

Global Power Shift

Fulvio Attinà
Yi Feng *Editors*

China and World Politics in Transition

How China Transforms the World
Political Order



Springer

Global Power Shift

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Ample empirical evidence points to recent power shifts in multiple areas of international relations taking place between industrialized countries and emerging powers, as well as between states and non-state actors. However, there is a dearth of theoretical interpretation and synthesis of these findings, and a growing need for coherent approaches to understand and measure the transformation. The central issues to be addressed include theoretical questions and empirical puzzles: How can studies of global power shift and the rise of ‘emerging powers’ benefit from existing theories, and which alternative aspects and theoretical approaches might be suitable? How can the meanings, perceptions, dynamics, and consequences of global power shift be determined and assessed? This edited series will include highly innovative research on these topics. It aims to bring together scholars from all major world regions as well as different disciplines, including political science, economics and human geography. The overall aim is to discuss and possibly blend their different approaches and provide new frameworks for understanding global affairs and the governance of global power shifts.

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Order



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China's World Policy at the Time of the War in Ukraine



Fulvio Attinà and Yi Feng

Abstract The chapters in this book provide knowledge of the conditions that are at the heart of understanding how China is influencing changes in today's world politics and how ready it is to perform the task of rebuilding the world order. The chapters of the first part focused both on the philosophical and ideological roots of China's worldview and on China's power resources and political goals which have substantial implications in contemporary global affairs. The chapters of the second part examined China's engagement with the main problems of today's world politics. They bring to the surface the ever-changing participation of Chinese leaders in decision making towards such issues over the past decades. Generally, and understandably, such participation has been characterized by a willingness to act as a responsible power without failing to defend its interests and objectives. The chapters of the third part provided knowledge on China's management of intergovernmental relations with the countries of Europe and Asia which are at the centre of China's projection of power at today's stage of world politics.

Experts agree that over the past three decades China has pursued its peaceful rise in world politics conforming to the established standards of the world political order. The mass media, for their part, cannot fail to report that the rise of China generates opposite feelings and reactions from people from different areas of the world, mostly smug reactions from the Global South and anxious reactions from the Global North. Studies and research by scholars testify that China's rise in the governance of world affairs is constant and seemingly unhindered and unstoppable. Overall, the answers of experts, journalists, and scholars converge on China's exceptional rise but where it is headed and where it will lead the world are questions that do not receive equally

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convergent answers. Understanding China's policy toward continuity and change in world politics is also intriguing because macroscopic inconsistencies emerge here and there between what Chinese leaders say and what they do. China's leaders say they aim to build the multipolar world because in such a world sovereignty is assured to all states, be they small, medium, or large and powerful. At the same time, Chinese political leaders are respectful of the current world governance that includes the rules of international institutions that give a few great powers—China is one of them—roles, and positions that openly institutionalize the exercise of hierarchical political authority, thus benefiting China as well. The most prominent examples are the well-known decision-making rules of the United Nations Security Council and the International Monetary Fund, the position of nuclear countries in the world nuclear non-proliferation policy, and China's developing country status in organizations such as the World Trade Organizations and the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change.

Finally, sinologists explain that Chinese values and norms underlie a peculiar worldview and that Chinese leaders want to promote these values and norms internationally and are confident that they can achieve this goal. They believe their design is well received by the political class of the Global South and the Rest of the world in contrast to the West which has dominated world politics for the past 70 years. What is perceived as low coherence between statements and actions of Chinese leaders is an approach inspired by the perspective of progressive change with which Chinese leaders want to transform world politics through the gradual revision of institutions, rules, and policies.

Over the past 40 years, China has socialized with the institutions, rules, and policies of world governance and order. China's foreign policymakers have focused on the permanent problems of trade, finance, and security, as well as new problems of global scope such as development cooperation and environmental protection. At the same time, Chinese leaders never accept their country being treated as a subordinate player and, less so, a status quo actor of world politics. On the contrary, they put the country at the forefront of the group of dissatisfied countries. China's response to the transition situation of the world order that Russian aggression on Ukraine has begun clearly confirms China's firmness in asserting the country's dissatisfaction with the current order in accordance with other dissatisfied states.

