

On Building a Community of Shared Future for The United Nations
**Analysis on China's Performance in The United Nations General Assembly
2013–2018**

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<p>Over the course of the last decades, China’s rise has been among the most essential phenomena in world politics. Along with it, the consensus among scholars is that in the era of president Xi Jinping, China has abandoned the “hide and bide” principle and become an active norm leader in the global arena. This study examines China’s influence and activity in the United Nations General Assembly, the organ which has the broadest agenda within the UN system and in which every state has equal representation. This work fills the gap in recent research on the General Assembly by studying resolutions adopted between 2013 and 2018 that China participated drafting. Hence, the study expands the scope of China’s known activity in international affairs.</p> <p>This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. By using mixed methods, it was possible to extract numeric data from the sample (n=351) but also to take a closer look at the language of the resolutions. Furthermore, the data also revealed the countries that supported and opposed China-sponsored resolutions, determining the group of countries that enabled China’s rise in the General Assembly.</p> <p>The analysis showed that China’s global responsibility campaign stretched to the General Assembly in which it actively participated in decision making. While the majority of the resolutions that China sponsored were in line with the overall sentiment, clashes occurred especially in the subjects concerning individual freedoms and human rights. In these spheres, the individual-centered order led by the United States competes with China’s state-centered order. China appears to have gained the upper hand by having the support of circa 120 states, mostly in the developing world.</p> <p>The study concludes that China is the most active global power in the General Assembly, and with the help of the majority of the UN member states, has managed to promote its worldview in the resolutions.</p>		
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1 The basis of the research

In September 2018, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres spoke in the China–Africa Cooperation Summit in Beijing: “It is important that current and future development cooperation contributes to peace, security and to building a ‘community of shared future for mankind’” (UN, 2018a). Moreover, Guterres commended China’s commitment to share its successes through its geopolitical project, namely the Belt and Road Initiative (ibid.). It was as if the Secretary-General was speaking on behalf of China, echoing its rhetoric. The question arose: has the prominent international organization become the promoter of China’s view of the world order?

Among other things, this study provides an answer to this question. China’s rise has been one of the most essential phenomena in world politics over the course of the last decades. It is not just China’s double digit economic growth; China’s participation in global governance and its role in creating international order has been a subject of constant debate. There’s a wide consensus among scholars that with Xi Jinping on the Dragon Throne, China has taken a more active role in the international stage and abandoned the old maxim of “hide your capacities, bide your time”. With Xi’s own words: “We must improve our ability to participate in global governance, and in particular, our ability to make rules, set agendas, and carry out publicity and coordination” (Xi, 2016a: 489–490). While there is no clear road map to determine where China’s ambitions will lead to, at least in the field of human rights China has molded the rules more to its liking (see. e.g. Piccone, 2018; Mazarr et al., 2018). China’s rules have emphasized the role of sovereignty and nonintervention to the extent that it can affect the UN’s ability to respond to the issues and violations that member states are dealing with (ibid.).

This study examines the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The UNGA is the only UN principal organ in which every member state has equal representation. Furthermore, the UNGA’s agenda is broader than any other organ’s in the UN. This study aims to fill a clear blank spot as a thorough search of the relevant literature yielded no recent research of China’s influence work in the UNGA. While previous research has focused on specific fields, this thesis delivers a wider perspective to China’s influence work in the UN. This study analyzes UNGA resolutions that are sponsored by China in the Xi Jinping era (from 2013 to 2018, n= 351). Through the analysis, the following research question is answered:

How has China performed in the United Nations General Assembly in the Xi Jinping era?

The research question is approached by using three sub-questions:

1. *How active was China in the United Nations General Assembly between 2013 and 2018?*
2. *What does the language of the resolutions reveal about China's way of influencing in the United Nations General Assembly?*
3. *Who are China's supporters in the United Nations General Assembly's decision making?*

Thus, this research provides an answer to whether China's influence has grown in the UN and also with whose support has it grown. These answers provide a good ground to reflect whether China is aiming to overthrow the United States from the podium of a hegemon or merely claiming more foothold within the US-led order.

Before going into conclusions, this study formulates the theoretical framework in chapters 2 and 3. In the second chapter, the reader is made familiar with the key concepts of this research. Within the same chapter, a narrative based on previous research is compiled. This offers a background to reflect the findings of this study. In chapter 3, following the constructivist tradition of international relations, this work not only explains the norm creation process and required conditions needed for norms to succeed but also describes the whole reality constructed of and guided by norms.

Chapter 4 gives a more detailed description of the execution of this study and introduces the methodology. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of this research and places the results in the broader context. The concluding chapter wraps up the main discoveries and suggests ways for further research.

2 Setting the scene: China and the global order

In late 2018, the People's Republic of China (PRC) celebrated its 40th anniversary of reform and opening up. During that course of time, China has gone through a dramatic change – commonly described as China's rise – and not least in terms of its role in the global arena. What could have once been called a country that rejected the core principles upheld by the international community has switched to a “position in which it participates in almost all of the major international regimes in which it is eligible to participate” (Nathan in Ross & Bekkevold, 2016: 171).

This study takes particular interest in China's actions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the Xi Jinping era. China's part in the international order is a well-documented topic and, naturally, this work will be built upon what is already known. Before presenting the previous research on China's role in the international order, the reader is made familiar with the terminology used in this thesis.

2.1 International order and global governance

Every day, myriad goods and services cross national borders. People move around searching for new experiences, or at the other end, refuge. And if you have gone through a period of unemployment in the past decade, chances are that it is because of the US' subprime loan crisis that occurred in 2007 and set tremors through the whole world economy. This is to exemplify that the world in the 21st century is built upon complex interdependent relations which have both good and bad outcomes (Kacowicz, 2012). Especially in a time of crisis, no matter where and how local, the interdependence causes a strong incentive to prevent the spreading of harm. For instance, insurgency and wars in Syria and Iraq displaced millions of people, which then posed a great challenge to Europe to accommodate the people seeking asylum. The question that arises, then, is whom to turn to in need of solutions for transnational matters.

Global governance, by definition, has to do with how we arrange our world's affairs. To take a step back, this study starts by echoing the view held by the English School: that the world constitutes a society of sovereign states, an international system, that sustains international order (see e.g. Bull, 2012; Wight, 1977; Kacowicz, 2012.) Even though there are power imbalances between states in many fields, there is no state that rules over others, nor is

there a world government (ibid.). In other words, there is no individual ruler to end the violence in the Middle East or to declare world peace. However, from the absence of supreme authority, which is called anarchy in international relations, we can still find order. Mazarr et al. (2016) write: "Order presumes some degree of institutionalization or established structure – established through ordering mechanisms that play some role in governing the relationships and behaviors among actors in a system" (p. 8). Governance, then, consists of measures taken to uphold or change prevailing order – or as Rosenau (1992) describes, "governance is order plus intentionality" (p. 5). Hence, to discuss global governance is to discuss how international order is organized.

According to Weiss and Thakur (2010) "'global governance' is the sum of laws, norms, policies, and institutions that define, constitute, and mediate relations among citizens, society, markets, and the state in the international arena" (p. 6). Thus, global governance can be seen as a system of rules, a medium that structures the international order. Bull (2012) writes that states sharing common interests and values form a society of states "in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions" (p. 13). However, order can be built on different sets of values and principles. Mazarr et al. (2016) make a distinction between conservative and liberal forms of order¹. The conservative view rests upon the Westphalian system that emphasizes territorial integrity of sovereign states. The liberal view, on the other hand, has been evident since the end of World War II. It holds that there is a harmony of interests to be achieved among states, which, in turn, has led to the establishment of hundreds of international organizations, coalitions and cooperation forums. (p. 10–11.) Cooper (2000) describes this as an attempt "to go beyond nation state" (p. 20). In practice, both conservative and liberal forms play a role in the current international order.

The collectively held values of international order, although very powerful, are not approved uncontested and are prone to change. Sinclair and Owens (2012) see global governance as an attempt to rewrite the playbook "to get the favoured ideas enshrined in our habits, norms and expectations" (p. 19). The current order is "the deeply institutionalized concept of order based on US visions for world politics" (Mazarr et al. 2016: 12). During the Cold War it was a

¹ Some of the sources use the division conservative/liberal. However, given the broadness and ambiguity of these concepts, this study uses Cooper's (2000) distinction between modern and postmodern order. Thus, throughout this work, the pairs conservative/liberal, modern/postmodern and Westphalian/post-Westphalian are treated as synonyms.

security and trade regime of democratic states that expanded to the point that it was "impossible to prosper without access to them" (ibid: 13). Moreover, the US' world order appears to be somewhat post-Westphalian in the sense that it values individual rights over sovereignty. Doyle (1999) writes that our current order may obligate "to override in some circumstances the domestic sovereignty of states in order to rescue fellow human beings from intolerable oppression" (p. 41). As will be discussed in more detail below, China has become well accustomed to the modern order and tries to challenge the more liberal pillars of the current order, such as promotion of human rights and democracy.

2.2 International organizations and the United Nations

To understand international order and relations within it, we must further examine the arenas in which order is being negotiated and renewed. As briefly mentioned above, since the mid-40s the world has seen the rise of hundreds of international organizations as well as other interest groups. According to Rittberger et al. (2019), to gain the role of international organization, an organization must consist of three or more states, have a regular plenary meeting and a secretariat and a mailing address (p. 4–5). In other words, international organizations can be seen as active multilateral organs that have physical headquarters. This is merely to distinguish international organizations from non-governmental organizations, transnational firms and so forth. With the chosen criteria, the world has 330 international organizations (ibid: 2).

Along with the "institutionalization rush" occurred the creation of one of the cornerstones of contemporary global institutionalization, the United Nations system. It was created to build more cooperation-oriented relations between states and to prevent further devastation caused by the two world wars (Sinclair & Owens, 2012: 33). The UN is an international organization that Rittberger et al. (2019) would characterize as "general purpose" and a "creator of norms and rules" (p. 5–7). There are also task-specific organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that handles sectoral matters and implements and enforces rules instead of setting them (ibid.). All-in-all, the actors that take part in governing global matters today vary from grassroots movements and non-governmental organizations to global capital markets. However, the paramount role is still handed to states and to international organizations composed of states, such as the UN (Kacowicz, 2012).

In seventy plus years there has been not just a huge increase in the number of actors in the global arena but also in the number of tasks they are appointed to take care of. The UN was established to be an active peacekeeper and to protect human rights, but in the course of time its portfolio has expanded also to addressing developmental, social and environmental issues. Key economic institutions have also adjusted their policies to coincide with on-going global challenges and political climate at any given time. (Sinclair & Owens 2012: 21, 26.) Although international organizations and their sub-organs have their specific fields of interest, they do have a common denominator: they exist for the simple reason that we need to have focused expertise on various matters. For the very same reason, international organizations must have relatively high autonomy and authority over the tasks they are mandated to fulfill. (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 17–18, 22.) In sum, the world is to a great extent governed by states that allocate the power to execute and enforce their will to the organizations that they have created. International organizations, in that sense, “are both composed of and producers of rules” (ibid: 18).

Given the relatively strong self-governed nature of any organization, the study of institutionalism demands us to look at how bureaucratic work is done in a particular organization (Sinclair & Owens, 2012: 32). That is why focus is now turned to the organization of this study’s interest, the United Nations. The UN has four purposes that are stated in the UN Charter’s first article: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving problems and promoting human rights and to be a center for helping nations to achieve these goals. The Charter was signed on the 26th of June in 1945 by 50 nations. Today, the UN has 193 member states. (UN, 2013: 10–11.)

The organization has six principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. The General Assembly’s functions will be discussed in more detail shortly. The most influential organ, however, is arguably the Security Council that is responsible for maintaining peace. It consists of 15 members of which five are permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) with the right to veto. The Security Council gathers upon request to settle disputes that might pose a risk of conflict, and resolutions are passed with 9 votes. However, in several occasions, many of which concern the Israeli-Palestinian situation and Syria, the vote has been vetoed (Sengupta, 2017). Even the UN’s top officer, Secretary-General António Guterres, has described the

Security Council as paralyzed on certain issues (UN, 2019b). In addition to principal organs and their numerous sub-organs and committees, the UN is a web of tens of specialized agencies, programs and related organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). There are also constantly over a hundred thousand people serving in various posts in the UN's peacekeeping missions. (UN, 2013: 41–47, 92.)

As the listing above reveals, there are a wide range of organizations working under the UN umbrella to fulfill the common goals of peace, security, social justice, development, nutrition and health of the people. Repeating Barnett's and Finnemore's (2004) words, the functioning of the UN relies greatly on the expertise and the authority of its agencies and programs. The aim of this study, however, is to examine the most democratic organ, the General Assembly, that creates most of the policy recommendations that are enforced in agencies and member countries (UN, 2013: 24).

2.2.1. The United Nations General Assembly

This thesis analyzes the resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the only UN organ in which all countries have equal representation, that is, one vote per member state. According to the Millennium Declaration, "the General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations" (Ruder et al. 2011: 13). It is comprised of the president, 21 vice-presidents and six main committees. Committees are divided on the basis of their areas of responsibilities that include matters from security (the First Committee), economics and development (the Second Committee), humanitarian issues (the Third Committee) and decolonization (the Fourth Committee) to administrative and legal issues (Committees Fifth and Sixth, respectively). That is to say, the General Assembly's agenda is broader than that of any other UN principal organ. The only clear restraint the UNGA has is that it cannot take decisions on international situations that the Security Council is considering. The UNGA also approves the budget of the UN which includes specifying the member states' share of a budget. (ibid: 12–13.)

The UNGA's annual session begins in September and runs for one year. The annual session begins with adopting the agenda. The list of over 160 items is relatively stable with only a few items being added or deleted each year. (ibid: 36.) The core work of the organ, its main committees and their many sub-organs is to "discuss, debate, and make recommendations on subjects pertaining to international peace and security, including development, disarmament, human rights, international law, and the peaceful arbitration of disputes between nations" (Albert et al. 2018). The realization of the work comes in the form of decisions and resolutions. These are debated and decided in the meetings of different committees in which all the member states have presence. The UN Charter gives resolutions a status of policy recommendation, that is, they are rarely legally binding². However, they are powerful documents, as Ruder et al. (2011) note: "GA resolutions reflect the degree of intergovernmental agreement, the evolution of political ideas and the state of global cooperation on a given topic" (p. 52). Resolutions and decisions are generally adopted by consensus, but if the decision is made by voting, a simple majority rule applies³ (ibid: 37).

