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**Globalisation with Chinese Characteristics?  
Assessing China's rise on the basis of scholarly views, speech  
and critical discourse analysis**

*Final version*

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## **1. Abstract**

*Tapping into the debate on the rise of China and the future of the liberal world order, this paper aims to provide a novel approach to contribute to the discussion. By borrowing from Gilpin's systemic theory (1988) and Schweller's (2005) adaptation that the world is in a delegitimizing and deconcentrating phase, this paper aims to find whether the Xi-administration provides a rhetoric of resistance to delegitimise the hegemonic United States' globalism perspective on globalisation. By using a comparative critical discourse analysis, this paper has compared the discourse of the Xi-administration to the core claims of globalism as defined by Steger (2005). This paper found that there are distinct differences between the two discourses and that the rhetoric of the Xi-administration skilfully opposes the core globalist claims made by the US. The paper found narratives that could explain how China's rhetoric helped to make the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank successful and why China now is pursuing the embracement of the liberal world order without conforming to Western norms and values. Since most evidence is not enough for making academically viable statements this paper concludes by arguing that this analytical technique should be used in further research to substantiate this paper's initial findings.*

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## 2. Introduction

Fifty years ago, few would have expected the president of China defending (economic) globalisation in a speech during the World Economic Forum in Davos. Yet in today's reality, Xi Jinping — in a mountain resort in the heart of a Europe that is stricken by sentiments of populism and anti-globalisation— appealed the economic and political leaders of the globalised world by asserting China's commitment to "guide economic globalisation, cushion its negative impact, and deliver its benefits to all countries and all nations" (Xi Jinping, 2017). The timing of the speech is significant. After the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit) and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States (US), anti-globalisation sentiments seemed to be thriving. In the midst of these tendencies, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) stressed the importance of the global liberal economy. The speech sparked a debate among academics. For a long time, Western scholars and politicians have called for China to take on a more leading position in world affairs and debated the consequences of China as a shaper of a vision to world politics. Now this moment has come and to the outside, Xi's speech looks almost identical to the globalisation-rhetoric used by Western leaders, causing some media and scholars to believe that China is committing itself to the liberal world order and gradually is becoming more like the West (Financial Times, 2017). However, other scholars are more sceptical and see China ambitious to change the unipolar world order and not sustaining it (e.g., Kupchan, 2007). While scholars endlessly debate this question, given the variety of answers, it seems that the discussion lacks effective parameters to determine in which direction China's rise is heading. In this paper, an innovative analytical perspective to the question of the rise of China will be explored. Based on the idea of Gilpin's cycle of power transition<sup>1</sup> and Schweller's<sup>2</sup> notion that today's world is in the second phase of Gilpin's cycle, the delegitimation phase. This paper will determine, with the use of critical discourse analysis, whether there are some fundamental conceptual and ideological differences between the globalisation rhetoric of Xi Jinping and the Western globalisation rhetoric. The choice for assessing the globalisation rhetoric is motivated by the fundamental role of the concept within the ideology of the US. Moreover, as will be illustrated in section 5, the globalisation rhetoric of the United States is hegemonised

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<sup>1</sup> Gilpin, R. (1988). The theory of hegemonic war. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), 591-613.

<sup>2</sup> Schweller, R. L., & Pu, X. (2011). After unipolarity: China's visions of international order in an era of US decline. *International Security*, 36(1), 41-72.

by the neoliberalist<sup>3</sup> Globalism-perspective and has deeply impacted global economic, institutional and socio-political processes (Steger, 2005). If the Xi-administration has a different globalisation rhetoric, that could delegitimise the US perspective and could lead the world towards a different direction, then this will greatly affect all the aforementioned global processes. To see whether China indeed has a globalisation rhetoric different to the Globalism variant, speeches of the Xi-administration on global affairs will be analysed and compared to the core claims of Globalism as defined by Steger (2005). The research question this paper will answer is: do the Speeches of Xi Jinping and Wang Yi resemble the Globalism-discourse of the United States or does the Xi-administration provide an alternative developmental model?

### **3. China's Foreign Strategy**

This paper will first assess the grand strategy of China's rise under the Xi administration - dubbed the peaceful rise 2.0 – by briefly outlining China's foreign strategy pre-Xi and then examining the novelties of Xi's strategy towards 'the great renewal of the Chinese nation' (Xi Jinping, 2013).

Since Xi Jinping raised to power in 2012, China has become a proactive agent on the international stage (Heilmann, et al., 2014). Before the Xi-Li administration took office in 2012, China committed to a foreign policy characterised by 'peaceful development'. This strategy was formulated to convince the world that China is able to reach great power status without destabilising the existing liberal international order (Shambaugh, 2013). The key focus of China with the 'peaceful development' rhetoric, has been on improving its relation with the outside world. By expanding trade, diplomatic and economic ties and via increasing engagement – albeit passively in this period -- with regional and global multilateral institutions, China displayed an image to its neighbours and the great powers that it is rising peacefully (Zhang & Andrew, 2016). This strategy has proven to be very successful. Economically, between 1990 and 2010 China has shown economic growth figures averaging around 10% (World Bank, 2017). China became import trade partners to most countries in the world, being the most important trade partner to many countries in the Asia-Pacific, Central Asia and Africa (CIA World Factbook, 2014). Politically, China has positioned itself in all multilateral

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<sup>3</sup> The neoliberal aspect of globalism referred to the deregulation of markets, the liberalization of trade, the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the idea that the market (invisible hand) was the only thing guiding globalisation (see also section 5.1).

institutions, having important seats in the UN security council. Nowadays China is one of the largest financial and military contributors of UN peacekeeping missions and active organiser and participant of multilateral summits and institutions (Sun, 2016).

Under Xi Jinping, China reassured its commitment to the peaceful development strategy, but moved from being a passive follower in multilateral institutions to an active shaper. Diplomatically China reassured its peaceful image. This was necessary because many countries in the region were threatened by the economic supremacy of China in the region and their country's dependency on China in terms of trade. Also, China's military development was seen as threatening (Wang, 2016). China therefore heavily invested in organising and hosting confidence-building meetings, regional and global summits, and paying significant attention to bilateral relations with the great powers (Zhang, 2015). Hence showing its commitment and confidence in multilateral institutions to reassure its peaceful rise. Economically, however, China has become more active. China has launched the comprehensive economic "one belt one road initiative" aimed to develop West-China and reinvigorate silk-road trade routes (Swaine, 2015). Moreover, China originated the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is already seen as an alternative to the 'World Bank' given the broad embracement of the international community. Notably the founding members included the European G7-members, despite significant efforts of the United States to sway its allies to impede the Chinese initiative (Feigenbaum, 2017).

Lastly, China is one of the founders of the New Development Bank established in 2014, which is an initiative by the BRICS and is headquartered in Shanghai. So, instead of investing in existing institutions such as the world bank, China has founded parallel structures to these institutions in order to increase its influence over multilateral institutions and to undermine the position of the US, where most multilateral institutions are located (Heilmann, et al., 2014). Creating such institutions can be seen as a clear sign that China is challenging the dominant position of the US. The establishment of such institutions can also infuriate the US and lead to conflict; which would automatically mean an end to the peaceful development-strategy. How does China want to balance its rise in such a way that it will not break with its strategy?

