



The Chinese Model of Global Governance:
Viable Competitor to the International Liberal Order?

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Chapter 1, Introduction:

By the end of the Second World War, the international system was dominated by two great powers, the USSR, and the USA. This gave rise to a system known in international relations as a bipolar order. A structure in which two dominant powers hold significant influence over global economic, military, and political affairs, while other states align themselves with one of the superpowers (Ikenberry et al. 2008: 4). This system of international order is characterized by competition and tension between the two leading powers. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world moved into a period of Unipolarity as the sole surviving superpower, the United States, enjoyed a period of global domination. This period of supremacy was facilitated by the presence of the Liberal International Order (LIO). It emerged after World War II and is primarily led by the United States and other Western powers. It is based on the principles of liberalism, including individual freedom, democracy, human rights, free trade, and the rule of law. The LIO has been instrumental in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity around the world by encouraging the spread of liberal values and institutions. It has also played a key role in the creation and maintenance of international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, which have helped to regulate and manage international affairs.

As of this writing the LIO has been the dominant global governance system for several decades, however, recently it has been facing challenges from the rising powers of Russia and China. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the more credible threat among the two nations. This is because now its economy and military have the capabilities to rival that of the United States. In different interviews, Chinese representatives have expressed their country's dissatisfaction with the current international order. Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the 19th Chinese Communist Party National Congress: "General Secretary Xi Jinping made it clear in his report to the Congress that China will endeavor to foster a new form of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind" (Rolland 2020).

This paper aims to explore the key features of the emerging Chinese global governance model and whether it can serve as a viable alternative to the current global governance system. The study will draw on a variety of sources including academic journals, government publications, and media reports to provide a comprehensive analysis of this

research question. By providing a detailed examination of the Chinese global governance model, this essay aims to contribute to a better understanding of the potential implications of this model for the international system.

This paper will be divided into four chapters. The first will contain, apart from this introduction, the literature review, the theoretical framework, and the methodology. The first part will provide an overview of how existing literature discusses the topic of the threat that China poses to the international system and Sino-US relations. The following theoretical framework section will explore the concepts of global governance, uni, bi and multipolarity, and world system theory in more detail. The third section lays out the methodology that was used for the drafting of this paper. The second chapter will be dedicated to discussing the origins and characteristics of the Liberal International Order. It is divided into two parts; the first will discuss the emergence of the Cold War order, while the second will explore the emergence of the LIO in the post-Soviet era. The third chapter instead will present the Chinese perspective on global governance. To do so it will first introduce the Chinese foreign policy changes towards the international system in the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis, and then it will present the characteristics of the Chinese perspective. Finally, the fourth and last chapter will first introduce the similarities and differences between the two perspectives to then move on to a discussion regarding the viability of the Chinese model from a western Perspective. The conclusions will be discussed at the end.

Literature Review

Is China a Threat to the Liberal International Order

The literature regarding this topic is quite expansive. Over the past 20 years, China has emerged as a powerful player on the global stage, with a rapidly growing economy and a military to match. It has been increasingly assertive in promoting its interests and values and aims to regain a central role in the international system and in the institutions that govern global affairs. The main debate in the literature is whether China aims to challenge the system established by the United States or to become part of it. The body of researchers seems quite split on one side, a minority claims that China aims to participate in the international system, and on the other, some claim that the PRC will bring an end to the system. This research is summarized and explained in the paragraphs below.

Authors such as Wu Xinbo (2018: 1007) are in the minority and claim that China seeks a partnership with the liberal order. He argues that since the end of the Cold War, the Asian nation has opened its diplomacy toward other countries. In fact, by 2016, it had established 97 partnerships with other nations and international organizations, the first one was with Brazil in 1993 (ibid). He supports his argument by citing China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who in March 2017, declared that China intends to build on the current basis to further enrich the connotations of partnership, elevate its standard and coverage, and forge a closer global partnership network (idem: 1008). Furthermore, he argues that from the security perspective, the PRC also recognizes the central role of the United Nations and other international institutions. For Beijing, this institution represents a central actor in keeping world peace and is seen as "the primary source of legitimacy for the collective action on international security" (ibid). In fact, in the period between 2016 and 2018, not only China contributed the greatest number of forces to the UN peacekeeping organization but also shouldered almost 10.2% of UN peacekeeping expenses (ibid). In 2021 this number had risen to almost 15.21%, slightly more than half of what the United States was contributing with 27.89%, but still considerably more than Germany, the UK, and France combined (peacekeeping.un).

It has been proposed that the establishment of institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) could be interpreted as an attempt to challenge the established order. However, the author argues that these are just speculations as the charter of the organization states that it is not directed against any other countries or international organizations (idem: 1010). This suggests that it does not have the intention of becoming a geopolitical bloc focused on any specific third party (ibid). Despite Russia's interest in using the SCO as a counterbalance to the United States and NATO, other members, including China, have not supported this stance (ibid).

Other authors such as Nana de Graaff (2020: 193) and Alistair Ian Johnston (2003: 5) also deal with this topic. The former underlines that China's development, although impressive, was in grand part only possible through its embrace of capitalism and the opening up of its economy to global markets, production chains, and (if less so) financial flows (de Graaff 2020: 193). This means that the nation is inextricably linked to the global economy and is on a path of gradual and selective integration with the established order.

The latter argues that China is not a revisionist country as many in the West would depict it but rather a status quo power. He claims that were the PRC's intentions to revise the

international system, it would seek distance from it and not participate in its institutions. Indeed, between the mid-1960s and mid-1990s, China's membership in international organizations grew substantially, approaching the levels of Western nations, despite previously having largely isolated itself from such organizations (Johnston 2003: 12). However, participation in institutions might not necessarily prove a status quo behavior but rather what matters is compliance with the rules and regulations of said institutions (idem: 13). Under this aspect, the Asian power also does not disappoint. In his article, Johnston analyzes the compliance of China with five major normative regimes: sovereignty, free trade, non-proliferation and arms control, national self-determination, and human rights. In terms of sovereignty and free trade, the author found that the PRC has become a champion of these ideals (idem: 15). Sovereignty has always been an important tenet of China's foreign policy and from the late 1970s on it has also started to embrace the norms of global free trade (ibid). Through the opening up of its economy, the state has managed to foster impressive economic growth from which its people have and continue to benefit (ibid). Therefore, the author claims, there is no desire to overturn this system that so greatly benefits the interests of China (idem: 16). In the field of non-proliferation and arms control there are more concerns regarding the PRC's behavior. While the country has signed several constraining arms control agreements, there are still concerns regarding the transfer of nuclear weapons-related technology to Pakistan in the 1980s. However, "China's record on nuclear exports has dramatically improved in the late 1990s. But its record is, at best, mixed on missile-related exports" noted Robert Einhorn, the State Department's assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation during the Clinton administration (idem:18).

Moving on, the author also explores the normative regimes of national self-determination. Johnston argues that China is frequently accused of violating international principles, such as in cases involving Tibetans, Uighurs, and Taiwanese. However, he suggests that these accusations often arise from a misinterpretation of international laws. In fact, "International practice and international law, while often unclear and in constant evolution, does not recognize the absolute right of any social, political, or ethnic groups to sovereign independence" (idem: 19). The law was created in this manner to disincentivize further fragmentation of states. It is also important to underline that the United States is often also ambivalent in cases of national determination. For example, it has never shown support for the independence of Quebec even when its people had voted overwhelmingly in favor of

independence in a national referendum. Therefore, the author suggests that it is difficult to judge whether China is compliant with very vague rules, to begin with.

In conclusion, the researcher also analyzes the record of the PRC regarding human rights. In his paper, he notes that while non-governmental organizations point out China's violations of human rights, there is no consensus on how to accurately evaluate its compliance with international norms. He points out that Chinese authorities frequently violate political and legal rights that are guaranteed by the country's constitution and international human rights agreements. However, it's not clear whether China's performance in protecting its citizens' social and economic rights is equally problematic. While economic development has improved the living standards of many Chinese people, it's debatable whether this has led to a net gain in socio-economic rights. The answer to this question depends on whether one considers the socioeconomic advances, mainly in urban China, to be gains in social and economic rights for the entire population, or whether the growing income inequality, environmental degradation, and lack of equitable education, welfare, and health systems (mostly in rural areas) violate such rights. Depending on one's ideological perspective, whether supporting state welfare systems or a more market-oriented economy, China's protection of its citizens' economic and social rights could be seen as either improving or deteriorating (idem: 22).

