



Article

Will China be a New Type of Great Power?

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Abstract

How will China's rise to great power status affect its foreign policy and world order? This article argues that China's future policies will depend on how it defines its identity relative to the United States and other powers, and how others respond to China's self-definition. For insights, I draw on social identity theory (SIT), from social psychology, which holds that states seek to maintain a positive but distinctive identity. China wants to restore its previous status as a great power, but at the same time to preserve its culture and norms, without assimilating Western liberal values. According to SIT, states that want to improve their status may pursue social mobility, social competition, or social creativity. Social creativity seeks to attain pre-eminence in a different domain from that of the leading powers. Social creativity—the strategy that China has generally followed since the end of the Cold War—appears to be the most desirable and feasible path for China's rise and peaceful integration into the international system.

In his speech on November 29, 2014 to the Foreign Affairs Work Conference (FAWC)—the first to be held since 2006—Chinese President Xi Jinping exhorted the assembled Chinese officials to develop for China a 'distinctive diplomatic approach befitting its role as a major country', stressing that China must 'conduct diplomacy with a salient Chinese feature and a Chinese vision'.¹

Traditionally, rising powers adopt more expansive goals to shape the rules and norms of the international system to suit their interests.² China is sensitive to how others perceive it, putting emphasis on maintaining 'face' and preoccupied with restoring to the country its

1 Michael D. Swaine, 'Xi Jinping's Address to the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs: Assessing and Advancing Major-Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics', *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 46 (2015), p. 5, <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/clm46ms.pdf>.

2 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

former status as a pre-eminent power.³ How, then, will China's eventual attainment of great power status affect its foreign policy and the world order? This article argues that China's future policies will depend on how it defines its identity relative to that of the United States and other major powers, and how others respond to China's self-definition.

My argument draws on social identity theory (SIT), which argues that states seek to maintain a positive but distinctive identity.⁴ Consistent with SIT, China wants to restore its former status as a great power, but at the same time to preserve its culture and norms without assimilating Western liberal values. According to SIT, states that want to improve their status may pursue social mobility, social competition, or social creativity. Social mobility emulates the values and norms of higher status group members in order to be admitted to their club. Social competition aims at replacing the dominant group at the top of the status hierarchy by surpassing it in its domain of superiority. Social creativity seeks to attain pre-eminence in a different area from that of the other leading powers. Social creativity—the strategy that China has generally followed since the end of the Cold War—appears to be the most desirable and feasible path for China's rise and peaceful integration into the international system.

The next section reviews leading theoretical predictions on the implications of China's rise to great power status. That following presents the concepts and hypotheses of SIT, and their implications for China's future behaviour. The third section summarizes China's foreign policy during the Cold War under Mao Zedong as a basis for contrast with the changes Deng Xiaoping made to foreign policy strategy through the 'reform and opening up' policy. The fourth section is structured chronologically according to the leading concepts that a succession of Chinese leaders proposed for Chinese foreign policy as part of a social creativity strategy.

Debates on the Implications of China's Rise

At the end of 2014, China's economy officially overtook that of the United States to become the world's largest, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), measured in purchasing power parity.⁵ China is thus expanding its power and economic influence

- 3 Yong Deng, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
- 4 For the seminal works on social identity theory, see Henri Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978); Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', in William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, eds., *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1979), pp. 33–47; and Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For applications of social identity theory to international relations, see Jonathan Mercer, 'Anarchy and Identity', *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1995), pp. 229–52; Peter Hays Gries, 'Social Psychology and the Identity-conflict Debate: Is a "China Threat" Inevitable?', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2005), pp. 235–65; Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy', *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2010), pp. 63–95.
- 5 Keith Fray, 'China's Leap Forward: Overtaking the US as World's Biggest Economy', *Financial Times*, 8 October, 2014, <http://blogs.ft.com/ftdata/2014/10/08/chinas-leap-forward-overtaking-the-us-as-worlds-biggest-economy/>.

over the rest of the world. How will that power transition affect China's foreign policy? Some realist scholars suggest that, as its power grows, China will seek to displace the United States as the dominant power in East Asia, so driving a wedge between the United States and its Asian allies and supplanting American access to markets and raw materials. When it becomes sufficiently powerful, China might also reject important international rules, norms, and institutions that are no longer congruent with its interests. Generally speaking, rising powers such as China want to alter territorial boundaries, as well as such institutions and international rules and norms that were put in place when they were weak.⁶ According to this line of thinking, China's rise to great power status will inevitably undermine US influence and standing. Competition between states is zero-sum, and an enhanced position for China will necessarily be at the expense of the United States.

Contrary to realists, however, some scholars believe that a return to the historical pattern of China's dominance over East Asia would not necessarily be conflictual or destabilizing.⁷ Liberals hold that China is deeply embedded in the global economy; hence that economic interdependence and the potential cost of aggression act as restraining forces on Chinese foreign policy.⁸ Constructivists suggest that China's identity is influenced by interactions with others, and that China is increasingly being socialized, through its participation in international institutions, into accepting international norms.⁹

These scholarly analyses neglect the role of China's identity in shaping its future foreign policy, and in particular the availability of alternative identities from which China's leadership may choose.¹⁰ Closely linked to identity choices is the question of China's relative

- 6 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), chapter 10; Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); John J. Mearsheimer, 'The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2010), pp. 381–96; Ashley J. Tellis, 'U.S.-China Relations in a Realist World', in David Shambaugh, ed., *Tangled Titans: The United States and China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), pp. 75–102; Denny Roy, *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).
- 7 See, for example, David Shambaugh, 'China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order', *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2004/05), pp. 64–99; David C. Kang, 'Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks', *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2003), pp. 57–85; David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
- 8 G. John Ikenberry, 'The Rise of China and the Future of the West', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (2008), pp. 23–37; G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
- 9 Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Qin Yaqing and Wei Lin, 'Structures, Processes, and the Socialization of Power: East Asian Community-building and the Rise of China', in Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng, eds., *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 115–38.
- 10 For exceptions, see Lowell Dittmer and Samuel Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Gilbert Rozman, 'China's Quest for Great Power Identity', *Orbis*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1999), pp. 383–402; Ren Xiao, 'The Rise of a Liberal China?', *Journal of Global Policy and Governance*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2013), pp. 85–103.

status in the world. While it is clear that many Chinese want their country to be recognized as a great power, what does that aim imply in terms of policy choices? Will China strive to equal or surpass US military power in efforts to be recognized as an equal? Should China develop an opposing alliance system? To answer these questions, I turn to SIT, an enduring and vibrant theoretical tradition in social psychology that originated in Europe and later migrated to the United States.

Social Identity and Status

A social identity refers to that ‘part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’.¹¹ Social groups include nationality, ethnicity, occupation, class, and gender. Groups are social categories that help to orient the individual to the environment by classifying, segmenting, and ordering the social world.¹² By reducing complexity to a limited number of categories, social groups help people make sense of an otherwise overwhelming situation.

Social groups also help to form a person’s identity. Each group includes certain characteristic attributes and a set of prescriptions on how individuals should behave as members.¹³ In the modern era, states and nations increasingly define people’s sense of who they are. A sense of Chinese identity began to develop under the Qing dynasty in the late 19th century, partly as a result of Western and Japanese imperialistic pressure.¹⁴ Previously, China had viewed itself largely as a historic, enduring, morally superior civilization, and not as a unified nation state. An identity is both objective (in that it describes measurable qualities) and subjective (in that it describes self-image as well as others’ opinions). Because an identity is subjective, a state’s view of its identity may diverge from how others see it—often an important cause of international conflict, as in the Western dispute with Russia over Ukraine, which is motivated in part by Russia’s sense that its great power status has not been adequately respected by Europe and the United States.¹⁵

A social identity is both relative and comparative. The qualities of groups—such as wealth, intelligence, beauty, and achievement—have no meaning other than in comparison with those of other groups. Members evaluate their respective groups through reference to similar out-groups. Being superior on important dimensions contributes to a positive social identity and enhances well-being, whereas negative comparisons are aversive.¹⁶ States usually have a reference state through which to evaluate their qualities and achievements. As a

- 11 Henri Tajfel, ‘Social Categorization, Social Identity, and Social Comparison’ in Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation between Social Groups*, p. 63.
- 12 Tajfel and Turner, ‘Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict’, p. 40.
- 13 Michael A. Hogg, Deborah J. Terry, and Katherine M. White, ‘A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory’, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (1995), pp. 259–60.
- 14 William T. Rowe, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 210–211, 236–37.
- 15 Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, ‘Russia Says No: Power, Status, and Emotions in Foreign Policy’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 47, Nos. 3–4 (2014), pp. 269–79.
- 16 Tajfel and Turner, ‘An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict’, p. 40.

state's power grows, it may adopt a new, higher status reference group as a benchmark to evaluate its achievements. For example, Poland was originally compared with other former communist states in Eastern Europe, but after a decade of economic growth averaging 4% each year, it is more often grouped with the larger European Union (EU) states—Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Spain.¹⁷

Within a community, there is a general consensus on how each group is ranked vis-à-vis other groups according to valued attributes such as wealth, power, or occupational prestige. Status refers to a group's overall place in the social hierarchy. Because the group is part of the self, people prefer to belong to high-status groups and are reluctant to be identified with low-status groups. Being a member of the latter type damages collective self-esteem.¹⁸ The same principle applies to the international system, wherein states are consensually rated in terms of wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, socio-political organization, and diplomatic clout.¹⁹

Groups are motivated to adopt strategies that achieve or maintain positive comparisons with other groups.²⁰ According to SIT, groups strive for social identities that are positively distinctive. Therefore, group members want to be both better on relevant dimensions than other groups and different from them as well.²¹ When the group is inferior to a reference group according to important characteristics, its members may be motivated to undertake one of three identity management strategies—social mobility, social competition, or social creativity. The choice of one strategy over another depends on the perceived permeability of the higher status group's boundaries, and on the legitimacy and stability of the status hierarchy.