Chinese leaders share the claim of many developing countries to break out of the existing world order and let in the multipolar world which they imagine as the world that ensures each country from outside interference in internal affairs and gives equal voice to all states in rule-based multilateral cooperation addressing common issues. The leaders of China, along with those of India, Brazil, and many countries of the Rest of the world diffuse the image of the future world order as the order based on multipolarity and multilateralism, which, in their opinion, are at the heart of today's embodiment of the Westphalian rule of sovereignty that protects independent countries from interference in domestic and foreign affairs. To China and the Rest, Westphalian sovereignty is tantamount to giving the state rulers a free hand regarding their responsibilities to their own citizens and the outside world. It is not surprising that humanitarian intervention to protect people who are not protected

by their own government is considered a serious threat from leaders who support the fundamentalist conception of Westphalian sovereignty, that is, without limits and adaptations to the circumstances created by the evolution of the global social context. However, the most critical aspect of such position is that multipolarity as the condition in which groups of countries gather around few poles, that is, powerful countries with leadership skills, is a major obstacle to multilateralism. The actual results of multilateralism, in fact, depend on the autonomy of each state in the formation of policies in the multilateral institution and in their implementation with internal policies without the constraints of multipolar politics, that is, without the need to demonstrate loyalty to a pole country. In fact, such loyalty to a pole country is a fundamental obstacle to reaching the multilateral agreement.

In truth, China faces the challenge of balancing the goal of changing the current order that has fuelled China's economic growth to date and the goal of bringing together revisionist countries that oppose existing world institutions and policies. Chinese leaders want to keep multilateralism alive, especially in venues where China enjoys institutional power such as the UN Security Council. China's considerable participation in UN peacekeeping operations is a clear demonstration of such a policy. The commitment to reduce global warming and environmental pollution while respecting the UNFCCC policy is another case in point. When financial policy is considered, China wants to increase its role in the Bretton-Woods institutions and also support financial institutions under its leadership, as it did with the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

On the other hand, many developing countries are fond of the Chinese model that improves the standard of living and provides aid without conditional clauses in contrast to the Western model of development cooperation that conditions economic aid to the democratic reforms of the receiving country. The Chinese model of economy and society is perceived by the ruling class of some developing countries as close to the model of society and economy of their countries in accordance with the Westphalian principle of inviolable sovereignty.

Incidentally, such a model of sovereignty plus development that China proposes to countries in need of aid has the effect of de-legitimizing the principles of the existing world order. The Ukrainian war further demonstrated the attraction of the Chinese model. In the vast Indo-Pacific area, which today receives the attention of the United States and Western states of the area, most governments are close to Beijing's position because China is the largest trading partner of Asian countries. By the way, China's economic presence is also growing in sub-Saharan Africa, counteracting the long-standing influence of Western European countries.

As a result, while some analysts warn that it is premature to worry about China's rise due to the relative asymmetric vulnerability of China and the West, many experts and politicians say that it is necessary to counter China's economic might through hardening trade relations, export rules, and investment in information technology.

Meeting in Beijing on February 2, 2022, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin stated that they share a mission to fulfil in the current times. The Joint Statement of the meeting begins as such

Today, the world is going through momentous changes, and humanity is entering a new era of rapid development and profound transformation. It sees the development of such processes and phenomena as multipolarity, economic globalization, the advent of information society, cultural diversity, transformation of the global governance architecture and world order; there is increasing interrelation and interdependence between the States; a trend has emerged towards redistribution of power in the world; and the international community is showing a growing demand for the leadership aiming at peaceful and gradual development. At the same time, as the pandemic of the new coronavirus infection continues, the international and regional security situation is complicating and the number of global challenges and threats is growing from day to day. Some actors representing but the minority on the international scale continue to advocate unilateral approaches to addressing international issues and resort to force; they interfere in the internal affairs of other states, infringing their legitimate rights and interests, and incite contradictions, differences and confrontation, thus hampering the development and progress of mankind, against the opposition from the international community (see Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development, <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770>).

Three weeks later, China celebrated the end of the Winter Olympics and the Russian army invaded Ukraine claiming to pursue legitimate national rights and the high political duty of protecting democracy in Europe from Nazism. Even if one credits the officially stated objectives of the invasion, no one can claim that the Joint Declaration is causally coincident with the invasion. By default, the war in Ukraine set in motion the transitional phase of the world order in the wake of the Joint Statement of the leaders of China and Russia. However, the two parties may give a different meaning to the link between the war event and the unfolding of *the era of rapid development and profound transformation* that the Joint Statement emphasized. In other terms, the war in Ukraine began the transition phase of the world order but the two leaders are divided in views of how to deal with the *process of transforming the global governance architecture and world order* that they indicated in the Joint Statement.