Essential for this thesis is the process of drafting the resolution. Most draft resolutions, either completely new or just proposing changes to already existing ones, are written by a member state as the sponsor of the resolution. In case the resolution has more than one sponsor, the one initiating the process is called the main sponsor. After the resolution is drafted, it is submitted to the General Assembly. The next part of the process is taking action, that is, making a decision on adopting the draft resolution. In practice, the process is not as straightforward as presented here, and there is a lot of consultation between member states usually every step of the way. In any case, if the resolution is adopted, it will be issued as a General Assembly document and published in the UN's Official Document System. (Ruder et al. 2011: 52–58.) Given its sponsor-driven nature, it is not far fetched to state that the UNGA's resolutions not only reflect the degree of global cooperation but also the agenda of the sponsors to a certain degree. Chapter 4 describes in detail how this study examines China's influence work through the resolutions it has sponsored.

2.3. Together since 1971 – literature review

China was one of the 50 signatories of the UN Charter after the Second World War in 1945. The governing party, Kuomintang, fled to Taiwan after they were defeated by the

² Exceptions to the rule are the approved budgets which are legally binding.

³ Votes on budgets, admissions of new member states and issues concerning peace and security require a two-thirds majority to pass.

communists in 1949 but still claimed the role of legitimate government of China. Thus, the Republic of China on Taiwan held China's seat in the UN up until 1971. On the Mainland, the People's Republic of China, founded in 1949, is to date under the authoritarian rule of the Communist party. Under the rule of chairman Mao Zedong between 1949 and 1976, the PRC went through a series of disastrous political campaigns aimed at improving the national economy, agriculture and social cohesion. Meanwhile, the country's relationship towards contemporary powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, was complex, even hostile at times. Instead, the PRC reached out to developing countries especially in Africa and Asia. As the defiant propaganda proclaimed, the aim was to unite the world's countryside to overcome industrialized countries. (See e.g. Paltemaa & Vuori, 2012; Liu, 2014.)

It is needless to note that during the twenty plus years that the PRC was excluded from the UN, it never lost its longing to be part of the organization. Although there were voices in state-controlled media condemning the UN as an instrument of imperialist states, for the most part it was propaganda: the fact that the UN was neither a messenger of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nor the Warsaw Treaty Organization convinced the PRC that the UN was a neutral actor. (Liu, 2014: 26.) In fact, from the 1950s onward, the United Nations General Assembly would have an annual vote on whether the PRC should be the sole representative of China in the UN. The votes fell short of support for over two decades up until the late stage of Mao's reign. (ibid: 50–51.)

The events that occurred in October 1971 owed to a relatively solid support that the PRC had gained among developing countries and so called neutral countries. Especially the 1960s saw a wave of newly independent states' admissions in the UN. To everyone's surprise, including the PRC's, by 1971 those sympathetic to Beijing had gained a two-thirds majority in the UNGA. The vote of China's representation in the UN was 76 to 35 in the PRC's favor. (Liu, 2014: 51.) Most remarkably, the PRC became one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council having the veto right in security matters.

China's participation in global governance was a subject of debate even before it joined the UN. A study done in Yale Law School in 1966 saw challenges in PRC's UN membership that are somewhat similar to those researchers still mention today: "A transfer of China's United Nations seats could affect the advancement of human rights, the development of international law, the distribution of wealth by international agencies, the allocation of capital between the developed and lesser developed countries, the evolution of labor standards,

and the dissemination of knowledge bearing on health, meteorology, food production and peaceful uses of atomic energy” (McDougal & Goodman, 1966: 672). Perhaps in line with the Cold War spirit, concerns about China’s criminal activities on foreign soil were also connected to its membership: “The ‘Trojan Horse’ argument, frequently advanced by Peking’s detractors, was largely based on the assumption that China would use her diplomatic privileges and immunities as a shield in carrying out espionage activities – –” (Kim, 1974: 306). Kim (1974) finds that many of the fears were baseless in the early years of China’s participation, and in fact, there were no signs of spying or clear indicators of China using its power in the UN to its own advantage (ibid: 308–310). Above all, the forecasted paralysis of the Security Council did not quite actualize, and China used its veto power even less than other permanent members (ibid: 308–310).

Even though China and the United States took measures to warm their bilateral relations in the early 1970s, it did not reflect on China’s behavior in the UN. Having gone through 334 votes in the UNGA from 1971 to 1977, Chai (1979) concludes that China was more likely to support the Third World than stronger Western powers and the Communist camp (p. 399). In addition, out of all countries China’s agreement with the hegemon, the United States, was the lowest (ibid: 403). In that sense, the discourse of a “China threat” perhaps stemmed from the fact that China did not strongly align with those supporting the values of liberal democracies.

A few years after Mao’s death in 1976, China started a set of radical market reforms under the de facto leader Deng Xiaoping. Reforms steered China’s economy sharply towards market economy and were thus branded “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. Essential to the reform policy was to connect China with international trade. In 1980, China finally had access to the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and IMF). Importantly, China was not the only one going through major reforms: the whole international system was expanding rapidly towards the end of the 20th century. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was reformed into a wider dispute solving organ, the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 (China entered in 2001). This was a timely decision as the 1990s saw a rapid growth of free trade agreements between states and regions. Similarly, integration deepened through cooperation forums that emerged for instance based on states’ economic potential (G20, BRICS) or regional interests (ASEAN, APEC). The web of norms also expanded in fields of arms control and disarmament as well as in human rights. Noteworthy was that in these matters China made a full turn compared to Mao’s times and quickly embraced the

values supported by the international community⁴. (Nathan in Ross & Bekkevold, 2016: 168–172.)

Since the launch of the reform policy, China has been assuming the role of a responsible state by taking a more proactive role in international decision making (see e.g. Gowan, 2018). In the Security Council, China has backed efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and recently, it has become particularly active in the human rights regime (Nathan in Ross & Bekkevold, 2016: 172). However, the current consensus among China watchers appears to be that China's non-confrontational era of development known as Deng's "hide and bide" policy seems to have come to an end. Instead, China has toughened its rhetoric under president Xi Jinping and more distinctively presented its model as an alternative to the US-led order (e.g. Mazarr et al. 2018: 4–5).

Before taking a closer look at China's activity in the global arena in the era of Xi Jinping, it is noteworthy that China's influence work in the UN does not just mean drafting resolutions. As a part of its global responsibility campaign, China has occupied central posts within the organization such as in the World Bank, Interpol, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, to name a few. To explain why the nominations to the top seats matter, Lynch and Groll (2017) state that from the Chinese point of view, UNESCO is seen as a vehicle to regulate the global internet. Having a Chinese representative in UNESCO would guarantee that China's voice is heard as the organ is sketching the international norms for cyberspace. Also, as the United States has cut funding in various UN organs since 2011, China has responded by pouring tens of millions of dollars into the UN system (ibid.). Furthermore, China began engaging in peacekeeping fairly recently, but it already has more troops under the UN flag than any NATO member country (Aukia, 2017: 74–75).

2.3.1 China's global game in the Xi Jinping era

After claiming power in all main organs (head of the state, party and military) in 2013, Xi Jinping has earned the title of a strongman by using harsh and determined moves ranging from a domestic anti-corruption campaign to island building in the South China Sea, the area

⁴ China signed several arms control and disarmament treaties, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In the field of human rights China has been a vocal enforcer of a wide range of treaties concerning development, poverty, the rights of children, women and disabled, and acts against torture, genocide and slavery.

that is a constant subject of territorial disputes. On top of these, China has launched geopolitical initiatives, such as the Belt and Road, and established new institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). This has signaled that in the Xi Jinping era, China is all but a passive bystander in the world stage. Stenslie and Gang (2016) go as far as seeing Xi's doctrine, namely phrases such as Chinese Dream or Belt and Road, as part of China's grand strategy of becoming the world's dominant superpower (p. 121). Indeed, in 2017, Xi gave a speech in front of the 19th Party Congress and set a goal that China would be the global leader by 2050. Taking all into account, it is safe to say that China has departed from Deng Xiaoping's maxims of "keep a low profile and bide your time" and "never take the lead" (see e.g. *ibid*: 123; Daekwon, 2017).

In 2017, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era was incorporated into the constitution of the Communist party. As the party is the *de facto* user of power in China, interpreting Xi Jinping Thought will point the way to which China is steering. Domestically, Xi (2016b) has emphasized the core role of the party in exercising leadership in order to meet the centenary goals⁵ and to achieve the Chinese dream (p. 42). In short, the Chinese Dream refers to the prosperity of the state and a sense of collective pride which holds that a hundred years of humiliation will never be revisited. Thus, China has to grow stronger to be able to resist the aggression of others if needed (*ibid*: 43). This also means committing to strengthen the military and to "deepen preparations for military conflict" (Xi, 2016c: 58).

Parallel to building a stronger and militarily capable China, in foreign fora Xi has emphasized the role of peaceful development. In his words, fostering a friendly international environment is an essential part of achieving the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation (Xi, 2014: 479). During Xi's time China has increasingly called the international community to take part in building "a community of shared future for mankind" (人类命运共同体, *Rénlèi mìngyùn gòngtóngtǐ*, from now on CSFM). This vague phrase has rapidly gained prominence in China's foreign policy. Not only is there a book "On building a community of shared future for mankind" that compiles Xi's speeches on world order, but CSFM is also at the core of Xi Jinping Thought and has been added to China's constitution. It is a "new model of international relations" that emphasizes mutually beneficial cooperation contrary to a "Cold

⁵ The centenary goals refer to the level of development by the time of the 100th anniversary of the Communist party (2021) and the 100th anniversary of PRC (2049). By 2021, the goal is to "build a moderately prosperous society in all respects" meaning that the lives of the people living near poverty line will be improved. By 2049, the goal is to "build a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious".

War mentality” or “zero-sum game” (see e.g. Yang, 2019). The new foreign policy also has features that were already introduced in the 1950s as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence⁶. Zhang (2017) writes: “[B]y proposing this new partnership of great powers and the [CSFM] concept, Beijing hopes to convey the message that nations can coexist and achieve common prosperity” (p. 201). The end product is a community that has complete trust in each other in political and security realms and which complements each other economically. In contrast to other approaches in international affairs, CSFM stresses the interest of the world community and thus transcends the central role of self interest in international politics (Mardell, 2017).

Speaking in front of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, Xi explained CSFM through seven points that the international community should engage in. Through these “shoulds”, CSFM appears to be a relatively cosmopolitan and inclusive approach on international politics with its emphasis on multilateralism, cultural diversity and green development. However, as in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the core principle of CSFM is the overriding respect of sovereignty: “The principle of sovereignty is not just embodied in the inviolability of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries. It also means that all countries’ endeavors to promote economic and social development and improve their people’s lives should be respected” (Xi, 2015: 569–575).

From the point of view of the current world order, the notions of sovereignty and mutual respect topped with the notion of nonintervention are not completely unproblematic. Through the building of a community of shared future for mankind, China is promoting its own model at the expense of the postmodern values of human rights and democracy by noting that every country has their own system and way (that should be respected) to achieve common goals. Consequently, this weakens the transparency and accountability of the international system and ties the hands of the international community to explore and respond to violations (see e.g. Piccone, 2018: 8). This also includes reacting to concerning reports, testimonies and leaked documents about the repression of Uighurs in China’s northwestern region of Xinjiang.

⁶ Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: 1. Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. 2. Mutual non-aggression. 3. Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs. 4. Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit. 5. Peaceful co-existence.

Regarding human rights, Rana Mitter (2003) has outlined the characteristics of Chinese “socialist human rights”. Differing from universal human rights, the Chinese model avoids stressing postmodern values at the expense of national sovereignty. Instead, socialist human rights are treated as a socio-historical categorization which at its core is not universal but rather tied to historical circumstances. (p. 225-226.) This perception is still alive as can be seen from China’s State Council’s (2019) human rights report: “There is no universally applicable model, and human rights can only advance in the context of national conditions and people’s needs.” According to the Chinese view, the Western concept of human rights underlines the capitalist virtues such as the freedom to own private property. Thus it does not increase justice for individuals but rather maintains the current distribution of power and wealth between states. On the contrary, the Chinese concept sees human rights as not just social but also economic and holds that these rights are collective rather than individual. (Mitter, 2003: 226.)

One of the core concepts in China’s perception of human rights is the right to development. This has to do with China’s centenary goals: China treats itself as a developing country on its way to become “moderately prosperous society” where development and the eradication of poverty are inseparable and constitute the most essential aspect of human rights. Consequently, development is seen as a primary basic human right without which other human rights cannot be realized (PRC State Council, 2016). From the perspective of the current international order, this is a big issue that also underlines China’s behavior in the UN. Creutz (2019) notes that Western human rights scholars see that China’s “developmentalist” model is removing the one who possesses the rights, a human, out of the limelight. Instead it gives a disproportionate role to the surroundings. Together with China’s other maxim that human rights can only be advanced in the context of national conditions, this means that the development level of a country would dictate the level of human rights protection (see PRC State Council, 2019). Creutz (2019) sums up China’s preference for advocating collective human rights as follows: “Individualistic human rights, particularly civil and political rights, are subordinated to the state and its goals; they should not be construed as a means for individuals to rise against the state.”

The CSFM is a visionary model that respects the diversity between states and utilizes multilateral platforms to achieve common good. However, at the same time it is a modern model that values sovereignty over everything else. This is problematic in that it is primarily interested in achieving common prosperity while disregarding the costs of achieving that

goal. Nevertheless, it is essential to explore the CSFM, as it is also an umbrella under which many of China's other aspirations belong. For instance, in the first Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing in 2017, president Xi noted that moving closer towards a community of shared future for mankind is the ultimate goal of the Belt and Road Initiative (Zhang, 2017: 196). Even though the CSFM is ambiguous and unclear, Zhang thinks that in the short term the concept will be used to ease the tensions on territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The long-term plan is to sustain a favorable external environment for China's economic development. (ibid: 204.)

