



# CHINA'S RISE: PANDA HUGGER OR DRAGON SLAYER?

Similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions of China's growing economic, political, and military power

MA Thesis American Studies Program  
Utrecht University  
Dr. Jaap Verheul  
Maria-Louise Pfaltzer – 3472612  
August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Word count: 23.789



## Abstract

The US and Europe – founders of the existing liberal international order – seem to have diverging views on China’s growing power. Its extraordinary economic growth has given rise to much international debate on whether the PRC will overthrow the existing order and impose its political weight on it or whether it will become a loyal player of the current system. The US seems to see China as a threat. Although it pursues both a strategy of engagement and containment, the latter strategy seems to dominate. The EU, on the other hand, seems to greet China’s rise with a certain awe, as several of its most important member states have joined Chinese initiatives, such as the AIIB.

In order to verify whether one can speak of a divergence, it is necessary to analyze the various interpretations of China’s rise. In this thesis, influential reports of American and European think-tanks are examined to identify the similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions. Subsequently, the similarities and differences are being ‘tested’ against three different theories on the transatlantic relationship in order to explain the different perceptions adequately. These theories include the theory of Robert Kagan on the disparity in power and ideology, the theory of Ronald Havenaar on the differences in mentality, and the theory of Peter Baldwin on the importance of similarities over differences.

By examining the reports of the think-tanks, the thesis shows that the American perception can be characterized by several distinct images: a classical realist image, an optimistic image and a vigilance image. Therefore, one cannot speak of one single American perception on China’s rise. The vigilance image, however, proves to be the most representative, as the majority of the reports can be categorized under this denominator. The European perception can be characterized by a relatively unified image.

By ‘testing’ the similarities and differences in the US-EU perceptions on the theories, the thesis shows that the American vigilance perception and the European perception have many features in common, but that *within* these commonalities certain differences can be identified. The similarities can be explained by changes in the American and the European mentality. The differences can be explained by contrastive political, economic, and military interests at stake as a result of China’s rise, which derive from a disparity in ‘overall’ power. However, the thesis argues that the differences should be seen in a context of similarities, as the perceptions show a remarkable overlap. Therefore, one can conclude that the US and the EU do not have diverging views on China’s rise. Each of them qualifies its growing political and economic power as a *possible* risk to the global system. As a result, both see engagement rather than containment as the best strategy. There is, however, a divergence in the assessment of risks and in the understanding of how to best engage with China. Europe’s definition of engagement consists of guiding and supporting the power of the PRC in multilateral institutions. The US prefers to engage with China bilaterally by means of cooperation, mutual understanding, and building trust.



## Table of contents

Abbreviations.....	6
Introduction.....	7
<b>Part 1</b>	
Chapter 1: Historical overview	
1.1 Introduction.....	10
1.2 A brief history of China's rise.....	10
1.3 American-Sino relations.....	11
1.4 European-Sino relations.....	13
1.5 Conclusion.....	14
Chapter 2: American perception of China's rise	
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 The Council on Foreign Relations.....	15
2.3 Brookings Institute.....	18
2.4 The Centre for Strategic & International Studies.....	21
2.5 The Peterson Institute for International Economics.....	22
2.6 The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.....	24
2.7 Congressional Research Service.....	25
2.8 Conclusion.....	26
Chapter 3: European perception of China's rise	
3.1 Introduction.....	28
3.2 European Council on Foreign Relations.....	28
3.3 European Institute for Security Studies.....	31
3.4 The Centre for European Reform.....	32
3.5 Chatham House.....	33
3.6 Notre Europe.....	35
3.7 Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.....	36
3.8 The Clingendael Institute.....	37
3.9 Conclusion.....	38
Chapter 4: Similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions of China's rise	
4.1 Introduction.....	41
4.2 Justification.....	41
4.3 Similarities.....	42
4.3 Differences.....	42
4.4 Conclusion.....	44
<b>Part 2</b>	
Chapter 5: Theories on transatlantic similarities and differences	
5.1 Introduction.....	45
5.2 Robert Kagan – On Paradise and Power.....	45
5.3 Ronald Havelaar – Eb and flow.....	49
5.4 Peter Baldwin – The Narcissism of Minor Differences.....	55
5.5 Conclusion.....	56
Chapter 6: Similarities and differences in a theoretical framework	
6.1 Introduction.....	58
6.2 Similarities and differences according to Kagan.....	58
6.3 Similarities and differences according to Havelaar.....	60
6.4 Similarities and differences according to Baldwin.....	61
6.5 Conclusion.....	62
Conclusion.....	64
Bibliography.....	67

## Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CER	Centre for European Reform
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSIS	Centre for Strategic & International Studies
ECFR	European Council on Foreign Relations
EU	European Union
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KMT	Kuomintang
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PIIE	Peterson Institute for International Economics
PLA	People's Liberation Army (China)
PRC	People's Republic of China
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War Two

## Introduction

In 2010, “China’s Rise” was the third most popular news expression in the US.<sup>1</sup> Ever since, the expression has never left the newspapers. Whether it comes to political or economic issues, the importance of China looms large. Politically, the debate centers on how China’s rise will affect the existing rule-based system on an international level, which was formed by the US and the European powers during and after WWII. The most important question in this context is how it will affect the US as a global power in particular. Another aspect is China’s increasing assertive foreign policy. Its artificial islands in the South China Sea can be seen as signs of ‘muscle-flexing’.<sup>2</sup> Economically, it is clear that China has transformed the global economy. The IMF asserted that the PRC produced 17% of the world GDP in 2014, exceeding the US’ world GDP of 16%.<sup>3</sup> In October 2014, the Chinese even launched an ‘equivalent’ of the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).<sup>4</sup> China’s economic rise has generated international debates on its impact on the existing economic rules-based system. Notably the EU, as a world economic power, is concerned that China may revise the existing international liberal order to its own benefit. Also in the fields of the environment, human rights, and development cooperation, China’s role cannot be ignored in the international debate.<sup>5</sup>

There is a consensus on both sides of the Atlantic that China is obtaining a dominant position in the world. Its rise puts both the US, as a political superpower, and the EU, as a regulatory superpower, under pressure. Yet, a consensus does not seem to exist on how to respond to China’s rise. Recent developments suggest a difference in perspectives on China’s growing political, economic, and military power.

In 2011, the American government announced its ‘pivot to Asia’. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that “the future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action.”<sup>6</sup> However, it is unclear whether this statement refers to a strategy of including China into the existing world order or a strategy of containing China. On the one hand, a key element of the pivot consists of deepening working relationships, including China.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, several

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<sup>1</sup> Vinod K. Aggerwal and Sara N. Newland, *Responding to China’s Rise: US and EU Strategies* (New York: Springer, 2015) 77.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Clover and Geoff Dyer, “US struggles for strategy to contain China’s island-building,” *Financial Times*, June 7, 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/54414c0e-0a6f-11e5-82e4-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3hdkB14C9>.

<sup>3</sup> “China’s Rise to Global Economic Superpower,” *Huffington Post*, last modified February 2, 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nake-m-kamrany/chinas-rise-to-global-eco\\_b\\_6544924.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nake-m-kamrany/chinas-rise-to-global-eco_b_6544924.html).

<sup>4</sup> Raj M. Desai and James Raymond Vreeland, “How to stop worrying and love the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank,” *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/04/06/how-to-stop-worrying-and-love-the-asian-infrastructure-investment-bank/>.

<sup>5</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China’s Rise*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> “Secretary Clinton: Engaged America is Vital to Asia’s Future,” US Department of State, last modified October 11, 2011, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/10/20111011161233su0.8861287.html#axzz30Ph1DmRw>.

<sup>7</sup> “Secretary Clinton: Engaged America is Vital to Asia’s Future.”

recent developments indicate that the US seems to contain China in order to prevent it from becoming the new global power. First, the US is involved in negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). TPP is a proposal for a significantly expanded version of the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPSEP); an FTA between Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. Currently, the negotiations are held between eleven countries from which China is excluded.<sup>8</sup> A second indication are the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP); an FTA between the US and the EU. President Obama restarted these negotiations in 2013, that had been initiated repeatedly by the EU since the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> Several analysts explain the possible trade agreement to the need for combined economic and political power to write new global trade rules reflecting Western economic principles (a rules-based market economy) and political values (liberal democracy).<sup>10</sup> A third sign is the public condemnation of China's political enlargement in the South China Sea. The American government has labeled these as "neo-colonialism". Consequently, it has supported several neighboring countries in their dispute with the PRC.<sup>11</sup>

In Europe, China's rise seems to be received with both anxiety and excitement. The European powers increasingly express their concerns on its policies in respect of energy and human rights, and its geostrategic ambition.<sup>12</sup> Hence, several analysts see TTIP as a European response to the economic rise of China and to prevent the relative decline of the West.<sup>13</sup> However, the Sino-European relations are also characterized by converging economic interests. Recently, the UK, France, and Germany decided to participate in China's AIIB by becoming founding members.<sup>14</sup> They enthusiastically encouraged other countries to join AIIB as well. Subsequently, the US condemned these actions. According to the *Financial Times*, a US official stated that American diplomats "are wary about a trend toward constant accommodation of China, which is not the best way to engage a rising power."<sup>15</sup>

It is remarkable that the US and Europe – as founders of the existing liberal international order – seem to have diverging views on China's rise. This divergence was first noticed in 2005 by a transatlantic working group that consisted of analysts of the Center for

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<sup>8</sup> Lydia DePillis, "Everything you need to know about the Trans Pacific Partnership", *Washington Post*, December 11, 2013, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/12/11/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-trans-pacific-partnership>.

<sup>9</sup> "TTIP: A Test for the European Union?," Center for European Policy Analysis, last modified August 6, 2013, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.cepa.org/content/ttip-test-european-union>.

<sup>10</sup> "Judy Asks: Is TTIP Really a Strategic Issue?," Carnegie Europe, last modified October 8, 2014, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=56869>.

<sup>11</sup> "The US, China, and the 'Containment Trap'," *The Diplomat*, last modified April 30, 2014, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/the-us-china-and-the-containment-trap/>.

<sup>12</sup> "China-EU Relations: Broader, Higher, and Stronger," *EU Observer*, last modified February 4, 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, <https://euobserver.com/stakeholders/127497>.

<sup>13</sup> "Judy Asks: Is TTIP Really a Strategic Issue?,"

<sup>14</sup> Desai and Vreeland, "How to stop worrying and love the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank."

<sup>15</sup> Nicolas Watt, "US anger at Britain joining Chinese-led investment bank AIIB," *The Guardian*, March 13, 2015, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/13/white-house-pointedly-asks-uk-to-use-its-voice-as-part-of-chinese-led-bank>.

Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). The group concluded that many American policymakers saw China as a possible threat to US political and security interests, whereas a vast majority in the EU did not assume that a stronger China will necessarily clash with Western interests.<sup>16</sup> In 2011, the Transatlantic Academy published a report on Western perceptions of China's rise. In contrast to the working group, the report suggested a growing awareness among both powers of the possible implications of China's growing economic and military power.<sup>17</sup>

In order to verify whether one can speak of a divergence, it is necessary to analyze the recent interpretations of this subject. This thesis addresses the perceptions of the US and the EU on the rise of China. The analysis consists of two parts. In the first part, influential reports of American and European think-tanks will be examined. Hereby, the focus lies on whether China's is presented as a threat or an opportunity. By comparing these reports, similarities and differences in the perceptions will become clear. The second part will analyze the similarities and differences in a broader framework. Based upon a various theories, which are 'tested' to the analysis of the reports of think-tanks, this thesis explains similarities and differences in the perspectives on China's rise.

The question "How can similarities and differences in the American and European perceptions on China as a rising power can be explained?" will be addressed in six chapters. The first chapter consists of a historical overview of China's rise and its relations with the US and Europe. The second chapter deals with America's perception of the PRC. The third chapter consists of an analysis of Europe's view on China. The fourth chapter presents the significant similarities and differences. The fifth and sixth chapter analyze these outcomes on the basis of a theoretical framework. This framework includes the theory of Robert Kagan on the disparity in power and ideology, the theory of Ronald Havelaar on the differences in the American and the European mentality and the theory of Peter Baldwin on the importance of similarities over differences. The thesis ends with a conclusion.

By examining the American and European perceptions in a broader theoretical context, the thesis may contribute to the discussion on future strategies toward China. An understanding of these strategies can also contribute to the discussion on the future of TPP, TTIP, and the transatlantic relationship in general. Furthermore, the thesis makes an attempt to address possible defects in the theories of Kagan, Havelaar, and Baldwin.

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<sup>16</sup> Transatlantic Academy, *Global Shift: How the West should respond to the rise of China* (Washington, D.C: Transatlantic Academy: 2011) 39.

<sup>17</sup> SWP, *China's Rise: Diverging U.S.-EU Perceptions and Approaches* (Berlin: SWP, 2005) 5.

## Chapter 1: Historical overview

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises an historical overview of the rise of China and its relationships with the US and Europe. An understanding of these relations during the twentieth century is necessary for an adequate analysis on the current perceptions on China. Furthermore, such an overview can serve as a starting point for the analysis of the US-EU perceptions.

### 1.2 A brief history of China's rise

Prior to 1979, China – under the leadership of Mao Zedong – maintained a centrally planned economy. To support rapid industrialization, the central government undertook large-scale capital investments during the 1960s and 1970s. In the late 1970s – after Mao's death – China shifted toward a more market-driven approach, also known as the *gaige kaifang* ('reform and opening policies').<sup>18</sup> The outward-oriented approach led to a rapid increase in exports. Over the 1980s and 1990s, the PCR became increasingly engaged in the global economy. It privatized many state-enterprises, and it joined the IMF and the World Bank. In 2001, China became a member of the WTO. Herewith, it agreed upon regulations on imports and exports, intellectual property, and trade remedies. The 2000s can also be characterized as a period in which China began to advocate multilateralism and international trade as an instrument for achieving international peace and stability.<sup>19</sup> It pursued several trade initiatives, such as the ASEAN-China Free trade Area and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.<sup>20</sup>

In these three decades, China has emerged into a major economic power. From 1979 to 2014, China's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 10%.<sup>21</sup> Today, it is the world's largest manufacturer, merchandise exporter, and holder of foreign exchange reserves. China is also currently the second-largest economy after the US. Some analysts predict that it could become the largest within the next five years.<sup>22</sup> However, China's current economic model has resulted in a number of negative economic and social outcomes, such as over-reliance on fixed investments and manufactured industrial exports, wide-spread pollution, and growing income inequality.<sup>23</sup> The global economic crisis of 2008 has exacerbated the problems of

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<sup>18</sup> Wayne M. Morrison, *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2014) 2-4.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Holslag, *Onmogelijke vrede* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2015) 106-107.

