Understanding China’s Attitude toward International Order:
from General Delegitimization to Selective Embeddedness

by

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Abstract

China is rising and playing an increasing important role in both regional and international affairs. As for China’s attitude toward international order, this thesis argues that since 1992 China has been gradually shifting its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness by using political discourse analysis and fuzzy-set analysis methods. Why has China become less critical of the international order in the past few years but in 1990s China severely criticized it? In terms of the relationship between China and the West, why does China cooperate with the West in some areas while fighting with it in others? This paper proposes an identity-attitude model to explain these puzzles. It argues that China’s attitudinal change is caused by the change of China’s identity. China cooperates with the West only when China perceives itself as the beneficiary of the international order.
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This thesis is not just about literature, methodology, argument, model and conclusion. More importantly, it is about love, friendship, light as well as hardship.

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1 Introduction

What is China’s attitude toward the international order since the end of the Cold War? Why has China become less critical of the international order in the past few years but in 1990s China severely criticized it despite the fact that the West has dominated the international order has since 1992? In terms of the relationship between China and other powers, why does China cooperate with the West in some areas while fighting with it in others?

These questions are very important because China is not a weak and negligible country. As Barry Buzan and many others have observed, China’s comprehensive power- especially in the economic sphere- has grown at an astonishing rate in the 30 years since the Chinese government brought into effect the policy of reform and opening, drawing the attention of the international community to what has been dubbed ‘China’s rise’.  

The rise of China is catching the global attention. As we entered the 21st century, China’s economic power became more obvious. Now China is the second largest economy in the world following the US. More and more scholars are contributing to the literature on the rise of China. Accession to the WTO further fuels China’s economic power.

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According to Bloomberg, China eclipses U.S. as the world's biggest trading nation last year as measured by the sum of exports and imports of goods.

China is now the second largest economy, but many people in the US already believe that China is the top economic power. According to a recent Gallup survey, 53% of Americans, regard China as the leading economic power in the world today.

Figure 1: The Survey of Economic Power of China, Japan and US

Source: Gallup (data for EU, India and Russia not shown)

References:

With China growing stronger and more powerful its influence is becoming more global. As a result, international society is concerned about the impact a global China has in three areas: first, China’s relationship with Asia; second, its relationship with the US; and third, China’s attitude toward international order. This paper focuses on the last question, i.e., what is China’s attitude toward international order. Has China’s attitude changed in the past two decades? If it has changed, how can we explain such transformation?

This thesis argues that since 1992 China has gradually shifted its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness. By delegitimization I mean China intentionally isolates itself from the international order by severely criticizing it. Embeddedness means that China makes efforts to be located or secured within the international order by actively justifying it. I study the change of China’s attitude toward international order from the elite perspective. This is because countries are mostly governed by elites, and the same reigns true for China. In addition, compared to people from countries like the US or those in Europe, Chinese people are more interested in domestic affairs. So the best strategy to study China’s attitude toward international order is to examine the elites’ attitude toward it in China. That being said, I would offer a caveat for my argument. I am not arguing that public opinion does not matter in China. On the contrary, it can, to a certain degree, influence the country’s attitude toward international order. But an elite perspective is better for conducting my research because we cannot find a scientific way to reflect public opinion in China and its attitude toward international order. An elite perspective can overcome this problem. China is ruled exclusively by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which is ruled by many prominent Chinese elite. Thus in this sense “elites” mean the CCP elites. How
can we study CCP elites’ attitude toward international order? This thesis argues that the best way to answer this question is to examine the CCP party congress reports since they are the most authoritative, thorough and explicit political documents available. My argument, based on the political discourse analysis and fuzzy-set analysis of the party congress reports from 1992 to 2012, is that China has been gradually shifting its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness.

In addition, this thesis seeks to answer why China has changed its attitude toward international order. I build an identity-attitude model to explain the causal mechanism. My argument is that the change of China’s attitude is caused by the change of China’s identity. China’s identity is mainly shaped by CCP elites because these elites possess more information about the relationship between the country and the world than the public. In 1992, China’s attitude toward international order was delegitimization since China viewed itself as a backward developing country that was the victim of the international order. China is changing its attitude from delegitimization to selective embeddedness because China now views itself as a rising power that is the beneficiary of the current international order despite the fact that it is still a developing country. The reason why China’s embeddedness is selective instead of being complete is that selective embeddedness is more in China’s interests because the country still has many contradictions with the Western-dominated international order.

The rest of the thesis organized as follows. In section 2, this paper reviews the existing literature and discusses the realist, institutional, constructivist and cultural approaches. Section 3 presents this thesis’s methodology, which combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to
analyze the issue under analysis. Political discourse analysis and fuzzy-set analysis methods are combined to study China’s attitude toward international order. Section 4, the core of the paper, explores the evolution of China’s attitude toward international order while the subsequent section (section 5) attempts to explain the change of China’s attitude toward international order. This section develops an identity-attitude model to explain why China is becoming less critical of the international order. The sixth and final section presents the conclusions.
2 Literature Review

The rise of China and its impact on the international order have attracted great academic attention. There are four approaches to study and understand the research questions in the existing literature. They are realist approach, (liberal) institutional approach, constructivist approach and cultural approach.

2.1 Realist Approach

The realist approach to the research questions of this thesis is based on realist international relations theory. Basically, realist approach to the study of China’s attitude toward the international order can be represented by power transition theory and tragedy of power politics theory (Mearsheimer 2001; Lemke and Tammen 2003; Levy 2008; Chan 2008). Realist approach is quite pessimistic about the consequence of China’s rising. For example, Mearsheimer has expressed his concerns publically many times. He once wrote “the picture I have painted of what is likely to happen if China continues its impressive economic growth is not a pretty one. Indeed, it is downright depressing. I wish that I could tell a more optimistic story about the prospects for peace in the Asia-Pacific region. But the fact is that international politics is a nasty and dangerous business and no amount of good will can ameliorate the intense security competition that sets in when an aspiring hegemon appears in Eurasia.”