Reflecting the narrative above, the final part of this chapter examines the role that an ever bolder and stronger China will play in international fora. The research on China's motives is presented in order to examine how China will reach its goals, or in other words, where a community of shared future for mankind will lead us.

2.4 What China wants – four scenarios

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, China's integration into the liberal world is anything but slowing down. This does not only become evident by looking at the memberships in different organizations but is also displayed through national initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the 21st century silk road to connect China to Europe and Africa. With Xi Jinping assuming power, China's significance on the world stage has grown considerably.

A useful tool to analyze the previous literature on China's role in the international system comes from Wang (2015). He sees possible sets of order ranging from the restoration of the autocratic *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) order with China's ruler as the head of the world to the integration into the US-led world order with emphasis on human rights, transgovernmental regimes and democratic values. In between these two ends are Pax Sinica, which holds that China would claim the role of the hegemon that currently belongs to the United States, and the view in which China is striving for more power to reshape the current order more to its liking. (p. 43.) Even though all these models have explanatory power, the current consensus suggests that China is trying to rewrite the rules of the global order rather than claim the leadership within it. As Wang's model bundles several other models, it will be used to walk through the continuum of scenarios by starting from the American-led world order.

2.4.1 Settling in to status quo

To date, China has justified its foreign policy by referring to the teachings of history. The century of humiliation (1839–1949), which means the aggression and imperialism by foreign powers on China's soil, is central to understanding China's stance towards Western powers. With the establishment of the PRC, the century of humiliation was declared to have ended. This, in turn, meant that the PRC would come to consider the territory it had regained as its most valuable asset. According to Kaufman (2010) this still has a clear role in China's foreign policy: "Referencing the experience of being 'carved up,' they championed state sovereignty above all other values, and touted the principle of 'non-interference in domestic affairs' as a basis for refusing to participate in any international actions seen to undermine it" (p. 11). China's sovereignty-oriented view fitted well with the general political climate in the Cold War era. In a way, China integrated into Westphalian world order through its "shameful past".

Since the days of the reform, China has stepped up its efforts and joined the international, regional and other multilateral organizations. The public facade of China is that of a cooperative, friendly and responsible country which greatly contributes to international society. Against the sceptic views, China's public diplomacy turned out to be in line with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. For the country that was selectively turning to capitalism and integrating with the rest of the world, this turn was imperative. Wang and Zhu (2015) write: "The fundamental reason for the success of China's economic reform over the past 30 years is China's willingness to comprehensively and profoundly adapt itself to a previously unfamiliar system, one that China suffered humiliation at the hands of, but one that a newly strengthened China must integrate into" (p. 366–367). Moreover, by being an active joiner, China has been able to manage its public image and has also gained the opportunity to shape the development of that system to its preferences (Nathan in Ross & Bekkevold, 2016: 173).

However, if we accept that the post-Cold War period has seen a rise of values that override national sovereignty, we will come to see that China does not fit in the current world order. Even though China is a signatory of the most essential treaties that sustain the postmodern world order, it has been the promoter of values with so-called Chinese characteristics. That

is to say, China still opposes a handful of norms, such as those of the value of human rights, liberal democracy, and security built upon military alliances (Mazarr et al., 2018: 4). Consequently, China's compliance with treaties in these spheres has not been consistent (ibid: 4). Against this background, it is hard to expect a more proactive China vowing for the order that does not advance its endeavors.

2.4.2 Reshaping the world order

As mentioned above, being part of the current world order has proven beneficial for China's development. However, Wyne (2019) sees the financial crisis that started from the US in 2007 as an inflection point at which China came to understand the vulnerabilities of the current economic order. Global trade, owing much to China's trade volumes, has switched to low gears along with China's declining domestic growth. Furthermore, the other supporting column of the liberal order has been shaking as the spread of democracy came to an end at the turn of a new millennium (Acharya, 2017). Against this and the more recent turn of the US towards unilateralism, we can reflect the actions of the world's second biggest economy.

China's pressure to accelerate the renegotiation of the world order is, of course, dependent on the counter force it faces. In other words, how the US molds the world order determines the level of resistance. In his article, Nathan (2016) concludes that rather than introducing a new "Chinese model" of global governance, China has an old-fashioned way of interpreting sovereignty, and it is not happy with the ways sovereignty has been reinterpreted in more limited ways (p. 189). The more traditional position usually gives China a strong position in face of the law (and in face of the UN Charter), whereas the US' value-based humanitarian approach is relatively new to the international system. On the other hand, breaking away from the traditional interpretation is plausible if it is in China's interest (ibid: 189).

To continue further with Nathan's notion, a study by the US-based Rand Corporation distinguishes several ways through which China positions itself with international order. In addition to the aforementioned rule compliance issues, China challenges and renegotiates terms that contradict its own views – such as human rights. Instead of just challenging the existing institutions, China is setting up new ones, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). (Mazarr et al. 2018: 37–41, 48–49.) The report summarizes: "Like any powerful country, China's leaders are likely to use the country's growing influence to

shape the rules of the order to serve their interests and to circumvent those rules that do not” (ibid: 3).

As the current world order is built on liberal values promoted by the West, Acharya (2017) reminds that the West is also the one that has the most to lose – rising powers, such as the BRICS countries, will demand more say in international decision making and will be increasingly suspicious towards the schemes suggested by the West. Ikenberry (2011) does not see China trying to overthrow the status quo any time soon as it also benefits from it. However, according to him, China will seek more authority within the current order (p. 57). Ikenberry’s notion has similar elements as Feng and He (2017). They criticise interpreting the order statically and holistically. Instead, they claim that there are several sub-orders within the liberal order out of which China might want to change some: “China might challenge the security order as realists predict, but it is not rational to overthrow the economic order, because, as liberals argue, China has been a ‘winner’ by joining the liberal economic order after the Cold War. China’s communist ideology might be at odds with the democracy-based political order, but it will not lead to war as long as China does not export communism or revolution to the outside world” (p. 28–29).

Even though the nuances and emphases vary, scholars share the view that China will seek a sturdier foothold in the global system. Nowhere does this become more clear than in the human rights regime. By going through several resolutions and voting records of the UN human rights organs, Piccone (2018) finds that China is not only taking a more proactive role in the field of human rights but also using its role to change the rules of the game. Communist party rhetoric, including the aforementioned “community of shared future of mankind”, has been introduced to the UN resolutions such as “Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights”, adopted in 2018. This way, China reinforces its interpretations of sovereignty and nonintervention in internal affairs. Consequently, it weakens the UN’s ability to address China’s worsening human rights record. (Piccone, 2018: 5–8; see also Yan, 2019; Kothari, 2018; Gao, 2017.) At the same time with the US turning more inwards, and for instance retreating from the Human Rights Council, the group of countries associating with China is growing. This, in turn, strengthens China’s position within the UN system.

2.4.3 The hegemon

The extent to which China will try to advance in Wang's continuum is a constant puzzle for academics. The strongest argument in favor of China attempting to dismantle the US' hegemony was witnessed in the 19th Party Congress in 2017. In his speech, president Xi Jinping explicitly announced that by the mid-21st century "China [will] become a global leader in terms of composite national strength and international influence" (Xinhua, 2017). The discourse of China taking world leadership has certainly had support also among Western scholars (see e.g. Pillsbury, 2016), but it has also faced resilient opposition. Friedman (2009) goes as far as seeing China as incompetent to take the leadership due to its slowing economy and high social disparity between different regions. This structure topped with a centrally governed political system is not stable, Friedman argues (p. 88–97).

As discussed already in the second scenario, the global power balance is likely to be reconfigured, and this can already be seen for instance in the human rights regime. This means stripping the US off some of its power. However, Wyne (2019) is not convinced that China would want to be in a position in which it also would have to be a key responder in global issues, such as humanitarian or economic crises. Similarly, Mastro (2019) believes that Beijing is not interested in establishing alliances on a global scale and sustaining global military presence. Instead, it would prefer displacing the US in the Indo-Pacific region to become a regional hegemon in every aspect. This position would grant China enough power that it could counter the US whenever needed. (p. 31.)

Finally, China's domestic policy will determine its global ambitions. China is benefiting from the current order and has become more and more integrated into it. The legitimacy of the Communist party relies on economic growth and the realization of the "Chinese dream", which means it is above all dependent on a peaceful and stable international environment. In other words, China may try to adjust order or bend the rules to its liking, but it is unlikely to start a lengthy struggle for leadership, at least in the foreseeable future (see Wang & Zhu in Ikenberry et al. 2015: 366–368).

2.4.4 All under China-led heaven

Tianxia (天下, all under heaven) is a millennia-old system that lays down the foundation of Chinese political order. With dynasties changing in imperial China, the perception of tianxia has also varied, but the party doctrine reflects the interpretation of the Qin (221–207 BCE) and Han (206 BCE–9 CE and 25–220 CE) dynasties. The tianxia system relied on one

ultimate leader, the son of heaven, who received his mandate to rule from heaven. It follows that the son of heaven was the only lawful leader of the known world. Areas and communities not under the son of heaven's rule were seen as inferior but could become part of the one true political system if they accepted its norms and rules. Evidently, this model of governance did not allow political opposition or competing groups, although in practise, applications of the model were rather pragmatic, and some forms coexistence and cooperation did in fact take place. (Wang in Ikenberry et al. 2015: 44–47; Dreyer, 2016: 1024.) Tianxia is a top-down hierarchical system in which the welfare of the people is fulfilled through the leader's heavenly guidance. Thus, it is incompatible with the current order that has a bottom-up approach in a sense that the rights of individuals are the bedrock of lawmaking and governance. Also, in contrast to the Westphalian system with nation states having conflicting interests, tianxia is a system to unite the world into one harmonious whole.

Given its broadness, the tianxia order is a label through which many historical events can be interpreted. For instance, Mao Zedong's world liberation through communist revolution has been viewed as Mao's tianxia pursuit (Wang in Ikenberry et al. 2015: 44). Some view the adoption of Hong Kong's model of "one country, two systems" as a move towards tianxia and away from the nation state framework (Zhang & Hu, 2017: 205). Be that as it may, tianxia has without a doubt gained foothold among Chinese scholars in the post-Cold War era. Zhao Tingyang (2018) argues that in an age of globalization, "all under heaven" coexisting harmoniously is the only suitable model. An anarchic "battleground-model" is doomed to fail and leads to endless conflicts.

It is highly likely that the tianxia order will be revisited both at rhetorical and theoretical levels. It echoes in party propaganda calling for the realization of "harmonious society" and the "Chinese dream" (Zhang & Hu, 2017: 205). President Xi has himself given a speech in which he addressed that all the people living under one sky should put aside their differences and strive to build a community of shared future for mankind (Xi, 2017: 521). On the basis of what has been discussed earlier, however, a China-orchestrated eradication of the nation state system is still a utopian/dystopian concept. Dreyer (2016) notes that China has adopted the Westphalian doctrine to such degree that abandoning its core principles could make China vulnerable in sensitive matters: "Given the restive nature of some minority groups on the PRC's periphery, it would be foolish for Beijing to sanction a precedent that allowed external intervention on behalf of the rights of such groups" (p. 1027). Dreyer continues that tianxia was perhaps a useful organizing principle "in an environment where

China was the largest and most powerful state with a civilization whose superiority was widely acknowledged, and in the absence of a competing paradigm” (ibid: 1027). In an age of strong nation states with strong national identities, introducing a world order with China as a paramount leader of all people is farfetched. In summary, China needs the current order in pursuit of its Chinese dream of national rejuvenation at least for the time being.

3 The world of our making: Constructivism in international relations

On many occasions, China has voiced that international relations (IR) in the 21st century should not be interpreted through a realist zero-sum-game assumption in which another's absolute gain is another's loss. In this instance China's view has been accepted. This thesis' analysis is concerned with China's subjective action in the UNGA. This action happens through certain language and with certain intentions and goals. Therefore, human ideas and actions are treated as the building blocks of reality. This is to say, this thesis sees international relations from a constructivist point of view. At the core of constructivist thought lies an argument of the international system and states being products of human minds and social interaction (Booth & Erskine, 2016: 5).

Constructivism stepped into the field in the late 1980s and adapted social theories to the study of the international system. As part of what Onuf calls the fourth generation of IR studies, constructivism starts from the notion that humans are social beings and through interaction they form social relations – and more broadly – make the world what it is (Onuf, 1998: 58; Booth & Erskine, 2016: 24–35). As Theys (2018) writes, constructivism was an approach-on-demand. The end of the Cold War with Germany uniting and Soviet states claiming independence one after another without much resistance was something that neither realism nor liberalism could explain in a satisfying manner. It became apparent that IR had not paid much attention to people and their agency. It is people that shape the international relations through their actions and interactions. (p. 36.)

That perspective came to challenge the whole structure of international politics that was largely dominated by rationalist schools of thought. Constructivists questioned the system in which states, egoist and rational in their character and driven by material forces, are seen as the most important players in world politics (Booth & Erskine, 2016: 35). That view owes much to a presumption that international politics is anarchic by nature, that is, organized in a way that there are no higher powers above states. On the contrary, Alexander Wendt (1992) argued that “anarchy is what states make of it”, in other words a social construction shared by nation states (p. 394–401).

Wendt's argument already sheds light to constructivists' point of focus. Unlike rational choice theory which can be utilized for estimates or predictions on how rational states behave, constructivism sees the international system as an arena of actors that create the structure

we agree upon. Constructivists themselves are set to describe the environment in which international politics takes place and to specify the forces that are active in that arena. That is, constructivists are searching for the rules of the game of international politics. (Brown & Ainley, 2009: 49.)