On the one hand, the way of conducting the Ukrainian war establishes certain boundaries to the relationship between China and Russia. Beijing does not want to fall victim to Western sanctions and refrains from supplying or selling weapons to Russia. For reasons related to its own goals and projects in domestic and foreign policy, China does not want to pay a high price for supporting Russia. Beijing's dependence on energy imports could have an influence on the purchase of Russian oil and gas diverted from Europe and sold at a reduced price due to Western sanctions. In addition, Russian consumer products are of little significance to China which fears damaging the huge trade with European countries. Finally, Russia's lucrative trade with India, especially in the arms sector, is a major obstacle for China.

On the other hand, as mentioned, China's vision, unlike the Russian strategy towards changing the world order, is inspired by a long-range perspective aimed at progressively transforming the existing framework of institutions and policies rather than subverting it suddenly and with disruptive actions. Accordingly, the chapters of this book analyse how China participates in the governance of significant areas of world politics to understand how China is changing world politics. This book

recognizes that Chinese leaders are far from agreeing to undergo a process of homogenizing the country to the status quo and, at the same time, investigates whether China has a clear vision of change and where the revisionist process will end.

On this premise, this book deals with the subject through the system-oriented and actor-oriented research methodology. In other words, to understand how, in the current transitional stage of the order, China is changing the politics and government of the world, the authors of the chapters of this book carried out research on the main global issues and problems and, based on such knowledge, analyse the response and actions that Chinese leaders are taking in accordance with the values, goals, and resources of their country. It is in this sense that the dual methodological perspective is useful for building knowledge of world issues and problems that are crucial to understanding China's action towards world politics, and knowledge of China's values, goals and means that are crucial to the future of world politics.

The two chapters of the first part of the book provide the knowledge necessary to frame the theme of the book and appreciate the contribution of the knowledge that the other chapters of the book provide to the understanding of the change that China marks on world politics. The chapter by Song and Ai deals mainly with the ideologies underlying the Chinese worldview. The chapter by Kugler, Tammen, and Zeng, on the other hand, builds knowledge about the material power of China and other world powers. Jointly, the two chapters draw the scenario for future relations between these powers and China, the world's leading dissatisfied power. Based on the stressful impact of the authoritarian version of communitarianism that informs China's worldview, Song and Ai's analysis comes to conclusions that converge with the findings of Kugler, Tammen, and Zeng, that is, the significance of the different levels of satisfaction as the element that complicates efforts towards China's coordination and mutual understanding with the United States and the European Union. However, they have advanced the analysis of several factors - both national, such as population greying, and international, such as shared responsibility for responding to climate warming - that can reduce the tension of the confrontation between world powers.

China's involvement in making and implementing world policies is the subject of the second part of this book. It is generally recognized that the interconnected states of today's globalized world are not effective at addressing global problems if they do not coordinate their policy response. The post-World War II world was reorganized by the coalition of Western countries resorting to a new approach to dealing with these kinds of problems. Post-war conferences, working by the method that was called multilateral negotiation, formed the world policies of finance, trade, and security in the event of military aggression. Today, such multilateral policy at the world level is alive but contested, in some cases because of decision-making rules considered illegitimate and in other cases because of rules that world policies have put in place. However, multilateral policymaking remains the appropriate form of producing the response to problems on a global scale. The four chapters deal with multilateral policies that address the new global problems that have entered the agenda of world politics. Further global problems await to be addressed through

real-world policies rather than international treaties that impose obligations on states but do not control their implementation. Issues such as international crime, mass migration, and the fight against hunger are assigned to international organizations with the consent of all countries but consensus on the formation of effective policy responses has not been reached. This part of the book deals with four of these problems, namely climate warming, weapons of mass destruction, development cooperation, and communicable diseases. The chapters analyse both the state of the policymaking that has achieved different results and China's conduct and strategy towards the multilateral formation of the world policy response to such problems.