### **3.1 From Follower to Shaper in the International Arena**

According to Zhang, the establishment of Chinese multilateral institutions is part of Xi's 'peaceful development 2.0 strategy' (Zhang, 2015). Here the 1.0 strategy is enriched with three extra features. The first being that the peaceful development 2.0 is a "proactive and coordinated approach to create and shape a stable external environment that serves China's domestic development." Creating Beijing- (or Shanghai-) based multilateral institutions would help in creating such an environment, since China will be better able to shape a stable environment with home grown institutions. Second, China's commitment to the 'peaceful development' policy has become conditional and is premised on reciprocity. Not only China must adhere to its peaceful strategy, only when all countries would commit to peace '[all] countries in the world could co-exist peacefully' (Xi Jinping, 2015). China has extended its peaceful rise rhetoric to not only convince other countries that it is rising peacefully, but now also tries to persuade others to adopt the peaceful development-strategy.

An essay by minister of foreign affairs Wang Yi titled "Where Are the International Relations of the 21st Century Heading" outlines how China's peaceful rise policy could serve as a template for conducting international relations and is a clear example of how China is proactively promoting its vision to a broad audience. The first two elements of the new foreign policy strategy indicate that China is trying to prevent confrontation, by providing alternative institutions; persuading other countries with a peaceful rhetoric and offering a "new" approach to international relations. China thus tries to appeal to other countries by showing how different ideas and institutions could bolster development for all.

### **3.2 An Assertive Development 2.0?**

The last focus of Xi's 2.0 strategy, and most prominent in the debate on China's rise is the commitment "to forcefully protect China's national interests". In the year before the appointment of Xi, the idea that China had become assertive, if not, aggressive in its foreign policy gained ground. Driven by nationalist sentiments, China was accused of opposing or obstructing UN-policy, acting hostile in territorial disputes and seeing an increase in military activity (Christensen, 2011). Driven by nationalist pressures, this trend was seen to continue under Xi, whose speeches often contain elements arguing that China should protect its 'sovereignty, security, and developmental interests'. The idea is that China should use its more prominent position in the international arena to protect its national interests and not only focus appeasing to others. According to Zhang, the protection of national interests overshadows China's

first two elements of the peaceful development 2.0 strategy. Some scholars, therefore argue that the increasing military presence and nationalist tendencies are the fundamental drivers of China's new foreign policy, especially in the Asia-pacific region, apprehensively forcing neighbouring states to play by the rules of China (Wang, 2016). If hostility will take the overhand, this would mean a break with China's peaceful rise-strategy and could lead to indirect (North Korea) and maybe even direct conflicts (South China Sea) between the China, its neighbouring states and even between China and the US (Kupchan, 2007). Judging from the fact that China has greatly profited from its peaceful rise strategy for over 20 years, this last scenario should not be favoured by the Chinese. Although, ensuring economic growth will be increasingly difficult for China and some scholars therefore argue that domestic pressure could move the leadership to unexpected moves in order to retain its powerful position as the leadership of China (Wang, 2016). The question of the following sector therefore is: will China be able to continue to rise peacefully or is the use of force inevitable, given the domestic affairs, for China to continue rising?

#### **4. Is China able to Change the World Order?**

China's rise and the question if China can rise peacefully will be assessed in three different ways. First, the current academic debate on the rise of China will be explored to provide direction to this paper's endeavour of assessing the likely nature of China's rise. These perspectives are captured in a table and from this table follows that most scholars predict that the liberal world order will prevail, with China conforming and growing in power or else China is seen deflecting, challenging and squander. The main reason given for these two scenarios is that China lacks a compelling alternative developmental model with which it could challenge the liberal world order. Subsequently, a theoretical debate on power transitions, from both the realist and liberal perspective will provide a theoretical framework to the academic debate. Here the impact of the liberal multilateral institutions on power balancing and power transition theories is determined to be great. Lastly, with this notion in mind, the paper explores power balancing efforts of second-tier powers to see how the position of the US is challenged. The concept of resistance, and in particular the rhetoric of resistance, will show to provide the best analytical lens to study China's rise in a liberal world order.



## **4.1 The Future of the Liberal World Order**

The academic debate concerning the future of the liberal world order is roughly divided between two sides. On the one hand are scholars who see the liberal world order sustain; status-quo scholars. The other group consists of scholars who see the liberal world order disappear; which will be referred to as declinists. For scholars arguing in favour of the status quo, most predict that the US-centred liberal order will shift to a multipolar liberal order. Power will inevitably shift from the West to 'the Rest,' but all countries — including China — will conform to the liberal principles of today's world order. The most important reasoning is the lack of an alternative developmental model for the world order. Also, countries are simply too dependent on the (financial) international institutions, making change unlikely. Others argue that the liberal order will sustain because China, its main challenger, is too unstable (politically) to pose a threat to the liberal order (source). The declinists, instead predict the emergence of an illiberal multipolar order with significant power for the dissident regional powers who see little reason to sustain the current US-based world order. The world order that follows is, according to this view, multipolar, inward-looking and driven by realist geopolitics (see for example: Mead, 2016). There is however, another prominent view on the future of the world order; scholars who predict the emergence of a Sino-centred world order in which China will draft and inspire international institutions as well as other countries. This 'Sino-minded' perspective differs from the others with regard to its optimistic perception of Chinese cultural and political institutions and China's potential to inspire other countries.

### **4.1.1 Status quo scholars**

Most scholars see an optimistic future for the liberal order. One of the most important perspectives is given by Ikenberry (2014). He argues that, despite the changing position of Western powers; the liberal international order is alive. Emerging powers do not seek to change the order since they are profiting from it themselves. They only wish to gain more authority and leadership within it. Emerging countries clearly see the benefits of the liberal system. The economic growth of China, for example, has skyrocketed since the admittance to the WTO in 2001 and due to its trade and bi/multilateral relations based on liberal principles.

(Ash & Holbig, 2013) Moreover, while China is seen as illiberal and too assertive by for example Christensen (2011), liberalists argue that this will change once China becomes a larger actor in the international arena. This is because, Ikenberry argues, liberal cooperative institutions promote stability and enable growth. To illustrate, China's military rise and regional assertiveness agitates other countries. To de-escalate rising tensions and prevent economic and diplomatic relations to deter, China needs to cooperate in regional or global institutions and commit to international law and agreements in order to convince its neighbours that it is rising peacefully. So, therefore liberalists argue that China will embrace the liberal institutions of international cooperation to secure its own development (Steinfeld, 2010).

So, in the scenario where China fully embraces the liberal world order and manages to grow in the same pace as it does now, the greatest change possible to the liberal world order is the switch from a Washington-centred to a Beijing-centred network of global liberal institutions, and to most scholars, as we will see in section 4.3, even this change is unlikely. Then, if most scholars see China embracing the liberal world order, does this automatically mean that China will also embrace other Western norms and institutions such as democracy and human rights and freedoms?