<sup>20</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China's Rise*, 5-7.

<sup>21</sup> Morrison, *China's Economic Rise*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, 25.

China's economy.<sup>24</sup> Economists attribute these problems to China's incomplete transition to a free market economy. The Chinese government defines China as a 'socialist-market economy', which means that the government accepts and allows the use of free market forces in a number of areas to help grow the economy but still plays a major role in the country's economic development.<sup>25</sup> Given the fact that the Chinese government perceives a growing economy as vital to maintaining social stability, it is highly possible that the government will try to pursue economic growth at all costs. This could mean that Beijing will remain reluctant – or even dismissive – to implement comprehensive economic reforms to transform China to a free market economy. The Chinese government has acknowledged that its current economic growth model needs to be altered. In 2013, it launched an ambitious reform plan in order to rebalance the economy toward a new consumption-led growth model, where resources are allocated according to the demands of the market. Nonetheless, other policies – such as protectionist policies, stimulus packages, and an undervalued currency – remain distortive.<sup>26</sup> They indicate that the government prefers to control major parts of the national economy.

In addition to the failure to take meaningful steps to rebalance its economy, China has received sharp criticism for its land reclamation activities on contested islands in the South China Sea. The sea is the subject of numerous rival territorial claims, with China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam disputing sovereignty over island chains and nearby waters. The area also includes fertile fishing grounds and potentially rich reserves of undersea natural resources. In June 2015, the Chinese foreign ministry stated that it plans “to build facilities on the artificial islands it has created, and these would perform several tasks, including military defense.”<sup>27</sup>

### *1.3 American-Sino relations*

Since WWII, the US has played a significant role in the East Asian security landscape. In the context of the Cold War, the US established several strong bilateral security alliances throughout East Asia. The strong presence of American military power caused particular tensions with China in the 1950s and 1960s. Their rivalry was not only based on the Cold War environment. During the Chinese Civil War, the US supported the Kuomintang party (KMT), the party that opposed the Communist Party of China. In the Korea War, the two were also

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<sup>24</sup> “Issue Guide: China and the Global Financial Crisis,” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May, 2009, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/china/issue-guide-china-global-financial-crisis/p19517>.

<sup>25</sup> Morrison, *China's Economic Rise*, 25-26.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> “Beijing: Island building in South China Sea ‘almost complete’,” CNN, last modified June 17, 2015, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/17/asia/china-south-china-sea-land-reclamation/>.

opponents. These disputes resulted in a distant and hostile relationship.<sup>28</sup> The rivalry gradually turned into normalized relations, since President Nixon's visit to the country in 1971. After the 'Sino-Soviet split', both powers had much to gain geopolitically and strategically. The US saw the PRC as a potential ally in containing the Soviet Union. For China, the benefit consisted of indirect protection under the American bilateral security alliances with various countries in the region. This caused diplomatic and economic ties to grow in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>29</sup> In this new security environment, economic disputes were considered as relatively less important.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1990s, the common security interests ceased to exist. This circumstance gave rise to political tensions. Incidents, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre and the criticism by President Clinton of China's human rights policies, contributed to a further deterioration of the relationship.<sup>31</sup> US arms sales to the neighboring Taiwan – where the KMT party still holds power – also gave rise to frustration.<sup>32</sup> When the PRC became a member of the WTO and evolved into a global economic power, these political tensions gradually changed into economic disputes. Since the 2000s, the American government has continuously expressed its concerns on the overvalued Chinese national currency, the trade imbalance, and its protectionist policies.<sup>33</sup> These concerns stem from China's interventionist – and thus unfair – policies, that have had a negative effect on the American economy and the global system. China's ignorance in terms of trade with its longstanding enemies, such as Iran, has fueled further US discontent over China's ambiguous economic policies.<sup>34</sup>

Although the US has supported China in its role as responsible stakeholder in global issues, mistrust seems to have never disappeared. China – as an authoritarian global power – may erode Western democratic values and multilateralism. In its capacity as an economic superpower and its increased global scope, the PRC may be in a stronger position to influence non-democratic regimes and impose those regimes an equivalent to its own polity as an alternative for the Western liberal-democratic capitalist system.<sup>35</sup> This scenario seems to be reflected in President Obama's recent statement on China in an interview with the BBC, prior to his trip to Kenya in July 2015:

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<sup>28</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China's Rise*, 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> David L. Shambaugh, *Tangled Titans: The United States and China* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013) 35-36.

<sup>30</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China's Rise*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Shambaugh, *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*, 39.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, 303.

<sup>33</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China's Rise*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) 258.

<sup>35</sup> Holslag, *Onmogelijke vrede*, 24.

“China had been able to funnel an awful lot of money into Africa, basically in exchange for raw materials that are being extracted from Africa. What is certainly true is that the United States has to have a presence to promote the values that we care about.”<sup>36</sup>

#### *1.4 European-Sino relations*

The majority of Europe’s relations with China were established in the 1960s and the 1970s. As the communist Sino-Soviet partnership came to an end and the Cold War progressed, the European powers became increasingly willing to create diplomatic ties with the PRC. France was the first country to establish relations in 1964. Other countries, including the UK and West-Germany, followed in 1972. During the late 1970s and 1980s, economic and political ties were strengthened following China’s ‘reform and openings’ policies. Trade and investments between the two powers grew significantly.<sup>37</sup>

Following the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, China found its relationship with the European powers much damaged. Along with the US, Europe imposed sanctions on the PRC. Nevertheless, their economic impact was negligible, as most of them were lifted in 1995. Only the arms embargo is still in force.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, at that time, European policymakers and entrepreneurs saw China as a source of good business opportunities.<sup>39</sup> During the 2000s, growing economic ties were accompanied by increased political cooperation, such as the EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.<sup>40</sup> This partnership was created in 2003, which extended the trade agreement of 1985 with cooperation on foreign affairs, security matters, and international challenges such as climate change and global governance.<sup>41</sup> The EU encouraged Beijing’s shift toward multilateralism, because it saw America’s unilateralism – that peaked in the early 2000s when it decided to invade Iraq – as a threat to international cooperation and global stability.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, this resulted in a strong Sino-European relationship.

Today, the EU and China are the largest trading partners in the world. Both powers have a large interest in maximum access to each other’s markets.<sup>43</sup> Since the financial crisis of 2008, however, China is increasingly seen as a competitor to Europe’s domestic (industrial)

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<sup>36</sup> Marc Santora, “Obama to Push U.S. Trade in Kenya as China’s Role Grows”, *New York Times*, July 24, 2015, last modified July 3, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/world/africa/obama-trip-to-kenya-offers-rare-chance-to-shore-up-economic-ties.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/world/africa/obama-trip-to-kenya-offers-rare-chance-to-shore-up-economic-ties.html?_r=1).

<sup>37</sup> David Shambaugh, *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 22-2

<sup>38</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China’s Rise*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Shambaugh, *China-Europe Relations*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> “EU Relations with China,” European Union External Action, accessed July 3, 2015, [http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index_en.htm).

<sup>42</sup> “Understanding China-EU Relations,” Carnegie Europe, last modified October 15, 2015, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=49688>.

<sup>43</sup> “China-EU Relations: Trade and Beyond,” *The Diplomat*, last modified April 14, 2014, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/china-eu-relations-trade-and-beyond/>.

productivity due to Beijing's focus on bilateral relations with individual member states. China benefits from the competition between the member states, which is not in the interest of the EU.<sup>44</sup> Europe also strongly opposes China's domestic human rights policy. Nonetheless, European and Chinese policymakers are aware that increased cooperation is beneficial to each of them. When the euro crisis intensified, the PRC showed its support by buying European bonds *en masse*.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that US-EU relationships with China have clear commonalities. As the PRC opened up to the world in terms of its economy and its membership of multilateral organizations, both powers have deepened their ties with China. Each of them has tried to impose its values, including multilateralism, the rule of law, human rights, and environmental protection.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, China's development is accompanied by significant challenges to both the US and the EU. Its reluctance to fully transform into a market economy and its human rights policy are examples of the political, economic, and cultural-societal controversies, that characterize the relationships.

Although the US and the EU share common concerns, there are also significant differences to be found in their relations with China. The European-Sino relationship is based to a great extent on their common preference for a greater role of multilateral organizations. During the 2000s, the European leaders and the Chinese government shared their concern of an extreme unilateralist US. The US approach, in contrast thereto, is less focused on having China embrace multilateralism. Its interests lie more in the field of security and power politics, due to its alliances with countries at China's periphery. Europe, on the other hand, has no strategic military commitments in the region. Due to the absence of any security alliances with Asian countries, one may argue that this makes Europe's relationship with China less 'restrained' and that America's attitude may be characterized by suspicion and mistrust.<sup>47</sup> The next chapters will examine these similarities and differences more closely from a perspective of the respective US-EU perceptions of China.

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<sup>44</sup> "Understanding China-EU Relations."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> Aggerwal and Newland, *Responding to China's Rise*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Bates Gill and Melissa Murphy, *China-Europe Relations: Implications and Policy Responses for the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2008) VII.

## Chapter 2: American perception of China's rise

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the American view on China's growing economic, political, and military power. In order to identify this view, recent publications and reports of influential American think-tanks are examined. These reports and publications are derived from the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Brookings Institute, the Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE), the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The selection of the think-tanks is based on the extent of their impact on American politics. US government representatives utilize the research of these think-tanks for information and policymaking. In turn, these think-tanks hire former diplomats, policymakers, and military experts to help in articulating solutions or international positions on various complex issues. Representatives of think-tanks also testify often in congressional hearings.<sup>48</sup> The chapter demonstrates that there is no single American perception of China's rise. In fact, there are several distinctive perceptions to be identified. This research has identified three perceptions: a classical realist perception, an optimistic perception, and a vigilance perception.

### 2.2 The Council on Foreign Relations

This section analyzes the 'Council Special Report' by Robert Blackwill and Ashley Tellis and the prepared statement by Jerome Cohen before the US House of Representatives. CFR is both an influential and controversial foreign policy think-tank, as many of its members hold senior positions in the US government and business community. The institution has often been criticized that it exerts a disproportional power influence on the formulation of American foreign policy.<sup>49</sup>

#### 2.2a 'Revising U.S. Grand Strategy toward China' – Robert Blackwill and Ashley Tellis

The report by Blackwill and Tellis was published in March 2015. It was presented as a 'Council Special Report', meaning that it provides a timely response to imminent crises and policy dilemmas.<sup>50</sup> Blackwill is a senior fellow at the CFR, who worked as Deputy Assistant

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<sup>48</sup> "Think Tank Employees Tend to Support Democrats," US News, last modified March 3, 2011, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2011/03/03/think-tank-employees-tend-to-support-democrats>.

<sup>49</sup> Robert J. McMahon, "A Question of Influence: The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy Reviewed," *American History* 13 (1985): 445-450.

<sup>50</sup> "Council Special Reports," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 6, 2015, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/by\\_type/special\\_report.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/by_type/special_report.html).

of President George W. Bush.<sup>51</sup> Tellis, a visiting fellow of the Carnegie Endowment, also worked for the Bush administration as a staff member of the National Security Council.<sup>52</sup> The main message of their report is that the American government should abandon its strategy aimed at integrating China into the global order, and replace it by a new grand strategy aimed at balancing China's rise. The authors define 'grand strategy' as going further than protecting the liberal international order under America's hegemony, and include an adequate response to new threats to the global system.<sup>53</sup>

Since the 1990s, the successive Washington administrations have seriously underestimated the threat to American interests in South-East Asia. Hence, these administrations have failed to integrate China successfully into the international liberal order. The lack of a grand strategy led to the implementation of policies that actually enabled the rise of new competitors, such as China.<sup>54</sup> As a result, the US is now unable to counterbalance the Chinese threat. In view of this situation, America should start balancing China's power. This means that it should strive for achieving a balance between its cooperation with China and limiting the dangers that China's economic and military expansion pose to US interests in Asia and globally. It also means that economic cooperation may not dominate America's security interests and the security of its allies in South-East Asia. The leading principle of this grand strategy should be "preserving America's primacy in the global system".<sup>55</sup> The American government should strengthen the US military, enter into new preferential trade agreements with its allies which do not include China, develop a technology-control system aimed at preventing China from being able to inflict strategic harm and increase the political capacities of China's periphery.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, a confrontation with China should be avoided by stimulating US diplomatic relations aimed at mitigating tensions.<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion, Blackwill's and Tellis' report reflects a classical realist hardline approach, with any lack of optimism in terms of cooperation:

"There is no real prospect of building fundamental trust, peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, a strategic partnership, or a new type of major country relations between the US and China."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Robert D. Blackwill," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 6, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/experts/europe-india-middle-east-and-north-africa/robert-d-blackwill/b6>.

<sup>52</sup> "Ashley J. Tellis," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed July 6, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=198>.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Blackwill and Ashley Tellis, *Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2015) 3-5.

<sup>54</sup> Blackwill and Tellis, *Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China*, 3-4.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, 23-33.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, 28.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, 38.