3.1. Rules, agents and structures

When examining the rules of the game, the ontology of international relations, it is challenging but crucial to find a solid starting point. Constructivist scholars go to great lengths discovering the base upon which to build their world view. Starting from the people, the creators of the constructivist world, would make sense unless there was another truism. Wendt (1987) writes: “1) human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live; and 2) society is made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors” (p. 337–338). To put it simply, people collaborate – and in many instances fight – to create the conditions for the just and functioning world. Thus, they are organized into a society. In order to function, society must have a certain code of conduct – or order – that people choose or choose not to follow. These choices that people make give them roles in society. It follows that people make society, and society molds the way people behave in it. This thesis approaches the matter starting from what Onuf calls the third element linking people and society, that is, rules and norms (Onuf in Kubálková et al. 2011: 59).

Rules have two distinctive characteristics. They give social meaning to material reality and they are transformative in nature. First, to continue with the game metaphor, following Wittgenstein’s thoughts Onuf states that rules tell us how to play the game. Without rules, the game has no social meaning, that is, without a set of predetermined boundaries there is no way of judging whether some action is morally or legally suitable (Onuf, 1989: 47). Rules have both constitutive (guiding) and regulative (governing) roles. In order to successfully finish the game of chess, one has to be aware of the regulative rule that the game only ends with a checkmate. Equally important is to comprehend what counts as a checkmate (constitutive rule). (Kratochwil, 1989: 26.) Rules give social meaning to chess, but, on the other hand, without the existence of chess the rules of chess naturally have no point of reference: “Resources are nothing until mobilized through rules, rules are nothing until matched to resources to effectuate rule” (Onuf, 1989: 64).

Secondly, rules are transformative in nature. The more people follow a rule, the stronger it will be and vice versa (Onuf in Kubálková et al. 2011: 68). Take the act of queuing as an example: if a person breaks the convention of queuing by cutting in the line, the rest of the queuers are posed with the dilemma of whether to endure the misbehavior or to consider a convention being broken and to seek saving time by cutting in themselves. The transformative character of rules has fundamental consequences for the whole system of our interest, and therefore it is among the key concepts of this study.

Rules reveal who are the active participants of any given society. These participants are called agents. In the framework of international relations, states, federations, international organizations, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations among others are seen as agents. China has agency through its sovereignty in the state system. The UN's agency, on the other hand, is more complex. While it is a coalition of over 190 agents, it is more than just a tool that effectuates and implements the will of those states. The UN itself also has qualities of an agent, such as goal-orientation, ability for decision making and relative autonomy. In the UN's case, "rules define shared tasks (like 'development'), create and define new categories of actors (like 'refugees') and create new interests of actors (like 'promoting human rights')" (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 21). Barnett and Finnemore call these sorts of bodies bureaucracies: as agents they are somewhat special, as they are both constructed of and creators of rules (ibid: 18).

Agents are seen as acting rationally to achieve certain goals, which in turn are based on people's wishes and needs. Norms and rules point out appropriate goals to pursue (Onuf in Kubálková et al. 2011: 59–60). Thus, they guide actions: some acts are constrained and others are enabled. Agents create relatively stable patterns of rules that are called institutions. Together with these institutions, whether the outcomes they produce are intended or unintended, agents give society its structure (ibid: 61). Wendt (1999) broadens this concept by claiming that the structure is a combination of material conditions, interests and shared ideas (shared ideas itself is a wide concept including not just our perceptions and interpretations but also rules and norms). Every structure has to have these three elements or it ceases to exist: "Without ideas there are no interests, without interests there are no meaningful material conditions, without material conditions there is no reality at all", Wendt writes (p. 139). To give an example, in order to be concerned about North Korea's nuclear capabilities (material conditions), the United States needs to be familiar with the idea of a nuclear missile and its usage. Realizing the damage that a nuclear weapon could cause

partly explains the US' attitude towards North Korea, but does not offer an explanation for a warmer attitude towards the United Kingdom that has ten times more nuclear missiles than North Korea. Thus, the US needs to have an intersubjective understanding (which Wendt also calls common knowledge) as the basis of its estimates of the UK's and North Korea's intentions. Through reciprocal social acts, the US has concluded to treat North Korea as an enemy and Britain as an ally (interests). (Wendt, 1995: 73.)

The example of North Korea's nuclear capabilities also exposes the core of Wendt's thought. Wendt's (1999) maxim goes: "The structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces" (p. 1). That is, the US's stance towards the UK and North Korea cannot be explained just by material conditions. It is rather a whole set of information, estimates, rules, conventions and culture, all of these belonging under the label of shared ideas that "construct the identities and interests of purposive actors" (ibid: 1). Even though shared ideas are given the primary role in the world's creation, all three elements go hand in hand. When North Korea and the US started to mediate their bilateral relationship, which in Wendt's model means transforming interests towards one another, the first step was to alter North Korea's material conditions. Dessler (1989) lays out a rather clear representation on how the interaction of these three dimensions of society play out: structure is a medium of agents' activity and it is also altered through that activity (p. 461). In other words, action, guided by rules, reproduces or transforms some part of structure. The notion of the transformative nature of structure is essential for constructivism and for this thesis: based on what has been stated above we can see how a rule, once created or changed by China or any other agent, puts the social structure in motion.

It is also needless to underline that agency is based on contract and has its grounds in a certain structure. That is to say, agents and other elements of the structure do not possess any values, such as power, separate from the structure they belong to. Take the institution of the nation state as an example. Onuf (2011) notes that the principle of sovereignty is a highly formal rule that constitutes the society of states (p. 69). As many groups of scholars in the field of IR treat the sovereign state as a bedrock unit of research, it is important to acknowledge that sovereignty can be seen as a shared view of the (temporal) structure of governance that is commonly traced back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 (see e.g. Brown & Ainley, 2009: 71-72). That is to say, before the state society we had a system in which religious communities played the key role. Like its predecessor, the state system

should not be seen as a permanent structure either. Contract-based order, by definition, can be and has been altered.

A major shift in agents' performance is a useful mind game to take further, as it exposes the interdependence of the agents and the structure. Wendt (1987) writes: "The deep structure of the state system, for example, exists only in virtue of the recognition of certain rules and the performance of certain practices by states; if states ceased such recognition of performances, the state system as presently constituted would automatically disappear" (p. 359). The crisis of sovereignty (quality of agency) would be a crisis of the international system (structure) for it threatens the fundamental principle of order in the current structure. Tracing back Wendt's thoughts on the elements of structure, the lack of an idea (sovereignty) also renders of interests and material conditions meaningless: without the state and the principle of territorial integrity, there is only a no man's land occupied by people.

3.2. The lifecycle of norms

To understand the motives and interests of an agent (mainly China in this thesis) it is crucial to understand the dynamics of the constructivist world. Having described that, this thesis now takes a pragmatic turn. The practical application of the theory comes from Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). Their paper "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change" describes the evolution of a norm. The significance of norms stems from the fact that they are shared ideas or expectations of appropriate behavior. From a constructivist point of view this means that, as explained above, norms are an inalienable part of the world's structure. Essential for this study is a remark that norms do not just emerge or change but rather are consciously pursued by a subject, or an agent, as referred above. These agents that actively participate in norm creation are called norm entrepreneurs. (p. 894.)

The process of a norm becoming widely accepted has been divided in three stages. It starts from norm emergence, which in practice means that norm entrepreneurs, for example non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations, attempt to convince a critical mass to support a norm. In this case, the critical mass refers to the amount of states needed to elevate a new model of thought into an agenda. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) write: "[N]ew norms never enter a normative vacuum but instead emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of

interest” (p. 897). In Chapter 2, the current international order was described as postmodern in nature with resilient characteristics of modernism in it. This order and the set of norms it holds is the normative space that sets the standards for what is seen as appropriate. As China or any other state tries to bring its own components of thought to the current normative space, these are evaluated according to their compatibility with the already existing norm code. In this sense, bringing forward a new norm means challenging the old order.

Regardless of the matter – whether it is a prohibition of landmines or women’s suffrage – studies have found that there is a dividing threshold between the first two stages (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 897). Before the norm becomes broadly embraced and accepted, or cascades, as Finnemore and Sikkink call it, studies show that it requires one-fourth to one-third of the states, called norm leaders, to endorse it (see e.g. Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 901; Centola et al. 2018: 1116). In case of the ban on land mines in 1997, the support of 60 norm leaders was required to start a cascade. By the end of that year, 124 countries had ratified the Ottawa landmine treaty. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) also note that some states are more critical to the norm’s adoption than others. Critical states are those that have a clear interest to sustain the old structure that the rising norm is trying to shake. As a big polluter and coal producer, China is seen as a more critical state in climate combat than Finland for instance. If a norm has critical states onboard, it is more likely to cascade. (p. 901.) The third stage of a norm’s adoption is called internalization. At this point the norm has become accepted to the extent that its objectives are no longer questioned. The very quality that these norms are taken for granted makes them powerful: as they are not a source of conflict, they are easily ignored. (ibid: 904.) Thus, they have integrated into the structure.

The occurrence of pervasive change in the international atmosphere does not just transmit from one country to another but rather is a process of socialization. In the context of international relations, this means an ideological process in which agents define their place in the international community and the group they belong to. Redefining one’s stance never happens in vacuum either. The web of motives stretches from having the approval of the state’s citizens to being approved by international society and allies. (ibid: 902.) Few dare to stay out if everyone else is on the bandwagon.

Finally, based on their earlier research and the research of others, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) have sketched the intrinsic characteristics of norms that are prone to prosper more

likely than others. Following the observations of Boli and Thomas (1997), the article claims that norms including elements of universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress and world citizenship are likely to flourish in international fora. Similarly, also taking the eradication of slavery and colonization into account, independent research by different scholars points towards a more humane turn in the international norm code. This especially concerns human dignity, integrity and prevention of bodily harm of vulnerable groups. To refer to land mines one more time, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) note: “The speed with which the ban on landmines moved from norm emergence to a norm cascade reinforces the idea that norms prohibiting bodily harm to innocent bystanders are among those most likely to find transnational support” (p. 907). Against this background, it would appear that the overriding sovereignty-focused worldview promoted by China is not the type of norm that is likeliest to succeed.

The rules of the game have now been presented as far as they are relevant for this research. In sum, our world order is based on a social contract, and parts of it, whether small or big, are constantly being reproduced and transformed by us, people. On a closer look, this transformation takes place within social structure and is created by active participants of that given structure, i.e. agents. They create the world through social interaction. This study observes the transformation of norm-like policy recommendations given by the United Nations General Assembly and especially China’s role as a norm leader in this process. This theory will be put into practice after the material of this research has been introduced.

4 Methodology

This research looks into the UN's decision making through the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Based on the previous research, the hypothesis is that China's influence in the UN has grown, and by changing the resolutions, China changes the rules of the international order. Thus, the study aims to test the hypothesis and its suitability in the UNGA. Specifically, it seeks to offer an answer to the following question:

How has China performed in the United Nations General Assembly in the Xi Jinping era?

Given the broad nature of the research question, it is divided into three sub-questions that all in their part explain China's performance:

1. *How active was China in the United Nations General Assembly between 2013 and 2018?*
2. *What does the language of the resolutions reveal about China's way of influencing in the United Nations General Assembly?*
 - *Has the United Nations General Assembly adopted elements of China's agenda in its resolutions?*
3. *Who are China's supporters in the United Nations General Assembly's decision making?*

As the research question also may imply, this study takes both a quantitative and qualitative approach. While the sub-questions 1 and 3 can be answered through quantitative measures, the sub-question 2 combines both approaches. This stage involves measuring the appearance of particular statements, words and phrases in the documents but also includes a close reading of the texts and making credible and replicable inferences. As such, this part of the research employs content analysis (see e.g. Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Inferences are then summarized into a narrative which is examined in relation to the broader context (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002: 105).

Here, quantizing, i.e. turning a non-numeric sample into numeric data, also serves as a guide to qualitative analysis. That is, the observations rising from the large amount of data give the criteria for the resolutions that are examined qualitatively. As the qualitative content analysis focuses on the handful of resolutions that underline China's ambitions, giving a quantitative overview also serves as a yardstick; it sets qualitative findings in proportion. A

more detailed description of how this research was conducted will follow after the core of this research, the resolutions, have been introduced.

4.1. Resolutions

This study relies solely on material that is accessible for everyone and can be found online. In the website's terms and conditions of use, The United Nations grants the permission to use their material for non-commercial purposes (UN, 2020a). This study's sample was drawn from the UNGA's compilation documents. These documents include all the resolutions that the UNGA has adopted as well as the voting records and the sponsors. These documents can be accessed through the United Nations Digital Library⁷.

Compilation documents carry titles such as "Resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its 72nd session. Volume 3, 25 December 2017-17 September 2018." The title indicates the number of the session, which has grown annually since the General Assembly first gathered in 1946. The analysis in this study concerned the resolutions of six sessions, from the 68th (September 2013) to 73rd (December 2018). The latter part of the 73rd session was not analyzed as the material was not published at the time of this research. Compilation volumes are published around six months after the period in question has ended.

Compilation documents are divided into three volumes per year. The first volume is a thick list of resolutions, circa 1,000 pages, adopted from September to December. The UNGA calls this period the main part of the session, as this is when most of the work of the main committees is done and the general debates are held (Ruder et al. 2011: 14). Volume two is more like a leaflet compared to other volumes, and mainly lists elections and appointments made in the main part of the session. As they contain no resolutions, all volume two documents were left outside of this study. The latter part of the UNGA's annual session is called the resumed part, and it is more oriented in field-specific consultations, debates and working group meetings (ibid: 14). Although less resolutions are adopted in the resumed part, they are compiled into volume three, and were naturally taken into account (except in the case of the 73rd session).