But realist approach has two main weaknesses. First, it highlights the potential for a rising power to challenge the existing international order and to attack other countries, but the existing

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literature fails to provide a convincing argument to explain why a rising power will challenge the status quo given that its development is highly dependent on other powers in a positive-sum game context. The other weakness is that the realist approach fails to explain how we can evaluate whether a rising power is satisfied or dissatisfied with the current international order.

2.2 Institutional Approach

The institutional/liberal institutional approach emphasizes the aspect of China's increasing global activism by participating international institutions (Fullilove 2011; International Crisis Group 2009; Tong 2012), such as the WTO, APEC, G20, Climate Change Conference, IMF, World Bank, among others. China is interested and enthusiastic about international organizations. In particular, China has accelerated its speed to join international organizations and international mechanisms after the Cold War ended. According to Alastair Iain Johnston, by 1996, China was equal to seventy percent of the US's participation in international mechanisms, eighty percent of India's, and one hundred eighty percent of the world average. In terms of joining in international organizations, China was a member of thirty organizations out of thirty-seven while the US only participated in thirty-three. From a more quantitative standpoint, China's participation rate is almost ninety percent of America's participation.5 Thus, when we compare these numbers with the realist approach, the institutional approach is more optimistic about the relationship between China and the rest of the world since it emphasizes its participation in a diverse range of pertinent international affairs.

Institutionalists admit that the rise of China has raised many crucial questions. For example, will a strong China behave responsibly in world affairs by complying with the rules and principles of

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the international community where China will play like a responsible stakeholder? Or will it defy universal standards and fight for its self interests, thereby challenging the international order dominated by the West? In this sense, institutionalists share the same concerns with realists. However, by examining China’s participation in global affairs, they find that China is generally compliant in global affairs, embodied in the treaties that it has signed or ratified, especially in the areas of trade, arms control, environmental protection and human rights.\(^6\) That being said, students of international relations find that China may have different strategies to cope with international affairs despite its compliance with international rules.

2.3 Constructivist Approach

The constructivist approach (including English School) to this question is to study the relationship between China and international norms including human rights, responsibility to protect (R2P), humanitarian intervention and sovereignty, and the relationship between China and international society (Qin 2010; David 2011; Buzan 2010; Foot and Walter 2011). Constructivist international relations scholars have different opinions on China’s relationship with the international order. Barry Buzan, for instance, argues that China’s peaceful rise, if not impossible, will be extremely difficult.\(^7\) The reason is that to get accepted by international society, China must change its identity by accepting international society’s primary international institutions, most notably democracy, human rights and humanitarian intervention. However, China’s current identity, based on socialist ideology nearly precludes its acceptance of those aforementioned norms and institutions. Some scholars such

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as, Qin Yaqing disagree with Buzan by arguing that “International society is a process which interprets it as a network of dynamic and transformative relationships, constructing and reconstructing identities of actors within, and producing new syntheses through inter-subjective and inter-contextual practices. In such a process, not only the features of society are changing, but also are the identities of actors. The assumption that a static actor chases the changing institutions does not stand.”

Unlike realist scholars, constructivists are not certain about the direction of China’s rise. China may keep its identity fixed and resist international order. China may also change its identity and accept international order. But this kind of theoretical ambiguity, in fact, undercuts its explanatory power since constructivist approach, to a large extent, neglects the study of China’s self-identity. It emphasizes the interaction and socialization process in international politics, but without a concrete understanding of China’s own perception of its identity and international society, we are not able to understand how social interaction will work between China and other states. This is one main flaw of constructivist approach.

Another shortcoming is that some constructivist work is too narrow to present the whole picture. For example, one cannot simply illustrate China’s attitude towards international order by studying its changing foreign policy toward humanitarian intervention since it is only a small part of international order.

2.4 Cultural Approach

Realist approach, institutional approach and constructivist approach are Western

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8Ibid., p152
international relations approaches. They are all rooted in the common history and culture. However, in the past five years, a non-Western “cultural” approach to understanding the rise of China and its relationship with the world has emerged. The cultural approach is one in which Chinese scholars, along with a few Western ones draw from ancient Chinese history, philosophy, concepts and morality as intellectual and methodological resources to study contemporary international relations, especially China’s relationship with the world (Yan and Xu 2008; Yan 2011; Carlson 2011; Paltiel 2011; Paltiel 2010; Ren 2011; Callahan 2008). In China, Yan Xuetong, Dean of the Institute of Modern International Relations and Qin Yaqing are the leading proponents of the cultural approach. In Canada, Jeremy Paltiel, an international relations scholar from Carleton University, also supports this approach.

The cultural approach is distinct from the other three approaches due to its Chinese culture-oriented ontology, epistemology and methodology. Some scholars, especially the Tsinghua International Relations school led by Yan Xuetong are interested in applying ancient Chinese philosophical concepts (the concept of Tianxia in particular) to illustrate China’s attitude toward international order. As a concept, Tianxia (all-under-heaven), existed in ancient Chinese historical work. In 2005, Chinese scholar Zhao Tingyang published a book called *Tianxia Tixi: An Philosophical Introduction to World System* (Tianxia tixie: Shijie Zhidu Zhexue Daolun⁹). His book quickly caught the attention of Chinese international relations scholars. He uses the concept of Tianxia as both a tool to study China’s relationship with the world, and as a start to build the so-called Chinese international relations school. According to Qin Yaqing, “Tianxia and the affiliated practice of the ‘tributary system’

deserve consideration for inclusion in contemporary international relations due to its ‘holistic’ nature, in which there is space for the ‘far away’ but no ‘dichotomy of the self and other’. This holistic worldview is different from the Western dualistic view of the two opposites, where an inevitable conflict is implied. Alongside this, Tianxia has a second normative component that is global and hierarchical; such a view may then offer a positive alternative to the ‘inter-nationalness’ of the Western system. Third, within such a system, order derives from ‘unequal but benign’ relationships (as seen in the ‘perfect Tributary system’).”

