

Lund University  
Department of Political Science

STVM25  
VT14  
Tutor: Mikael Sundström

# Understanding China's New Assertiveness

A Dyadic Study of China's Rise, its Goals and Implications

Vilhelm Rudberg

# Abstract

Since the financial crisis in 2008-2009 China has shown a new assertiveness internationally, contradicting Deng Xiaoping's earlier strategies of China to lay low internationally and develop economically. This new assertiveness is an often-discussed subject and is often connected to the Chinese rise and a presumed pursuit of regional hegemony in South East Asia, rejected by Chinese officials. This paper aims on studying China's new assertiveness on both a systemic international politics level and on foreign policy level to understand what drives this new assertiveness. Graham T. Allison used three explanatory models to examine the decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crises, and I have adapted his three models to China's behaviour in South East Asia and complemented them with e.g. factors that affect decision-making and contemporary theories of hegemony. Using this method gave me the opportunity to challenge the notion of a Chinese pursuit of hegemony since the case of China contained several anomalies compared to the theoretical framework, which instead points to an All-under-Heaven system emphasized by Chinese officials and scholars. The new assertiveness is explained mainly through enhanced militarism, PLA influence and capacity, kept non-confrontational through e.g. Confucianism and Deng-ist advocates.

*Key words:* China, China's peaceful rise, Non-Confrontational Assertiveness, All-under-Heaven, Graham T. Allison, South China Sea, Hegemony, Chinese Foreign Policy

Words: 21981

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# Acronyms

ADIZ	Air Defence Identification Zone
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCYL	Communist Youth League of China
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
ECS	East China Sea
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NPC	National People's Congress
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PLANAF	People's Liberation Army Naval Air Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	The Central Politburo Standing Committee
SCS	South China Sea
SLD	Shangri-La Dialogue
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
WTO	World Trade Organisation

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Problem

Since the early 1980s, China's economy has grown rapidly and continues to grow at a steady pace (Hong et al., 2012). China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States, and the IMF indicates that China will most likely overtake the U.S. before 2020 (Shor, 2012, 158). According to recent reports from the World Bank, produced while writing this paper, China may surpass the U.S. as soon as this year (Bloomberg, 2014).

In 1978 China opened up to the world, much thanks to the leader at the time Deng Xiaoping. In post-Maoist China, Deng created an "open door policy" aiming at increasing the liberalization and globalization of the Chinese economy leading to a boost in foreign trade and investment to stimulate economical growth. Deng's grand strategy for China's revival was characterized by caution on the international arena in order to maximize external viability and accelerate development (Green & Kliman, 2011).

However, since the global financial crisis in 2008-2009, which China overcame well, China has taken a new approach on the international arena moving away from Deng's low-profile-strategy, toward a more assertive "get something accomplished"-approach and demonstrated a new form of assertiveness; economically, militarily and politically (Cheng J., 2013, 53-54)(Yahuda, 2013, 447).

National politicians who still advocate Deng's ideas and policy are fading in influence, whilst the PLA, and others, are becoming more and more independent due to heavy development, strengthening its importance nationally. The PLA has undergone, and is undergoing, a major refurbishment, with tremendously strengthened financial supplement, and new technological advances (Green & Kliman, 2011). The PLAN has new capabilities of both "green water" and "blue water"-operations and aircraft carriers; the PLAAF has been strengthened by grand purchases but also through the development of a combat aircraft with stealth technology J-20; a new network of satellites for monitoring and control is in service, and so on.

The newfound assertiveness has especially taken the expression in its own geographical region, where it has led to actions that may be contrarian to international law; they have tried to reduce the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, have harassed foreign fleets in international waters, taken bold action in disputes regarding the groups of islands and reefs in the East and South China Sea, which is considered Chinese territory, the controversial air defence identification zone in the East China Sea, and so forth. This while Chinese

policymakers, media, and researchers still speak of China's "peaceful development", founded on Chinese Confucian philosophy.

In the unipolar world system of today the U.S. has the power and/or ability to influence and enforce norms, ideas and institutions due to global hegemonic-like factors, being the most powerful state in the world. One example of this is the Obama administration's pivot or rebalancing in Southeast Asia, where the U.S., based on liberal values, e.g. support regional institutions and enforce liberal capitalist trade by ensuring the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea (Pomfret, 2010).

Even though China is not by classic claims part of Southeast Asia, its newfound assertiveness and foreign policy has affected the region immensely (Mahiar-Barducci, 2011)(Ignatius, 2014). Despite the fact that Chinese scholars and policy-makers regularly denies any Chinese hegemonic pursuit, China's new assertiveness is often regarded as highly interconnected with its rise internationally and a frequent explanation in political magazines and media of its new assertive behaviour is a presumed pursuit of regional hegemony in Southeast Asia and the challenging of the declining U.S, which in turn deeply worries its neighbours (cf. Hsiang, 2008; Emde, 2012; Harris, 2005; Minxin, 2010; Hydarian, 2013; Yan, 2014; Carpenter, 2011; Capaccio, 2009; Wang, 2011).

To conduct this study I will try to examine the new Chinese assertiveness by searching for answers to the following questions:

*How does a regional hegemonic rise occur and affect the regional arena? AND*

*Which national factors of decision-making drive the state to pursue regional hegemonic status? AND*

*What signs are there to conclude that the assertiveness is related to a pursuit of hegemony? AND*

*How can we understand and explain national decision-making versus international behaviour behind China's new assertiveness related to its supposed pursuit of hegemony and/or peaceful rise? AND LASTLY*

*Related to the results of the other four questions; why has China changed its behaviour towards a new non-confrontational assertiveness?*

## 1.2 Disposition

In regard to my problem here is the planned procedure and disposition for the paper. I want to study the Chinese rise, as mentioned above, by analysing the phenomenon on two levels, both the systemic level and a foreign policy level. I will do this by using theories of international relations and hegemony to portray how we can explain the rise on an international level, and then move into China to

try to conceptualize how we can explain the Chinese assertiveness based on its processes of foreign policy decision-making.

Graham T. Allison did this meritoriously in his study of the Cuban missile crisis, using three different models. I will take a similar approach but will modify Allison's models some to make them more comprehensive, understandable and to fit this paper. I will also use dimensions, found in the political theories, to be able to further understand the Chinese rise and to highlight similarities and differences between theory and empirics.

I will start of by giving my *Aim and Objective, Method and Design*, some *Previous Research* and some *Delimitations* in the continuation of chapter 1. Following in chapter 2 I will discuss my methodological foundation and introduce, what I call, *Allison's Method*. Chapter 3 and 4 will be dedicated to the respective levels of analysis where theories and empirical material is introduced and analysed separately. In chapter 5 I will combine the results from chapter 3 and 4 and give a dual-level analysis and show my final results.

### 1.3 Aim and Objective

In my view the Chinese rise will be one of the biggest questions of our time and academics dispute however this rise will not go peacefully – as realists often argue, whilst contemporary Chinese scholars regularly point towards the harmonious non-confrontational development that will ascend the region into prosperity (Green & Kliman, 2011, 33-34)(Mearsheimer, 2010A). No one can deny that China is pursuing a major power status regionally and internationally (Cheng J., 2013, 54). This rise is often understood as the Chinese development economically, military and politically, but also related to its new influence and engagement in the international arena and its new non-confrontational assertiveness regarding claims in the South and East China Sea (Ma, 2013, 155-156).

According to John Mearsheimer; China cannot rise peacefully, based on the containment of the U.S. and its allies (Mearsheimer, 2006)(Mearsheimer, 2010A, 382). He believes that China will try to create a power-gap between its adversaries making itself sufficiently strong so that no other state in the region dares to challenge it (Mearsheimer, 2010A, 389-390). This does not necessarily mean that it will strengthen the military to the level that it will attack other states, but rather to be able to push and decide other states' behaviour and to push the U.S. out of the region.

The new Chinese assertiveness is often connected to four different factors that supposedly point to this assumption: first; that the rise of China do change the balance of power in the region; second; that its interests have expanded to include nearby seas and covered trade routes; third; the growth of nationalism among the population and officials; and lastly; the development of the PLA and sub-divisions and its ability to pursue national interests (Yahuda, 2013, 446).



My aim with this paper is to study this new assertiveness related to the Chinese rise. To understand whether China is pursuing hegemony or if other domestic factors influence their new assertiveness. I will try to reach the aim by studying China on two levels of analysis, both international system level and foreign policy level. Hopefully this will portray different aspects of the Chinese rise and improve understanding of the phenomenon. By approaching this study from a hegemonic view my objective is to problematize and portray the difficulties, problems, and gains with the Chinese rise and hegemony, based on its foreign policy, national affairs and concerns. To do this properly and as vividly as possible I will operationalize hegemony based on contemporary political theory, thus not initially giving any of them more relevance than another, merely showing different definitions and explanations. The overhead aim of this study is therefore two-folded, as the first aim is to study the Chinese rise towards hegemony based on assumptions of contemporary theories of hegemony on a regional basis, AND try to expose Chinese national factors leading to their foreign policy and new assertiveness.

## 1.4 Previous Research

China is a widely discussed subject and the headlines for this paper, China's rise, new assertiveness and potential hegemony has been discussed and debated by several scholars from different schools and nationalities. Famous scientists as Mearsheimer, Buzan, Hurrell, Li Mingjiang, Storey, etcetera, portray their views of China's rise based on theoretical assumptions, and e.g. if this will go peacefully or lead to a great war between superpowers. Studies explaining Chinese foreign policy and systemic approaches towards the rise and assertiveness are used to emphasize the importance of the rise and how China may affect the world and its surroundings (cf. Mearsheimer, 2010A; Yang, 2011; Yahuda, 2013; Fravel 2010). My belief is that there is a gap in understanding China. Western scholars adapt western theories and ideas, whilst many Chinese scholars emphasize and argue for a Chinese understanding of China and challenge western scholars with assumptions of tradition, culture and Chinese philosophy (cf. Emde, 2012; Yiwei, 2009; Baogang, 2010; Tingyang 2006). I have not been able to find a study that examines China from both a systemic perspective and decision-making, it is always one or the other. In my belief a two-folded study has the potential to bridge the gap and give the rise of China a more thoroughly understanding, complementing contemporary theories of the phenomenon with Chinese ideas, and letting the two levels of analysis complement each other.

By studying the phenomenon from both inside-out and outside-in I hope to contribute to the existing research by being able to combine, e.g. neorealist and neoliberalist, approaches of hegemony with factors that may affect Chinese foreign policy-making such as Chinese nationalism and Confucianism.

Other phenomena, e.g. the rearmament in the region, the island disputes, etcetera, regarding Southeast Asia and the South China Sea are also widely

examined and local scholars as Geoffrey Till and Richard Bitzinger often do, but most of these studies use China as a explanation to the phenomenon rather than studying China in itself (cf. Storey, 2011; Bitzinger, 2010; Till, 2012).

## 1.5 Method and Design

Graham T. Allison wrote the book *Essence of Decision* analysing the Cuban missile crisis from three different perspectives. The book was later republished with co-author Philip Zelikow (1999). Allison intended to study and analyse the decision-making process behind the various actions during the crisis, by adapting three different models, derived from three different theories; rational actor theory, organizational theory, and a form of negotiation theory (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 42). He then attempted to demonstrate the results from the three different perspectives and how it may have influenced the U.S. and Soviet's actions during the crisis respectively (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, x-xi).

Among the criticism of Allison's models include the models mixed complexity (Bendor & Hammond, 1992). It is stated that the first model (though better in the second edition of the book), the Rational Actor Model (RAM) is too simple in its design and only designed to later be wrestled down by the latter two (Rosati, 2001). Model II and III, especially model III, are said to be too complex and convoluted and that they rather fail to produce the core of the problem (Munton, 2012)(Rosati, 2001). The aim in my models will be to conceive, or adapt, existing political theories of international relations, and what drives the actions and interaction of states based on some of the core assumptions I could observe in Allison's models, and thereby retain the core of each model. The Rational Actor Model will thereby be modified and enhanced by a diversification of different theories of hegemony that still emphasize the core assumptions of Allison. The latter models will be complemented by other similar theories of foreign policy-making to hopefully lessen the complexity of the models, making them more understandable. Since both of the latter examines the same level, Model II and III will be joined together in one chapter based on their overarching similarity, whilst the first model will have a chapter of its own.

The aim of *Essence of Decision* is not to fully explain the Cuban missile crisis, but rather to understand how foreign policy decision-making is perceived and conducted in critical situations (Gustavsson, 2006, 270). Allison's models are constructed as explanatory rivals, diversified through different theoretical assumptions of how decision-making occur (Herrman M., 2001, 49). In difference with Allison my overall aim is to understand and explain the Chinese rise, using the theories at hand, rather than contributing with more knowledge about decision-making in general. Thereby I intend to, instead of making the explanatory models rivals, let them complement each other in how to understand Chinese foreign policy. Following Jakob Gustavsson's words, that an important ambition is to combine theories and explanatory factors on different levels of analysis to vividly and compellingly explain international events (Gustavsson,

2006, 271-272). This can also help us understand how uncertainties of policy makers can react to different scenarios on the system level (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 6).

Allison's method will also be complemented with theoretical dimensions found diversifying the different theories to further emphasize the study of the Chinese rise. These dimensions will be portrayed sequentially in the study only to make the study more colourful, vivid and intersubjective verifiable.

Kenneth Waltz criticise Allison that his study of the Cuban missile crisis is rather a dyadic study of both international politics and foreign policy-making (Waltz, 1986, 122). This is not problematic for my study but to the contrary gives a possibility of studying the phenomenon on two levels.

## 1.6 Delimitations

Knowing your limitations is essential to a good study, and I will try to motivate mine and some delimiting choices made. First of all, the latter part of the foreign policy of the Chinese rise is heavily based on actors' ideas, values and relations. I am aware that I will not be able to follow the decision-making process at a close distance, as Allison did during the Cuban missile crisis. I will not be able to have a sit-down with the Chinese president Xi Jinping or other power-holders of Chinese politics, which forces me to limit my study to mainly secondary sources and other scholars' evidence of Chinese behaviour. This also means that during this study I have to make some theoretical or cognitive assumptions along the way. Meaning that if a particular theory X of foreign policy-making states that behaviour Y is because of factor Z, I must assume that this is also the case with China. Especially during the latter two models, since my insight is limited to, as mentioned, nothing other than the actual actors' words.

Using Allison's method is delimitation in itself since it gives the framework of analysis for the study. Many more aspects could possibly be included in the study and would possibly show interesting results, but then it wouldn't be related to Allison's three models. Thus, since I accept Waltz critique that Allison's study actually studies the phenomenon on two different levels, both systemic and reductionist, many more theories could possibly explain and examine the Chinese rise on the international level. But limiting it to Allison's core assumptions makes the choice easier.

## 2 Methodology

A study that applies theories to a certain case to analyse a certain phenomenon or sequence is often regarded as a theory consuming (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 42). Often one case is analysed by applying a number of different theories to examine both how the phenomenon can be understood and explained, but also which theory that has the highest explanatory power of the case (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 43). In difference with a theory testing study, which primarily, as the name tells us, aims at using a case or cases to dismantle a certain theory, the theory consuming study aims at explaining a certain case with different theories (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 42-43). The difference between the two is small but can be found in the motivation of the focal point. What is primarily to be studied? If, as in my case, the phenomenon is the primary focus and explanatory factors secondary; the study is theory consuming (Ibid.).