#### **4.1.2 China will become like the West**

Most authors see Westernisation as the key to China's development (Shambaugh, 2016). In their view, China will first liberalise and then democratise. This is based on two assumptions; first, the Western principles of democracy and human rights proceed from the fundamental liberal principles of the liberal world order. So, if one were to adopt the liberal order, it will ultimately conform to the norms and values of the US-dominated liberal world order too (Shambaugh, 2016). Secondly, scholars argue that China simply lacks a persuasive, alternative developmental model and therefore is bound to conform to the principles of the contemporary world order (Steinfeld, 2010). Most scholars do not see the authoritarian, un-democratic political model of China as an example to other countries. This argument is primarily popular among realist scholars. In their eyes, China might surpass the US economically, but it will never have the power to attract other states with their political or cultural values. In fact, according to Zhang (2016) this au-

thoritarian political model will move the CCP-leadership to act too assertively in international affairs and lose its momentum. Alternatively, Shambough argues that the internal pressures of China (educated middle class, regional inequality, pressure from minority groups) will amplify the democratisation process of China and force the leadership to move away from this authoritarian regime (Shambough, 2016).

### **4.1.3 China has something to offer**

Not all scholars agree with the unattractiveness of China's developmental model. Jacques (2011) for example sees China not only growing economically, but says that there will be a growing "Sinification" of the world; meaning increasing political, cultural and ideological influence of China on the world. In his eyes, China must be recognised not only as an economic superpower, but as a great power founded upon distinctly different norms and values, of which the power can only be understood if viewed through the lens of China. In the view of Jacques, the reason China has not adopted Western normative political and cultural institutions is because Chinese civilisation has its own unique and effective institutions. China will therefore not become more like the West, but the (Western) world will learn to understand China due to its presence on the international stage, copy China's ideas and ultimately become more like China.

Another example of this 'Sinification' is given by the popularity of the 'Beijing Consensus'-developmental model (Ramo, 2004). This term was coined by Ramo as an alternative to the 'Washington Consensus'-developmental model. The latter, often imposed as a conditionality of World Bank loans, prescribes a set of neoliberal economic policies as the ultimate method to spark the economy for developing countries. While this method has proven effective for the United States, few developing countries have benefited from the 'Washington Consensus' approach to their development. China, for example did not accept the neoliberal policies ascribed by Washington and still developed unprecedentedly. Ramo, therefore argued in a 2016 interview that: "The idea of the Beijing Consensus is less that every nation will follow China's development model, but that it legitimises the notion of particularity as opposed to the universality of a Washington model" (The Diplomat, 2016). This model has gained prominence in many developing coun-

tries; who eagerly reach out to Beijing and receive aid and help without the neoliberal reforms that come with the Washington variant. In global terms, the 'Beijing-Consensus' instead opts a new global order founded on economic relationships, but which also recognises political and cultural difference as well as differences in regional and national practices within a common global framework. The debate concerning the 'Beijing-Consensus' shows that China does offer a distinct perspective on global affairs, attractive to different (developing) countries and significantly different to today's order.

## Academic perspectives on the rise of China

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### *Line of thought*

### Paper/Book

### Synopsis main argument

#### China will be no threat to the liberal world order

1. *China will embrace Liberal World Order*

- Ikenberry, G. J. (2015). 'The Future of Liberal World Order.'

"Emerging powers do not want to contest the basic rules and principles of the liberal international order; they wish to gain more authority and leadership within it."

2. *China must reform politically and adopt democratic principles*

- Shambaugh, D. (2016). 'China's Future.'

The CCP must become less authoritarian and more liberal for China to continue its unprecedented development

3. *China will act too assertively internationally and squander its momentum*

- Wang, W. Z., Brooks, S. G., & Wohlforth, W. C. (2016). 'Debating China's Rise and the Future of US Power.'

China will act assertively internationally to boost the regime's domestic legitimacy, yet it will not be able to out-compete the United States in the foreseeable future.

#### China is a threat to the liberal world order

4. *China's authoritarian model (Beijing Consensus) will replace/compete with the liberal world order (Washington Consensus)*

- Halper, S. (2010). 'Beijing consensus: how China's authoritarian model will dominate the twenty-first century.'

China's authoritarian model gains legitimacy by offering developing countries "no-strings-attached gifts and loans," rather than the Washington model of "promoting democracy through economic aid".

5. *China will be the central player in a world of 'contested modernity'*

- Jacques, M. (2009). 'When China rules the world: The end of the western world and the birth of a new global order.'

The rich and superior Chinese culture will rise again after 250 years and shape a world order unfamiliar to today's Western-made world.

6. *Geopolitics will dictate the international relations and lead to a decay of the U.S.-lead liberal institutions*

- Mead, W. R. (2014). 'The return of geopolitics: The revenge of the revisionist powers.'

Russia, Iran and China wish to regain their regional power and will use a geopolitical strategy to overthrow the US-dominance in their regions

## 4.2 A new perspective on changing the world order

### 4.2.1 Realist perspective

For realist scholars, a peaceful rise of China is impossible. Realists have put significant emphasis on the study of power changes in international relations (known as power transition theory) and have concluded that power transitions, in a situation where there is a hegemon (in our case the United States) that is challenged by a second power (China), always leads to war (Gilpin, 1988). This is because the second most powerful state is becoming rapidly more powerful, causing the most powerful state to react fiercely to the threat, which will eventually lead to a (hegemonic) war of which the outcome will determine the new rules and power relations in the world coined the 'phenomenon of uneven growth' by Gilpin. So, for realists, even though China attempts to rise peacefully, as long as China is rising and the hegemon is declining (gradually) this situation is unsustainable and will lead to war.

Gilpin has found that this change of political system follows a cyclical trajectory, starting with (1) a stable order. Here the hegemon has a military, economic and diplomatic advantage over all other powers, due to which it can shape the international order in such a way that it serves the economic and political interests of the hegemon (Patrick, 2016). In the case of the United States, this has been the period between 1991, after the fall of the Soviet Union until approximately the period surrounding the global financial crisis (Layne, 2006). Although some argue that the moment of hegemonic decline has not been reached yet by the US. As the hegemon, the United States laid out an international system based on Western values such as capitalism and democracy that still is relatively stable today (Nye Jr., 2017).

The second phase is known as the period of relative decline by the hegemon and a rise of power by secondary states. Important in this stage is that a process of "de-concentration and delegitimation of the hegemon's power" takes place (Schweller, 2005, p44). This period characterises itself by an increase in critique on the hegemon's behaviour and system. The process is accelerated due to the inclination of hegemons to overstretch and overspend in order to preserve their unipolar posi-

tion (Gilpin, 1988). In the case of the United States, convinced of its own developmental model as a template for the world, the US overcommitted in bringing peace and democracy to all areas in the world, resulting in high costs and US involvement in all areas of the world (Nye Jr. 2017). Consequently, imperial overstretch is a burden to the hegemon and an opportunity for second-tier powers. A rising state can decide to criticize behaviour of the hegemon on a range of issues. In the case of the US, one could for instance point at the critique on the military behaviour of the US in the middle east or on the failure/ineptitude of the neoliberal economic institutions during the global financial crisis (Haass, 2008). For the second greatest power, the idea is to delegitimise the order of the hegemony and prepare the world for an alternative (Gilpin, 1978). The preparation takes place in the third phase, in the form of arms build-ups and the formation of alliances. Since second-tier powers are not able to balance the power of the most dominant state alone, the strongest power will lead the formation of an alliance that will altogether try to balance and eventually attempt to overtake the power by expanding their military capacities and bundling their powers to challenge the hegemony (Paul, 2005). This process of rapid military expansion and imbalance will lead to the fourth phase; (4) a resolution of the international crisis, often through hegemonic war and finally the result of the war will lead to (5) system renewal.