The report keeps up a pessimistic drumbeat of warnings that integrating China into the existing system threatens US global leadership. China is portrayed as an outsider who only opts for multilateralism to the extent that it is to its own benefit. Thus, the economic growth and cooperation-initiatives are just building blocks of a grand strategy, aimed at changing the existing liberal order in South-East Asia. The authors see it as America's responsibility – as the leader of the liberal order – to keep the region free from any hegemony. China's conduct in South-East Asia is described in terms of evil versus good. They underline that the origins of China's ambitions come from its will to recover the geopolitical primacy it once enjoyed during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). Thus, the major threat that emanates from China's rise is its military expansion, its will to replace the US as primary power in Asia, to misuse its economic power as political means, and to pull Asian nations closer to its own policy preferences. By using bold language, Blackwill and Tellis make clear that China's geo-economics and military power are “a danger to US interests.”<sup>59</sup>

### *2.2b 'China's Future – and our own' – Jerome Cohen*

CFR fellow Jerome Cohen is a Chinese law expert. He held his prepared statement before the subcommittee on Asia of the US House of Representatives on June 17, 2015.<sup>60</sup> His statement is interesting, because he bases his analysis on international law. The main goal of his statement, is to take away momentous concerns on the future of China, as he begins his statement with the following words:

“Forecasts of China's future run the gamut. I do not endorse either extreme. There is no significant chance that in the foreseeable future the Communist government will follow the fate of the Soviet Union. Nor do I share the view that the People's Republic is becoming so powerful that it will dominate the world.”<sup>61</sup>

He reasons his arguments on China's internal problems, as well as on its foreign policy. Internally, its growth over the last decades has been so prodigious that it is facing many economic, social and political problems. The PRC has failed to realize that its new economic model will only be lasting if it is based upon a political system that has been reformed accordingly. Cohen describes the attempts to restrict Western values as a public confession of their gradual loss of control. Neither is there any concern for China surpassing the US as the

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<sup>59</sup> Blackwill and Tellis, *Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China*, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, Jerome A. Cohen, “China's Future-and Our Own” (prepared statement before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific United States House of Representatives 1st Session, 114th Congress, June 17, 2015).

<sup>61</sup> Cohen, “China's Future-and Our Own.”

new world leader, as its foreign policy is very inconsistent. It is continuously violating its obligations under many human rights treaties and it is challenging the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. This conduct is detrimental to its international credibility as a power who is capable of assuming global leadership. On the other hand, it has been cooperative in the field of global issues, such as environmental pollution and climate change. Although its overall foreign policy is not fully in balance, China's cooperative attitude in this field is a positive development. Cohen highlights its active participation in the WTO and its economic and multilateral initiatives, such as the AIIB. The latter is described as "innovative and constructive", which implies that he disagrees with the dismissive attitude of the US government.<sup>62</sup>

In his statement, Cohen depicts China as a 'clumsy' and 'inexperienced' to make clear that it is not a threat to US leadership. His reasoning is illustrated by China's struggle to accept the concept of rule of law. It is aware that this concept is fundamental for global leadership and responsibility, but it does not know how this concept can go hand-in-hand with Communist rule. Overall, Cohen is positive about China's rise as a whole. His principal concern is China's commitment to comply with the international treaties on human rights issues and freedom of navigation in international seas (UNCLOS). He acknowledges China's political ambitions, but he only sees a threat in its rejection of the principle of international settlement of maritime and territorial disputes.<sup>63</sup>

### *2.3 The Brookings Institute*

The reports from the Brookings Institute, as analyzed in this section, have been written by Jeffrey Bader, Jonathan D. Pollack, and Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Wang Jisi. Brookings is an influential think-tank, which houses former politicians, government officials, journalists and academics.<sup>64</sup> The institute is defined as 'liberal' or 'centrist'.<sup>65</sup>

#### *2.3a 'Changing China Policy: Are we in search of enemies?' – Jeffrey Bader*

The report 'Changing China Policy' was published in June 2015. The author, Jeffrey Bader, worked for the National Security Council as principal advisor to President Obama on Asia.<sup>66</sup> Bader believes that the US should not change its reconciliation policy toward China. He

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<sup>62</sup> Cohen, "China's Future-and Our Own."

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>64</sup> "What to Think about Think Tanks?," NPR Ombudsman, last modified April 12, 2011, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/ombudsman/2011/04/22/134229266/what-to-think-about-think-tanks>.

<sup>65</sup> "Think Tank Employees Tend to Support Democrats."

<sup>66</sup> "Jeffrey A. Bader," Brookings, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/baderj?view=bio>.

argues that this policy, as developed under the Nixon administration, has laid the basis of relative stability, whereby the risk of military conflicts has been minimalized.<sup>67</sup>

Bader criticizes certain American foreign policy experts, who argue that the reconciliation policies pursued by the US are outdated and that these should be replaced by a relationship built on rivalry. He does identify China's rise as a certain threat to America's dominant position in the Asia-Pacific. Nevertheless, he pleads that this threat is manageable – or even controllable – provided that US takes the right approach and sees this threat in its right proportion. Bader highlights that the US and China are not only rivals, but also partners. As superpowers, they are the main engines of global growth. Furthermore, they have a shared responsibility in addressing global issues as the emission of greenhouses gases and energy consumption. He points out that China has made major efforts of integrating into the global economic system. In order words, he is optimistic that global issues with China will be solved by mutual cooperation.<sup>68</sup>

Bader does share America's concern on China's conduct in the South China Sea. However, he nuances this concern by arguing that this conduct is a stand-alone event that may not be seen as a template for any future mode of conduct. Sovereignty is crucial for China. As long as this principle is not violated, the chance of China using military power should not be exaggerated. Neither is China's military rise alarming, because it does not have a network of military alliances similar to that of the US.<sup>69</sup>

In conclusion, Bader's analysis is one of hope and confidence. His language is carefully chosen by keeping a balance between criticizing and praising China. His report emphasizes that the relationship of the US with China is fundamental for many issues which the US cannot solve by itself. Therefore, he sees many opportunities in China's growing global power. He depicts China's constant feeling of distrust as a result of America's strong political and military network in South-East Asia. China's peaceful rise is partly America's own responsibility. The risk consists of the US, not being fully committed to cooperate with China.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Bader, *Changing China Policy: Are we in search of enemies?* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2015) 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, 4-5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, 3-4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, 5.

## 2.2b 'China's Rise and US Strategy in Asia' – Jonathan Pollack

The report of Jonathan Pollack was published in December 2012. Pollack is a renowned expert in Chinese political-military strategy.<sup>71</sup> The report 'China's Rise and US Strategy in Asia' can be described as ambivalent. On the one hand, Pollack tries to balance the international unease that China's growth has generated, by highlighting that China's overall development has been "unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable".<sup>72</sup> Beijing is also identified as "not yet a fully revived great power".<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, Pollack highlights several risks related to China's rise. First, it reluctantly accommodates to extant international norms, as it sticks to self-protective measures on a range of international issues. Moreover, its rising nationalism underscores the gap between its declared aspirations and its actual behavior. Second, if China's economy stagnates this may have negative implications on the international economy as a whole. Third, its antiquated military is being transformed into a professionalized force. Pollack is particularly interested in this military issue. He argues that the Chinese government sees growing military capacities as integral to the credibility of China as a major power. Hence, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) will develop capabilities that can complicate US military operations in the region.<sup>74</sup>

Despite Pollack's relatively moderate language, the risks as presented by him lead to the conclusion that there is a cause for concern about China's growing political, economic, and military power. His urge for American and European consultations over China's longer-term future confirm this view, as he describes this future as "a pressing political and strategic issue that warrants far more attention."<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Pollack pleads for incorporating China within the existing international structures. He argues in an ominous tone that any other strategy that does not include China "is doomed to failure."<sup>76</sup> The policy of counterbalancing China – particularly in the military realm – will be detrimental to the relations. On the contrary, the US must carefully weigh how trilateral political and security collaboration with China could reconfigure the future. He sees intensified transatlantic consultations – with Europe playing a key role because of its passive attitude in the security aspect – as a potential way to achieve this.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> "Jonathan D. Pollack," Brookings, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/pollackj?view=bio>.

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Pollack, *China's Rise and US Strategy in Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2012) 51.

<sup>73</sup> Pollack, *China's Rise and US Strategy in Asia*, 57.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, 52-53.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, 52.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, 54.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, 57.

### 2.2c 'Addressing U.S.-China Strategic Distrust' – Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi

In March 2012, Lieberthal and Wang published a large report on mutual distrust in US-China relations. Lieberthal is an Asia expert at Brookings, who worked as special assistant to President Clinton for national security affairs.<sup>78</sup> Wang is a visiting fellow, who is considered to be one of China's most important academics in the field of international relations.<sup>79</sup> The report tries to explain where the mutual distrust stems from, in order to take away this distrust. Lieberthal and Wang do not lay out any risks in China's overall rise. It is portrayed as a benevolent power "who's economic and political interests are increasingly reaching around the world, while its geo-economics and geopolitical center of gravity remain in Asia."<sup>80</sup> The challenge solely lies in overcoming strategic distrust between the US and China. In an optimistic manner, the report highlights the opportunities of understanding each other's domestic situation.<sup>81</sup>

The Chinese distrust stems from "its memories of 100 years of humiliation" caused by Western domination.<sup>82</sup> From the American perspective, the distrust derives from its uncertainties as to how China will make use of its growing capabilities in the global economic system, along with China's undemocratic politics with human rights violations.<sup>83</sup> The US and the PRC must overcome this distrust by means of diplomacy, dialogues and cooperation. Building strategic trust in trade, military affairs, the cyber realm, and in multilateral dialogue can contribute to a better coordination of their common interests.<sup>84</sup>

The report can be characterized as an idealistic manifestation of liberal values. Prosperity and security are presented as China's and America's main goals, which can be achieved by means of dialogue and cooperation. By means of creating awareness of differences in style and practices, and appreciation of how Chinese policy-making works, the US can reduce its uncertainties about China's impact on America's vital interests.<sup>85</sup>

### 2.4 The Centre for Strategic & International Studies

In March 2015, CSIS published the report 'Navigating Choppy Waters'. CSIS is a globally renowned think-tank with a distinct focus on foreign policy issues. It is generally defined as a 'centrist' institution.<sup>86</sup> The report is written by Matthew Goodman and David Parker, both

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<sup>78</sup> "Kenneth G. Lieberthal," Brookings, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/lieberthalk?view=bio>.

<sup>79</sup> "Wang Jisi," ThinkINChina, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.thinkinchina.asia/wang-jisi/>.

<sup>80</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi, *Addressing U.S.-China Strategic Distrust* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2012) 2.

<sup>81</sup> Lieberthal and Wang, *Addressing U.S.-China Strategic Distrust*, 49.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, xi.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, 20-34.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, 39-48.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, 49.

<sup>86</sup> "Think Tank Employees Tend to Support Democrats."

economic experts at the institute.<sup>87</sup> Based on various interviews, the report aims to demonstrate that China's plans to rebalance the economy toward a new consumption-led growth model – as announced in 2013 – are likely to succeed. Nonetheless, it warns that this might go hand-in-hand with tightening political control on the free flow of ideas and information.<sup>88</sup>

Goodman's and Parker's portrayal of China's rise can be characterized as an urge for vigilance. President Xi Jinping is depicted as an authoritarian leader, whose fierce anticorruption campaigns solely serve to consolidate his own position. From that perspective, he poses more of a challenge than an opportunity for the US. His opaque and personalized style of decision-making is designed to reassert centralized control over economic policy-making. Thus, China's economic and social reform agenda – which is designed to give markets “a decisive role in resource allocation” – will only result in a more pluralized political economy instead of an open market economy.<sup>89</sup>

The concerns of the authors mainly lie in China's ambivalent economic behavior. The untrustworthy and contradictory leadership of Jinping poses significant challenges to existing economic order. They state that “no foreign nation will have more impact on US economic, security, and diplomatic interests over coming decades.”<sup>90</sup> Although they present these challenges in a somewhat dramatic manner, the approach should be aimed at engagement rather than containment of China. Engagement, however, requires a thorough understanding of Chinese decision-making dynamics. Along with this new mindset, the US should aim to stimulate China to play by the established rules. Furthermore, it should encourage Beijing to continue reforming its economy toward consumption-led growth. At the same time, America should concentrate on sustaining its own economy in order to give the good example. This can be achieved by a reform of the Bretton Woods system and strategic foreign economic strategies. In conclusion, the success of China's reforms depends largely on the American commitment to justify its role as the global economic leader.<sup>91</sup>

## 2.5 *The Peterson Institute for International Economics*

The policy brief ‘Preserving the Open Global Economic System: A Strategic Blueprint for China and the United States’ was published by the Peterson Institute in June 2013. PIIE is a

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<sup>87</sup> “Navigating Choppy Waters,” Center for Strategic & International Studies, last modified March 31, 2015, <http://csis.org/publication/navigating-choppy-waters>.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew P. Goodman and David A. Parker, *Navigating Choppy Waters: China's Economic Decisionmaking at a Time of Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2015) 3.

<sup>89</sup> Goodman and Parker, *Navigating Choppy Waters*, 77.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, IX.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, 84-85.

renowned think-tank that focuses on international economic affairs.<sup>92</sup> The policy brief is written by senior fellow and economic expert Arvind Subramanian. He makes clear that the US is a diminishing rather than an established power. Particularly in the economic sphere, it should be more aware that it is increasingly incapable of carrying the burden of global leadership on its own. The US needs China as its partner, as the Chinese economy has become too big to deny its international responsibilities.<sup>93</sup>

Subramanian proposes a ‘Power-for-Purpose Bargain’; the US should give up some of its power in the existing multilateral institutions in exchange for China assuming its international role and responsibilities. This results in some sort of shared leadership, in which the US can still exercise dominance.<sup>94</sup> The goal is clearly within the reach of the US, who can persuade China that global leadership is a self-interested insurance policy that minimizes external threats to Chinese economic development. Hence, Subramanian sees China’s rise not as a threat or a challenge, but as a reality that the US should accept. In this new reality, the open global economic system can still survive if the US makes use of the opportunities this situation offers. By giving China more power and influence in multilateral institutions and by actively promoting the renminbi as an international currency, the US will be less exposed to the risk that China starts working outside existing structures.<sup>95</sup>

Although the author is optimistic, he also expresses his concerns on China’s capability to act as a true world leader in the long-term. China is still a middle-income country with many domestic economic and political challenges. China’s future role as economic world leader may be affected by these challenges. As the US is gradually shifting away from its pre-eminent position, this could result in a structural undersupply of leadership. The potential global power sharing between the US and China may, however, also be comprised by China’s recent military expansion in the South China Sea.<sup>96</sup> These circumstances led the US to embark on new initiatives aimed at containing China, such as TTP and TTIP. Subramanian warns the US that these initiatives carry only modest economic benefits and entail substantial risks. China construes TPP as an act of hostile regionalism. As a result, it can develop into an economic global leader whose focus is less global and more nationally orientated.<sup>97</sup>

In conclusion, Subramanian is both optimistic and vigilant. China’s rise as a global

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<sup>92</sup> “2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report,” University of Pennsylvania, accessed July 6, 2015, [http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=think\\_tanks](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=think_tanks).