⁷ The website that was used to access the documents:

https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?ln=en&as=1&m1=p&p1=Resolutions+and+Decisions+of+the+General+Assembly&f1=series&op1=a&m2=a&p2=&f2=&op2=a&m3=a&p3=&f3=&dt=&d1d=&d1m=&d1y=&d2d=&d2m=&d2y=&rm=&ln=en&action_search=Search&sf=year&so=d&rg=50&c=United+Nations+Digital+Library+System&of=hb&fti=0&fti=0

As stated before, the sponsorship of the resolution indicates the states that are responsible for drafting the resolution. All the resolutions from the chosen period had more than one sponsor, and compilation documents did not specify main sponsors and cosponsors of the resolutions. As there was no indication of the distinct writer of the draft, all the resolutions with China as one of the sponsors were examined. As for the actual data gathering, keyword search was used to find the documents that China has sponsored. In compilation documents, the sponsorship is either marked right under the document symbol (see Figure 1) or in the footnote. The sponsors are specified by the country's name, and China goes by the name "China" instead of its full official name "The People's Republic of China". Thus, the search word used was "China".



Figure 1. Sponsors of the resolution 72/136. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. Source: *The UN; Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its seventy-second session, Volume I, p. 160.*

Having gone through all the documents, the number of China-sponsored resolutions was altogether 351. The count was verified four times. The number includes both the resolutions China as a state has sponsored (n=248) and the resolutions China sponsored in collaboration with Group 77 (n=103). Group 77, also known as "Group 77 and China" (G77) is a UN-based economic collaboration group that consists of 135 countries, mainly developing countries. As China has been seen as a champion of the Third World, analyzing the resolutions Group 77 has put forward gave a fruitful chance to reflect on whether China's influence work was also done through the coalition of like-minded countries.

It should be acknowledged that focusing on the resolutions that China and G77 have sponsored is a conscious, curtailing choice. Singling out the resolutions China has not sponsored leaves some things in the dark. For one, this study's notion of performance only concerns active participation in drafting the resolutions and leaves China's wider voting

behavior unexamined. Naturally, and confirmed by the quantitative research, China supported all the resolutions it sponsored. However, this study does not reveal what kind of resolutions and worldview China is voting against in the General Assembly. Also, going through all the resolutions of the General Assembly or all the resolutions China has supported (in addition to those that it sponsors) or opposed might have uncovered nuances that this study’s sample does not have. However, the sample here was selected to answer the specific research question of this study. Thus, with this study’s aim in mind, the chosen exclusions are justifiable.

4.2. Quantitizing

The data of this research, the UNGA’s resolutions, consists of text that manifests the political will of states. It is non-numeric data out of which numeric data was extracted. This process is called quantitizing (see e.g. Sandelowski, 2011). In practise, after all the resolutions that China sponsored during the six sessions were identified, Google’s spreadsheet software was used to list the titles as well as all the relevant information. For this study’s purpose, this meant that every title included information of the responsible committee, whether there was a vote, the possible voting result and the list of countries that supported, opposed and voted for abstention (see Figure 2). With the help of the spreadsheet tools and algorithms, this data provided information on China’s activity in different sessions and committees. In the next chapter, these findings are listed in tables and explained.

Resolution	Committee	Vote?	Voting result	Supporters	Opposers	Absent
68/139. Improvement of the situation of the	Third	N				
68/146. The girl child	Third	N				
68/151. Global efforts for the total elimination of	Third	Y	134–11–46	Afghanistan, Al	Australia, Ca	Albania, Ar
68/152. Use of mercenaries as a means of	Third	Y	128–55–8	Afghanistan, Al	Albania, And	Colombia,
68/153. Universal realization of the right of	Third	N				
68/154. The right of the Palestinian people to	Third	Y	178–7–4	Afghanistan, Al	Canada, Isra	Cameroon
68/159. Human rights and cultural diversity	Third	Y	136–54	Afghanistan, Al	Albania, And	None
68/160. Enhancement of international law	Third	N				

Figure 2. A screen capture of the spreadsheet of listed resolutions. Source: Compiled by author.

According to Sandelowski (2011), quantitizing “will allow analysts to discern and to show regularities or peculiarities in qualitative data they might not otherwise see or be able simply to communicate, or to determine that a pattern or idiosyncrasy they thought was there is not.” In addition to providing insight on the possible changes in China’s behavior, quantitizing

also had two other purposes. First, this information guided and facilitated the qualitative stage of the research. In other words, the data pointed to the areas of China's particular interest that warranted closer examination. Secondly, as stated before, it gave an overall picture of the whole sample, providing context to the qualitative findings.

The quantitative part also included searching for an answer to the third research question by distinguishing the supporters of China-sponsored resolutions. This was also done computationally using the "countif" command. This command enables the counting of every cell (the cells all stand for one resolution) in a particular column that has for example the word "Afghanistan" in it. Counting the appearances of "Afghanistan" in the columns "Supporters", "Opposers" and "Absent" returns the total activity of Afghanistan in the sample. The activity of all the UN member states was counted using this operation. This also included manual adjustments as there are states whose names also correspond with other states', thus outputting false voting behavior (e.g. Sudan – South Sudan; Republic of Korea – Democratic People's Republic of Korea). To avoid miscalculation, these states were identified and given differing names (e.g. SudanA). The end product was another spreadsheet that distinguishes the states' voting behavior per session and in total.

4.3. Content analysis

At its heart, content analysis aims to find, analyze and clarify meanings arising from the text (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002: 103). Content analysis can be utilized both in quantitative and qualitative research. In this study, both aspects were put into use.

There are several ways to conduct content analysis starting from the very fundamental distinction of whether the analysis is material-driven (bottom-up) or theory-driven (top-down) (e.g. Chi, 1997: 25; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002: 108). This study takes the middle way, i.e. theory-guiding content analysis. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002), this method is material-driven, but it relies on the already existing theoretical framework (p. 108). Thus, this study sought to test whether China's known way of acting could also be applied in the context of the UNGA. However, this study also acknowledged the new notions arising from the sample.

To give a concrete example, answering the question "What does the language of the resolutions reveal of China's way of influencing in the United Nations General Assembly?"

quickly revealed that China's expressions might have been adopted in the UNGA. To determine this more systematically, the sub-question "Has the United Nations General Assembly adopted elements of China's agenda in its resolutions?" was formulated. This also included adding computational word counting to the study. In other words, the keywords that reflected China's agenda were searched for. As mentioned earlier, China has introduced a model for a new type of international relations which aims to create a community of shared future for mankind. In addition to just focusing on the CSFM's appearance in resolutions, terms that can belong or relate to CSFM were also looked for. These categories were created on the basis of the theoretical framework. The terms closely linked to CSFM are:

Mutually beneficial cooperation / win-win cooperation

Non-interference / non-intervention

Harmonious / peaceful coexistence

Belt and Road Initiative

It must be noted that the appearance of these terms did not necessarily imply the promotion of CSFM. For instance, "non-interference" is an established word closely linked to the core principles of the modern order, sovereignty and territorial integrity. That is, the word in itself is commonly used by China although not specifically Chinese. For this reason applying a qualitative approach was imperative.

Instead of just counting the amount of certain words and expressions, a more wholesome approach was taken in order to not only reveal the explicit manifestations from the text but to also expose latent or contextual content (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). It must be noted that making contextual interpretations is a vulnerability: different scholars might come to different conclusions with the same sample. Thus, in this study, the contextual content was exposed by using a combination of close reading of the resolutions and going through the United Nations meeting records and explanations of vote. In other words, mixing the contextual interpretations with actual data was avoided. Rather, based on the aforementioned sources, this study composed a narrative that presents the interpretations that other states made out of China-sponsored resolutions. The subject was approached from the point of view of the present order to understand China's attempts to make international order more to its liking. The examination of interpretations made by the states that support the postmodern order exposed the common "threat factors" that these states link to China-sponsored resolutions.

The next chapter of this study presents the results in descriptive and explanatory terms. It is descriptive in the sense that it presents the numeric data as it is. Arguments of whether there is causality or correlation between certain indicators were avoided. The part that applies a more qualitative approach, although the reasoning and grounds of it are theory-guided, relies wholly on the public records and merely characterizes their contents within the given context. An explanatory part that presents the implications of the observations based on the theoretical framework is included at the end of every sub-chapter.

5 Results & reflections

This chapter starts with an answer to the first sub-question about China's activity in the General Assembly by laying out the overall picture of China's activity in 2013–2018. This will be followed by three sub-chapters that take an in-depth look into the resolutions in the three UNGA committees that China is most active in. These sub-chapters will shed light on China's way of operating and show that China has got elements of its agenda adopted through the resolutions. Having examined China's way of working, this study then turns to look at the enablers. As said, in case of a vote, the General Assembly uses the "one country, one vote" principle, which means that China needs associates in order to get its ambitions promoted. The last sub-chapter, "China's bandwagon", reveals the group of the most loyal supporters of China-sponsored resolutions. Finally, from this mosaic of information, it was possible to compile a description of China's performance in the General Assembly in the Xi Jinping era.

Structurally, this chapter contains both the results and the interpretations that were made based on the theoretical framework. This is for the sake of clarity and readability: to avoid repetition as much as possible, and given the amount of information and detail in the results, this study incorporated the reflective part "Reflections" at the end of every sub-chapter. These parts have been separated to keep the results intact.

5.1. China's work in the General Assembly in numbers

Over the course of the six years in the General Assembly, the number of resolutions sponsored by China was 351. The average amount of resolutions sponsored per one session was thus 58.5 (see Table 1 below for a detailed list). Throughout the time period, China's participation varied between 50 to 69 sponsored resolutions per session. This variation went in waves and was common: UNGA's agenda remained rather stable throughout the years and the majority of the titles in the sample were dealt with on an annual basis. However, some of the examined resolutions were brought to the table every two years or more sporadically, which at least partly explains year-on-year divergence (see Appendix). Thus, there was no clear trend either way in the number of resolutions China sponsored.

For the comparison, the resolutions of the 72nd session (2017–2018) were arbitrarily chosen for closer examination. In that session, China was a sponsor in 60 resolutions whereas the

number of sponsorships of the United States was 39. Russia placed in between the US and China with its 48 sponsorships (most of which were sponsored side-by-side with China). In total, 283 resolutions were passed in the 72nd session.

China-sponsored resolutions by committee	68th	69th	70th	71st	72nd	73rd	Total
No reference ⁸	16	27	16	18	14	11	102
First	6	9	5	9	5	8	42
Second	4	10	6	5	12	25	62
Third	21	20	22	23	25	18	129
Fourth	2	2	1	1	0	0	6
Fifth	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
Sixth	0	0	1	0	3	2	6
Total	50	69	52	56	60	64	351
Out of which "G77 and China"	14	21	12	11	17	28	103

Table 1. China-sponsored resolutions in the General Assembly's committees 2013–2018. Source: Compiled by author.

It is important to emphasize that the great majority of the China-sponsored resolutions, two-thirds to be exact, were passed without a vote. If a vote did not take place, no state was against the adoption of a resolution and it was adopted with consensus. Out of the over 350 resolutions 120 were settled with a vote. Yet, the China-sponsored resolutions were questioned more often during the last two sessions of the sample period. Whereas the percentage of vote in the first four sessions was circa 30 percent, in the 72nd and the 73rd the percentage climbed to 42 and 39, respectively (see Table 2).

Committee-level examination revealed that the percentage of China-sponsored resolutions settled with vote varied between zero percent in the Sixth Committee and 54 percent in the Second Committee. As a reminder, the Second Committee, also called the Economic and Financial Committee, is the body that deals with issues such as economic growth, macroeconomic policies, development and sustainability. The most controversial session in this regard was the 72nd session in which nine out of twelve China-backed resolutions were

⁸ In the UN compilation documents, there is a category "Resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee". This means that these resolutions were not prepared by any of the designated committees. In this and other tables to come, this category is referred to with the word "No reference".

called for a vote, bringing the percentage of votes to 75 (see Table 2). The number of resolutions that China has sponsored in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth committees was very small (0–3 per session), and hence making interpretations out of their percentages would be misleading.

Resolutions called for vote, %	68th	69th	70th	71st	72nd	73rd	Total
No reference	6	7	0	0	7	18	6
First	33	33	40	56	60	50	45
Second	50	70	50	40	75	36	54
Third	38	35	45	39	48	56	44
Fourth	0	0	0	100	0	0	17
Fifth	100	100	100	0	0	0	50
Sixth	00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	28	29	31	30	42	39	33

Table 2. Percentage of China-sponsored resolutions requested for vote. Source: Compiled by author.

The Second Committee was also the only committee in which China’s activity increased. Not only did the number of sponsorships grow steadily throughout the sessions, but, taking into account that the total amount of resolutions passed in the Second Committee has been around forty in any given session, also the degree of China’s participation increased. China’s level of engagement was 10 percent out of all the resolutions that the Second Committee passed in the 68th session. The number grew close to 30 percent in the 72nd session and peaked to 65 percent in the 73rd session.

In the Third Committee, China sponsored 129 resolutions altogether, which was more than it sponsored in all other designated committees combined. The Third Committee is officially called the Committee of Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues. However, the UN itself highlights the aspect of human rights by stating that in the 73rd session alone more than half of the Third Committee’s draft resolutions were directly related to human rights. The Committee also works closely with the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNHRC. (UN, 2020b.) China’s emphasis on human rights was in line with other global powers. In the 72nd session, China sponsored 25 Third Committee resolutions while the US sponsored 22 and Russia 18. The Third Committee’s percentage of vote, 44 percent, exceeds the average level with over ten points.

China has also been a frequent sponsor of certain issues in the sphere of security. In the First committee, also known as the Committee of Disarmament and International Security, China promoted the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the prevention of an arms race in space and security issues concerning information technology and telecommunication. In the span of six years, China sponsored 42 First Committee resolutions of which 45 percent were adopted with vote. For the first two sessions, the percentage of vote was the same as the average of the whole sample, 33 percent. As it approached the present moment, the number climbed closer to 50 percent and even exceeded it.

Reflections

On the basis of the sheer number of the sponsored resolutions, China seemed to be a consistent norm leader in the UNGA between 2013 and 2018. By sponsoring circa 60 resolutions per session it was more active in the UNGA than other leading powers, that is, the United States and Russia. If a state's responsibility was to be measured on the basis of participation in the international forum, China would already be the most responsible global power in the UNGA. In other words, the data from the UNGA indicates that China has indeed started a bolder phase in its foreign policy and abandoned Deng Xiaoping's "hide and bide" policy.