If the boundaries of a higher status group are permeable, to gain acceptance into it a lower status group may adopt the norms of that group through a social mobility strategy.²² In the same way as individuals who want to be accepted as part of the upper class emulate the values and norms of the wealthy,²³ states may also adopt the political and economic norms of the dominant states to gain entry into elite clubs or institutions. For example, since 1989, Eastern European states have adopted liberal democratic institutions and capitalism in order to be accepted as European states, rather than Balkan countries, symbolized by admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU.²⁴

Emulation of the values and institutions of the leading powers, then, is what distinguishes a social mobility strategy. However, imitation of the behaviour of great powers—

- 17 'A Golden Opportunity: Special Report, Poland', *The Economist*, 28 June, 2014, pp. 1–2.
- 18 Ad van Knippenberg and Naomi Ellemers, 'Strategies in Intergroup Relations', in Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, eds., *Group Motivation: Social Psychological Perspectives* (New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 20–21.
- 19 Deborah Welch Larson, T.V. Paul, and William C. Wohlforth, 'Status and World Order', in T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, and William C. Wohlforth, eds., *Status in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 7.
- 20 Hogg, Terry, and White, 'A Tale of Two Theories', p. 260.
- 21 Tajfel and Turner, 'Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', pp. 40–41.
- 22 Tajfel, 'Achievement of Group Differentiation', *Differentiation between Social Groups*, pp. 93–94; Tajfel and Turner, 'Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', p. 43.
- 23 Murray Milner, Jr., *Status and Sacredness: A General Theory of Status Relations and an Analysis of Indian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 35–36.
- 24 John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

such as hosting the Olympics, deploying aircraft carriers, acquiring nuclear missiles, having a regional sphere of influence, or maintaining a space programme—all conventional status markers—does not necessarily denote a social mobility strategy. After all, the Soviet Union possessed all these status markers. It depends on the state's goal. Social mobility seeks acceptance and membership in elite clubs.

When opportunities for mobility are limited because elite clubs are not permeable to new members, and the status hierarchy is regarded as *illegitimate* (unfair or morally wrong) or unstable (capable of being changed), then the lower status group may resort to social competition. In this instance having an inferior status is not sufficient to mobilize the group to change its position. Minority groups sometimes accept their lower standing if they have internalized the dominant society's ideology justifying inequality.²⁵ Also important is stability—whether or not status relations between groups are perceived as changeable in the near future. To undertake competition against the dominant group, the lower status group must believe that it might succeed in reordering the relationship. Shifting status relations allows the lower status group to conceive of occupying a higher position.²⁶

The social competition strategy attempts to equal or best the dominant group in its area of superiority. The goal is to reverse the relative positions of the two groups in the status hierarchy.²⁷ Since status in international relations is usually based on a combination of military and economic power, social competition entails geopolitical rivalry, such as arms racing, competing for spheres of influence, military demonstrations of the latest weapons, military intervention in a smaller power aimed at influencing other's perceptions, and/or acting as a spoiler. Social competition is about the group's relative position, which means that it is zero-sum.²⁸ The Anglo-German naval rivalry before WWI, wherein Germany sought to surpass the number of battleships that Great Britain had, is an example of social competition.²⁹ Similarly, during the Cold War, the US–Soviet space race was as much about prestige and pride as national security. As then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson said, 'Failure to master space means being second best in every aspect, in the crucial arena of our Cold War world. In the eyes of the world first in space means first, period; second in space

- 25 Tajfel and Turner, 'Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', p. 44; Naomi Ellemers, Henk Wilke, and Ad van Knippenberg, 'Effect of Legitimacy of Low Group or Individual Status on Individual and Collective Status-Enhancement Strategies', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 63, No. 5 (1993), pp. 766–78; Jean S. Phinney, 'When We Talk About American Ethnic Groups, What Do We Mean?', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 51, No. 9 (1996), pp. 918–27.
- 26 B. Ann Bettencourt, Nancy Dorr, Kelly Charlton, and Deborah L. Hume, 'Status Differences and In-Group Bias: A Meta-Analytic Examination of the Effects of Status Stability, Status Legitimacy, and Group Permeability', *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 127, No. 4 (2001), pp. 520–42.
- 27 Tajfel and Turner, 'Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', p. 44.
- 28 John C. Turner, 'Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Intergroup Behaviour', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1975), pp. 5–34.
- 29 Michelle Murray, 'Identity, Insecurity, and Great Power Politics: The Tragedy of German Naval Ambition Before the First World War', *Security Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (2010), pp. 656–88; Reinhard Wolf, 'Rising Powers, Status Ambitions, and the Need to Reassure: What China Could Learn from Imperial Germany's Failures', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2014), pp. 185–219.

is second in everything.³⁰ Some analysts believe that China is engaged in competition with the United States for global power status.³¹

Although social competition may include actions that seem to imitate the leading state, the goal of seeking such status markers is to supplant the dominant state in the status hierarchy rather than acceptance into elite clubs. Another difference between social competition and social mobility is that the former does not require acceptance of the values and institutions of the higher status states—indeed social competition may involve promoting a rival ideology or value system, as the Soviet Union did during the Cold War.

If the existing status hierarchy is viewed as legitimate (fair or justifiable) and/or stable (unlikely to change), a lower status group may exercise social creativity. Social creativity entails either re-evaluating an ostensibly negative characteristic as positive or identifying alternative dimensions of comparison on which the group ranks highly. A classic example of the first tactic would be the African-American ‘Black is beautiful’ slogan of the 1960s.³² Under the context of international relations, Li Dazhao, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), argued that despite being an agricultural country and not having an industrial proletariat, China was nevertheless uniquely qualified to participate in the proletarian struggle because the Chinese people had been oppressed by imperialism, so rendering the entire country a member of the world proletariat. Economic backwardness thus became an advantage in making China more revolutionary than the advanced capitalist Western nations.³³ An illustration of the latter tactic of identifying a new dimension on which to gain status is that of an experiment where psychology majors who had scored lower in IQ tests than physics majors viewed their group as more creative.³⁴

In international relations, this form of social creativity would entail identifying dimensions on which to be superior other than geopolitical power, the usual status criterion. Traditionally, to gain admittance to the great power club a state would need to possess outstanding military capabilities, typically demonstrated through victory over another major

- 30 Walter A. McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 8.
- 31 Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015); Mingfu Liu, *The China Dream: Great Power Thinking and Strategic Posture in the Post-American Era* (New York: CN Times Books, 2015); Yan Xuetong and Qi Haixia, ‘Football Game Rather than Boxing Match: China-US Intensifying Rivalry Does not Amount to Cold War’, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2012), pp. 105–27.
- 32 Tajfel and Turner, ‘Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict’, pp. 43–44; Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 28–29. For application of the concept of social creativity to US relations with China, see Peter Hays Gries, ‘Social Psychology and the Identity-Conflict Debate: Is a ‘China Threat’ Inevitable?’, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2005), pp. 235–65.
- 33 V. Kubáľková and A. A. Cruickshank, *Marxism and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 110; Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 69.
- 34 Russell Spears, Bertjan Dossje, and Naomi Ellemers, ‘Self-stereotyping in the Face of Threats to Group Status and Distinctiveness: The Role of Group Identification’, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (1997), pp. 538–53.

power in war.³⁵ But states may use social creativity to gain status outside the traditional geopolitical dimension by promoting new international norms or principles of world order. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru achieved additional status for India by promoting the issues of world peace and nuclear disarmament, decolonization, racial equality, development aid for newly independent states, and restructuring the United Nations (UN). Nehru thus imbued Indian foreign policy with a moral dimension, denouncing power politics and promoting international cooperation, opposing military preparations for war in favour of negotiation, and advocating peaceful coexistence with rather than containment of communism. As a result, India had a far larger global profile than its poor, developing economy, and weak military would otherwise have warranted.³⁶

As status requires recognition from others, for social creativity to succeed the dominant group must accept that the new dimension the aspiring group identifies is important and one on which the status-seeking group ranks highly.³⁷ The higher status group may be willing to recognize the other's social creativity because it highlights an alternative dimension that does not affect the basis of that superior group's high status.