Paltiel argues that Zhao Tingyang mounts a bold attack on the ontology and epistemology of Western thought. His philosophic approach is a response to Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*, and seeks to transduce Western social science and philosophic habit away from the methodological individualism inherent in Kant and much of Western thought. Rather than the state or the individual as the unit of analysis (and here you can see a direct challenge to Kenneth Waltz’s triad of Man, the State and War) Zhao takes Tianxia, the whole human world as his unit of analysis. He conceives of Tianxia as a null-inclusive institution in which there is no ‘outside’ and therefore no need for violent conquest. This institution is moreover both normative and hierarchical, in which order is both an ethical norm and a political goal. Allan Carlson is also supportive of this approach and the concept of Tianxia. He argues that a Tianxia order might pave the way for the novel solution of such controversies, and as such lead to greater stability within the region.

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While the cultural approach is indeed a very innovative way to study China’s attitude toward international order and, more broadly, China’s relationship with the world, this approach is still not appropriate. It is doubtful in terms of the extent to which ancient Chinese culture, especially the concept of Tianxia can influence China’s external perception and attitudes in the 21st century given the whole international context is distinctly different. Chinese intellectuals may use this approach to influence decision-making process in China. But so far we have not seen enough evidence to show that the Chinese authority is using this approach to guide its foreign policy. In this sense, the relevance of this approach to reality is also doubtful.

Indeed, as Carlson argues, it is imperative to emphasize that to date China has made no moves to create such a Tianxia order in Asia, nor is it likely to move in the direction of such an undertaking. The mainstream in the Chinese foreign policy establishment continues to exhibit a deep attachment to the existing international order within the prism of a passive acceptance of the normative status quo in the international system.\textsuperscript{13} It is for these reasons that this thesis argues that the existing approaches can only provide an implicit and partial understanding of China’s attitude toward international order. In the following section, I will introduce a new approach and the methodological innovation of this thesis.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p102}
3 Methodology

The methodological innovation of this thesis is to apply and combine the discourse analysis and fuzzy set analysis.

3.1 Discourse Analysis

What is discourse analysis? Zellic Harris argues that discourse analysis is a method for the analysis of connected speech or writing. Originally, discourse analysis is a linguistics method but later applied to other fields. At first, discourse analysis was about the study of occurrence of morphemes that potentially limited its usage. For example, Harris argues that the method is formal, depending only on the occurrence of morphemes as distinguishable elements; it does not depend upon the analyst’s knowledge of the particular meaning of each morpheme. By the same token, the method does not give us any new information about the individual morphemic meanings that are being communicated in the discourse under investigation. When discourse analysis was introduced to political science arena, it yielded many interesting work.

The introduction of discourse analysis to political studies is a recent trend, but this is not

\[15\] Ibid, p1
something new. Actually, the relationship between language and politics was already discussed by ancient scholars among whom Aristotle is the most notable one. The following is a well-known extract from his Politics.

But obviously man is a political animal in a sense in which a bee is not, or any other gregarious animal. Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose; and she has endowed man alone among the animals with the power of speech. Speech is something different from voice, which is possessed by other animals also and used by them to express pain or pleasure · · · · Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust. For the real difference between man and other animals is that humans alone have the perception of good and evil, just and unjust, etc. it is the sharing of a common view in these matters that makes a household and a state.

(1253a 1-18, Ackril 1987)

Aristotle’s discussion on language and politics is the foundation of political discourse analysis. Since different scholars have diverse interpretations of Aristotle’s work, there are several approaches to conduct political discourse analysis. Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough argue that there are currently two well-established and influential contributions to political discourse analysis: one is Chilton’s approach the other Wodak’s approach. Chilton begins with a discussion of Aristotle’s aforementioned discussion on the relationship between language and politics, which he views as “the main ingredients of a theory of politics and language that will serve as framework for practical analysis of political discourse”. Wodak’s approach is called discourse-historical approach (DHA).

Fairclough and Fairclough argue that in DHA, the field of politics is viewed as segmented into a

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number of ‘fields of action’: lawmaking procedures, opinion, and will; inter-party formation of attitudes, opinion, and will; organization of international/inter-state relations; political advertising; political executive and administration; political control’. Each field of action is associated with a distinct set of political sub-genres.\(^1\)

This thesis adopts Wodak’s approach because it fits the research purposes more suitably than Chilton’s method.

How exactly do we conduct political discourse analysis? Teun A. van Dijk wrote a thorough paper on political discourse analysis and the ways we can conduct political discourse analysis.\(^2\) Before we delve into the ways of conducting political discourse analysis, we must know what political discourse is. Dijk argues that the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as president and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels.\(^3\)

After clarifying the meaning of political discourse, we can now focus on the structures and strategies of political context and talk. Dijk argues that political discourse analysis should examine the various levels and dimensions of discourse structure: topics, superstructure or textual schemata, local semantics, lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, expression structures and speech acts and interaction. Section 4 uses Dijk’s framework to analyze the party congress reports of Chinese Communist Party from 1992 to 2012.

3.2 Fuzzy-set Analysis

The current literature on the rise of China is often centered on the analysis of whether China is a

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\(^3\)Ibid, p12
status quo power or a revisionist power (Kastner 2012; Feng 2009; Johnston 2003; Combes 2011).

This section argues that the dichotomy of status quo and revisionist is not an accurate portrayal of China’s relationship with international order. This is so since Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu argue that in multipolar and bipolar systems, balancing is the primary mechanism to preserve the status quo. Under unipolarity, in contrast, balancing becomes the very definition of revisionism. In this sense, given that the US is now the only superpower in the world and the current international order is dominated by it, China’s any balancing behavior, no matter whether it is good or bad, is “revisionist” regardless of its intention.