Most scholars, however, do not agree with the arguments that have been just presented. They claim that China will inevitably come into conflict with the United States and its system, which if successful, would mean the rise of a new international order. One of the most prolific writers in favor of this hypothesis is researcher G. John Ikenberry (2020: 133). He argues that the liberal order is facing a crisis of authority, as the United States, the main architect, and leader of the liberal order, has been increasingly unwilling to provide the leadership and resources needed to sustain the system (ibid). Furthermore, he argues that actors such as former President Donald Trump have actively undermined 75 years of American leadership (ibid). Additionally, rising powers such as China and other actors are challenging the rules and norms of the liberal order and promoting alternative models of governance and development (Ikenberry 2008: 23). However, he argues that this transition of power will likely not be a violent one because of the nuclear revolution that has taken place. This has made conflict between major powers unlikely as any martial confrontation could lead to the destruction of humankind.

Ikenberry identifies two other problems that are plaguing the liberal order and will inevitably lead to its dissolution: first the crisis of legitimacy and second the “problems of modernity” (Ikenberry 2020: 135; Ikenberry 2008: 19). The former results from the benefits of the system not being shared equitably among all countries, this is leading many to lose faith and seek new approaches to global governance (idem 2008: 20). He also points out that rising nationalism and populism in many countries are also weakening the established order, as people are losing faith in democracy and the idea of a shared liberal order (ibid). Instead, what the author defines as the “problems of modernity” derive from “the deep, worldwide transformations unleashed by the forces of science, technology, and industrialism, what [...] once described as a “tidal wave” pushing and pulling modern societies into an increasingly complex and interconnected system” (idem 2020: 135). These “problems” can only be solved through cooperation and collaboration, which were the main aims of the international order. However, many seem to think it has failed in this regard (ibid). This opens it up to challenges from other rising powers which might find supporters among the discontents of the old order (ibid).

Another scholar that has discussed this topic is John J. Mearsheimer (2019). He also finds the established world order to be in big trouble as there are systems that aim to replace it (idem: 7). He further enriches the debate by identifying other causes for the collapse of the international liberal order. He firmly believes that the system was always doomed to collapse, because the key policy on which it rests, spreading liberal democracy around the globe, is deeply flawed (idem: 8). The practice is not only quite difficult but is often also met with a lot of resistance often resulting from a sense of nationalism (ibid). Another important factor to consider is how the hyper-globalized economy undermines the order. “It helps countries other than the unipole grow more powerful, which can undermine unipolarity and bring the liberal order to an end. This is what is happening with the rise of China, which, along with the revival of Russian power, has brought the unipolar era to a close” (ibid). In conclusion, Mearsheimer believes that this will lead to the rise of two parallel systems, led by their respective power the United States and China, which will compete with each other in both military and economic realms (ibid).

Sino-US Relations

Sino-US relations have been a central topic in international relations, with significant implications for global politics, economics, and security. The relationship between China and the United States has evolved, from a period of cooperation and engagement to one of increasing competition and strategic rivalry. This part of the literature review aims to provide an overview of the historical context, key issues, and current state of Sino-US relations. The relationship between China and the United States dates back to the late 18th century when the US became an independent nation. However, it is only in modern times that this relationship has become of worldwide importance. During the Second World War both the nationalist government of China, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, and the United States found themselves involved in a conflict with the imperialist power of Japan (Qimao 1987: 1161). During this period, while the two countries were not formally allied, the Kuomintang (KMT) was a large recipient of American aid and was considered an important strategic ally (ibid). However, in 1949 when the communist revolution led by Mao Zedong succeeded, the nationalist government was forced to flee to the island of Formosa and established there a parallel government to that of Beijing. Following the doctrine of containment of Communist regimes, the Americans decided not to recognize the newly established People's Republic of China but instead opted to continue their support for the separatist government in Taiwan (ibid). This decision set the stage for several decades of limited interactions between the US and Mainland China.

Relations broke down further in the 1950s as the two countries found themselves on opposite sides of the Korean War. When on June 25th the North Korean army, supported by the Soviet Union, invaded the South, the United Nations and the U.S. joined in their defense (cfr.org). Thanks to international support and after intense fighting the forces of the South were about to defeat their enemy and approach the border with China. However, Chinese leaders feared that the United States and its allies might use the conflict to encircle and isolate China (ibid). Furthermore, Mao Zedong believed that China had a duty to support its communist neighbor and to demonstrate its military capabilities to the world. So, in October 1950, Chinese forces crossed the Yalu River and entered the war on the side of North Korea (ibid). This allowed the North to regain much of the territory it had lost and forced a stalemate along the 38th parallel where after multiple rounds of negotiation the border of the two countries was established (ibid).

Another important event in this period was the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, which took place only a year after the end of the Korean War. In August 1954 after the United States had

just lifted the naval blockade of Taiwan, the Nationalist government decided to deploy troops on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu (Qimao 1987: 1174). This triggered a reaction by the PRC, which began shelling the islands. The attack was intended to test the response of the United States and to pressure the KMT government to reunify with the mainland. In response, the United States sent the Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait and defend the island from any potential attack (ibid). President Eisenhower also issued a statement warning China against any aggression toward Taiwan and reaffirming US support for the KMT government through the establishment of a mutual defense agreement (ibid). However, as the shelling was not subsiding the Americans threatened nuclear retaliation against the mainland which brought the CCP to the negotiating table. The crisis was finally resolved with the nationalists' withdrawal from the Dachen islands. However, similar crises would erupt again in 1956 and 1996 (ibid).

The first public sign of warming relations between the two sides took place on April 6th, 1971, when the US Table Tennis Team was in Nagoya, Japan, to participate in the World Table Tennis Championships (Oksenberg 1982: 176). While there, the US team received an invitation to tour China and play against the Chinese Table Tennis team. This invitation was unprecedented, given the long-standing hostility between the two countries (ibid). The American team accepted the invitation and was taken on a tour of the country. This was a significant event as it helped to break down the barriers that had been created between the two countries. It was followed by a series of high-level exchanges between the US and China, including the visit of US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger to Beijing in July 1971, which marked the beginning of a significant shift in US foreign policy towards China (idem: 177). However, the normalization of Sino-US relations only took place in 1979 and marked a significant turning point in the bilateral relationship, which had been characterized by mutual suspicion and hostility for several decades (ibid). The normalization was a result of a series of diplomatic efforts and negotiations, including the Shanghai Communique of 1972, which recognized the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China and paved the way for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. This communique was drafted and signed by both US President Richard Nixon and the PRC Premier Zhou Enlai and represented the basis for further interaction between the two nations (idem: 178).

However, as mentioned previously the rapprochement between the US and China began only in 1979 as then US President Jimmy Carter granted China full diplomatic recognition. Together with this the United States acknowledged the One-China policy and

severed its normal ties with Taiwan (ibid). This principle underlines that “there is but one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and the Government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China” (eu-china-mission.gov.cn 2022). However, while the US has agreed to this principle, in the same year, Congress approved the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This marked the beginning of the policy of “strategic ambiguity” (cfr.org). This policy is based on the belief that a clear commitment to defend Taiwan could provoke China and increase the risk of conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, the US has maintained a deliberate ambiguity in its statements and actions, particularly concerning the US commitment to defend the island against Chinese aggression (ibid). The TRA does not explicitly state that the US will come to Taiwan's defense, but it does state that the US will provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself against any potential Chinese aggression (ibid).

Following the normalization, Sino-US relations went through different phases, shaped by changing domestic and international contexts, as well as by divergent interests and values. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the relationship was marked by a pragmatic and cooperative approach, based on shared interests in containing the Soviet Union, promoting economic development, and resolving regional conflicts (Zhang 2020: 3). However, the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 and the subsequent US sanctions on China led to a period of tension and mistrust, as well as a shift towards a more confrontational and conditional approach in US-China relations (ibid).

The 2000s saw a partial return to a more cooperative approach, as China's economic rise and integration into the global economy created new opportunities for engagement and cooperation with the United States. The bilateral relationship was marked by growing economic interdependence, as well as by cooperation on issues such as counterterrorism, climate change, and regional security (ibid). However, the rise of China's military capabilities, its economic growth, and increasing global influence led to a more assertive foreign policy. Thus, the United States began to view China as a strategic competitor. This shift was further exacerbated by the 2008 global financial crisis, which led to a decline in US economic power and an increase in China's economic influence (ibid).