While status is normally measured in relative terms, because social creativity in international relations seeks status outside of the traditional realm of geopolitical power, it is possible for a state to gain higher status without diminishing the standing of the leading state. Hence state A may be recognized as superior on dimension X while State B is superior on dimension Y.³⁸ The availability of alternative dimensions through which to gain recognition and standing means that achieving higher status is not necessarily a zero-sum game that entails loss of position by the leading power. SIT calls into question the pessimistic view of many American and Chinese analysts wherein China's rise status will generate international conflicts due to the zero-sum nature of status.³⁹ For example, since the end of WWII, Germany has achieved status as a civilian power concerned with European integration and harmonizing relations without challenging the position of the United States, which derives its superpower status from maintaining sufficient military capabilities to preserve

- 35 Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978), pp. 46–48; Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), pp. 16–18.
- 36 Baldev Raj Nayar and T. V. Paul, *India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 136, 141, 144.
- 37 Tajfel, 'Achievement of Group Differentiation', p. 96.
- 38 Amélie Mummendey and Hans-Joachim Schreiber, "'Different" Just Means "Better": Some Obvious and Some Hidden Pathways to In-group Favouritism', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1984), pp. 363–68.
- 39 See, for example, Robert D. Blackwill and Ashley J. Tellis, *Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China*, Council of Foreign Relations Special Report, No. 72, March 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Tellis_Blackwill.pdf. For a recent expression of concern about the growing tendency of Chinese and Americans to view their relationship as zero-sum, see Michael D. Swaine, 'Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific: The Need for a Stable U.S.-China Balance of Power', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 20 April, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/20/beyond-american-predominance-in-western-pacific-need-for-stable-u.s.-china-balance-of-power>.

order outside its territory and region.⁴⁰ Moreover, SIT identifies the conditions under which non-competitive status seeking through social creativity is likely to occur—when the status hierarchy is legitimate and stable. Social creativity may enhance the status of a state even if the overall hierarchy remains stable because it seeks superiority on a different ranking scale.

How does a social identity relate to national role? A social identity includes traits or qualities such as ‘hard-working’, ‘efficient’, and ‘technologically advanced’. A role refers to actions and decisions expected of a particular position. Therefore it serves particular functions for the group or international society.⁴¹ A social role exists prior to the states that occupy it. Expectations of the role evolve over time through accretion of experience and culture.⁴² Accordingly, the occupants of particular roles, such as regional protector or alliance leader, show consistent patterns in their performance. In contrast, a social identity is supposed to differentiate a state from others. The two concepts may be reconciled by recognizing that states may select a role, such as status quo power, as a means of enacting a particular social identity, such as that of being moral and civilized.⁴³

In sum, social mobility seeks acceptance and recognition; social competition seeks to catch up with and surpass; and social creativity avoids direct competition in favour of seeking pre-eminence in a different area. Indicators that China is following a social mobility strategy include emulation of the institutions, values, and ideology of the leading powers in order to be accepted into the great power ‘club’ or recognized as a member of an elite stratum. This would be manifested in domestic political and economic reforms. Indicators of social competition include the promotion of a rival ideology, arms racing, formation of a rival alliance system, driving a wedge between the rival power and its allies, military intervention to influence others’ perceptions rather than for security reasons, acquiring a global naval presence, or acting as a spoiler. Social creativity would be manifested in Chinese efforts to promote new international norms, institutions, or designs for world order, or high-

40 H. W. Maull, ‘Germany and the Use of Force: Still a “Civilian Power”?’, *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2000), pp. 56–80.

41 Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Menlo Park: Benjamin/Cummings, 1980), pp. 57–58; K. J. Holsti, ‘National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy’, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1970), pp. 233–309. For leading works, see Stephen G. Walker, ed., *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Philippe G. Le Prestre, ed., *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). For application to China, see Shih Chi-yu and Yin Jiwu, ‘Between Core National Interest and a Harmonious World: Reconciling Self-role Conceptions in Chinese Foreign Policy’, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2013), pp. 59–84.

42 Sheldon Stryker and Anne Statham, ‘Symbolic Interaction and Role Theory’, in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, eds., *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 331; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 227; David M. McCourt, ‘Role-playing and Identity Affirmation in International Politics: Britain’s Reinvasion of the Falklands, 1982’, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2011), pp. 1599–1621.

43 McCourt, ‘Role-playing and Identity Affirmation’.

profile diplomacy to resolve conflict. Social creativity tries to highlight the state's unique values or institutions.

Because the identity management strategies are ideal types, a state's foreign policy may include elements of more than one. For example, China's current policy of seeking status through economic development includes competition in East Asia, such as the drive for Asian-dominated security institutions, and military modernization to neutralize possible US military actions against China and maintain a presence in its maritime periphery, even though China is not challenging the United States for global power parity.⁴⁴ Such behaviour is typical of a rising power and, in China's case, reinforced by the historical experience of 'one hundred years of humiliation', which taught the lesson that China must seek wealth and power (*fuqiang*, an abbreviation of the slogan *fuguo qiangbing*, 'enrich the state and strengthen its military power') to avoid external interference and loss of sovereignty.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, change in the predominant strategy will have far-reaching effects on a state's identity and world image.

China may also have instrumental reasons for some actions that seem to fit an identity management strategy. Rarely does a foreign policy action serve only one goal. Foreign policy actions differ in relation to the relative weight of status as opposed to more instrumental objectives, such as economic interests, military power, or political influence. Some actions, such as hosting the Olympics, are driven almost exclusively by the desire for status. Others, meanwhile, such as promoting economic development in other countries, may also be motivated by material goals such as increased trade or access to energy resources.

This SIT framework will be applied below to illuminate developments in Chinese foreign policy since the origins of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Cold War period provides a baseline for comparison with China's foreign policy since the 'reform and opening' policy that Deng Xiaoping launched in 1978. If realism is correct, China's foreign policy aims should become more expansive and its policies more aggressive as the country's power grows. Liberal institutionalists and constructivists would predict China's internalization of existing international norms as it becomes socialized through participation in international institutions.

Since coming to power in 1949, the CCP has sought to restore China's former greatness and centrality, so overcoming a legacy of humiliation by the imperialist powers. The PRC initially pursued social competition with the West and later the Soviet Union. The 1978 'reform and opening' policies of Deng Xiaoping, with their emphasis on economic development, made it possible for China to use social creativity, especially in stressing China's

- 44 Swaine, 'Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific'. On China's military modernization programs, see M. Taylor Travel, 'China's Search for Military Power', *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2008), pp. 125–41; Michael D. Swaine, *America's Challenge: Engaging a Rising China in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 2011), pp. 156–82; Eric Heginbotham, *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996–2017* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2015).
- 45 Orville Schell and John Delury, *Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 2013). See also Wang Zheng, *Never Forget National Humiliation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). China's 'one hundred years of humiliation' is conventionally dated as beginning with the first Opium War (1839–1842) against Britain and concluding with the establishment of the PRC in 1949.

independence from the superpowers. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Chinese leadership has tried to enhance China's international standing while maintaining a distinctive international identity separate from that of the West.⁴⁶ China's leaders' use of the social creativity strategy seems that best suited to advancing China's status by virtue of highlighting the country's distinctive identity, avoiding arousing perceptions of a 'China threat', and averting any conflict with the United States associated with the power transition.