Another problem with this dichotomy is that in practice it is very difficult to label a country as a status quo power or a revisionist power. Let us assume that one country tries to challenge one aspect of the current international order but embrace another part of it, a practical question emerges: do we label this country as a revisionist power or not? It may make some sense if we label it as a revisionist state because it indeed challenges international order. But the opposite also makes sense because in most areas this country is compliant with the international order.

To overcome these problems, we need to use fuzzy-set analysis method.

Fuzzy logic allows one to express uncertainty within a rule- inexact reasoning system-such that a fuzzy logic conclusion is not stated as either true or false, but as being possibly true to a certain degree. The degree of certainty is called the "truth value." Fuzzy set theory uses only the numeric interval of 0 to 1:

FALSE: Truth Value - 0

TRUE: Truth Value = 1

UNCERTAIN: 0 < Truth Value < 1

Since fuzzy-set analysis can express uncertainly when it is applied to international relations, we can then analyze the degree to which China embraces the international order.

Fuzzy set analysis is a very sophisticated method developed by Charles Ragin to be used in political science and sociology. Ragin published a book entitled *Fuzzy-set Social Science* in 2000. Since then, more and more scholars are using fuzzy set analysis to conduct and test their political inquiry. In 2005, Gary Goertz and James Mahoney developed a new framework to conduct political research by combing two-level theories and fuzzy-set analysis. This thesis uses their framework to study China’s attitude toward international order.

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24. See more in his website [http://www.u.arizona.edu/~cragin/fsQCA/](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~cragin/fsQCA/)

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4 The Evolution of China’s Attitude toward International Order

This section conducts political a discourse analysis to examine the political reports of CCP congress from 1992 to 2012. Based on the analysis, I argue that China is gradually shifting its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness. This argument will further be tested and supported by the fuzzy set analysis.

4.1 The Political Discourse Analysis of the CCP Party Congress Reports

Dijk’s framework consists of eight levels of analysis. In this thesis, I focus on two levels: textual schemata analysis and lexicon analysis. First of all, I unpack the party congress reports. Each report is divided into four segments: international economic order, international political order, international cooperation and international system. The argument here is that these four segments, which authorities presented in each party congress reports are the main determinants of China’s attitude toward international order.

China’s attitude toward international economic order can reflect China’s perception, attitude and the degree of acceptance about the international economic rule, norm, principle and regime. It includes China’s attitude toward international trade, international finance, international investment, the economic gap between South and North, energy, economic globalization and non-traditional security (information security, shortage of resources, food security, technology security, illegal

27The party reports can be found here.
CCP’s 16thParty Congress Report.
http://www.ce.cn/ztjd/2003/sj/sjzqfbj/t20031009_1763196.shtml
immigration and money laundering), among others.

China’s attitude toward international political order can reflect China’s perception, attitude and the degree of acceptance about the international political rule, norm, principle and regime. It includes China’s attitude toward international security, peripheral security, power politics, non-traditional security (terrorism, proliferation, separation of nationalities, cyber security and pirate), intervention, hegemony and other international relations issues.

China’s attitude toward international cooperation can reflect China’s perception and attitude toward the depth and width of international cooperation. It includes China’s regional cooperation (it means Asia here) and international cooperation (beyond Asia). With respect to China’s regional cooperation, it includes China’s extent of cooperation with neighboring countries and regional institutions (SCO, APEC, ASEAN+3, GMS, ASEM). In terms of international cooperation which goes beyond Asia, it includes China’s degree of cooperation with world hegemon (the US), major powers (refer to developed countries), small countries (mainly developing countries), China’s cooperation with international organizations (WTO, WHO, IMF, UN, G20, BRICS) and China’s participation in global governance.

China’s attitude toward international system can reflect China’s perception, attitude and degree of acceptance about the current distribution of different states within the status quo. It includes China’s attitude toward polarity within the international system, the justness of international system and the development of international system.

Second, I will conduct a textual schemata analysis to figure out the overall attitude of each year. By comparing each year’s reports, we can grasp a basic sense of China’s attitude toward international
order.

In the international economic order part, the 14\textsuperscript{th} report wrote: “The international economic competition is becoming much fiercer, many developing countries’ economic environment severely deteriorates and the gap between South and North is bigger and bigger.” In the international political order part, the 14\textsuperscript{th} report wrote: “The existence of hegemonism and power politics is always the main obstacle to solve peace and development problems.” With respect to international cooperation, it wrote: “Our cooperation with many developing countries is further enhanced and our relationships with all the countries including Western developed countries are improved and developed.” In terms of the international system, it wrote: “Hegemonism and power politics cannot solve any problem. It does not work if only a few countries monopolize and control international affairs.”\textsuperscript{28}

In the international economic order part, the 15\textsuperscript{th} report wrote: “The unjust and unreasonable international economic competition is still harming the interests of many developing countries and the gap between South and North is bigger and bigger.” In the international political order part, the 15\textsuperscript{th} report wrote: “Hegemonism and power politics are still the main threats to world peace and development. Expanding military bloc and strengthening military alliance can contribute nothing to secure peace.” With respect to international cooperation, it wrote: “We need to enhance our cooperation with the third world countries and we also need to improve and develop our relationship with developed countries based on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” In terms of the international system, it wrote: “The current international situation continues to be alleviated.

Multipolarity trend is developing globally and regionally in economic and political spheres.”  

In the international economic order part, the 16th report wrote: “Countries should help each other to develop and it should not result in a huge gap between South and North.” In the international political order part, the 16th report wrote: “We oppose a variety of hegemonism and power politics.” With respect to international cooperation, it wrote: “We will continue to improve and develop our relationship with developed countries. We value the fundamental interests of all the countries. We will continue enhance our cooperation with the Third World countries.” In terms of the international system, it wrote: “The development of world multipolarization and economic globalization brings opportunities and advantages to world peace and development.”