The response to the problem of climate warming has a prominent place because, as demonstrated by the analysis of the chapter by Fulvio Attinà, it was formed through a model of policymaking that satisfies the essential conditions to make legitimate and effective policy response to the problem. Such conditions are the respect for the equal decision-making rights of all states, the implementation process based on dialogue and interaction between national governments and the policy institution, and assistance to countries in need of capability-building for the policy implementation. The achievement of such conditions, which came in 2015 with the Paris Agreement, ended a negotiation that had lasted since 1992 when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, was signed and transformed into the policy institution legitimized to manage the policy to de-carbonize the world. The war in Ukraine raised problems and doubts about the implementation of the policy. On the one hand, the agreed deadlines for de-carbonization will suffer. On the other, the use of renewable energy sources can be promoted by the goal of making countries less dependent on the use of imported fossil energy, an achievement that Chinese leaders have already espoused.

The arms race is a problem that has taken on a new meaning as nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction have changed relations between the great powers. The chapter by Jan Karlas deals with the analysis of the response to this problem, which is the primary responsibility of the great powers that produce and store huge quantities of such weapons, and the concern of all states. The chapter analyses multilateral negotiations aimed at establishing rules and mechanisms for the control of such weapons. It emphasizes the policy of the great powers to make the world a little safer from the use of weapons of mass destruction and addresses the evolution of China's approach to the related negotiations. In a rather similar way to the process of policymaking on climate warming, China's approach has changed from abstaining from exercising leadership to an active and leadership role, especially in negotiations on conventional weapons of mass destruction. Karlas explains that China's concern for security in its regional area and interest in promoting the image of national foreign policy as that of a developing country determine the Chinese approach in accordance with the strategy of the country's progressive rise in the world hierarchy.

China's commitment to development cooperation aid is another aspect of the role Beijing wants to play in world politics. The country's status as a developing country is highly regarded by the Chinese elite as the building block of action in world

politics and a key card of the ascending role in the world political order. This is the interpretative key of the analysis of Silvia Menegazzi's chapter on China's development cooperation policy. The analysis underlines the dual and asymmetric strategy of Chinese leaders towards this area of a crucial world problem. In fact, the Chinese strategy is both bilateral and multilateral. Initially, it was more a policy of bilateral cooperation. Later, while continuing to be bilateral, it also turned towards multilateralism, but focusing on the multilateral cooperation of Chinese-led financial institutions that add to and compete with existing financial institutions that are under the leadership of Western countries.

The chapter by Francesca Cerutti addresses the problem of infectious diseases that have spread beyond national borders in recent decades. Addressing such a problem worldwide was assigned to the World Health Organization which carried out the task primarily through the issuance of International Health Regulations. Covid-19 has raised concern about the effectiveness of such a rules-based response in view of many countries' traditional aversion to accepting formal instruments of international governance. The social, political, and also cultural and demographic specifics of each country are the cause of such an outcome. On the contrary, today's global interconnection imposes on states the imperative to accept the multilateral policymaking model as the appropriate form to address problems on a global scale. China, due to the specifics of the country, represents a lot for the outcome of the world health policy. The chapter explores China's participation in such policy responses in recent decades and at the present time. It highlights the double standard of Chinese leaders that came to public prominence with the Covid-19 experience. On the one hand, they recognize the WHO's authority in world health governance. On the other hand, they defend national priorities that clash with the world policy response.

The chapters of the third part of this book analyse the relations of China with the countries of Europe and Asia. These chapters recognize that for all great powers and China entry into the circle of states in the leading position of world politics is achieved both through intergovernmental dialogue and economic exchange with advanced and emerging states and through the construction of significant relations with the countries of the surrounding region. Unlike relations with the countries of Central and South America, the Middle East, and Africa, with which China prefers to establish bilateral relations, relations with the states of Europe and Asia have a significant multilateral dimension. Bilateral relations with EU and non-EU member states are significantly accompanied by relations between China and the EU. Similarly, China's bilateral relations with the countries of Asia, especially Southeast Asia, are complemented by China's relations with poorly organized and well-organized networks of states cooperating in political and economic affairs. The chapters by Feng and Gao, Yan, and Lišanin deal with China's approach to European countries and the European Union. They show that this approach is a still undecided process due to various reasons. The chapter by van der Zwan analyses China's relations with Asian countries that are shaped by the Belt and Road Initiative.

The chapter by Feng and Gao analyses the strength of China-Europe relations through opinion poll data processed with multivariate statistical analysis. As relations between international actors depend on their own images of the other, Feng and Gao assess the present and future potential of Chinese policy towards Europe by investigating the impact of a sudden fact, namely the COVID-19 shock originating in China, and of established economic exchanges, namely trade, contracted projects, and FDI existing between China and European countries. The analysis shows that external shocks such as the blow of the virus born in China cause a change in the image of the other for the worse while the influence of economic exchange on the image of the other is significant but nuanced for various reasons. The trade surplus against the other country, for example, does not necessarily improve the well-being of respondents, although it still contributes to the positive image of the other country.