In recent years, Sino-US relations have entered a new phase, characterized by a more confrontational and competitive approach, fueled by divergent economic, strategic, and ideological interests. The Trump administration's trade war, technology decoupling, and strategic competition with China, as well as China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea

and its treatment of minorities in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, have deepened the bilateral mistrust and rivalry (ibid).

The current state of Sino-US relations is marked by increasing competition and strategic rivalry. One of the main drivers of the deteriorating relationship between the two countries is the ongoing trade war. In 2018, the Trump administration imposed tariffs on Chinese goods to try and limit the US's trade deficit (ibid). This triggered a tit-for-tat response from China, which has led to a significant reduction in bilateral trade. Despite the signing of a phase one trade deal in 2020, tensions have continued to simmer, with the Biden administration maintaining many of the tariffs and restrictions put in place by the previous administration.

Another major area of tension in US-China relations is technology. The US has taken several steps to limit Chinese access to American technology, including banning Chinese tech companies like Huawei from doing business in the US and restricting the export of certain technologies to China (cfr.org). The PRC, for its part, has sought to develop its technological capabilities and reduce its reliance on American technology, to become a world leader in areas like 5G and artificial intelligence.

Finally, Human rights have also been a contentious issue in the Sino-US relationship. The United States has criticized China's human rights record, including its treatment of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and its suppression of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong (ibid). China has accused the United States of interfering in its internal affairs and has defended its policies as necessary for national security and stability. The COVID-19 pandemic has also further strained the relationship, with the United States accusing China of not being transparent about the origins of the virus and mishandling the early stages of the outbreak (ibid).

In conclusion, the history of US-China relations is complex and multifaceted, marked by periods of cooperation and competition, as well as tension and conflict. From the early days of the Sino-US relationship, characterized by mutual curiosity and interest, to the later years marked by ideological differences and strategic competition, the two countries have seen significant changes in their relationship. While there have been some attempts at dialogue and cooperation, the relationship between the two countries remains fraught and uncertain, with both sides engaging in actions and rhetoric that could potentially escalate into conflict. As the two superpowers continue to navigate their relationship, the future of US-China relations remains a critical issue for the world.

Theoretical Framework

Unipolarity, Bipolarity, and Multipolarity

In the realm of international relations, the distribution of power is often classified into three distinct categories: unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity.

In the literature, there are two competing definitions of what can be regarded as a pole. Authors such as Ikenberry, Mastanduno, and Wohlforth define it as a state possessing a disproportionate number of resources and abilities that can be used to achieve its goals. It must also excel in all aspects of state capability, which is traditionally considered to include population and territorial size, resource availability, economic strength, military power, and institutional efficiency (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 4). However, there is also a competing definition that focuses less on the capabilities of the state. Jervis (2009: 191), defines a pole as a state whose security or values cannot be threatened by any other actor. Although the definitions offer distinct characteristics of a pole, they are connected by the belief that holding such a position results in greater security.

It is important to underline that this is merely a theoretical model and that in the real world, it is often difficult to define whether a nation meets all of these criteria. Therefore, one can say that a unipolar system emerges if, in the international system, there is a state whose overall share of capabilities places it unambiguously in a class by itself compared to all other states (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 6). “Unipolarity should also be distinguished from hegemony and empire, terms that refer to political relationships and degrees of influence rather than distributions of material capability” (ibid). In contrast to an empire in a single-pole system, the existence of many juridically equal nation-states is also contemplated. Additionally, in a unipolar system, the hegemon does not necessarily receive tribute, as the flows of power can go both ways. (Jervis 2009: 190).

The United States is often considered to be the unipolar power in the post-Cold War era, as its military and economic might has allowed it to shape the international system to a significant degree (Ikenberry et al. 2009: 6). Proponents of the Hegemonic Stability Theory argue this to be the most stable international system. The theory suggests that a unipolar system creates a stable and peaceful international environment by deterring aggression from other states and reducing the need for the dominant state to use its power. The lack of

competition among hegemonic powers should lead to a more stable, predictable, and peaceful international environment as it eliminates the fears of security. However, this view is often criticized as the absence of peers to counterbalance the worst impulses of the hegemon could lead it to act without restraint, and in turn induce other actors to act irresponsibly as well (Jervis 2009: 193).

Now moving on to the discussion of a bipolar system. In such a scenario, power is distributed among two states who compete for influence over the international system. This kind of international order is probably the most well-known, as it was the predominant system during the Cold War. This period is often described as the quintessential example of a bipolar international system, with the United States and the Soviet Union as the two superpowers. Some researchers, such as Kenneth Waltz, believe it to be a relatively stable international system due to the fact that two superpowers are engaged in a balancing act, where each seeks to check the power of the other (Waltz 1964: 882). This balance of power between the two superpowers can lead to a certain level of stability as neither wants to risk a confrontation that could lead to devastating consequences (ibid). Moreover, neutral states have a clear choice between aligning with one superpower or the other, which can lead to greater predictability in the international system (idem: 885). States may choose to align with a superpower for protection and security or economic and ideological reasons. As a result, alliances can be relatively stable, and states may be less likely to switch sides, as doing so could risk provoking the other superpower.

However, Waltz also notes that a bipolar system is not without its weaknesses. The balance of power between the two superpowers can be upset if one power significantly increases its military or economic capabilities, causing the other to feel threatened and respond in kind. This arms race can destabilize the system and increase the likelihood of conflict. Additionally, smaller states may be caught in the middle of this balancing act, leading to proxy wars or other forms of conflict.

Multipolarity, on the other hand, refers to a situation where there are multiple centers of power in the international system (Rosencrance 1966: 317). Often, this model is indicated as one of the more desirable because of three main factors. First, it allows states to interact with a wide variety of other partners (ibid). This wide variety of contacts should reduce the danger of unhealthy competition among states as if a single power becomes dominant, the others can band together to feel less threatened (ibid).

The second factor is that “as the number of independent actors in the system increases, the share of its attention that any nation can devote to any other must of necessity decrease” (ibid). This means that in a world with enough poles, the attention of the countries would be so divided that conflicts would probably be limited as many events would not reach the national level of attention (idem: 318). The third and final point is that multipolarity limits arms races. “If a state, A, is allocating half of its military strength against B and half against C and D together, and B begins to rearm, A's countervailing increment is only half of what it would be if A and B were the only powers in the system” (ibid).

Global Governance

“Global governance is governing, without sovereign authority, relationships that transcend national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home”. This definition of this was given by researcher Lawrence S. Finkelstein in 1995 (369). However, it is important to underline that this is still a contested concept. Three main definitions can be found in the literature. First, the term “global governance” is used by many authors to make sense of socio-political changes. Within this body of literature, researchers constrict this term to problems of foreign policy or traditional forms of world politics (Biermann & Pattberg 2008: 279). The definition previously provided, by Finkelstein, would fall under this category. However, this provides quite a narrow definition that is difficult to distinguish from traditional international relations. Thus, we move on to the second conceptualization of this term which sees global governance as “first and foremost a political program, to regain the necessary steering capacity for problem-solving in the postmodern age” (ibid).

Researchers that follow this line of reasoning often call for the establishment of a new “global governance architecture” to solve the problems that were brought about by globalization. In this interpretation, the concept is seen as a tool that needs to be developed through the establishment of new international institutions that do not depend on the goodwill of nation-states to enact change. This view is particularly popular among both European and American scholars. In fact, for example, a German Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry defined it as “the problem-adequate reorganization of the international institutional environment” (ibid). Likewise, U.S. academics, such as Gordenker & Weiss, see global governance as “efforts to bring more orderly and reliable responses to social and political

issues that go beyond capacities of states to address individually” (ibid). The third and final perspective regarding global governance has adopted a more programmatic definition. This literature is especially espoused by both neoconservative and Neo-Marxist writers, even if with a different connotation. The former see the attempts of the UN and other international institutions at global governance as a way to restrict the range of action of powerful states, such as the USA. The latter emphasizes how this is a project by the ruling elites to deal more effectively with economic and political crises which result from neoliberal societal changes (idem: 276). Furthermore, they emphasize how “an international community ridden with inequalities and injustice, institutionalizing ‘global governance’ without paying careful attention to the question of who wields power, and without adequate safeguards, is tantamount to sanctioning governance of the many weak by the powerful few” (ibid). This paper will make use of literature aligned with the second conceptualization.

