is deep concern about the US continued reinforcement of its military alliances in the Asia-Pacific and forward deployment of its military assets.” Opposed to the American image of a troublemaker is the conciliatory role of China, which is “committed to peaceful resolution.” Dai further shaped the role of China as non-strategic, non-competitive and simply an innocuous actor who tries to provide the best for its people. Consider this paragraph:

“It would be nothing but baseless speculation to assert that China wants to make the South China Sea an Asian Caribbean Sea and impose the Monroe Doctrine to exclude the US from Asia or that China is trying to compete with the US for dominance in the South China Sea, Asia and even the world. Unlike traditional western powers, China, an oriental civilization that goes back five thousand years, has distinctive culture, values, political thinking and view of the world. For China, the South China Sea issue is all about territorial sovereignty, security, development and maritime rights and interests. It is all about preventing further tragic losses of territory. China's thinking is as simple as that. And there is no other agenda behind it. We have no intention or capability to engage in “strategic rivalry” with anyone. We have no ambition to rule Asia, still less the Earth. Even in the context of the issue in question, we have never claimed we own the entire South China Sea. We only have one ambition, which is to manage our own affairs well and ensure a decent life and dignity for the nearly 1.4 billion Chinese people. China's right to rise peacefully and deliver a better life for its people should not

and will not be taken away by anyone.”⁴⁰⁹

According to Dai, China’s motives are simple, non-strategic and non-exclusive; it does not aim to dispel American influence. This Chinese uniqueness is discursively tied to traditional culture which in practice is claimed to be inherently inclusive. Dai tried to prove Chinese inclusiveness by saying that China “never claimed we own the entire SCS.” However, the historical nine dash lines that it uses for position defense basically is the SCS itself. The former diplomat’s statement to deny Chinese ambition is as effective as the attempt to gloss over the fact that the PRC has a military base by naming it a “logistical support facility.” Nevertheless, Chinese leaders and officials hold a firm belief in their idealistic motives.

Another example is a 2016 *Qiushi* article penned by a professor from Beijing University. The author rebutted foreign commentary that China’s proposal of “the concept of Asian security” amounts to “an Asian version of the Monroe Doctrine.”⁴¹⁰ One of the reasons this professor cites to explain the differences between the American policy in the Western Hemisphere and China’s policy toward Asia is along the line of Beijing’s inclusion versus Washington’s pursuit of “self-interests and hegemonic practices” in the Americas. The article characterizes the Doctrine as “unfair and outdated,” and as the evidence for the US seeking “a dominant status in the Americas.” It continues that, “on the contrary, the concept of Asian security fits the trends of the time in terms of peace, development, cooperation and win-win [situation].” To highlight Chinese inclusiveness, the author lists several examples of its cooperativeness since the 1990s with Asian countries on traditional and non-traditional security issues including the South China Sea.

⁴⁰⁹ “Speech by Dai Bingguo at China-US Dialogue on South China Sea Between Chinese and US Think Tanks,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, July 05, 2016, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1377747.shtml> accessed Jan. 05, 2019

⁴¹⁰ Zhai Kun [翟崑], “The Concept of Asian Security Is Not An Asian Version of the Monroe Doctrine” [亚洲安全观并非“亚洲版门罗主义”], *Qiushi*, issue 2, 2016.

According to the author, “in the security field, the American alliance system can hardly cover the entire Asia and lacks inclusiveness.” China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Asian Investment Bank and Silk Road Fund are parts of efforts to “reform international order and system,” and “such reform is not to build a brand new order but rather to innovate and to improve [the current order].” In other words, unlike Washington’s strategic calculations for self-interest, China’s concept of Asian security does not mean exclusion and it takes others’ interests to heart. In conclusion, by taking a moral high ground, the author lays out principles for major and smaller states to follow in their foreign policies: “relevant major states should abandon the pursuit of absolute security, respect smaller countries’ security needs and should not practice hegemonism and bully lesser states. Smaller countries should exert self-restraint and should not intentionally infringe on and provoke major states’ legitimate security interests.” In the context of Beijing raising this point, it is using an indirect way to say that regional lesser states should not provoke China because it has every right to do what it deems necessary and since the PRC never practices power politics, what it does is right and good for others. Such logic well accepted in China’s political culture may raise eyebrows for those educated with different sets of behavioral values.

China and the US share one similarity in that the ideational basis used to run domestic affairs applies to foreign policy as well. In the case of the U.S., it was racist logics. Variants of racism that spin around the idea that peoples of color are born to be inferior facilitated continental expansion and contributed to the compromised results of turning overseas territories into protectorates, instead of federal states. This domestic-foreign linkage is evident in the Chinese discourse of inclusiveness. The logic goes that, due to the inclusive Chinese culture, a multi-ethnic Chinese nation has been a unified whole since ancient times and the PRC will carry this idea of unity with diversity to international governance. This continuity from the past to the

present and from domestic to foreign however results from cosmetic changes made to the history. One example is Chinese textbooks.

In the formative years of the Chinese Communist Party, it was the party's policy to support the independence of ethnic territories.⁴¹¹ After it became the ruling party in 1949, the CCP's position shifted and reverted to the imperialist view. The PRC invaded Xinjiang at the end of 1949 and Tibet in 1950. After territorial annexation, it did not immediately build narratives that incorporate non-Han peoples to the Chinese self. The 1954 constitution already embraced the idea that China is a multi-ethnic state, but the high school textbooks remained Han-centric. In describing the historical relations between the Chinese dynasties and non-Chinese political entities, non-Hans often carry negative representation as “enemies”, “pillaging” and “destroying” the Chinese homeland, whereas Hans were “patriots”, “defending the motherland”. Basically, “China” and “Chinese” during Mao's era, in comparison to textbooks from the 1980s onwards, still closely referred to the territory where the Han lived.⁴¹²

Changes would come after Mao's death. The receding ideological zeal requires other means to hold the country together. The growing ethnonationalism during the 1980s and 1990s also provided motives to stress inclusiveness. Inter-ethnic wars and conflicts in the continental history now are downplayed as “a quarrel between brothers, and a scuffle in the family.” “Invasion” by non-Hans is replaced by “expedition”, in a 2003 textbook for instance. Words such as “slaughters”, “plunders”, and “cruel” ceased to be the labels of the non-Hans, with some exceptions. In contrast to previous practice, non-Han peoples such as Mongols now receive

⁴¹¹ Odd Arne Westad. *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

⁴¹² Nimrod Baranovich, “Others No More: The Changing Representation of Non-Han Peoples in Chinese History Textbooks, 1951-2003,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 69, no. 1, 2010, pp. 85-122.

positive appraisals for their contributions to China's development. "China" and "the Chinese" in the new narratives extend to the territories and the peoples, Han and non-Han alike, that the PRC rules. The underlying rationale is that the past will be understood according to the current political needs of the Communist Party.⁴¹³

While it is problematic to form discourse by othering non-Hans, it is similarly erroneous to remove the Other by seeing them as part of the Chinese self. The new discourse rewrites the non-harmonious past and creates a false consciousness of binding community "since antiquity." Neither does it adequately address the inter-ethnic conflicts in the territories now under the PRC control. This process of forming national identity is a political one. A multiethnic Chinese identity is not based on the reality that peoples are willing to live together under the same institutions. It is the result of the Communist Party's attempts to create the reality to fit its governing needs.

Chinese repression of the non-Chinese population has its latest example in Xinjiang. Each year, from 2011 to 2016, saw the number of new buildings below 4. In 2017, it spiked to 15 and dropped to 10 in 2018. These buildings are security facilities equipped with barbed wire, cameras and check points. There are an estimated one million Muslim Uyghurs imprisoned in these facilities. Chinese authorities also send Kazaks for "re-education" in this large-scale round-up. Reportedly, the prisoners are forced labor and work in the factories that supply manufactured goods worldwide including clothing and shoes. According to witnesses' testimonies, these people experience physical and psychological torture. They are taught Chinese songs that praise the CCP and Xi Jinping. Outside the concentration camps, Muslims are forced to eat pork and

⁴¹³ Ibid.

drink liquor. Attending religious activities and reading the Quran are forbidden.⁴¹⁴ Chinese authorities deny ethnic cleansing and insist that these facilities are “vocational training centers.”

To show that it is on the right side, the Chinese government argues that while 23 countries representing a population of 600 million question China’s Xinjiang policy in the UN, more than 30 countries with 3 billion people support China.⁴¹⁵ It further defends the policy on the ground of correcting thought to prevent the spread of “terrorism, separatism, and extremism.”

Under the “Pairing up” policy, the government sent 1 million civilians, with most of them Han Chinese, to live in the Uyghur households and other Muslims’ homes to monitor their daily life and educate them with scheduled Chinese choreography, red songs and Xi’s “New China” vision. These strange people suddenly become “relatives” to the Muslim families. The purpose throughout the stay is to observe whether Muslims are “extremists” and whether they show a decent amount of loyalty to the Chinese leader and government. Observing the fast during

⁴¹⁴ John Sudworth, “China’s Hidden Camps: What’s Happened to the Vanished Uighurs of Xinjiang?” *BBC*, Oct. 24, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps>; Chris Buckley and Austin Ramzy, “China’s Detention Camps for Muslims Turn to Forced Labor”, *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 2018, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/16/world/asia/xinjiang-china-forced-labor-camps-uyghurs.html>>; Reid Standish, “China’s expanding war on Islam: Now they’re coming for the Kazakhs”, *Washington Post*, March 01, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/chinas-expanding-war-on-islam-now-theyre-coming-for-the-kazakhs/2019/03/01/16ebbe76-38ff-11e9-a2cd-307b06d0257b_story.html>; Anna Fifield, “Nike to review supply chains in China after reports Uighurs forced to make shoes,” *Washington Post*, March 11, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/nike-to-review-supply-chains-in-china-after-reports-uyghurs-forced-to-make-shoes/2020/03/11/6137df9e-6380-11ea-912d-d98032ec8e25_story.html>; Reuters News Agency, “China bans Muslim children from Quran classes,” *Al Jazeera*, Jan. 17, 2018, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/china-county-bans-muslim-children-religious-events-180117123448774.html>>; Qiao Long and Wong Lok-to, “Chinese Police Order Xinjiang’s Muslims to Hand in All Copies of The Quran,” *Radio Free Asia*, Sept. 27, 2017, <<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/chinese-police-order-xinjiangs-muslims-to-hand-in-all-copies-of-the-quran-09272017113203.html>>; Jon Sharman, “China ‘forcing Muslims to eat pork and drink alcohol’ for lunar new year festival,” *Independent*, Feb. 07, 2019, <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-muslims-xinjiang-pork-alcohol-lunar-new-year-spring-festival-uyghur-islam-a8767561.html>>; Sophia Yan, “China’s Uighur Muslims forced to eat and drink as Ramadan celebrations banned,” *The Telegraph*, Jun, 01, 2019, <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/01/chinas-uyghur-muslims-forced-eat-drink-ramadan-celebrations/>>.