My study is to be mainly explanatory in trying to explain the Chinese rise, but it will also include certain descriptive ventures, since it is my belief that explaining without describing is a fruitless affair. Analysing the Chinese rise without first describing the phenomenon and different factors related would lead to a rickety explanation. Like explaining a math problem without first describing the value of each number. An explanatory study aims particularly to answer distinct questions of why and not questions of where, who, what and when as with a descriptive study (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 37). Hopefully by answering questions of descriptive nature will help me understand the question of why. A study is often both deductive and inductive in different stages of the process (Goldmann et al., 1997, 38-39).

### 2.1 Case Study Design

Case studies are good for testing theories (Goldmann et al., 1997, 57). By applying a theory on a certain phenomenon the theory might prove to be correct or not. My view is that it is the same with a theory consuming study, using just one case and studying from a theoretical framework.

One advantage with using a case study is that a phenomenon can be explored and analysed through a multitude of views and methods and thereby giving the possibility to dig deeper and get a more colourful picture (Goldmann et al., 1997, 56-57). By analysing just one phenomenon it is possible to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon that may give valuable understandings and knowledge.

Case studies almost always contain comparative elements (Esaiasson et al., 2009, 121). While still focusing on a certain case or phenomenon in a limited context some forms of comparisons are almost always present. As in my case when trying to understand a certain change and the Chinese rise the comparison is found in a sequential perspective connected to the “new” assertiveness of China (Ibid.). And when implementing a variable before and after a certain point in time we automatically have two units of analysis.

One common critique against case studies is the limitation of making generalisations based on just one case (Goldmann et al., 1997, 56). From a statistical perspective this may be true, but generalisations from a case study take a more analytical conceptual shape (ibid.).

## 2.2 Qualitative – Quantitative

Quantitative and qualitative studies are often portrayed as each other’s adversaries (Allwood, 2011, 1417-1419). Based on different ontological and epistemological settings they are methods for scientists with different views of the world and knowledge (Ibid.). Quantitative methods are most often paired with empirical positivists, pointing towards large N statistical studies, whilst qualitative constructivists or hermeneutics approach with a mind-dependent intensive view of a phenomenon (Allwood, 2011, 1419-1422). As the names of the two tell, quantitative implies as many cases as possible to be able to generalize the results, whilst qualitative suggest higher quality and intensity in fewer cases. Qualitative methods are suitable for trying to capture different contexts or processes, since they mainly focus on patterns of contextual issues and meanings (Devine, 2002, 199).

Even though I will focus on only one case I believe my study to be a quantitative and qualitative mixture since I regard that to be the best approach to understanding the phenomenon. My variables used are found within both mind-dependent and empirical sources of information and address both hard and soft data (Marsh & Read, 2002, 234-235). I will use both empirical data found in mainly secondary sources, but since decision-making also include ideas, emotions and psychological factors it is impossible to exclude qualitative secondary data as well (Allwood, 2011, 1422). I do not regard this as a problem but rather a possibility to enhance the study and enable a more thorough analysis.

The gap between quantitative and qualitative methods, and the notion of the methods usage independent of each other, is commonly challenged (Marsh & Read, 2002, 236)(Allwood, 2011). Many researches today instead claim that combining the two gives the study more validity and allow the student to examine more aspects of the phenomenon (Marsh & Read, 2002, 237).

## 2.3 Using Three Perspectives – Allison’s Method

My method of choice is to apply Allison’s tri-perspective method analysing the same phenomenon from three different perspectives, with some modifications. I will apply his Rational Actor Model onto theories of hegemony and its effects to be able to understand and analyse the Chinese rise on an international level. Thus using the findings from the theories to construct different dimensions to be able to vividly examine China in a global and regional context.

Allison’s assumptions from each of his models will be framing my models whilst some modifications will take place to make the models applicable to hegemony and China. I will not use the models the same way as Allison did analysing the Cuban missile crisis in an action – reaction template but rather on the sequential rise and status of hegemony. Thus the models gives me a possibility to study China initially from an outside-in systemic perspective looking at the international level followed by a more reductionist inside-out perspective of Chinese foreign policy.

## 2.4 Dimensions

As a tool of analysis I will use dimensions to try to portray China’s new assertiveness and rise. Dimensions can be used as a framework to understand, but also sort, the empirical data of the case (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, 164-165). By using comprehensive and mutually exclusive dimensions it allows the opportunity to portray China’s rise in an international context based on theoretical assumptions (Beckman, 2005, 26). By constructing these dimensions based on my findings in the theories used I will be able to codify China centred on empirical facts.

The usage of dimensions also allow for comparisons within the same case, showing changes in time as China at time A and time B might place itself different in the same dimension showing a change in behaviour internationally (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, 172). Dimensions are in general quite easily constructed for use as frameworks or screens since they do not need the carefully detailed precision as e.g. ideal types do (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, 172).

# 3 International Systemic Analysis – Rational Actor Model

In his book, Allison exemplifies RAM by mentioning the following political theories: realism, neorealism, institutionalism and liberalism (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 30-40). I have chosen to examine hegemony through the eyes of neorealism and neoliberalism, and a dyadic approach to the theory of hegemonic stability (or Hegemonic Stability Theory). These have been chosen since they are strong in the contemporary, and recent, discussion of hegemony and fit Allison's assumptions of the actor.

I mainly discuss hegemony as established rather than the ascendance of the same, much because of that this is what the chosen theories do, thus I emphasise a sequential notion meaning that if hegemony is regarded as e.g. the state with most military power, the most colourful explanation of the rise is to focus on military enhancement.

## 3.1 Model I - Rational Actor Model

Allison's first model the Rational Actor Model, RAM, treats the state as a perfectly rational actor, with full information about the situation treated (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 13-19, 64). States act rationally in the international arena by attempting to maximize profits, and strive to achieve given goals (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 13, 17). Thereby states encounter each situation by calculating costs against potential benefits and choose the option that gives the highest pay-off, thus maximize the strategic goals (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 18, 24). When given various options to the situation at hand the state selects the option that is most favourable and closest to their goals, which in turn might be national security, resources, power, etcetera. (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 17).

Allison points out that the model is widely used by researchers today (1999) and adapted by the various schools of political science in the analysis of international relations (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 15, 26). As mentioned, Allison accounts this by illustrating the rationality of classical realism, neorealism, institutionalism and liberalism. The joint equal for these four is that the state is considered as the main actor in international relations and that their national interests control their behaviour (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 34). However, they differ in the level of rationality and he highlights realism as perfectly rational, where the state's self-interest and option with the highest benefit will drive the state's actions, whilst within institutionalism and liberalism states are looking for

a common good, a positive sum game, and that states can choose the next best option to achieve the highest common good (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 26-39).

Allison illustrate the core functions of the rational actor model by pointing out that one can assume that: the state is a single and unified actor, the state has a single utility function, the state acts in relation to threats and opportunities, as well as the state's action is to maximize value and utility (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 27, Figure 2).

## 3.2 Hegemony

Analysis of the most dominant state in the system – the hegemon – is a popular study by scholars of political science (Brooks, 2012, 27). Hegemony is a widely debated term and used in different ways by different schools of international relations. Though what unites most all of these theories, according to Andrew Hurrell, is that hegemony is based on constant negotiations between the weak and the strong, but where the means might differ accordingly to different understandings (Hurrell, 2007, 270). He acknowledges the balance of consent and coercion as the most vital of the definition of hegemony, the balance of direct and indirect power versus the provision of some action autonomy and respect for the interests of weaker states (ibid). Thus, different schools of theory emphasize different levels of focus on each side of this balance. The hegemonic form of the international society can be an explanatory factor on the system level. Different forms of hegemonies can explain different forms of international systems and institutions (Keohane, 1986, 147-148).

The most powerful state must actively accept its own hegemony in regards of it both controlling and stabilizing the international system to be considered a hegemon and for the hegemonic system to arise (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 14). Since potential states with the capacity to be a hegemon might decline this opportunity due to e.g. national protectionism (ibid.)(Milner, 1998, 112). Jungblut & Sacko depicts that the most powerful state requires three elements to be considered an international hegemon (2004, 15). These elements are: hegemonic power, hegemonic will, and international acceptance. A hegemonic state dominates its surrounding whilst a potential hegemon has the capacity to out-power other regional powers but does not necessary do so (Godwin, 2004, 83).

According to Gramscian notions of hegemony the hegemon in the international arena is not necessarily a state, but rather the dominant political and ideological force in the international community (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 12). This dominating force is able to sustain a dominant role in world politics based on its hegemonic dominance of values. The values of this leading class are acknowledged as good and correct whilst values from weaker classes, or states, are regarded as bad and false, whereas the dominant force will impose their values to others (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 12-13). As Gilpin argues that the creators of e.g. neoliberal regimes are hegemonies, Gramsci adds that its creation is an



extension of the governing international elites ideological views and values (Burmeister, 2003, 2).

### 3.2.1 Neorealism on Hegemony

A Neorealist theorist explains the international system as anarchical and competitive and that state behaviour is easiest understood by examining the system (Keohane, 1986, 13-15). Since the system is anarchical and not hierarchical and states are rational and the thing separating states is the division of power, the system is not stable until it balances itself through a balance of power (Hurrell, 2006B, 5-6)(Mearsheimer, 2001, 2).

According to Kenneth Waltz theories are either reductionist or systemic (Waltz, 1986, 47)(Waltz, 1979, 18-39, 60-64). Neorealists or structural realists argue that to understand the international system we must be aware of the units but especially understand the structures (Waltz, 1986, 52). “It is not possible to understand world politics simply by looking inside of states.” (Waltz, 1986, 52). Waltz stipulates that it is needed or the best practice to study causes on both unit-level and system-level to vividly understand and explain changes and continuities within a system (Waltz, 1986, 51-56, 331).

Structures work to keep outcomes within narrow ranges and constrain different conditions (Waltz, 1986, 62). According to Waltz – it is agents, etcetera, within the structure that operates for a particular purpose narrowing the ranges, within a larger system. Thus constraining unobservable structures are selectors, constraining by rewarding and punishing behaviour within the system (Waltz, 1986, 62-63). “Agents and agencies act; systems as a whole do not. But the actions of agents and agencies are affected by the system’s structure. In itself a structure does not directly lead to one outcome or another. Structure affects behaviour within the system, but does so indirectly.” (Waltz, 1979, 74).

Kenneth Waltz thus emphasises that in regard to the structure of the international system, states should be defensive not trying to maximise their power in pursuit of hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2010B, 78). Instead states should try to balance the system to have the biggest chance of surviving. Another part of neorealism does not agree with Waltz on this notion, and urges states to do the exact opposite, offensive realists. John Mearsheimer and other offensive realists understand that the best way of surviving is to maximise power, and that hegemony is not necessary based on the fact of domination or conquest (Mearsheimer, 2010B, 78). Mearsheimer argues that multipolar systems are more dangerous than bipolar systems, since they have a bigger chance of war, and multipolarity with especially powerful states are the most dangerous systems of all (2001, 5). Since the structure of the system drives states towards striving for more and more power, a potential hegemon will do what it can to secure its own survival (Mearsheimer, 2001, 20-21). Your friends today might be your enemies tomorrow, and no rational state would miss the chance of securing hegemony on the argument that they have enough power to suffice its own security today, even

if that means war and conquest against other states (Mearsheimer, 2001, 33-35, 147-148).

In the view of neorealists, power is not the end-objective; survival is. Thus, power is a mean towards the goal – survival. Power is based on states' material capabilities, and can be divided into existing power; e.g. military resources, technology, economics, and latent power; potential power in a situation of competition (Mearsheimer, 2010B, 78-79). Military power is by far the most important source of power for offensive realists, whereas land, air and naval forces constitute the armies of a state's military power, thus a source power in the international community (Mearsheimer, 2001, 43)

Offensive realists deny the statements of defensive realists that states should not pursue hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2010B, 83). They accept the notion of the balancing system, but explain it as ineffective (ibid.). They claim that history has shown that the victor of war most often has been on the initiating side, and regardless that hegemony is hard to reach – it is possible. So they stipulate that great powers are always searching for the opportunity to maximize its power to reach hegemony, though raising the stakes with risks of central war (ibid).

The critical explanatory difference between offensive and defensive realist therefore is the notion of rationality of states, as a defensive realist hails the state that balances as rational, while deems the state that pursue hegemony as irrational (Mearsheimer, 2010B, 84). They instead try to explain these inaccuracies by adapting domestic-level theories as organizational theory, domestic regime type, etcetera. Offensive realists instead claims that states who act in non-accordance or contradictory to their structural arguments act in an unwise way, and they lack the back-up plan of adapting a theory of domestic factors or foreign policy (ibid).

The hegemon can enforce its will thru material power, e.g. military might, by coercive behaviour, acting unilaterally without consent of other states (Pedersen, 2002, 682). By military supremacy the hegemon can act predatorily unilateral in accordance with its goals and objectives securing its own survival and socio-political and economic resources (Warner & Zawahri, 2012, 218). Neighbouring weaker states are believed to be able to group together and ally against the hegemon, to try to balance it, or to bandwagon with the hegemon (Hurrell, 2006B, 6, 12). This often leads to sub-regional groupings among the weaker states to counter the potential threat of the hegemon (Pedersen, 2002, 681). So forth weaker states may approach other major powers in the system, hedging against the hegemon or become a follow-state trying to gain as much as possible in the existing zero-sum game (Hurrell, 2006B, 12)(Mearsheimer, 2001, 157-159).

### 3.2.2 The Neoliberalist Critique

Neoliberalism is very similar to neorealism on several accounts. First of all it also acknowledges the international system as anarchical and not hierarchical (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 119). Secondly it treats the state as a unified rational actor and agrees with neorealism on the fact that international cooperation historically has shown hard to establish (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 117-118). Neoliberalists

aimed to understand and challenge the pessimistic realist notions by using the same framework, adapting their assumptions (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 118). Though the big difference to the neorealist international theory – of states maximizing power or balancing to stabilize anarchy – neoliberalists, or institutionalists, will argue that states will produce a set of formal and informal rules – institutions – in which their behaviour is limited, yet serves their national interest (Duffield, 2009, 642). By – solving coordination problems, acting as focal points – solving cooperation problems, acting as rules of state behaviour – and by reducing uncertainty of other states incentives, by enhancing communications and transparency between states – institutions broaden the sets of actions for states minimizing the risks of extreme assertiveness, aggression, and elevate cooperation and interdependence (Duffield, 2009, 642-643). Robert Keohane portray institutions as a persistent and connected set of rules that not only define and restrict state behaviour but also allows and creates expectations of state behaviour (Ericson, 2009, 59-60).

Another diversification between the two neo-theories mentioned, is the view and potential of anarchy (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 119). The neorealist theory is very pessimistic about the state of anarchy and claim that due to the fact of it being an all-encompassing unchanging condition, where states cannot control the outcomes and definitely ensure their survival, states get paranoid and afraid, leading to the quest for power (ibid.). Neoliberalists argue that anarchy rather is a vacuum that is to be gradually filled with norms, rules and institutions (ibid.).