Global Governance encompasses a wide range of activities, from international treaties and agreements to the actions of non-governmental organizations and civil society groups (Finkelstein 1995: 369). The concept emerged in the aftermath of World War II as a response to the need for more effective ways to manage global issues such as economic development, environmental protection, and security (ibid). The United Nations and its specialized agencies were established to provide a framework for global governance. Over time, a variety of other international organizations and institutions were established to address specific global issues (idem: 370). These organizations serve as forums for states to cooperate on a range of issues such as security, trade, health, and the environment. They also develop rules and regulations that govern international behavior, facilitate cooperation and coordination, and provide technical expertise and assistance to states that need it (ibid). Global governance can take many forms, from formal international organizations, such as the UN to informal networks of states, civil society organizations, and private actors. It can also include both state-led and non-state actors, such as international NGOs, private companies, and individuals (ibid).

For example, global scientific networks are taking on a new role in global governance. The scientists who form these organizations provide indispensable information for policymaking, especially on issues that are characterized by analytic and normative uncertainty (idem: 281). Although these networks are prevalent in many policy areas, they are particularly evident in the field of environmental policy. They emerged through a combination of self-organization and state sponsorship, to offer scientific information on environmental problems and decision-making options for policymakers (ibid). However,

seeking scientific advice for political decision-making is not new in world politics, as demonstrated by the long-standing assistance provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in negotiations on fishing quotas (ibid). Nevertheless, the number and impact of such networks have significantly increased in recent years.

Another fundamental aspect of global governance is international law. Firstly, it provides a framework for states to negotiate and agree upon common solutions to transnational problems (ibid). For example, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides a framework for states to negotiate and agree upon actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Secondly, international law sets standards of behavior for states, which helps to regulate state behavior and ensure compliance with global norms and values (ibid). This includes norms related to human rights, trade, and security, among others. Finally, it also provides mechanisms for accountability and enforcement, which are critical for effective global governance. These mechanisms can include dispute resolution mechanisms such as the International Court of Justice or arbitration, as well as international institutions that monitor compliance and provide oversight, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency or the World Trade Organization (ibid).

One of the key challenges in global governance is the question of who should participate and what legitimacy these institutions have (Keohane 2011: 104). In the past, global governance was often dominated by powerful states, but in recent years, the institutions that make it up have been criticized for a lack of legitimacy (ibid). This is due to the fact that much of what is seen, for example, during meetings of the security council is mostly theatrics, as the real negotiations have already taken place in some dark room (ibid). Recently there has also been an increasing recognition of the importance of including non-state actors, such as civil society organizations and private companies, in the decision-making process. Finally, another major challenge in global governance is the question of how to address issues that affect the entire international community, but which are beyond the jurisdiction of any one country, such as climate change, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (idem: 105).

World System Theory

The final theory to be introduced in this section is the World systems theory. It is a theoretical framework developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, in the 1970s, that explains the dynamics of

the global political economy and the different stages of economic development (Chirot & Hall 1982: 84). “In his own first definition, Wallerstein said that a world-system is a multicultural territorial division of labor in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants” (Martínez-Vela 2001: 4). He argues that it is this division of labor which transforms the global economy into two main types of societies: core and peripheral.

Core societies are the industrialized, capitalist countries at the center of the global economy (Chirot & Hall 1982: 85). They are characterized by well-developed towns, flourishing manufacturing, technologically progressive agriculture, skilled and relatively well-paid labor, and high investment (ibid). However, fostering this growth and maintaining their prosperity has always required a large number of resources, which led to the creation of peripheral countries. These societies were the less developed, often agrarian, or mineral-rich countries, and focused on the production of certain key primary goods (ibid). This division of labor led to the emergence of several problems. “Peripheries produced certain key primary goods while their towns started to decline, as more workers were forced into the fields, labor became coerced in order to keep down the costs of production, technology stagnated, labor remained unskilled or even became less skilled, and capital, rather than accumulating, was withdrawn toward the core” (ibid). While at the beginning the differences between core and periphery were small, with time, they grew to incredible levels of inequality (ibid). This inequality is not a product of the capitalist system but rather one of its key components. Without it, the system would not be able to function. One of the most important tools to maintain this inequality is technological development. The theory argues that while the core will experience all kinds of technological advancements, the periphery “will be constrained to experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status” (Martínez-Vela 2001: 4).

The theory also argues that the core societies use their economic and political power to maintain the existing system and to resist attempts by peripheral societies to break out of their dependent position (Chirot & Hall 1982: 85). However, to make this system stable, Wallerstein argues that there is a third type of nation, namely the semi-periphery. This is a class of nations who find themselves in between the two mentioned previously, and depending on the moment they could rise to join the core or fall to the periphery. Their role is to “deflect the anger and revolutionary activity of peripheries, and they serve as good places for capitalist investment when well-organized labor forces in core economies cause wages to

rise too fast” (ibid) Examples of such countries are Spain in the 17th-18th century, who became part of the periphery, or modern Japan who instead rose to the core (ibid).

Methodology

The paper's methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive and objective evaluation of the potential of the Chinese global governance model as an alternative to the current global governance system. To achieve this goal, a comparative study will be conducted that draws on both primary and secondary sources of information. The use of primary sources, such as newspaper articles and official institutional documents, will be especially helpful in contextualizing the analysis as closely as possible to the present. These sources will provide up-to-date information on recent developments and events that have not been extensively covered by the literature. In addition, documents from reputable and official sources will be used where necessary to ensure accuracy and reliability.

The secondary literature, on the other hand, will consist of academic research and theoretical frameworks, such as Uni and multipolarity, global governance, and world system theory. By employing these theories, an in-depth analysis will be conducted to identify any evidence of signaling and the potential for the Chinese global governance model to serve as a viable alternative to the current system.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and challenges that were present during the drafting of this paper. Resources on the Chinese governance model are relatively scarce and may be biased, and sources explaining the positions of China and Russia on global governance are limited. Both countries do not provide many details regarding their activities, which can make it challenging to form a comprehensive analysis. Nonetheless, every effort will be made to ensure that the analysis presented in this paper is as rigorous and comprehensive as possible, using the available information and theoretical frameworks to provide a nuanced and objective evaluation of the potential of the Chinese global governance model.

Chapter 2, The Liberal International Order

The Liberal International Order (LIO) as defined by John J. Mearsheimer is an organized group of international institutions that help govern the interactions among the member states, based on the ideals of liberal democracy (Mearsheimer 2019: 9). Conventionally, the LIO is understood to have been established in the aftermath of World War II. However, authors such as Mearsheimer, Kundani, and Ikenberry argue that the United States has, in fact, spearheaded two distinct global systems since the end of the war. The first, known as the Cold War order, is occasionally mislabeled as a "liberal international order," despite lacking both liberal and international elements. "It was a bounded order that was limited mainly to the West and was realist in all its key dimensions" (idem: 8). Although it possessed some traits associated with liberalism, they were based on realist reasoning. Conversely, the second system, which emerged after the Cold War, is genuinely liberal and international, representing a significant departure from the restricted order that the United States had controlled during the Cold War era. This section is dedicated to exploring the history, characteristics, and differences between these two systems.

The Cold War Order

As mentioned in the short introduction to this section, the conventional point of view that the Liberal International Order, as we know it today, has been in place for the past 75 years is indeed flawed (Allison 2018: 126). When it was created the world was a different place. The United States had just come out of the Second World War as a global superpower as its troops were spread out around the world, from Europe to Asia (Ikenberry 2020: 183). Suddenly, American policymakers and strategic thinkers saw it as necessary for the US to use its power to reshape the international order to create a system that was congenial with America's security concerns and future strategic interests (ibid). This new international infrastructure had as a goal to first and foremost create a durable international environment, which could ensure the stability and security of its hegemon (ibid).

This system was not established all at once, in fact, there were competing perspectives on what it should look like. The Roosevelt administration, which had presided over the American war effort and the last years of the war, had envisioned a world built upon the tenets of open trade and great-power cooperation. "In the reformed "one world" global order, the great powers would operate together in the background to provide collective security

within a new global organization” (idem: 184). The president, however, did not survive to the end of the conflict and by that time the circumstances had permanently changed (idem: 183).

Harry Truman became the new president, finding himself in a bipolar power structure where the United States and the Soviet Union were the two opposing poles. These two nations held opposing ideologies and increasingly viewed each other as mortal enemies (idem: 183). In fact, American strategists of the time began to see the Soviet Union as an even greater threat than Nazism itself (Allison 2018: 127). In a famous piece known as the “Long Telegram” diplomat Gorge Kennan wrote that Soviet communists are “a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*. [...] They see it as necessary that our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power [was] to be secured” (ibid). Under these circumstances, the Truman administration changed its focus from the establishment of a “one world” system, as envisioned by Roosevelt, to the rebuilding of Europe and the containment of the Soviet Union (Ikenberry 2020: 184).