China's Cold War Status and Identity

During the years 1949–1970 of the Cold War period, China perceived the international status hierarchy as both illegitimate and unstable, conditions that favoured its pursuit of a social competition strategy. China hence sought to restore its central place in the status hierarchy and to promote new norms and rules through communist revolution.⁴⁷

After taking power in 1949, the Chinese Communists viewed the international system as exploitative and imperialistic, and destined to fall according to objective 'laws of history' as set forth in Marxism–Leninism. The CCP would establish its own concepts and norms in place of those that the imperialist powers had instituted.⁴⁸ Mao Zedong decided that the PRC would not recognize the embassy, legation, or consulate of any country that had relations with the Kuomintang government until 'New China', as Mao and the CCP called it, had negotiated diplomatic relations with those countries, a policy known as 'making a fresh start'. Moreover, China would eliminate all the special privileges that imperialist countries had enjoyed in the country before establishing diplomatic relations with them, a decision known as 'first cleaning the house before entertaining guests'.⁴⁹

Having grown up in a world where China was weak and suffered humiliation at the hands of foreign powers, Mao and other CCP officials were determined to restore China's 'Middle Kingdom' status and centrality in world politics. Under Mao, China followed a social competition strategy based on continuous revolution at home and support for revolutionary movements in the Third World.⁵⁰ Initially, Mao and other Chinese ideologists viewed the United States as the leading foe. By 1960, however, China's relations with the Soviet Union had become increasingly conflictual, culminating in armed clashes in March and August of 1969 along the Ussuri River. With Soviet troops massed along the Chinese border and Soviet officials hinting at a pre-emptive strike against China's nuclear facilities, Mao had come to view the Soviet Union as the leading threat to China's security,⁵¹ and

46 Deng, *China's Struggle for Status*, pp. 66–67.

47 Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 4, 10–11, 15, 47, 51.

48 Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 73, 92–93; Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 4, 6–7.

49 Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 30, 39, 42.

50 Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 203–204; Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 47, 51.

51 Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 47–48, 240–42; Kuisong Yang and Yafeng Xia, 'Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao's Changing Psyche and Policy toward the United States, 1969–1976', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2010), pp. 399–400.

was therefore receptive to conciliatory signals from US President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger of a Sino-American rapprochement.

The positive implications for China's international status were immediately apparent. Shortly after Kissinger's visit to China in October 1971 to draft the so-called Shanghai communiqué in preparation for Nixon's visit in February 1972, the UN General Assembly voted to admit China to the UN as a permanent member of the Security Council and to expel Taiwan—a 'great victory' for Chinese foreign policy and a 'significant enhancement' of the PRC's international status.⁵² The international status hierarchy was then perceived as stable. The breakup of the colonial empires was completed with the revolution in Portuguese Africa in 1974–75, and any further national liberation struggles were unlikely. Moreover, during the 1970s China established diplomatic relations with a large number of states and became integrated into the UN and numerous specialized agencies, so providing the PRC with a stake in normal state-to-state relations.

Despite rapprochement with the leading capitalist power, however, China ruled out the social mobility strategy, which would entail adopting the values of the United States and other Western states, which Mao regarded as attempts to justify inequality and exploitation of weak and poor states. Instead, China would obtain a central role in international politics by other means—through moral superiority and aligning with the Third World. Mao gradually developed this idea, which eventually took form in the 'Three Worlds' theory, which Deng Xiaoping presented in a 1974 speech before the UN General Assembly, according to which the developed countries in Europe and Japan (Second World) and developing countries (Third World) were increasingly resistant to attempts by the superpowers (First World) to exercise hegemony. In contrast to the United States and the Soviet Union, which tried to bully and control other states, China would never be a 'superpower'. Real power lay not with the United States and the Soviet Union; 'rather it is those people from the third world countries who unite and dare to fight and win'.⁵³ Mao's Three Worlds theory suggested that China could achieve improved status not by being a superpower, which would call for developing superior military capabilities, but by acting as the moral and intellectual leader of the developing Third World—the beginning of a strategy of social creativity.

The 'Three Worlds' concept also implied that level of development, rather than the international class struggle, was the leading criterion through which to differentiate between states, thus providing an ideological transition towards the later 'reform and opening' policy of Deng Xiaoping.⁵⁴ Unfavourable social comparisons between the PRC and Hong Kong, Japan, and Western Europe provided the stimulus for the emphasis on economic modernization rather than class struggle, as under Mao.⁵⁵ Deng argued that China

52 Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, p. 272.

53 'Speech by Chairman of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China, Teng Hsiao-Ping, at the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly', 10 April, 1974 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1974), pp. 3, 8, 20–21; Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating between Revolution and Détente', pp. 418–20; Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, p. 90.

54 Chen Jian, 'China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations', in See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), p. 145.

55 Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 217–27.

was 'very poor' and 'this is a condition far from commensurate with the standing of a great nation such as ours'.⁵⁶

Deng set three goals as China's agenda during the 1980s—anti-hegemonism, national unification, and economic development or modernization—all of which would contribute to the objective of enhancing China's status. Opposing US hegemony would restore China's international position, unification would overcome the legacy of the century of humiliation during which imperialist powers carved China up, and economic development was an important task because 'the role we play in international affairs is determined by the extent of our economic growth'—not the spread of communist revolution or the acquisition of military power.⁵⁷ As part of Deng's opening up policy, China offered incentives for foreign investment, allowed more trade, and encouraged students to study overseas—a departure from Mao's policy of self-reliance. China also became more active in international organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, behaviour that was not associated with geopolitical competition.⁵⁸

With the reorientation of China's identity to economic production as a basis for status under Deng Xiaoping, China pursued a social creativity strategy. Deng sought to improve China's status not through the traditional zero-sum military approach or propagation of a rival ideology, but through economic development, which entailed cooperation and integration into the global economy. Whereas Mao's Great Leap Forward objective was to equal Great Britain's production of steel in three years,⁵⁹ the traditional communist 'storming' approach to development, Deng cautioned that China's economic modernization would be a 'New Long March'.⁶⁰

Deng was following a different path towards achieving great power status. In the past, as earlier mentioned, states had to possess superior military capabilities to gain admittance to the great power club. Japan, for example, despite its post-war economic growth rate and position as the world's second largest economy, was not considered a great power after 1945.⁶¹ Deng, however, downgraded the importance of military modernization and cut defence spending to allow more investment in domestic development.⁶² China's social creativity was also manifested in the 'independent foreign policy' announced in 1982 at the 12th

56 Zhu Liqun, 'China's Cold War Experience and its New Security Concept', in Vojtech Mastny and Zhu Liqun, eds., *The Legacy of the Cold War: Perspectives on Security, Cooperation, and Conflict* (Lanham: Lexington Books 2014), p. 334.

57 Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 359–60.

58 Ann Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Madelyn C. Ross, 'China's International Economic Behaviour', in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 442–46.

59 Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (New York: Walker & Company, 2010), pp. 57–58.

60 Peter Nolan, *China's Rise, Russia's Fall: Politics, Economics and Planning in the Transition from Stalinism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 162; Yan Xuetong, 'The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 10 (2001), p. 34.

61 Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System*, p. 43; Takashi Inoguchi and Paul Bacon, 'Japan's Emerging Role as a "Global Ordinary Power"', *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005), pp. 1–21.

62 Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 540–41.

National Congress of the CCP, when General Secretary Hu Yaobang declared that China 'never attaches itself to any big power or group of powers, and never yields to pressure from any big power'. Instead of forming a united front against the Soviet Union, therefore, China would align with neither superpower. As Deng later explained, China would play neither the 'United States card' nor the 'Soviet card', but oppose hegemony regardless of source.⁶³ Chinese leaders believed that taking an independent line, rather than allying with another major power, maximized freedom to manoeuvre and therefore China's weight in international politics.⁶⁴ But the independent foreign policy was not just a matter of diplomatic flexibility. It implied that China was morally superior and so set apart from both superpowers.⁶⁵ China would not follow a traditional balance of power policy of tilting from one side to the other, but take decisions based on the merits of each case.

A strategy of maintaining equidistance between the two superpowers could not, however, be sustained after the 1989 collapse of communist parties in Eastern Europe and the economic implosion of the Soviet Union. In 1992, a time of domestic economic crisis and international isolation, Deng said, 'we will only become a big political power if we keep a low profile and work hard for some years; we will then have more weight in international affairs'.⁶⁶ Later, Deng's thinking on foreign policy evolved into the 'twenty-four character' principle: *'lengjing guancha, wenzhu zhenjiao, chenzhuo yingfu, juebu dangtou, taoguang yanghui, yousui zuowei'* (observe calmly, secure our position, cope with affairs calmly, never seek leadership, hide brightness and cherish obscurity, get some things done), sometimes translated as 'keeping a low profile' (*taoguang yanghui*). This cautious strategy was to become the Chinese foreign policy slogan in the immediate post-Cold War era, but did not rule out China's search for status by other means.

Chinese Creativity and the Quest for Great Power Status

After the end of the Cold War, China faced the challenge of advancing its status in a world wherein it was an outsider in relation to the dominant liberal Western powers. With social mobility unattractive because the CCP was committed to 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', and social competition likely to fail, Chinese leaders showed creativity in enhancing China's status by other means as symbolized in a succession of slogans—responsible power, new security concept (NSC), harmonious world, and 'One Belt, One Road'.