⁴¹⁵ See the televised interview of Chinese envoy to Australia with Australia’s ABC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2_e0Dvz5U>.

Ramadan and Islamic long dress are signs of “extremism.” Family members will be questioned about the whereabouts of their relatives and whether they know Arabic or Turkish. To test whether the Muslim population’s Chineseness is genuine, these “relatives” will provide cigarettes or beer to see if anyone takes it. Another strategy is to buy fresh ground meat to make dumplings to probe if anyone asks what kind of meat it is. Muslim households in the list of visits include those whose extended family members have been sent to the concentration camps.⁴¹⁶ The Chinese government readily admits that 1.1 million “civil servants” are involved in this “assistance program” to improve ethnic unity. Domestic reports are infused with familial closeness and mutual help when describing the interaction between Chinese “relatives” and their Muslim strangers.⁴¹⁷

When it comes to the relationships between the PRC and other countries, and the relationships between the CCP and its own people, Beijing’s narratives are constructed in a way that is devoid of strategic calculations and suppresses mention of power relations. They do not describe the Chinese government in a way that would create the impression that it is constantly practicing and aware of realpolitik. Instead, they portray an unrealistically idealistic picture in which the CCP and the Chinese nation are innately peaceful. “The logic that rising powers always seek to dominate does not apply to China, as such action is not in China’s ‘genes.’ In a bid to prevent history from repeating itself, China’s rise has followed a distinctly Chinese path of

⁴¹⁶ Darren Byler, “Government Has Ordered a Million Citizens to Occupy Uighur Homes. Here’s What They Think They’re Doing,” *China File*, Oct. 24, 2018. <<https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/postcard/million-citizens-occupy-ughur-homes-xinjiang>> accessed March 3, 2020. Byler’s report is based on his field research and interviews with local people.

⁴¹⁷ For instance, see Yang Mingfang, Li Yanan, and Ardaka [杨明方 李亚楠 阿尔达克], “A Million of the Party Staff and Workers Pair Up with Peoples of Different Ethnicities in Xinjiang” [新疆百万干部职工与各族群众结对认亲], *China Daily*, Nov. 07, 2018 <gongyi.people.com.cn/n1/2018/1107/c151132-30386143.html> accessed April 26, 2019.

peaceful development.”⁴¹⁸ This ultra-idealism makes non-Chinese Chinese by discursively creating a façade of domestic inclusiveness. It is also used to influence and persuade the international audience not to resist its foreign policies as they mean no harm, by providing a cover for outward expansion that is strategic in correspondence to the PRC’s assessments of the world balance of power.

Deeds of concealed realism nevertheless do not preclude the concurrence of a belief that the self-behavior is altruistically inclusive and morally right. The Chinese texts that are full of idealistic principles of inclusion and are made to contain no assessments of situational conditions required for strategic calculations that go beyond rhetorical cover. It reflects a conviction in the self occupying the moral high ground. This differs from the American idealism that similarly relies on statements like “make the world a peaceful place and correct the wrongs that are done,” but is based on racist differentiations. This statement also applies to Japan’s case and since Japan used similar inclusive and altruistic narratives as China does, Japanese idealism was closer to the Chinese version. However, to gauge the extent of one’s ultra-defensiveness, a discursive comparison needs to be understood in a larger context of a country’s history. China’s politics of authoritarian inclusion is an institutionalized culture with its seeds planted in pre-modern times, and its practices have been relatively constant since then. Japan’s domestic conditions and its short-lived bid for hegemony provided no persistent imperatives to form a discourse that reflects the Chinese degree. Tokyo’s imperialism from the perspective of discursive rationalization was diminutive compared to the scale of Beijing’s model.

⁴¹⁸ Xu Weixin, “The Newest Developments in Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,” English *Qiushi*, vol.7, no. 3, 2015, pp. 46. English translation original.

The American case is a different variant. It was criticized for its blatant use of force and intervention through various excuses. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether Washington produced a consistent and systematically constructed discourse with its roots allegedly planted in an uninterrupted American civilization. It is also questionable whether the same set of narratives has been applied throughout its past, as the US is a democracy and thus its justifications have not been consistent. What turned out to be relatively constant was racism, but racial logic did not always have positive correlations with expansion and in some cases it went against expansion. The difficulty of finding a pattern in Washington's discursive justification, except for a general statement that it used rhetoric for cover-ups, has to do with its democratic polity. The PRC, on the contrary, not only has a single ruling party but also a long-term tradition of appropriating inclusive ideology, which conditions the entrenchment of its belief in the moral authoritativeness of the self; "we are selflessly inclusive in the past, at the present and will be in the future."

EPILOGUE

To leave the rebirth cycle, the *Heart Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra* teach Buddhist disciples to discharge any masks (不著相) they may take on to execute any agendas arising from greed, hatred, delusion and ignorance, for the Buddhahood each sentient being originally possess does not have any of these attachments. Buddha's compassion does not stem from these emotions that give rise to karma which sentient beings carry over to their next life. A Buddhist disciple is constantly reminded that the purpose of one's life is to practice the ultimate peace of mind.

In a conversation between two monks and Master Huineng, the Sixth Successor of Chan (or the Sixth Patriarch of Zen), about the flying banner in the wind. One monk said that the banner is moving and the other argued that it is the wind that makes it move. Master Huineng then replied, "the banner does not move. Neither does the wind. It is your mind which gets agitated."

Before the passing away of Master Shen Yan, he left four verses. "Aging in the middle of hustle and bustle but carry no sense of burden. Crying and laughing are transient for their nature are attachments. 'I' do not exist in the first place and therefore there is nothing that cannot be left behind" (無事忙中老，空裡有哭笑，本來沒有我，一切皆可拋).

Shakyamuni Buddha incarnated in the form of a human being to preach for forty-nine years, but the Buddha told the disciples that whoever says I preach, it is a defamation of Buddha for it does not wear any mask for any purpose. It is as it is (如是); nothing comes and nothing has gone.

The Buddha transforms into human beings with different identities to show people ways out of suffering as sentient beings carry different karmas and thus they need different guidance. The Buddha does not have any attachments before and after this is done.

For those whose minds are agitated and their motives are sweet words coated, with themselves taking genuine unsettled minds and motives, they wear multiple masks. As they proselytize to recruit followers, they have taken the opposite side to Buddhahood.

However the narratives are constructed and whether they are more inclusive or not, from Mao's period until today, they are all about the PRC itself. They reflect China's perceptions of how other major powers treat it, its responses to foreign criticism, and how it will reshape an international order to address its perceived injustice and inequality in the current world politics that is not conducive to the fulfillment of its interests. Other actors, including those who have

role congruence with the PRC and those who are (potential) enemies, play auxiliary roles to contrast with and to highlight Chinese uniqueness that, according to Beijing, bears the characteristic of genetical goodness. Such benevolence is further claimed to have a realization in China's socialist institutions and sinicized Marxism-influenced Chinese culture. Chinese narratives cannot be taken as a mere reflection of a sense of insecurity and vulnerability. Each addition of discursive thread to the growing sophistication of connections among different logical nodes also shores up the ruling group's confidence. The created discourse can work both ways to project a desired persuasive effect, to the target audiences and to those who authorize and design the narratives. The pursuit of self-interest is disguised with idealism. However, from the PRC's perspective, it believes itself to be the true upholder of the moral high ground. The wider the gap is between China's beliefs and what others understand, the more likelihood there will be for future conflicts with other countries. The root cause of conflicts as such is not misunderstanding, but rather structural. Views and perspectives can be systematically formed. Clashes of worldviews can give rise to conflicts.

The Chinese narratives at different stages exhibit a similar pattern. They constantly supply domestic audiences with the idea that the country *will be* great. During the 1990s and entering the 21st century, this future national greatness also hinges on Chinese influence and activities abroad. To facilitate its outward expansion, Beijing disseminates similar ideas to both domestic and international audiences that China is on the right path and will be a better contributor to the world compared to what the institutions in other major states have brought to domestic and international development. The prospects for future gains define Chinese nationalism. This type of nationalism is built upon material strength and its accompanying cultural and political influence. When nationalism is not merely about building a modern state, but also depends on

outward expansion, the lines between state and empire, between nationalism and imperialism are blurred. This is evidenced by China's annexation of Central Asian territories at the end of 1940s and the early 1950s and its current global activities that are justified through the rhetoric of bringing prosperity to all human beings. The blurred differentiation is further evidenced by the PRC creating a belief that the territories in the first island chain are indispensable to its access to foreign markets and to the territories that will be used for economic and military purposes.