Thus, it becomes clear that the post-war order was influenced by two interrelated projects, each possessing its unique political outlook and intellectual justifications (ibid). The first of these projects was aimed at uniting the capitalist liberal democracies and reorganizing the relations among them. The goal was to create a new stable Western order, regulated by a dense web of multilateral institutions, which would allow the industrialized democracies to dominate the world economy and establish “economic peace” (ibid).

This desire was rooted in the liberal internationalist idea that economic interdependence was necessary for global peace and prosperity (ibid). American planners and scholars debated whether the US could prosper as a great power without access to trade and resources from Asia and Europe (idem: 192). They concluded that the United States could not maintain its position without access to a “Grand Area”, which included the Western Hemisphere, the United Kingdom, the remainder of the British Commonwealth and Empire, the Dutch East Indies, China, and Japan (ibid). De facto, as the historian Carlo Santoro summarizes: “The only area sufficiently large was the one equivalent to the world economy as a whole and driven by the United States” (ibid). Therefore, the Western superpower saw its interests tied to the breakdown of imperial blocs and spheres of influence and the construction of an open postwar order (idem 185). Such a system would be created through the implementation of trade regulations, tariff reductions, and governing institutions for investments. Whenever economic disputes would arise, the interests of all parties would be

considered, with the explicit goal to find a fair and equitable resolution (ibid). Furthermore, conflicts would be contained and resolved through the establishment of a framework of rules, standards, safeguards, and procedures. In the eyes of the policymakers of the time, this approach was necessary to foster a civilized community (ibid).

Another key component of this project was institutional cooperation, which aimed to replace the anarchy of unbridled and conflicting national interests with a world order based on international law and collective security (idem: 192). This would only be possible through the creation of an effective international organization that could prevent the outbreak of war and promote economic and social progress (ibid). This idea is embodied in the United Nations, which was established in 1945. The organization is based on the idea that nations should promote peace and security, protect human rights, and promote economic and social progress through collective action and diplomacy (ibid).

The final component of the project was to reconcile openness with social and economic security, a political compromise, or social bargain (idem: 194). Citizens of the countries under this system would agree to live in a more open world economy, and their governments would take steps to stabilize and protect their livelihoods through the instruments of the modern welfare state (ibid). This compromise, called "embedded liberalism," sought to build domestic support and construct encompassing coalitions within countries around an international order that facilitated both economic openness and social protection (idem: 195).

The second project, instead, emerged as a reaction to the deteriorating relations and the pressures imposed by the Cold War to balance Soviet power (idem: 185). It was mainly based on the balance of power, nuclear deterrence, and political and ideological competition, and marked the beginning of the policy of containment (ibid). The project started with the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, which became a rallying cry for all Americans to fight against the new threat of Communism (ibid). Thus, "the realist logic of balance, deterrence, and containment became tied to American leadership of the free world" (ibid). While the threat that the Soviets posed was often exaggerated it became instrumental in justifying realist goals and often even illiberal actions (ibid). For example, interventions in support of illiberal regimes, while using illiberal means were rationalized under the guise of supporting broader liberal international goals (ibid). These regimes were seen as bulwarks in the fight against communism, so the liberal values of the West such as promoting democracy always yielded when it conflicted with the dictates of the balance of power politics (Mearsheimer

2019: 20). Furthermore, entrance to the international system or even NATO was not precluded to countries which failed to espouse the liberal ideas, if they had a strategic significance, as the cases of Portugal, Greece, and Turkey illustrate (ibid).

The strategy of cooperative security, or security binding, was also one of the main components of this project (idem: 196). Instead of balancing against each other as potential security rivals, Western nations agreed to embed themselves within layers of functional institutions and a security alliance that locked them into long-term cooperation and mutual restraint (ibid). The Atlantic Alliance, comprising NATO, the Marshall Plan, and other multilateral institutions, was designed to mold the military character of the Atlantic nations (ibid). Its goal was to prevent the balkanization of European defense systems, create an internal market large enough to sustain capitalism in Western Europe, and lock Germany on the Western side of the Iron Curtain (ibid). The US made clear that an American security commitment hinged on European integration, which European leaders agreed to, only in exchange for corresponding assurances and commitments from the US (ibid).

Finally, the two projects of the reorganization and protection of democracies and the fight against communism came together in the 1950s (idem: 186). The alliances that the US established in Europe, through NATO, and in Asia, mainly with Japan, became fundamental tools in the scenario of the Cold War (ibid). These two projects became the basis on which the Western order was established in this new bipolar world. This order reflected the belief that the "free world" was not just a temporary alliance against the Soviet Union, but a community of shared fate (idem: 197). The United States, Europe, and the wider liberal democratic world formed a political community defined by a common fate and shared affinities of value and identity (ibid). The sense of community was important because it brought the expectation that dealings among the United States, Europe, and other liberal democracies would be based on political give-and-take, consensus building, and diffuse reciprocity, not on the imperial or patron-client exercise of American power (ibid).

However, in reality, the order became a mix of both realist and liberal values. On one hand, it promoted the values of free trade and multilateralism, while on the other it relied on the principles of balance of power and hegemony (ibid). "It was more Western-centered, multilayered, and deeply institutionalized than originally anticipated, and it brought the United States into direct political and economic management of the system" (ibid). The threat of a common enemy facilitated cooperation between the members. Furthermore, the security guarantees that were provided by the US to Europe and Asia allowed the countries there to

open their markets, which in turn helped cement the alliance and settle economic disputes (ibid). The United States suddenly became the center of the Western world, as it gradually took on more commitments and functional roles. America's domestic market, the US dollar, and the Cold War alliances emerged as crucial mechanisms and institutions through which the postwar order was founded and managed, to the point that America and the Western liberal order fused into one system (idem: 188). However, while the US did occasionally resort to cruder power politics, this was more the exception than the rule, and the history of NATO is also largely one of compromise despite the predominant position of the United States.

The Liberal International Order

It was only following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the world's dominant superpower that the Liberal International Order materialized as we know it today (Mearsheimer 2019: 28). With the "unipolar moment" underway, the constraints imposed by the security competition between great powers were significantly reduced. Additionally, while the Western order remained intact, the Warsaw Pact disintegrated in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union (ibid). Consequently, President George H.W. Bush leveraged the unique position of the USA as the unipole of the world to spread the realist Western order worldwide, transforming it into a proper liberal international order. This initiative had enthusiastic support from liberal democracies both in East Asia and Western Europe, even though it was clear that the US would be its leader (ibid).

In the early 1990s, the United States was well-positioned to construct a liberal international order. It had extensive experience in building and managing the Western order during the Cold War and held a significant power advantage compared to its potential rivals (idem: 25). China was still in the early stages of its rise, and Russia was experiencing internal disarray following the collapse of the Soviet Union (ibid). This power advantage allowed the United States to act in line with liberal principles and exert influence, including the potential use of force, if necessary. Furthermore, the United States and its allies enjoyed considerable legitimacy in the post-Cold War era (ibid). They had emerged victorious from the conflict, and liberal democracy appeared to be the prevailing political order with no viable alternatives. In this context, the United States was perceived as well-suited to pursue a foreign policy of liberal hegemony, aiming to construct a world order based on liberal

principles. The belief prevailed that most countries would eventually adopt liberal democracy, and international institutions that had contributed to Western prosperity during the Cold War were seen as capable of furthering globalization (ibid).

This new system that was envisioned is based on a few key assumptions. Primarily, the LIO is founded upon core principles such as democracy, free trade, and the rule of law, which underpin its ideological framework (ibid). Moreover, it actively advocates for multilateralism and the establishment of international institutions, such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, to promote collaboration and peacefully resolve disputes among nations. Concurrently, the established order strives to cultivate economic interdependence and open markets, promoting free trade and globalization as catalysts for prosperity and stability. These elements were already present in the Cold War order but were limited only to Western nations and their allies. (ibid)

However, another pivotal aspect, which emerged only after 1991, is its emphasis on safeguarding human rights, individual freedoms, and civil liberties, across the world, viewing these as essential components of a fair and all-encompassing global system. This led to the establishment of the principle of the “Responsibility to protect” (R2P) which quickly became a staple of the LIO. This rule states that: “Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity”. However, should a state fail to do so “the international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian, and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations” (un.org). This text was adopted in 2005 amidst many debates as it was seen by many as an encroachment on state sovereignty, and as an excuse for Western nations to interfere with the internal matters of other countries (ibid).