China as a Responsible Power

In 1997, China eventually settled on the identity of a 'responsible power', in light of altered perceptions of the status hierarchy and the realization that social competition was premature and could provoke a regional containment policy. Initially, Chinese analysts had

- 63 Hu Yaobang, 'Create a New Situation in All Fields of Socialist Modernization—Report to the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: 1 September, 1982', *Beijing Review*, Vol. 25, No. 37 (1982), pp. 29–31.
- 64 Wu Xinbo, 'China: Security Practice of a Modernizing and Ascending Power', in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 148.
- 65 Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), p. 391.
- 66 Dingding Chen and Jianwei Wang, 'Lying Low No More? China's New Thinking on the *Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy*', *China: An International Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2011), pp. 197–98.

believed that the end of the Cold War would result in a gradual trend towards multipolarity; that US power was declining due to domestic economic problems and growing differences with its allies. The United States, therefore, would eventually be challenged by the emerging powers Russia, Japan, and China as separate poles.⁶⁷

Deng's successors jettisoned his cautious policy in Asia in favour of one more forward in defence of China's sovereignty interests in the South China Sea and Taiwan. In February 1995, the Philippine government discovered China-built platforms on Mischief Reef, an islet in the Philippines claim area.⁶⁸ From July 1995 until the spring of 1996, China deployed ground, air, and naval forces near Taiwan and conducted military exercises, including the launching of test missiles in the Taiwan Strait, in efforts to dissuade Taiwan voters from electing pro-independence candidate Lee Teng-hui, and to deter the United States from any further steps towards accepting Taiwanese independence such as the May 1995 decision to issue a visa to Taiwan's president to visit the United States, and the Clinton administration's positioning of two aircraft carrier battle groups in waters off Taiwan.⁶⁹

Chinese analysts also concluded that American power and influence was more robust than they had realized; US allies were not balancing against the United States. In 1996–1997, therefore, Chinese analysts concluded that 'the superpower is more super, and the many great powers are less great'.⁷⁰ Indeed, the United States had upgraded its alliances with Japan and Australia.⁷¹ In the context of China's growing power in East Asia, the PRC's actions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait contributed further to perceptions of a 'China threat' among smaller states in the region.⁷²

Belief that the status hierarchy was stable for the immediate future and the desire to undermine the 'China threat' theory laid the basis for a shift in China's great power strategy. In 1997, Beijing adopted the identity of 'responsible major power'—a social creativity strategy. Chinese President Jiang Zemin used the term 'responsible power' (*fuzeren de daquo*) in a speech before the Russian State Duma in April 1997, in which he suggested that China and Russia, as major powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, had an important responsibility to safeguard world peace and stability.⁷³ While the

- 67 Rozman, 'China's Quest for Great Power Identity', p. 389; Yong Deng, 'Hegemon on the Offensive: Chinese Perspectives on U.S. Global Strategy', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 116, No. 3 (2002), pp. 345–46.
- 68 Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 46–47; Alice D. Ba, 'China and ASEAN: Renavigating Relations for a 21st-Century Asia', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2003), pp. 627, 631; Bill Hayton, *The South China Sea: The Struggle for Power in Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 85–87.
- 69 Robert S. Ross, 'The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force', *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2000), pp. 87–123.
- 70 Deng, 'Hegemon on the Offensive', p. 346.
- 71 Avery Goldstein, 'The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Powers Emerging Choice', *China Quarterly*, Vol. 168 (2001), p. 840.
- 72 Allen S. Whiting, 'ASEAN Eyes China: The Security Dimension', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (1997), p. 299; Robert G. Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia: Promises and Perils* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 179.
- 73 Pichamon Yeophantong, 'Governing the World: China's Evolving Conceptions of Responsibility', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (2013), p. 331.

meaning of responsible power was not clear, it seemed to connote greater Chinese involvement and leadership in multilateral organizations.⁷⁴ Beijing had an opportunity to demonstrate its responsibility in the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis, when the PRC gained prestige by refraining from devaluing its currency, thereby acting against its immediate self-interest and providing financial assistance to struggling states such as Indonesia and Thailand.⁷⁵ Although Beijing had previously regarded multilateral organizations with suspicion, as tools of the United States, in the mid-1990s China began to take a more proactive role in Asian-related economic and security organizations, such as the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) and the organization for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). In 2002, China signed an ASEAN declaration on conduct for parties in the South China Sea, which renounced violent means of dealing with conflicting claims in those waters.⁷⁶

The responsible power concept implied a more proactive and less passive Chinese foreign policy than Deng's warning to 'keep a low profile'.⁷⁷ To forge an identity as a responsible great power was also a diplomatic innovation. Although great powers have special responsibilities for maintaining a stable political and economic order, it does not follow that taking on global responsibilities is sufficient to bring great power status to a state with no foundation of hard power. For example, Japan was humiliated for its 'cheque book diplomacy' of providing \$13 billion in support of the Persian Gulf War but not contributing troops to the operational theatre. US ambassador to Japan Michael Armacost said in a cable to Washington, 'A large gap was revealed between Japan's desire for recognition as a great power and its willingness and ability to assume these risks and responsibilities For all its economic prowess, Japan is not in the great power league'.⁷⁸ States that contribute most to UN peacekeeping operations tend to be Middle powers, such as Canada and the Scandinavian nations.⁷⁹

One manifestation of the responsible power strategy was the NSC, introduced at the March 1997 ARF Trust-Building Conference. A month later, the NSC appeared in an address by President Jiang Zemin to the Russian Duma. It then made its way into the Sino-Russian statement calling for a multipolar order. The new security thinking received an official imprimatur by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in December 1997 during

74 Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, 'China's Regional Strategy', in David Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 48–49; Samuel S. Kim, 'China's Path to Great Power Status in the Globalization Era', *Asian Perspective* Vol. 27, No. 1 (2003), p. 54; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, p. 12; Yong Deng, 'China: The Post-Responsible Power', *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2015), p. 118.

75 Kim, 'China's Path to Great Power Status', p. 63.

76 Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, pp. 119–21; Shambaugh, 'China Engages Asia', pp. 68–69.

77 Rosemary Foot, 'Chinese Strategies in a U.S.-hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging', *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (2006), p. 85.

78 Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 66–67.

79 Lilach Gilady, *The Price of Prestige: Conspicuous Consumption in International Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

ceremonies marking the 30th anniversary of ASEAN. The concept was further elaborated in December 1998 in China's first Defence White Paper.⁸⁰

The NSC added to the five principles of peaceful coexistence (mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, nonaggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence), first articulated by China, India, and Burma in 1954, that of reliance on multilateral organizations rather than 'out-moded' Cold War military alliances.⁸¹ China had long advocated the five principles of peaceful coexistence, but including multilateral organizations as the foundation of security was a creative means of improving its relations with neighbouring states, and contrasted favourably with the US bilateral network of alliances.⁸²

A good example of the NSC is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which China established in 2001 (and which includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) to combat terrorism, Islamic extremism, and separatism. Consistent with the NSC, the SCO was not directed against any particular state, and dealt with non-traditional security threats. The first instance of China's taking the leadership role in establishing a multilateral security organization; it was also named after a Chinese city.⁸³

Another description of China's foreign policy, 'peaceful rise', was coined by Zheng Bijian, former executive vice-president of the Central Committee's Central Party School and chair of the China Reform Forum. He presented it in a November 2003 speech at the Boao Forum for Asia. Peaceful rise was soon picked up by President and General Secretary Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. In brief, it signified that the rise of China would not pose a threat to any other country or be achieved at the expense of any nation. However, the term 'peaceful development' replaced that of peaceful rise in Hu Jintao's April 2004 speech to the Boao Forum. The concept nevertheless continues to be used in academic publications and popular discourse.⁸⁴

An authoritative formulation appeared in Zheng's essay in the prestigious US journal, *Foreign Affairs*, in which he wrote, 'China has blazed a new strategic path that suits its national conditions while conforming to the tides of history'—'the development path to a peaceful rise'. In contrast to past aspiring great powers, China would not exploit other

- 80 David M. Finkelstein, 'China's "New Concept of Security"', August 2003 <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lang=en&id=100856>.
- 81 Denny Roy, 'China's Pitch for a Multipolar World: The New Security Concept', *Asia-Pacific Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2003), p. 2.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 3; Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism', *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2002), pp. 575–607.
- 83 Finkelstein, 'China's "New Concept of Security"', pp. 205–206; Deng, *China's Struggle for Status*, p. 50.
- 84 In the internal debate among academics and government officials over peaceful rise, some claimed that the term 'rise' was too threatening, whereas others objected that the emphasis on 'peaceful' could deprive China of leverage over Taiwan on the issue of reunification. Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 'The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of "Peaceful Rise"', *China Quarterly*, No. 190 (2007), pp. 291–310; Robert L. Suettinger, 'The Rise and Descent of "Peaceful Rise"', *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 12 (2004), http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/clm12_rs.pdf.