Noticeably, the vast majority of the resolutions were passed uncontested. This translates to a notion that in the majority of China-backed resolutions, the contents were in line with the aims of the international community. This, again, polishes the image of China being a responsible, consensus-driven state, which it de facto is for the most of the time. The last two sessions, however, saw a rise in the percentage of votes, and the committee-level examination pointed out the sore points between China and the rest of the international community. Throughout the sessions, the rise was most substantial in the field of security (in the First Committee), where the rate of disagreement rose from 33 percent in the first two sessions to over 50 percent in the 71st and the 72nd sessions.

China's particular activity in the Second Committee can also be explained through the status of a responsible state. As the world's second biggest economy, it is imperative that China actively participates in shaping the international economic order. Secondly, for China, the

Second Committee seemed to be a forum to promote its human rights views. This will be discussed in more detail in the reflections of the next sub-chapter.

Considering the remark that China is becoming more active in the human rights regime, it is not surprising that it was also an active participant in the Third Committee. While on average, a third of China-backed resolutions were taken to a vote, they were more likely to clash with overall sentiment in the Third Committee, where roughly half (44 percent) were taken to a vote. However, this equally means that in the field of human rights there was still a narrow majority of subjects in which China and the rest of the world could agree.

5.2. Inside China-sponsored resolutions

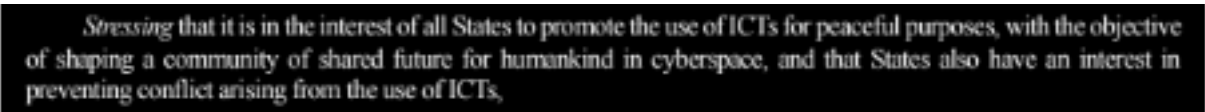
Based on China's activity in the UNGA, it was justified to focus on three designated committees, namely to the First, the Second and the Third. Concurrently, the emphasis moves from quantitative analysis to qualitative. Throughout the sub-chapters the examples that were raised were merely to answer to the sub-question of whether China got elements of its agenda adopted in the UNGA. To this effect, this study particularly searched for the worldview with Chinese characteristics from the resolutions. It should be kept in mind that the majority of China-sponsored resolutions were universally accepted and hence did not promote the distinctive Chinese worldview. In this sub-chapter, the reflections will be made after the findings of all three committees have been presented.

5.2.1. The First Committee: Community of shared future in cyberspace

From the 69th session onwards, The First Committee, the General Assembly's organ in charge of international security, dealt annually with several resolutions that were initiated by China and/or Russia. Resolutions such as "No first placement of weapons in outer space", "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" and "Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space" concerned power politics in outer space. These resolutions cross-referenced each other and, according to criticism especially from the US, e.g. lacked the definition of what exactly counts as "a weapon in outer space" and did not prohibit the use of terrestrially-based anti-satellite weapons (Wood, 2017). Without going too much into the substance, there are salient notions to be made out of these resolutions.

Firstly, whereas other resolutions seek, in the spirit of resolutions, political commitment for preventing weapon placement in space, the resolution “Further practical measures...” urged states to implement a legally binding instrument. The suggested treaty was drafted by China and Russia. According to the US, it had weaknesses similar to the resolution mentioned in the previous paragraph, and it failed to create an effective regime for arms prevention. Critics also saw that these resolutions also created overlapping mandates which could possibly distract on-going processes. In sum, they were wasting both time and the fiscal resources of the UN. (Wood, 2017.)

Secondly, the resolutions repeated China’s rhetoric. For example, the resolution “No first placement of weapons in outer space” reaffirmed that practical measures should be taken to prevent arms race in outer space “in a common effort towards a community of shared future for humankind.” The same expression could also be found elsewhere in the First Committee’s resolutions that China was backing. The resolution “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”, which was initiated by Russia, grew more controversial throughout the sessions. In the first three sessions of the sample, this resolution was adopted with consensus. In the 73rd session, however, there were new paragraphs that were, inter alia, aiming to shape a community of shared future for humankind in cyberspace. (see Figure 3) As the representative of the EU saw, such additions inevitably increase the risk of weakening the protection of online freedoms. Moreover, it increases states’ ability to control people’s access to the Internet. (UN, 2018b: 9.)



Stressing that it is in the interest of all States to promote the use of ICTs for peaceful purposes, with the objective of shaping a community of shared future for humankind in cyberspace, and that States also have an interest in preventing conflict arising from the use of ICTs,

Figure 3. “73/27. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” calls for the creation of a community of shared future for humankind in cyberspace. Source: The UN; Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its seventy-third session, Volume I, p. 274.

Through the sessions, this ICT-related resolution had called upon a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to advance consensus-based regulatory work and to specify responsible state behavior in the field of cyberspace. In the 73rd session, the resolution suggested the establishment of a new intergovernmental and “truly inclusive” Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to work on the basis of the resolution. From the perspective of the status quo

holders, this suggestion was seen as weakening the consensus reached through the GGE, which, once put into force, “threatens to create an unnecessary and potentially counterproductive duplication of efforts in the cyber arena within the United Nations system” (UN, 2018b: 11). In order to preserve the continuity of the GGE’s work, the US drafted its own cyberspace resolution called “Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security” that is largely identical to the previous versions of Russia’s and China’s resolution. As both resolutions were adopted (although China and Russia along with ten other states were against adopting the US’ resolution), the UNGA approved the creation of a double mandate.

5.2.2. The Second Committee: Developmentalism and human rights

In the Second Committee, the majority of China-sponsored resolutions concerned either development or developing countries. In the 73rd session, the Second Committee passed the resolution “73/244. Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” for the first time. It was adopted through a vote with a simple majority of 133 supporters while 48 states were against the adoption of a new norm. Roughly, the supporting block included states from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the opponents included North America and Europe.

The resolution was sponsored by China through the G77 plus China coalition. Among other things, the resolution calls, “in the spirit of win-win cooperation”, for all relevant stakeholders to assist developing countries to bridge the digital division “with the aim of building a shared future for humankind”. For instance, the United States, which opposed the adoption of the resolution, criticised the placement of paragraphs that reflected China’s domestic political slogans: “We cannot support the reference to “win-win cooperation” in operative paragraph 17. This phrase has been promoted by a single Member State to insert its core political ideology and signature foreign policy agenda into UN documents and does not reflect the views of all member states” (Locatelli, 2019).

The resolution concerning rural poverty also calls for nation-specific measures and “concerted efforts” of the whole society to promote socioeconomic development in rural areas. Similar language was found in several China-sponsored resolutions. Commenting on the China-backed resolution, the representative of the EU said that the Union and its members expected a resolution to not undermine or renegotiate the 2030 Agenda (the UN

agenda for the sustainable development) or to be based on national concepts: “The Committee was faced with a draft resolution that was the opposite of all the principles”, the representative said, adding that the EU was open to the sort of discussion of rural poverty reduction that takes all human rights into account (UN, 2019b: 18).

According to the US, the resolution creates a duplicative mandate to the UNGA which already holistically analyzes the progress made in poverty reduction. The US representative said that the resolution “will inflate an already bloated General Assembly agenda and suck precious resources away from the UN’s important work to benefit those who are most in need” (Locatelli, 2019). Similar comments were given to another Second Committee resolution regarding the implementation of the Agenda 21. As the US and EU both note, this agenda was replaced with 2030 Agenda already in 2015, and it is hence both redundant and irrelevant (Delegation of EU to UN, 2019; Lawrence, 2018).

5.2.3. The Third Committee: Human rights and national characteristics

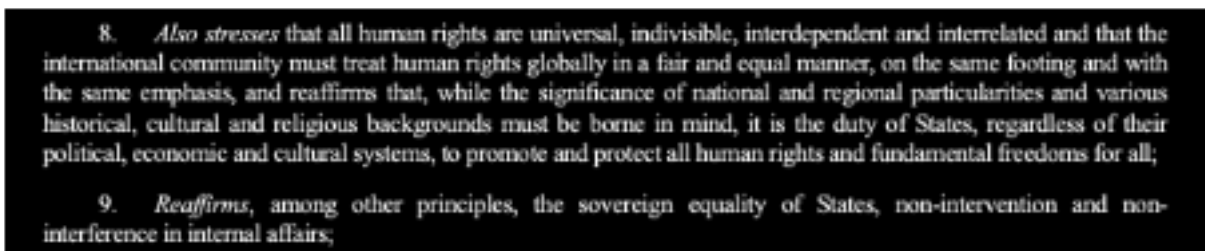
China’s recognition of universal human rights could be read from several Third Committee resolutions. Take the resolution “The right to development” as an example. It has been on the UNGA’s agenda annually since the 70th session. Every time the resolution has been adopted after a requested vote. Here, as in almost every controversial subject, the division runs between the West and the rest of the world. The resolution calls for raising the right to development “to the same level as and on a par with all other human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

While the Western countries accepted the idea that development and human rights are connected, the criticism of the status quo states targeted the language of the resolution. First, as the UK representative said, the right to development is an ambiguous term lacking definition, indicators and the suitable instruments of realization (UN, 2017: 10). Moreover, besides the vagueness of the core concept, defining the resolution’s aims and the worldview is difficult as it is inconsistent with its language. The resolution first accepted universal human rights even to the extent that “the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights”. However, in the so called operative part of the resolution, it gives the state the greatest mandate to monitor and enforce the realization of human rights: “[T]he primary responsibility for the promotion and

protection of all human rights lies with the State – – the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized”, states the resolution.

As a whole, the wording of the resolution, according to the US, protected states instead of individuals. In the resolution, the US also attached its attention to the domestic slogan “mutually beneficial cooperation”, which China uses interchangeably with “win-win cooperation” (UN, 2019c: 11). This phrase was included in the resolution for the first time in the 71st session.

Figure 4 (see below) is an extract from the Third Committee resolution “Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order”. The resolution’s language follows the much used pattern: as seen in operative paragraph 8, human rights are first declared as universal and indivisible. It is followed by the notion that states, with “national particularities borne in mind”, are the safeguards of human rights. Paragraph 9 further underlines the core principles of modern order. In total, the resolution references the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity five times.



8. *Also stresses* that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and reaffirms that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;

9. *Reaffirms*, among other principles, the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs;

Figure 4. “71/190. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order” has language typical to China. Source: *The UN; Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its seventy-first session, Volume I, p. 791.*

Besides having adopted China’s political messages, even China’s economic and geopolitical project, the Belt and Road Initiative, is endorsed a few times in the UNGA as a “welcomed effort to enhance understanding among civilizations”. Table 3 (see below) summarizes the word count of China’s much used expressions in the resolutions that it sponsors. China’s language could be found 80 times in 351 resolutions. In the last half of the six-year sample period, the appearance of China’s rhetoric seems to have grown (if taken into account that the 73rd session is not fully documented), especially the use of its foreign policy doctrine CSFM and “mutually beneficial cooperation”. Out of all China-sponsored resolutions in the 71st and 72nd sessions, roughly one-third contained some of the expressions detailed

below. Consequently, this seems to loosely correspond with the growth seen in the percentage of votes witnessed in the latter half of the sample.

Furthermore, searching for China-specific language by taking into account all the adopted resolutions in the sessions, China’s language can be seen also outside the China-sponsored resolutions. In addition to established or semi-established expressions such as “non-interference” or “harmonious coexistence”, also the relatively new win–win rhetoric was seen in “non-Chinese resolutions”.

Appearance of expressions in number of China-sponsored resolutions	68th	69th	70th	71st	72nd	73rd	Total
<i>A community of shared future for mankind</i>	2	2	2	4	5	4	19
<i>Mutually beneficial cooperation / win-win cooperation</i>	2	3	2	7	7	1	22
<i>Non-interference / non-intervention</i>	1	3	2	3	3	5	17
<i>Harmonious / peaceful coexistence</i>	4	3	3	3	3	4	20
<i>Belt and Road Initiative</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	9	11	9	19	18	14	80
% of all the resolutions	18	16	17	34	30	22	23

Table 3. The spread of China’s typical language in the UNGA resolutions. Source: Compiled by author.

Reflections

The examples from the China-sponsored resolutions shed light to the strategies that China and like-minded countries use to challenge and bend the current postmodern order. First, they fight to retain the sovereignty-driven Westphalian order. Second, they have developed their own human rights agenda that promotes collective values to counter the predominant appreciation of individualism. And third, the domain of this “culture war” is the everyday work of the UN that is burdened with overlapping processes and mandates granted by rivaling blocks.

1) Retaining the Wesphalian order

It is evident that the UNGA has adopted elements of China's agenda in its resolutions. Moreover, China's language has had its own life separate from the original promoter in the resolutions, and it has spread even to the vocabulary of the UN Secretary-General, as shown at the beginning of this study. China's concept of CSFM and other paragraphs underlining the essence of state sovereignty extended from the resolutions concerning cyberspace to the developmental issues. From the perspective of the supporters of the present order, this emphasis is clearly restricting the realization of postmodern freedoms and human rights. As seen in the content analysis, China's rhetoric has been met with suspicion, especially by the US. Nevertheless, the opposition by the US and other status quo holders has not hindered the adoption of the resolutions with China's wording.

China's ambitions were not just implicitly hidden in China's slogans such as CSFM or "mutually beneficial cooperation" that underline friendly and respectful ties between states, but also correspond to respecting the principle of non-intervention and non-interference into the affairs of sovereign states. For instance, the resolution "Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order" referenced sovereignty and territorial integrity five times. Bearing in mind that the resolution was in the hands of the human rights -oriented committee, this tautology seems like overkill.

Even though China pledged its support for universal and indivisible human rights in the resolutions, it is important to remember that China's State Council (2019) has a rather different message for the domestic audience: "There is no universally applicable model, and human rights can only advance in the context of national conditions and people's needs." In China's language, universal human rights and the emphasis on taking national conditions into account appear almost as the two sides of the same coin – they seem to exist together.