In the international economic order part, the 17th report wrote: “The world economy is becoming more and more imbalanced and the gap between South and North is bigger and bigger.” In the international political order part, the 17th report wrote: “The world is still not peaceful and hegemonism and power politics still exist.” With respect to international cooperation, it wrote: “China’s fate is strongly connected with the outlook of the world. We will cooperate with all kinds of countries based on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” In terms of the international system, it wrote: “The world is in the period of great transformation. World multipolarization is irreversible and economic globalization is still advancing. International forces are developing in the interests of world peace and development.”

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In the international economic order part, the 18th report wrote: “China will actively participate in global economic governance, promote free trade and investment and oppose all kinds of protectionism.” In the international political order part, the 18th report wrote: “The world is still not peaceful. Hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionist have risen. China opposes all kinds of hegemonism and power politics.” With respect to international cooperation, it wrote: “We will cooperate comprehensively with all kinds of countries based on Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. We will continue to improve and develop our relationship with developed countries. We will continue enhance our cooperation with developing countries.” In terms of the international system, it wrote: “World multipolarization, economic globalization, cultural diversification and social informatization are developing. Emerging market countries and developing countries are enhancing their strength and international forces are developing in the interests of world peace and development.”

Table 1: The Summary of China’s Attitude toward the Four Aspects of International Order

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<td>In Flux</td>
<td>Delegitimization</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>In Flux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>In Flux</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Notice: I.E.R means international economic order, I.P.R. means international political order; I.C

means international cooperation and I.S means international system)

In summary, the above analysis (see Table1) clearly shows that China is gradually shifting its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to embeddedness.

Third, I will conduct lexicon analysis to explore the tendency of China’s attitude, which words and phrases are gradually disappearing, and which are increasing and what are new.

Figure 2: The Lexicon Analysis of CCP Party Congress Reports

In the 14th party congress report, the words and phrases used to refer to delegitimate the international order are as many as thirty-three but this number has been declining since then. In the 17th and 18th party congress reports, only seven words and phrases are used to delegitimate the international order. In the meantime, the words and phrases used to refer to embeddedness or compliant with the international order is relatively stable. What is really significant about this trend is that in the 14th party congress report, the words and phrases used to delegitimate the international order outnumber the counterparts to show embeddedness with international order. However, in the 18th party congress report, the words and phrases used to show embeddedness with international
order outstrip those used to delegitimate the international order.

Now let us turn to the new words and phrases in each party congress reports except the 14th one to further examine the change of attitude.

Comparing with the 14th party congress report, the 15th report, wrote for the first time “All kinds of regional and inter-continental cooperative organizations are booming. China should actively participate in multilateral diplomatic activities. China should bring the roles in UN and other international organizations into full play.”

In the 16th party congress report, it wrote unprecedentedly “We oppose all kinds of terrorism. We should strengthen international cooperation, prevent and crack down terrorist activities, eradicate the origins of terrorism. We will continue to develop people-to-people diplomacy.”

In the 17th party congress report, what is new is that “China will take consideration of other parties especially developing countries’ reasonable concerns when China facilitates its development. China will continue to cooperate and exchange with foreign political parties and political organizations, enhancing the foreign exchange and relations of National People’s Congress, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, army, local governments and civil organizations.”

In the recent 18th party congress report, it wrote, for the first time, that “The imbalance of global development has worsened. Hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionist is on the rise. Cooperation and win-win mean that we should advocate a sense of human fate community. China will take consideration of other countries’ reasonable concerns when

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34 CCP’s 16th party congress report.
China facilitates its development. We should facilitate other countries’ development to build a more balanced, equal and new type of global development partner relationship. China will actively participate in global governance.\textsuperscript{36}

From the above new words, phrases and sentences used in each report, we can reach the conclusion that China is more open to the world and it reflects that China is becoming an indispensable part of the current international order. China may not feel satisfactory about the international order in every aspect, but it certainly has accepted and recognized some merits of the current international order. China is shifting its overall attitude toward international order from general delegitimization to embeddedness. But China is not fully embedded with the international order. I argue that China’s embeddedness is highly selective based on a long-term complicated calculation of benefits and costs. Selective embeddedness has two meanings here. The first meaning is that the degrees to which China is embedded in these four areas are discrepant. By reading the party congress reports, we can gather that China gives more credits to the international economic order than to the international political order. This means that it is more embedded with the international economic order than with the international political order. The second meaning is that even within the same area, China’s embeddedness is still variant. For example, in terms of the embeddedness in the international economic order, China is more committed and cooperative in trade than finance. China tries to make it more integrated with the international trade order (trade liberalization and protectionism) rather than international financial order (dollar hegemony, liberalization of capital account). In the next section, I will quantitatively show why China’s attitude

\textsuperscript{36}CCP’s 18th party congress report.http://china.caixin.com/2012-11-08/100458021_10.html
toward international order can be characterized as selective embeddedness.

4.2 The Fuzzy-Set Analysis of the CCP Party Congress Reports

Table 1 has already shown that in some aspects, China’s attitude toward international order is embeddedness while in other aspects China’s attitude is delegitimization. But discourse analysis do not give us a more accurate description about the exact degree of embeddedness and delegitimization. Fuzzy-set analysis can overcome this problem and show quantitatively China’s attitude toward international order.

To begin, we need to identify and code the outcome variable and the causal variable. In this thesis, the outcome variable is China’s attitudes toward international order. “0” denotes “extreme delegitimization” while “1” denotes “fully embedded”. I use Gary Goertz and James Mahoney’s two-level theory to build a two-level analysis framework for our research.

The basic level: China’s attitude toward international order

The secondary level: attitude towards international economic order, attitude towards international political order, attitude towards international cooperation and attitude towards international system.

Since these four aspects constitute the basic level question of China’s attitude toward international order, these four variables at the secondary level represent causal variables. This paper will code these four causal variables and aggregate the fuzzy-set scores into overall scores of China’s attitudes toward international order. If the overall fuzzy-set score is approximate to 1, it means that China totally accepts and supports international order. Or China is “fully embedded” with the international order. If the overall fuzzy-set score is close to 0, it means the opposite. In this way,
fuzzy-set analysis can confirm this paper’s previous finding and support it. In addition, fuzzy set analysis can also show the discrepancies of China’s embeddedness.