Institutions per se are often influenced and constituted by their implementation and their “business”, as they gain legitimacy from their contribution and purpose (March & Olsen, 2009, 5-10). As, e.g., an economic institution is expected to work and contribute in relation to contemporary international economic order, political in political, but also in regards to their creation stemming to the source of its upcoming (ibid). Institutions may be a substitute to force through the strong participation of states, and quest towards common interests, not only their own, and may still be an establishing force of a hegemon based on the formations of those rules and norms, and the foundation of values related to the potential hegemon (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 120).

Liberalist notions of international regimes have been affected by hegemonies (Little, 2008, 304-305). According to neoliberalists an international regime is defined as a high level of institutionalization, which may stem from hegemonic dominance in international systems (Little, 2008, 301). If a state has an overwhelming amount of power it has the possibility to uphold and impose international norms and institutions, creating effective outcome of public good on the international arena (Little, 2008, 301-305). These regimes stabilize the anarchical system, enhancing the incentives to cooperate and interdepend, by removing some of the fears of cheating, free-riding, etcetera. Neoliberalists furthermore claim that these regimes have proven very persistent and can survive and persist, even after the decline of the hegemon. Exemplification is made during earlier periods of hegemony where international interdependence and cooperation grew and broadened extensively as the hegemon secured the institutions in a system of anarchy, and the interdependence between states lead to a rationality to

continue cooperation (Sterling-Folker, 2010, 120-121). The institutions stemming from the hegemon, or a particularly powerful state, become normative platforms of cooperation between self-interested states. To neoliberalist accounts of hegemony the hegemon might therefore act as a kind of leader in the international system, influencing lesser powers thru consent and legitimacy by operating towards common goods (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 2-4)(Hurrell, 2006A, 550).

Legitimacy may be gained through e.g. economic, political or religious aspects where other states have incentives to follow the hegemon in its actions (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 6)(Hurrell, 2006B, 3-4). Thereby the hegemon has the power to implement norms and institutions that gain the international or regional community through participation of other smaller states (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 2-4). Though this system does not come for free, as the hegemon must be ready to carry some of the costs inclined with institutions for the good of all. By this relationship between the strong and the weak ideas can spread from the hegemony to weaker states based on legitimacy and economic strength of the hegemon (Hurrell, 2006B, 3-4). Dependent if the hegemon is regarded or portrayed as predatory or benevolent will greatly depend on the legitimacy of its hegemonic system, whereas e.g. in an economic system, the hegemony needs benevolent consensual legitimacy to lead weaker states to join and invest in the system of common goods (Brooks, 2012, 28). Security is often explained as a particularly common good in the international community, as is economic interdependence and human rights, etcetera, and through the flowing of ideas and politics in the globalization of neoliberalist relations, weaker states will follow the examples of the hegemon, democratizing which in turn leads to a more secure and stable system – based on the notion of democratic peace (Mearsheimer, 2001, 16-17)(Warner & Zawahri, 2012, 226)(Hafner-Burton & Montgomery, 2008, 118).

In relation to the neorealist predatory notion of hegemony, neoliberalist emphasize that the most powerful state should act in accordance with multilateralism, since multilateralism unlike unilateralism is based on norms, values and institutions instead of raw power (Brooks, 2012, 34). Military power and other “hard” powers exist and are noted, but not extremely important to the hegemon’s relations (Warner & Zawahri, 2012, 218-220). Since the emphasis is on consent and not coercion, military forces are mainly for the hegemon to gain legitimacy and ensure the safety of the institutions, and potential “rouge” states, and of course be a collateral factor in institutions of collective security (Warner & Zawahri, 2012, 218)(Grundig & Ward, 2008, 6).

In regard to a hegemonic system, neoliberalists acknowledge the potential existence of a hegemon and its effects, as portrayed above, but do not necessarily see it as a precaution for a stable international system pointing to other explanatory factors as well (Milner, 1998, 115-116). Even though the relevance of the hegemon for creating and pursuing international institutions, though not for keeping them alive.

### 3.2.3 Answers to Cooperation – Neorealist version of Hegemonic Stability Theory and Hegemonic War

The theory of hegemonic stability is widely debated but also adapted by different schools of thought (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004)(Grundig & Ward, 2008, 3)(Gowa, 1989, 309). Both realist and liberalist scholars have applied their assumptions to hegemonic stability theory and acknowledges it in different ways. The source of the theory is also hard to grasp, since by some it is told to be a realist answer to international cooperation, or a liberalist explanation of a coercive hegemon (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 3). Proposed creators of hegemonic stability theory vary from Gilpin (1971, 1981) to Olsen (1965) to Kindleberger (1973) etcetera, and the resemblances of each of their proposals are evident – which hopefully will be shown in the following sections.

The realist-prone version of theory of hegemonic stability is a theory much accredited to Robert Gilpin, in which he aims to explain international cooperation controverting neorealist assumptions (Gilpin, 1988)(Hall, 2006, 42). It is based on theories of economic history and brings a realist approach to how, why and what constitutes state cooperation, therefor being regarded as an answer to the neoliberalist approach and the fact that international cooperation has flourished since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ibid).

Gilpin observes that liberal capitalist democracies have established deep-going and prolific international cooperation and trade, which he tries to explain in regard to unipolarity and hegemony (Hall, 2006, 42-43). He draws special attention to the hegemon and explains that these institutions are unipolar in their existence and creation, despite if the world is bi- or multipolar, since they stem from the dominance of one powerful source (ibid). Order can be established in a system of anarchy by the dominative exercise of power by a hegemon (Keohane, 1986, 198). Thus, Gilpin states that there is no necessary specific connection between political hegemony and economic liberalism (Gilpin, 1986, 311). He argue that other economical systems may also be associated with hegemonic dominance, much in relation to the hegemon and its perceptions and attitude. To exemplify he stipulates the importance for political hegemony and economic effectiveness for a nation to promote a liberal world economy (ibid).

Some scholars even take it as far as arguing that a hegemonic state is necessary for the spreading of global common goods in the contemporary international system (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 3). The institutions in the international systems are enforced by the military power of the hegemon, in which the hegemon can use trade and norms to pursue its own goals, and the international system becomes more or less monopolized by the hegemon and its strength (Kohout, 2003, 54). The most fundamental role for the hegemon is to secure the international system with its military preponderance, and thereby passively encourage other states to cooperate (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 5). The hegemon will try to influence and change the system of interdependence towards its own advantage, using its supreme power (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 5).

According to Thomas Pedersen major powers in the international arena may cooperate with other states if they see themselves having a certain relative

weakness, such as location, resources or prestige, in which they can gain advantage through cooperation, without others gaining as well (2002, 693). Another source of cooperation might be if the major power is in a military decline, or if the hegemon is essentially powerful in non-military areas, e.g. economics or culture, but weaker militarily (ibid.).

Gilpin considers history as cyclical where war is a central concept as redistribution of power (Keohane, 1986, 177). The hegemonic war is defined as a war of determining dominance in the international system, where the victor take charge, defines the system and institutions, grows with the system and at last declines (Rosencrance, 1987, 284). Thence follows a period of growth, stability and prosperity, where institutions related to the hegemon are established and grow. So a hegemonic power has the ability to create order in anarchy through its dominance as periods of peace follow this establishment (Keohane, 1986, 189). Though, this expansion of power puts the hegemon in a more exposed position where it needs to continually spend more in order to safeguard and further expand, which gives other states opportunity to challenge the hegemon (Rosencrance, 1987, 293).

Theory of hegemonic stability is to be regarded as a view of when stability echoes the international system; the other side of the coin is the theory of hegemonic war (Kohout, 2003, 55). Due to the cyclical notion of the structure, Gilpin understands the system as transforming (Gilpin, 1988, 601-603). Hegemons are challenged by upcoming major powers, both economically and military, by the rivals gaining more and more power which most probably will lead to a central war of transition between major powers (Kohout, 2003, 55-58). According to Gilpin's theory the challenger is most likely to initiate the confrontation – as offensive realism would suggest as well – in order to enhance its power and expand its influence (ibid.) But if not, there is also the risk of the hegemon initiating war in a preventing move to stop the rise of the challenger, in order to keep its momentum in the system.

Gilpin builds his theory on basic realist assumptions, but his approach opens the possibility to, or at least attempts to, explain how institutions and rules can become inconsistent with the hegemon, leading to, and because of, its decline (Keohane, 1986, 177). This transformation is also an effect of the burden of costs within the system. Since the hegemon has the ability to, and do, take the heavier burden of the costs in the system, rationally based on the bigger gains, smaller states can enjoy the lower costs and in the long term have a stronger growth rate than the hegemon, leading to the inevitable economic and political descent of the hegemon (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 5).

### 3.2.4 Liberalist Theory of Hegemonic Stability

Liberalist scholars also inclined in defining and explaining the theory of hegemonic stability has a much more optimistic view of the world system. There are many similarities with the section of realist thinkers above, but also some essential differences. One of the main conceptual differences is regarding or

depicting the hegemon as benevolent or predatory (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 3). The more liberalist assumptions agree with its counterpart that the system is stabilized by one dominant hegemonic state that sets the rules for the system and is overly important to institutions and cooperation between states (Kukk, 2004, 1). The hegemon acts rational in that it gains the most of this cooperation and trade, and therefore accept the burden of extra cost (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 3). It uses the international norms and institutions to urge compliance from weaker states integrating them into the system (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 3). "International norms cannot come from any other source but a systemic hegemon" (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 3). Some scholars argue that economic trade, growth and cooperation are almost entirely dependent on whether international institutions are, and/or stem from, liberal democracies (Milner, 1998, 119).

Liberalist adaptations of hegemonic stability theory also see the hegemonic system as cyclical but much more optimistically than Gilpin's theory of hegemonic war. It is emphasized that due to the fact that the scale of the system and the amount of public goods will eventually drain the hegemon and its resources to the point where it is no longer "...a stable system care-taker." (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 4). Since the state with the most to gain from international cooperation will pick up the costs of that cooperation (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 3-4). The effects of driving global multinational institutions and cooperation, and protecting global stability and security, will eventually lead to an overinvestment in international ventures and national military, which as with Gilpin's theories, will lead to the hegemon's demise (McCormick, 1990, 129-130). Though contrary to the realist version this needs not to be followed by a central war. Liberal notions of hegemony as a fit between power, ideas and institutions challenge the realist idea of material and military raw power hegemonic dominance, showing that other factors related to the hegemon might help in explaining international stability under hegemonic rule (Cox, 1986, 224-225).

A big difference between the two versions of the theory is the relation of means and tools in accordance to the assertiveness or aggressiveness of the hegemon. The more liberal stance would argue that the hegemon will more or less force weaker states into the system or regime by soft power measures making it e.g. economically or politically irrational not to, based on the distribution of public goods (Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 7-8)(Hurrell, 2006A, 556). The hegemon will employ economic and political coercive force to make a weaker state join the cooperation, motivated by its own legitimacy and possible dyadic gains for both the hegemon and the lesser power (Hurrell, 2006B, 7-8)(Hafner-Burton & Montgomery, 2008, 111)(Grundig & Ward, 2008). The more realist approach would instead deem this unnecessary since the military power of the hegemon will make states unwary knowing the risks of not cooperating (Destradi, 2010, 916-918)(Jungblut & Sacko, 2004, 10-12). Since the rational state's highest goal is its own survival, weaker states will voluntarily join in the cooperation both because of the hegemon's hard power supremacy and due to the fact of other goals of the state (Grundig & Ward, 2008, 5-6).

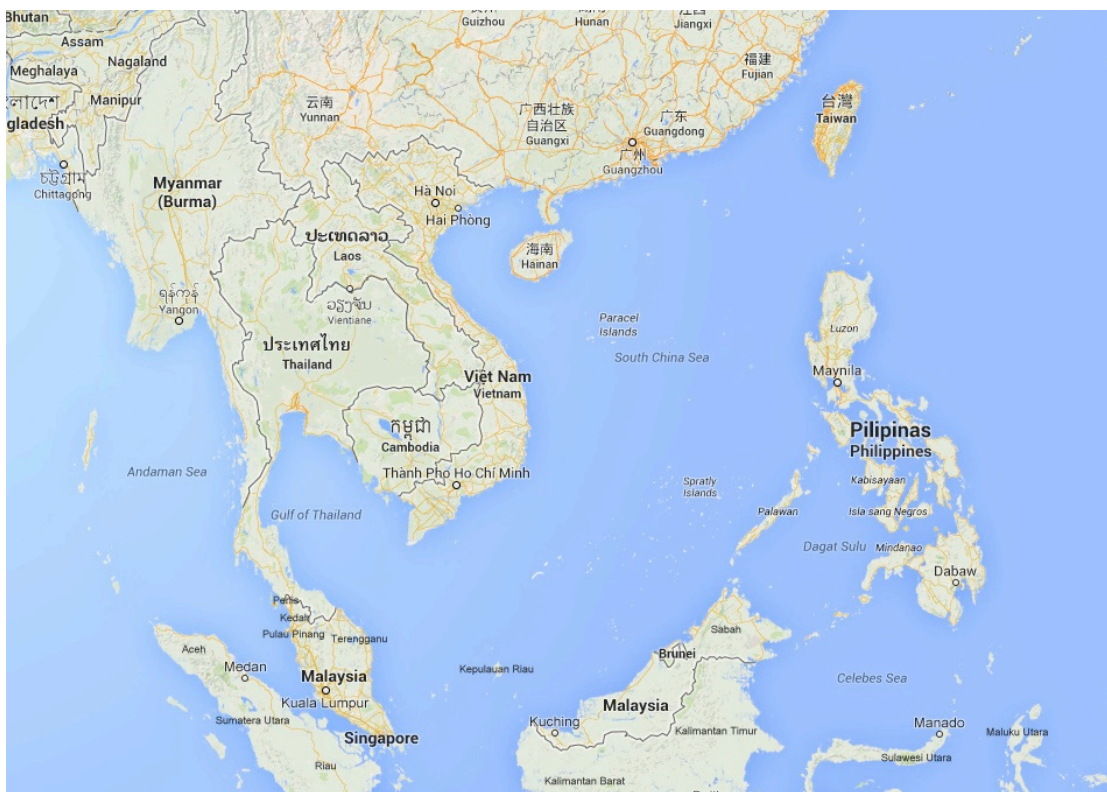
By emphasising the importance of other power factors than just military power liberal notions of hegemonic stability theory stipulates the importance of the

legitimacy behind the hegemon's actions and behaviour – a leader needs followers – thus weaker states consenting to its hegemonic leadership (Warner & Zawahri, 2012, 218).

### 3.3 Southeast Asia and China

Defining regional powers, Sandra Destradi stipulates the following assumptions as uncontested (2010, 905): That the state belong to the region, that they are the largest power in the region and that they influence the region of some kind.

China is not historically considered to be part of Southeast Asia, which might be problematic in regard to this definition. In geographical terms China is a huge country and southern China borders Southeast Asian countries by both land and sea, and its most southern region – the island of Hainan – is located in the



geographical region of Southeast Asia. The historical reef claims made by China in the South China Sea, are located in Southeast Asia, thus I understand China as regarding itself part of, or at least as a stake-holder in, the region (Hsiang, 2008)(Buzan & Wæver, 2003, 138). What typically defines a regional hegemon, according to Miriam Prys, is its geographical position within that region and its power supremacy in the region and neighbouring states – both materially and non-materially (2010, 485).