The second pyramid discussed in chapter 3 that describes the Chinese belief system posits China's institutions at the top of the triangle to form reciprocal relations with the future of the world and the future of the PRC's domestic development. Although this triangle emerges in the context of Beijing's advocacy for a multi-polar world, judging by the PRC's past practices of proposing a preferred order according to its evaluations of the then world dynamics, multipolarity may be more a strategic expediency than a formula China will adopt permanently. The pyramid thus needs to be seen on a global scale, instead of a limited geographical scope where China claims itself to be a pole. With that said, deception and a genuine belief in one's words can coexist. It is the latter that supports Beijing's expansion.

The second triangle along with the narratives in the defense white papers confirm that the country prefers to achieve its political goals during peacetime. The relations between domestic development and the future of the world are mediated by material strength. Accordingly, a lack of a major war is conducive to China's overseas activities which in turn contribute to material accumulation. Beijing further justifies that its domestic solvency will contribute to the world. These mutually reinforcing linkages in the Chinese belief system also appear in the military writings. Through a re-conceptualization of the world's geopolitics, China's geostrategy that perceives itself at the center covers an expansive geography of Eurasia and the Indian and the

Pacific Oceans in a way that marginalizes the Atlantic and Western Europe. It is within this scope that military and non-military activities take place in attempts to realize the expected/claimed reciprocal connections between domestic development and the future of the world, and to realize the second pyramid as well.

The PRC characterizes its outward expansion as non-expansive and non-hegemonic because it does not rely on the use of force and war as previous powers did. The narratives trace this quality to the genetical goodness of the Chinese polity and the Chinese nation. This biological explanation conceals strategic calculations. The preference of realizing political goals during peacetime results from China's assessments of the post-Cold War climate. This means that the PRC's foreign policies are tailored according to conditions and it does not avoid war. When it perceives that situations allow it to advance its interests, the country may also actively pursue a war solution. In addition, the globetrotting during peacetime, as indicated by its military and non-military narratives, also aims to prepare for war once non-use-of-force measures fail. It is trying to make a possible future war easier. Narratives for the public attention rarely dissent these strategic motives. Meanwhile, the hiding of strategic calculations does not mean a Chinese disbelief in their constructed idealism. Writings for non-public consumption still incorporate idealistic reasonings for self-rationalization. It is an institutionalized culture of self-justification in display. Chinese idealism, which is predicated on the inherent good nature of the self and functions on a global scale to serve strategic purposes, bears the characteristics of unfalsifiable ultra-defensiveness.

The prospects for gains have driven Chinese behavior and increasing discursive assertiveness. This tendency can be strengthened when the country perceives itself to not be on a strong footing. Tales are woven to convince the self and others that a catastrophe is merely a

mistake, a China problem is someone else's problem, a normal deed can be exaggerated as heroic, and the outcomes of events are framed to be successful under the CCP's leadership. As the PRC shows determination to increase its global influence, these types of narratives also gain salience in its foreign policies. The attempt to reshape global consciousness has its latest example in the crisis of the Wuhan coronavirus. The PRC may be consciously aware of its own manipulation but its belief that such act serves a greater purpose will provide justification. As Beijing selects partial facts and fabricates information to explain the evolution of the event, it also becomes a believer in its own created account.

The coronavirus crisis provides a vivid example of Beijing's conviction in its authoritarian inclusiveness. That its moral authority cannot be questioned has a full display through strategies of denial and distraction to protect the throne. The intense wave of international propaganda to reshape the cognition of the public, with some conducted more diplomatically while many are dubbed as what the pundits call "wolf-warriors diplomacy," aggressive in words and actions with a lack of civility, indicates something at the belief level which supports this fervor. This belief is close to the statement that "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" under the leadership of the CCP is to be realized at the expense of whatever comes into its way; the Chinese polity is to be protected so as to maximize the effects of inclusion shown through the unhampered spread of Chinese influence which is an integral part of a realized revived Chinese nation. The implementation of this imperialist nationalism has collaborators overseas.

The World Health Organization (WHO) presents a curious case for a more systematic analysis in the future. Some preliminary evidence points out positive correlations between Beijing's influence in the past 13 years and an institution-wide approval, on the bureaucratic level, of the PRC's handling of the epidemic that later on became a world pandemic. WHO does not hide the fact that it uses data and information provided by the Chinese government. The curiosity lies in the officials' conviction about Beijing's success and unrestrained praises of China. With limited reliable information and knowledge of this virus, WHO chooses to believe in what it is told. What are the sources of this built-in bias and how institutionalized it is within the organization require a more in-depth examination with field research including interviews with (formal) WHO staff to obtain knowledge of the culture of that institution. The rest of this epilogue presents Beijing's narratives to cope with internal and external pressures, its military activities in the first island chain during the crisis, a contest of will between the PRC and regional countries including the US through military presence, and a discursive co-optation between WHO and China. In using an event that originally was domestic and later on produced political, economic, social and military consequences, in some cases severe, on the international level, this epilogue demonstrates the degree of Beijing's ingrained belief in how an "inclusive" world should/can be realized, that is, do not question the authority of the CCP and recognize the positivity that it brings, and the comprehensive scale of its behavior informed by such conviction in the morality of the self.

Li Wenliang, a Chinese ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital of Hubei Province, sent a text message in December 2019 to fellow doctors warning of a SARS-like virus and urged them to wear protective gear. Four days later, the Public Security Bureau had him sign an

admonition letter which accused him of “making false statements,” “severely violating social order” and “violating the law.”⁴¹⁹

On the last day of December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued a news release stating that “investigation so far has not found any cases of human transmission.....Pneumonia usually appears in the winter and spring. It can spread or become epidemic (or pandemic). The symptoms include fever, body sores, breathing difficulties in some cases..... this disease can be prevented and can be controlled.”⁴²⁰

On January 5, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a disease outbreak statement to explain the situation in China and to provide suggestions. It stated, “As of 3 January 2020, a total of 44 patients with pneumonia of unknown etiology have been reported to WHO by the national authorities in China.” It continues to use the information provided by the Chinese authorities for further details about the symptoms of these patients and their business affiliations with Wuhan markets. It concludes the beginning section in this way: “Based on the preliminary information from the Chinese investigation team, no evidence of significant human-to-human transmission and no health care worker infections have been reported.” In the section titled *WHO risk assessment*, following the statement that “There is limited information to determine the overall risk of this reported cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology,” it continues to describe the symptoms as being “common to several respiratory diseases” and states that “pneumonia is common in the winter season” before recognizing a need for prudent handling of the 44 cases. It is based on the information provided by the Chinese authorities that WHO “advises against the

⁴¹⁹ BBC, “Li Wenliang: Coronavirus death of Wuhan doctor sparks anger,” Feb. 7, 2020, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51409801>> accessed March 17, 2020.

⁴²⁰ Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, “The Report From Wuhan Municipal Health Commission Concerning the Situation of the Coronavirus” [武汉市卫健委关于当前我市肺炎疫情的情况通报], Dec. 31, 2019, <<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2019123108989>> accessed March 17, 2020.

application of any travel or trade restrictions on China based on the current information available on this event.”⁴²¹

On January 10, 2020, Li started to develop the symptoms of Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19 or novel coronavirus). Not until twenty days later was he diagnosed with the disease. The confirmation of his case came in the middle of the Lunar New Year that is celebrated by several East Asian countries including Vietnam. He eventually passed away in the beginning days of February.⁴²²

At the end of January, the territories under the PRC’s control had all reported confirmed cases. Several countries had either repatriated their citizens or planned to do so. Governments worldwide also implemented various travel bans and restrictions to contain the spread of the disease from China to other countries. Not until January 30 did WHO declare coronavirus as a global health emergency or public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC), and it had been against such a decision before.⁴²³ This was after the trip made by Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of WHO, to meet with Chinese president Xi Jinping.

Tedros explained, in a report to the Executive Board of WHO on February 3, that the declaration was based on the evidence of human-to-human transmission outside China and the

⁴²¹ WHO, “Pneumonia of unknown cause – China,” Jan. 05, 2020, <<https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unknown-cause-china/en/>> accessed March 18, 2020.

⁴²² BBC, “Li Wenliang: Coronavirus death of Wuhan doctor sparks anger,” Feb. 7, 2020, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51409801>> accessed March 17, 2020

⁴²³ The definition of PHEIC is as follows. “an extraordinary event which is determined.....to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease; and to potentially require a coordinated international response”. This definition implies a situation that: is serious, unusual or unexpected; carries implications for public health beyond the affected State’s national border; and may require immediate international action.” See WHO, “IHR Procedures concerning public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC)” <<https://www.who.int/ihr/procedures/pheic/en/>> accessed March 18, 2020.

concern about the capabilities of countries with “a weak health system.”⁴²⁴ In the same report, the Director-General also stated that he was “impressed” in his meeting with Xi “at his [Xi’s] detailed knowledge of the outbreak, and for his personal leadership, but also at his commitment” to protect the Chinese people and to prevent the spread of the disease to other countries. He continued to praise China, saying that “if it weren’t for China’s efforts, the number of cases outside China would have been very much higher.”⁴²⁵ He further provided reasons for why travel restrictions are not appropriate. “[T]here is no reason for measures that unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade. We call on all countries to implement decisions that are evidence-based and consistent.”⁴²⁶ In other words, the travel bans implemented by airlines and countries are not, from the WHO perspective, supported by evidence. Meanwhile, WHO’s recommendations were based on incomplete data and with limited knowledge of the sources and the nature of coronavirus. Tedros in the report also praised Chinese endeavors in stopping the spread of the disease. China’s *Xinhua* on the same day also reported Tedros’ statements and understood his words as a “denunciation” of the measures that other countries were taking against China, as the headline shows.⁴²⁷

In a news release from the PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the meeting between WHO’s Director-General and Xi, the report listed Xi’s remarks and Tedros’ comments in a way that shows the consensus from both sides about the endeavors that China had been putting into stopping the spread of the disease. Xi mentioned that China’s dealing with the

⁴²⁴ WHO, “*Report of the Director-General, 146th Meeting of the Executive Board*,” Feb. 03, 2020, <<https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/report-of-the-director-general-146th-meeting-of-the-executive-board>> accessed March 18, 2020.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Xinhua, “WHO chief denounces unnecessary interference with int'l travel, trade during coronavirus outbreak,” Feb. 03, 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-02/03/c_138753418.htm> accessed March 18, 2020.

epidemic was “in a timely, open, transparent and responsible manner, responded to concerns of all sides actively, and enhanced cooperation with the international community” after explaining what the central government had done domestically. The report then provided a list of the Director-General’s praises of China, in a way compatible with and overlapping with what Tedros would later state in the February 3 report to the Executive Board of WHO. Take a few examples of what the report said that Tedros stated in the meeting:

“.....it is admirable that the Chinese government has shown its solid political resolve and taken timely and effective measures in dealing with the epidemic.”