<sup>93</sup> Arvind Subramanian, *Preserving the Open Global Economic System: A Strategic Blueprint for China and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2013) 1-2.

<sup>94</sup> Subramanian, *Preserving the Open Global Economic System*, 2-3.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, 8-10.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, 5-6.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, 9-11.

power is seen as inevitable, which does not have to endanger the open rules-based multilateral economic system. China – due to its self-interested mindset – is likely to embrace this system if its global leadership is acknowledged. However, this will only occur if the US actually relinquishes power in China’s favor. Edmund Burke is paraphrased to clarify this argument: “The US may have to graciously give up the power that it is gradually losing the ability to withhold.”<sup>98</sup>

## 2.6 *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

In April 2015, the Carnegie Endowment published a large report on the major challenges for the US in the Asia-Pacific region. Carnegie has developed itself since 2006 from an American foreign policy institution to a global think-tank.<sup>99</sup> Although it is not formally associated with any political party, Carnegie is defined as a ‘centrist’ think-tank.<sup>100</sup> The report ‘Conflict and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region’ is written by a number of Carnegie analysts. It mainly deals with China’s political and military rise in the region. The authors sketch several potential scenarios, and identify the strategic risks and opportunities of those scenario’s for the US. Although they present these risks and opportunities in an objective manner, their proposed approaches reveal a certain concern about China’s growing political and military power.

Each of these potential scenario’s recognizes China’s assertive regional foreign policy. This assertiveness partially derives from the rise of ultranationalist forces within the PRC. Although not expressed explicitly, the authors implicitly state that its regional assertiveness may pose a potential threat to US interests. Chinese dominance in the Asia-Pacific region can lead to competition and conflict, in which the US can get involved. However, such a risk will only become serious if the relations between countries in that region become more constrained and competitive. A second major risk of the changing security environment is the possibility of increased tensions that put existing multilateral, political, and economic arrangements at stake.<sup>101</sup> For this reason, the Carnegie analysts recommend the American government to develop a long-range strategy that can extract the maximum benefits out of an increasingly complex security environment. Among others, this entails a dialogue with China on each other’s vital interests and creating ‘crisis management mechanisms’ in the South

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<sup>98</sup> Subramanian, *Preserving the Open Global Economic System*, 16.

<sup>99</sup> “The Global Think Tank,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/about/>.

<sup>100</sup> “Think Tank Employees Tend to Support Democrats.”

<sup>101</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *Conflict and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015) 10-11.

China Sea that could settle future maritime and territorial disputes. Furthermore, the US should promote a free trade agreement with ASEAN-countries, including China, that focuses on mutual regional benefits. In such a new context, it will be better positioned to address human rights and democracy issues.<sup>102</sup>

The perception of the Carnegie analysts on the PRC can be characterized as contrastive. It foresees that the American ability to shape the Asia-Pacific region will gradually diminish due to China's growth. Nonetheless, a long-term strategy – aimed at extracting maximum benefits out of the changes – can reduce the amount of challenges to American security interests in the region.<sup>103</sup> It is interesting to note that the authors' recommendations are principally made on military-political issues, and less on economic issues. Each recommendation has a component of deterrence and engagement. This focus on deterrence demonstrates that China's political and military rise is associated with deep concern.

### *2.7 The Congressional Research Service*

The CRS is the think-tank of the American Congress. It publishes reports on several areas of research, such as foreign affairs, defense and trade, in order to assist the legislative branch in its work.<sup>104</sup> For this reason, the report 'China's Economic Rise' is interesting for the analysis of America's perception on China. The report was written by Wayne Morrison and published in October 2014. Although the style of the report is informative and neutral, Morrison highlights that China's economic rise poses a risk to the existing economic order and US leadership.

China's increasing confidence in its current economic model is seen as a problem. Its economic model has proven to be successful. Yet, it maintains a number of distortive economic policies, such as government subsidies, trade and investment barriers and discriminatory policies.<sup>105</sup> Morrison argues that the key challenges for the US are to convince China that it has a stake in maintaining the international trading system, and to take a more active leadership role in that respect. Furthermore, it should promote economic and trade reforms.<sup>106</sup> In other words, he favors a more bilateral engaging stance over a more aggressive style.

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<sup>102</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *Conflict and Cooperation*, 198-199.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, xvi.

<sup>104</sup> "About CRS," Congressional Research Service, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/about/>.

<sup>105</sup> Morrison, *China's Economic Rise*, 1.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*, 36.

Although Morrison mainly uses statistics and plain information to convince Congress on the best ways to respond to China, his report indicates that he is concerned about China's will to play by the rules. Moreover, his analysis of the indecisiveness of China's government to reform its economy demonstrates that he observes it with distrust.

## *2.8 Conclusion*

This chapter addresses the American view on China's political, economic, and military rise. The analysis of the various reports of American think-tanks demonstrates that there are significant differences to be found in the perceptions of the authors. For this reason, the American perception on China can be characterized by more than one image. This analysis categorizes three different perceptions. Each image conveys its underlying message in a distinct manner.

The first image is the classical realist image as put forward by Blackwill and Tellis. This view is the most 'extreme' on China's rise and its implications for the US. China is presented as not to be trusted. It strives for maximizing its power, and to overthrow the existing political liberal system and its democratic values. In the classical realist view, the accent lies on the military aspect of China's rise as illustrated by its aggressive land reclamation projects in the South China Sea. It urges the American government to pursue both a strategy of containment and engagement, whereby it points out that the existing policy of reconciliation with the PRC is outdated. It believes that American interests are best served by the traditional realist concepts of 'self-interest', 'military strength', and 'power politics'. Lastly, the first image is merely focused on China, and not so much on self-criticism.

The second perception suggests an optimistic view of China's overall rise. This perception attempts to counter the general discourse of fear that the PRC will succeed the US as international superpower. Moreover, it does not identify China as a threat. It explains that China has no intentions to supplant the role of the US in the world, nor that it intends to undermine any global norms or order. The optimism is based on various presumptions, such as China's thorough integration into the current global economy, its good trade relations with western countries, its commitment to multilateralism and global governance issues, its lack of military alliances, or its concerns over domestic problems. Another feature of the second image are the opportunities offered by China's growing international power. These mainly lie in the domain of multilateral issues, such as climate change, and political and military cooperation. Lastly, the optimistic view pleads for an understanding of China's position. It explains China's ambiguity as a result of US unwillingness to acknowledge the preminent

position of the PRC. The reports by Bader, Lieberthal and Wang, and partially Cohen reflect the optimistic perception that China's rise does not automatically go hand-in-hand with political consequences.

The last image reflects the urge for vigilance on China's global rise. Although this view generally recognizes that China has not made any public advances in changing international power relations, it also includes reasons to worry. These reasons relate to China's military spurt, its ambivalent attitude towards international norms, Jinping's highly repressive policies, his indecisiveness on actual economic reforms, or growing nationalism. The vigilance perception is also expressed by its mild and moderate style. Although it does not identify China's rise as a direct threat, it does reason that it is a serious cause for concern in the economic, political, and the security sphere. Furthermore, it pleads for a strategy of engagement rather than containment. This is presented by the idea of 'better safe than sorry', in contrast to 'all is well that ends well'. In other words, integrating China into the existing international economic and multilateral system will prevent it from imposing its own version of international rules. Nonetheless, the new reality in which China is a new global power remains complex. Finally, the vigilance image is critical to the US itself. It argues that China's mode of conduct – revisionist or status-quo – is partially determined by America's own attitude; acceptance or refusal of China as a new world power. Pollack, Cohen (partially), Goodman and Parker, the Carnegie analysts, and Morrison are illustrative for this third image.

Interestingly, Subramanian can be categorized under each of these images, as he acknowledges China's will to undermine America's role but he also identifies opportunities within this context. His unique stance demonstrates that one can better speak of several American perceptions on China's rise, rather than one particular image. Nonetheless, there are several characteristics that all images have in common, and which can be identified as particular to the American perception. First, all reports express their concern on China's growing military role in the South China Sea. The intentions of the PRC for this territorial expansion remain unclear. As a result, there is reason for concern. Second, the reports all acknowledge that China's rise will have a fundamental impact on the future of the US.

## Chapter 3: European perception of China's rise

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the European perception of China's rise. In order to identify the view of the European countries, publications and reports of influential European think-tanks are examined. Along with pan-European think-tanks, this thesis will take British, French, German, and Dutch institutions into account. The choice for these countries can be explained by their important position within the EU, and their involvement in shaping the transatlantic relation. The reports are derived from the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the Centre for European Reform (CER), Chatham House, Notre Europe, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) and the Clingendael Institute. It should be noted that due to the absence of 'direct' reports on China's rise and its implications for Europe, this chapter examines multiple smaller reports which only partially deal with the subject.

The chapter demonstrates that Europe's perception can be defined as uniform, with the following five particularities: (i) the recognition that China is a cause for concern; (ii) significant optimism on Europe's ability to integrate China into the existing order; (iii) serious concerns on Europe's current fragmented approach; (iv) little attention for China's military rise and; (v) a large focus on the American-Sino rivalry.

### 3.2 The European Council on Foreign Relations

The reports of the ECFR relate to the report 'China 3.0: Understanding the New China' and the policy brief 'The Road Back to European Power'. ECFR is a pan-European think-tank that aims to conduct research on the development of a coherent and values-based European foreign policy.<sup>107</sup>

#### 3.2a 'China 3.0: Understanding the New China' – Mark Leonard

The report by Mark Leonard, the director of ECFR, was published in November 2012. He derives the title from his analysis that China has entered into a new era since the financial crisis of 2008, labeled as 'China 3.0'.<sup>108</sup> The report aims to shine light on the debates that take place within the Chinese intellectual, political, and economic elites on its growth. As regards the debate on economic subjects, there is division between advocates of the privatization of

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<sup>107</sup> "About the European Council on Foreign Relations," ECFR, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.ecfr.eu/about>.

<sup>108</sup> Mark Leonard, *China 3.0: Understanding the New China* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012) 10.

state-owned companies and those who favor economic growth by clever state planning. In the political realm, the opinions are also divided. The liberals want to place limits on the power of the state through elections or the rule of law, whereas neo-authoritarians fear such measures will lead to bureaucracy and corruption. In the field of foreign policy, internationalists want to play a role in the existing institutions, whereas nationalists want China to assert itself on the global stage. Leonard calls for a better understanding among European policymakers of the internal debate, because the outcome of this debate will determine whether China's growing power will have implications for Europe and the world.<sup>109</sup>

In spite of the absence of a clear-cut interpretation of China's rise, Leonard sees several opportunities for Europe to influence the debate. First, the EU can reach out to the new 'Weibo generation'; an equivalent of the Western social media-generation, and the rising number of Chinese NGOs to inform them on European-Sino dialogues on human-rights issues. By means of 'digital diplomacy', the notion of liberal values can be transmitted. Secondly, through Chinese investments on the European continent, the EU can influence China's development in terms of economic reforms. By welcoming Chinese private enterprises, transparency can be legally imposed and reliance on domestic purchasing power can be encouraged. This can also contribute to growth and employment in the European economy.<sup>110</sup> Due to these opportunities, there are good reasons for the EU to engage with the PRC. Leonard warns that China 3.0 is more contentious than before.<sup>111</sup> China realizes that continued economic success depends on reforms, yet it is a step in the dark as – up to now – it was used to state-control. Nonetheless, he is cautiously optimistic that Europe can guide China in this process.<sup>112</sup>

Curiously, Leonard does not dwell on China's assertive foreign policy.<sup>113</sup> His analysis is limited to Europe's need for a responsible and constructively engaged China within the international context. He is confident that joint efforts on resolving disputes in which China is involved, can lead to China's own generally accepted version of the 'responsibility to protect'-doctrine. In conclusion, one can say that Leonard's perception on China's rise is multifaceted. He addresses the views within China that do not concur with Europe's ideal outcome, but his emphasis lies on the opportunities for Europe to "get China 3.0 right".<sup>114</sup> In other words, an undesirable image of China's rise is left aside. Leonard's main message to

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<sup>109</sup> Leonard, *China 3.0*, 21-24.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, 127-129.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, 126.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, 131.

<sup>113</sup> It should be kept in mind that this article was published in 2012, which means that territorial issues mainly concerned stakes in terms of fishing, shipping lanes, energy resources, and forward defense.

<sup>114</sup> Leonard, *China 3.0*, 131.

European policymakers is to have more understanding for the Chinese debate. This means a uniform approach, which he also defines as the largest strategic challenge for the EU in its relation with China.<sup>115</sup>

### *3.2b 'The Road Back to European Power' – Susi Dennison et al.*

The policy brief 'The Road Back to European Power' was published in July 2015. It is written by various visiting and senior ECFR fellows. The brief aims to review the EU's global strategy. The authors urge Europe to understand the world realistically, as new threats emerge that pose an existential challenge to European core interests. China's rise is not addressed as a specific challenge, but it is placed in the broader context of the general emergence of Asia as a powerful continent.