Since war, for most realists, will be the outcome of all power struggles. A significant emphasis of realist research on the rise of China has been allocated to pinpointing if China (seen as the second most powerful state) will have the necessary military or technological power to balance the US. Brooks & Wohlforth (2016) here argue that China, for this reason will not be a threat to US hegemony, because it might catch up economically, but militarily and technologically speaking, the US leads by a long mile (see also section 2.2.1). So, for realists two things are clear. If China wishes to overthrow US hegemony, this will not be possible peacefully. Second, since China lacks the necessary technological and military capacities, it will not be able to overtake the US now nor in the coming decades (Wohlforth, 2016). So, if China wishes to challenge US-hegemony, an alliance is needed, where China must convince other powerful states that US rule is unsustainable, make them ready to engage in war and convince them that a(n) (Chinese) alternative world order is better.

The realist perspective thus presents a negative view on the fate of China's peaceful development strategy. Fortunately, it does give an interesting lens through which China's rise can be viewed. If power change is as systemic as Gilpin and Schweller say, in which stage are we now? Are we in the delegitimation stage? Or already in the stage of arms build-ups and alliances? If the former is true, can the establishment of Chinese multilateral institutions be seen as an act of delegitimation? If the latter is true, what alliances are being built? Or better say, which major countries are willing to militarily confront the United States? Since the answer to the last question is that only Russia and to a lesser extent Iran are powers (but too small to balance the US militarily) that could be swayed into an alliance, the latter case seems very unlikely (Mead, 2016). So, for China, if it wishes to rise peacefully and knows that it is militarily incapable of challenging the US, does this mean that a systemic change is simple inevitable and are therefore even acts of delegitimizing fruitless?

#### **4.2.2 The liberal dream**

According to liberals, today's system is different from political orders before, since it is rooted in liberal institutions and this difference has significant implications for the realist perspective on power relations (Patrick, 2016). This will thus also have consequences for the cycle of power transitions presented by Gilpin (Paul, 2005). According to liberals, the liberal world order is based upon and designed with realist ideas of power balancing and anarchism in mind, so to prevent an imbalance of power and the continuous contestation of power to emerge (Ikenberry, 2012). Since 1945, a liberal world order has been developed to tackle the issues that were seen as the root causes for war and conflict (such as the great wars). So, the primary idea of this order is to uphold peace and stability, and promote global prosperity through multilateralism, sovereign equality, international law and global interdependence (Nye Jr., 2017). Conflicts will be resolved through multilateral institutions and if states feel mistreated, they can appeal to international law to change this. These liberal institutions are seen as the key reason for states to not engage in hard balancing (the third phase of power transition theory: arms build-up and alliances) against the hegemon. Paul (2005) argues that most states have refrained from hard balancing because they view the United States as a constrained hegemon



whose power is checked by a multitude of factors. He primarily mentions the possession of nuclear weapons by some second-ranking powers and the presence of multilateral institutions as the most effective restraining factors (Paul, 2005 p44). Therefore, most states have forgone military balancing primarily because they do not fear losing their sovereignty and existential security to the reigning hegemon. To economic liberals, economic interdependence and, more recently, globalization disincline second-tier states from engaging in balance of power politics. Because, similar to the argument made by Ikenberry in section 4.2, these powers are linked by trade, investment, and commercial flows with the United States and the rest of the world. So, military competition could derail their economies. Liberals thus see the absence of hard balancing of power as a result of the liberal world order of today and as a clear sign that the likelihood of military confrontation, especially on the scale of a hegemonic war, in the future will be nihil. So, does this mean that countries refrain from any balancing and accept the hegemonic system of the United States?

### **4.3 Soft Balancing and resistance**

While hard balancing has become almost impossible in today's liberal world, this does not mean that great powers have decided to accept all of the hegemon's behaviour. Countries instead have moved towards a strategy of soft balancing. Contrary to hard balancing, soft balancing is a diplomatic strategy, where smaller powers build coalitions and make use of the multilateral institutions to balance hegemonic behaviour by the United States (Paul, 2005). The theory of soft power balancing was especially popular in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent retaliatory policies by the US as part of the war on terrorism. Soft balancing was therefore seen as the counter-measure by the second-tier powers to the hegemon's illiberal behaviour to start a war in Iraq despite a veto by the UN security council (Paul, 2005). What is interesting about the theory are the conditions under which soft balancing is possible. Soft balancing happens under two conditions. First, being "the hegemon's power position and military behaviour are of growing concern but do not yet pose a serious challenge to the sovereignty of second-tier powers" and secondly, the dominant state is a major source of public goods in both the economic and security areas that cannot simply be replaced (Paul, 2005). In section

4,3 is already shown that militarily the US will dominate the security relations of the coming decades and also economically the US will remain an important hub in the global economy. The first condition, however is currently not met. As stated earlier, soft balancing was used primarily during the heydays of the war on terrorism. However, if the US starts to portray illiberal behaviour or if the second-tier powers collectively come to this conclusion, soft balancing will most likely be used as the core strategy.

What makes soft balancing appealing to second-tier powers is that the dominant state cannot easily retaliate because the balancing efforts do not directly challenge the power position of the US with military means. In fact, soft balancing is legitimately using the institutions that were designed to balance powers (Ikenberry, 2012). So, by using existing liberal institutions, second-tier powers can legitimately constrain the power of the hegemon, without risking retaliation. Thus, if China can effectively increase its power within multilateral institutions, it will be able to better balance the power of the United States, even build soft balancing alliances with liberal great powers all without risking military confrontation or serious economic or diplomatic consequences.

#### **4.3.1 Resistance**

Soft balancing is mainly aimed at containing the influence of the hegemon and forcing the US (since it is a recent phenomenon) to play by the rules of the liberal institutions such as the UN (Paul, 2005). Schweller's notion of resistance takes the balancing argument a step further. Schweller emphasizes the idea that a shift from a unipolar to a multipolar liberal world order equals a change of system and thus triggers a process similar to Gilpin's power cycle (Schweller, 2011 p46). Since China is seeking to become more powerful and wishes to live in a multipolar world, China will be seen as a revisionist power by the United States and thus as a threat. Consequently, China must find a way to convince other countries that it is benevolent and harmless, but still provide effective resistance to the US hegemony. According to Schweller, this process is only possible in the second phase of Gilpin's power cycle; the delegitimizing phase. The ultimate goal of resistance is to "delegitimize the hegemon's global authority and order," so to create the conditions to replace the unipolar system (idem, p44). The concept of resistance consists of three elements to analyse the rise of China, the first: coined 'rightful resistance'

provides an explanation why China has embraced the liberal world order in the first place. The second and third, the rhetoric of resistance and the practice of resistance are strategies to delegitimize the ideology of the hegemon.

