

China in Global Governance: Ideology, Theory, and Instrumentation

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This article was prepared as part of research project #20-514-930003 "Russia and China in the Global Political Space: Harmonization of National Interests in Global Governance" supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

DOI: 10.31278/1810-6374-2020-18-4-132-153

Abstract

Over the past few years, the global political landscape has changed dramatically. Trump's aggressive foreign policy has broken the precarious balance between the centers of world politics established in the past two decades. The U.S. trade war with China and accusations of creating COVID-19 have added a significant imbalance to the distribution of power in global governance.

The current political global space is characterized by a tough struggle between the main centers of power for spheres of influence in macro regions, global power and redistribution of world incomes. In fact, it is a struggle for

competition in setting the principles, norms and models of the future world order. Most of the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are distancing themselves from the West on many international issues, and advocating the creation of national concepts of world order (in “non-West,” “post-West,” “outside the West” formats), which would take into account the political and cultural traditions of their countries, and the specific experience of their interaction with neighboring states and the world as a whole. Thus, the competition in global governance between the United States and China is for a new global order, including influence on the vast Global South.

This article offers an analysis of China’s strategy of global governance and Chinese academic discourse on this issue. The paper also examines China’s instrumentation for formatting its own structure of global governance and forms of strategic rivalry with the United States.

Keywords: global governance, strategic rivalry, world order, international regime, norms, rules, COVID-19, China, the U.S.

CHINESE ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ON GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

There are more and more researchers in China who purposefully explore various types of global governance and related international affairs. On June 20, 2013, the first all-China scientific conference on global governance was held. It was attended by over 60 scholars from more than 20 universities, research institutes and leading journals writing about international relations (Yang Hao, 2013, pp.63- 64). The first “Introduction to International Organizations” under the editorship of Zhang Lihua came out in 2015 (Zhang Lihua, 2015), followed in 2016 by “China and Globalization: a View from Beijing and Moscow,” edited by Zhang Yuyan (Zhang Yuyan, 2016).

In China, global governance is understood as a new type of principles, mechanisms, methods, and activities focused on the values professed by holism and on the common interests of humankind, whereby various actors, using equal dialogue, negotiations and cooperation for managing the public affairs of humankind, jointly respond to global changes and global problems. Global governance is essentially a transition from governmental to non-governmental, from the state to society, from

territorial politics to non-territorial politics, from forced governance to equal, advisory, voluntary and network-based governance, which represents a special type of political power. Global governance has a major impact on international relations: it breaks the state-centric system and model of international relations and allows humanity to solve more complex international issues; it encourages people to participate in the public affairs of humankind and facilitates the democratization of international relations; it promotes dialogue, cooperation, coordination, and political transformation of conflicts in international relations; and it helps develop international relations in a just and reasonable manner (Huang Rihan and Yao Yufei, 2013, p.235).

China is actively forming a global network of partnerships, which includes more than 100 countries in five macro regions around the world (Grachikov, 2019a, pp.83-93), applying its own regulatory requirements to other countries (Grachikov, 2019b, pp.154-173), and actively using Western classical approaches to building relations with the United States and the world community as a whole (Grachikov, 2019c, pp.187-200).

The Russian academic community has adopted the view that global governance is a system of institutions, principles, political and legal norms, and behavioral standards that determine the regulation of transnational and global problems through the interaction of states. The most comprehensive collection of Russian academic views on this issue can be found in the “Global Management: Opportunities and Risks” (Global Governance, 2015).

Some Chinese researchers name the G20 as an important platform for global governance, emphasizing China’s special role in this forum. For example, Zhang Lin has said that the G20 “is currently the main forum for international economic cooperation, which plays an important role in promoting global economic development and strengthening policy coordination” (Zhang, 2016). This is the first global governance mechanism in which China participates as a founding country and a key member. The G20 is short for the Group of Twenty. The historical condition for the Group’s creation was that the G8 did not have sufficient representation to address global economic

issues. Like the G8, the G20 is an informal forum that enables major countries to engage in dialogue within the Bretton Woods system. The goal of the G20 is to facilitate the modernization of the international financial system, to create a broad basis for discussion and consultation on issues of mutual interest, to seek cooperation, and to promote stability and sustainable growth of the world economy. Since the 2008 financial crisis, G20 has been focused on rebuilding the global economy. Zhang Lin emphasizes that reform and reorganization of the international financial system consisting of the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank Group, and the G8 is already inevitable, because the measures they take to overcome crises do not work (Zhang, 2016).