countries through invasion or colonization but attain peacefully the capital, technology, and resources it required for development by participating in economic globalization. China would ‘transcend’ ‘traditional ways for great powers to emerge’. China would not follow the ‘path of Germany leading up to WWI’ or of ‘Germany and Japan leading up to WWII’ when those countries ‘plundered resources and pursued hegemony’. Nor would China follow the path of the United States and the Soviet Union in competing for ‘global domination during the Cold War’.⁸⁵

Peaceful rise could be viewed as propaganda aimed at reassuring foreign publics about China’s fast economic growth rather than as a practical guide to foreign policy.⁸⁶ Peaceful rise was a manifestation of social creativity in that it proposed that China, unlike past states, could achieve great power status without military competition or territorial expansion—through peaceful economic development, largely because globalization could enable China to acquire the resources and technology it needed through trade. Some Chinese analysts raised the objection that as peaceful rise had never before occurred it was not feasible.⁸⁷

Harmonious World and Soft Power

China acted as a norm entrepreneur, part of a social creativity strategy, through President Hu Jintao’s ‘harmonious world’ concept, first presented in Hu’s address on the 60th anniversary of the UN in September 2005, and elaborated in two official documents: ‘China’s Peaceful Development Road’ White Paper (2005) and Hu Jintao’s ‘Report to the 17th Party Congress (2007)’.⁸⁸ According to Hu, a harmonious world would entail effective multilateralism based on a reformed UN; cooperative security and the establishment of a collective security mechanism; economic prosperity through mutually beneficial cooperation; and tolerance and dialogue among diverse civilizations.⁸⁹

The way to achieving a harmonious world lay in support for multilateralism, the UN, and international law. The harmonious world concept is distinctive for its combination of Western and Confucian values (the ‘Great Harmony’ and ‘peace under heaven’). Chinese intellectuals proposed that a harmonious world could constitute the premise for a new international order based on Confucian values.⁹⁰ As Mao had attempted to eradicate Confucianism, believing that it was detrimental to China’s development, this reworking of Confucian values exemplified the social creativity tactic of reframing a negative characteristic as positive.⁹¹

85 Zheng Bijian, ‘“China’s Peaceful Rise” to Great Power Status’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (2005), pp. 19–20.

86 Suettinger, ‘The Rise and Descent of “Peaceful Rise”’, p. 7.

87 Glaser and Medeiros, ‘Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-making in China’, pp. 303–304.

88 William A. Callahan, *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 46–47.

89 Hu Jintao, ‘Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity’, speech at the United Nations Summit, 15 September, 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/zt/shnh60/t212915.htm>; David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 25.

90 Callahan, *China Dreams*, pp. 44, 48–49, 51.

91 Gries, ‘Is a “China Threat” Inevitable?’, p. 251.

Also related to traditional Chinese values is a greater emphasis on developing 'soft power'. Hu Jintao said in a 2006 speech to the CCP's influential Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group, 'the enhancement of China's international status and international influence must be reflected in both hard power, including the economy, science and technology, and national defence power, and in soft power, such as culture'. Hu made advancement of China's soft power an official objective in his work report to the 17th CCP Congress in October 2007, wherein he declared that China must 'enhance the country's cultural soft power'.⁹²

For many Chinese academics and officials, soft power is valuable both intrinsically and instrumentally—as an indicator of elevated international status, and as a means of facilitating China's continued rise in hard power. Chinese strategists believe that a country cannot be recognized as a great power unless its values, norms, and way of life have appeal for others.⁹³ Some Chinese scholars have suggested that traditional Chinese Confucian values, such as harmony both within society and between humanity and nature, could have substantial attraction for the rest of the world by virtue of their contrast with the environmental destruction, ethical confusion, and international conflicts that Western materialism, science, and individualism foster.⁹⁴ In 2004, the Chinese government began establishing Confucian Institutes around the world to promote the teaching of Chinese language and civilization.⁹⁵ The argument that Chinese values are superior to Western values exemplifies the 'reframing' tactic of social creativity, whereby in the post-industrial age supposedly negative traits (traditional Chinese values that are criticized for obstructing modernization) are reframed as positive.⁹⁶

Doubts were raised in the West about the continuation of China's peaceful rise policy from 2009 to 2010, when China asserted its sovereignty interests more forcefully. In March 2009, five Chinese naval vessels harassed a US naval surveillance ship, the *Impeccable*, within China's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).⁹⁷ A few months later, China submitted to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf a map with a nine-dash 'U'-shaped line encompassing 80% of disputed waters in the South China Sea.⁹⁸ China reacted more stridently than usual to the Obama administration's announcement in early 2010 of

- 92 Bonnie S. Glaser and Melissa E. Murphy, 'Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics', in Carola McGiffert, ed., *Chinese Soft Power and its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World* (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), pp. 15–16.
- 93 Li Mingjiang, 'China Debates Soft Power', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2008), pp. 299–300.
- 94 Li, 'China Debates Soft Power', p. 292; Glaser and Murphy, 'Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics', pp. 13–14.
- 95 Weihong Zhang, 'China's Cultural Future: From Soft Power to Comprehensive National Power', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2010), p. 395.
- 96 Gries, 'Is a "China Threat" Inevitable?', p. 251.
- 97 Demetri Sevastopulo, 'White House Protests to Beijing over Naval Incidents', *Financial Times*, 10 March, 2009, p. 3; Kathryn Hille, 'China Hits Out at US "Illegal" Intrusion', *Financial Times*, 9 March, 2009, p. 5; 'Naked Aggression: China and America Spar at Sea', *The Economist*, 14 March, 2009, p. 45.
- 98 M. Taylor Fravel, 'China's Strategy in the South China Sea', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2011), pp. 294–95; Hayton, *The South China Sea*, pp. 249–50.

an arms sale to Taiwan and a presidential meeting with the Dalai Lama at the White House, despite having been previously notified.⁹⁹ At the July 2010 ASEAN meeting, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi reacted strongly when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that territorial disputes in the South China Sea should be resolved collaboratively and that the United States had a 'national interest' in freedom of navigation in the area.¹⁰⁰ In September, China engaged in a contentious dispute with Japan over the arrest, contrary to past practice, of a Chinese fishing captain who had rammed two Japanese coastguard vessels near the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, which are claimed by China and currently administered by Japan. Using the implicit threat of economic coercion, China induced Japan to release the captain.¹⁰¹

Differences emerged within China over whether or not China had an interest in acting as a responsible power, at least insofar as the United States conceived of responsibility. Since 2005, when US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick called on China to be a 'responsible stakeholder', the concept of responsibility had become a matter of controversy among analysts in China. Many inferred that the US insistence on Chinese responsibility was expressly to encumber the country with overwhelming burdens that would prevent China's rise.¹⁰² China resisted pressure from the United States to make a bigger contribution to the IMF and revalue the Yuan to alleviate the 2008–2009 financial crisis.¹⁰³ Instead, governor of the Chinese Central Bank Zhou Xiaochuan wrote an article in which he proposed bolstering IMR Special Drawing Rights (SDR) and making them serve as 'an international reserve currency that is disconnected from individual nations'.¹⁰⁴ China also resisted international pressure at the Copenhagen climate change meeting in December 2009 to agree to legally binding and genuine caps on emission levels and sent a lower level official to a meeting of 20 heads of state in Premier Wen Jiabao's stead.¹⁰⁵

China has moreover displayed limited willingness to restrain its North Korean ally. China refused to condemn North Korea for its March 2010 sinking of a South Korean corvette, the Cheonan, with the loss of 46 sailors, even though an international inquiry in May

99 'By Fits and Starts', *The Economist*, 4 February, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/15452683>; Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2012), p. 40.

100 Indyk, Lieberthal, and O'Hanlon, *Bending History*, pp. 48–49; 'Testing the Waters', *The Economist*, 31 July, 2010, p. 32.

101 Martin Fackler and Ian Johnson, 'Japan Retreats in Test of Wills with the Chinese', *New York Times*, 25 September, 2010, p. 1.

102 Shambaugh, *China Goes Global*, pp. 23–25; Deng, 'China', pp. 122–24.

103 Geoff Dyer, 'Hesitating to take on Global Leadership', *Financial Times*, Special Report, 2 April, 2009.

104 *Ibid.*; David Pilling, 'China is Just Sabre-Rattling over the Dollar', *Financial Times*, 2 April, 2009, p. 11, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/2b72e622-f2cb-11e4-b914-00144feab7de.html#axzz3nr651xR8>.