Building vital and intense mutual relations is the primary goal of the leaders of China and the European Union. Although such a relationship has not always been smooth, the leaders have always shared the goal of developing complementarity and cooperation. The chapter by Yan explores this shared vision through an in-depth analysis of the concept of strategic autonomy that has taken over the EU foreign policy scene in recent years. The chapter highlights China's expectation for the advancement of European strategic autonomy because it could advance China's goal of promoting the multipolar world and give the European Union a balancing role in U.S.-China relations. China's support for European strategic autonomy, however, cannot hide the fact that European strategic autonomy has such significant implications for world politics that make it an opportunity and a challenge for both parties and also a work in progress constantly influenced by the changing circumstances of international relations.

The Lišanin chapter analyses China's policy towards an area of Europe, namely the Western Balkans, that has not yet stabilized, through the case of Serbia, a country that harbours resentment towards the EU because of the conditions created in the recent past of European international politics. The chapter highlights the impact of the unfinished EU enlargement policy on the countries of the Western Balkans. Lišanin points out that it has created great uncertainties for the governments of the area and a vacuum that represents an opportunity for countries, such as China, who want to expand their presence in competition with the European Union and Western countries, with the United States in the lead. The chapter traces the growing presence of China based on economic partnership, infrastructure investment, and political cooperation. It also explains the orientation of the Serbian policymakers towards the uncertain situation in the area. The willingness of Serbian leaders to overcome such uncertainty by navigating the middle and waiting for changes for the better, however, was frustrated by the war in Ukraine that brought back the confrontation between the great powers.

China's potential for coalition power has grown over the past decade thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative, BRI. Investments in infrastructure and trade facilitation are among the main aspects of this programme, which is mainly, but not only, implemented by state-owned enterprises and which benefits from public procurement and grants. It raises the question of whether Chinese leaders are pursuing the

growth of the country's GDP through the expansion of economic relations with countries around the world with a view to promoting a new world order centred on China. The chapter by Gul-i-Hina van der Zwan focuses on several cases of China's engagement within the Belt and Road Initiative in Asia through a new conceptual framework aimed at discovering China's link and leverage towards countries in Asian sub-regions such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. Various dimensions of Chinese linkage along economic, social, cultural, communication, and intergovernmental ties for the BRI partner countries are analysed. In addition, the chapter examines Chinese leverage under BRI to unpack the dynamics and influence of Chinese involvement and bilateral relations with BRI partner countries. The van der Zwan's analysis fills the gap existing in the academic debate about China's influence by studying the mechanism of China's potential political influence in partner countries along various dimensions. Finally, the chapter shows the importance of the social, cultural, and communication aspects of the BRI thanks to the engagement with various actors such as Chinese firms, state-owned enterprises, private-public partnerships, and joint ventures which play a key role in determining the link with China in partner countries.

It is our purpose to present the readers with a coherent analysis of the some of the most important issues that China engages and their implications to the rest of the world. We hope that each chapter of the book is of clear relevance to both scientists and world policy professionals. In recent decades, scientific research on China's action in world politics has primarily concerned itself with the country's growing power and the impact of such an increase on the configuration of the world political system. Starting from the current situation, political science research on China is called upon to investigate how China is behaving as a top player of world politics in transition. The specifics of the country's political culture matter as much as the actual actions of Chinese leaders at such a transitional stage. This book fits into this policy research orientation. The authors are aware of the need to follow such a research direction by developing further studies on China's ideological roots, power resources, involvement in world politics towards the problems of world range, and bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Making such scientific research useful to politicians and professionals in world politics is of the utmost importance. The experience they have gained in recent decades may not be sufficient to address the current challenges of reforming international relations and aligning the world political system with the institutional and political structure that current times require for a viable world.