Zou Yabao and Wang Kai call the institutionalization of the G20 an urgent need of China, because the Group has already gone a long way from addressing international economic issues to dealing with international relations and global political governance. The institutionalization of the G20 would be a good opportunity for China to participate more profoundly in global economic governance and promote reform of the international financial order (Zou and Wang, 2011, p.34).

There are two groups in the world that contribute to economic development: the first one consists of developed countries, and the second one is made up of developing countries: the G7 and BRICS, respectively. The G20 essentially integrates these two groups, whereby China finds it very important and seeks to promote its development (Jin and Gu, 2016, p.8). In his study, Pang Zhongying has raised the important issue of global governance deficit. In his opinion, this is a serious problem facing the world community. Pang defines global governance as the management of problems on a global scale and at the global level (Pang, 2016, p.3).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES OF CHINA'S DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Diplomatic strategies. The conceptualization of China's foreign policy as diplomatic strategies, which reflect the traditional political philosophy and the practice of foreign relations employed in ancient

China, originated during the Warring States period in the form of stratagems (and then strategies) (Grachikov, 2015, pp.34-46). Diplomatic strategies represent a chartered course and a strategy of protecting national interests of the country, carried out in the process of interstate interaction at a certain time, depending on national conditions. They include political, economic, cultural, ethnic, and other survival strategies related to the country's development (Diplomatic Strategies, 2020). Diplomatic strategies are a common idea, comprehensive calculation and a universal plan of diplomatic action by means of diplomacy as an independent agent (Jin, 1999, pp.97-90). The entire history of China's diplomacy is a natural process of constantly changing diplomatic strategies. China's foreign policy practice until 1978 showed that short-term diplomatic strategies covering about ten years (for example, the strategy of "Leaning to One Side") are an integral part of long-term strategies spanning thirty years or more (for example, the strategy of "Joining Alliances," and now the "Chinese Dream" or "Two Centennial Goals"), which, in turn, are only a "small part" of China's Grand Strategy. China's Grand Strategy, as defined by Yuan Pan, President of the Chinese Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, refers to "the embodiment of ideals and policies that represent the provision of long-term leadership for the future of a country that goes beyond individual organizations or political parties and eliminates the demarcation line between domestic and international affairs" (Yuan, 2013, p.3). According to Ye Zicheng, the Grand Strategy is a huge strategic system that includes a number of interconnected and various strategies integrating the long-term momentous state goal of transforming China into a world power (Ye, 2003, p.2).

China's national interests include the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the maintenance of internal stability, economic growth and the achievement of China's status as a great power. These interests have remained fairly consistent and unchanged for decades (Yan, 1996; Hong, 1999). With the growth of economic power and export opportunities, as Xu Jia observes, the national interests of China

began to slowly expand beyond its borders (Xu, 2006, p.19). When analyzing the national interests of China, Ye Xiaodi used the approach of neoclassical realism by taking power structure as an independent variable and China's strategic orientation and the reaction of adjacent/peripheral/neighboring countries as intermediate variables. Based on the relationship between these three variables in the shift/transit of China's national interests, he classified them as "defensive national interests," "constructive national interests," and "competitive core interests," extending their application from domestic and regional to interregional and international levels. Ye Xiaodi believes that China's national interests have changed over the past forty years as follows: 1980-1990 was a period of bipolarity and defensive national interest; in 1991-2010, they gave way to unipolarity and constructive national interest; in 2011-2017, China opted for multipolarity and competitive core interests (Ye, 2003, pp.76-115). China's foreign policy/diplomacy changed accordingly from that of "a participant" to that of "a leader" of the world political system.