China's 'peaceful rise' can be seen as the ultimate adaptation of the idea of rightful resistance. This concept assumes that: "weak actors (1) partially and temporarily accept the legitimacy of the hegemon, and (2) take advantage of opportunities and authorized channels within the order to make relative gains and to contest particular behaviour of the hegemon" (idem, p50). Indeed, China's peaceful rise strategy has enabled the country to develop economically, militarily and diplomatically and positioned China well within the liberal world order. While as shown by for example, Jacques, China has rich culture with ideas, norms and values vastly different to the Western norms associated with the liberal world order, indicating that China is only using the liberal world order as a means to rise as a power. While rightful resistance is a good strategy to obtain a more influential position in the hegemon's world order, it is not a given that this will lead to contestation and delegitimizing of the hegemon's behaviour. In fact, according to Schweller, with this strategy the 'resistor' even risks to become socialised within the order, losing its ambitions to change it. This view is also popular in the academic debate, as shown in section 4.1.2. So, in our analysis we must test whether China is becoming socialized by the liberal order or whether it shows acts of resistance.

What then, are acts of resistance? In order for a country to successfully delegitimize the hegemon's behaviour, it must practice resistance and create a rhetoric of resistance (idem, 44). The practice of resistance has been the focus of most studies. They simply refer to strategies that can impose costs on a unipolar power in a variety of ways. Christensen (2011) for example has based his claim that China had become more assertive in global affairs on Chinese practices of resistance, such as China blocking US initiatives in the UN security council or rejecting rulings of the international court of justice. Moreover, the establishment of the AIIB explained in 4.3.1 can also be seen as an act of resistance. While acts of resistance are important, they are fruitless without a proper delegitimizing rhetoric.

### **4.3.2 Rhetoric of resistance**

China must move itself towards creating a rhetoric of resistance, to challenge the ideology of the hegemon. The idea of Schweller is that resisters should not only physically block or resist to the hegemon, but also ideologically. Because, only if a resister will be able to delegitimize the ideology of the hegemon, it can convince (former) allies of the hegemon that a change of system is necessary. This is because, in international politics, the concept of hegemony refers not only to economic and diplomatic domination, but also to ideological control, through the hegemon's virtual monopoly on social and cultural capital (Fairclough, 2009). To refer back to the soft balancing conditions, if China is able to convince other countries with a rhetoric of resistance that the ideology and rhetoric of the hegemon is harmful and/or inferior (meeting condition 1), soft balancing will occur, that enable the second-tier powers to form alliances and move the liberal world order in a different direction. With China then pursuing a strategy of institutionally accepted soft balancing, the United States has no ground for retaliation and will find it difficult to persuade allies to block China's acts of resistance and to see China as a threat. Again, the case of the AIIB is a fine example. Here, China has been able to persuade Western powers to support the establishment of a Chinese multilateral institution parallel to the existing Western institutions, despite efforts of the United States to oppose the AIIB (Heilmann, 2014). If China is able to create a convincing rhetoric that is delegitimising, US ideology and is also appealing to second-tier powers, it has a fair chance of challenging the US hegemony. Assessing whether China is already pursuing such a rhetoric of resistance can therefore be a very promising analytical tool and is something that has been looked over by the mainstream academic debate.

## **5. The Discourse of Globalism**

As the previous section has shown, for China to change the world order, it must delegitimize the hegemon's ideology. Today, the ideology of the US stretches far and has shaped the world significantly (Nye Jr., 2017). Since the 1970s and accelerated by the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US presented an ideology advocating the deregulation of markets, trade liberalisation, the privatization of state-owned enterprises and American values such as freedom and democracy (Kup-

chan, 2007). In that time, the US used its own rhetoric to sell their ideology to the world. According to Steger (2005), the US rhetoric was clustered around a single ‘buzzword’: globalisation.

Globalisation as a concept has been a much-debated topic academically. The term lacks a clear definition and is described as being a process, a force, an age or, like in this paper, even as an ideology (Steger, 2010). Central to most definitions, however is the idea that globalization encapsulates the growing interconnectedness and integration of economies, people, countries and cultures around the globe (Fairclough, 2009). In the midst of this confusion, the US has been able to prime the concept in the public realm. Ever since the 1970s, the concept has been deeply embedded in the world that has been shaped by the US (Nye Jr., 2017). According to Steger, the US notion of globalization has been strongly framed by one perspective; globalism. He argues that “Globalism is a discourse of globalization that represents it in reductive neoliberal economic terms within a strategy to inflect actual processes of globalization in that direction” (see also footnote 3). So, while globalization can be far more than just one perspective, the United States has managed to hegemonise the discourse on globalization and made the world believe that globalization equals globalism.

One of the key ways for the US to popularise the globalism-rhetoric is to relate globalization to keywords of the particular norms, values and ideas the United States wanted to spread globally. These keywords included for example: “modernisation”, “democracy”, “markets”, “free trade”, “liberalization”, “security” and “terrorism” (Fairclough, 2009 p2). As a result, globalization is often perceived by the public as processes of inter-connectivity and inter-dependency which will ultimately lead (or already have led) to the political, economic and cultural ideas of the US. This has enabled the US to use the concept globalisation to systematically legitimise the unipolar world order and the associated ideology of the US (Fairclough, 2005).

For China, delegitimizing globalisation and the ‘related’ globalism concepts should thus be a major focus and is of key importance if it wishes to change the world order. It is therefore a fruitful endeavour to analyse the rhetoric of China on globalisation. Likewise, analysing China’s rhetoric on globalization offers a great possi-

bility to see if China has accidentally fallen for the unintended outcomes of rightful resistance, as argued by many opponents of the liberal world order. That is the case (albeit only one indicator) if China is using the same globalist concept of globalization and the same rhetorical underlining as the United States.

### **5.1 Measuring Globalization**

Analysing discourse on the basis of a concept that has not yet been clearly defined in the academic world and is so complex as the concept of globalization seems to be unmeritorious. However, this research is not so much about the actual concept of globalization. Rather it focuses on the discourse surrounding the word, which generates imaginary representations of how the world will be like in their notion of the concept (Fairclough, 2009).