Spreading this new liberal international order was a major endeavor, which required three major steps. The first was the expansion of membership in existing institutions, such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank, and the establishment of new ones like the WTO (idem: 22). It was crucial to establish a web of institutions with universal membership that would be able to exert significant power on member states' behavior (ibid). The second step was to establish an open and inclusive global economy that would facilitate free trade and unrestricted capital markets. This goal was more ambitious in scope than the economic order that existed in the West during the Cold War. Finally, the third essential task was to promote liberal democracy globally, an objective that had been frequently neglected during the age of competition with

the Soviet Union. This mission was not exclusive to the United States, as its European allies were generally supportive of this effort as well (ibid).

These tasks are inspired, and thus closely linked to the main theories of liberal peace, namely liberal institutionalism, economic interdependence theory, and democratic peace theory. Consequently, the architects of the LIO believed that creating a robust, sustainable, and rule-based liberal international order was synonymous with establishing a peaceful world (idem: 23). This belief served as a strong motivation for the United States and its allies to actively work towards expanding this new order to include other countries around the world. The most important aspect of the success of this new order was the integration of China and Russia, the most influential states in the post-World War II system after the United States (ibid). The goal was to involve these states in various institutions, fully incorporate them into the global economy, and therefore facilitate their transition into liberal democracies. While the first two steps were carried out successfully this did not lead to the desired outcome for the West. Even though the two powers were socialized into the system it did not lead to any democratic reform of their political systems (ibid).

Instead, a more illustrative and successful example of this approach was the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe. This expansion was not primarily driven by a strategy to deter potential Russian aggression but instead focused on achieving liberal objectives. The aim was to integrate Eastern European countries, and possibly eventually Russia, into the "security community" that had emerged in Western Europe during the Cold War (ibid). This perspective was aligned with a liberal approach, which emphasized the importance of stability, the rule of law, and the promotion of democratic and free market values in the region. The architects of this policy, such as Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama, did not consider as realistic the possibility of invasion by Russia, as the country was still recovering and adapting to the new post-Soviet reality, and therefore did not want to employ a containment strategy. However, at the same time, they failed to recognize the Russian fears regarding the NATO enlargement, which was seen as an encroachment into what used to be their sphere of influence and a threat to their national borders (ibid).

Similarly, the United States adopted a liberal approach in its post-Cold War policy toward China. Instead of seeking to contain the emerging power as it had done with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, as this had proved to be highly counterproductive, the United States aimed to engage with China (idem: 24). This approach involved actively involving the PRC in major international institutions and integrating it into the U.S.-led

economic order, with the expectation that this would eventually lead to China's transformation into a liberal democracy. Furthermore, American policymakers believed that by engaging with China it could be integrated into the international system which would transform it into a "responsible stakeholder", thus motivating it to maintain peaceful relations with other countries (ibid).

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the United States and its allies made significant progress in establishing a comprehensive liberal international order. While challenges existed, the emerging order generally operated effectively. However, few anticipated that this order would start to unravel in the subsequent years, which is precisely what occurred.

Chapter 3, The Chinese Perspective on Global Governance:

China and the LIO (Before and After 2008)

Having explored how the Liberal International Order came to be and its characteristics, this chapter focuses on providing a more in-depth look into the Chinese perspective on global governance. However, to fully understand how this view was formed it is first important to examine the relationship between China and the LIO and how it has changed over time. China's approach to the Liberal International Order has undergone significant changes before and after 2008. However, we can say that China only began to look outwards in the late 1990s as it had been previously preoccupied with the internal development of the country. In fact, since the 1970s the Asian country had been undergoing a series of policies that aimed to modernize the country's economy and increase its international trade and investment. The reforms began in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and focused on opening up the economy to foreign investment, encouraging private enterprise, and decentralizing decision-making authority. Some of the key measures included the establishment of special economic zones, the liberalization of foreign trade and investment, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. These policies helped to transform China from a largely agricultural economy into a major industrial power and paved the way for its emergence as a global economic superpower in the 21st century.

Having managed to establish a solid economic base and supported by the ongoing rapid growth, by the 1990s China was finally ready to look outwards. From this moment on the country's engagement with the international community started to boom in all spheres. The underlying basis for the PRC's new foreign policy was the "new security concept" (NSC) (Weissman 2015: 159). This principle, established in direct response to the expansion of NATO, laid out China's aspiration in the new post-Cold War order. "It emphasizes mutually beneficial economic cooperation, confidence building, and the establishment of strategic partnerships not directed at a third country" (idem: 160). With this concept, as a basis the peaceful rise (和平崛起) policy was developed (Masuda 2023: 22). This policy had multiple goals, first it wanted to clarify that China would pose no threat to its neighbors or the international community, and second that its development did not have to be a zero-sum game but that it could represent an opportunity for everyone (Weissman 2015: 160). Furthermore, the Chinese leadership wanted to engage in economic globalization more actively, but only seeking out advantages while avoiding disadvantages (Masuda 2023: 22).

Therefore, before 2008, China pursued a strategy of cautious engagement and selective integration with the LIO. This approach involved focusing on participating in international economic institutions and leveraging the benefits of the global trading system. China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 also marked a significant milestone in its integration into the International Order, opening up access to global markets and contributing to its export-led growth. During this period, it sought to leverage its abundant labor force and low-cost manufacturing capabilities to attract foreign investment and further modernize its economy. These efforts were quite successful as the country saw incredible levels of development growth, so much so that by 2010 it became the second-largest economy in the world surpassing Japan. Although, while benefiting from the flow of technology and capital, China always maintained reservations about certain political and social aspects of the LIO, such as human rights and democracy promotion, due to concerns about political stability and sovereignty.

However, the year 2008 marked a significant turning point for China's relationship with the Liberal International Order. This was the year when Beijing hosted the Summer Olympic Games, a global event that showcased China's growing economic and political clout. It was also the year of the global financial crisis, which profoundly impacted the United States and other Western countries but left the PRC largely unscathed. Consequently, due to

rising nationalistic pressure and the confidence given by its growing economic and military power, China started to become more assertive (Weissman 2015: 160). It started to propose changes to the international order in line with its interests and priorities. Thus, the CCP's vision of peaceful development began to break down as the narrative of an assertive China began to spread (ibid).

Therefore, as the PRC's power and influence continued to expand, it began challenging certain aspects of the LIO that it perceived as unfavorable or biased towards Western powers. China started to advocate for alternative models of global governance that prioritized national sovereignty, non-interference, and multipolarity. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, exemplifies this shift, as it aims to create new networks of trade, investment, and infrastructure that bypass traditional Western-dominated institutions and foster greater connectivity with China (ibid). China's assertiveness also manifested in territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea. Its construction of artificial islands and military installations, imposing of unilateral fishing bans, seizing of Vietnamese fishing boats and equipment, and the harassment of US ships in contested areas challenged the principles of freedom of navigation and international law upheld by the International Order (idem: 161). These actions raised tensions with neighboring countries and drew criticism from other states concerned about China's assertive behavior.

The PRC's rise as a major global power has also generated debates about the compatibility of its economic model with the liberal economic order promoted by the LIO (ibid). The presence of state-led capitalism, state-owned enterprises, and domestic industry subsidies have raised concerns about fair competition and market distortions. Some argue that China's economic success poses challenges to the level playing field and market-oriented principles of the international system (ibid). Moreover, the country's human rights record, restrictions on political freedoms, censorship, and lack of political liberalization have also been sources of contention within the Liberal Order. These issues have strained China's relationships with other member states, especially Western countries, and raised questions about the compatibility of its political system with the liberal democratic values upheld by the LIO (ibid).

Despite these challenges, China remains involved with certain parts of the global system, including being a member of multiple international organizations and taking part in discussions regarding issues such as sustainable development and climate change. Additionally, it has pursued leadership positions in international institutions and established

initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to offer alternate options for development financing (ibid). However, at the same time, it also pushes for adjustments to the international system to better reflect the interests and perspectives of emerging economies, including its own.