“President Xi’s personal guidance and deployment show his great leadership capability.”

“China has released information in an open and transparent manner, identified the pathogen in a record-short time and shared the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus in a timely manner with the WHO and other countries.”

“China’s measures are not only protecting its people, but also protecting the people in the whole world.”

“Hailing the high speed and massive scale of China’s moves are rarely seen in the world..... it showed China’s efficiency and the advantages of China’s system.”

“The experience of China is worth learning for other countries.”⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs “Xi Jinping meets with visiting World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,” Jan. 29, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1737014.shtml> accessed March 18, 2020.

In the 146th session of the Executive Board of WHO on February 6, under the auspices, announced by the chairperson, of the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Program, Thai representative Dr. Suwit Wibulpolprasert gave a sarcastic statement about WHO's dealings with coronavirus:⁴²⁹

“Chair, WHO advice against travel restrictions on novel coronavirus in China has been violated. This is in contrast to H1N1 2009 pandemic emerged from other part of the world and spread out much faster and killed more. We are definitely double or even triple standard. Chair, if implement travel restrictions and have to quarantine, we have to quarantine the DG [Director-General] who just came back from China, and cancel this EB [Executive Board]. Many people here including those from the countries that implement travel restrictions shake hands and even hug Dr. Tedros. They are all vulnerable except me. Dr. Tedros decline to hug or shake hands with me in the last 3 or 4 days. Particularly you, Chair, who sits next to him all the time, would be the most vulnerable. Chair, we need to bring back global confidence, solidarity and stop the panic immediately. To achieve that, I would like to propose to the DG through you, Chair. To immediately convene a global meeting of WHO staff and experts in China, especially in Wuhan. We can all appreciate the most charming Yellow Crane Tower, built almost 2000 years ago, with very few tourists. If convenes in Beijing, it would be the best time to visit the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, without too many tourists and at low costs. Chair, with my wife's permission, I am happy to pay half of my annual

⁴²⁹ For the video, see WHO, the 146th session of the Executive Board, the session of public health emergencies; preparedness and response, <<https://www.who.int/about/governance/executive-board/executive-board-146th-session>> accessed March 19, 2020.

pension to support this meeting and join in with my own expense. Thank you, Chair.”

The Thai representative’s humor made others laugh as he proceeded. Once he finished his remarks, he was applauded from the floor and thanked twice by the chairperson.

Amid the mounting death toll and cases of infection in the PRC, a video included in a news report posted by New Tang Dynasty Television shows that a man in Wuhan, perhaps a patient’s family member, shouted at the doctors, saying that “I do not want to talk with you about this. How come there is no oxygen? People are dying. The television channels reported that everything is fine.” Another woman then continued to say, “they say they have been helping everyday, but actually they have not. They say new rooms are opened, but in fact there is no such thing. I saw someone died in front of the door yesterday. It is real.”⁴³⁰

To cope with the crisis, China announced that it would build new “hospitals” in late January. Within two weeks, two “hospitals,” Mount Fire God (Houshenshan) and Mount Thunder God (Leishenshan), were completed and started to receive patients in early February. The interior designs and the lives of patients are unknown. News reports show that the hospital looks more like a warehouse, with individual beds only partially separated. It remains an open-air setting where treatment of patients and control of the disease can be called into question. Some news reported two beds in one room with locks outside the door.⁴³¹ Chinese official media, however, presented a different picture: patients wearing masks were square dancing to inject

⁴³⁰ See New Tang Dynasty, “People of Wuhan Risk Their Life in Disclosing the Situation of Coronavirus in Wuhan and Ask for International Help” [武漢人冒風險講述武漢疫情的真實情況 向國際社會求助], *Youtube*, Jan 28, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh0HumVqoBs>> accessed March 19, 2020.

⁴³¹ Keoni Everington, “Video shows interior of new Wuhan ‘hospital’ resembles prison”, *Taiwan News*, Feb. 04, 2020, <<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3870468>>.

positivity amid the crisis.⁴³²

Due to the lack of medical treatment and support in the middle of the collapsing medical system, a woman from Wuhan in a video vented her frustration at the helpless situation that her sick family members were faced with, “.....money cannot get you medicine. Money cannot get you a bed in the hospital.....corrupt regime, evil society, no one has freedom of speech.....A yard-full of people have crowded the hospital. There are no beds. There is no medicine. The news from CCTV are all fake, all of them!”⁴³³

Tedros’s applause of China did not come without being questioned. During a press conference on February 12, a reporter from Euro News asked WHO whether “effusive praise” given to Beijing was due to a Chinese request to save face.⁴³⁴ Tedros replied that many WHO colleagues, including himself, Mike Ryan, Sylvie Briand and Maria van Kerkhove all agree that what China was doing should be recognized. In his two-page answer, Tedros used “truth” 13 times to emphasize that it is the truth that China has been doing praiseworthy things and the Chinese president was showing leadership. “We have met the President, we have seen the level of knowledge he has on the outbreak. We saw first-hand that he is leading the outbreak directly and you know we always ask for political commitment, political leadership. That’s what we have seen so don’t you appreciate that kind of leadership that’s really committed? Again the truth.” In

⁴³² Sara Zheng, “Wuhan’s Dancing Coronavirus Patients Provide Moment of Light Relief for Chinese Looking to Keep Their Spirits Up,” *South China Morning Post*, Feb. 11, 2020<<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3050024/wuhans-dancing-coronavirus-patients-provide-moment-light-relief>>; Youtube, “From Square Dancing to Xinjiang Dancing in the Make-shift Hospitals of Wuhan” [武汉方舱医院的广场舞改跳新疆舞了], Feb. 13, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05BDpw3FShk>>.

⁴³³ CCTV refers to China Central Television, a state media. See YouTube, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49YuHR1XFDk>> accessed March 19, 2020.

⁴³⁴ WHO, “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) 12 February 2020 Press Conference,” <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/transcripts/who-audio-emergencies-coronavirus-full-press-conference-12feb2020-final.pdf?sfvrsn=ef1ba2bf_2> accessed March 18, 2020.

a video showing the press conference between Tedros and Xi when they met, which CGTN (China Global Television Network), a Chinese state-owned English language news channel, uploaded to YouTube, a line from Xi Jinping goes, “This time, I have been personally directing and deploying (resources)” regarding the work of the prevention and control of the disease.⁴³⁵

The Director-General also brought in member states to strengthen his view that what the PRC was doing was witnessed and agreed by many. “...[A]lmost all member states were praising China for what it did and they had a reason. The reason others were saying, many countries were saying was, China took action massively at the epicenter, at the source of the outbreak - the shutdown of Wuhan City - and that helped in preventing cases from being exported to other provinces in China and the rest of the world.” He also added that “China is doing many good things that are slowing the virus and the facts speak for themselves and this has to be recognized. The whole world is seeing this.....So let the truth speak for itself and the world can judge.”

Tedros denied that China demanded to be praised and insisted that what the WHO delegation said and saw were the truth. “China doesn’t need to ask to be praised and I don’t expect any country asks to be praised. It was not, it is not. That’s the truth, the whole truth and with my colleagues we speak the same language because we have seen these concrete things that should be appreciated.” Despite sweeping statements, it is unclear what the WHO delegation saw and how the information and situation were presented to them.

The demise of the stricken ophthalmologist Dr. Li Wenliang set off a public outcry to demand freedom of speech and to condemn the government for hiding the spread of the disease.

⁴³⁵ CGTN, “President Xi Jinping: We will definitely overcome this disease,” *YouTube*, Jan. 28, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DiiY8a6xMg>>.

Perhaps in an attempt to assuage the public fury, and in keeping with the CCP's long-term practice of making propaganda out of people's misery, the National Health Commission (NHC) issued an official decision on March 5 to grant 506 individuals and 113 medical teams and hospitals the titles of "Progressive Individual" (先进个人) and "Progressive Group" (先进集体) respectively in the work of preventing and controlling the spread of the novel coronavirus. The list of individuals would come to include deceased Li Wenliang. The decision frames the issue in a politicized way:

Since the occurrence of the new coronavirus, the staff and workers of the nationwide health system have resolutely implemented the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important directives and the policy of the Party. Carrying the lofty mission of safeguarding people's life, security and health, they have displayed fearless spirit. Treacherous situations only motivate them more to step out and work in the frontline to compete with time and the devil of the disease to save patients' lives.....[They] have created medical miracles.....Some of them abandon everything, overcome family difficulties and disregard the self's unwellness to race to Hubei.....Some of them resolutely stand in the frontline to save patients' lives days and nights regardless of danger..... Right now, the prevention and control of the disease enters a crucial stage, health departments of different bureaucratic levels and health workers should.....resolutely obey the Party's centralized command and take those who are granted with titles as role models."⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶ National Health Commission, "Regarding the Decision to Honor Advanced Individuals and Advanced Groups for Their Work in Preventing the Spread of Novel Coronavirus" [关于表彰全国卫生健康系统新冠肺炎疫情防控先进集体和先进个人的决定], March 5, 2020, <

The narratives of the decision are about the Chinese Communist Party, instead of those devoted individuals and groups. In other words, the narratives indicate that it is under the leadership of the CCP that the Chinese people show bravery and an impressive sense of responsibility and altruism that makes the containment of the disease possible. This is reminiscent of the CCP-constructed national discourse about the history of the PRC in that the CCP historically has led the Chinese people to overcome difficulties, great and small, and the country remains strong under its leadership.