Identification to the region is an important factor since a hegemon, or major power, that do not identify itself in the region will most likely project inwardly



looking to national and global politics (Prys, 2010, 489). Much as China has done earlier following Deng's strategies for national development.

Another factor in relation to China's vastness and in regards of it earlier possibly not regarding itself as part of the region, I believe, stem from the fact that modern history China's domestic power centre is located in north east of China, mainly in Beijing, hence its focus, or priory, has been mainly towards the region of Northeast Asia. Though today with globalization and enhanced infrastructure that shortens the distances, central power holders in China are able to broaden its focus and views towards new core national interests (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, 137-141). Beijing overtook Nanjings role as capital in the 15<sup>th</sup> century during a large campaign against the Mongols in the north (Wang, 2012, 138). The official capital has changed many times since, but in 1949 Beijing was established as the present capital of China.

The region of Southeast Asia does not have a particularly clear historical foundation, based on the fact of being under long colonial imperial rule, Japanese occupation and Chinese subordination (Best & Christiansen, 2008, 442).

Particularly since the end of the cold war regional major powers have emerged as key actors on a regional arena assuming central roles in regional, and in some cases global, governance (Prys, 2010, 480). One difference from global hegemony is the overarching global system of which the regional hegemon must adapt to (Prys, 2010, 482). Regions as clusters of units or states have a structure in itself but must be embedded in a larger system, i.e. it cannot be the whole system (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, 27). Hegemons may be inclined to include in the region in order to avoid other external powers, e.g. a global hegemon, from being the producer of public gains in the region (Hurrell, 2006B, 8). In a liberalist sense the regional hegemon therefore can stimulate an enhanced regional integration whereas national borders becomes less important and cooperation within the region more available (Best & Christiansen, 2008, 436-437).

Regional powers might adapt their behaviour by external pressure from other more powerful states (Prys, 2010, 497). External powers can also effect the perception of the regional hegemon by e.g. influencing their values onto the lesser powers in the region or by an extension of military or economic resources reducing the importance of the hegemon (ibid.). Weaker states might willingly cooperate with the extra-regional power to resist the regional hegemons dominance (Prys, 2010, 497-499). Mearsheimer makes a distinction between global hegemony – domination of the world – and regional hegemony – domination of the geographical region – whereas a regional hegemon will try to prevent states in other regions acquiring the same status (Mearsheimer, 2001, 40-43). If other regions consist of at least two major powers, their focus will be on each other.

When studying a regional major power it is important to be aware of the dyadic split between regional and international levels (Prys, 2010, 498). Regional hegemons may have aspiration of becoming a global hegemon, which can infuse a split between global and regional interests and goals, and actions between the two.

Depending on the relations between the region and the hegemon, neighbours may act alongside the hegemon or reject its hegemony resisting the hegemon

fearing its intentions (Prys, 2010, 493). Hurrell states that regional institutions and security cooperation may be an effect of the dilemmas of weaker states in relation to the preponderant power (Hurrell, 2006A, 563-564)

According to Mearsheimer gaining the status of global hegemony is barely feasible so states concentrate on becoming a regional hegemon (Mearsheimer, 2001, 140-143). The biggest distinction between regions is vast distances of water between landmasses (ibid.). These waters make the first defensive line in security of the region, making it hard to launch global assaults from one region to another, unless the aggressor has established friendly relations in that very region in which it can disturb the stability in the hegemon's backyard (Mearsheimer, 2001, 142-143).

### 3.4 Summary RAM and Hegemony

Based on the observations of the different theories, regarding hegemony, what I regard the biggest differences between them is the dimension of consent and coerciveness stemming from the hegemon towards lesser powers AND the level of hard versus soft power for the hegemon to get its will. Meaning that depending on the theories above the hegemon is presumed to either engage its neighbours through getting their consent, by e.g. providing common goods, political or idea based leadership, or by coercing them, by e.g. military force, bribes or economic sanctions. The hegemon may pursue this by either soft power or hard power, depending on which theory is in focus. To clarify further I regard the first section; offensive neorealism, as regarding the hegemon as getting its will through coercive hard power politics whilst the neoliberalist approach theorizes the hegemon as acting through consent and with soft power incentives (see figure 1.). To vividly examine and understand China by using the theories above I have decided to construct dimensions based on my theoretical findings.

Figure 1.	Neorealism	Realist HST	Liberalist HST	Neoliberalism
<b>Source of power</b>	Hard power most important, mainly military. Latent power, which can be transformed into material power as well.	Hard power, but also spreading of public goods which gains the hegemon the most. Soft power through enforcing institutions and cooperation.	Soft power, spreading of public goods gaining all participants more or less equally. Hard power exists to ensure regime and institutional security.	Soft power most important. Legitimacy through liberal ideas, values, norms and institutions where all participants gain equally. Spreading of democracy ensures peace.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Coercive measures. Forcing states into accepting the hegemon's dominance knowing the risks of not complying. War is a possible tool. The hegemon takes what it wants to maximize its power and security.	Mainly consensual through weaker states' knowledge of its material preponderance and the potential gains of cooperation even though the hegemon gains most. Coercive measures are possible for the hegemon to make weaker states comply.	Coercive through enforcing liberal democratic values onto weaker states, making it impossible for them not to join the cooperation. States outside the cooperation are not economically and politically rational. Legitimacy through political and ideological values.	Consensual through legitimacy and mutual common gains. International regimes, interdependence and possible positive outcome make states want to cooperate. Spreading the hegemon's ideological and political values influences weaker states to consent.
<b>Weaker state reaction</b>	Bandwagoning or hedging. Follow the hegemon to try to get the crumbs or try to balance the system through hedging with other states. National expansion of material power. Otherwise institutions or cooperation irrelevant.	Cooperate with the hegemon to be included in the public goods. Fear of the hegemon's material power and possible gains makes it irrational not to. A descending hegemon might lead to hedging and rejection of the hegemon.	Join the cooperation to be included in the public goods. Irrational to be on the hegemon's blacklist not gaining. Noncooperation leads to ostracism and soft power sanctions, i.e. Rouge states.	Hegemon as source of institutions and public goods. Willingly cooperate in the international system to get the most of it. Interdependence with other democratic states secures stability and economic prosperity.
<b>Ascendance</b>	Through military and material preponderance, thereby becoming the most powerful state in the system.	Through military and material preponderance, thereby becoming the most powerful state in the system. Often after war or conflict with an earlier hegemon or major power. Ability to carry the cost of cooperation and national security against upcomers.	Economical power preponderance and ability to carry the biggest cost of cooperation and public goods. Ability to coerce others to join the cooperation peacefully, both through legitimacy by others and domestic will.	Biggest economy and ability to carry the costs of public goods. Spreading of ideological and political values through international legitimacy-based leadership.

### 3.5 Coercive – Consent Dimension

In this first dimension I will add a historical parameter to vividly exemplify and explain Chinese behaviour in earlier periods of time related to today. Since China, which will be shown, is referring to an All-under-Heaven system as a form of Chinese political philosophy, that will be described, followed by an examination of an earlier period of Chinese hegemony, the Ming Dynasty, to compare contemporary All-under-Heaven with historical practice of All-under-Heaven, in 3.5.1.

“Even though China should always speak with authority and strength, she needs to break the previously dominant political logic that any rising power will inevitably move toward hegemony. While China will never casually contemplate a war, neither will she ever retreat from any challenges when necessary. Therefore, China must also be careful that her own actions not be misinterpreted as adventurous and serving the wrong goals.” (Yu, 2013, 80). China is often trying to change its international image by portraying itself as benign, peaceful and stable stakeholder in international politics, for example; as the conception of the “China threat” was countered by the notion of the Chinese “peaceful rise”. Though, peaceful rise was changed later on to terms as “peaceful development”, “harmonious world” or “peaceful world” as “rise” made its neighbours anxious and concerned about the meaning of the rise (Breslin, 2009, 9-11).

China insist that it is dedicated to a “peaceful rise” that will not affect and change the international system but instead will harmonize Southeast Asia under re-establishment of historic hierarchy that will threaten no one (Till, 2012, 21).

Most understand the new Chinese assertiveness as starting after the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, as they revised their grand strategy in seeing the start of the U.S. decline, leaving earlier strategy of Deng (Christensen, 2011, 1). Because of this assertiveness and arrogance China has managed to severely damage the relations with both its neighbours and the U.S., officially threatening neighbours, harassing foreign civil and military ships, shelling other states’ territories, violated neighbouring states’ territorial water, strengthening ties with U.S. adversaries e.g. North Korea and Iran, international cyber attacks and reconnaissance, etcetera, are among the deeds of China, which are used to exemplify this new assertiveness (Christensen, 2011, 1-3). “Looking at the current world situation, a full-scale war is unlikely, but we cannot exclude the possibility that, in some local areas, unexpected events may occur, or military friction may take place due to a misfire” – Liang Guanglie (See Till, 2012, 51).

### 3.5.1 All-under-Heaven

China is often and repeatedly stating the fact that they are not seeking or pursuing any form of hegemony, global or regionally (Breslin, 2009, 4). The “All-under-Heaven” system stretches back over 3000 years and was a contributing factor to the unification of China under one rule (Tingyang, 2009, 7). The main idea was to implement an overarching system to unify the world (China) through common political ideas and values, instead of force, establishing common goods and harmony through a universal system. It is including in its foundation and makes no differences among people and lands (Tingyang, 2009, 10). For the system to work it is necessary that all are included and inside the system, because it reduces the sense of disorder and anarchy in the international society. It is similar to realism meaning that an instable international system leads to disruption and high risks of conflict (Tingyang, 2009, 10). A universal and all-encompassing peace, universal harmony between all peoples, can only be achieved if all people are included in the All-under-Heaven system (Tingyang, 2009, 5).

The system is a triadic concept in a sense that it divides into three worlds – the physical, psychological and institutional (Yiwei, 2009, 110-112)(Tingyang, 2009, 9). As physical and psychological implies including all people, and their ideas, the establishment of international institutions are of essential necessity (Tingyang, 2009, 11). Making the “world” the highest entity in the system, All-under-Heaven emphasizes a one world-institution ensuring world order by establishing hierarchy on the international arena. Whereas the difference from western philosophy of nation-states, communities and individuals, is that in Chinese political philosophy see All-under-Heaven, nation-states, then families as the hierarchical order (Tingyang, 2009, 11). “The absence of a world institution as the highest political entity is dangerously incomplete in that there is no one to take care of the world.” (Ibid.).

Chinese All-under-Heaven theory makes the world the primary object in the political order and the state is peripheral in contrast to western theory where the state is the primary (Tingyang, 2006, 31). A tightly connected concept is the Son-of-Heaven who is entitled to rule in the All-under-Heaven system to improve the happiness and prosperity of all people (Tingyang, 2006, 32). This will not necessarily be a “dictator or a superpower, but one who has the right and power to justify the governance of All-under-Heaven.” (Ibid.).

In Chinese political philosophy there is a great divide between rule and ownership (Tingyang, 2009, 6). Meaning that just because you rule the world does not necessary mean you own it. One power can govern and rule, without the love from the people and ownership of spirituality (Ibid.).

From a historical perspective it is important to know that the Chinese rise is not something new, but in fact rather a re-rise to earlier greatness during history (Wang, 2012, 129). As during one of the earlier periods of Chinese greatness, the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) China could dominate the region based on predominance in military power and superiority of economic resources (Wang, 2012, 129-130). Thus giving them the capacity to expand their territory both on land and by sea. By their regional dominance China could, and did, influence the international system and controlled international politics on Chinese terms (Wang, 2012, 130). It launched several campaigns aimed at crushing their Mongol adversaries in the north, and successfully annexed Vietnam, first making it a tributary state and later a Chinese province and part of Chinese territory, based on claims that Vietnam had belonged to China since ancient times (Wang, 2012, 137-143). China also launched several maritime expeditions during this period, expanding its political influence into South East Asia and to India (Wang, 2012, 143-144). Even though the aim was not to colonize or conquer the territories found, the might of the Chinese fleet showed China’s overwhelming power making it possible to conduct coercive diplomacy far from home. Many states were forced into submission making them tributary states submitting to the Chinese supremacy (Wang, 2012, 145). The tributary system infused hierarchy on international politics, making China the top of the system and setting the “rules of the game” by their hegemonic dominance (Wang, 2012, 147). The core of the system was based on harmony and coexistence through cultural expansion rather

than military might and conflict, making the Chinese emperor ruler of All-under-Heaven, a concept that has returned to Chinese political philosophy (Wang, 2012, 147-148). The Chinese culture was the aim for the system's existence since the tributary states were allowed to trade with China, whilst those who refused were withheld this privilege, making it more or less impossible not to (Wang, 2012, 148).

Today, China, as a major economic power in the region have used its economic advantage against the states in Southeast Asia as a pressure tactic related to the maritime disputes and employed denial of market access (Graham, 2013, 309). A Philippine challenge of Chinese claims led to a boycott of banana imports in 2012 making the Philippine's drop their international proceedings in the UNCLOS (Ibid.). Many of the ASEAN states are seemingly suspicious towards the Chinese "peaceful development" claim and suspects the motives of Beijing as still expansionist and revisionist (Ho & Pitakdumrongkit, 2013). According to some, the All-under-Heaven theory gives China the belief that they have the mandate to rule their smaller neighbours and control their foreign policies just as they did under earlier periods of history (Dillon, 2011, 52). China will have the possibility to redraw the international economic order (Yu, 2013, 80). But, based on some essential assumptions by Chinese thinkers this may not take form as foreseen or understood by western scholars and power-holders. Chinese scholars and policies consequently reject interference in other states' national affairs, based on the rejection of imperialism and feudalism and their own struggle during Mao's rule (Ibid.). Combined with All-under-Heaven as a framework for economic development, prosperity and stability for all states lead Chinese scholars to emphasize a Chinese remaking of international order, and international non-aggressive dominance, without necessary being a hegemon, since assumptions of hegemony would not fit, in China to "... cultivate peace and promote an equal, mutually respectful, pluralistic, and multipolar structure." (Ibid.).

*ANALYSIS: According to Chinese officials and scholars, China is not pursuing a hegemonic system in Southeast Asia, but rather emphasize the All-under-Heaven as a complement or substitute to the contemporary system and western philosophies. Relating to both history and narratives All-under-Heaven still shows to be rather coercive as states are forced to join the system by cultural, economic and military means. So, on the dimension of coercive-consent the All-under-Heaven is regarded rather coercive based on contemporary assumptions and historical practice.*

### 3.5.2 The South China Sea and Taiwan

"China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact." – China's former foreign minister Yang Jiechi argued at an ASEAN ministers conference in Hanoi 2010 after feeling attacked by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who argued to keep the freedom of navigation

in the South China Sea and stating it of national interest to the U.S. (Washington Post, 2010).

According to Dana Dillon, the South China Sea is the place where China is most likely to risk a military conflict (Dillon, 2011, 51). Today a Chinese military territorial expansion of the Paracel and Spratly isles in the South China Sea would most probably lead to war with the Philippines and Vietnam, and possibly more states claiming the reefs, shoals and islands (Fravel, 2010, 510-512). Trade and diplomacy would suffer deeply hurting the hastily growing economies and worsen China's international image even more, consolidating the impression of China as a revisionist state (Ibid.).