105 Jeffrey A. Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2012), pp. 62–66, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/china/China-Analysis_Climate-policies-after-Copenhagen.pdf.

found that North Korean torpedoes were responsible.¹⁰⁶ When, in November 2010, the DPRK shelled a South Korean island, killing four, China's muted response was that both sides should avoid further escalation.¹⁰⁷

Some Western analysts have argued that China's actions represent no significant change from previous behaviour.¹⁰⁸ Contradicting the suggestion that China's behaviour was assertive, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said at a March 2010 press conference that China was merely adhering to its principles of defending its 'core interests and dignity' on issues of sovereignty, security, and development.¹⁰⁹ In late December 2010, State Councillor Dai Bingguo published an essay reaffirming the country's path of peaceful development.¹¹⁰ Other Chinese analysts contend that China has merely responded to the provocations of others, and that being more outspoken about its 'core interests' is entirely appropriate in view of the increase in the country's power and influence.¹¹¹ The trend towards a more proactive Chinese foreign policy has intensified under President Xi Jinping.

One Belt, One Road

Xi's variant of social creativity involves building new institutions and promoting economic development across Eurasia. As with previous Chinese leaders, Xi Jinping's foreign policy goals include restoring China's status as one of the world's leading powers. On November 29, 2012, two weeks after his appointment as general secretary of the CCP, Xi announced at the National Museum that the 'greatest Chinese dream' was the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.¹¹² More specifically, the Chinese dream has been defined as achieving a 'moderately well-off China' by 2021, the centenary of the CCP, and a 'rich and powerful' China by 2049, 100th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC.¹¹³

Xi announced in his November 2014 FAWC speech that China would continue along the 'peaceful development' path, implying that economic development, rather than arms racing and military intervention, as would be the case in a social competition strategy, is the means through which China will achieve great power status. But he also declared that China's foreign policy should be one appropriate for a great power, thus implicitly abandoning Deng's 'keep a low profile' strategy.¹¹⁴ Since President Xi assumed power, China

106 'Testing the Waters', p. 32; Deng, 'China', p. 123.

107 Thomas J. Christensen, 'The Advantages of an Assertive China: Responding to Beijing's Abrasive Diplomacy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (2011), pp. 57–58.

108 Alastair Iain Johnston, 'How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness?', *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2013), pp. 7–48; and Björn Jerdén, 'The Assertive China Narrative: Why It is Wrong and How So Many Still Bought into It', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2014), pp. 47–88.

109 Michael D. Swaine, 'Perceptions of an Assertive China', *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 32 (2010), p. 5.

110 Dai Bingguo, 'Adhere to the Path of Peaceful Development', 6 December, 2010, <http://china.usc.edu/ShowArticle.aspx?articleID=2325>; Bader, *Obama and China's Rise*, p. 123.

111 Swaine, 'Perceptions of an Assertive China', pp. 6, 9.

112 'Chasing the Chinese Dream', *The Economist*, 4 May, 2013, p. 24.

113 Kevin Rudd, *U.S.-China 21: The Future of U.S.-China Relations under Xi Jinping*, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, April 2015, p. 10.

114 Jane Perlez, 'Leader Asserts China's Growing Importance on Global Stage', *New York Times*, 1 December, 2014, p. 6; Christopher K. Johnson, 'Thoughts from the Chairman: Xi

has maintained an assertive stance on its territorial disputes, having sent ships near the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands and initiated regular patrols to protest Japan's purchase of three islands. China also took over control of the Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines, and declared an Air Defence Identification Zone over the East China Sea.¹¹⁵

Xi's advocacy of a 'new type of great power relationship' with the United States suggests that his conception of a foreign policy befitting a great power does not necessarily imply conflict with the United States. On his first visit to Washington, D.C. in February 2012 as vice president, speaking before a high-level gathering at the State Department, Xi said that the United States and China should have 'a new type of relationship between major countries in the 21st century'.¹¹⁶ The implication was that the United States and China should not repeat past historical experience whereby mistrust and competition between an established power and a rising power result in conflict and war.¹¹⁷ Premier Li Keqiang said at a press conference in March 2013 that he did not believe that 'conflicts between big powers are inevitable'.¹¹⁸ Xi repeated his advocacy of a new type of great power relationship in his Sunnylands, California summit meeting with President Barack Obama.¹¹⁹

Instead of arms racing, expanding ties to rogue states, or forming a hostile alliance against the United States, which a social competition strategy would entail, Xi has engaged in remarkable institution building—evidence of social creativity. Instead of being a 'responsible stakeholder' in a Western-designed order, Xi, consistent with social mobility, seeks to apply certain Chinese values to international norms and institutions, such as 'justice', 'fairness', and 'righteousness'.¹²⁰ Xi's diplomatic innovativeness is best displayed by the ambitious 'Silk Road' project that would establish a 'Silk Road economic belt' of roads, pipelines, and railway links from China to Central Asia and Europe, and a '21st Century maritime Silk Road' consisting in ports from China's coasts through Southeast and South

Jinping Unveils His Foreign Policy Vision', Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 8 December, 2014, p. 3, <http://csis.org/publication/thoughts-chairman-xi-jinping-unveils-his-foreign-policy-vision>. For discussion of the implications of the shift, see Yan Xuetong, 'From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2014), pp.153–84.

- 115 Martin Fackler, 'Japan Says China Aimed Weapons-targeting Radar at Ship Near Islands', *New York Times*, 6 February, 2013, p. 13; Suisheng Zhao, 'Foreign Policy Implications of Chinese Nationalism Revisited: The Strident Turn', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 22, No. 82 (2013), p. 550; Chris Buckley, 'China Claims Air Rights over Disputed Islands', *New York Times*, 24 November, 2013, p. 14.
- 116 Xi Jinping, 'Speech at the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and U.S.-China Business Council Luncheon', Washington, D.C., 15 February, 2012, <http://www.chinausfocus.com>.
- 117 David M. Lampton, 'A New Type of Major-power Relationship: Seeking a Durable Foundation for U.S.-China Ties', *Asia Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2013), pp. 53–55.
- 118 'More Opportunities for Sino-U.S. Trade, Investment: Premier', 17 March, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/17/c_132240139.htm.
- 119 David E. Sanger, 'Xi and Obama See Pitfalls That Might Be Difficult to Avoid', *New York Times*, 10 June, 2013, p. 8.
- 120 Kevin Rudd, *U.S.-China 21*, p. 17. On the applicability of these values to international relations, see Yan Xuetong, 'New Values for New International Norms', *China International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2013), pp. 15–28.

Asia ('One Belt, One Road') to East Africa and the Northern Mediterranean.¹²¹ The 'One Belt, One Road' is more than just infrastructure building; it will include promotion of policy coordination across Asia, financial integration and greater use of the Yuan, trade liberalization, and human connectivity.¹²²

The Silk Road project is not a regional free trade area, but China's effort to use its growing economic resources and diplomatic skill to strengthen cooperative interactions, establish an integrated web of economic, social, and political ties, and over the long-term dispel mistrust and build a sense of common security.¹²³ Xi's diplomatic plans for neighbouring countries include application of the NSC, emphasizing 'comprehensive security, common security, and cooperative security', and using regional security mechanisms to expand trust.¹²⁴ Institutions created for the Silk Road project, it is hoped, may eventually expand to include security functions.¹²⁵

One potential source of funding for the Silk Road project is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) established by China, and finalized in March 2015, with 57 nations as founding members, including some of America's closest allies who defied American pressure not to join the bank.¹²⁶ In addition, in November 2014, China committed to contributing \$40 billion to a Silk Road fund. Another potential donor is the New Development Bank, formally launched in July 2015 by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) with a capitalization of \$100 billion.¹²⁷

Some Chinese experts have compared the Silk Road with America's Marshall Plan after WWII.¹²⁸ But the US economic plan for rebuilding Europe was part of the containment policy, whereas China's project is potentially open to all states, regardless of their form of government.¹²⁹ In March 2015, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi rejected the comparison, explaining that 'it is a product of inclusive cooperation, not a tool of geopolitics, and must not be viewed with the outdated Cold War mentality'.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the Silk Road is a

121 Scott Kennedy and David A. Parker, 'Building China's "One Belt, One Road"', Centre for Strategic and International Studies, <http://csis.org/publication/building-chinas-one-belt-one-road>; James McBride, 'Building the New Silk Road', Council on Foreign Relations, 25 May, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/building-new-silk-road/p36573>; Jacob Stokes, 'China's Road Rules: Beijing Looks West Toward Eurasian Integration', *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/1114344>.

122 Kennedy and Parker, 'Building China's "One Belt, One Road"', pp. 1–2.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 3; Michael D. Swaine, 'Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy', *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 44 (2014), p. 15.

124 Swaine, 'Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy', p. 11.

125 Yan, 'From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement', pp. 168–69.

126 'What China Wants', *The Economist*, 23 August, 2014, p. 46; Robin Harding, Joseph Leahy, and Lucy Hornby, 'Taking a Stand', *Financial Times*, 17 July, 2014, p. 7.