The Characteristics of the Chinese Perspective

In recent years, China's global influence has been on the rise. As the world's most populous country and second-largest economy, the PRC has been increasing its involvement in both global governance and international organizations. In fact, as we have seen, since the 1990s the country seems to have, at least partially, embraced the international order. It has signed and ratified the Convention on Human Rights, it has gained access to the WTO, and it has become a de facto partner of the G-7. However, with its unique political and economic system and made more assertive by its success in fostering economic development, China has also presented a distinct alternative to the Western model of governance. Its ideological foundations and characteristics will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First of all, it is important to underline that the concept of global governance arrived in China through Western academic writing and interaction with international institutions (Wang & Rosenau 2009: 11). Therefore, their position is not that diametrically different from that of the West. Chinese analysts agree with the idea that there are certain problems in the world, such as environmental degradation, transnational crime, and financial crises, which cannot be resolved by single states (idem: 12). These crises exist on a global scale, affect countries with different ideologies and sociopolitical systems and thus require global governance to be solved. Furthermore, they concur that governance cannot be carried out only by central governments, but that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), interest groups, and social movements also play a key role (ibid). Finally, they acknowledge that some commonly held principles are part of global governance. These include human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, which are advocated by Western governments, significant global institutions, and the global community (ibid).

The similarities, however, end here as many Chinese scholars are skeptical regarding the feasibility and desirability of global governance. In their view, sovereign states, the interests of the global powers, and power politics will always remain central to international

relations (idem: 13). “They believe that the notion of global governance and its variations, such as good governance, democratic governance, and effective governance, which have been promoted by the World Bank and other international institutions, are nothing but neoliberalism dressed up as idealism” (ibid). From the Chinese point of view, the suggestion that the West is responsible for bringing good governance to the rest of the world, while other nations have to relinquish their national sovereignty in exchange, reflects a biased and Western-centric perspective (ibid). These critics argue that developing countries must drive their progress, without external intervention. This concern regarding foreign intrusion is so pervasive that even those supportive of global governance acknowledge the potential for Western nations and multinational corporations to exploit the concept to justify their domination and interference in the domestic affairs of other nations (ibid). The only institution that could be entrusted as being at the center of the global governance initiatives is the United Nations (idem: 14). This is not surprising given China's privileged position at the UN Security Council and the UN's long history as a universal institution (ibid).

Having established the different perspectives it is now important to determine what the norms proposed under the Chinese global governance model are. Speaking at an Asian-African summit in Jakarta on April 22, 2005, President Hu Jintao for the first time put forward his vision of global governance based on the concept of a “harmonious world”, known in Chinese as 和谐世界 (hexie shijie) (idem: 17). This concept is rooted in traditional Chinese values, and its requirements are realistic and objective. It emerged as a result of China's increasing global influence and represents a new ideology of global governance. At the basis of this “harmonious world” sit four principles aimed at reforming the global governance model.

The first principle is the democratization of international relations (idem: 18). The PRC sees the existing state of global governance as "undemocratic", with powerful international institutions being dominated by a small group of Western industrialized countries (ibid). According to Chinese analysts, democracy, in the context of international relations should entail equitable participation of countries in international affairs and broad consultations when dealing with common international problems. To achieve a "harmonious world," China advocates for international organizations to overcome their democratic deficit, enhance transparency, and expand opportunities for new actors, such as civil society, to participate (ibid). The country is also very critical of the unilateral foreign policy of the

United States, which it identifies with hegemony and power. China argues that to reform global governance the United States needs to turn “into a "normal" country that abides by international law and treats other countries in a democratic fashion” (idem: 19).

Moving on, the second precept, first explained by Hu Jintao in his speech at Yale University in the United States, is justice and common prosperity (ibid). This principle emphasizes the importance of economic development, poverty eradication, and regional and global economic cooperation in tackling global economic development issues and promoting economic security (Grachikov 2020: 139). It suggests that countries should work together to promote economic development and reduce poverty, as well as cooperate on regional and global economic issues (ibid). By doing so, countries can address economic challenges collectively and ensure a stable and secure economic environment (ibid). According to Chinese commentators, globalization has widened the gap between the global North and the South, with developed countries being the main beneficiaries of international trade, global capital flows, and the information revolution (Wang & Rosenau 2009: 19). This economic disparity is seen not only as unjust but also as a threat to the peace and stability of the international system. China advocates for shared development and common prosperity among all countries, which requires Western nations to open their markets to developing countries to transfer technology, provide more aid, and forgive the debt (ibid). Furthermore, developing countries are also urged to engage in South-South cooperation to fully realize their development potential. The Chinese government and scholars explicitly oppose the trading protectionism which has been conducted by Western industrialized countries (ibid). Their main point of criticism is that these nations demand that developing countries open their markets to foreign goods and capital while at the same time limiting imports and investments coming from the global South. This is seen as a double standard that needs to be eliminated so that all countries can benefit from economic globalization (idem: 20).

The third principle of a "harmonious world" emphasizes the importance of diversity and tolerance (ibid). Chinese analysts argue that globalization has not only created economic interdependence among countries but has also spread Western ideas and ideologies, sometimes leading to what is perceived as cultural imperialism (ibid). The CCP stresses that each country has its own unique history, culture, and economic situation, and that, therefore, no one should impose their values and models on other countries (ibid). Furthermore, they also believe that the diversity of civilizations enriches the world and thus each country has the right to choose its own development model and political system (ibid). They argue that

civilizations must coexist and learn from one another, and that harmony does not mean sameness but rather a reconciliation amid differences (idem: 21).

Finally, the fourth principle refers to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Chinese officials and analysts argue that traditional thinking about national security, characterized by geopolitical considerations and what they call the "cold war mentality," is outdated (ibid). They claim that many of the threats faced by countries today are transnational and global and cannot be effectively addressed by individual countries (ibid). Furthermore, it advocates against encroaching on the sovereignty of other nations, meddling in their domestic affairs, and resorting to force or the threat of force (Grachikov 2020: 139). Therefore, they advocate for new approaches based on mutual trust and cooperation among different countries. Moreover, they emphasize the continued importance of the United Nations and its Security Council in multilateral diplomacy and maintaining global peace (Wang & Rosenau 2009: 21).

Chapter 4, Comparison between the Western and Chinese Perspective

Differences and Similarities between the LIO and the Chinese Perspective

The Liberal International Order and the Chinese perspective on global governance represent two distinct approaches to the organization and management of global affairs. While they share certain similarities, they also diverge significantly in terms of their underlying principles, priorities, and strategies. Thus, comparing these two perspectives might provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of global governance.

One of the primary differences between the LIO and the Chinese perspective lies in their foundational principles. The established order is rooted in liberal values such as democracy, human rights, and free trade. It emphasizes the importance of multilateral institutions, international law, and cooperation among states to address global challenges. In contrast, the Chinese perspective emphasizes principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and state-led development. Thus, it places a stronger emphasis on national interests and has a more skeptical view of external interference in domestic affairs.

The LIO and the Chinese perspective also differ in their attitudes toward human rights and democracy. The Liberal Order places a strong emphasis on the promotion and protection

of human rights as universal values, and advocates for democratic governance and the rule of law as essential components of a just and stable international order. China, on the other hand, tends to prioritize economic development and social stability over political liberalization. It maintains a more cautious approach to human rights and democratic norms, which it often considers a kind of cultural imperialism. Instead, it tends to emphasize the importance of national sovereignty and the right for nations to do with their people as they please.

Another important distinction between the two is the approach to economic governance. China's perspective on economic governance emphasizes state-led development and strategic industrial policies. It aims to provide a kind of general blueprint for countries to follow, however, while maintaining that each nation has to find its development path. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a prominent example of its efforts to shape global economic connectivity according to its priorities. In contrast, The US-led international order is characterized by open markets, free trade, and economic integration. It emphasizes the role of international organizations like the World Trade Organization in facilitating global trade and investment.

Regionalism is also another area where discrepancies between the two systems can be found. The LIO places particular importance on regional integration and cooperation, often through institutions like the European Union, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), or the African Union. These regional organizations are seen as building blocks for global governance, promoting peace, stability, and economic cooperation. The Chinese perspective, instead, seems to value a more state-centric approach to regionalism. China has established regional initiatives such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which prioritize China's strategic interests and aim to increase its influence in the respective regions.

Finally, the last area of difference that can be found lies in the attitudes toward international law and norms. The liberal international order emphasizes the role of international law as a guiding framework for global governance. It upholds the United Nations Charter, treaties, and conventions as vital tools for regulating state behavior and resolving disputes. It also promotes the concept of Responsibility to Protect, which asserts that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities. In contrast, while China does recognize the importance of the UN as a key institution for global governance, it adopts a more cautious approach to international law, particularly when it comes to issues of sovereignty and non-interference. Furthermore, its emphasis on state

sovereignty sometimes leads to skepticism towards international legal mechanisms that could be perceived as infringing on its domestic affairs, such as the aforementioned R2P.