The South China Sea is a semi-enclosed sea, surrounded by China (and Taiwan), Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia, consisting of hundreds of small reefs, islands, shoals, banks, etcetera, in form of four groups – the Pratas Islands, the Macclesfield Bank, the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands (Zou, 2012, 19). China is the only country that claim all the four groups, whereas the Pratas are under Taiwanese control, and China's claim is under the unification of China, the Macclesfield Bank is claimed by China and Taiwan, the Paracels are under Chinese control but also claimed by Vietnam, and the Spratlys are claimed by all surrounding states except Indonesia (Zou, 2012, 19).



The Chinese claims are based on the alleged discovery by Chinese fishermen and the historical usage of the islands (Thang & Thao, 2012, 36-37). Based on historical documents, i.e. maps, pre-dating the PRC, making it, in the eyes of the Chinese, rightfully theirs and all other's claims false (Zou, 2012, 19-20). These maps and especially *Atlas of Administrative Areas of the Republic of China*,

published in 1948, support the Chinese claim by portraying a “traditional maritime boundary line” also called the e.g. “U-shaped line” or “Nine-dotted line”, which supposedly stipulate the Chinese maritime border (Ibid.).

The South China Sea is rich on hydrocarbons and is one of the world’s busiest waterways with almost half of all the shipping in the world passing it (Dillon, 2011, 54). Due to the competition between especially China and the U.S. in regards to oil and petroleum imports, China have been pursuing a form of neo-mercantilist policies to become more self-sufficient and are mainly importing oil from states that are to be regarded as adversaries to the U.S. (Chanis, 2011, 286). China is well aware of its dependency in energy, and whilst the U.S. dependency in imported oil and gas is declining annually, China’s is growing in line with its development (Chanis, 2011, 287).

Even though the benefits of controlling the Paracels and the Spratlys are uncertain, just as with Senkaku, the exclusive territory around are believed to contain vast amounts of natural resources that could lessen China’s dependency on imports (Fravel, 2010, 513-514). If the various groups of islands in the South China Sea were under Chinese sovereignty this would mean that China could claim large maritime zones adjacent to the islands as economic exclusive zones (Ibid.)(Fravel, 2011, 294).

Another factor is the possibility to control the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, an extremely important trade route for China, the U.S. and internationally, which often has been stated by e.g. U.S. officials (Dillon, 2011, 51). The Paracels and Spratlys located somewhat in the middle, with Vietnam to the west and Philippines to the east, China would gain an extreme tactical advantage both militarily, e.g. as buffer zone against the homeland, and with the possibility to control the trade route and to reduce the so called “Malacca dilemma” which is the fact that 85% of Chinese oil imports pass the Strait of Malacca and the SCS (Le Mière, 2013)(Fravel & Liebman, 2011, 62-63). Popular pressure and nationalism is another factor making the reefs a core interest for China (Fravel, 2010, 515-519).

However, in 2002 China and the ASEAN states signed an agreement on the declaration of conduct in the South China Sea, acknowledging the different claimants and their disputes along with a promise to solve the disputes peacefully (Zou, 2012, 25). Though the disputes have not been solved but rather escalated since 2002, and especially after 2009, hence conflict have seemed quite imminent at many different occasions and growing number of reports of harassments by Chinese paramilitary law enforcement vessels, as e.g. Vietnam claim to have been harassed at 516 occasions last year – 223 more than in 2012 (Economist, 2014)(Heydarian, 2014).

The number of PLAN naval exercises in the South China Sea has increased under the last couple of years (Fravel, 2011, 308-309)(Green & Kliman, 2011, 40). These exercises aim of both enhancing PLAN’s capabilities but also to demonstrate its enhanced power and ability to support Chinese claims of sovereignty (Ibid.).

Except from PLAN activity in the South China Sea, China has also intensified the activity from coast guards and other maritime agencies to secure and monitor



their interests, by a larger fleet – from 113 vessels and 242 aircrafts in 2008 to 188 vessels and 523 aircrafts in 2010 (Zou, 2012, 21). Examples of incidents often mentioned as fronting the new Chinese assertiveness are the interception of U.S.N.S *Impeccable* in 2009, the cutting of survey cables off Vietnamese and Philippine ships in 2011, and the confrontation with the Philippine warship in 2012 (Le Mière, 2013). To further exemplify the situation in the SCS, Chinese ships attacked Vietnamese vessels by ramming and using water-cannons on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May this year, which according to international media risk escalating the situation, combined with oil-rig moves and new tension (cf. Son, 2014; Bateman 2014)(Guardian, 2014). To reduce “foreign” fishing in the disputed waters China has approved new regulations for Chinese law enforcement vessels to board and search fishing vessels in claimed territorial sea (Bateman, 2012). The ADIZ in the East China Sea, established in November 2013, also worries the ASEAN members that China will deploy a similar zone in the South China Sea as Chinese defence ministry spokesman, a few days after the establishing of the ECS ADIZ, addressed the fact that China will deploy more identification zones at the right time (Loh, 2013).

CCP still considers Taiwan as part of China and unification is a primary goal for Beijing, and China is officially prepared to take military action towards that goal if Taiwan chooses to try to declare independence (Glaser, 2011, 4). Taiwan has postponed unification talks with China indefinitely, and even though the former president Hu officially stated that China would not use force against Taiwan, Taiping officials have officially shared its concerns about a Chinese military annexation (Bingham Kennedy, 2007, 286-269).

*ANALYSIS: Again China show a more coercive side related to their neighbours. Their core national interests are to be theirs at any cost. Even though the situation in the SCS has still not escalated into full-scale conflict, the actions of PLAN and other maritime agencies portray a very coercive strategy of harassment and non-conventional and non-confrontational assertiveness. China is forcing their neighbours to comply, but without risking war. With the situation with Taiwan I believe China to be biding their time, using coercive measurements and threats to keep Taiwan from declaring independence.*

### 3.5.3 Institutionalism and ASEAN

The Sino-ASEAN relation has undergone a massive transformation during the last 20 years and today China is one of the largest trade partners to ASEAN and has become an extremely important player in regional multilateral cooperation such as ARF, ASEAN plus three and East Asian Summit (Storey, 2012, 287). According to Ian Storey this development of deepening relations with ASEAN is for China to promote its peaceful development, building trust in the neighbourhood and for China to understand the interests and values of the ASEAN states (Storey, 2012, 288). Also, China with its expansion in domestic military production know the value of trade in the developing and expanding region and military assistance can

help to undermine existing military relationships with external powers (Ibid.). The trade between China and ASEAN have increased immensely in the recent past, with an annual growth rate of 22%, the bilateral trade increased from US\$BN 54 in 2002 to US\$BN 400 in 2012 (Ho & Pitakdumrongkit, 2013).

Even though the charm-offensive towards ASEAN, the Chinese are still maintaining a non-negotiation policy towards their claims in the South China Sea, since China regards its sovereignty as indisputable (Shekar, 2012, 259). China is still arguing for bilateral discussions to solve the disputes and opposes any internationalization, but the ASEAN claimant states are declining, deeming it to be a simple attempt to “divide and conquer” (Storey, 2011, 15).

But regardless of the fact that China is deeply suspicious of multilateralism with American presence, it has shown some willingness to involve itself in cooperative security and somewhat loosening earlier insistence of resolving international problems, disputes and situations bilaterally (Till, 2012, 223).

Off course when talking about the relationship between ASEAN members and China I am aware that there are differences between the states (Shekhar, 2012, 253). As the relationship with, for example, former communist states as Myanmar and Cambodia differs than for example the Philippines and Vietnam.

China joining the WTO has greatly benefited its economic development (Gavin, 2013). Though recently a conflict between China and the WTO have arisen, due to the fact that China is not complying with the rules, embodied in GATT, it agreed to by joining. As the largest exporter of strategic raw materials, needed in high tech production, China has chosen to reduce the share of export motivated by domestic needs (Ibid.). This has led to a number of complaints, from e.g. the EU and the U.S., and a growing conflict between the WTO and China. And some other challenges against the U.S. international dominance have been made. As in 2009 the head of the People’s Bank of China called for the IMF to stop using dollar as the world reserve currency and find another alternative (Miller K., 2010, 1).

*ANALYSIS: The increased Chinese presence in regional institutions shows a more consenting side of China willing to accept and acknowledge regional institutions. Their presence shows an ambition to become a reliable stakeholder in the region and to help development and security in the region. To make smaller states comply with China by consent and to challenge the U.S. pivot taking away their friends. China as a potential hegemon may have the power to redraw the international system, based on theoretical assumptions earlier in this chapter, and the conflicts with international institutions may be a sign that China is not content with some liberal capitalist institutions stemming from the U.S. and Britain.*

## 3.6 Hard – Soft Power Dimension

### 3.6.1 The PLA and Sub-divisions

Beijing has been upgrading their military capacity for the last 15 years (Bitzinger, 2011, 7). Richard Bitzinger suggest five reasons for this as he argues that (1) China want to accompany their cultural, diplomatic and economic “soft power” with “hard power” military resources as (2) they seem more prone to use military means towards their key regional interests and (3) to deter Taiwan from declaring independence with the goal to incorporate them in the motherland (Ibid.). (4) And to broaden their capacity of operations to be able to secure and promote growing interests abroad and become more active in international activities, and lastly (5) to restrict and mitigate U.S. power in the region by becoming stronger.

Today the Chinese military budget is more than three times as high as the ASEAN countries together (Yahuda, 2013, 452). According to Japan’s MoD, China is doubling its defence expenditure every five years and has become the second largest defence spender in the world, spending around 90 US\$BN a year (2011), which would imply that China would reach contemporary U.S. level in about 15 years from 2011 (Till, 2012, 49, 249 fig. 1.). The remarkable increase in military spending started 1997, and was the start for what is called double-digit real annual growth, which is still growing in size (Bitzinger, 2011, 7). In real terms, the Chinese defence budget has increase with over 600% since 1997, and in recent years from 2008 until 2011 it grew from US\$BN 61,2 to US\$BN 91,5<sup>1</sup> (Bitzinger, 2011, 8). AND, most military experts claim the official numbers in the Chinese defence budget to be greatly underestimated and undervalued, and real figures may be from 1.5 to ten times higher than the official budget (Bitzinger, 2011, 9). The PLA, PLAN, PLAAF and PLANAF have been extremely modernized and have enhanced capability both qualitatively and quantitatively and now possess e.g. stealth-, standoff precision-, long-range airborne-, undersea attack- and expeditionary warfare- capabilities (Bitzinger, 2011, 10). Due to procurements and Chinese defence industry and industry-theft it is still developing, as for example there is speculation that China is looking into buying around 50 fixed-wing fighter jets, e.g. Russian Su-33, producing six new aircraft carriers, manufacturing its first homemade fourth-generation-plus combat aircraft J-10, long-range precision-strike ballistic missile-systems, developing a high tech C4ISR system, etcetera (Bitzinger, 2011, 9-13). The CMC have been working actively to increase the ability for joint operations within the PLA (Miller A., 2014, 9).

China is regularly declaring that defence procurements or military exercises are not aimed at other countries (Till, 2012, 37). Even though China is upgrading

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<sup>1</sup> 2008 US\$BN 61,2. 2009 US\$BN 70,3, 2010 US\$BN 81. 2011 US\$BN 91,5.

and developing its military strength, Chinese leaders claim that the force is merely defensive (Mearsheimer, 2010A, 383-386).

China's military defence strategy is related to their military development as the PLA is officially intended to be a defensive force and only attack when attacked, but with a forward-defence posture (Bitzinger, 2011, 8). This led to building a force capable of fighting and winning short-duration high-intensity conflict, based on speed, agility and long-ranged attacks and five-dimensional warfare (Ibid.).

China's naval capacity is growing at a fast pace with the first aircraft carrier Liaoning, growing submarine fleet and growing surface fleet (Till, 2012, 36). They have strengthened the capacity of the southern fleet and actively enhance the activity of the Yulin naval submarine base on the southern tip of Hainan (Till, 2012, 42).

*ANALYSIS: Looking at the development of military means China is definitely enhancing their hard power means. As their annually accumulated double-digit military development spending probably will not slow down in the near future, China will have the opportunity to challenge the U.S. and dominate the region. Even though Chinese officials argue the defensive objective of their military, defensive means can easily be used for offensive purposes.*

### 3.6.2 Foreign Aid and Projects

At the 17<sup>th</sup> party congress in 2007 CCP officially launched their new strategy of soft power, spreading Chinese culture to serve strategic interest (Courmont, 2013, 343). Initially the Chinese soft power strategy has two different ambitions; to enhance the rise of China, which they emphasize does not depend purely on hard, AND; to establish a favourable international environment to rise in, based on cooperation, mutual benefit and friendship regionally, which hard power could not do without being too costly (Courmont, 2013, 349). Today Chinese soft power is primarily aimed at improving the international picture of China and its rise, by investing huge amounts in hosting different sport and cultural events, investing in developing countries, seducing the world and showing the good side of China (Courmont, 2013, 350-352). Even though the Chinese strategy is considered to be global, Southeast Asia has been the main target for several years (Ibid.). The soft power strategy of Beijing raises concern internationally of it being the start of Chinese hegemonic ambitions (Courmont, 2013, 357). The U.S. and its liberal allies see an authoritarian government with exceptional economic development, a combination that most certainly would seem attractive and favourable to democracy for potential leaders in developing countries (Ibid.).

The Chinese charm-offensive was to show regional countries that their economic boom, i.e. peaceful development, would lead to prosperity in the whole region and that China is a benign power and not a threat, drawing on consensus and economic development through institutional globalization and not through regional military expansion and hegemony (Storey, 2012, 293).

China is trying to portray itself as a benign neighbour by using soft power measures, as aid, diplomacy and trade, to get a better national image (Lum et al., 2008, 1). They are affecting the behaviour of their neighbours by mainly using economic soft power tools, but also by spreading a sense of an Asian community and Asian values to create resemblances between peoples (Lum et al., 2008, 2). In economic terms China is still maintaining its non-interference policy in other's national affairs, so instead of direct aid with counterclaims, China is assisting in giving loans, to e.g. infrastructural projects and energy projects, and then have Chinese companies completing the projects (Lum et al., 2008, 5). This approach is very appreciated in the receiving country, but has brought international criticism that China is not promoting values of human rights and democracy. Examples of projects include ports in Myanmar and Bangladesh, railroads in ASEAN countries and Nepal, sport stadiums and infrastructure in Latin America and Africa (Horta, 2014)(Miller K., 2010, 5).

Related to Chinese soft power Beijing officials have often portrayed China with "great power style" which is closely related to a "responsible great power", similar to, according to Chinese scholars, a benign hegemon (Yang, 2011, 63-65). This concept has roots in historic culture and philosophy, especially Confucianism, and is to support the notion of peaceful rise and not a China threat (Yang, 2011, 65-68). Li Mingjiang argues that the single most important soft power for China is its "traditional culture", mostly as its notions of a peaceful rise and harmonious world order stem from its cultural heritage and combined philosophy of earlier Chinese thinkers (see Breslin, 2009, 12). Though "historically, a strong China has brutalized the weak", based on the same cultural heritage soft power as China is promoting today (See Cohen in Breslin, 2009, 13). Confucius institutes, financed by the CCP, are now widespread around the globe in over 50 different countries offering promotion in the Chinese language, education, culture, and cultural exchange (Cheng J., 2013, 59-60).