2) Setting a new agenda

As witnessed particularly in the Second Committee's resolutions, China and others have developed their own human rights agenda which puts strong emphasis on enhancing people's surroundings, that is, promoting development and poverty reduction. Similarly, this was witnessed in the First Committee in which China sponsored a blueprint resolution concerning regulation in cyberspace, raising concerns over freedom of speech. The Third

Committee's resolution "The right to development" that calls the international community to recognize development as a human right was the most powerful manifestation of legitimizing China's and like-minded countries' agenda. Thus, the resolution aimed to change the norms of the human rights regime that is an essential part of the present international order.

While the importance of either development or poverty reduction themselves is not contested or questioned by the international community, their underlying collective nature moves away from the individualism that lies at the core of the postmodern thought. What is concerning from the postmodern order's point of view is again the central role given to the state, which echoes Creutz's (2019) description: "Individualistic human rights, particularly civil and political rights, are subordinated to the state and its goals". Especially in the human rights regime such language strips power from other crucial organs such as civil society actors and human rights agencies. that. As Creutz (2019) has noted, the language typical to China weakens both the substance and the resources of the international human rights system.

3) Burdening the bureaucracy

Finally, as the supporters of both the modern and the postmodern order seek to advance human rights in their own terms, it is not surprising that there was a clear division into two blocks in certain fields of interest within the UNGA. As seen in many resolutions, the clash of differing worldviews comes down to the question of allocation of the UN's limited resources. In fact, these disputes were met in every surveyed committee. The rivalry of these two blocks is materializing in overlapping resolutions, working groups and other processes which all require expertise, time and money. This might impact the productivity and credibility of the whole UN system.

All-in-all, China's activity in the UNGA seems contrary to what Boli and Thomas (1997) found in their study. They claimed that norms including elements of universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress and world citizenship are likely to succeed. Rather, China seems to have found companions that together promote relativism, collectivism and the absolute authority of the state. These companions do not include the so called critical states, as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) call them. In this context, the keepers of the current postmodern order, mainly the US and its allies, are seen as critical states. It is thus likely that China is investing in quantities before qualities. In other words, China is gathering a reserve

of like-minded countries to outnumber the US-led block in the UNGA. The analysis continues by determining China's loyal supporters in the General Assembly.

5.3. *China's bandwagon*

The so-called like-minded group that China belongs to has no clear-cut definition. To be exact, this group of countries is referred to as like-minded developing countries. It is self-proclaimed in nature and thus does not have a specified list of member states.

Nonetheless, there are several sources that define this group somewhat similarly, including the group itself. These countries include Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. (See e.g. Human Rights Watch, 2017; Piccone, 2018; UNFCCC, 2014.)

Indeed, these countries' voting behavior corresponded with China's. Out of the total 120 votes, this block supported China-sponsored resolutions over 90 percent of the time. They also avoided voting against and have rarely abstained from voting. However, this study indicates that this group of countries is just the tip of an iceberg. In the General Assembly, the supporting block was much larger.

According to voting statistics, there were close to a hundred states that voted similarly to China. That is, the percentage of support was 90 percent or above. These states are highlighted on the map in Figure 5 (see below). In the case of almost 50 of these states, the percentage rose to 97 percent or above. If the bar was lowered to 75 percent, the number of countries rose to over 120 and almost all the blank spots were filled in the Middle East, Africa and South America. It is also noteworthy that some "loyalists" were rather passive in voting, which means that the like-minded group seems to be even bigger. For example, Laos participated in voting 60 times (50% of all votes) but had a clear record of voting accordingly with China. Similarly, North Korea and Côte D'Ivoire had participation percentage below 50, but they rarely voted against the block's overall opinion. Thus, in order to have a full picture, it was also necessary to pay attention to states that had and had not opposed China-sponsored resolutions. Tellingly, there were 121 countries that had never voted against the China-sponsored resolution.

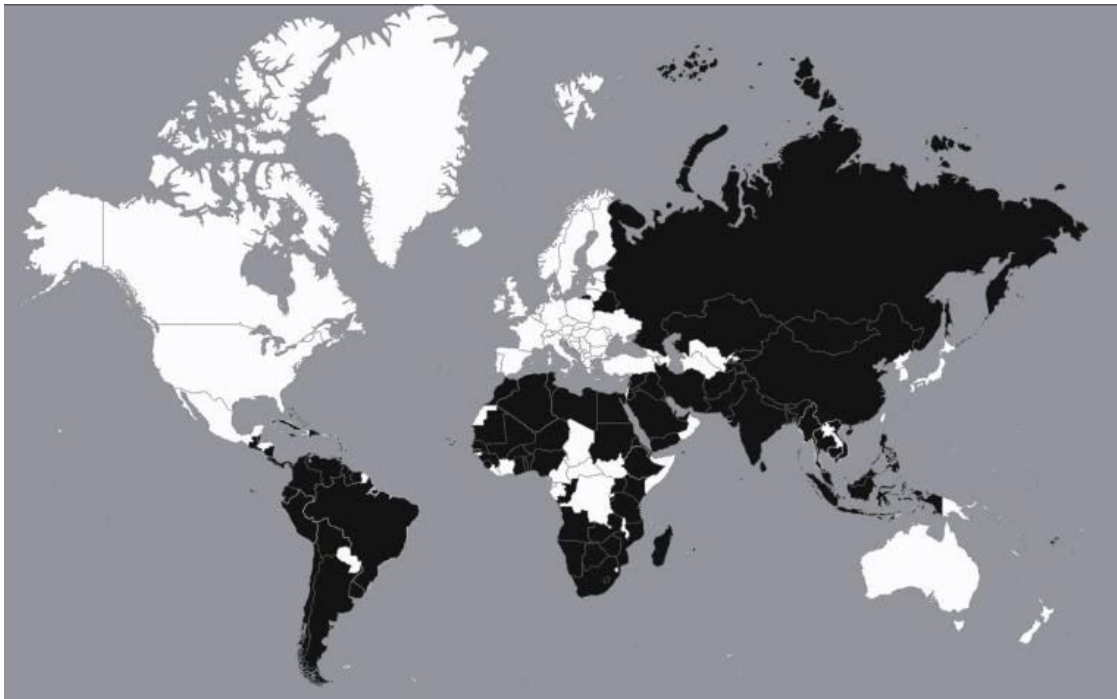


Figure 5. The most loyal and active (support rate of 90 percent or above) members of the General Assembly's like-minded group painted in black. Source: Compiled by author using AmCharts visualization tools.

The list of supporting countries is similar to another group, G77 and China. This UN-related organization also consists of developing countries, 135 of them to be exact. According to the group itself, it “provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system” (G77, 2020). As a group, G77 and China is most active in drafting and introducing its own resolutions in the Second Committee. However, in addition to economic and developmental topics, the group has found mutual understanding in human rights and security issues. Out of the 135 countries, almost a hundred voted similarly with China 90 percent of the time. Again, using the standard of 75 percent, the number of supporters within G77 increases to 115.

Those who support the status quo have varying responses to China-sponsored resolutions. The most critical, by far, is the United States along with its ally Israel. Out of 120 votes, the US has supported China-sponsored content only six times while it has been against 109 times and abstained from voting five times. This means that the US has opposed the resolutions of China and the like-minded group 91 percent of the time. Similarly, Israel's

statistics are 11–98–5 (supported–opposed–abstained) with the rejective response percent being 82 percent. Also Canada was notably critical and voted against the like-minded group 75 times.

Europe⁹ and the rest of the liberal democracies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand had less critical yet varying approaches. Out of the voted 120 China-backed resolutions, the majority of the European countries have supported 46–50 resolutions (38–42%). The number of against-votes varies from Greece's 35 (29%) to the United Kingdom's and Ireland's 56 (47%). In many instances, European countries have chosen to abstain from voting if the resolution's text has been problematic but there have been advancements or constructive efforts from the like-minded group to reach consensus. The number of abstentions vary between 15 and 33. Japan's (47–48–23) and New Zealand's (47–37–34) voting behavior is similar to that of European states on average, but Australia (36–56–27) has been more critical than an average liberal democracy.

These countries' rate of opposing China-sponsored resolutions was remarkably smaller than that of the US. For instance in Germany's (47–52–18) case, instead of calling the vote 120 times there would have been a need for vote 70 times (abstentions and opposing votes combined). Thus, if it was just for Germany to decide, only one-fifth of China-sponsored resolutions would have been called for a vote. The supporters of the current order were most likely to join forces to oppose the like-minded developing countries in the Third Committee. In that committee, the postmodern block united in voting against the China-sponsored resolutions four to six times in every session. In other committees such opposition occurred rarely if at all.

Given that there are 193 member states in the UN that all have one vote in the General Assembly, China has a qualified majority to support its ambitions. Out of all the China-sponsored resolutions that were called for vote, all except one were adopted with over two-thirds majority in favor of China and the like-minded group. Figure 6 (see below) displays the usual result of a vote. China-specific language also has equally strong support. In the 73rd session the resolutions that mentioned CSFM had 119 to 133 supporters.

⁹ This does not include Russia, Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan that are among the like-minded group.

RESOLUTION 73/166

Adopted at the 55th plenary meeting, on 17 December 2018, on the recommendation of the Committee (A/73/589/Add.2, para. 162),²⁸⁹ by a recorded vote of 148 to 11, with 32 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Figure 6. The voting record of the resolution “73/166. The right to development”. Source: The UN; Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its seventy-third session, Volume I, p. 866.

Reflections

The group of so called like-minded countries is bigger than already known in the UNGA. In fact, whereas the boldest existing characterizations present the group as consisting of 50 countries, this study identified almost a hundred countries that voted similarly with China 90 percent of time and 120 countries that had not voted against China. Thus, China seems to have positioned itself in the group of countries that hold overwhelming majority of votes in the UNGA.

It is crucial to emphasize that the like-minded group might not be particularly China-minded. It is probable that the group that China is part of has decided to vote in the same way in order to advance their collectively held values and goals. In other words, promoting the Westphalian order seems to be a common denominator within the like-minded group. However, what can be said with certainty based on the close reading of the resolutions is that the group does not mind supporting the resolutions containing language that promotes China's domestic ambitions. Thus, the like-minded group not only promotes the same values

as China, but also enables China to promote its own agenda in the resolutions. And as the growing disagreement rate would indicate, China is increasingly utilizing this opportunity.

Also, the like-minded group of countries has close resemblance to Group 77, which is the coalition of 135 developing countries. Belonging to this particular majority has been a decades-long project for China. Regardless of its own progress, China has taken the side of the developing countries ever since these countries granted the PRC a seat in the UN in 1971. Actually, this study's findings are consistent with what Chai discovered over 40 years ago. First of all, China is most likely to support the developing countries and to receive support from them. The scepticism-filled relationship between China and the US is also in line with Chai's findings. (Chai, 1979: 399, 403.)

It seemed that the United States as a current hegemon has its own quest to preserve the current order in every field. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, one-third of all the China-sponsored resolutions were called for a vote, and in almost all cases the US has either abstained or opposed the resolution in question. Other supporters of the US-led order determined their stance based on the issue, suggested steps and language of the resolution, and an average European state did not support one-fifth of China-backed resolutions. Based on this, it can be concluded that the supporters of the present postmodern order do not constitute a monolith that has a uniform way of voting. This block's consolidated efforts to maintain the current order were at their starkest in the field of human rights, in which China has also stepped up its activity.

To conclude, China's core project of building a community of shared future for mankind has all the prerequisites to succeed in the UNGA. This is because in the UNGA the amount of like-minded countries turned out to be much greater than usually suggested. In terms of a norm's lifecycle, China's vision surpassed the needed threshold of one-third of states to start a norm cascade. In the UN, one-third of the members would mean 65 supporters and, for example, in the 73rd session the resolutions that mentioned CSFM had 119 to 133 supporters. Thus, two-thirds of the UN's member states were in China's bandwagon, identifying themselves as the supporters of modern values. At the same time, the outnumbered supporters of the present order, namely the Western liberal democracies, do not form a solid front of opposition but rather vote on a case-by-case basis.

As a norm leader, China is an exception to the rule. Quite frankly, the worldview that China transmits through resolutions is opposite to what have been considered the elements of a successful norm (universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress and world citizenship). Also the need for supporters of particular interest, critical states, does not apply in China's case. In the UNGA, the "one country, one vote" rule topped with an almost unwavering flood of support has enabled China to bypass these known truisms and to make the world more to its liking. China's political slogans have also been introduced to resolutions that do not have a connection to China. Hence, this language has become more established and more internalized within the UN, as tends to happen with the language of norms.

Considering all this, it seems clear that China is able to shake the current power balance of the global order. In some issues, especially in the field of human rights, China has de facto changed the structure by questioning the current order and launching overlapping processes. However, as pointed out, for the most part China strives to reach consensus with the international community and acts according to the current order's playbook. It seems that China will not pursue radical changes such as reorganizing the structure of world politics, but rather emphasizes already existing Westphalian elements within the current structure. Thus, recalling Wang's continuum, used in the second chapter, China's performance in the UNGA can be placed in the second phase. This means that whenever the current global order is renegotiated and redefined through the norms, China is among the loudest players.

6 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine how China has performed in the United Nations General Assembly in the Xi Jinping era. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of China-sponsored resolutions, it can be concluded that China is the most active global power in the UNGA, and with the help of the majority of the UN member states, has got its voice heard and language accepted in the resolutions. It is an active norm leader rewriting the rules of human rights and international development in the General Assembly.

Throughout the sample period (2013–2018), the General Assembly still had a high percentage of consensus in decision making. Resolutions were adopted with consensus two times out of three. This suggests that China often acts according to the current order's playbook, and it is restructuring that order more to its liking rather than overthrowing it. However, to discover the whole spectrum of China's practises, this study focused on the contested one-third of the resolutions.

In this part of the sample, China's language emphasized the role of sovereignty and territorial integrity above all. This has its roots in China's historical trauma of foreign intrusion. As explained, the overriding respect for state sovereignty and non-interference weakens the transparency and the accountability of the international system and ties the hands of the international community to respond to violations. The model of global governance suggested by China deviates from the current international order which has been described as postmodern and individual-centric. In this study, the supporters of these orders clearly stood out as two distinctive blocks. "The culture war" between the two blocks occurred especially in subjects related to individual freedoms and human rights. In practise, differing worldviews led to the creation of rivaling resolutions that on their part mandated the creation of overlapping working groups and legislative processes. This all impacts the functioning of the UN system and the allocation of its resources. Moreover, the rivalry draws away from consensus-based decision making: the last two sessions of the study's sample saw a rise in the amount of votes, which means that the level of disagreement increased.