Despite these differences, there are also some areas of convergence between the LIO and the Chinese perspective on global governance. Both value the role of multilateral institutions in global governance. They recognize the importance of platforms like the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in facilitating dialogue, negotiation, and coordination among nations. While they may have different views on the effectiveness or structure of these institutions, both perspectives acknowledge the significance of multilateralism as a mechanism for managing global affairs. Furthermore, they recognize the importance of global cooperation in addressing transnational challenges. They acknowledge that issues such as climate change, terrorism, and pandemics require collective efforts and coordination among nations. Their approaches to addressing these challenges may be different, but both perspectives agree that collaboration and joint action are necessary to find solutions and mitigate risks.

Another crucial similarity between the two perspectives is their recognition of the importance of economic development and poverty reduction. While their approaches may differ, both acknowledge that economic well-being is a critical component of global governance. As we have seen, the Western system promotes a market-oriented, liberal economic order that emphasizes free trade, investment, and economic integration. It seeks to reduce barriers to commerce and encourage economic growth as a means to lift people out of poverty. China, on the other hand, emphasizes state-led development and poverty reduction through its domestic policies and initiatives like the BRI. China's focus on infrastructure development and investment in developing countries aims to foster economic growth and enhance connectivity, particularly in regions that have been historically marginalized.

Furthermore, both the LIO and the Chinese perspective recognize the need for reform in global governance structures. The former advocates for reforms to address the democratic deficit in international institutions and increase the representation of developing countries. It calls for greater inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes. The latter also emphasizes the need for reform, particularly to address the unequal distribution of power in global governance. China has called for a more balanced and multipolar international order that better reflects the emerging economies' growing influence. This shared recognition of the need for reform creates an opportunity for dialogue and collaboration between the two perspectives on shaping the future of global governance.

To summarize, both perspectives on global governance represent distinct approaches with notable differences in their principles, priorities, and strategies. While the LIO emphasizes liberal values, multilateralism, and open markets, the Chinese perspective prioritizes sovereignty, non-interference, and state-led development. However, there are also areas of convergence. Both perspectives acknowledge the importance of global cooperation, albeit through different lenses, and recognize the need for reform in global governance structures. Understanding these differences and similarities is essential for fostering constructive dialogue, finding areas of convergence, and addressing the complex challenges facing the world today.

General Viability of the Chinese Model from a Western Perspective

To begin, it is first important to underline that many of the criticisms that the Chinese global governance model moves to the Liberal International Order are indeed valid.

The most common grievance with the established order is that it is a system that heavily favors the West. This statement is correct, and the roots of this problem can be found in the historical origins of the international system. As was previously introduced in this paper, the current system found its origins in the bipolar world that emerged at the end of the Second World War. The order was designed with the reconstruction of Europe and the containment of the Soviet Union in mind. Therefore, many of its institutions were mostly geared towards bringing back the West, but mostly European countries, to an advanced level of development. This was done by establishing a system like the one described by the world system theory. The Western countries became the core, while their allies and the Third-world nations, which decided to align themselves with the US, became the periphery. The system worked as by the end of the Cold War, Europe together with the United States were the most developed countries in the World. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, instead of reforming the order to adapt it to a new environment, it was merely expanded to encompass the rest of the world. This led the worst aspects of the system to persevere and allowed them to keep damaging developing nations. Another valid criticism that is often moved against the LIO is that to gain access to funding by certain institutions, requirements are imposed on developing countries which do not consider their culture, history, and level of development. That is indeed true and is probably a remnant of the Western colonial past. The idea that

development should happen in the same way across the world, is faulty and outdated. Every country has the right to find its path to development according to its history, geographical location, and culture.

With this in mind, I believe that the global governance model proposed by China could be a viable alternative to the Liberal International Order for the following reasons. However, there are some aspects, which if not addressed will make it attractive almost only to the global south. They will be discussed after.

The first point in favor of the Chinese model is that it does indeed recognize that there are transnational problems, such as environmental degradation, transnational crime, and financial crises, which require the community at large to intervene if a solution is to be found. These are issues that are becoming more evident and frequent with every passing year, and thus it is important that any model that aims to function on a global level recognizes them and aims to find solutions. Furthermore, it is important to underline that Chinese global governance repudiates war as a means of solving international disagreements. This is a key aspect, as in the history of mankind, conflict has only led to further destruction, suffering, and instability, and has rarely achieved lasting peace or resolution of disputes. The fact that the Chinese model prioritizes peaceful negotiation and diplomacy while emphasizing mutual respect and cooperation between nations, may ultimately lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

The second factor that makes the “harmonious world” model viable is its desire to see international institutions become more democratic. This is a sentiment that is widely shared among countries that are not part of the Western world. Such a reform would make the existing institutions more legitimate. Furthermore, it would help to address some of the criticisms leveled against the current global governance system, such as its perceived lack of inclusivity and representation of the developing world. By giving greater voice and agency to a wider range of actors in international decision-making, a more democratic system could foster greater trust and cooperation among nations, leading to more effective and just outcomes for all. However, implementing such reforms would require significant political will and cooperation from existing global powers, which may prove to be a significant challenge. In addition, the Chinese model is clear in its stance against the unilateral foreign policies of the United States, which they perceive as being driven by a desire for hegemonic power. They contend that reforming the current global governance system must involve transforming the United States into a "normal" country that adheres to international law and

treats other nations with democratic equality. Most people around the world, even in Western countries, would agree with this assessment, as the US often behaves in an arrogant and exceptionalist manner, which has damaged its reputation and created distrust towards the Americans.

The third and final aspect that makes this model viable is specific to the global south and it is regarding the principle of non-interference. China has always been a staunch supporter of this principle as it is seen as a way to protect the sovereignty and independence of developing countries. By respecting the principle of non-interference, China avoids the perception of imposing its values or interests onto other countries, which has been a common criticism of Western interventions in the past. This approach also resonates with many countries in the global south who in their history have been subject to colonialism, and thus value their independence and autonomy in decision-making. The Chinese global governance model argues that this principle should also be applied to Western ideas and ideologies. It claims that on numerous occasions, industrialized countries have attempted to force their ideals upon other nations, in a fashion bordering on cultural imperialism. Considering the resistance that Western ideals have found in the global south in recent years it is easy to assume that this view is widely shared, and thus an international system that embraces this principle would find widespread support.

In conclusion, it would feel remiss not to present a critique of this model. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, if addressed the following objections could make the Chinese model also popular within Western countries. The main point of criticism is regarding the non-interference principle. Western countries have come to the realization, through their history and experience, that the government of a state does not always have the best interests of its people in mind. This, paired together with the existence of transnational problems, has led to the belief that sometimes intervention is required to solve issues that the state would otherwise neglect, even if it violates their sovereignty. At this point, a dilemma arises from the fact that some global issues, such as climate change, require cooperation and negotiation from all involved parties. However, if one of the countries involved is unwilling to engage in such discussions, it becomes a significant obstacle to finding a solution. Therefore, non-interference is difficult to reconcile with global governance, especially if there are no incentives for a state to change its internal policy.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has attempted to provide a two-fold analysis of the Chinese global governance perspective. Firstly, the paper examined the similarities and differences between the Liberal International Order and the Chinese perspective on global governance. While the LIO is rooted in liberal values, human rights, and democratic principles, the Chinese perspective emphasizes sovereignty, non-interference, and state-led development. These differences shape their respective approaches to economic governance, regionalism, and international law. However, there are also notable areas of convergence. Both perspectives recognize the importance of multilateral institutions and global cooperation in addressing transnational challenges. They acknowledge the need for reforms in global governance structures to address power imbalances and increase inclusivity. Moreover, they both value economic development and poverty reduction, although with different strategies and priorities.

Secondly, the paper discussed whether this model could present a viable alternative to the Liberal International Order. The analysis showed that the Chinese perspective recognizes the existence of transnational problems and prioritizes peaceful negotiation and diplomacy while emphasizing mutual respect and cooperation between nations, which may lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes. Additionally, this model desires more democratic international institutions, which would give greater voice and agency to a wider range of actors in international decision-making, and it respects the principle of non-interference. These factors make it a viable candidate to replace the Liberal International Order. However, Western countries could prove resistant to this change as they would find it hard to reconcile the duties imposed by global governance with the non-interference principle.

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