China's relations with two great powers, the USSR/Russian Federation and the United States, have always had a significant impact on the development of its specific diplomatic strategies ("Lean to One Side," "One Line") (Ye, 2003, p.2), due to ancient Chinese concepts of using "close" (USSR/Russia) and "distant" (U.S.) countries alternately for the sake of its own national goals, taking into account internal and external factors (Kissinger, 2012, pp.57-77, 83-86). Russia occupies a significant place in China's current diplomacy as evidenced by the fact that it is the only country designated as a "global strategic partner" of China and its actual ally in the global confrontation with the United States.

Relations with the U.S. have had a special, if not exceptional, place in China's diplomacy for the past forty years. The paradigm of their development was laid down personally by Deng Xiaoping. For example, Niu Jun writes: "Deng Xiaoping believed that the Chinese modernization, in the context of Chinese-American relations, was the main external factor closely connected with the prosperity of the country" (Niu, 2014, p.88). According to Yuan Peng, "without Sino-

American normalization, there would be no multilateral reforms and the policy of openness. The normalization of bilateral relations has influenced the situation in China and beyond, and this influence is felt strongly in the domestic, political, economic, and social life in China. This trajectory can be traced up to this day” (Yuan, 2015, pp.4-5). This “voluntary” dependence on the United States and the desire not to spoil relations with it have lately exposed an obvious methodological weakness and strategic miscalculation of Chinese diplomacy, which did not happen to be quite prepared for Trump’s assertive “trade and sanctions” diplomacy. No matter how the “wars” with the United States end, China will need years to replace the U.S. in its foreign policy and diplomacy, and redirect the “America-bound” foreign trade to other regions of the world.

One of the features of China’s current diplomacy is the global nature of its partnership strategy, covering the entire world political and economic space (discussed in detail earlier, see Grachikov, 2019a, pp.83-93). A new trait of China’s diplomacy over the past five years is the clear intention to change its status in global governance from a norm-taker to a norm-maker (Lu and Bao, 2019, pp.74-106; Reilly, 2011, pp.103-136). See Table 1 for more details.

Table 1. Xi Jinping’s Great Power Diplomacy in Global Governance

AREA	DESCRIPTION
PHILOSOPHY/ IDEOLOGY	COMMUNITY OF COMMON DESTINY; CHINESE DREAM; “ACHIEVING RESULTS” (<i>you suo zuo wei</i>)
GEOECONOMICS/ GEOPOLITICS	ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE; CHINA-AFRICA, CHINA-LATIN AMERICA, 16 (Central and Eastern Europe) + 1 (CHINA), ASEAN + 1 (CHINA) FORUMS
GLOBAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE	ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK (headquartered in Beijing), NEW BRICS DEVELOPMENT BANK (based in Shanghai); G20 AS THE MAIN MECHANISM WITH CHINESE PARTICIPATION
DIPOMACY	A NEW TYPE OF RELATIONS WITH GREAT POWERS; PERIPHERAL DIPLOMACY; GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

Note: compiled by the author on the basis of Xi Jinping’s works (Xi, 2014).

CHINA'S IDEOLOGY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Chinese academic discourse attaches great significance to global governance and China's role in it. Ye Wenyong and Yu Longhai have noted in their study that global governance is not only a new theory with a broad connotation, but also an objective historical process of world development. In their opinion, global governance can effectively respond to global challenges, but at the same time the global governance system itself is based on principles that were engendered mainly by Western countries, and therefore does not always take into account the interests and needs of a large number of developing nations. Since China becomes increasingly involved in world affairs, it needs its own understanding and interpretation of global governance (Ye and Yu, 2014).

In the mid-2000s, China started to gradually build its own ideology of global governance. Speaking at an Asian-African summit in Jakarta on April 22, 2005, President Hu Jintao for the first time proposed the idea of “building a harmonious world”—an ideological presentation of China in the field of global governance, prepared by the ideological and propaganda structures of the Chinese Communist Party and announced by its leader. It contains the following main components. The *concept of harmonious security* for the maintenance of peace and security is a prerequisite for the development of any country, because only by strengthening exchanges and cooperation can all countries achieve common development. The concept of harmonious security emphasizes peaceful settlement of international disputes or conflicts through consultations and negotiations within the UN framework, and opposes the violation of the sovereignty of other countries, forced interference in their internal affairs, and the use of force or threat of force.