The authors note that there is more competition for rule-making and implementation, coming from Asia. In that respect, the AIIB is associated with the challenge that existing international institutions have become increasingly subject to erosion:

“Nothing symbolized the shift in international order better than China's successful Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank proposal.”<sup>116</sup>

The support by Europe – as co-founder of the existing liberal order – for new institutions, such as the AIIB, only contributes to this erosion. The new institutions give rise to concern, because the priorities of their initiators deviate from the existing structures. Key principles, such as sovereignty, stability, and growth, will result in a down-scaled version of the current international order. China is particularly depicted as the malefactor: “...it is China that has done most to work towards a new, low-cost, and incentive-driven international order.”<sup>117</sup> It constructs an order in which norms and legal enforcement are minimized, while it enshrines trade and capital flows from a protected vantage point. The policy brief urges the EU to prevent China from going its own way, and instead support it in finding its place in the existing global system. This can only be successful if the EU is prepared to make certain compromises in response to China's resistance to conditionality.<sup>118</sup>

Interestingly, the ECFR experts briefly express their concern about China's growing military might. Their principle worry relates to China's revisionist agenda. For this reason, Europe should adjust its existing approach of projecting norms and values. The authors are

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<sup>115</sup> Leonard, *China 3.0*, 130-131.

<sup>116</sup> Susi Dennison et al., *The Road Back to European Power* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015) 4.

<sup>117</sup> Dennison et al., *The Road Back to European Power*, 4.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*, 6.

critical on Europe's 'empire of norm'-policy, as it hinders competitiveness and repels partner states.<sup>119</sup> They recommend that the EU sets a shorter list of priorities, in which human rights issues have a lower priority and economic cooperation has a more prominent place.<sup>120</sup> In conclusion, the policy brief can be seen as a reality check on China's rise. In robust terms, it is portrayed as a threat to the existing liberal international system. The EU has more to lose "than any other actor if international institutions are further fragmented, and if international norms are degraded."<sup>121</sup> Again, the authors state that only a united Europe can preserve its power.

### *3.3 The European Union Institute for Security Studies*

The EUISS is an agency of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that deals with the analysis of foreign, security, and defense policy issues.<sup>122</sup> In this section, the short alert issue 'China: reshaping the global order?' and the policy brief 'China: setting the agenda(s)?' are examined. The publications have been written by Alice Ekman. Ekman is a China specialist at the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI) and an associate analyst at the EUISS.<sup>123</sup> She argues that China intends to reshape the international order with the PRC as global agenda setter. Yet, Ekman's neutral language indicates that these intentions are not necessarily malign.

The alert issue, published in July 2015, places China's New Silk Road projects and its White Paper on military strategy in a wider strategic framework. The Silk Road projects aim to build a network of infrastructure throughout Eurasia. The White Paper is the public document that offers insight in China's future military strategy. Ekman points out that China uses these projects as a tool to profile itself on the global stage. Its level of self-confidence is extremely high. As a result, it tries to reshape the existing order by means of a two-sided approach: proactive flexibility in the economic field and firmness on territorial and maritime disputes. China's aspirations are first and foremost concentrated on the Asia-Pacific region. Nonetheless, its new initiatives are an indication of China's greater political ambitions. The renewed interest in Europe derives from its strive to challenge the 'illegitimate' American hegemony.<sup>124</sup>

The policy brief, published in March 2015, describes the underlying intentions of

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<sup>119</sup> Dennison et al., *The Road Back to European Power*, 5.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, 4-5.

<sup>122</sup> "About us," European Union Institute for Security Studies, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/about-us/>.

<sup>123</sup> "Associate Analysts," European Union Institute for Security Studies, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/about-us/associate-analysts/>.

<sup>124</sup> Alice Ekman, *China: reshaping the global order?* (Brussels: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015) 1-2.

China's Silk Projects more in detail. An additional objective is the reduction of China's domestic socio-economic imbalance. A second incentive is the increased need for oil and gas. A third objective stems from Sino-American rivalry. The Chinese hope that stronger economic, political, and security ties with the many Eurasian countries will lead to a balance of power moving toward Asia.<sup>125</sup>

In both articles, China's ambitions are not conceived as a direct threat. Yet, it is the best option for Europe to become a 'co-agenda setter' to mitigate the possible risks. In its role as co-agenda setter, the EU can influence China and increase its own political impact. Curiously, Ekman does not address any military issues in her reports. Overall, she is relatively less concerned about China's rise than other political analysts, as she believes that China's aspirations – in the first place – will remain limited the South-East Asia and – in the long run – to a competitive approach toward the US.<sup>126</sup>

### *3.4 The Centre for European Reform*

In July 2014, CER published the report 'A Presence farther East: Can Europe play a strategic role in the Asia-Pacific region?' CER is an independent British think-tank, that describes itself as "pro-European but not uncritical."<sup>127</sup> The report is written by transatlantic expert Rem Korteweg.<sup>128</sup> In his opinion, China's rise should convince Europe to develop a security strategy for the Asia-Pacific region. He argues that the maritime and territorial disputes between China and its neighbors put essential European economic, and thus, security interests at risk.<sup>129</sup>

The author straightly points out what China's growing power is about:

"The expansion of Beijing's economic influence, its growing national confidence, and its ever-increasing demand for raw materials, are matched by military build-up and an increasingly assertive foreign policy."<sup>130</sup>

This has led to a contradictory rivalry between China and the US; they have a common interest in stable economic relations and their cooperation is crucial to the global economy, but in security terms they compete against each other. Korteweg is worried about this rivalry, because it can have serious implications for European economic security interests. Economically, Europe's prosperity depends to a large extent on its trade with Asia. As its

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<sup>125</sup> Alice Ekman, *China: setting the agenda(s)?* (Brussels: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015) 1-2.

<sup>126</sup> Ekman, *China: setting the agenda(s)?*, 1-2.

<sup>127</sup> "About the CER," CER, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.cer.org.uk/about>.

<sup>128</sup> "Rem Korteweg," CER, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.cer.org.uk/personnel/rem-korteweg>.

<sup>129</sup> Rem Korteweg, *A Presence Farther East: Can Europe Play a Strategic Role in the Asia-Pacific Region?* (Londen: CER, 2014) 1-2.

<sup>130</sup> Korteweg, *A Presence Farther East*, 2.

trade with Asian countries has intensified dramatically, Europe's interest in stability of the Asia-Pacific region – and the maintenance of a global flow of goods to and from the region – should be in proportion therewith. For this reason, the EU cannot ignore Asia's security situation.<sup>131</sup>

Korteweg rings the alarm bell in the sense that there are various critical aspects of China's rise that originate more from Western countries than from China itself. First, the US and the EU have been unable to coordinate a joint 'pivot' toward Asia.<sup>132</sup> Second, European countries themselves fail to pursue an harmonized approach. France and Germany even prefer to follow their own bilateral route. However, time has come for a coordinated approach by Europe to secure its interests in the Asian region. Since the Asian region is increasingly shaped by power politics, Europe's ambition to be a normative power should be replaced by a more strategic approach. Korteweg recommends a successful conclusion of TPP and TTIP, which can establish a coherent framework of trade agreements based on harmonized standards. He is optimistic that China – not being a party to those agreements – will eventually adopt these standards.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the EU should integrate China further in multilateral frameworks, such as ASEAN. He is also confident on this aspect, as he states that Europe's efforts to shape the context in the region will permit China to rise peacefully.<sup>134</sup>

In conclusion, one can suggest that Korteweg sees China's regional political and military rise as a serious threat to European economic interests. He is not at unease with its possible ambitions to change the international rules-based order. Interestingly, he is quite firm in his statements as he argues that Europe should "step up its game in East-Asia", including a military role and a hardline stance as regards compliance with UNCLOS.<sup>135</sup> At the same time, he also holds on to Europe's traditional approach, by recommending dialogues with Asia, the US, and between member states themselves. This argument demonstrates that – within the context of China's rise – Europe's fragmented foreign policy, along with its prudence, are in fact the real major challenge to its own economic security.

### *3.5 Chatham House*

In June 2014, Chatham House published the report 'China's Global Personality'. The institute is a renowned British think-tank in the field of foreign affairs.<sup>136</sup> The report is

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<sup>131</sup> Korteweg, *A Presence Farther East*, 2-5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*, 10-11.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*, 13.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibidem*, 16-17.

<sup>136</sup> "About Chatham House," Chatham House, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about>.

written by former British diplomat and China expert Tim Summers.<sup>137</sup> His report on China's growing power can be characterized as nuanced and yet critical. In a typical British understatement style of presentation, the author suggests that China's rise poses both challenges and opportunities, whereby the latter are dominating for the UK.

One of Summers' principle arguments is that China's global personality is a dynamic concept; it is formed by the continuing debate among the Chinese economic and political elite, as well as other global actors. Thus, the long-term implications of China's rise do not only originate from its own decisions, but also from the decisions made by other powers.<sup>138</sup> From that angle, the author is hesitant to make a clear statement on China's ambitions. That being said, he does identify several indications that the PRC is spreading its global influence, thereby implicitly saying that this spread may have detrimental effects on the global order. First, China's reach is spreading substantially beyond its borders, and this spread is notably increasing its self-confidence. Second, it is likely to strengthen its foreign and security policy. Third, it tries to obtain a position that is equivalent to that of the US. Summers notes that China is pursuing these ambitions without incurring the risk of any military conflict.<sup>139</sup> Then again, whether this succeeds will also depend on the attitude of the US.<sup>140</sup> He is not concerned about China's commitment to the existing multilateral structures, in so far as related to economic subjects. Other subjects, however, will remain outside the scope of its core interests.<sup>141</sup>

Summers sees sufficient room for other countries to participate in shaping the future of the global order. Engaging with Chinese policymakers can encourage them to behave in a way that reduces tensions in the Sino-American relationship. Thus, this will have a mitigating effect on any risks related to renegotiating the regional order. Although this will not lead to a 'G2 structure', in which global affairs will be overseen in a kind of partnership between the US and China, a more active engagement of other countries will certainly be in their best interest. If strategic difficulties between the two powers continue, this could pose a challenge to those countries whose strategic interests are aligned closely to the US, but for which the rise of China may offer more opportunities than threats. As regards the UK, its core interests lie more in the economy and global governance issues than in traditional security concerns.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, he implicitly suggests that the UK

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<sup>137</sup> "Dr Tim Summers," Chatham House, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/directory/189121>.

<sup>138</sup> Tim Summers, *China's Global Personality* (London: Chatham House, 2014) 4.

<sup>139</sup> Summers, *China's Global Personality*, 12-15.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibidem*, 28-29.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*, 22.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem*, 27-31.

should convince the US to abandon its traditional role as superior power, to accept the new power relations and to engage with the PRC in “a dialogue of equals.”<sup>143</sup> This type of alliance is most beneficial to the UK. Hence, it can be concluded that Summers recognizes the possible threats that accompany China’s rise, but that – on balance – there are more opportunities for the UK in this new reality.

### *3.6 Notre Europe*

The report ‘Europe and World Governance’ was published by Notre Europe in 2010. Notre Europe is a French think-tank, that was created in 1996 by Jacques Delors in order to promote European integration.<sup>144</sup> The report was drafted by Nicole Gnesotto as the outcome of discussions between high-ranking former European statesmen and ministers.<sup>145</sup> The report deals with China’s rise in a new global order. In this order, it poses a threat to major global interests, such as climate change.

The report argues that globalization has resulted in a new emerging order. Although it has provided structure to the economic system, it also led to a greater interdependency between states whereby the world has become increasingly vulnerable to major disruptive events, such as financial crises and natural disasters. Thus, on balance, globalization has led to more political instability and to a return to power politics.<sup>146</sup> China is depicted as a major force behind this process. The report identifies three major challenges to the new global context: the survival of the planet, the economy, and international security.<sup>147</sup> Throughout the report, a large emphasis is placed on the first challenge. It argues that the two latter challenges are proportionally less important than global issues:

“The survival of the planet has become the main challenge and no doubt the most obvious, as well as the most complex, common security issue of the early 21st century.”<sup>148</sup>

In spite of these challenges, the EU has “immense opportunities” to continue playing a predominant role in the new system.<sup>149</sup> The European model for pooled sovereignty should serve as a template for a new mode of multilateral governance. Multilateralism is seen as the sole route to lasting international security. Under this new mode of governance, the EU and the US would share their leadership but the Western values are no longer sacrosanct. In this

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<sup>143</sup> Summers, *China’s Global Personality*, 30.

<sup>144</sup> “Presentation,” Notre Europe, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.delorsinstitute.eu/011-361-General-presentation.html>.

<sup>145</sup> Nicole Gnesotto, *Europe and World Governance: Reshaping EU-US Relations* (Paris: Notre Europe, 2010) 2.

<sup>146</sup> Gnesotto, *Europe and World Governance*, 3-7.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*, 9-10.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibidem*, 9.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibidem*, 14.

context, China is perceived as a threat. Its constant demand for energy to fuel its economic development endangers the survival of the planet. Moreover, its nationalism, its focus on defending its own interests, and its value to sovereignty are contradictory to the concept of multilateral governance.<sup>150</sup> The report also addresses China's militarization, but without concluding that it constitutes a threat. It merely explains its defense budget as a result of increased international competition, which – in turn – derives from globalization.<sup>151</sup>

In brief, China's rise is perceived a serious threat, but only in respect of the challenges of globalization, of which climate change is the most important one. A revitalized transatlantic partnership could be a significant impetus to have China more committed to its global responsibilities. In this context, the greatest challenge is the need for a politically strong and unified Europe that is able to take a leading role in the globalization process, and exert greater influence over other powers.<sup>152</sup>

### *3.7 The Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*

In June 2015, the SWP published the report 'Goeconomics Meets Geopolitics: China's New Economic and Foreign Policy Initiatives'. SWP is a German independent think-tank that analyzes foreign policy and economic issues.<sup>153</sup> The report is written by Hanns Günther Hilpert and Gudrun Wacker, each an Asia expert at the SWP.<sup>154</sup> <sup>155</sup> The report serves as an overview of China's recent international initiatives. It argues that China's intentions are not revisionist. Yet, Europe should play a constructive role in ensuring that these new initiatives set high standards in the field of Western norms and values.<sup>156</sup>

China's assertive foreign policy and its strong will to shape its own (economic) security environment are seen as signs of its ambitions for regional leadership. Nonetheless, the authors note that these ambitions are not necessarily benign. China's increasing global responsibility and its economic initiatives only imply a greater willingness to become more integrated in the regional and global system. In the view of Hilpert and Wacker, it is necessary to grant the PRC a greater role in the existing multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, ADB and IMF. Such a role would also compel these institutions to reform their constitutional documents, whereby emerging countries are given voting rights proportional to

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<sup>150</sup> Gnesotto, *Europe and World Governance*, 20-24.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, 9.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem*, 29-31.