This section adopts a simple five-value coding scheme: 0.00, 0.25, 0.50, 0.75, 1.00. The score I code each causal variable is based on discourse analysis of the party congress reports and other available data and information. I will use min (sum $X_i$, 1)\(^{37}\) aggregation procedure to calculate the fuzzy set score for outcome variable. The result is shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Secondary Level</th>
<th>Basic Level</th>
<th>China’s Overall Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I.E.O</td>
<td>I.P.O</td>
<td>I.C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that in 1992, China’s attitude toward international order is general delegitimization (the overall score is 0.19 which is close to 0.). In 2012, the fuzzy-set score is 0.69, which means that China’s attitude becomes selective embeddedness or partial embeddedness.

Discourse analysis (Table 1) and fuzzy-set analysis (Table 2) above can help us better understand China’s attitude toward international order. The analysis above finds that China is shifting its attitude toward international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness. It means that

\(^{37}\text{The way to implement this procedure is, in my case, is to divide all values for secondary-level variables by 4 and then summarize the four variables together to generate a total score for outcome variable, i.e., China’s attitude toward international order.}\)
China’s foreign policy is more pragmatic and China’s external relationship is more cooperative. The last main question to answer in this thesis is why this could happen. Why does China change its attitude toward international order? Why is China selectively embedded in the international order rather than fully embedded? In the following section, this thesis will build a model to answer those questions.
5 Identity-Attitude Model

Why has China changed its attitude toward international order from 1992 to 2012? What are the reasons behind this? How can we explain this phenomenon?

Several theories attempt to explain these puzzles among which institutional outsourcing theory and hegemonic decline theory are the two most prominent explanations. In Playing Our Game: Why China's Rise Does not Threaten the West, Edward S. Steinfeld proposes a theory of institutional outsourcing to explain why China is mainly a “capitalist enabler” or “institutional converger” which leads to that China will not challenge the West and harm their core interests. He argues that “institutional outsourcing is a kind of flow, moving from China to advanced systems like the United States, involves ceding to a third party the power to define key societal rules that govern and shape social interaction”. As a result of institutional outsourcing, China is gradually involved in global system and China’s development will benefit both China and other key partners. For example, in the economic area, he uses the case of global production chain to show that China is deeply involved in this global division of labor and the technological rise of China is in both China’s and the West’s interests.

Although institutional outsourcing theory is very powerful in explaining China’s embeddedness in the international economic order, its major shortcoming is that it cannot be successfully applied to other areas. For example, we cannot use this theory to explain China’s attitude toward international political order because institutional outsourcing does not work in the Chinese political arena. Given

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39 Ibid, p25
the central importance of China’s attitude toward the international political order, we ought not to neglect it. In this vein, Steinfield’s institutional outsourcing theory cannot fully explain the change of China’s attitude toward international order.

Yet another important theory worthy of attention is hegemonic decline theory, which is developed mainly by Stephen Walt, Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu. Schweller and Pu argue that rapidly growing states often appear as threats to their neighbors, as well as to the hegemon and its allies. Prior to military confrontation or even the threat of such conflict, the rising challenger must delegitimize the hegemon’s global authority and order. To some extent, this argument is feasible since Schweller and Pu correctly find that “unipolarity is the only system in which balancing is a revisionist, rather than a status quo, policy.” The rationale is that no country wants to be labeled as a revisionist state, thus the country that wants to balance the hegemonic power must delegitimize the hegemon. If international order is dominated by a hegemon, it will give rising states enough incentive to delegitimize international order as part of a rational strategy to undermine the hegemon’s authority.

There are many ways for rising states to resist and challenge a world hegemon, especially when this hegemon seems to be in decline. Schweller and Pu argue that in addition to the discourse and practice of resistance, subordinate states may practice every day resistance and rightful resistance, which share the principle that such states apply various “weapons of the weak” to contest the

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42ibid, pp43-44
43ibid, p45
44James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*; and Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*
hegemon without openly defying it through violence.\textsuperscript{45} In the case of China, following this logic, the reason why China delegitimizes international order is that China tries to resist and challenge US primacy. In Schweller and Pu’s words, to cope with the existing order, China pragmatically accommodates U.S. hegemony, on the one hand, while it contests the legitimacy of U.S. hegemony, on the other.\textsuperscript{46} China has incentives to delegitimize international order, but China does not have to do this all the time. Schweller and Pu also notice that “relying on existing institutionalized channels to contest U.S. hegemony, China seeks to increase its political influence and prestige through active participation in, not confrontation with, the existing order.”\textsuperscript{47} At first glance, it seems that hegemonic decline theory does a better job to explain China’s attitude toward international order than institutional outsourcing theory.

This thesis admits that hegemonic decline theory has some merits, but it also suffers some flaws. One problem with this theory is that it contradicts with reality. If Schweller and Pu are right, when China grows stronger and stronger, China should take more efforts to delegitimize international order. But in reality, this is not the case. China is more embedded with international order when it is rising. In addition, it is quite doubtful the extent to which the international order has been greatly undermined due to the rise of China. Even Schweller and Pu admit that while the consensus opinion is that U.S. power is eroding, the legitimacy of the United States’ international order and authority to rule have not, to this point, been seriously undermined.\textsuperscript{48} In this sense, hegemonic decline theory is

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid, p52
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid, p53
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid, p72
a bit ambiguous in explaining why China’s attitude toward international order has changed in the last two decades.