On March 19, the National Supervisory Commission issued a Q&A document regarding the process and results of the investigation into Li Wenliang's case. It concludes that it was "inappropriate" for Wuhan's local police authority to admonish Li and the local authority did not follow "the proper law enforcement procedure." The investigation team decided that the admonition letter will be revoked and the local police authority will take responsibility.⁴³⁷ Two police officers were then disciplined.⁴³⁸ The concluding sentences of the document state that "Li Wenliang was a communist party member and was not a so-called 'anti-current political establishment' individual" and "those who labeled Dr. Li Wenliang as a 'hero' against the current political establishment and an 'awakener' are hostile forces aiming to attack the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government."

Contrary to the past official narratives that Li stood against the government, his role has now shifted to become one of the CCP's kind. In so doing, the Party aims to mitigate public

<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/renshi/s7771/202003/28cc60d7e33b4dc7bd77af485fab1a58.shtml> > accessed March 18, 2020.

⁴³⁷ Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection & National Supervisory Commission, "Q & A with the National Supervisory Commission" [国家监委调查组负责人答记者问], March 19, 2020 <www.ccdi.gov.cn/toutiao/202003/t20200319_213887.html>.

⁴³⁸ Xin Jing Bao Wang [新京报网], "Regarding Those in the Wuhan Police Force Who Were Responsible for Dr. Li Wenliang's Incident" [武汉警方对李文亮医生被训诫一案相关责任人作出处理], March 19, 2020, <<http://www.bjnews.com.cn/feature/2020/03/19/706380.html>>.

anger and to undermine the source legitimacy when its own people or foreign communities use Li's example to question Chinese institutions. Meanwhile, like many Chinese political figures who were repudiated and then rehabilitated such as Deng Xiaoping and Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhongxun, or acclaimed first and then condemned (such as Lin Biao) according to changing political circumstances, Li's incident adds one more case to such a pool of instances. The tale of Li in the official narratives is the devotion of the people to their country under the successful leadership of the CCP, which disciplined those who failed to do their duty as civil servants. What Li did or did not do and what that means from his own perspective matter less.

The disease can cause severe blows to China's economy and the world's economy, but whether and how it will undermine the legitimacy of the CCP is unclear at this stage. Despite the public discussion about Xi's unstable administration, which in theory can be made more insecure by the public health crisis, according to the PRC's history and the political culture of the Chinese Communist Party, it is also likely that Xi and his followers will use this opportunity to enhance their power by placing their own people in some key positions so that opposition forces (either from factions within the Party itself or from the society) find it hard to challenge the current disease narratives in a way that would threaten Xi's power.

The former holders of the positions of the Party Secretary of Hubei Province and the Party Secretary of Wuhan City were replaced by Xi's men with backgrounds in law and politics. The vice team leader of Wuhan in the work leadership group to cope with the coronavirus that has been newly established by the central government also comes from the same background. Among the three new personnel, two of them had worked as Xi's subordinates before.⁴³⁹ A

⁴³⁹ BBC, "The Head of Hubei Was Replaced by the Party" [肺炎疫情：應勇空降「救火」中共湖北換帥], Feb. 13, 2020, <<https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/chinese-news-51485021>>accessed March 21, 2020

closer look into the work leadership group reveals a composition of leaders specializing in propaganda and foreign policy as well as the maintenance of domestic stability.⁴⁴⁰ The effectiveness of this task force in containing the spread of the disease while minimizing the harms inflicted or that will be inflicted on the people is highly questionable.

As the chart shows below, the new round of personnel changes is associated with the decline in the reported number of the newly infected cases on a daily basis. The government has so far issued seven different versions for the guidance for diagnosis and treatment. The way to calculate infected cases (not including the deceased cases) has also changed according to the addition or deletion of certain categories. On paper, the definitions of “suspected patients” and “confirmed patients” get more refined. The fifth version of the guidance that included “clinically diagnosed cases” judged through the C-T scan with the “confirmed cases” judged through the RT-PCR test was implemented on February 12,⁴⁴¹ and thus there was a record high of the reported infected patients amounting to 14,840. The numbers in parentheses are clinically diagnosed cases. From February 16 to 18, no statistics are provided regarding the number of clinically diagnosed cases. However, within less than one week, coinciding with the arrival of the new officials, the decision was made, according to the changes made in the sixth version of the guidance, i.e., the removal of the category of “clinically diagnosed cases” for Hubei

⁴⁴⁰ Xinhua, “Li Keqiang Hosts the Work Leadership Group That Deals With Novel Coronavirus” [李克强主持召开中央应对新型冠状病毒感染肺炎疫情工作领导小组会], Feb. 04, 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-02/04/c_1125531482.htm>.

⁴⁴¹ Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, “The Situation of Novel Coronavirus in Hubei on February 12, 2020” [2020年2月12日湖北省新冠肺炎疫情情况], Feb. 13, 2020, <<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020021309543>> accessed March 21, 2020.

Province,⁴⁴² to exclude the “clinically diagnosed cases” from the confirmed cases.⁴⁴³ Therefore, starting from February 19, the reported new cases on a daily basis had a drastic drop. The odd number on February 19 in which the cases of Wuhan were even more than the entire province, according to the official explanation, was due to the confusion caused by the transition from the fifth version to the sixth version of the guidance. Cases were then added back by the Chinese authorities and the number changed to 775 for the entire province.⁴⁴⁴ Statistics on February 20 were also adjusted, according to the official explanation, after the addition of the 220 cases in prison.⁴⁴⁵ Despite some fluctuations, the trend was going downward and dropped to a single digit and then zero.

⁴⁴²“The Interpretations of the Sixth Version for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Novel Coronavirus” 《新型冠状病毒肺炎诊疗方案（试行第六版）》解读, Feb. 19, 2020, <http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2020-02/19/content_5480958.htm> accessed March 21, 2020; National Health Commission, “The Sixth Version for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Novel Coronavirus” [新型冠状病毒肺炎诊疗方案（试行第六版）], <<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yzygj/s7653p/202002/8334a8326dd94d329df351d7da8aefc2/files/b218cfcb1bc54639af227f922bf6b817.pdf>> accessed March 21, 2020.

⁴⁴³ Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, “Explanations Regarding the Feb. 19 Corrections of the Number of Cases of Novel Coronavirus in Hubei” [湖北省关于订正2月19日新冠肺炎确诊病例的情况说明], Feb. 22, 2020, <<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020022209721>> accessed March 21, 2020.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, Feb. 21, 2020, <<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020022109719>> accessed March 21, 2020.

Reported Infected Cases Chart:

Locations dates	Hubei Province (newly confirmed cases)	Wuhan (newly confirmed cases)	Locations dates	Hubei Province (newly confirmed cases)	Wuhan (newly confirmed cases)	Imported cases (nation wide)	Current local confirmed cases (nationwide)
Feb. 01	1921	894	Feb. 26	409	383	-----	43258
Feb. 02	2103	1033	Feb. 27	318	313	-----	39919
Feb. 03	2345	1242	Feb. 28	423	420	-----	37414
Feb. 04	3156	1967	Feb. 29	570	565	-----	35329
Feb. 05	2987	1766	Mar. 01	196	193	-----	32652
Feb. 06	2447	1501	Mar. 02	114	111	-----	30004
Feb. 07	2841	1985	Mar. 03	115	114	-----	27433
Feb. 08	2147	1379	Mar. 04	134	131	2 (20)	25352
Feb. 09	2618	1921	Mar. 05	126	126	16 (36)	23784
Feb. 10	2097	1552	Mar. 06	74	74	24 (60)	22177
Feb. 11	1638	1104	Mar. 07	41	41	3 (63)	20533
Feb. 12	14840 (13332)	13436	Mar. 08	36	36	4 (67)	19016
Feb. 13	4823 (3095)	3910	Mar. 09	17	17	2 (69)	17721
Feb. 14	2420 (1138)	1923 (922)	Mar. 10	13	13	10 (79)	16145
Feb. 15	1843 (888)	1548	Mar. 11	8	8	6 (85)	14831
Feb. 16	1933	1690	Mar. 12	5	5	3 (88)	13526
Feb. 17	1807	1600	Mar. 13	4	4	7 (95)	12094
Feb. 18	1693	1660	Mar. 14	4	4	16 (111)	10734
Feb. 19	349 (775)	615	Mar. 15	4	4	12 (123)	9898
Feb. 20	411 (631)	319	Mar. 16	1	1	20 (143)	8976
Feb. 21	366	314	Mar. 17	1	1	12 (155)	8056
Feb. 22	630	541	Mar. 18	0	0	34 (189)	7263
Feb. 23	398	348	Mar. 19	0	0	39 (228)	6569
Feb. 24	499	464	Mar. 20	0	0	41 (269)	6013
Feb. 25	401	370	Mar. 21	0	0	45 (314)	5549

Note: data compiled by the author. Sources: Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, <<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/list3rd/yes/802>> accessed March 21, 2020; Nation Health Commission of the PRC, <http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqtb/list_gzbd.shtml> accessed March 22, 2020.