*ANALYSIS: The Chinese soft power has also developed extensively. Showing that China want to pursue a peaceful stability in the region and internationally. The aid packages are meant to make states more positive and reliant of China and their development. As the Chinese charm-offensive is to be improve the neighbours' image of China understanding that China will be a friend and not foe.*

### 3.7 ASEAN Reaction

Something very similar to an arms race is currently underway in Southeast Asia as arms procurements and military budgets has increased and are still increasing. For example many countries have acquired high technology jet fighters, submarines, air-to-air and air-to-ground weapon systems, anti-ship cruise missiles, C4ISR systems and put large orders on different forms of armoured vehicles and battle tanks (Bitzinger, 2010, 51-52). According to Richard Bitzinger there are of course

several reasons for this armament in the region, but he declares ASEAN nations arming themselves against China as probably the most important (Bitzinger, 2010, 61). In 2011 Asia surpassed Europe for the first time in net defensive spending according to IISS (Till, 2012, 31-33). Patterns of defence expenditure in Asia is highly connected to Chinese procurement and behaviour and, according to Geoffrey Till, the defence expenditure of China's neighbours and rivals is much correlated to the ambiguity regarding the Chinese rise, its new assertiveness and the haste of China's defence-spending growth (Till, 2012, 32).

Asia and Southeast Asia today is bipolar in the U.S. pivot and China, no other local state has the capacity to challenge China without the support of the U.S. (Godwin, 2004, 83). The ASEAN response to the rise of China is two-folded both hedging, building stronger ties with the U.S. and other ASEAN member states, procuring arms and expanding the military, whilst still trying to better the relationship with China to gain economically and financially from its rise (Shekar, 2012, 260-263)(Graham, 2013). As with Singapore for example, often humorously called the USS Singapore based on the huge U.S. military presence, while simultaneously pragmatically strengthening ties with China (Graham, 2013, 312). The Philippines have again opened up their bases to U.S. forces after closing them in 1992 and the U.S. answered by tripling their military assistance (Graham, 2013, 313). But the lack of trust within ASEAN makes most of the ASEAN members to hedge against both each other and China by military rearmament and bandwagoning with the U.S. (Hao & Tsung-Yen, 2013)(Chang, 2013, 58).

In January 2013 the Philippines officially lodged a legal claim to the UN to examine the matter with an arbitrary tribunal under UNCLOS (Thayer, 2013, 80). China dismissed the Philippine claim and started to diplomatically pressure other ASEAN members to lobby the Philippines to drop their claim.

ANALYSIS: I believe the reaction of the states in Southeast Asia to be explaining the situation quite well. As regarding the theories earlier, the smaller states are reacting exactly as the more realist versions said they would, by hedging and bandwagoning. The extreme rearmament in the region, the closer ties with the U.S. and some trying to better the relations with China show that at least the neighbours portray China as a hegemon or potential hegemon in the region.

### 3.8 Analysis

To summarize the shorter paragraphs of analysis above I believe that it is hard to conclude that the newfound assertiveness is based on a pursuit of regional hegemony, at least in classical terms. The dimension of soft versus hard power showed to be quite bland since both areas have undergone heavy development and investment. But, on the coercive consent dimension China show a particularly coercive posture toward the region. Sure, some signs of consensual behaviour are there but get overshadowed by the more aggressive coerciveness.

So, to further relate to the international theories used, where do we place China? And can we assume that China is pursuing hegemony whilst still arguing not to? My belief is simply no, not based on these theories. I believe the answer is to be found within the All-under-Heaven philosophy, and the historical practice. Looking at earlier Chinese All-under-Heaven I believe that we can see distinct similarities with Chinese behaviour and development. Develop the military to be able to coerce others to compliance through overwhelming power. Use soft power to coerce states to follow the system and comply with Chinese rules. Set the rules of the game, subjugate, but not conquer. Well is that not hegemony? Perhaps, but not according to the Chinese, since it challenges some essential assumptions of western conception of hegemony. First, it does not stem from a liberal democracy and has a different set of rules and values – making liberalist assumptions unimportant. Second, the difference in the entities of All-under-Heaven and western philosophy is essential. The nation-state is not the highest entity – the world is and the world is not a hegemon. And lastly, it does not fit realist assumptions since the system would be hierarchical and not anarchical.

## 4 Foreign Policy and Hegemony

As noted in the previous chapter, theories of international politics attempts to understand and explain state behaviour based on assumptions about the international system, whilst theories of foreign policy-making instead focuses on the actions of each individual unit in the same system (Gustavsson, 2006, 255-256). Since states seldom act as anticipated, as IR theories would understand them, we need to emphasise understanding of the unit level as well to understand why states would pursue hegemony (Ibid.). This inside-out perspective of the same phenomenon hopefully grants the possibility to study how foreign policy is conceived, actualized, changed, etcetera.

### 4.1.1 The Decision-Unit

When studying the production of foreign policy, states are still the central unit, since foreign policy constitutes the state's policies towards the international community (Gustavsson, 2006, 256). But instead of just accepting the state's actions as related to the system, the focus is on the choices made by individuals, groups or coalitions inside the units that affect the state's international behaviour (ibid.)(DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 3). While an analysis of the system may be productive, no big international event is understandable without an additional analysis of the decision-making of those in power (Renshon & Renshon, 2008, 511). Thereby trying to identify patterns or forces driving the decision-unit in a state towards a certain policy or decision (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 5, 18). Therefore it is an important step when analysing foreign policy to understand and identify who is in charge of the decisions in a state. The decision-unit can take different formations depending on factors within the state either being an individual, group or coalition (Ibid.).

The individual level regards the importance of the one actor in charge and how different actors or leaders differ the foreign policy (Gustavsson, 2006, 268). The individual as a decision-unit often stem from an individual with almost autocratic power in which institutional constrains and consensus is rather unimportant (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 19).

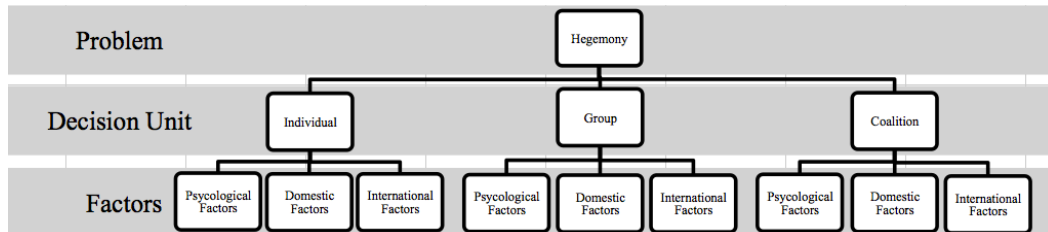
The small group as a decision-unit instead consists of a small amount of like-minded actors with allegiance to the group (Ibid.). The group takes the decisions regarding foreign policy and can consult actors outside the group.

Coalitions instead imply decision-making by a group of actors with allegiance to other outside the group (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 20-21). Decisions cannot be taken unilaterally but rather by reaching consensus or compromises between the coalition members.



Decisions made by the decision-unit might also be affected by external factors (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 25-30). These factors may lead the decision-maker to make a decision based on a more or less holistic or heuristic search, where a holistic search implies a full examination of alternatives and implications, and heuristic employs cognitive shortcuts (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 17). Some factors are often more related to a certain decision-unit, e.g. as when studying decisions made by a dominant individual psychological factors are often in focus (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 18-20).

Figure 2.



#### 4.1.2 Model II - Organizational Behaviour

The second model presented in Allison's *Essence of Decision* is called Organizational Behaviour. He begins by clarifying one of the key factors in this model, that a state does not consist only of one governing entity, but instead of amounts of organizations, governed by different rules, norms and standards, and responsible for different areas (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 143). States handle situations based on how national organizations work and depending on the capabilities they possess (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 6-7). As far as possible, organizations avoid acting on estimates of an uncertain future, and new solutions used are considered rare, as they rather adapt existing solutions to meet new emerging problems (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 152). Because of this, organizations are rationally limited when considering the solution with the highest utility declined due to limited capacity of the organization (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 156). In Model II, Allison emphasize that international relations are governed by the results of organizational processes at the national level, and national organizations' capacity (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 164).

Thus organizations can act both as actors and as formal or informal, collections of actors (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 145). Within organizations operators act to control the organization's objectives and constitute, together with material and technological conditions, its capacity (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 143-147). Prior to decision-making processes within the state, each organization act as an actor, in the great organization that is the state, and wants to pursue their goals and demonstrate its capacity towards a national decision that goes on par with the organization (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 149).

Hence an analysis of international relations, according to Allison, consists of questions such as: which organizations constitute the helm of state? What

capabilities and capacities do they possess? What limitations and opportunities exist for organizational performance (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 390)?

#### 4.1.3 Model III - Governmental Politics

Allison's third and final model takes a similar path as the model II, which critics of Allison also point out (Bendor & Hammond, 1992). The state is not a single actor but consist of groups or games, which in turn consist of many players (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 255-258). Each player is an actor whose actions in the national arena affect state behaviour on the international arena (Ibid.). Since players do not act according to a national target or a national strategy, or against the same international problems, decisions are made not pursuing a particular rational decision, but rather "by the pulling and hauling that is politics" (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 255).

The players try to influence decisions accordingly to what they consider to be the essentials of a certain situation - in which the nation's actions really matter - however players are considered responsible citizen that pursue what they believe to be the most favourable for the state (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 256). The state, or the state's actions, is not considered rationally stipulated, despite the fact that an individual can be rational, the bureaucracy and politics of a group or coalition result in that no single player will be able to push through its favourable action altogether, but the end result will consist of a compromise of several players' opinions, which thereby will not be the most rational decision possible (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 271-273, 294-295). Therefore, the actions of states are not specifically selected to solve a specific problem, but rather a result of a political game between national players. The players' ability to influence the state's action consists of several different variables, such as the player's power and influence, the way the game is structured, what perceptions that drive each player. So, the core ingredient to Allison's third model for studying the actions of states, or why states have changed their behaviour in international relations, is to identify the game and the players in the national arena and highlight its capabilities and influence to manage their positions, compromise and bargaining (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 257).

#### 4.1.4 Model II & III and Hegemony

Gustafsson argue that the forces of foreign policy are easier identified if we first understand and identify the goal of certain behaviour (Gustavsson, 2006, 259). Assuming hegemony, in regards to the previous chapter, as a state with the ability to dominate others, disregarding sources of power and means of force, hegemonic pursuit is to be considered as a sequence of decisions based on normative foreign policy trying to become the dominant state. Decisions made in regard to foreign policy are to be understood as measures or means towards the goal of hegemony. Hence decisions are sought to deal with problems, in the sense that the problem is

the difference between the present and the goal (Herrman M., 2001, 51). In relation to organizational behaviour and governmental politics, the explanation is to be found amongst the top-level characters of the state (Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 143, 255, 296).

Organizational behaviour would explain the pursuit in the capacity and procedures of the organizations available to the decision-unit (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 170)(Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 6). Thus assuming that the state has the necessary organizations, with enough capacity to pursue that goal, or rather the decisions made towards that goal, thereby analysing the output from those organizations (Mintz & Redd, 2013, 21-22). Organizations will try to maximize their own importance and capacity in order to be a vital part in the decision-making whilst still maintaining its autonomy (Mintz & Redd, 2013, 23-24). The semi-rationality of the model falls under the fact that a most rational decision or behaviour of a state might be limited due to the capacity of the organizations (Mintz & Redd, 2013, 22)(Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 271).

The governmental politics model would instead show explanations of the pulling and pushing of politics (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 170)(Allison & Zelikow, 1999, 6-7). Assuming that decision-making is based on the bureaucratic negotiations of the players, a pursuit of hegemony would instead be found within the perceptions and argumentation of the players (Mintz & Redd, 2013, 22-23). Governmental politics model assume that bureaucracies are jealous in the sense that they want to protect their own area of expertise with the ambition to grow in importance (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 71-71). This might lead to rivalry between the different organizations or agencies since foreign policy often cross between different areas (Ibid.).

This model is not likely to play out well during crises with high time pressure, but rather efficient analysing long-term policies (Ibid.). The organizational behaviour model also fits a long-term policy field since decision or policy-making in situations without time-pressure gives way to a more extensive information search that makes it possible to chose or adapt the best standard operating procedure (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 73).

<b>Figure 3.</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Coalition</b>
<b>Organizational Behaviour</b>	Which organizations and capacities are available to the leader in a certain situation.	Group-members may stem from different organizations and are also subjected to the capacity of the organizations available.	Subjected to the capacities of organizations available. But perceptions of organizational capacity varies among the rival members of the coalition. Goals may differ leading to preference to different organizations.
<b>Governmental Politics</b>	Advisors and officials try to affect the leaders perception and information to influence the decision.	Games between the players within the small group. They share the allegiance but differ in how to achieve a certain goal.	Rivalry between actors in the coalition. Compromising and debate lead to the decision. Players don't share allegiance and will plead for different course of action that most gains the own organization.

#### 4.1.5 Factors Affecting Decisions

“The real world is complicated” and one of the essential assets of analysing foreign policy in comparison to international politics is the possibility to acknowledge and adapt factors outside the assumed rational mind of the decision-maker(-s) that might affect the decision taken (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 97). E.g.

psychological factors that might affect a leader to strive for hegemony even though it would not be a rational decision, or to use means or measures that is not the naturally best decision. National actors are not necessarily irrational, but these factors might lessen the ability for the actor to be perfectly rational in its decisions (Ibid.). Decision-units most often consist of small groups or strong individuals as psychological factors might have great affect on both the explicit decision, and the Standard Operating Procedures and the bureaucratic games (Ibid.). These factors make an especially interesting case when trying to understand state behaviour in a given set (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 104). If decisions vary but the most common points of analysis – resources, alliances and regime type – do not, psychological factors, may have explanatory power to that certain behaviour.

Emotions affect the decision-unit through the acts of others in the sense that it differs from mood or feelings (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 99-100). Other states' actions against the nation may affect and emotionalize the populous that in turn spread to the leader making his decision based on those emotions.

A leader's beliefs of itself and others also affect the decisions made in foreign policy (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 101-103). It may change how the decision-unit processes the information at hand, but also the view of the outcomes of certain behaviour. A leader's or group's personality and leadership style also affect the decision-making (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 114-119). Difference in leadership personality may lead to a different set of priori and ideas, which may help us understand why leaders in similar situation make different decisions. E.g. nationalism, distrust, problem solving, power seeking, and etcetera may be traits of leaders personalities affecting how they act in foreign policy. Leadership style helps us understand why a certain course of action is chosen looking to what might drive the leader (Ibid.)(Renshon & Renshon, 2008, 511-512). Their reactions to political constrains and new information and how they are pursuing their version of the world (Herrman M., 2001, 66).