<sup>153</sup> "The Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik," SWP, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/about-swp.html>.

<sup>154</sup> "Dr. rer. Pol. Hanns Günther Hilpert", SWP, accessed July 10, 2015, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/scientist-detail/profile/hanns\\_guenther\\_hilpert.html](http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/scientist-detail/profile/hanns_guenther_hilpert.html).

<sup>155</sup> "Dr. phil. Gudrun Wacker", SWP, accessed July 10, 2015, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/scientist-detail/profile/gudrun\\_wacker.html](http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/scientist-detail/profile/gudrun_wacker.html).

<sup>156</sup> Hanns Gunter Hilpert and Gudrun Wacker, *Goeconomics Meets Geopolitics* (Berlin: SWP, 2015)

their economic power. Delay in implementing reforms will only result in China increasingly going its own way by setting up new separate institutions.<sup>157</sup>

Strikingly, important issues, such as territorial claims, remain unaddressed in the report. It mainly dwells on China's new economic initiatives to highlight the opportunities that are offered by China's new activism. The authors do argue that all initiatives are still in their initial stage and that their success in the long-term remains unpredictable. Furthermore, they urge the EU to ensure that their values – as relating to human rights, social and environmental issues, compliance and governance – are properly transmitted and embedded in these initiatives. Yet, Hilpert and Wacker are relatively confident that China will join the existing geopolitical architecture of law based rules and principles. Their main argument is that the PRC will seek to play a political role within the existing global economic system, which is commensurate to its economic weight. In the end, it has owed most of its economic growth to closer integration into this system. They argue that Europe was wise to seize the new opportunities offered by China, in contrast to the US.<sup>158</sup>

In conclusion, one can argue that the authors translate China's rise into increased opportunities for European enterprises. China wants an increased connectivity with Europe as expressed by its multiple initiatives. A harmonized response by the EU to these Chinese initiatives could certainly contribute to their success. They point out that Europe's approach is, unfortunately, still fragmented so that much of its precious political leverage is unnecessarily wasted. For this reason, Europe should focus much more on uniformity in its external relations.<sup>159</sup>

### *3.8 The Clingendael Institute*

The reports 'The EU member states must act together against China' and 'EU should tango with Taiwanese tiger and Chinese dragon' were published by the Clingendael Institute in January and February 2015. Clingendael is a renowned Dutch think-tank, focused on foreign policy. The author is Maaïke Okano-Heijmans, an economic diplomacy and Asia expert at the institute.<sup>160</sup> Her perception on China's political and economic rise is relatively negative. In her publications, she fiercely criticizes the EU for their "shortsighted economic diplomacy-thinking" and their inaction in China's attempt to reverse political reforms.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Hilpert and Wacker, *Geoeconomics Meets Geopolitics*, 6.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem*, 5.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibidem*, 4-5.

<sup>160</sup> "Dr. Maaïke Okano-Heijmans," Clingendael, accessed July 11, 2015, <http://www.clingendael.nl/person/maaïke-okano-heijmans?lang=nl>.

<sup>161</sup> "Europa moet gezamenlijk optrekken tegen China," Clingendael, accessed on July 11, 2015, <http://www.clingendael.nl/publication/europa-moet-gezamenlijk-optrekken-tegen-china?lang=nl>.

Okano-Heijmans is skeptical on the sincerity of China's intentions in becoming a world leader. Europe's lack of a unified strategic vision will only pave the way for China to exploit its position up to a maximum. Currently, the European powers only compete with one another for their own economic gain. Instead of joining forces on negotiations on good governance and environmental standards, they miss out on collective economic opportunities. More importantly, they decrease their own geopolitical power and fuel China's geostrategic interests. Okano-Heijmans sees China's growing influence in the world – and particularly in global economic governance – as unstoppable. Thus, engaging with the PRC is seen as the only feasible option. A dialogue may result in more influence, which in turn may redirect China's revisionist intentions. The AIIB offers a good opportunity to exert direct influence in shaping the bank's financing policy.<sup>162</sup>

Okano-Heijmans believes that China deliberately tries to influence the international system. She warns that its growing power can possibly lead to a new global order, which is not in line with Western standards. China is portrayed as somewhat 'cunning' power that consciously tries to play the European member states off against each other. Its growing repression of civic freedoms, its assertive foreign policy, its reversal of political reforms and its continuing influence on the economy are all addressed as evidence to highlight China's malign intentions. Okano-Heijmans' views are confirmed by her reference to the 'Chinese dragon'. Nonetheless, she remains hopeful that Europe – acting thereby uniformly – can exert influence on China's revisionist intentions.<sup>163</sup>

### *3.9 Conclusion*

This chapter addresses the European perception on China's political, economic, and military rise. The analysis of the various reports of European think-tanks demonstrates that Europe's perception can be summarized by five characteristics. The first is the recognition that China is a cause for concern. The reports show that they are cautious with China's ambitions for a balance of power. However, the reports differ in their view on the major challenges that these ambitions entail. Multiple reports, like the ECFR policy brief and the reports by Ekman, express their concerns on the increased risk of degradation of international norms. The report of Notre Europe sees China mainly as a threat to global issues, such as human rights and the environment. Other authors, such as Hilpert and Wacker, argue that China's intentions may

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<sup>162</sup> "Europa moet gezamenlijk optrekken tegen China."

<sup>163</sup> "EU should tango with Taiwanese tiger and Chinese dragon," Clingendael, accessed on July 11, 2015, <http://www.clingendael.nl/publication/eu-should-tango-taiwanese-tiger-and-chinese-dragon?lang=nl>.

not necessarily be benign. Nonetheless, they all consider China's ambitions as commensurate to its economic weight. In other words, the authors are definitely concerned about China's rise. At the same time, there is still room for influence. This leads to the following particularity, as mentioned hereunder.

The second characteristic is the reports' notable optimism on the ability of the European powers to integrate China into the existing international and multilateral systems. Several authors, such as the EUISS analysts, are confident that the EU is capable to guide China on its way to leadership. Authors like Leonard argue that Europe can help shape a responsible "China 3.0".<sup>164</sup> Others, like Korteweg and Summer, are optimistic that Europe's efforts to shape the context in the region will mitigate the risks associated with China's military rise. The optimism on Europe's abilities leads to the conclusion that the reports see China's rise as a *possible* rather than a direct threat.

A third characteristic are the serious concerns on Europe's current fragmented approach. The reports see Europe's indecisiveness, along with its divided stance, as a major challenge in the context of China's rise. Although the reports remain hopeful that the EU can play a key role in preserving the existing global order, they continuously emphasize that this can only happen if the European powers act unitedly. In order to stimulate the EU in its unification, recommendations are made that range from a common foreign policy toward China, a long-term strategy in the Asian region, to seizing new Chinese initiatives altogether. The reports of Okano-Heijmans, Korteweg, and Notre Europe present this challenge in a relatively dramatic terms, whereas, other authors take a more neutral course.

A fourth characteristic is the limited attention for China's military rise. Several reports, such as the SWP and ECFR reports, do not or only briefly address China's expansion in the South China Sea. Some authors, such Gnesotto, do acknowledge that China's military rise can be seen as a threat to security in the region, but they do not elaborate on this issue any further. A major exception is the report of Korteweg. He analyses China's military build-up in great detail, along with its assertive foreign policy and its growing nationalism. Nonetheless, he puts the challenges of China's military rise in an economic framework that has its own separate challenges. Moreover, in line with the other reports, Korteweg remains optimistic that the EU can integrate China into multilateral frameworks as a means to contain the military risks.

The last characteristic is Europe's fixation on the American-Sino rivalry. The reports

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<sup>164</sup> Leonard, *China 3.0*, 131.

of Chatham House and the ECFR underline that the US plays a major role in determining the direction of China's rise; revisionist or status-quo-orientated. This latter characteristic is related to the image of China as a *possible* rather than a direct threat. The reports acknowledge that in the event that the US would play a more aggressive role, China's will to challenge the existing world order will change accordingly. Authors like Ekman and Hilpert and Wacker argue that the US choices for its actions, such as TPP, can also have their impact on China's behavior towards the existing economic institutions. Others, like Korteweg, believe that any actions by the US in the South-East Asian region will be determinant for China's rise, whether peaceful or not.

Finally, it should be noted that the analysis of the various European reports also shows that the perceptions of the authors are relatively unison. With the exception of Hilpert and Wacker, all reports express their concerns about China's political and economic rise. Although China has never given any public indications that it intends to transform the existing global order, all authors give various reasons to believe that concerns – though in different degrees – are justified. Furthermore, the military aspect remains undervalued by the authors. The uniform perception stands in sharp contrast to the American reports, which can be characterized by several distinct images. For this reason, this chapter demonstrates that one can speak of one global European perception on China's rise.



As most American reports fall under the category of the vigilance perception, one may conclude that the vigilance part of the broad American perception can be considered as the most representative part. This reasoning may justify the decision to take this part as the starting point for demonstrating the differences and similarities between the US and Europe, and – as will be done in the second part of this thesis – for explaining these differences and similarities within a broader framework. Another justification is that it would be too one-sided if only the particularities that the American perceptions have in common would serve as a basis for a comparison with the particularities of the European perception. Although it would be highly interesting to take the classical realist and the optimistic perceptions also into account when analyzing the comparison, the scope of this thesis – unfortunately – does not permit such an analysis.

#### *4.3 Similarities*

The vigilance perception shows strong similarities with the European perception. The American authors all regard China with some suspicion. The same goes for the European authors, with the exception of Hilpert and Wacker. Both express their doubts on China's intentions, and each place China in a larger framework of being 'up to something'. Second, both perceptions acknowledge that China's rise is a cause for concern. The Americans and the Europeans each see China's growing power not as a direct threat, but as a potential risk. Third, both reports underline that the direction of China's rise partially may depend on the behavior of the US. Both see mutual distrust as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the US and China treat each other with distrust, the likelihood of a conflict will be much higher. For this reason, both recommend to take these arguments into account.

A final major commonality of the perceptions is the strong belief in a strategy of engagement rather than containment. In both the vigilance American image and the European image, China's rise is seen as inevitable or as the new reality. Both believe that integrating China into the existing international economic and political system is considered as the best option to prevent it from changing the rules.

#### *4.4 Differences*

There are, however, also significant differences between the American vigilance and European perceptions. Each perception places China in a larger framework of being 'up to something', but the contours of these frameworks are different. The American reports take an overall picture of China's rise, including its military expansion, its ambivalent behavior on

economic issues and its political ambitions. The European reports, on the other hand, mainly focus on economic, domestic, and political aspects, whereby the latter aspect solely relates to multilateral issues. In other words, the American perception is more geopolitical, whereas the European perception clearly remains restricted to economic, societal and multilateral issues.

Second, although both see China's growing power as a potential risk rather than a direct threat, they have different grounds for this common view. The American vigilance authors are concerned about possible implications in the economic, political, and military realm, whereas the European authors look at the possible economic and multilateral effects. Thus, this leads to a difference in the assessment of risks.

Third, where the American reports seems to rely more on their own strength, Europe seems to place greater faith in multilateral institutions. Although both recommend a strategy of engagement rather than containment, the US interprets engagement more in bilateral terms, whereas Europe intends to act more through multilateral institutions. In other words, the American authors interpret engagement with more restriction, whereas the Europeans interprets this term in a more extensive manner. The US also seems more concerned with its relative sovereign position on global issues, whereas the EU – as a quasi-supranational institution – is more willing to hand over power to the Chinese in order to integrate them into the existing international system. An exception is, however, Subramanian, who recommends the US to hand over power to China in multilateral institutions.

Fourth, a crucial difference is the security dilemma. The US is far more concerned with the military actions of China in the South China Sea than Europe. None of the European reports defines this issue as a priority on its agenda. The only exception is the report of Korteweg, who identifies China's assertive foreign policy in the region as a threat to Europe's economic interests.<sup>165</sup> Although there are slight differences of interpretation in the American reports, their focus on China's territorial expansion is remarkably higher than that of the European reports. Thus, one can argue that the American perception is much more concerned about China's military rise than the European perception.

Fifth, the European reports are optimistic about the chance that China will eventually become an integrated power under European guidance. This stands in sharp contrast to the American reports, where Europe is only mentioned in the report of Pollack. Although they also believe that integrating China into the existing international system is the best strategy, the manner in which this should be realized is by means of engagement on American terms. In

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<sup>165</sup> Korteweg, *A presence farther East*, 2.

their interpretation, China's engagement should be founded on a better understanding of China's interests and a growing mutual trust. This interpretation is less optimistic than Europe's interpretation. In this latter interpretation, the possibility of a more peaceful and harmonious rise is mentioned more frequently than in the American reports. For this reason, the US approach can best be described as pragmatic.

#### *4.5 Conclusion*

This chapter addresses the similarities and differences between the American vigilance perception and the European perception. There is a consensus on both sides of the Atlantic that China is becoming an ever more important economic and political actor in the world. For this reason, the perceptions have many particularities in common. Both acknowledge that China's intentions are not necessarily benign. Its ambivalent attitude toward the global free-market system has led to a common belief that China's growing power is a possible threat. Yet, both make the proviso that China's integration in the existing order can mitigate this concern by means of a strategy of engagement rather than containment. Lastly, both perceptions are critical on the US, as it seems to underestimate the fact that the direction of China's rise – revisionist or status-quo orientated – may depend on America's own behavior.