Because of a lack of transparency, it is not possible to verify whether these official statistics closely reflect the realities. First, there is an issue about testing. How widely the tests are available to three types of patients--critical patients, patients with mild symptoms, and those

who carry the virus but do not show symptoms--is unknown. If tests are not distributed sufficiently wide or are not made available, it is highly possible that patients with mild symptoms and those who do not show symptoms are not included in the data. Only when the data about the number of people tested and their distribution is presented can we know how well a country is coping with the crisis. For the countries where the disease did not originate and that had time for preparedness, the data also tells how well these countries are preparing for the possible crisis. Data is relatively transparent in many democracies. It is also not difficult to find out from news reports whether, how many and when the testing is available in these countries. In non-democracies, this information is not readily available. Second, if a country is ill-prepared, which also includes a failure to prevent the spread at the very beginning, and its bureaucracies do not function at the time of crisis, faced with a sudden surge of the disease's attack, it has a higher chance of experiencing a collapse in its medical system, including a lack of medical supplies for patients and for nurses and doctors as well. When the medical system is collapsing, the data is not reliable because people do not get tested and even when they get tested, they may not get treatment. The results of the test can also be fabricated to meet the official expectation, which is more likely to happen in a non-democracy.

As the PRC provides the world the number of zero cases for four consecutive days as this epilogue is written, there are also news reports indicating a need to be doubtful of the data. Tan Zhigang, a resident of Wuhan, expressed his distrust of official statistics. "It is just like the Wenzhou train collision. In answering journalists' questions about how many people die, the official of the railway department said regardless of whether you believe the number that I provide, I believe and as long as they [higher officials] believe, it counts." Mr. Ding provided a more detailed description of his mother Hu Aizhen's situation. According to him, when his

mother showed symptoms at the end of January, the hospital denied her a bed on the ground that there was no bed to provide. Many hospitals that he visited all refused to give his mother a test to see if it was positive. What his mother got instead was oxygen. He brought his mother to the hospital to get oxygen for more than 10 hours on a daily basis and this continued for 10 more days before his mother passed away.⁴⁴⁶

On March 10, Zhang Yi, a Wuhan resident, took his mother to Wuhan Asia Heart Hospital for the treatment of heart-related foot problems. In his own video recording, he mentioned the need to do blood testing to see whether his mother contracted the virus before getting hospitalized. Zhang also stated that there were patients who just got confirmed positive without showing any symptoms and would be transferred to a different hospital. He concluded that there is a need to test all Wuhan residents because they could be potential virus carriers.⁴⁴⁷ A voice recording from a Wuhan doctor followed up the development of the events after Zhang brought his mother to the hospital. The doctor said that the blood testing is according to the new policy stipulated in the seventh version of the guidance for diagnosis and treatment. This new method is faster in getting the result, more accurate, and cheaper compared to RT-PCR. However, the blood testing stopped one day after Zhang's visit to the hospital. He assessed that the other two hospitals probably would not be able to provide the test either since Asia Heart and the Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University had already stopped the test.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ Radio Free Asia, "Questions Are Raised About China's Statistics As Hubei Is Reported to Have Zero Cases for Two Consecutive Days" [湖北连续两日无新增病例 中国疫情数据再受质疑], March 20, 2020 <<https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/huanjing/ql2-03202020064837.html>> March 21, 2020.

⁴⁴⁷ The Epoch Times, "Video: Patients With No Symptoms Wander Around in the Hospital" [视频：无症状确诊“中共病毒”病患在医院游荡], March 11, 2020, <<https://www.epochtimes.com/gb/20/3/10/n11929948.htm>> accessed March 26, 2020.

⁴⁴⁸ See the video uploaded by New Tang Dynasty Television, "Wuhan Doctor's Disclosure: the Dreadful Truth of the Release of the Patients in Shelter Hospitals" [武汉医生爆内幕：方舱大规模「清零」可怕实情], March 15, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKxK2wPJ9Ew>> accessed March 26, 2020.

This Wuhan doctor also commented on the lifting of quarantine order on the patients in the shelter hospitals (方舱医院), which were makeshift facilities built in response to the outbreak. He expressed his concerns about how “the expert team showed frenzy in signing the papers to lift the order”. According to him, the expert team would sign the paper even though it was clear that patients had not recovered, and they did not even ask about patients’ symptoms. As long as the CT test showed some progress toward recovery, the paper would be signed, and patients would go home. He expressed that if he did not sign during his shift, the next doctor would sign. The doctor concluded: “many things were not about medical professionalism”; they are about “the diagnosis and the cure of political science. It is too scary that people in the shelter hospitals were discharged in this way.”⁴⁴⁹ When this epilogue is written, China had stopped testing people and discharged patients between early and mid-March. Lack of testing and a premature lifting of the quarantine order would lead to inaccurate numbers on reported newly confirmed cases and the current confirmed cases.

The replacement of officials in Hubei and Wuhan and the declining reported cases are highly associated. Unless there are reliable sources of statistics that can pass through several screens of scrutiny including non-state media reports, people’s reactions and the views of medical personnel among others, numbers provided by Chinese authorities should be seen with skepticism. Since March 4, the statistics have focused on imported cases, meaning that the patients contracted the disease outside the country, while official data shows that nationwide local confirmed cases are dwindling day by day. For the imported cases, the numbers in parentheses are accumulative. The political message of these statistics to both domestic and international audiences is clear; since the new officials assumed office, China has been fighting

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

the disease more effectively and the imported cases are the result of the situation being out of control in other countries.

The narratives in the English texts depict China as a fully responsible actor in that not only is the control of the disease a nationwide effort with the population and the CCP fully in coordination, but it is also science-oriented with measures properly designed. “[U]nder the personal leadership and direction of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government and people have fought a people’s war against COVID-19. We have acted according to the principle of shoring up confidence, strengthening unity, ensuring science-based control and taking targeted measures. We have all along been open and transparent, and put people’s health and safety front and center.”⁴⁵⁰ Beijing claims that its offers of help to the international society and the willingness to cooperate with other countries are out of its sympathetic feelings based on its experience in coping with the disease. “China’s readiness to help is inspired by humanitarianism; it has no ideological agenda, and is still less driven by selfish geopolitical interests.”⁴⁵¹ It continues to reason that the international “assistance” which it provides and the endeavors it put forth to create an environment of solidarity follow the goal of “building a community with a shared future for mankind.” The narratives indicate a confidence that China’s dealings have won international support. “More and more countries have come to appreciate and agree with China’s position. It has become a common voice and consensus in the international community to reject any attempt at labeling the virus, politicizing the response, and stigmatizing any specific

⁴⁵⁰ “Wang Yi: China Provides Experience for Global Response and Boosts Confidence in Defeating the Virus”, *MOFA*, April 28, 2020, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/t1774292.shtml> accessed May 2, 2020.

⁴⁵¹ “Wang Yi: China's International Anti-epidemic Cooperation Never Seeks Selfish Geopolitical Interests,” *MOFA*, April 28, 2020, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/t1774283.shtml> accessed May 2, 2020.

country.”⁴⁵² Specifically, Beijing was deflating foreign criticism of its own denial that the virus originated in China, one of its diplomats’ accusation that the virus was brought by the American military to the PRC, and the international demands for an explanation and a thorough investigation of the source. Instead of tackling the problems at the roots, that is, with a reflective process to examine how the disease originated and the mishandling in the first place, the narratives turn lofty in stating that it is more important to make concerted efforts worldwide to deal with the virus as the common enemy of mankind than to politicize the issue. Many countries would agree that the priority is to control the spread, but in the context of the CCP raising this point, the implication may be that there is no need to trace the source and China will not be “stigmatized” to take the blame.

An article from the *People’s Daily* reported that Xi’s March 10 “visit” to Wuhan amid the declining reported cases was “inspiring” and “projected confidence and strength for China and the world in their efforts to fight the disease.” It is a “demonstration of China’s strength and China’s spirit.” The article went that Xi during his visit particularly expressed gratitude to the people of Wuhan. “Wuhan is a city of heroes. The people of Wuhan are a heroic people.” Before it brought in the comment that the leadership of the CCP and the people of China have worked together to overcome the difficulties, the article indicates that Xi’s visit “demonstrated the practice of the idea of the shared community for mankind” because it “mustered the strength and lifted the spirit for the people of China and projected powerful energy to the world in its coping with the disease.”⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² Wang Yi, “Following Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy To Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Through International Cooperation Against COVID-19,” *MOFA*, April 19, 2020, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/t1771257.shtml> accessed May 2, 2020.

⁴⁵³ *People’s Daily*, “Projecting Confidence and Strength for China and the World for Their Fight Against the Virus” [为中国和世界抗击疫情注入信心与力量], March 12, 2020,

Another *People's Daily* article praised China's attitudes and measures taken to cope with the coronavirus in a way that shows the country as "a responsible major power." According to this article, Beijing's dealings with the disease "traded time for the countries around the world in their dealings with the virus," which the spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs has so far stressed in the press conference twice,⁴⁵⁴ and "[it] has made major contributions and won the international applause."⁴⁵⁵ *Xinhua* also came up with a list of praises from foreign intellectuals, scholars and officials to prove that the PRC was doing well. It commented, "the international society has high regard [to China] and sees that the Chinese government and the Chinese people have effectively fought with the disease. It is inspiring. [The international society] believes that China can accelerate the pace of restoring production and restoring the normal life, and further provide positive influence to China's and the world's economy."⁴⁵⁶

In the context of the officially reported dwindling of infected cases, at the March 20 press briefing of WHO, Tedros expressed that "Wuhan reported no cases for the first time since the

<http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2020-03/12/nw.D110000renmrb_20200312_1-03.htm> accessed March 22, 2020.