To help in this analysing process, this paper will use the six claims of globalists on the concept of globalisation, that altogether legitimise the worldview and related policies of the United States. The six claims are:

1. Globalization is about the liberalization and global integration of markets
2. Globalization is inevitable and irreversible
3. Nobody is in charge of globalization
4. Globalization benefits everyone
5. Globalization furthers the spread of democracy in the world
6. Globalization requires a war on terror

*From: Steger (2005) Ideologies of globalization p16-25*

The first claim is very important and resembles the idea that free-market capitalism is the most important driver of globalization. The more markets are liberalized and given the incentive, the more markets will interact and intertwine globally, and thus drive globalization. The first claim is used to globally unfold the economic neoliberal model of the US, which ultimately benefits the US the most. The second claim refers to the idea that globalization is a historic trend and that countries cannot (and should not) do anything to stop its processes. The third claim has been crucial to the rhetoric of the US, by claiming that the market is in control of globalisation (first claim), the concept of globalisation has been seen as a neutral factor. However, as Steger has pointed out, the globalist strategy of the US has created economic power imbalances that could be sustained by convincing other countries that this was not due to globalisation, since nobody is in charge of globalisation. The fourth claim is yet another rhetorical tool. The argument here is that globalisation should be pursued, because

even though it looks as if not everyone is benefiting right now - due to protectionism and unfavourable regulations - once the market becomes more deregulated, globalisation can take over and this will bring prosperity (one of globalisation's keywords) to everyone. So, the fourth claim helps to prove to the world that globalisation is a good phenomenon. The fifth claim emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union and became very popular at the change of the decade, and to date has a lot of proponents (see 4.1.2). The idea is that once countries start to develop economically, a middle class will emerge who will demand rights and ultimately call for democracy. Lastly, and most disputed, the United States has used the idea of globalisation as part of their war on terror rhetoric. The idea here is that a war on terror is necessary to bring peace and democracy to the middle east, which will stabilize the region, allow them to open their markets and benefit from globalization.

These six claims, together with their implicit arguments and keywords will be used in a comparative critical discourse analysis to the discourse used by Chinese politicians in order to find whether the discourses overlap or if there are differences. If there are differences between the discourses the Chinese rhetoric should then be critically opposing or rejecting the globalist claims of globalisation in order to be deemed a delegitimising rhetoric.

## **6. Methodology**

By gathering the narratives and rhetoric found by coding eight speeches of Xi Jinping and Wang Yi and comparing these to the abovementioned claims, an assessment will be made if China's notion of globalization is different to globalism and what the consequences of these differences (or similarities) are. This will be done on the basis of critical discourse analysis.

### **6.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

In the field of Critical Discourse Analysis significant attention is offered to the political context of the arguments, rhetoric and text style of the speech (Van Dijk, 1993). Hence, the first step will be to dissect, code and outline the arguments given in the speech. This process will take several steps. The first step concerns an open line-by-line coding round. This is to become familiarised with the data and to find initial patterns (Saldaña, 2015). Furthermore, the

data will be coded for values. Dissecting values from the speeches is important to understand the worldview and nature of the arguments and statements made in the speeches (Fairclough, 2013). In the second coding round the data is coded for patterns. By analysing the codes of the first round, patterns will emerge. The following step is to capture these patterns in explanatory narratives. Before drafting these narratives, the six criteria for globalism of Steger will be considered. These assumptions will be used and codes will be clustered around them. Codes advocating the inevitability of globalization will for example be clustered around assumption 2. By clustering these codes, the research wants to find how much of the globalization discourse of Xi and Wang overlaps with the ideas of Globalism. An important element of CDA is to assess power relations and in particular the imbalances (Fairclough, 2013). Specific attention in the analysis will therefore be laid upon questions such as: who is benefiting from this structure? Why is change necessary? Who is exploited? Is this rhetoric or policy beneficial for everyone or only for the initiator? On the basis of these criteria the paper wishes to find if China has a delegitimising rhetoric on globalization or not.

## **6.2 Which speeches to analyse and why?**

For this research seven speeches and one essay have been analysed, all given and distributed during the Xi-administration in the period between 2013-2017. Six of these speeches were addresses by Xi Jinping to global and domestic audiences and Wang Yi, minister of foreign affairs, gave the remaining speech and has written the essay. The speeches that will be analysed are Xi Jinping's addresses at: 1) the Boao Forum for Asia 2013; 2) the 70th general assembly of the United Nations; 3) the World Economic Forum 2017 at Davos; 4) the opening ceremony of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; 5) the One Belt One Road forum; 6) the Chinese nation with Xi's 2017 new year speech. The speeches by Wang Yi are: 1) an essay on China's plan for developing the international relations of the 21st century; and 2) a statement at the UN security council on North Korea.

The selection of these speeches is based upon the outcomes of the scholarly debate and the deligitimation theory of Schweller. In the academic debate, most scholars argue that China is embracing the liberal world order. For this reason, an important focus within the selection of the speeches has been laid on finding addresses by Xi and Wang to global audiences at the multilateral institutions of the liberal world order. Moreover, liberal institutions are at the core of globalisation and therefore provide the most logical venue for China to stress their view on globalisation. Similarly, the speeches at the opening of the Chinese multilateral institution will be analysed to look critically at the motives for China to establish the AIIB.



Other scholars have pointed at the alleged assertiveness of China under the Xi administration, especially in the region. Therefore, a speech at the Boao Forum for Asia is assessed and a recent speech by Wang Yi addressing the tensions on the Korean peninsula. These speeches allow to assess the claims of assertiveness in the region (what is China's rhetoric towards its neighbours?) and the speech on the North-Korea conflict helps to find if China opposes and delegitimises the US as the primary power in security conflicts.

### **6.3 Limitations**

While the process stated above appears straightforward, the analyses of these texts are actually very complex and several biases need to be taken into account.

Political speeches are for example written by professional writers and therefore specific attention must be brought to the explicit and implicit premises of the speech (Van Dijk, 1993). Subsequently, one must be aware that the found premises are subject to the ideological frame of reference of the observer. To minimise this bias, specific attention in the analysis will be paid to local coherence (Saldaña, 2015); the arguments given by Xi and Wang must be in line with Chinese literature, prior statements and/or strategic reports of the CCP. Every segment of arguments will therefore in the analysis be tested for local coherence in order to understand the meaning and truthiness of the given argument, premise or policy suggestion. Also, consistency and/or evolution of the arguments and policies stated in the speeches will be tested. This will be tested by detecting if the speeches present aligned views or if they contradict, between speakers and over the years.

Another important limitation is language. While most speeches have been written in English, some of the analysed speeches are an official translation of speeches in mandarin. The risk here is that some sentences might be interpreted differently if the original speech would have been analysed. Still, considering that these are official translations and each speech has been covered thoroughly by media and China watchers, the translated versions suffice for this analysis.

Other concepts of PDA provide guidelines to shape the analysis process. The study of semantics has for example shown that politicians will tend to emphasise all meanings that are positive about themselves and their own party or ideology and negative about the Others. Moreover, they will hide, mitigate, play-down, leave out critical reflections on their own group (Van Dijk, 1997).

The last limitation refers to the coding and the absence of multiple coders. Normally, coding schemes, codes and patterns will be formed by several coders and subsequently compared,

revised and combined, to obtain the most reliable results (Saldaña, 2015). Given that this thesis is written by one person and given the limited time and resources, this point has not been met whilst doing this research.