Although the US-EU perceptions seem to be on the same wavelength in respect of China's intentions, there are also significant differences between the two. The American perception is more geopolitical, as it takes the political, economic, and military aspects of China's rise into account. The European perception remains restricted to economic, societal, and multilateral issues. As a result, the US worries over possible implications in the economic, political, and military realm, whereas the EU only assesses the risks in the economic and multilateral order. In this respect, the American concern about China's military rise stands in sharp contrast to the European perception. Lastly, Europe's definition of engagement consists of guiding and supporting the power of the PRC in existing institutions, with the aim to reduce its possible revisionist intentions. In the American perception, engagement means less far-reaching commitments, as it wants to rely solely on its own actions. In this respect, the Europeans are more optimistic, whereas the American perception can be best qualified by the idea of 'better safe than sorry'.

The analysis of these similarities and differences leads to the conclusion that the American vigilance perception and the European perception have many important features in common. Yet, certain differences can also be identified.

## Chapter 5: Theories on transatlantic similarities and differences

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theories on the differences between the US and the EU in respect with their foreign policy outlook. As mentioned, these theories include the theory of Robert Kagan on the disparity in power and ideology, the theory of Ronald Hvenaar on the differences in mentality and the theory of Peter Baldwin on the importance of similarities over differences. The theories will be described, followed by a conclusion on how each political analyst explains the similarities and differences. Furthermore, this chapter will contain some critical remarks on the theories.

### 5.2 Robert Kagan – *On Paradise and Power*

In 2002, Robert Kagan published the essay ‘On Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order’ in *Policy Review* magazine. The essay sparked a great debate on both sides of the Atlantic. His ideas were lauded by some as one of the more important contributions to the study of world politics in recent years, whereas others attacked his ideas as being the most misguided analysis of European-American relations ever.<sup>166</sup> Kagan is an American historian and political analyst. He worked for the State Department from 1984 to 1988. Currently, he is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.<sup>167</sup>

Kagan is considered to be a neoconservative writer, due to his aggressive and pro-interventionist approach.<sup>168</sup> Moreover, he cofounded the *Project for the New American Century*, a neoconservative think-tank that focused on US foreign policy.<sup>169</sup> By tracing the differing histories of Europe and the US since the end of WWII, Kagan makes clear how Europe’s relative ‘weakness’ led to a new set of transnational beliefs on power and threats, while the strength of the US enabled the country to grow into its role as protector of the West. He explains differences in the American and the European views on world politics by this disparity in power and ideology.

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<sup>166</sup> Michael Cox, “Commentary: Martians and Venutians in the new world order,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 79 (2003): 523-532.

<sup>167</sup> “Robert Kagan,” Brookings, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/kagan?view=bio>.

<sup>168</sup> Jason Horowitz, “Events in Iraq Open Door for Interventionist Revival, Historian Says,” *New York Times*, June 15, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/16/us/politics/historians-critique-of-obama-foreign-policy-is-brought-alive-by-events-in-iraq.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/16/us/politics/historians-critique-of-obama-foreign-policy-is-brought-alive-by-events-in-iraq.html?_r=0).

<sup>169</sup> Project for the New American Century, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For A New Century* (Washington, D.C.: Project for the New American Century, 2000) 2.

### 5.2a Main arguments

When Kagan published his essay, attention for differences between American and European policymakers had increased as a result of multiple foreign policy disputes between the George W. Bush administration and the EU. In Kagan's opinion, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic had denied the existence of genuine differences far too long. It was time to "stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world."<sup>170</sup>

Kagan argues that the differences between the US and Europe in strategic culture do not naturally spring from their respective national characters.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, the estrangement is rooted in American power and European weakness. The European strategic culture – perceived as more peaceful – is historically speaking relatively new. It stems from a shift in the power equation: the Americans and the Europeans have each "traded places" and, subsequently, each have traded perspectives.<sup>172</sup> Kagan explains that the US, when it was a weak country, appealed to international law as the best means of regulating the behavior of nations. Now as it is strong, it believes in unilateralism and strength. Subsequently, the European powers, when they were strong, believed in *Machtspolitik*. Nowadays, they see the world through the eyes of a weak power.<sup>173</sup> Kagan states that the shift in power equation has led to a 'power gap' between the two continents. As American defense budgets and advanced military weaponry started overshadowing European military capabilities, the power balance became fully out of proportion.<sup>174</sup>

However, the power gap can only partially explain the differences between the US and Europe. Along with the power disparity, a broad ideological gap was created. When the European powers founded their political union, they started developing ideals and principles regarding the utility and morality of power that differed from the American ideals and principles. Kagan argues that this strategic 'chasm' grows wider at a worrying pace, because these material and ideological difference reinforce one another. Moreover, it might be impossible to reverse the power and ideological gaps.<sup>175</sup>

As a result hereof, the US and Europe no longer share a common strategic culture. Kagan explains that the continents have parted ways by each setting their own priorities and their own determining threats, as well as foreign and defense policies. Europeans generally

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<sup>170</sup> Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) 3.

<sup>171</sup> Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 7-8.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibidem*, 10.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem*, 8-11.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*, 12-27.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibidem*, 11.

favor peaceful solutions to problems, preferring dialogues, and persuasion to coercion. They like to see themselves as politicians who approach their problems with great nuance and sophistication, such in contrast to American policymakers.<sup>176</sup> Kagan believes that European faith in international law leads to an unrealistic view of the world, which also contributes to the American-European divergence. He describes their belief as “Immanuel Kant’s post-historical paradise of perpetual peace.”<sup>177</sup> The preeminent global position of the US, on the other hand, has shaped a Hobbesian mindset.<sup>178</sup> In Kagan’s opinion, Europeans are blind to their dependence on US military protection. This collides with Europe’s vision of a legal order. In order to clarify his argument, he writes that the old Atlantic partners live on different planets: Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.<sup>179</sup> The US is more inclined to use force when necessary. Kagan portrays this willingness as both courageous and needed. Europe has never established the ‘third force’ in the world to defend itself against the Soviet Union, as promised at the end of WWII and again after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.<sup>180</sup>

According to Kagan, the differing perceptions on threats can also be explained in matters of psychology. After the end of the Cold War, Europeans interpreted the fall of the Soviet Union as “a holiday from strategy”.<sup>181</sup> Their greater tolerance for security threats ever since can better be explained by Europe’s relative weakness than – as Europeans like to believe – America’s ‘war hunger’. He explains that nations who are weaker tend to ignore the threats surrounding them, simply because they do not want to see them. Stronger countries are not only more capable of eliminating risks, but they are also better in assessing risks. He states: “The incapacity to respond to threats leads to tolerance and denial.”<sup>182</sup>

The psychological aspect of the American and European disparity has produced another concept: the structure of the present international order. Europe’s weakness has resulted into a strong interest in building a world where military strength and hard power matter less than economic and soft power.<sup>183</sup> As a result, Europeans tend to see many international threats, such as Saddam Hussein, the rise of China, Russia’s aggression, and North-Korea, primarily as *American* problems. Europeans perceive problems such as poverty, scarcity of food and water, and climate issues as ‘real’ concerns. To them, these problems can better be solved by multilateralism than by unilateralism.<sup>184</sup> Kagan attributes the European hostility to

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<sup>176</sup> Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 5.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*, 3.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibidem*, 17.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibidem*, 25.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibidem*, 32.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibidem*, 114.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibidem*, 34-35.

unilateralism as self-interested. The weak European powers hope to contain American power – without wielding power themselves – by creating a new world order in which they can play a superior role.<sup>185</sup> The author describes this new European mission as one of the most important reason for the divergence in views between Europe and the US.<sup>186</sup> According to Kagan, the future of the transatlantic relation lies in the readjustment to the new reality of American hegemony. The differences between American and European perceptions of the world are however more easily to solve than at first sight. A first step is to understand and acknowledge their existence. Furthermore, the Europeans should substantially increase their own military capabilities, and – more importantly – recognize the necessity of a strong America. Nonetheless, Kagan expects the US to respond to future global strategic challenges without the military support of its partner.<sup>187</sup>

### *5.2b Conclusion and points of criticism*

Kagan outlines the different philosophical outlooks of the two continents on the use of power in clear terms. These outlooks are natural consequences of the American military might and the European lack thereof. Europeans seek peace through law and diplomacy, which has resulted in a devised political order in which power is subdued and the use of force is banished. This has made them weak, and as a result thereof, the EU is not able to confront the threats of the world. Instead, America's preference for *realpolitik* is a deeper expression of its strength. These differences – that have gained momentum since the end of the Cold War – have resulted into a growing divergence in strategic views and a eroding solidarity between the partners.

Although Kagan's analysis of the philosophical influence of military power is thought-provoking, his generalization of the pacifist attitude of the European powers is incorrect. France, for example, is a country that has always believed that American power must be balanced by a strong Europe. As political analyst G. John Ikenberry writes in his review:

“Kagan's characterization of a post-modern Europe, however, is too German-centered; he ignores the fact that the United Kingdom and France retain great-power identities and a willingness to use military force.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 41.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibidem*, 61.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibidem*, 96-113.

<sup>188</sup> Gilford John Ikenberry, “Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order by Robert Kagan,” *Foreign Affairs* 82 (2003): 145-16.

Furthermore, Kagan's analysis relies on simplistic concepts of power, strength, and weakness. His denigrating language on Europe's non-military power gives the essay a more opinionated than a scientific outlook. While reading the essay, one can wonder whether his work serves as a contribution to the transatlantic debate or as a justification of Washington's unilateral actions in the War on Terror. In addition, his explanation of the different worldviews of American and European policymakers is too political. He does not take Europe's economic power over the US into account, which makes his statement on power as "the all-important question" biased.<sup>189</sup> Although he gives an historical overview of the transatlantic relations in order to clarify his arguments on the power and ideological gaps, Kagan seems to refuse to accept the historical motives of European powers to transform their continent from a divided, infighting region into a unified, economic superpower. This results in a distorted view of Europe and the EU. Lastly, Kagan leaves any form of change aside. Although his ignorance for change can be explained by his realist outlook, numerous statements on the transatlantic relationship are simply too static. Recent history has shown that change in international affairs is more apparent than ever, as the Russian aggressor has returned, the Islamic State (IS) threatens both the US and Europe, and economic cooperation in the form of TTIP is a serious option.

For certain aspects, Kagan's theory lends itself well for an analysis of the transatlantic outlook on China's rise. As chapter 4 shows, Europe completely disregards the military aspect of China's growing power, whereas this aspect is notably at the center of America's concern. Nonetheless, as chapter 6 will show, Kagan's political focus proves to be one-sided when the similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions on China's rise are explained within the context of a broader framework. In that chapter, other deficiencies of his theory will also be discussed.

### 5.3 Ronald Havenaar – *Ebb and Flow*

Ronald Havenaar published his book 'Ebb and Flow: Europe and America from Reagan to Obama' (original title: 'Eb en Vloed') in 2009, the year that symbolized a new era in the transatlantic relationship by the inauguration of President Obama. Havenaar is a Dutch historian.<sup>190</sup> In *Ebb and Flow*, he offers a comparative history of the American-European mentality in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. He explores the differences from a cultural

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<sup>189</sup> Frank Costigliola, "Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order by Robert Kagan," *Political Science Quarterly* 118 (2003): 518-519.

<sup>190</sup> "Profiel van Ronald Havenaar," Joop Opinions, accessed July 15, 2015, [http://www.joop.nl/opinions/bio/auteur/ronald\\_havenaar/](http://www.joop.nl/opinions/bio/auteur/ronald_havenaar/).

perspective. Havenaar identifies underlying emotions as the driving force behind a divergence between American and European policymakers. A change in the emotional mindset of the American people – which took place in the late 1960s and 1970s – caused a drift away from Europe’s mentality, that has always held on to the status quo. The disparity between America and Europe crystalized in the early 1980s, during the Reagan administration, with different ideas on the market, the role of the state, religion and – in particular – foreign policy.

### *5.3a Underlying emotions in political ideas*

Havenaar argues that the American-European relationship overtly deteriorated under the presidency of Reagan. He attributes this deterioration to differences in mentality. His analysis is derived from the views of the British historian Sir Lewis Namier, who first identified underlying emotions in political ideas. According to Havenaar, certain emotions and their level of intensity have a major influence on a country’s political ideals, values and interests. Moreover, these emotions are determinant for its foreign policy approach.<sup>191</sup> With his argument, Havenaar argues against both classical realists and idealists in the field of international relations. These claim that countries – in terms of realism – are driven by self-interest and power, or – in terms of liberalism – by the desire for freedom and stability. He defines the term ‘mentality’ as “a state of mind, which is difficult to trace but that has a great influence on the decision-making process of nations.”<sup>192</sup> A country’s state of mind is based on ‘invisible emotions’, that are not only multiple, but also mutable by nature.<sup>193</sup>

### *5.3b The market, the role of the state, religion and morality*

Havenaar argues that the American perception on the market and the role of the state has undergone a substantial change over the late 1960s and 1970s. Due to an increase in inflation and unemployment, Americans started to lose their faith in the welfare state. The economic misery fueled support for the conservative ideas of Reagan, who promoted a strong national defense, limited government intervention and a revival of moral values.<sup>194</sup> This ‘conservative turn’ to a number of US founding ideals – namely individual freedom, private enterprise, and personal enrichment – led to a new understanding of moral values. The free market, along with small government, became the basic concept for progress.<sup>195</sup> The new understanding

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<sup>191</sup> Ronald Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed: Europa en Amerika van Reagan tot Obama* (Amsterdam: G.A. Van Oorschot, 2009) 8-9.