⁴⁵⁴ In the March 20 press briefing, the spokesperson said, "From February 16 to 24, the China-WHO Joint Mission with two American experts on board conducted their nine-day field trip in China and highly appraised China's prevention and control measures. *They specifically pointed out that China has played a vital role in protecting the international community, as China's measures have bought valuable time and provided valuable experience for all* (emphasis added)." See MOFA,

<https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1758992.shtml> accessed March 26, 2020; In the March 23 press briefing, the spokesperson said that "We have bought precious time for and made significant contributions to the world." See MOFA,

<https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1759985.shtml> accessed March 26, 2020.

⁴⁵⁵ *People's Daily*, "China's Fight Against Coronavirus Manifests the Shouldering of A Major Country's Responsibility" [中国抗疫彰显负责任大国担当], March 19, 2020,

<http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2020-03/19/nw.D110000renmrb_20200319_3-01.htm> accessed March 22, 2020.

⁴⁵⁶ *Xinhua*, "International Society Praises China's Efforts in Controlling and Preventing the Spread of the Disease" [中国战“疫”成果为世界抗击疫情和恢复经济注入信心——国际社会积极评价中国疫情防控形势持续向好], March 20, 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2020-03/20/c_1125744079.htm> accessed March 22, 2020.

outbreak started. Wuhan provided hope for the rest of the world that even the most serious situation can be turned around.”⁴⁵⁷

As countries worldwide have received severe impact from the virus, the PRC has gone for a global offensive to change the narrative from itself being the origin place of the disease and handling the domestic crisis opaquely to present itself as having a transparent, efficient, and people-caring government that also helps other countries fight the disease by doing such things as “donating” testing kits. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs records a long list of Chinese diplomats’ actions in changing the world’s perceptions of the country, including signed articles in the newspapers of other countries and interactions with foreign officials through telephone conversations, face-to-face talks and interviews.⁴⁵⁸

The current pandemic may severely damage China’s economy, but it certainly has not affected its will to shape domestic and international perceptions. Meanwhile, the PRC has intensified military activities in the first island chain. On February 9, for an open-sea training, it sent out J-11 fighter jets, H-6 bombers, and KJ-500 early warning aircraft to pass through the Bashi Channel to the Western Pacific before returning through the Miyako Strait. Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense (MND) published a photo showing a Taiwanese F-16 armed with missiles shadowing a Chinese H-6 bomber coded 20015 within a close range. Next day, China again sent out H-6 bombers and escort planes through the Taiwan Strait before passing the Bashi Channel to the Western Pacific. Taiwanese MND again published a photo that identifies a H-6 bomber coded 20018. The escort planes briefly crossed the middle line of the Strait and retreated

⁴⁵⁷ WHO March 20 Press Conference, <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/transcripts/who-audio-emergencies-coronavirus-press-conference-full-20mar2020.pdf?sfvrsn=1eafbff_0> March 22, 2020.

⁴⁵⁸See News From Mission Overseas on the Foreign Ministry’s website <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/default.shtml> accessed March 20, 2020.

to the west of the Strait after several warnings from Taiwan's F-16s.⁴⁵⁹ When asked about Chinese harassment, President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan expressed that "I think what everyone cares most is the spread of the disease. The world has been paying attention to the outbreak in China. There are also a lot of things they [China] need to deal with. It is meaningless and unnecessary to have these military moves at this time. At this time, I want to tell China that the important thing is to have the epidemic under control so as to ease the pressure that the region and the world are faced with."⁴⁶⁰ On February 12, the US sent out one MC-130J Commando II tanker and two B-52 bombers to fly through the Taiwan Strait and along the east coast of Taiwan respectively. Taiwan's defense experts commented that it was usual for Washington to take such action.⁴⁶¹

On February 28, the PRC sent out H-6 bombers again for training and approached Taiwan's southwestern Air Defense Identification Zone. The fourth harassment came on March 16 when, as has rarely happened before, a KJ-500 early warning aircraft and J-11 fighters were sent for a night training in the airspace southwest of Taiwan. Taiwan scrambled F-16s and IDF fighters to intercept Chinese planes that approached its ADIZ.⁴⁶² Two days later, China's one destroyer, two frigates and one supply ship passed through the Miyako Strait. On March 23, Japan's Air Force intercepted China's EP-3 early warning plane in the East China Sea. Two days

⁴⁵⁹ Taiwan's MND, news release, Feb. 9 and Feb. 10, <<https://www.mnd.gov.tw/PublishTabs.aspx?parentId=65&NodeId=657&title=%E5%9C%8B%E9%98%B2%E6%B6%88%E6%81%AF&SelectStyle=%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E7%A8%BF&Page=2>> accessed March 26, 2020; Taipei Times, "Taiwan Shadow Chinese Aircraft," Feb. 10, <<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2020/02/10/2003730700>>; Taipei Times, "MAC Protests Provocative Flights," Feb. 11, 2020, <<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2020/02/11/2003730751>>.

⁴⁶⁰ See The Liberty Times, February 10, <<https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/3063099>> accessed March 26, 2020.

⁴⁶¹ CNA staff, "US military flies bomber to south of Taiwan," *Taipei Times*, Feb. 14, 2020, <<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2020/02/14/2003730967>> accessed March 26, 2020.

⁴⁶² The Liberty Times, March 17, <<https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/3102230>> accessed March 26, 2020.

later, it again intercepted a Chinese Y-9 intelligence aircraft which was passing through the Tsushima Strait. One of the PRC's frigates on March 26 was spotted cruising through the Tsushima and entering the Sea of Japan.⁴⁶³

According to Aircraft Spots' twitter, the US, on March 24, flew a Navy EP-3E reconnaissance aircraft through the Bashi Channel and headed north to the airspace southwest of Taiwan's southern city of Kaohsiung. From the map, it seems that the plane hovered and flew back and forth in parallel with Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ. On March 25, the US Pacific Fleet transited a guided-missile destroyer through the Taiwan Strait. The Fleet tweeted with photos: "US Navy sailors stand watch aboard USS *McCampbell* as the forward-deployed US 7th Fleet guided missile destroyer transit the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday." The caption of the photos on its Facebook wrote, "McCampbell is underway conducting operations in the Indo-Pacific region while assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest forward-deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force." One photo shows an MH-60 Sea Hawk helicopter taking off from the deck. On March 26, Aircraft Spots tweeted that the US Air Force flew two B-52H bombers to the East China Sea and close to Taiwan from its Anderson Base at Guam, with support from two KC-135R tankers.

China saw itself as a target audience of the American military activities and on March 26/27 issued several comments to pin the US in the role of villain. The PRC's Ministry of National Defense published both Chinese and English versions of the recent events and Chinese reactions, with the English version coming from *China Daily*'s report.⁴⁶⁴ The English article saw

⁴⁶³ Japan's Joint Staff Press Releases, March 19, March 23, March 25 and March 26, <<https://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2020.htm>>.

⁴⁶⁴ It seems that the news report from China Daily confused the date and instead of February 17, it wrote February 27.

the encounter on February 17 and a US warship transit through the Taiwan Strait as “provocative,” because it “undermined Chinese sovereignty, poisoned bilateral relations and disrupted regional peace and security.” It described that a US EP-3 surveillance aircraft operated only 400 meters away from a Chinese ship to spy on the Chinese activities for four hours and “ignored numerous warnings from the Chinese.” It quoted the spokesperson of the PRC’s MND as saying, the American maneuvers were “extremely inappropriate, unprofessional and unsafe. . . . They constitute a serious violation of international laws on freedom of navigation and are the root cause of problems between China and the US on maritime security. Yet the US not only ignores their wrongdoings but has also launched complaints and baseless accusations. We resolutely oppose these actions.” The spokesperson also commented on the American military exercises in the South China Sea earlier in March as “barge recklessly into the region, threaten national security of nearby countries and disrupt regional peace and stability.” Regarding USS *McCampbell*’s transit, the spokesperson said, “it sent the wrong message to Taiwan secessionists. . . . We will absolutely not allow any foreign forces to play the Taiwan card, and will not tolerate any attempts of secession.”⁴⁶⁵

Regional countries would continue to show their will through military presence. The second half of March and April were eventful in that actions and reactions from various parties confirm that neither side will back down during a crisis. Chinese vessels rammed into Vietnamese fishing boats, the Japanese destroyer *Shimakaze*, and a Taiwanese patrol boat.⁴⁶⁶ The

⁴⁶⁵ The PRC’s MND news release, “China blasts ‘provocative actions’ by US,” March 27, 2020, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2020-03/27/content_4862661.htm> accessed March 27, 2020.

⁴⁶⁶ “Chinese Ships Rammed into Taiwanese, Japanese and Vietnamese ships” [中國「直直撞」！連撞台灣、日本 週四再撞沉越南漁船], *The Liberty Times*, April 04, 2020, <<https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/world/breakingnews/3122781>>; Burke Matt & Ichihashi Aya, “Japanese destroyer is damaged in collision with Chinese fishing vessel in East China Sea,” *Stars and Stripes*, March 31, 2020, <<https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/japanese-destroyer-is-damaged-in-collision-with-chinese-fishing-vessel-in-east-china-sea-1.624290>>.

PLA naval warships would also hold military drills in the South China Sea and continue to cruise through the Taiwan Strait and the Bashi Channel before returning to their bases. On April 23, Taiwan's MOD published a photo of *Liaoning* that was recently taken during a surveillance mission.⁴⁶⁷ The aircraft carrier and 5 other warships also cruised through the Miyako Strait in late April.⁴⁶⁸ Washington made its presence felt as well. Aside from sending warships to pass through the Taiwan Strait, it seems that the US exponentially increased the patrols of its intelligence gathering aircraft in the area of the Bashi Channel and the triangular area between the airspace off of Taiwan's southwest and that off of China's southeast.⁴⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Japan announced the increase of troops deployed to Miyako island from 350 personnel to 700. The new arrangements came with new surface-to-air missile batteries and new land-based anti-ship missile batteries. Of the latter, part of the forces will be stationed on Ishigaki island.⁴⁷⁰

Instead of a purely global health issue, the pandemic is more likely to set in motion a series of events in international politics between the PRC and other countries for the coming one to two decades. China's politicization of the disease by turning the event into a propaganda tool and by distracting domestic attention through a show of military moves is the latest case that exemplifies the exercise of role construction and the framing of the issues to justify its overseas objectives. The narratives are constructed in a way highlighting that Beijing is on the right side and has an

⁴⁶⁷ Tsai Ching-yu, "Ministry of Defense Published A Photo of Liaoning to Show Its Recent Presence" [證實遼寧號近海現蹤 國防部首度公布自行拍攝照片], *United Daily*, March 23, 2020, <<https://udn.com/news/story/10930/4513939>>.