Another big flaw in this theory lays in one of its assumptions. Hegemonic decline theory assumes that rising states will have a fight with a declining hegemon. In the case of the rise of China, it implies that China will definitely have military conflict with the US. This section argues that such an assumption has two problems. One is that it is still too early to say that the US is in decline. The decline of the US has appeared in history many times. But so far, America is still the most powerful country in the world. In terms of military power, it is quite safe to estimate that at least for the next twenty years, no country can fully challenge the US military force. It is difficult to know whether the US will still be No.1 economy in the world in the next decade, but it is definitely not that easy for other countries to catch up to the US’s military capacity. In addition, American technology is far more advanced than that of China and many other countries, not to mention its soft power and political attractiveness. So basically, the gap between the US and other powers, especially China may not be as huge as it was, but it may be arbitrary to believe that the US is doomed and its decline is inevitable.

Institutional outsourcing theory and hegemonic decline theory also neglect the role of identity. While realists and liberals did not pay attention to it, the stance this paper takes is that identity is the key for us to understand China’s external attitude. What is identity? In the philosophical sense an identity is whatever makes a thing what it is.\footnote{Alexander Wendt, 1999. \textit{Social Theory of International Politics}, Cambridge University Press, p224} This definition is too broad to use in international relations. To better use this concept, we need to delimit its key values. This paper agrees with
Wendt’s argument that (he) will treat it as a property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioral dispositions. This means that identity is at base a subjective or unit-level quality, rooted in an actor’s self-understandings. But Wendt goes further to argue that “the meaning of those understandings will often depend on whether other actors represent an actor in the same way, and to that extent identity will also have an intersubjective or systemic quality.” In my view, self-understanding is not necessarily dependent on whether other actors represent an actor in the same way because their identity needs can be different and very subjective. Identity need is very crucial for states. Wendt argues that “two types of needs may be discerned: identity needs and material needs.” This thesis shifts its focus to the identity needs aspect. In other words, this thesis provides an explanation for the change of China’s attitude toward international order from the identity needs perspective. One caveat should be provided here. The central aim here is to study the causal effects of identity, not the identity formation process. This thesis introduces a theory of identity, which I call identity-attitude theory to explain the causality.

This thesis argues that China is shifting its attitude toward international order because China’s identity is changing. In the early 1990s, China viewed itself as a developing country which was the victim of the international order. Now, however, China views itself as a developing country that is the beneficiary of the international order. For this reason, China has embraced the international order. As a developing and rising country, China still has some contradictions with its more developed counterparts, which is the main reason why China’s embeddedness is highly selective since China

50 Ibid, p224
51 Ibid, p224
52 Ibid, p130
needs to make sure the embeddedness with the international order is in its interests.

The identity-attitude model consists of two parts. The first part concerns identity and the second part is related to the connection between national identity and national external attitude.

Identity really matters in one country’s external relationship. Constructivists such as Albert Yee and Alexander Wendt both recognize the causal effects of identity. Yee argues that “identity, ideology, and culture are distinct from power and interests, and do play a causal role in social life.”53 When we discuss national identity, our thinking is centered on the dichotomy of developing country and developed country. Some students of international relations used to employ the “Three Worlds theory” to identify each country. Nowadays, it is more common to use developing country and developed country to describe different countries. When it comes to one country’s attitude toward international order, I argue that we should adopt two dimensions to identify every country in the world. One dimension is the dichotomy of developing country versus developed country, and the other dimension is the classification of victim of international order versus beneficiary of international order. The second dimension is crucial because the first dimension cannot fully describe the discrepancies within developing countries and developed countries. For example, even within the developed countries’ camp, some developed states benefit more from the current international order than others do. This implies that some developed countries may have different attitude toward international order if they do not reap benefits from participation in the game. As for developing countries, when we compare them with developed countries, they ought to be less satisfactory about the current international order. But for some developing countries, if they gain more (relative gain)

than developed countries, they may be more satisfied with the current international order. And if this is the case, they are very likely to delegitimize the current international order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Four Types of Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed Country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By using the two dimensions analysis, I argue that we can identify four types of identity for countries in the world. Type A is the developing country which is the victim of the international order. Type B is the developing country which is the beneficiary of the international order. Type C is the developed country which is the victim of the international order. Type D is the developed country which is the beneficiary of the international order. (See Table 3 )

These four types of identity are very useful for our analysis of international relations. Before we go any further, we must answer one question. If identity is rooted in an actor’s self-understandings, how can we make sure we are studying the “right” actors, i.e., the actors who shape national identity? It is quite easy to tell whether a country is a developing country or a developed country. But in some cases, it is very difficult to define whether a country is a victim of international order. For example, if in country A, the public believes that their country is the victim of international order, but the elites of country A believe that the country is the beneficiary of international order, how can we define country A’s identity? Is it a victim or a beneficiary of international order?

For this question, we have to answer it case by case. In some instances, public opinion may be
more accurate whereas in some other cases elites may be more correct. The question is also related to political regime in any given country. In democracies, the public is more likely to share the same opinion with elites because public opinion can be fully expressed via many channels. In non-democracies it may vary. In some non-democratic countries, there is no great conflict between the public and elites in terms of attitude toward international order. But in some cases, we may see great contradictions between public opinion and elite opinion.

Figure 3: The Change of China’s Identity (1992-2012)

In the case of China, due to its high economic growth rate in the past thirty years, which is fuelled by economic globalization, I argue that China was a type A country in 1992, but is a type B country now. China was the victim of international order in the past but has now become the main beneficiary of the current international order. In terms of GDP per capita, China is still regarded as a developing country. But in the long run, China is very likely to be a member of mid level developed countries.
China is not a democratic country in the Western view. But Chinese elites and public opinions are quite the same when it comes to the question whether China is the beneficiary of the international order. Most of them will answer yes because there is no doubt that China develops faster than the majority of countries in the past thirty years.

The argument here is that it is identity, not power that determines one country’s attitude toward international order. While realists argue that material power is the most important factor in explaining countries’ external behavior and relationship this paper argues that identity is more useful in explaining countries’ attitude toward international order since identity formation includes material factors and other interaction factors. This means that identity is more comprehensive than power in explaining one country’s external attitude.

Table 4. Different Attitudes of Four Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing country</td>
<td>Delegitimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed country</td>
<td>Selective Delegitimization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are four types of attitudes that are determined by the four types of identity (See table 4).