127 Gabriel Wildau, 'Brics Lender Opens as Challenger to World Bank', *Financial Times*, 22 July, 2015, p. 4.

128 Sharon Tiezzi, 'The New Silk Road: China's Marshall Plan?', *The Diplomat*, 6 November, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/the-new-silk-road-chinas-marshall-plan/>.

129 Antonina Habova, 'Silk Road Economic Belt: China's Marshall Plan, Pivot to Eurasia or China's Way of Foreign Policy', *KSI Transactions on Knowledge Society*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2015), p. 66, <http://tksi.org/tksi.org/ojs/index.php/KSI/article/view/54>.

130 'Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press', 8 March, 2015, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1243662.shtml.

potential competitor of Russian President Vladimir Putin's plan for a Eurasian Economic Union that would link former Soviet states, and of Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi's 'Act East' and 'Connect Central Asia' policies.¹³¹

Chinese motives for sponsoring the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative probably include making use of the country's excess construction capacity and capital goods industries, opening up new export markets, and developing China's western and southern regions. The maritime Silk Road may increase China's ability to project naval power by creating new port facilities. Other anticipated benefits include fostering antiterrorist cooperation and secure access to energy resources.¹³² Nevertheless, the scope, ambition, imaginative framing, and personal stamp of Xi Jinping suggest that the desire for China's enhanced status and a 'new type of major country relations' are also important drivers. 'One Belt, One Road' will put China at the apex of a network of Asian institutions, and transform China from an Asian to a Eurasian power.¹³³

While China's most dramatic diplomatic initiatives are in the economic and financial areas, Xi also called for an 'Asian security concept' at the May 2015 Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) summit, an organization to which the United States does not belong. Security problems in Asia should be solved by Asians themselves, Xi maintained.¹³⁴

Is China, then, competing with the United States for global status by setting up rival institutions? The AIIB could be a challenger of the Japan-dominated Asian Development bank, and the New Development Bank could potentially compete with the US-controlled World Bank. But China's multilateral activities seem to be filling a gap rather than trying to undermine or replace US-led institutions. Certainly, the Asian region could use additional aid to build roads, railroads, and pipelines around the continent. The Asian Development Bank estimates that the region will need to spend more than \$8 trillion on infrastructure by 2020, an amount that greatly exceeds the resources of either the World Bank or Asian Development Bank.¹³⁵

Whether or not Xi Jinping's efforts to establish a new type of great power relationship with the United States succeed will depend in part on the two states' ability to work together on an equal basis in dealing with emerging areas of conflict, such as trade, currency disputes, cyber-spying, and North Korea. Although the Obama administration recognizes that a power transition is underway and would prefer to avoid confrontation with the PRC, US officials have declined to formally endorse the slogan out of concerns about the

131 McBride, 'Building the New Silk Road', pp. 5–6; Stokes, 'China's Road Rules', p. 3.

132 Kennedy and Parker, 'Building China's "One Belt, One Road"', pp. 2–3; Stokes, 'Beijing Looks West', p. 2; Swaine, 'Chinese Views and Commentary', pp. 5, 13, 15.

133 Stokes, 'China's Road Rules', p. 2; Swaine, 'Chinese Views and Commentary', pp. 7, 14.

134 Helen Cooper and Jane Perlez, 'U.S. Sway in Asia is Imperilled as China Challenges Alliances', *New York Times*, 31 May, 2014, p. 9; Zhang Ming'ai, 'Security Stressed at CICA Summit', 23 May, 2013, <http://www.china.org.cn>.

135 Yoichi Funabashi, 'A Futile Boycott of China's Bank Will Not Push Xi Out of his Back Yard', *Financial Times*, 10 December, 2014, p. 11; Jane Perlez, 'Hostility from U.S. as China Lures Allies to New Bank', *New York Times*, 20 March, 2015, p. 11; 'A Bridge Not Far Enough', *The Economist*, 21 March, 2015, p. 10; 'America's Flawed Strategy Towards New Asian Bank', *Financial Times*, 21 May, 2015, p. 8.

excessive amount of concessions the United States may be expected to make to China's point of view.¹³⁶

But Xi Jinping did much to alleviate such fears by reaching an historic agreement with Obama at the APEC summit in November 2014 on curbing emissions to tackle climate change.¹³⁷ Xi exudes confidence that China's economic development will eventually bring with it the global prestige and respect that the Chinese desire, and that competing with the United States for overall military superiority would be counterproductive.¹³⁸

Conclusions

China is still trying to forge a new identity and role consistent with its rising power. Since 1996, and perhaps even earlier through Deng Xiaoping's 'independent foreign policy', China has generally followed a social creativity strategy calculated to enhance its status, with occasional examples of assertiveness. Instances of social creativity in Chinese foreign policy include the responsible power, NSC, harmonious world, and One Road, One Belt. China has emphasized throughout its morality and distinctive path to great power status by domestic development, creative diplomacy, and proposals for world order.

Historically, the path to great power status has exerted the minimum requirement of a demonstration of superior military power through victory in war, with a strong economy playing a subordinate role, as demonstrated by Japan and Germany's failure to achieve entry to the top rank of world powers after WWII despite their considerable economic extent and importance. In contrast, the responsible power concept sought to enhance China's prestige through participation in regional multilateral organizations and giving economic assistance to its Southeast Asian neighbours. The NSC emphasized multilateral cooperation and trust-building rather than deterrence and alliance formation. The harmonious world highlighted Confucian values as a possible basis for a new world order. Finally, the Silk Road project of current Chinese President Xi is an enormously ambitious scheme to improve China's international status by enhancing regional prosperity and connectedness.

China has not followed a strategy of social mobility, which would entail progressive political liberalization along the lines of Western constitutional democracy in order to be accepted into elite clubs. China has also resisted political socialization by international institutions, contrary to liberalism and constructivism. The PRC has an ambivalent attitude to global governance, evident in its rejection of liberal norms and support for Westphalian sovereignty.¹³⁹

China has also refrained from social competition. To be sure, the PRC has both a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and nuclear missiles, important status markers. China may be trying to gain recognition of its sphere of influence in East Asia, just as the United States has in the Western Hemisphere. But China has not exhibited other behaviour typical of a great power—it has not tried to surpass the US possession of strategic nuclear missiles or form an opposing alliance system, as realism would predict. Nor has it

136 Jane Perlez, 'China's "New Type" of Ties Fail to Sway Obama', *New York Times*, 10 November, 2014, p. 8; Jamil Anderlini, 'Obama and Xi Stick to Parallel Narratives', *Financial Times*, 14 November, 2014, p. 6.

137 'Dealing with Denial', *The Economist*, 15 November, 2014, pp. 33–34.

138 Rudd, *U.S.-China 21*, p. 20.

139 Shambaugh, *China Goes Global*, pp. 131–32.

intervened militarily in areas where it has substantial economic stakes, such as the Middle East. China has a manned space travel programme, but no peer competitor in any space race.¹⁴⁰ China's ability to acquire predominant influence in Asia is potentially checked by the other major powers Japan, India, and the United States. Globalization has eased China's task of achieving status without being the leading military power, because nuclear weapons make major power war prohibitively costly, and territorial conquest is no longer acceptable.

China's social creativity policy suggests that China's rise to great power status need not be a zero-sum game with the United States, and that enhancement of the PRC's global standing does not necessarily entail attenuation of the US status. Too many analysts on both sides believe that any achievement or new capability on China's part would prejudice the US stature. Such thinking could lead to geopolitical competition and war. But China thus far has avoided that outcome by pursuing status through peaceful development and promotion of international norms, areas that do not compete with US global military superiority, responsibility for world order, or soft power.

According to SIT, it is important that other powers acknowledge and reinforce China's pursuit of great power status by means other than those employed by great powers such as Germany and Japan before WWII, and by the Soviet Union, which sought military predominance and territorial expansion. If China perceives that it is excluded from the great power club, it may resort to social competition, including acting as a 'spoiler' and forming ties with anti-Western states. The United States should encourage and reinforce China's efforts to promote multilateral cooperation in Asia, even when that entails forming institutions that the United States does not control.

SIT also predicts that China will be more likely to continue a strategy of social creativity if the Chinese perceive the international status hierarchy as both stable and legitimate. This means that the United States should not convey the impression that it is rapidly declining in power and interests, or of being unable to maintain its commitments and promises. At the same time, the United States should ensure that the Chinese believe they have an interest in the rules and norms of the international system, and that they occupy their rightful position in the status hierarchy. This may involve acceptance of certain classic Chinese values, and adapting existing international institutions and norms in recognition of Chinese power and interests. If China continues to follow a social creativity strategy of seeking status in a different domain, its continued rise to great power status need not be a zero-sum game with the United States.

140 Fiona Cunningham, 'The Stellar Status Symbol: True Motives for China's Manned Space Program', *China Security*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2009), pp. 73–88.