Except from psychological factors affecting the process of foreign policy-making there are of course other factors outside the mind of the decision-unit that affect the decision in a certain situation (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 121). Several different factors, both domestic and international, affect a state's foreign policy behaviour (Herrman & Herrman, 1989, 362). As DeRouen & Mintz state "Foreign policy decisions are typically made in a strategic setting" (2010, 121). This strategic setting is disturbed by other states actions and behaviour at which the decisions must be directed. Factors such as an arms race, deterrence, adversary regime type, alliances, and surprises change the strategic setting and extendedly the decision-making (Ibid.). These external or international factors lead to an action-reaction sequence of foreign policy as one state act in relation to the current setting or other states behaviour leading to a reaction from adversaries and so on (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 121-129).

Along with international factors that affect decision-unit behaviour are domestic factors (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 129). Economic conditions, public opinion and national politics all are important factors that may drive the decision-unit toward a certain decision or behaviour, as the decision-unit must take these

factors into consideration when making a certain decision in foreign policy (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 129-134).

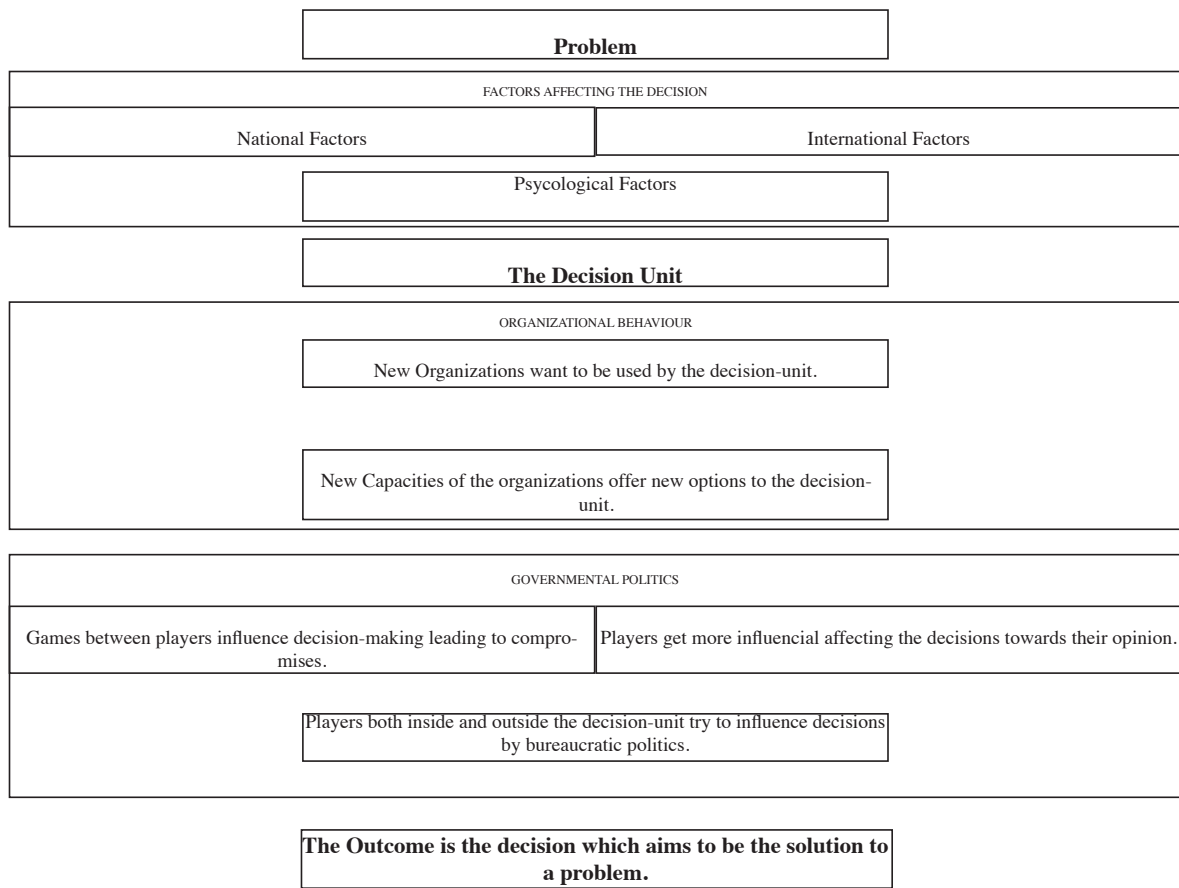
There are several tactics at hand for the decision-unit to try to e.g. garner public support for a certain action or reaction on the international arena (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 149). By marketing a certain decision both at home and abroad the leader can minimize or perhaps eradicate an otherwise opposing or resisting factor to that decision (Ibid.). By framing a given behaviour in one way or another will affect how the public, adversaries, allies, etcetera, precepts that behaviour (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, 150-151). Economic, military and diplomatic means also belong in the set of tools for states to use internationally to achieve a certain goal directly affecting other states (Gustavsson, 2006, 261).

#### 4.1.6 Change

A fundamental quality and need for foreign policy is the ability to change in times of need (Herrman C., 1990, 3-5). Changes in a country's foreign policies or strategies might lead to profound changes and have enormous effects on the international arena and are of big interest (Ibid.). As Charles Herrman state; redirections in a country's foreign policy can lead to that "Wars may begin or end. Economic well-being may significantly improve or decline. Alliances may be reconfigured. Sometimes the entire international system is affected, as when the Cold War began after 1945." (1990, 4). Major redirections in foreign policy might come out of three different settings in a country; changes in the means, in the ends or in the overall orientation (Herrman C., 1990, 6). One way of understanding these changes are through the lenses of understanding the bureaucracy of politics and organizations (Herrman C., 1990, 8, 11). Since the organizations in general are, as Allison also point out, resisting change in favour of standard operating procedures new capacities of the organization or new perceptions of important players can lead to big changes in foreign policy (Ibid.).

## 4.2 Summary Foreign Policy and Model II & III

To summarize the sections above a foreign policy decision is taken either by an individual, a small like-minded group or a coalition. Many different factors affect how that decision is conceived and made. Hence to continue this study we need to initially examine who is in charge in Chinese foreign policy-making. These results will effectively reduce the number of potential factors effecting foreign policy. Step two is to try to highlight these factors and their effects, looking at different organizations capacity and political games that affect.



### 4.3 Chinese Foreign Policy

Today the Deng-ists are losing ground in Chinese politics as the CCP has bigger struggle to manage the complexity of the Chinese society (Green & Kliman, 2011, 36). One reason for Beijing stepping away from Deng's strategies, according to Breslin, was that Chinese thinkers based on realist assumptions motivated engagement as the best solution to counter and reduce U.S. regional influence, thereby an engaging policy being the best strategy for Chinese security and national economic interests (Breslin, 2009, 7). The CCP is painfully aware of the rising social and political challenge with the growing inequality and social protests in China (Lagerkvist, 2014). Alongside the rapid modernization and globalization, digital communication is now more available to the Chinese population. The ability to monitor and follow the CCP and their decisions have made the CCP more vulnerable (Ibid.) Their awareness of this fact lead to a response of a tighter grip on digital communication, banning several international websites and TV-shows and higher level of censorship, alongside a stronger ductility toward popular opinion and flows in society (Green & Kliman, 2011, 40). The more operational independence of the PLA is also more and more

established as it approaches domains of space, cyberspace and further evolves into the maritime sphere (Green & Kliman, 2011, 36).

Others rejecting the new international assertiveness systemic assumptions motivate the policy change in national factors affecting the decision-unit and their struggle to keep the power nationally (Breslin, 2009, 7). Paranoia and insecurity stemming from historical cases of other communist parties in the western liberal capitalist world lead to a policy to minimize problems and obstacles internationally to be able to focus on stability at home and the survival of the party (Breslin, 2009, 8). Chinas neo-authoritarian rule defines by economic reforms and adapting to international economic market and institutions, whilst still holding a strong grip around politics and the population (Lagerkvist, 2014).

#### 4.3.1 The Politburo & the Fifth Generation

Several Chinese thinkers are stating that China is almost totally revived to its historic grand statute, and that the new leadership must continue and adept the progress started by Mao (Yu, 2013, 76). Mao who, by military force and struggle, brought China out of humiliating feudalism and imperial oppression, followed by the development policies for economic prosperity and market economic reforms by Deng and Jiang, further developed under Hu, the rise of China will possibly reach the grandeur status of history under the rule of Xi (Ibid.). Deng's reforms of opening up China to the world ended the self imposed Maoist isolation of China (Godwin, 2004, 81). Under Xi's term as president China will most likely surpass the U.S. as the largest economy in the world and reduce the gap to the U.S. military and actually become a potential challenge (Yu, 2013, 80).

The politburo has historically consisted of around 20-25 members and the smaller standing committee, which is the CCP's decision-making organ in major policies, consist of 5-9 members (Miller A., 2011, 2-5).

In recent years a notion of inner-party democracy has been established to eradicate the earlier zero-sum game where the winner takes it all of Chinese politics (Cheng, 2008, 77). Due to this decentralization of the foreign decision-making process the central committee has started to consult different ministries and organizations before making the process, more influenced by other actors (Jianwei & Xiaojie, 2014, 222). The members of the 18<sup>th</sup> politburo stem from two different coalitions within the party, called the elitists and the populists, or princelings - as offspring of earlier CCP leaders versus up-comers from the CCYL (Cheng, 2008, 77-78)(Chen & Zheng, 2009, 25). The president of China and first ranked member of the politburo Xi is affiliated with the factional group of the elitists, while the premier of China Li Keqiang, second ranked in the politburo, and Li Yuanchao vice president – protégés of earlier president Hu – are considered members of the populist faction. The two top characters, Xi and Li are considered to be very different in their political views, as the former is considered quite liberal in regards to economic globalization whilst conservative regarding political democracy (Cheng, 2008, 89-90). Li on the other hand is just the opposite. "China's decision-makers are by no means a monolithic group of elites

who share the same views, values, and visions; nor are they always engaged in a ferocious zero-sum struggle for power in which the winner takes all.” (Cheng, 2008, 54).

Within the Confucian family the father controls and has authority over all family members (Lu et al., 2012, 234). A form of paternalistic leadership is frequent within Chinese organizations in which the leader is to take the approach of the father as a severe and teaching authoritarian whilst still promoting harmony and helping the organization (Ibid.). Successful collectivism within an organization is that subordinates understand the hierarchy of the organization and accepts the legitimacy of the leader to make the group more effective than any individual.

All former Chinese top leaders have understood and acknowledge the importance of unity on the top level of the communist party (Cheng, 2008, 55). Though scholars predict that the “fifth generation” of Chinese decision-makers will have a troublesome time to establish unity within the politburo based on three assumptions; that China is moving away from the unitary form of autocratic leadership towards a more collective process of decision-making within the top level of the Chinese communist party; the diverse backgrounds of the ruling elite of the fifth generation; and the new challenges of economic disparity, social unrest and pollution (Cheng, 2008, 55). Since Mao, who had an unlimited amount of autocratic power, each of his predecessors have had to accept less and less unilateral power, the former president Hu Jintao had to relate to collective decision-making rather than strong-man politics (Chen & Zheng, 2009, 8-9). As the Chinese decision-unit is moving away from the strongman toward more collective decision-making the Chinese top leader constrained by public opinion, norms, etcetera making them more forced to consult rather than decide (Lampton, 2014, 76).

President Xi was elected at the 18<sup>th</sup> party congress in November 2012 and many are wondering however he will change China’s foreign policy orientation or whether he will continue a the assertive policy started by his predecessor Hu in 2009 (Feng & He, 2013, 209-210). Xi will claim power in China for the next ten years.

An interesting phenomenon in the Chinese power politics is how decision-makers really do not need to take actual popular responsible for their decisions (Chen & Zheng, 2009, 2-4). New leaders are selected within the CPC in a non-institutionalized nor transparent manner and thus new candidates rather have to work for support within the party and its faction than towards the people. But the bigger influence of popular opinion and media is challenging this by gaining more and more ground in China and becoming more important to politics.

*ANALYSIS: The earlier times of strongman leadership is more or less gone and I believe that the decision-unit is a small group decision-unit. Looking at the more collective decision-making within the PSC and the two rivalry groups within the fifth generation would point toward a coalition as the decision-unit. But the notion and importance of unity within the PSC, and the Confucian paternalistic view on leadership and on collective decision-making would instead point toward*



*the small group decision-unit. So, emphasizing collective decision-making by Chinese terms is still more centred within the unit and with loyalty to the hierarchy within the unit.*

### 4.3.2 Confucianism

A central question today is the relationship between Confucianism and democracy in modern China. Many different views lead to those who charge Confucianism for making a non-democratic form of governance just, and those who argue that Confucianism can justify a new form of Confucian democracy (Elstein, 2010, 427). Both Chinese and western scholars discuss the compatibility of Confucianism and liberal values of e.g. democracy and human rights. Depending on versions and definitions of the two concepts some scholars argue them to be more or less working together whilst other deem them each other's opposites. Sometimes argumentation about the incompatibility of democracy and Confucianism rather seem to aim to legitimize bad behaviour of Asian authoritarian governments (Stalnaker, 2013, 441). The rapid process of industrialization in China led to the rethinking of political tradition of academics and politicians again upholding Confucian heritage as a major value-bearer in the Chinese society influencing science, policy and behaviour (Lin, 2011, 38).

Samuel P. Huntington proclaimed that the central values of Confucianism are incompatible to democratic values whilst Fukuyama offered a much more optimistic view in arguing that many central concepts within Confucianism are not only compatible, but actually promoting democracy (Baogang, 2010, 18). Though commonly within Chinese scholarly is to emphasize that Confucianism is multidimensional, just as democracy, and not conceptual monoliths, but rather differs in regard to versions, traditions and forms, making the two more, or less, compatible dependent on how you puzzle them together (Baogang, 2010).

Confucianism is likely to have an impact on Chinese foreign policy and behaviour internationally, just as Protestant ethic had on the capitalist rise in Europe, according to Max Weber (See Zeng, 2011, 759). Modern neo-Confucianism is traditional Confucianism developed to fit in a modern context, adapting notions of western learning such as democracy and individuality and rationality, though still keeping the essential base from traditional Confucianism (Chai, 2006, 379).

Confucianism emphasizes a number of natural virtues that differentiate humans from animals (Chai, 2006, 367-368). The primal natural virtue is benevolence, which was an ethical core in historic China (Chai, 2006, 368-370). All other natural virtues, such as wisdom, justice and courage, are all connected and understood by understanding benevolence. Based on the notion of benevolence Confucianism diversifies between gentlemen and base-persons, and in extension in leadership (Chai, 2006, 372-373). The gentleman comprises the virtuous individual, being just, merciful, wise etcetera, and also officials in society, whilst the base person lacks the virtues of a gentleman being one of the common populace. The gentleman that is both an official and a benevolent person

is the highest form of leadership, with good intentions, learns from its mistakes, acting selflessly (Ibid.). “It advocates that one’s daily behaviour ought to be guided by the rules of rites or propriety, not merely for restricting individuals, but more for the cultivation of the sense of holiness, not primarily for conquering, but more for co-operating with others to contribute to the harmony of the universe.” (Lin, 2011, 39).