Part I

China on the World Stage

China's Vision for a Future World Order and Its Implications for Global Governance



Weiying Song  and Weining Ai 

Abstract This analytical essay addresses authoritarian communitarianism as the normative and ideological underpinnings of the current Chinese foreign policy. In recent years, China has exhibited its ambition in bidding for its preferred world order, through both its rhetoric and behavior. Being well aware of this new development, people are debating about what is exactly China's world vision and its approach to a future world order. Driven by the puzzle in contemporary global affairs, this chapter focuses on the philosophical and ideological roots of China's world vision, rather than investigating its foreign policies directly. It is argued that China's world view today and its ensuing policy approach are substantially informed by the authoritarian version of communitarianism, deriving largely from the traditional Chinese thoughts of Confucianism. Inspired by authoritarian communitarianism as the main international ideology, China is envisaging a world order, based on values of international stability and communal harmony, emphasizing the role of nation states and vertical hierarchical order. This argument is further assessed with China's role and policy in the crisis of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. Through this specific case, strength and limitation of China's world vision are better illuminated, with reference to global governance. It is concluded that the ideological struggle between China and mostly the West tends to generate substantial policy implications in contemporary global affairs.

In recent years, China has been highly proactive, or even “assertive” as criticized in the West, in its foreign policies, in terms of both rhetoric and behavior. The top Chinese leadership has declared on important international occasions time and again its determination on going out to the center stage of world affairs. Policymakers and analysts around the world are baffled about what China exactly aims to achieve in

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such high-profile discourses as the “Community of Common Destiny” (CCD) as well as flagship measures such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In particular, this happens in the time when the West has been facing various tremendous challenges, including global financial crisis, refugee and migration crisis, rise of political populism, the Covid-19 pandemic, and mostly recently the Russo-Ukrainian War.

The world is indeed attentive to China’s big turn in foreign behavior from the traditional low-profile strategy, known as “*Tao Guang Yang Hui*.” Much of the Chinese rhetoric is dismissed in the West simply as China’s exercise of propaganda or alleged as “sharp power” to project its influence internationally, through manipulation and disinformation in democracies (Walker & Ludwig, 2017). The ambitious Chinese initiatives centering around the BRI are, on the other hand, described in the West as China’s exploitation of weakness of other states for its own favor of interest maximization and power expansion. Overall, China’s policies and initiatives are being seriously suspected and challenged by the Western countries generally as its malicious ambition to conquer the world.

It is worth mentioning that this rise of China’s assertiveness and its self-confidence is accompanied by its narrative of conceptual framework of world visions, culminating in the “Community of Common Destiny” (which is also translated as “Community of Shared Future for All Humankind”) in the current Xi Jinping era. The Chinese government claimed it as an accolade when its concept of “Community of Shared Future” was officially cited in the United Nations context (CMFA, 2017). However, it is dismissed or even largely neglected in the West. Is a political concept such as the CCD presented by the Chinese leadership just a cheap slogan or does it represent its real strategic world vision? What is really China’s vision for a global order? How can we understand China’s world vision and its ensuing policies? How can we understand the incoherent and sometimes contradictory nature in Chinese rhetoric and behavior, relating to its global vision?

This essay argues that authoritarian communitarianism, originating from the Confucian thoughts, serves as the ideological basis of China’s world vision. Authoritarian communitarianism emphasizes social harmony as the paramount value of human societies. To this end, methods of centralized authority and hierarchical governance are necessary and often required. As a principle, therefore, pursuit of common goods precedes and dominates the right of individual freedom. This political ideology has defined China’s world view and its ensuing international behaviors as well as its domestic governance. It is essential to delve into the underlying political ideology as a good understanding of its normative basis, which can illuminate the logic of China’s foreign policy. “Community of shared future” defines the common goals of all humankind, regardless of races, ethnicities, history, culture, and tradition. In pursuit of social harmony at the global level, each state must, first of all, take care of its own internal affairs as the most essential contribution to global governance. As a specific case, China’s effort in controlling the Covid-19 pandemic within the country is a direct contribution to the world, despite its huge cost.