Based on these findings, future research could follow-up to determine whether the growing trend of disagreement continues in the General Assembly. There could also be a need for more case studies to fully understand the practical implications and consequences of competing, overlapping processes that these two blocks are initiating. This could be done by

interviewing sources working inside the UN system. Another line of study, one that was eventually ruled out from this study, could address China's voting behavior and its implications in the General Assembly.

This study expanded the scope of China's known activity in the international fora. China's behavior in the General Assembly fit well into the existing narrative. In this sense, theory confirmed and strengthened the arguments presented in this work. Thus, the material-driven but theory-guiding approach supplemented this work well. What did not apply, however, was the explanatory power of earlier models of what constitutes a successful norm. In this sphere, China lacked both the support of the critical states and the needed value base. Instead, it had the crowdforce to bypass these known truisms. This is to say that China has the sufficient building blocks to build a "community of shared future for mankind".

This study also filled the blanks of knowledge: both China's degree of participation in the General Assembly and the amount of supporters it has were novel pieces of information. As China has left the shadows and continues to grow bolder in the global arena, the blanks that are still unanswered require further attention.

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Appendix: Resolutions sponsored by China, sessions 68nd–73rd

The 73rd session

No reference to a Main Committee (11):

- 73/5. Chair of the Group of 77 for 2019 (vote, 146–3–15)
- 73/13. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization
- 73/24. Sport as an enabler of sustainable development
- 73/25. International Day of Education
- 73/126. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace
- 73/127. International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace (vote, 144–2)
- 73/129. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
- 73/130. Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin
- 73/133. Graduation of countries from the least developed country category
- 73/136. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development
- 73/138. White Helmets Commission: participation of volunteers in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

The First Committee (8):

- 73/27. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (vote, 119-46–14)
- 73/30. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 178–2)
- 73/31. No first placement of weapons in outer space (vote, 128–12–40)
- 73/44. Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status
- 73/58. Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia
- 73/72. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (vote, 180–2–1)
- 73/73. United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services
- 73/77. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

The Second Committee (25):

- 73/218. Information and communications technologies for sustainable development
- 73/219. International trade and development (vote, 184–1)
- 73/220. International financial system and development (vote, 184–1)
- 73/222. Promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices on assets return to foster sustainable development
- 73/224. Oil slick on Lebanese shores (vote, 166–7–7)
- 73/226. Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028

73/227. Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (vote, 135–47–3)

73/229. Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

73/230. Effective global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon

73/231. Disaster risk reduction

73/234. Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development

73/235. Harmony with Nature

73/236. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

73/239. Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

73/240. Towards a New International Economic Order (vote, 133–48–5)

73/244. Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (vote, 133–48–2)

73/246. Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)

73/247. Industrial development cooperation (vote, 183–2)

73/248. Operational activities for development of the United Nations system

73/249. South-South cooperation

73/250. World Food Safety Day

73/251. World Pulses Day

73/252. International Year of Plant Health, 2020

73/253. Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (vote, 185–1–1)

73/255. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (vote, 159–7–13)

The Third Committee (18):

73/141. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (vote, 188–3)

73/143. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

73/144. Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

73/147. Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula

73/149. Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation

73/157. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (vote, 129–2–54 poissa)

73/158. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 172–6–11)

73/159. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 129–53–10)

73/160. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination

73/163. Human rights and extreme poverty
73/166. The right to development (vote, 148–11–32)
73/167. Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (vote, 133–53–3)
73/168. Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights
73/170. Promotion of peace as a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all (vote, 135–53–1)
73/171. The right to food (vote, 188–2)
73/186. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity
73/187. Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes (vote, 94–59–33)
73/262. A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 120–11–41)

The Sixth Committee (2):

73/213. Observer status for the New Development Bank in the General Assembly
73/216. Observer status for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the General Assembly

The 72nd session

No reference to a Main Committee (14):

72/6. Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal
72/7. Role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
72/130. International Day of Living Together in Peace
72/132. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development
72/136. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
72/137. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace
72/241. A world against violence and violent extremism
72/273. Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
72/278. Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
72/312. United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse
72/307. Modalities for the high-level review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway
72/310. New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support (vote, 159–2)
72/311. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (vote, 158–1)

72/312. United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse

The First Committee (5):

72/26. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 182–0–3)

72/27. No first placement of weapons in outer space (vote, 131–4–48)

72/56. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

72/62. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

72/250. Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 108–5–47)

The Second Committee (12):

72/201. Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (vote, 130–2–48)

72/202. International trade and development (vote, 182–2)

72/203. International financial system and development (vote, 180–2)

72/205. Commodities (vote, 182–2)

72/209. Oil slick on Lebanese shores (vote, 163–7–9)

72/211. World Bee Day

72/212. Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

72/216. Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (vote, 131–48–4)

72/227. Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (vote, 184–2)

72/229. Culture and sustainable development (vote, 185–2)

72/239. United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028)

72/240. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (vote, 163–6–11)

The Third Committee (25):

72/141. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (vote, 184–2)

72/143. Cooperatives in social development

72/144. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

72/145. Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

72/148. Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

72/151. Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

72/154. The girl child

72/156. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (vote, 133–2–49)

72/157. A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 133–10–43)

72/158. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 128–51–6)

72/159. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination

72/160. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 176–7–4)

72/161. International Day of Sign Languages

72/165. International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism

72/167. The right to development (vote, 140–10–38)

72/168. Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (vote, 134–53)

72/169. Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

72/170. Human rights and cultural diversity (äänestys, 136-53)

72/171. Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity

72/172. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (vote, 129–54–5)

72/173. The right to food (vote, 187–2)

72/174. Promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies (vote, 134–52)

72/185. Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (vote, 129–53–3)

72/195. Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons

72/196. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

The Fifth Committee (1):

72/299. Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

The Sixth Committee (3):

72/125. Observer status for the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan in the General Assembly

72/126. Observer status for the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office in the General Assembly

72/127. Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly

The 71st session

No reference to a Main Committee (18):

71/14. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

71/19. Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

71/124. World Tuna Day

71/125. Persistent legacy of the Chernobyl disaster

71/128. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

71/160. Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace

71/249. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

71/252. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

71/255. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

71/275. International Day of Neutrality

71/276. Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction

71/278. United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse

71/279. Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day

71/288. The role of professional translation in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development

71/315. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

71/317. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

71/320. New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

71/327. The United Nations in global economic governance (vote, 86–2–42)

The First Committee (9):

71/28. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (vote, 181–0–1)

71/31. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 182–0–4)

71/32. No first placement of weapons in outer space (vote, 130–4–48)

71/42. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

71/43. Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

71/65. Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia

71/73. United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services

71/78. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

71/86. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (vote, 183–1–3)

The Second Committee (5):

71/222. International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028

- 71/223. Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
- 71/236. Towards a New International Economic Order (vote, 131–49–4)
- 71/246. Sustainable Gastronomy Day
- 71/247. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (vote, 168–7–11)

The Third Committee (23):

- 71/162. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
- 71/163. Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond
- 71/164. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing
- 71/166. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas
- 71/168. Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation
- 71/169. Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula
- 71/173. Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa
- 71/179. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (vote, 136–2–49)
- 71/180. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- 71/181. A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 133–9–45)
- 71/182. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 132–53–4)
- 71/183. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination
- 71/184. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 177–7–4)
- 71/186. Human rights and extreme poverty
- 71/189. Declaration on the Right to Peace (vote, 131–34–19)
- 71/190. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (vote, 130–53–6)
- 71/191. The right to food
- 71/192. The right to development (vote, 146–3–39)
- 71/193. Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (vote, 133–54)
- 71/194. Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights
- 71/195. Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief
- 71/197. Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (vote, 135–53–1)
- 71/209. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

The Fourth Committee (1):

71/218. Oil slick on Lebanese shores (vote, 166–8–7)

The 70th session

No reference to a Main Committee (16):

- 70/4. Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal
- 70/7. Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade
- 70/19. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
- 70/20. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace
- 70/76. Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin
- 70/78. Extension of the preparatory period preceding the graduation of the Republic of Vanuatu from the least developed country category
- 70/105. Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development
- 70/107. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development
- 70/109. A world against violence and violent extremism
- 70/110. The impacts of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon
- 70/253. Graduation of Angola from the least developed country category
- 70/292. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa
- 70/293. Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025)
- 70/295. New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support
- 70/298. Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- 70/301. Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife

The First Committee (5):

- 70/26. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 179–0–1)
- 70/27. No first placement of weapons in outer space (vote, 129–4–46)
- 70/53. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities
- 70/60. Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)
- 70/237. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

The Second Committee (6):

- 70/185. Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

70/193. International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017
70/194. Oil slick on Lebanese shores
70/197. Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors
70/212. International Day of Women and Girls in Science
70/225. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (vote, 164–5–10)

The Third Committee (22):

70/128. Cooperatives in social development
70/130. Violence against women migrant workers
70/132. Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas
70/138. The girl child
70/139. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (vote 133–4–49)
70/140. A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 133–11–44)
70/141. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 177–7–4)
70/142. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 130–53–6)
70/143. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination
70/149. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (vote, 130–53–5 poissa)
70/150. Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity
70/151. Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (vote, 135–54)
70/152. Promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies (vote, 134–54)
70/153. Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights
70/154. The right to food
70/155. The right to development (vote, 148–6–33)
70/156. Human rights and cultural diversity (vote, 133–54)
70/157. Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief
70/159. Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (vote, 135–53–1)
70/170. Towards the full realization of an inclusive and accessible United Nations for persons with disabilities
70/178. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity
70/179. Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons

The Fourth Committee (1):

70/98. Question of Western Sahara

The Fifth Committee (1):

70/280. Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (vote, 155–3)

The Sixth Committee (1):

70/123. Observer status for the Indian Ocean Rim Association in the General Assembly

The 69th session

No reference to a Main Committee (27):

69/6. Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace

69/11. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

69/18. The situation in Afghanistan

69/110. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

69/131. International Day of Yoga

69/134. Twentieth anniversary of the participation of volunteers, “White Helmets”, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

69/136. The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts

69/139. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

69/140. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

69/202. The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

69/243. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

69/266. A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development

69/267. Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

69/280. Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal

69/281. Saving the cultural heritage of Iraq

69/282. World Statistics Day

69/285. Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan

69/288. Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States

69/290. New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support

69/291. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

69/293. International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

69/310. Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition

69/312. United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

69/314. Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife

69/319. Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes (vote, 136–6–41)

69/326. Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services (vote, 103–11–38)

69/327. Promoting inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development

The First Committee (9):

69/28. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

69/31. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 178–0–2)

69/32. No first placement of weapons in outer space (vote, 126–4–46)

69/36. Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia

69/38. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

69/63. Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

69/68. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

69/75. United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services

69/81. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (vote, 179–1–3)

The Second Committee (10):

69/207. External debt sustainability and development (vote, 125–4–44)

69/209. International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan

69/212. Oil slick on Lebanese shores (vote, 170–6–3)

69/213. Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development

69/215. International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005–2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources

69/227. Towards a New International Economic Order (vote, 131–46–3)

69/238. Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (vote, 130–8–43)

69/239. South-South cooperation (vote, 129–44–7)

69/241. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (vote 165–6–9)

69/247. Modalities for the implementation of resolution 68/304, entitled "Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes" (vote, 120–15–35)

The Third Committee (20):

- 69/141. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas
- 69/143. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
- 69/144. Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family
- 69/145. World Youth Skills Day
- 69/146. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing
- 69/148. Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula
- 69/150. Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations
- 69/154. Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa
- 69/160. Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (vote, 133–4–51)
- 69/161. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- 69/162. A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 134–10–42)
- 69/163. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 130–52–7)
- 69/164. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination
- 69/165. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 180–7–4)
- 69/173. Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (vote, 135–53–1)
- 69/176. Promotion of peace as a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all (vote, 134–53–2)
- 69/177. The right to food
- 69/178. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (vote, 129–53–6)
- 69/183. Human rights and extreme poverty
- 69/197. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

The Fourth Committee (2):

- 69/84. Effects of atomic radiation
- 69/100. Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories

The Fifth Committee (1):

- 69/302. Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (vote, 137–3)

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No reference to a Main Committee (16):

68/7. Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade
68/9. Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal
68/11. The situation in Afghanistan
68/18. Graduation of countries from the least developed country category
68/99. Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster
68/103. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development
68/125. Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace
68/126. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
68/127. A world against violence and violent extremism
68/269. Improving global road safety
68/270. Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries
68/272. Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
68/278. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa
68/301. New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support
68/304. Towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes (vote, 124–11–41)
68/306. Enhancement of the administration and financial functioning of the United Nations

The First Committee (6):

68/29. Prevention of an arms race in outer space (vote, 180–0–2)
68/49. Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)
68/50. Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities
68/59. United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific
68/68. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (vote, 181–1–3)
68/243. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

The Second Committee (4):

68/200. Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (vote, 127–2–50)
68/206. Oil slick on Lebanese shores (vote, 169–6–4)
68/221. International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, 2015
68/236. Amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University

The Third Committee (21):

68/132. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas
68/133. Cooperatives in social development
68/134. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing
68/135. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twentyfourth special session of the General Assembly
68/136. Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family
68/139. Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas
68/146. The girl child
68/151. Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (vote, 134–11–46)
68/152. Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (vote, 128–55–8)
68/153. Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination
68/154. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (vote, 178–7–4)
68/159. Human rights and cultural diversity (vote, 136–54)
68/160. Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights
68/161. Promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies (vote, 135–54–1 poissa)
68/162. Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (vote, 135–55)
68/168. Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (vote, 136–55)
68/175. Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (vote, 132–52–6)
68/176. Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity
68/177. The right to food
68/192. Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons
68/193. Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

The Fourth Committee (2):

68/73. Effects of atomic radiation
68/90. Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories

The Fifth Committee (1):

68/292. Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (vote, 138–3–1)