*ANALYSIS: Confucianism may be an affective factor towards keeping the Chinese policies assertive but non-confrontational. As the notion of rule without ownership making China more assertive without necessarily ambitions to conquer militarily, since an annexation of military campaign necessarily would not gain.*

*Confucianism also affects the leader to be a benevolent gentleman and not a brute; acting sophisticated but still maintains and protects Chinese values and interests. The disputed compatibility between Confucian and democratic values show a possible scenario of behaviour and decisions not related to the norm. Since norms and institutions stem from liberal democracies a Confucian toolbox would make other options available to the decision-maker.*

### 4.3.3 New Capacity

According to Bitzinger the reason for the assertive and aggressive China is due to its enhanced military capacity and mainly the willingness to use the PLA in relation to their national interest (Bitzinger, 2011, 7). As seen in section 3.6.1 about the PLA, the Chinese military has undergone a rapid transformation enhancing its capacity. Also civilian law-enforcement organizations in the maritime area have largely new capacities as well, as stipulated in earlier sections.

*ANALYSIS: The development of increasing the capacity of the PLA and naval law-enforcement agencies have given the PSC a whole set of new options to chose from when making decisions regarding their interests in the SCS, making it more assertive. Explaining the newfound assertiveness from the Organizational Behaviour perspective would point toward these organizations and their availability to the decision-unit as the explanatory factor for China’s new assertiveness.*

### 4.3.4 Influencing Decisions

“Domestically, the PLA has long sustained the Chinese Communist Party in power and enforced internal security. In internal policy debates, the PLA is the hypernationalistic guardian of claimed Chinese territorial sovereignty and is the institution charged with enforcing these claims.” (Shambaugh, 1999, 52).

The PLA has taken a stronger approach toward Chinese leadership politics influencing decisions also wanting a chair in the standing committee (Miller A., 2011, 8). And both current president Xi and former presidents Hu, Deng and Jiang

have had key appointments in the CMC. The PLA's interest are supposed to be catered by the PSC and have had limited presence in the politburo historically (Miller A., 2011, 6-8). Though PLA is still a strong force in Chinese politics and the president must gather military support to be elected (Miller A., 2014, 9). Thus, Xi frequently has visited military bases and PLA brass during his political career to, presumably, gather support and respect of the top PLA officials (Miller A., 2014, 9-10).

Today there is a comprehensive debate between military and academics about the function and aims of PLAN, if it should prioritize "local informatized wars" or global power projection to protect wider Chinese interests (Till, 2012, 223). Military circles in China strongly advocate a hedging strategy towards the other main players internationally to resist the, in Chinese eyes, containment of China by the U.S. and its allies in the region (Till, 2012, 21). The fifth generation Chinese leaders stem from different backgrounds than their predecessors in coming from the academic world (Chen & Zheng, 2009, 24-25). Both Li and Xi have an academic degree in respectively economics and social sciences, which make the more connected to scholars and academia making it a stronger influence on Chinese foreign policy.

Also, national Chinese energy companies, especially in the oil industry, as CNOOC and CNPC are influencing the central committee for a more assertive behaviour in the South China Sea to acquire the hydrocarbon deposits (Lampton, 2014, 80).

*ANALYSIS: Looking at the newfound assertiveness from the Governmental Politics perspective it would describe that new players have gained more power to affect the bureaucratic games. President Xi is deeply connected to the military, and with the rearmament, the PLA and its sub-divisions have grown in influence. The fifth generation also come from the academic world giving scholars and theories a greater impact on Chinese decision-making. The result of the games is the non-confrontational assertiveness assumed to be a compromise between players. Looking at the grander influence of the PLA would explain the assertiveness and whilst the non-confrontational part can be assumed to stem from academia and those who still emphasize Deng-ist strategies, with the activity of the maritime law-enforcement agencies being the compromise.*

#### 4.3.5 Nationalism, Media & Popular Opinion

Since the financial crisis in 2008 nationalist voices in China has risen both with the people and in media, which often exaggerates the Chinese status internationally (Christensen, 2011, 3-4). Even though Chinese power holders have a more sober view of China's international status, the national uncertainty of CCP drives the standing committee toward more popular options (Ibid.). Nationalist pressure, and growing national instability related the national uncertainty of the CCP, forces the PSC to act in accordance toward "completing" China to its former grand (Fravel, 2010, 519).

Because the changing balance of power in Chinese favour the central committee more often find themselves in agreeing with popular notions of nationalism and thereby have become more actively complying with calls of popular nationalism (Jianwei & Xiaojie, 2014, 225). Nationalist appeals by the CPC have become an important strategy for the party's survival, making military nationalism an increasingly important part in establishing domestic pride for the party (Till, 2012, 225). As Hu argued in a speech 2012, of international attempts to divide and westernize China he urge his fellow countrymen to "uphold China's culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Yahuda, 2013, 455).

Nationalism is rising and spreading in China, and especially among the members of the fifth generation now holding office in the politburo (Cheng, 2008, 88). A form of popular ultra-nationalism is also rising in the nation both affecting and affected by the people's opinions (Cheng, 2008, 93). Chinese children are integrated into this nationalism in early ages as themes of national unification and rightful claims are recurrent in schoolbooks alongside narratives of Mao's struggles and warfare, and contemporary urbanized warfare (Yahuda, 2013, 454).

"Nowadays the Chinese media can exercise greater influence on Chinese foreign policy making and implementation via information dissemination, interest and opinion articulation, and policy recommendations albeit that its effect is limited, given the primitive stage of the bi-directional relationship." (Jianwei & Xiaojie, 2014, 234) Chinese leaders have become more influence by popular opinion on the web (Jianwei & Xiaojie, 2014, 223).

Popular access to the process of Chinese politics has grown in relation to earlier (Cheng, 2008, 87). In earlier times the people came to know about conflicts within the party as the victor proclaimed the defeat of his adversaries. But today the party has a higher level of transparency and make themselves available to TV, radio and newspapers, making it possible for political individuals to demonstrate their position and opinion in different questions (Ibid.). This in turn is slowly opening up the Chinese power elite to popular consent in making decisions and more influenced by popular opinion.

*ANALYSIS: The popular opinion emphasising national pride and nationalism is, most probably, a big factor of the new assertiveness pursuing Chinese rise toward earlier grandness. Since these notions flow within the more influential popular opinion and the greater media coverage forces the PSC toward a strategy to satisfy the people whilst still not risking full-scale war.*

#### 4.3.6 International Factors

Internationally China has a bad external image, which affects its credibility and security (Cheng, 2008, 92). In China the financial crisis in 2008-2009 is regarded as the marking of decline of the U.S. and other western powers (Mingjiang, 2011, 333). The start of the newfound assertiveness can be traced to Obama's visit in China in 2009 where the U.S. and China signed agreements not to interfere and respect each other's core interests (Feng & He, 2013, 229-230). Later the same

year the Obama administration received Dalai Lama in the White House and sanctioned arms deals with Taiwan, which made Chinese leaders furious charging the White House for failing in its commitments and threatening American companies operating in and with China (Ibid.).

Also, during Obama's visit to China in 2009 he called China to assist in global struggles (Yahuda, 2013, 447). This was regarded as a sign of weakness to the U.S. unipolarity, and the U.S. decline, and in relation to Chinese assumptions of U.S. containment of China, this was the start of the newfound assertiveness leaving Deng's low-profile strategy toward a more assertive "get something accomplished"-notion, according to Michael Yahuda among many (2013, 447-448). The U.S. and China are extremely dependent of each other in terms of trade and finance and probably have the most important bilateral relationship today (Shor, 2012, 158). China is the largest holder of US foreign reserves and the U.S. is the biggest receiver of Chinese exports, making the Chinese stakes in U.S. economy an important factor (Ibid.).

Because of the U.S. dominance on the oil market, China has turned its business and attention towards oil-producing states currently hostile to the U.S., e.g. Sudan and Iran, since if China and the U.S. would end up in a state of conflict, suppliers are less likely to support the U.S. whereas China has secured its import quota (Chanis, 2011, 289). The U.S. has also declared the South China Sea as national interest and especially to keep the freedom of navigation in the area (Storey, 2011, 14).

*ANALYSIS: Chinese officials are aware of their new importance internationally. They have seen the start of the U.S. decline. This gives more room to pursue national interests and challenge U.S. dominance for the first time since the War of Liberation, which may be a factor for the newfound assertiveness. Though, their bad image makes it harder to pursue these national interests and interests in the U.S. limits their room for manoeuvre.*

## 4.4 Analysis

Analysing China's new assertiveness on the foreign policy level, letting the Organizational Behaviour and Governmental Politics models complement each other and introducing other factors that may influence the decision-making process gives valuable insights to add to those from the international relations level. Examining the new assertiveness on this level makes most point to the stronger militarism within China. The nationalist growth, PLA's new capacity and influence strife for a more aggressive posture, while Deng-ist's and academia urge for carefulness lead to a compromise of non-aggressive assertiveness. To make it as simple, but thorough, as possible see figure:

**Chinese Core National Interests**

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION

Nationalism is growing and popular opinion has a bigger influence on policy-makers.

Media can monitor the PSC and the CPC to a higher extent than before making it more accessible to the population.

**The Politburo Standing Committee - a small group decision unit**

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

The U.S. is declining giving more room for Chinese action to pursue national interests and to act nationalistic.

PLA development is giving new options for the PSC for acting differently and adapting new Standard Operating Procedures.

GOVERNMENTAL POLITICS

A stronger PLA gets more influence arguing using them as the standard operating procedure in different situations offering to “get something accomplished”.

Deng-ist’s, and academia argue for a less assertive and aggressive approach to the PLA’s.

Confucianism urges benevolence but still make actions outside liberal norms and institutions available and legit.

**Non-aggressive assertiveness with paramilitary forces is the outcome.**

The outcomes of the decision making progress regarding foreign policies in the region is the non-confrontational assertiveness, which seem to be a compromise both in capacity and after bureaucratic games showing us a new method for China to reach a potential goal. In the next chapter these results will be combined and complemented with the results from the international systemic level of analysis.

## 5 Dual Level Analysis and Results

My first question of this study – *how does a regional hegemonic rise occur and affect the regional arena?* – I tried to answer by portraying contemporary theories of hegemony related to RAM. It gave me the two dimensions of hard versus soft power and consent versus coercive, which would portray different versions or theories of hegemony. The first dimension about power seemed to be quite inadequate to understand China, based on China's investment in both. While adapting China to the second dimension, China showed a more coercive posture but with a touch of consent related to the region. But to answer the question above a hegemonic rise would occur in either a grand development of hard or soft power and the will and capacity to dominate the regional arena, as shown in section 3.4.

*Which national factors of decision-making drive the state to pursue regional hegemonic status?* This question is answered by relating to the goal of the state and the prevailing conditions for the decision-unit. Is the goal hegemony? In this case I believe it not. But rather the All-under-Heaven system that would take China back to earlier greatness. The changing conditions within the state can stimulate the pursuit since it gives decision-unit the equivalent tools and capacity to pursue this potential goal and new actors emphasising this new posture get more power to influence this pursuit.

Understanding the All-under-Heaven system as the potential goal for the Chinese decision makers, combine with neo-mercantilist assumptions also vividly facilitates better understanding regarding Chinese decision-making and process of foreign policy. As model II and III showed that the PLA has grown both in influence and in capacity making the best explanation for the new Chinese assertive policies regionally. As the PSC is losing ground to public opinion and media becomes a stronger force in society, the PLA thrive alongside nationalistic notions, making it stronger both quantitatively and qualitatively. Deng's strategies have not been completely diminished and its advocates may still stipulate an internationally careful posture to challenge PLA influence. The All-under-Heaven system as a goal for the Chinese decision-makers would explain the new non-confrontational assertiveness, the PLA's new influence and activity related to model I, II and III.

Combining the results from the two different levels on analysis portrays China quite interestingly. As western theories of hegemony stemming from the RAM is rather weak in explaining Chinese behaviour on the systemic level since empirics related to the theories is full of discrepancies and anomalies. Introducing a Chinese version of the international system, not accepting the notion of hegemony, the All-under-Heaven, is more connected to the Chinese behaviour and gives a better understanding of the coercive posture of China and the development of both soft and hard power combined. As the rise of China, and the

development behind it, make China more dependent of natural resources the core interests in the SCS become even more important for the PSC and PLA than just national pride. National pride is an extremely important factor as nationalism is growing in China affecting the policy-makers towards a more aggressive behaviour and a pursuit of earlier grandness.

*What signs are there to conclude that the assertiveness is related to a pursuit of hegemony? **AND** How can we understand and explain national decision-making versus international behaviour behind China's new assertiveness related to its supposed pursuit of hegemony and/or peaceful rise? **AND** Why has China changed its behaviour towards a new non-confrontational assertiveness?*

Looking at the theoretical assumptions about hegemony there are several signs and factors that point towards a Chinese pursuit of regional hegemony, of course. Rearmament, aid-projects, coerciveness towards the region, the national public will towards former greatness, the challenging of liberal institutions, the challenging of the U.S., etcetera, all fit in the explanation of a Chinese hegemonic pursuit.

But the constant rejection of a hegemonic China, by Chinese scholars and decision-makers, their non-interference policy and Confucian philosophy would still make me, as discussed earlier, reject the notion that the new assertiveness is connected to a hegemonic pursuit. In my view the All-under-Heaven system has stronger explanatory power than any theory of hegemony, based on my results on both the systemic and the foreign policy level. The All-under-Heaven system does not include a hegemon according to the Chinese. It would be easy to argue the similarities with hegemony but, as mentioned earlier, there are several essential differences. Especially the differences in entities between western and Chinese philosophy is essential for the Chinese to reject hegemony, since it does not fit in the All-under-Heaven system. By establishing an All-under-Heaven system in Southeast Asia, China would still be able to dominate the region as the Son-of-Heaven but not necessarily as a hegemon but as the "world" instead of the contemporary "non-world". It would theoretically be able to challenge western liberal institutions in favour of institutions stemming from the Son-of-Heaven, including neighbouring states into Chinese culture and development whilst still keeping their sovereignty, with the ability to change the international system.

### 5.1.1 Final Discussion

As mentioned earlier in this study, the Chinese rise is an extremely interesting occurrence and I believe it to be of, and to have, extreme importance internationally. In my view the most interesting thing is the potential effect on the international system. As mentioned several times during this paper, since, a dominant state, disregarding if it is a Son-of-Heaven or hegemony, can establish and create institutions, norms and thereby affect the international community gravely in its existence. Institutions or regimes today stem from liberal democracies, i.e. the U.S. and Britain, and China is not a liberal democracy. And by becoming the strongest and biggest economy in the world China have the



possibility to challenge the pax Americana liberal capitalist world order with their All-under-Heaven philosophy. Another factor is that China is showing other developing countries that development and democracy necessary do not go hand in hand and attract smaller developing countries to follow the Chinese neo-authoritarian model. A pack of countries imitating the Chinese model would not be a positive turn from Washington's perspective.

Though it is important to note that China is still developing, and not able to dominate the region, with the U.S. presence, yet. China has caught up economically but still has a long way to go both e.g. militarily and socially. To further understand the phenomenon of rising China there are several fields within this paper that could be additionally examined and understood, that may have suffered from the aim of comprehensiveness of this study. The more China grows the more interesting phenomena will occur, be examined and understood. I regard the All-under-Heaven system as a very interesting subject for future research and especially related to western theories and philosophy and will probably be found in many hand- and schoolbooks of political science ahead. A deeper study into the development of the PLA and its increased capacity and influence would also make an interesting paper in itself.

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