The essay proceeds as follows. It first conceptualizes authoritarian communitarianism as a philosophical and ideological tradition in China, by comparing different types of communitarianism and relating it to Confucian thoughts. It then elaborates the Chinese scholarly literature and Chinese leadership's narrative on world vision, inspired by the ideological basis of authoritarian communitarianism. It further goes on to discuss the Chinese world visions' implications for global governance, in relation to its potential conflicts with other international ideologies. The theoretical discussion is complemented with some brief discussion of China's behavior in the ongoing crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1 Authoritarian Communitarianism in China

1.1 *Communitarianism and Confucianism*

In the West, communitarianism is a relatively newly coined term of political philosophy and ideology. It first emerged and established itself in the 1980s when there was a scholarly debate between the dominant political liberalism and a minority group of American and British scholars who disagree on several major liberal tenets. They argued for the importance of the common good in opposition to contemporary liberals and libertarians, who categorically emphasized the good for individuals, particularly including personal autonomy and individual rights. Despite several notable differences between the two schools of thoughts (Bell, 2016), Western communitarian thinkers unanimously agree that communitarianism at least in its Western version has no fundamental difference from liberalism. Some leading scholars of the school are even reluctant with the term due to its authoritarian connotations. Western communitarian thinkers went on to elaborate the internal differences within the school of thought. Varieties of communitarianism may thus exist due to the internal differences within the school and local philosophical and historical traditions (Etzioni, 2013). Apart from those found in the West, communitarianism is popular in more authoritarian East Asian countries, long influenced by Confucianism, particularly China and Singapore. It is argued that Confucianism is without doubt communitarian and the real question is how classical Confucianism can support a particular style of communitarianism (Fox, 1997, p. 565).

Notably, the Western literature of communitarianism has attracted strong scholarly interests in the Chinese academia. In contrast to the liberal value of individualism, communitarianism's emphasis on common good is more in alignment with dominant values within the Chinese society. While in favor of some of Western communitarian arguments, Chinese scholars endeavor to define communitarianism of the Chinese kind. They do this mainly by drawing on traditional Confucian thoughts. Social harmony (*he*) is asserted as the core value of Confucian communitarianism. As a primary virtue, harmony is more important than any other values such as justice in building and strengthening a community. According to classic Confucianism, harmony is not merely about absence of disagreements and conflicts,

but also about unconditional conformity to established social norms (Li, 2018, p. 8). In comparison with Western communitarianism, Confucianism is the “thick” type of communitarianism which attaches paramount importance to the common good in order to sustain a robust communitarian society. Social harmony is to be realized by its members through mutual transformation for the common good.

To achieve social harmony, Confucian communitarianism upholds two underlying tenets of its worldview. First, social community is more than the aggregation of the individuals that compose it. And in turn the order and stability of a community must be sustained at any cost. Confucian thinkers assert that human existence depends far more on traditional, communally inherited meanings than individualistic ones. Confucian perspective cannot accommodate an atomistic worldview but embraces a world of social interdependence (Fox, 1997, p. 586). All human relationships involve a set of defined roles and mutual obligations; each participant should understand and conform to his/her proper role. Indeed, individuals depend on each other to “carry out their responsibilities appropriately according to their particular places in the social structure” (Fox, 1997, p. 575). The exercise of authority, in other words, required the cooperation of all (Fox, 1997, p. 575). In a nutshell, Western communitarianism accords to two major sources of normativity, that of the common good and that of autonomy and rights. In this sense, people often face difficult choices, as neither in principle should take precedence over the other. Confucian communitarianism extolls the importance of the common good and the corresponding necessity of social obligations, if deemed necessary, at the cost of individual autonomy and rights.

Second, social relationship is fundamentally hierarchical. As a well-known doctrine, Confucius advocates in his *Book of Rites: Great Learning* for a strictly ordered hierarchy of social institutions, starting from the individual up to the universe: cultivating oneself (*Xiushen*), regulating the family (*Qijia*), governing the state (*Zhiguo*), and maintaining peace in the world (*Pingtianxia*). It is a stepwise process: only when individual personal character is duly cultivated, can human families be properly regulated; only when families are regulated, can the states be well governed; only when the states are well governed, can there be peace in the world. In the Confucian view, individuals are the basic elements of human communities at various vertical levels, from the family, to the state, and up to the world.

In this hierarchy, the state is the core of Confucian communitarianism which can be called as “state communitarianism” (W. Hu, 2007, p. 478). This is because the social and political thought of Confucianism is a social and political philosophy focusing on how to administer and rule a state (W. Hu, 2007, p. 477). “Confucianism never takes the individual, but it takes the community (the state) as the starting point for studying social and political problems. In other words, in Confucian social and political theory, the community but not the individual is always emphasized in political problems” (W. Hu, 2007, p. 483). The individual rights and freedoms are neglected, whereas the collective interests of the community (national interests) are valued. “Therefore, the primary goal of Confucianism is to increase the power of the state the most it can. It presupposes that the more powerful a state is, the more likely