The *concept of harmonious development* was put forward by Hu Jintao in his speech at Yale University in the U.S., where he noted that the construction of a harmonious world should be geared towards ensuring the harmonious development of the global economy. Countries should pay attention and take effective measures to promote economic globalization in a balanced, comprehensive and win-win manner and seek facilitation. Economic development, eradication

of poverty, and regional and global economic cooperation should be actively promoted in order to jointly address global economic development problems and ensure economic security.

The *concept of harmonious culture* promotes interpenetration of different cultures and beliefs, as well as mutual study of various social systems and development models in order to contribute to mutual understanding among nations.

The *concept of harmonious governance* implies coordination of individual states and the world as a whole, coordination of relations between states and society, as well as coordination between people and nature. These types of coordination are important for building a “harmonious world.”

So a “harmonious world” constitutes China’s vision of global governance, which reflects traditional Chinese values in relation to the surrounding world, has realistic and objective requirements, is the logical result of the expanding Chinese influence, and represents a completely new ideology of global governance. The “harmonious peace” concept was proposed by China in response to global development trends (Guo, 2010).

In 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward a new concept called a “Community of Common Destiny”, which is based on interdependent relations between countries driven by a wave of economic globalization. According to this concept, when confronted with difficulties, states take joint measures, following common interests, in order to improve common well-being and effective shared use of resources (Hao, Zhou, 2017, p.2). Dan Wenhua and Wang Peng emphasize that in 2015 China achieved significant results in diplomacy and global governance, as well as in building a “Community of Common Destiny.” While 2014 is considered the “first year” when China began to participate in global governance, 2015 is the “first year of practical work” when it actively promoted its vision of global governance and achieved its first results. In 2015, China proposed a “new type” of international relations within the framework of the “Community of Common Destiny” concept. Along with a “harmonious world,” a “Community of Common Destiny” is part of China’s ideology

of global governance, it matches the Chinese “way” of openness and mutual benefit, promotes cooperation and creates mutually beneficial conditions for it, and helps achieve inclusive development in all countries. The concept is based on economic cooperation between the countries participating in the One Belt One Road Initiative (Xi, 2017, pp.521-537).

XI JINPING’S LOGIC IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

China is just beginning to formulate its approach to global governance. President Xi Jinping first mentioned the need to “increase the country’s global governance abilities” on September 27, 2016, when he spoke about the diplomacy of a great power with Chinese characteristics. He named several problems. Firstly, the configuration of global governance depends on the *balance of power in the international arena*, and so China must actively participate in global governance and make more international commitments. Secondly, more and more “gaps” become evident in global governance, and the international community is calling for its *transformation*. Thirdly, the main platform for global economic governance is the *Group of 20, but it must be transformed into a long-term governance mechanism*. Fourthly, Xi Jinping named global governance mechanisms that concerned mainly the Asian region, which is important for China: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the East Asia Summit, and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Perhaps, Xi Jinping’s most important call was addressed to Chinese diplomats. He urged them to enhance the country’s ability to participate in global governance, and *develop rules and set the agenda for it* (Xi, 2017, pp.448-452).

From Rules to Orders: The Logic of International Institutional Competition

In China, international institutional competition is becoming an ever more important phenomenon with significant changes in the nature of the international system. Both leading countries and ordinary members of international institutions try to achieve their

goals concerning strength, interests or values by creating institutions or working in them, which makes international institutional competition increasingly manifest both at the global and regional levels on a variety of agendas. There are several forms of international institutions which are involved in institutional competition from the lowest to the highest level and which can be divided into four models/dimensions: international competition of rules, international competition of regimes, international competition of organizations, and international competition of orders. International institutional competition rests on the competition of international rules (Li and Luo, 2019, pp.28-57).