## **7. Analysis**

In the analysed speeches, the word globalization has been mentioned 17 times. Noteworthy is that the mentioning of the word globalization has always been paired with the adjective economic (economic globalization). So, globalization for the Chinese should be viewed – an embraced - only from an economic perspective. The word [economic] globalization only has a prominent role in the Davos speech and mentioned briefly in Xi Jinping’s address to the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations and a single time in Wang Yi’s essay on “Where are the international relations of the 21st heading” and twice by Xi at the One Belt One Road forum. The term ‘globalization’ has not been mentioned in Xi’s address at the opening ceremony of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, not in Xi’s new year speech 2017 and not in Xi’s speech at the Boao Forum on Asia’s development in 2013. Yet, as will be shown in the remaining of this analysis the speeches do contain a rhetoric that captures globalism and globalization and challenge the core claims of globalism, without mentioning globalization explicitly. First, the six core claims will be addressed. Some remaining clusters and keywords found in the analysis will be saved for the discussion.

### **7.1 Globalization is about the liberalization and global integration of markets**

Based on the narratives found in the speeches, globalization is only used by Xi and Wang to refer to economic processes. The word globalization is always accompanied by the adverb ‘economic’ (economic globalization) and used to describe the process of integration into or the overall development of the ‘global economy’. So, globalization does not only contain an economic dimension, it is seen as an economic term by the Chinese. China realizes the importance of the economic dimension within globalization and is keen to separate this rhetorically from other aspects such as culture and political model. Liberalization is often mentioned negatively, whereas the global integration is seen as a positive development. While economic globalisation overall is seen as a positive trend, the rhetoric of Xi and Wang is not as libertarian as the globalism discourse. Contrary to globalism’s idea of promoting market incentives and deregulation, Xi argues that combining “both the invisible hand and the visible hand ... will achieve both efficiency and fairness” (UN speech). Liberalisation is often rhetorically

compared to efficiency in the speeches. Efficiency is important and leads to economic growth, but is also unfair, and primarily benefitting the established MNEs and countries, the reasoning goes. Therefore, China sees an important role for (international) governance (the visible hand) to structure development. Fairness should be brought by both national as well as international governance (see also Globalization benefits everyone). The role of China overall sees a more important position for governance within the global economy. “Encourage greater cooperation between government and private capital” So development is possible through liberalization and especially in the Davos speech, this point comes across. But both private and public investments should be embraced and are seen as necessary. There is thus an important difference in the Chinese notion of economic globalization and the US/globalist notion. The former sees a combination of both the visible and invisible hand while the latter only stresses the benefits of the invisible hand.

## **7.2 Globalization is inevitable and irreversible**

Central to the Globalism discourse on globalization is the idea that globalization is inevitable and nothing can be done to stop this trend. Xi’s administration seems to confirm this assumption. In the Davos speech, Xi calls economic globalization a: “natural outcome of scientific and technological progress.” This premise leads Xi to conclude that economic globalization is a historical trend. The latter statement is repeatedly used in the Davos speech, Xi’s UN address and in the essay of Wang Yi. Also, the irreversibility aspect of [economic] globalization can be found in the globalization discourse of the analysed speeches. While most speeches contain the implicit understanding that economic globalization is the only way forward, the irreversibility aspect is made explicit in the Davos speech with the statement: “the global economy is the big ocean that you cannot escape from”. So, while Xi and Wang only refer to economic globalisation, they do stress the inevitability and irreversibility of [economic] globalisation processes. China thus seems to agree with the globalism discourse that globalization, at least economically is an inevitable and irreversible trend.

## **7.3 Nobody is in charge of globalization**

China strongly differs from the US with regard to claim 3. Where the globalist claim is that the market is in control and thus nobody is in control, China emphasizes the fact that the countries themselves are (partly) in control. As shown in sector 7.2, China sees economic globalization as an inevitable process, however, this does not mean that countries are powerless in this integration. All countries should view globalization [through their] “respective

national conditions and embark on the right pathway of integrating into economic globalization with the right pace.” According to the Chinese argument, the process of globalization and the economic growth associated with it is thus dependent on a country’s willingness to embrace globalization. So, countries need incentives to open up and embrace the global economy. This is where the international aspect of China’s discourse comes into play. China emphasizes that the “leaders of our time” have the ability to “steer” the global economy out of difficulty (Davos). The term “steering” readily implies that someone or something is able to change the direction of economic globalization, and that not only the market is able to do this. Such “steering” is possible via the global economic governance system. Currently, said institutions are inadequate in terms of representation and inclusiveness. The current institutions are favourable towards developed countries, while emerging markets and developing countries contribute to most of the economic growth. So, if the global economy should be steered out of difficulty, it should become more inclusive and pursue reform. This will make developing countries more open towards the global economy and so growth will be sustained. So, China’s rhetoric does not stress that nobody is in charge of globalization, but spreads the idea that all countries are – or should be - in charge of globalization. Here China is also keen to point out their own role in this process. With multilateral institutions such as the AIIB and the new development bank, China emphasizes that it is contributing “to the building of an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy” (Future IR speech). Thus, giving clear examples of how the country, through multilateral institutions, is helping to guide globalisation.

#### **7.4 Globalization benefits everyone**

Similar to the globalist perspective on globalization, the discourse of Xi and Wang contains many keywords such as “economic growth”, “prosperity” and “development.” The benefits of globalization are often emphasized through empirical arguments. Lines such as: “China also had doubts about economic globalization ... but embracing the global economy has proved to be a right strategic choice” are characteristic for the Chinese rhetoric in favour of economic globalization. This however does not indicate that China sees the market-driven variant of globalism benefit everyone. China mainly argues that potentially everyone could benefit from economic globalization, but right now not everyone [or all countries] are able to do so (see 7.3).

### **7.5 Globalization furthers the spread of democracy in the world**

The discourse of Xi and Wang clearly opposes this element of the globalism discourse. In fact, the word democracy has only been mentioned twice in all the speeches and both times it referred to China being a democratic country already, which is a claim contested by many Westerners. Such contestation, however, is detrimental for development and belongs to an ‘outdated mind-set,’ according to the Chinese rhetoric. China argues that: every country is unique and these differences should be embraced and understood. This rhetoric sometimes is very clear in the argumentation of Xi and Wang. Development, one of the keywords in all speeches; is bound by national conditions and therefore unique. Each country should “explore development paths suited to their national conditions.” The rest of the world should respect such choices instead of criticizing them. Wang has clearly phrased this idea by stating that: “countries should respect each other and treat each other as equals on the basis of shelving differences and seeking common ground.” China too acknowledges that the world is becoming inter-dependent and that everyone can become more prosperous. However, to the Chinese this will not necessarily lead to democracy, but to a system where people will engage in people-to-people exchanges to learn about each other’s cultures and create mutual understanding and respect. China pursues a strong rhetoric favouring cultural relativism on this particular matter.