For developing countries, their initial attitude toward international order is delegitimization because relative gains really matter. Comparing with developed countries, developing countries are more likely to blame their failure on international order. They believe that international order is not just and it constraints their development. In the case of type A, they choose to delegitimize international order since they are losers within that given international order. But type B counties do not act like
type A countries to severely criticize international order because they gain more than others in the
game. They are developing countries but they are ascending. The reason why they are rising is
because international order is in their interests. In this sense, their initial attitude toward
international order is still delegitimization. But in reality, they will have a mixed and complicated
attitude which finally results in an attitude of selective embeddedness. Selective embeddedness
means that their attitude toward international order is highly discrepant. In the areas they are
beneiting more from international order they are embedded with international order whereas in the
hostile arenas, they choose to delegitimize international order as the weapons of the weak.

As for developed countries, their initial attitude toward international order is embeddedness. It
is quite easy to understand because comparing with most of countries in the world, they are enjoying
more beneits and privileges from international order. This is especially the case for type D country.
These countries are in the high-ranking level and are gaining more advantages than the rest of the
world. They are the complete winners of the game. But if a developed country believes (or it is true)
that it has become a main victim of international order like type C country, it will depart from the
initial attitude of developed countries. Type C may make countries choose to change their attitude
toward international order from embeddedness to selective delegitimization. They delegitimize
international order because in some areas, they are gaining less than others. But overall speaking,
they are still the winners. In this case, selective delegitimization is the weapons of the strong.
In the case of China, back to 1992, China was type A country. This determines that China’s attitude toward international order is delegitimization. But China now views itself as a type B country. This change of identity determines that China is changing its attitude. That being said, as a developing country, China’s initial attitude is to delegitimize international order. But initial attitude does not equal to overall attitude. China’s attitude toward international order is in flux. In areas which China is benefiting more than other countries, it is more likely to be embedded with that kind of international order. For example, in the current international trade order, China’s initial attitude is to delegitimize rather than to accept since Western countries are making more money from international trade. But since China is able to adapt to the changing global market, China finds itself gaining more benefits from the current international trade order. This results in the change of China’s attitude toward international trade order, which directly alters its attitude toward international economic order. But in the case of climate change, in Western view, China is by no means a responsible stakeholder. In response, China argues that global warming is caused by those developed
countries but now developed countries are using climate change issue to impede China’s
development, which is totally not acceptable. In this case, we can find that China still views itself as
type A. So China is in conflict with Western countries in climate change contestation. And this directs
China to delegitimize international order.
6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have applied political discourse analysis and fuzzy-set analysis to study the party congress reports of the CCP from 1992 to 2012. So doing, this thesis argues that China is gradually shifting its attitude towards international order from general delegitimization to selective embeddedness. This thesis develops a model, namely identity-attitude model to explain why China has changed its attitude. One of the implications of this thesis is that we should go beyond the status quo state and revisionist state dichotomy in terms of a rising state’s relationship with international order. It may be misleading if we arbitrarily label a country as a revisionist state because in different international system balancing has different meanings. Under unipolarity, balancing becomes the very definition of revisionism. But in multipolar and bipolar systems, balancing is the primary mechanism to preserve the status quo.

The main methodological innovation of this thesis is to apply political discourse analysis and fuzzy-set analysis to international studies. Political discourse analysis, when combined with fuzzy-set analysis, is very productive and powerful in explaining one country’s external attitude. The discourse approach can be also applied to analyze other international issues if official discourse texts are available. For example, scholars can apply the methods used in this thesis to analyze India’s attitude toward international order. However, this methodological innovation may attract some criticism concerning the objectiveness of research. This thesis admits that the methods used in this paper are not without flaws. When I analyze the party congress reports and calibrate the four causal variables at the secondary level, no matter how objectively I was trying to achieve, the results would not be completely objective. Yet, social science is always different from natural science. Even though social
science cannot achieve value-free, in this thesis, I argue that the methods used are scientific enough to support and justify its conclusions.

The world is standing at a critical conjuncture. China is rising, the rest of the West is rising, and the current international order is in flux. Students of international relations are very curious and interested in China’s relationship with the world, China’s relationship with the West in particular. International relations scholars observe that China cooperates with the West in some areas while fighting with it in other areas. The identity-attitude model may partly solve this puzzle.

The Western developed countries are the main beneficiaries in many areas within the current international order. As a developing country, China’s initial attitude toward the current international order should be delegitimization, which implies that China should not cooperate with the West in most areas. But why is China cooperating with the Western powers in some areas such as WTO, nuclear non-proliferation, G20 and FDI, etc.? The reason in part is that in these areas, Chinese elites emphasize more on China itself as the beneficiary of the international order instead of adhering to the identity of being a backward developing country.

In some areas where China is the beneficiary of the international order, China still chooses to fight with the West. How do we explain this phenomenon? For example, in terms of climate change governance, as the largest carbon emission country, China has enough reasons to work with the West together to tackle global warming. But in reality, China chooses not to cooperate. In theory, China can emphasize either its identity as a developing country or its identity as the beneficiary of the international order. If China chooses the latter, China is more likely to cooperate rather than to fight. If China chooses the former, China is very inclined to fight with the West. Here I argue that China’s
strategy to fight with the West is to leave itself more leeway for bargain. In practice, once China chooses to cooperate, China is not able to retreat from this position. In other words, China has to work with the West all the time if China emphasizes on the identity of being beneficiary of the international order. But if China emphasizes the identity of being a major developing country, China will always have two options to choose: fight and cooperate. This will help China keep more strategic space for the future.

This thesis seeks to contribute to people’s understanding about China and China’s attitude toward international order from an inside-out perspective. Yet this thesis cannot predict the future of China’s external relations with the world and China’s attitude toward international order. The world is in transition and China’s identity is changing. Presumably, we may conclude that the next decade will be one of the greatest periods in our human history.
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