As a growing financial power and a recognized financial hegemon, China and the United States, respectively, are the most important players in international financial diplomacy. The global financial crisis of 2008 became a turning point, and the international financial statuses of the two countries have changed significantly since then, but in opposite directions. More precisely, China is continuing to grow financially, while America's position remains relatively weak, which encourages China to pursue persistent financial diplomacy and forces America to adopt defensive financial diplomacy. The financial and diplomatic game between the two countries manifests itself in their competition for forming and dominating international financial institutions. On the one hand, China is making efforts to promote the reform of existing international financial institutions and seeking to play a leading role in establishing new institutions in order to strengthen the favorable institutional framework for its own financial growth. On the other hand, the U.S. is trying to delay or even obstruct the reform of international financial institutions and undermining China's efforts to create new international institutions in order to maintain its financial hegemony in the world. Competition between the two countries for international financial institutions is in fact linked to the financial situation, the ability to provide international financial public goods and the legitimacy of their participation in international financial institutions. Whether their behavior becomes more agreeable or mutually exclusive will

have a long-term impact on the overall financial situation in the world (Li Wei, 2016, pp.112-138).

The reason for this phenomenon is that the traditional concept of security and internal governance structures have not really changed and its special needs for ensuring security abroad cannot be easily converted into market demand. This gap between demand and supply in the field of security clearly indicates that China needs to reform its overall structure of overseas security and external interests (Xiao He, 2018, p.94).

So unlike classic understanding of global governance, pragmatist and strategist Xi Jinping understands global governance as a balance of power in the international arena and institutional competition. And this is where the fundamental difference lies. Laurent Estachy's schematic model (Fig.1) of Chinese strategy and Chinese vision of global governance reflects the Chinese approach.

Fig 1. China's Grand Strategy



Source: Estachy, Laurent, 2020. Power Struggle between China and the United States. *Vestnik MGIMO-University*, 13(1), pp.82-99.

Table 2. Chinese Vision of Global Governance

Types of Global Governance	Authors/Articles
Global Economic and Financial Governance	Cai Feng, 2019; Hang and Yang Lize, 2019; Zhang Falin, 2019; Pang Xun, 2017; Cong Xiaonan, 2017; Luo Li Xiangyang, 2014; Xu Bin, 2013; Liu Junhong, 2010; Qiang Jianxin, 2010; Tang Yongsheng, 2010
UN Reform	Research Group of CICIR, 2015; Zhang Guihong, Guo Fenchen, 2014
International Order	Qin Yaqing, 2019; ; Li Wei and Luo Yifu, 2019; Wang Hui, 2018; Su Changhe, 2017; Zhang Shenjun, 2017; Gao Qiqi, 2015; Qin Yaqing, 2014; Zhang Ming, 2013; Wang Sheng & Luo Xiao, 2013; Chen Zhimin, 2013
G20	Xiang Nanyue and Liu Hongsong, 2017; Wang Ying & Li Jiguang, 2012
The Changing Identity of China	Chen Yue, 2018; Wu Zelin, 2017; Zhao Yang, 2016; Niu Xinchun, 2015.
Global Climate Governance	Li Huiming, 2017; Kang Xiao, 2016; Bo Yan and Gao Xiang, 2014
International Security Governance	Xiao He, 2018; Zhang Chun, 2016
Global Cyberspace Governance	Li Yan, 2019; Guo Xiaobing, 2018; Lu Chuanying, 2016; Wang Mingguo, 2015; Ren Lin, 2013; Yi Wenli, 2012
Global Investment Governance	Zhang Xiaoning, 2016
China-U.S. Relations	Lu Lingyu and Bao Jiazheng, 2019; Zhou Qi, 2019; Jia Qingguo, 2019; Ji Zhiye, 2019; Sun Xuefeng and Zhang Xikun, 2019; Diao Daming, 2019; Guo Xiaobing, 2018; Yu Xiang, 2018; Symposium, 2018; Xiao He, 2016; Li Wei, 2016; Mo Shengkai, 2015; Yan Peng, 2015; Tu Xinquan, Su Xiao and Yao Yan, 2015

Source: Authors' calculations

Note: Two editions of China's leading think tanks were analyzed: the journal *Contemporary International Relations* of the Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations and the journal *World Economics and Politics* of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for the period from 2010 to 2019.