### **7.6 Globalization requires a war on terror**

In all speeches, Xi and Wang have stressed the importance of peace and stability for development. In four of the eight speeches, the word ‘peace’ has been mentioned over 15 times. Peace is a precondition for development to the Chinese and for this reason conflict should be prevented at all costs. In the UN speech, China contrasts war, poverty and backwardness with peace, development and progress. Moreover, in the OBOR speech, where terrorism is particularly addressed, Xi stresses the importance of “addressing both its symptoms and root causes” here he mentions poverty and social injustice as the root causes, and development as the “master key to solving all problems”. Development should not be brought with war or a regime change, but via trade and investment in manufacturing and infrastructure through both public as well as private capital (One Belt One Road speech). While one can ask whether it is the middle east who is benefiting here the most or if it is China, who will be on the first row if development catches up in the Middle East (this is what China refers to as win-win cooperation). One can argue that at least war rhetoric is not being used by China and that this rheto-

ric shows that a war on terrorism is not necessary to bring development to the middle east. Moreover, China is open on its plans to also profit from the development of other regions.

## **8. Discussion**

It is generally known by IR scholars that Chinese leaders choose their words carefully and that their speeches are written with great precision. The discourse analysis of China's globalisation rhetoric seems to confirm this wisdom. For all but one of the claims, the rhetoric of the Xi-administration contained contradictory (resistance) elements to the globalism-rhetoric. The pairing of globalisation with the adverb economic is perhaps the best example of this rhetoric of resistance. As shown by the analysis, and by for example Zhang (2015), China is keenly aware of the neoliberal underlining of the US' globalisation discourse. Emphasising the inequality and risks involved with liberalisation and stressing the elements of control ('steering') and fairness that financial multilateral institutions can bring fits perfectly in the grand strategy of China. One of the additional patterns found in the coding process is China's wish to reform the global (financial) governance system. China attempts to create parallel multilateral institutions to challenge the established international order (Heilmann, et al.,2014). The rhetoric of balancing efficiency against fairness and control is appealing to many countries, for developing countries because the prospect of more influence and development is appealing and to developed countries such a rhetoric is interesting because it can open up new markets their lagging economies are looking for, if China can deliver trustworthy institutions to ensure low risk, high reward. The rhetoric of Xi's speech at the opening of the AIIB therefore focused on two elements, the ambition to make the AIIB a "high standard institution" according to the international standards (to appeal developed countries) and on the prospects for development with thereby the task of the AIIB to "accommodate the diverse needs of [its] developing members." While this finding is based on a limited pool of speeches, it does provide an interesting insight in the elaborate use of rhetoric by Chinese politicians in its strategy to establish its own multilateral institutions and gain the support from US allies. Further research could substantiate these findings.

Within the academic debate, much discussion concerned the fact that China increasingly embraces liberal institutions and argued that China would most likely Westernize too. As shown by the discourse analysis and argued by "Sino-minded" scholars, China has a distinct culture

that should be respected and will most likely influence other states in the near future. This idea has become very explicit in the patterns that were found. China explains this idea by providing a new view on international relations, based on equality and peace, and by showing how much China invests in other cultures and in the promotion of cultural understanding.

In all speeches, an idealistic scenario has been sketched introduces a "new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation". According to this "new" vision, countries must view IR as a positive-sum game, wherein countries should cooperate, integrate, respect each other, avoid conflict and mutually benefit from diplomatic and trade relations; creating win-win scenarios for everyone. Strategically central to this new philosophy is peace and development. By emphasising these two concepts, China wishes to create a "community of shared future". The assumption is that every country aspires to develop. Peace is universally seen as a pre-condition to development and progress. In all speeches, Xi and Wang exemplify this argument by emphasizing the negative effects on development during times of confrontation, conflict and turmoil, and by illustrating the link between peace, stability and development. The second element is the emphasis on 'common interests'. China argues that the interconnectedness and interdependencies of countries have converged interests of countries. Instead, China opts for international relations based on mutual benefiting. "The zero-sum mentality of the Cold War" should be abandoned. Via dialogue, cooperation and cultural exchange, countries must find common ground and create a 'community of shared future with shared benefits'. All these ideas are laid out in all eight speeches and provide a holistic view to China's new approach. If China were to make all of this possible, it does not have to overthrow the liberal world order entirely, instead it will rise on the basis of soft power and through soft balancing it can build alliances with other powers to dethrone the United States. Admittedly, these ideas are only drafted from the discourse and rhetoric provided in the speeches. Some scholars will argue that China's behaviour in bilateral relations concerning its neighbours provide an entirely different story, and also realist theories will debunk this idea. Even Schweller, whose resistance concept is one of the core elements of this thesis argues that such a peaceful transition is not possible. Still, if China is able to persuade other countries with this rhetoric and live up to its expectations, it will become a great power that could either peacefully or violently (if the US would adopt retaliatory measures) change the world.

## 9. Conclusion

Based on the academic review and theoretical perspectives, the main questions were, is China able to rise peacefully? Will China conform to the liberal institutions? And does China have a resistance discourse vis-à-vis the United States? After determining that analysing China's rhetoric of resistance on Globalization would be the right lens for answering these questions, the research question was formed into: do the Speeches of Xi Jinping and Wang Yi resemble the Globalism-discourse of the United States or does the Xi-administration provide an alternative developmental model?

Based on the analysis of the globalization discourse of the Xi-administration this paper can conclude that there is a difference between the globalism discourse of the US and the discourse of the Xi-administration. The rhetoric of the Xi-administration differed from the six core claims of Globalism on five points. Here it also provided a rhetoric of resistance by debunking the claims made by the United States. Interestingly, China seems to embrace the liberal world order and seeks to increase its influence and challenge the order of the US by creating multilateral institutions. Moreover, the rhetoric of China focused on cultural diversity and seeking common ground through dialogue and exchange also explained how the country can embrace liberal institutions without adopting the Western norms and values that are associated with it according to some scholars. Overall, the discourse provided many narratives that could be interesting for further research.

As for any finding in this study, the sample might be too small to give academically viable indications of China's globalization rhetoric, but what has become very clear in this endeavour is how well critical discourse analysis is suited for assessing whether China pursues delegitimation strategies or not. Especially comparing the narratives and codes founded after analysing the speeches serves to be a fine analytical tool to gain results. Moreover, the potential for further research and different perspectives is very high. The carefulness of Chinese speech-writing and diplomacy, together with the fine margins of resistance in a liberal world order, where hard power balancing is difficult, makes conducting CDA to elements of the rise of China a fruitful endeavour and therefore this paper highly recommends this analytical method.



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## Appendix A

### **Overview of analysed speeches**

1. “Working Together Toward a Better Future for Asia and the World”  
– Xi Jinping’s address to the Boao Forum for Asia (7 April 2013)
2. Statement XI Jinping at the General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly (28 September 2015)
3. Address by President Xi Jinping of China at the Opening Ceremony of The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (16 January 2016)
4. China's Answer to the Question "Where Are the International Relations of the 21st Century Heading" By Wang Yi Minister of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China (20 June 2016)
5. Xi Jinping New Year Speech 2017 (31 December 2016)
6. President Xi's speech to Davos (17 January 2017)
7. Stay Committed to the Goal of Denuclearization Uphold Peace and Stability on the Peninsula, address to the United Nations Security Council by Wang Yi (28 April 2017)
8. President Xi's speech at opening of Belt and Road forum (14 May 2017)