⁴⁶⁸ Japan's Joint Staff Press Release," April 28, 2020, <https://www.mod.go.jp/js/Press/press2020/press_pdf/p20200428_04.pdf>.

⁴⁶⁹ See Aircraft Spots' tweeter account for the US activities in the mid-March and the entire month of April.

⁴⁷⁰ Takahashi Kosuke, "Japan deploys SAM, ASM batteries to Miyakojima Island," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, March 26, 2020, <<https://www.janes.com/article/95119/japan-deploys-sam-asm-batteries-to-miyakojima-island>>; The Liberty Times, "Japan Establishes Missile Batteries on the Miyako Island to Deter the PLA" [威懾解放軍！日本自衛隊駐宮古島飛彈部隊成軍], April 6, 2020, <<https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/world/breakingnews/3124022>>.

altruistic heart for the people around the world in the time of a pandemic crisis. It also provides evidence to the idea discussed in this research about China's increasing assertiveness in discursive construction to support outward expansion and its activeness in overseas activities, even though its domestic foundation is weakening.

China's economic growth has been on a gradual decline from 2007 onward. Trade war with the US and the pandemic cast further shadows on its economic prospects. As this dissertation shows, a slowing growth rate has not affected China's overseas expansion. Neither does it affect the sense of cultural superiority as demonstrated in chapter 4. On the contrary, it has positive correlation with its growing determination to expand outward. Such determination is reflected in the refined discursive construct of how a strong and prosperous China can reshape the world order and bring the world peace and prosperity because of the inherent peaceful nature of its governing institutions and Chinese culture. Paralleling declining economic growth are proactive overseas infrastructure investments and military activities in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In the public speeches, they are rationalized with inclusive rhetoric of benefiting countries around the world. The rhetoric of inclusiveness that denies strategic calculations does not honestly reflect the Chinese perceptions of world politics which, as chapter 3 demonstrates, have been constantly informed by material strength and realpolitik since the founding of the PRC. The post-Cold War role construction of the self and others in which the altercasting process that produces role congruence plays a major part and the othering process which creates enemies becomes less salient are the strategic product of Chinese considerations of how to achieve maximum material gains, both economically and militarily, in a relatively peaceful international climate, which Beijing correlates with the trend of multipolarity, without causing major backlash that will hamper its design of reshaping the world order.

In repeatedly emphasizing a continuous need of a peaceful international environment for globalization and for other countries' development, China hopes to create an environment in which it will be able to expand by minimizing foreign resistance. The other benefit is that it can claim that the forthcoming arrival of a more just international order is because of China's peaceful development that does not involve the use of force. In this regard, Chinese imperialism bears the characteristics of peacetime expansion in that it hopes to achieve its political goal of obtaining international status and influence without using force. Nevertheless, the focus on the pre-war stage does not mean a relinquishment of or an aversion, cultural or otherwise, to war as a solution. It is a matter of situational assessments. As chapter 5 argues, Chinese strategic culture is neither defensive nor offensive, but rather about what the goals are and how they can be achieved. Since the post-Cold War climate is peaceful, there is no need to rock the boat because it will be too costly. The textual analysis in this research shows that the signs of increasing chances for the use of force can be detected by reading how the roles are readjusted in the Chinese narratives. The 2017 foreign policy paper about "Asia-Pacific" and the 2019 defense white paper indicate that China has perceived the world in a way that there are more hostile forces against its interests. The narratives justify Chinese positions by pointing fingers at others. What this reveals, consistent with the PRC's historiography of the major and small wars that it has fought, is that China does not avoid war, but instead takes actions according to *its own judgements of situations*, and whatever actions it takes, it will self-rationalize them (including the use of force) through role construction informed by the othering and altercasting processes.

China's behavior during the pandemic of Wuhan pneumonia conforms to the pattern of how the CCP will reassert itself domestically and internationally. Using its people's misery and shifting their roles to reshape the world's perceptions when domestic situations are worsening is

reflective of the findings in this research that the PRC has grown discursively assertive along with its active overseas expansion as a means to address domestic problems. The intensified military activities in the first island chain in the middle of the crisis are to distract domestic attention, and to shift China's problem to become someone else's problem, again through a role construction of I and the Other. The current pandemic conforms to the theory laid out in chapter 2 that material strength does not necessarily have positive correlations with the mentality of superiority. It is the aspiration for future gains that goes hand in hand with discursive assertiveness.

As Beijing devotes resources to military development, which does not necessarily require a booming economy, it has fewer restraints in utilizing military means to coerce and intimidate others, and even to use force, now that it has more affordable tools that can be used for assertion in its foreign policy and is narrowing the gaps for what is required for war. This trend will persist if the PRC continues to allocate resources for the Navy, compared to other services of the armed forces, after the pandemic. It is unclear at this stage how the crisis will affect globalization and the global economy. It is also unclear at this stage how it, together with the trade war with the US, will affect foreign investments in China and global production chains. That countries trade and do business with the PRC may not be drastically changed. However, it is possible that the PRC may be even more aggressive in pursuing overseas interests to satisfy a domestic economy which is further weakened by the disease. It is the prospect for future gains that drives assertiveness. As the change of the leadership in Wuhan shows, a weakening domestic foundation at the same time may prompt the ruling elite to shore up their power and to behave with less conciliation in an authoritarian country. The case of China exemplifies the coexistence of the sense of insecurity and agitated ambitions.

Journey to the West, one of the Chinese classics, is the tale of a Buddhist monk, Xuanzang (Tang Sanzang), embarking on a years-long pilgrimage to India to obtain the original sacred Buddhist scriptures written in Sanskrit. He is accompanied by three disciples. One of them is Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King. Wukong was witty and had mastered the 72 types of transformation. He could travel 10,800 *li* within one second. With his supernatural capabilities, he grew arrogant and infuriated the gods. To make Wukong behave, the Jade Emperor who oversaw the Celestial Court provided him a low-ranking position and had other gods watch over him. Wukong then escaped the Court for he did not find freedom of movement there in a way that he could boss things around. In his old mountain where he was revered as a king by fellow monkeys, there were no behavioral restrictions and no suppression on his egoism. He called himself, "Great Sage Equal to Heaven." After knowing that he was not invited to the Celestial banquet, out of revenge, Wukong ate the peaches that were to be offered to gods during the banquet. Eating the peaches made him immortal and his supernatural capabilities were strengthened as well. Riding the wave of newly gained confidence, he turned the Celestial Court upside down and created chaos. By now, the Jade Emperor asked the Buddha for help. The Buddha had the Monkey King in its palm. Wukong was confident that he could escape by urinating to mark places where he had been. However he tried, he could not escape from the Buddha's palm. The Buddha eventually placed Wukong under the mountain for 500 years before he was ordered to accompany Xuanzang on a trip to India. Wukong's responsibilities were to protect Xuanzang from the harms caused by demons. This did not mean that he had freedom to do whatever he liked. The Buddha of Mercy put a gold head band on him. Whenever his ego arose and started behaving unruly, Xuanzang could discipline him by chanting a Buddhist

mantra, *om mani padme hum*. The gold band tightened as the chanting continued and would cause him a severe headache.

However cunning and capable Wukong perceived himself, he was diminutive in front of the Buddha. However intelligent and resourceful he was in using his magic to fool others and rebel against the Celestial Court, he was powerless upon hearing a few words of mantra. *Wu* of Wukong means enlightened or awakened. *Kong* means no attachments and no wearing masks. If the Monkey King had realized the meanings of his name, he would not have acted so presumptuously and created troubles for others as well as causing himself to suffer from the 500 years of immobility plus intolerable headaches, while being ignorant of the knowledge that his unsettled mind was the source of all the disturbances.

Reference Notes

Because of the nature of sources cited, aside from bibliography, this section is needed to describe the primary sources and how they were obtained. For the documents and articles explained here, they will not be included in the bibliography. The NCCPC (Party's Congress) reports can be found on the CPC news website (<http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64162/64168/index.html>). China's Ministry of Defense publishes defense white papers, both in Chinese and English versions. It also includes the 2017 foreign policy white paper (*China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation* [中国的亚太安全合作政策]). The news releases and press conferences from China's MOD also provides information used in this research (<http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/index.htm> and http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/node_48462.htm). Japanese and Taiwanese MODs are also sources for regional military activities. This research also benefits from the Wilson Center Digital Archive for its collections of primary documents during Mao's era. Two collections, Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy and Bandung Conference, are particularly useful.

Aside from official documents, the *Qiushi* Journal is systematically examined to explore the Chinese worldview. The journal's website publishes Chinese issues since 2004, and English issues from 2009 to 2013. English *Qiushi* from 2014 to 2018 come in hard copies. *Red Flag Manuscript* can also be found on its website (<http://www.qstheory.cn/hqwglis/mulu.htm>). *Contemporary International Relations* and *International Studies* are foreign policy journals from think tanks, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations and China Institute of International Studies respectively. The former is affiliated with the Ministry of State Security and the latter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The journal of *Chinese Military Science* is a

publication of the People's Liberation Army's Academy of Military Science. Foreign policy and military journals are used to analyze the PRC's policy rationales.

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