As can be seen from Table 2, global economic and financial governance is the main element of the Chinese understanding of global governance, and the principal partner with whom it should negotiate is the United States. An important variable is the international order as the basis

of global governance. Global cyberspace governance, international security governance, and global climate governance are fairly new variables. Although there is little literature on the G20, this topic is constantly raised in Chinese leaders' speeches at various levels. A completely new aspect related to global governance is the change of China's identity as "towering," "responsible," "global," "great," "a new leader changing the United States," and "the main competitor of the United States." All these connotations indicate that China is making serious and elaborate plans to replace the United States as the leader of the world political system, which offers the world its values as universal.

* * *

Donald Trump twitted out earlier this year that there was a possibility of a complete breakup between America and China. "Perhaps I didn't make myself clear, but the U.S. certainly does maintain a policy option, under various conditions, of a complete decoupling from China." U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chinese Communist Party Yang Jiechi met in Hawaii in June of this year to discuss the fight against the coronavirus epidemic. The United States stressed the need for full transparency and information exchange to combat the ongoing pandemic.

The American leader has signed the 2020 Uighur Human Rights Policy Act, which imposes sanctions against Chinese officials for oppressing Uighurs and for violating human rights, such as the systematic use of disciplinary camps, forced labor, and intrusive supervision to destroy the ethnic identity and religious beliefs of Uighurs and other minorities in China.

Trump's move suggests that there can be no return to "normal" relations in the future—China is too sensitive to any interference in its internal affairs. The situation of Uighurs in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region has now been added to the issues of the Dalai Lama, Tibet, Taiwan, human rights, and others. Trump has perhaps erected an insurmountable "great wall" in relations with China and

now it is not important how the trade negotiations will end, because the process of “destroying” bilateral relations has been set in motion and China will not be able to do anything about it. The struggle for global leadership in global governance has spilled into the open.

A new generation of young Chinese diplomats is abandoning the established norms in favor of aggressive approaches that promote a COVID-19 narrative beneficial to China. This is called wolf warrior diplomacy and it has unpleasant consequences. Shortly before the COVID-19 crisis erupted, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had instructed the country’s diplomatic corps to adopt a more persistent approach to protecting China’s interests and reputation abroad. The pandemic, which would not have been so dramatic if it had not been for the initial mistakes of the local authorities in Wuhan, provided an excellent opportunity to implement his instructions. And this is exactly what Chinese diplomats are doing. For example, in the middle of March, Zhao Lijian, the newly appointed Foreign Ministry deputy spokesperson, came up with a conspiracy theory by claiming that the U.S. military had delivered the new coronavirus to Wuhan, the first epicenter of the pandemic. Similarly, in early April, the Chinese Ambassador to France posted a series of anonymous articles on his Embassy’s website alleging that elderly victims of the virus had been left alone to die in the country. Later that month, after Australia had joined the United States in calling for an international investigation into the origin of the pandemic, China’s Ambassador in Canberra immediately threatened boycotts and sanctions against Australia (Pei, 2020).

There are a number of ways to fill the global governance gap:

- To carry out gradual reform of the existing system of global governance;
- To use the leading role of the UN and expanding the power of its structures in global governance;
- To create G20 governance mechanisms;
- To establish new international institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank created by China and widely supported by developing countries;

- To take into account the role of non-state actors and networks in filling global governance gaps.

Modern China is not only an active participant in global governance, but it is also one of its main beneficiaries and even a leader to some extent. As the main “troublemaker” and the reformer of the existing system of international relations and its global institutions, China should continue to contribute to the transformation of these institutions, especially international financial organizations and the multilateral trading system. Global governance reform should affect not only administrative aspects by increasing the effectiveness of international organizations, but also political ones by promoting democratization and the legitimization of global international organizations.

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