<sup>192</sup> Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed*, 12.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibidem*, 12-13.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibidem*, 19.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibidem*, 22-23.

continued under the consecutive presidencies of George H.W. Bush, Clinton and George W. Bush<sup>196</sup>. In the 1990s, globalization reinforced the new understanding of moral values. Free trade not only stimulated economic profit, but it would also lead to democracy, open borders, international cooperation and – eventually – peace.<sup>197</sup> Havenaar points out that the change in the American perception on the market and the state caused the European countries – with the exception of the UK – to firmly hold on to the idea of a central government. The conservative revival was perceived as a threat to the welfare state and to European values. France and Germany believed that a deregulated world economy would lead to greater disparities between nations.<sup>198</sup>

Havenaar shows that the emotional mindset of Americans had also changed in terms of religion. After the social and cultural revolution of the 1960s, a religious revival emerged in the 1980s. This revival clashed with European secularism, whose cultural revolution of the 1960s had resulted in a rejection of religion, as it had become a symbol for oppression and backwardness. The dichotomy caused several arguments on moral values among Americans and Europeans since the 1980s.<sup>199</sup>

### 5.3c Foreign Policy

By comparing US-EU perceptions on foreign policy issues during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, Havenaar demonstrates that the ‘schism’ in mentality particularly manifested in international affairs. The differences started in the early 1980s, when the Reagan administration replaced containment and détente-policies by a militant approach towards the Soviet Union. Havenaar points out that this policy-shift was based on a paradox, in the sense that the role of the government diminished in domestic affairs, while it expanded in foreign affairs.<sup>200</sup> Reagan’s militant approach was rejected by Europe. The European powers felt more comfortable with a defensive strategy, which was vested on European values such as *raison d’état* and a balance of power. Havenaar explains the European fear for a change in the status quo to its emotional state of mind since WWII. Europeans were war-weary and avoided any risk that could lead to political decay.<sup>201</sup> Reagan’s determination to carry out his offensive strategy caused a gap in the transatlantic partnership.

During the 1990s, differences between the transatlantic partners grew due to opposing

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<sup>196</sup> Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed*, 27-29.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibidem*, 43-35.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibidem*, 31-41.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibidem*, 50-68.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibidem*, 95

views on the conflicts in Kuwait, Bosnia and Kosovo. Where the Americans preferred an assertive approach to expand their moral values, the European powers clung on to stability, status quo and risk aversion. In the case of the Balkan conflict, the American public opinion and the consent of the US Congress encouraged President Clinton to send troops, although he was reluctant to do so in first instance.<sup>202</sup> The determination to act was also triggered by European indecisiveness in respect of the conflict. Again, Havenaar attributes this indecisiveness to Europe's trauma of political conflicts.<sup>203</sup> Over the 2000s, the rejection by European powers of a 'preemptive war' resulted into further differences. Although they expressed their solidarity with the US after the attacks on September 11, 2001, Europe's fear for political decay remained unchanged.<sup>204</sup> Havenaar points out that solidarity with the European skepticism increased among the American people in the late 2000s. Americans became increasingly fatigue of their own assertive approach to promote moral values that had obtained a negative connotation. Along with the financial crisis of 2008 and religious nuance, the rejection of a hardline foreign policy has caused the transatlantic partners to converge.<sup>205</sup>

### *5.3d Conclusion and points of criticism*

By exploring the differences among American and European policymakers from a cultural perspective, Havenaar shows that underlying emotions – rather than the presidency of Obama – are the driving forces for a convergence within the transatlantic partnership. This convergence already started under the George W. Bush administration as an *American* reaction to economic, religious and foreign policy issues.<sup>206</sup> The main argument of the book, however, lies in the origin of the divergence in the transatlantic relationship since the 1980s. The changing emotional mindset of the American people had a major impact on the way US domestic and foreign policy was conducted. More importantly, it led to a 'schism' with their transatlantic partner. By attributing the underlying emotions of the European countries to their fear that the imperialistic history will repeat itself, Havenaar shows that Europe has been inward orientated since 1945. Their commitment to construct political and economic stability, caused the European spirit to be more internally than externally orientated. In addition, it rejected nationalism and expansionism. America's conservative turn – which particularly manifested in foreign policy – clashed with this internal outlook. The European tendency to

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<sup>202</sup> Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed*, 138.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibidem*, 153-154.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibidem*, 155-156.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibidem*, 251-258.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

hold on to the status quo has kept the ‘gap’ between the powers wide open, while the American whimsicality has brought the two closer to each other in the late 2000s. Nonetheless, Havenaar notes that the ambition for expansion, whether politically, ideologically or economically, has characterized the North-American continent for over a hundred years. What fluctuates is the will to expand by means of military force.<sup>207</sup>

The main points of Havenaar’s theory are of great importance to understand the differences and similarities in the US-EU perceptions on China’s rise. He extensively elaborates on the differences between America and Europe as regards to the outlook on global issues and the consolidation of Western moral values on a world-wide basis. However, certain aspects of his book are detracted from his own theory. With his intentional focus on the UK, France, and Germany, Havenaar suggests that “the continental heartland” represents all other European perspectives.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, with his arguments on an outward-orientated US government since the 1980s, the author implicitly suggests that the US was more inward-orientated in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. He hereby bypasses the American involvement in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cambodia invasion. Moreover, he overlooks arguments made by other historians, such as Anders Stephanson and Amy Kaplan, that expansionism and internationalism have been a part of the American identity for a longer period of time.<sup>209</sup> <sup>210</sup> Although Havenaar mentions the work of Robert Kagan, the book lacks an in-depth discussion on the topic. If he had presented his theory as a contribution to the discussion on America’s interventionist foreign policy, his book would have had more authority. Lastly, the author has little eye for cultural and ideological differences within the two continents. As the Dutch culture historian Jaap Verheul writes in his review:

“This may suggest, however, too much cultural, ideological, or ‘creedal’ coherence on both sides of the Atlantic.”<sup>211</sup>

This is particularly visible in Havenaar’s analysis of Europe, in which he omits to highlight the British reservations against French and German reactions to America’s hardline foreign policy. Chapter 6 will expand on the critical remarks of his theory, where the differences in the American and European perceptions on China’s rise are put in a broader framework.

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<sup>207</sup> Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed*, 244-245.

<sup>208</sup> Jaap Verheul, “Eb en vloed: Europa en Amerika van Reagan tot Obama by Ronald Havenaar,” *The Journal of American History* 97 (2011): 583-584.

<sup>209</sup> Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: , 1995) xii.

<sup>210</sup> Walter Russel Mead, “The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture,” review of *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*, by Amy Kaplan. *Foreign Affairs*, March, 2013, Capsule review, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2003-03-01/anarchy-empire-making-us-culture>.

<sup>211</sup> Verheul, “Eb en vloed.” 583-584.

#### 5.4 Peter Baldwin – *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*

In 2009, Peter Baldwin published his book *The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe are Alike*. Baldwin is an American historian. His field of expertise lies in the development of the modern state and trans-national aspects of development issues.<sup>212</sup> In *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*, Baldwin analyzes the differences and similarities between the US and European countries. He argues that there are more similarities than differences between the two. Although he does not deny the existence of differences, Baldwin points out that these differences should be seen in the context of similarities, which are more important.

##### 5.4a Main arguments

Baldwin rejects the presumption that the North-Atlantic is socio-culturally divided. He argues that this idea is ‘abused’ in Europe and the US for domestic political reasons and tactics. In Europe, criticism on America mainly concerns foreign policy and trade issues. This criticism has become more widespread in 1990s. As Europe’s safety was no longer in American hands and the EU developed into an independent and economic power, left and right winged parties within Europe became keen to define an alternative to the American hegemony. In the US, anti-Europeanism mainly exists among right-wing politicians, who symbolize the European continent as an excess of the welfare state and statutory regulation.<sup>213</sup>

The American and European criticism derives from the idea of ‘othering’. Renowned differences between the continents – such as competition versus cooperation, individualism versus solidarity, autonomy versus cohesion – are exploited by politicians across the Atlantic to unite their parties by means of a common opponent.<sup>214</sup> Baldwin derives the title of the book from Sigmund Freud, who formulated the phrase “the narcissism of minor differences” to illustrate the underlying psychology in ‘othering’ outsiders. Examples of such supposedly minor differences are those between English and Scots or Christians and Jews.<sup>215</sup>

Baldwin argues that the recent expansion of the EU has complicated the process of ‘othering’ the US. Many Eastern-European countries are more religious, more skeptical on interventionist state, and more *laissez-faire* minded in their economic practices.<sup>216</sup> These particularities make it difficult for European politicians to present secularism, social security,

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<sup>212</sup> “Peter Baldwin,” UCLA Department of History, accessed July 17, 2015, <http://www.history.ucla.edu/people/faculty/faculty-1/faculty-1?lid=254>.

<sup>213</sup> Peter Baldwin, *The Narcissism of Minor Differences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 2.

<sup>214</sup> Baldwin, *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*, 4-5.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibidem*, 10.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibidem*, 14.

and the welfare state as true ‘European’ features. In this context, the author presents his main argument. He states that it is incorrect to speak of major differences between the US and Europe, because Europe and the US are no unified continents. Baldwin writes: “Las Vegas is not Baden-Baden. But neither is Bergen Bergamo.”<sup>217</sup> Due to the lack of a coherent European identity, the US is as much a European country in its beliefs as any other European country. Moreover, the differences across the Atlantic are not as great as commonly thought. In fact, the commonalities are greater than the differences.<sup>218</sup> In order to clarify his theory, Baldwin presents a wide variety of statistics on the economy, crime, health care, education, culture, religion, and the environment. By placing the statistics in a cultural-political context, and by comparing these statistics among nations, he shows that the US and Europe are very similar to each other. Moreover, the comparative data show that the US lies within the European spectrum. Baldwin portrays the continents as twins: they are more alike than either would want to admit.<sup>219</sup>

In view of the existence of different views *within* each continent, one cannot speak of a convergence or divergence in the transatlantic relation. The direction of Europe cannot take place as a whole. For this reason, it is preferable to argue that Scandinavia, the English speaking part of Europe, the Continentals, the Low Countries, or the Mediterranean each stand in a similar relationship to other parts of Europe, as well as to various regions of the US. For example, American puritanism is a variant of regulatory styles that the US inherited from the prohibitive and controlling Scandinavians and other north Europeans.<sup>220</sup>

#### *5.4b Conclusion and points of criticism*

Baldwin shows that the much-remarked Atlantic divisions are often exaggerated. On the contrary, the two correspond to each other in almost every quantifiable respect. He explains the roots of the process of ‘othering’ to earlier American critics, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Emmanuel Todd, or Max Weber, who had a penchant for portraying America as far more ‘other’ than it actually is. As a result of their criticism, the early American politicians, philosophers, and writers began a counter-process of ‘othering’, from which American exceptionalism flourished.<sup>221</sup> In other words, the arguments for radical differences across the Atlantic are mainly of European origin. In this context, Baldwin presents the

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<sup>217</sup> Baldwin, *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*, 46

<sup>218</sup> *Ibidem*, 11.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibidem*, 243

<sup>220</sup> *Ibidem*, 211.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibidem*, 246

threatening image of rising powers – such as Europe in the postwar era, Russia during the Cold War, and now, China – as a natural reaction to American exceptionalism.<sup>222</sup>

On the surface, Baldwin's theory is useful for the comparison of the US-EU perceptions on China's rise. When looking at the transatlantic relation, it is important to take both differences and similarities into account. Furthermore, it is simply incorrect to depict the US and the European countries as two completely different regions, since their economic, political, and ideological standards are more similar than any other regions in the world. His analysis of 'othering' is useful to keep in mind when examining strategic reports on China. Nonetheless, there are critical remarks to be made on his book. Although Baldwin's statistics demonstrate that the US resembles an average European state, a surprising amount of this evidence actually supports the stereotype.<sup>223</sup> More importantly, Baldwin does not explain the similarities between the two continents in a broader context, nor the minor differences. Although he argues that the US is similar to Europe in many respects due to the differences within the European continent, he does not address any underlying similarities. Thus, his theory lacks an in-depth approach. One can conclude that the theory on the narcissism of minor differences is useful for supporting the idea that the importance of similarities should be taken into account when analyzing the US-EU perceptions on China's rise. However, its content has not much to offer when explaining the similarities and differences.

### *5.5 Conclusion*

This chapter has taken a closer look at the theories of Kagan, Havenaar, and Baldwin. Each author has a different perspective from which differences and similarities in the foreign policy outlook of the US and Europe are explained. Kagan can be classified as a classical political realist, who reasons in terms of 'self-interest', 'military strength', and 'power politics'. Havenaar, on the other hand, argues from a cultural perspective. He bases his arguments on underlying emotions, which are presented in an historical overview of the transatlantic relationship. Baldwin derives his arguments from statistics. He purely takes facts into account without any detailed comment. Furthermore, each author explains the foreign policy differences and similarities between the US and the EU differently. According to Kagan, strategic differences can be explained by a disparity in power. Europe's weakness and America's strength have led to different ideological perceptions on power and threats.

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<sup>222</sup> Baldwin, *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*, 238.

<sup>223</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, "The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe Are Alike by Peter Baldwin," *Foreign Affairs* 89 (2010): 146-147.

Havenaar argues that the estrangement in the transatlantic relation is rooted in underlying emotions that originate from the American side. He attributes differences in foreign policy to differences in mentality, arising from these underlying emotions. Baldwin places the differences between the US and Europe on foreign policy issues in a broader context of similarities. He explains these imaginary differences as emanating from a process of 'othering'.

The different theories demonstrate that the various US-EU perceptions of China's rise should be placed in a broader context. According to the three theories, important aspects of the explanation of the similarities and differences in these perceptions are the discrepancies in military strength and ideology, underlying emotions, and the process of 'othering'. In the next chapter, these aspects will be taken into account when explaining the similarities and differences – as addressed in chapter 4 – more in detail.

## Chapter 6: Similarities and differences in a theoretical framework

### *6.1 Introduction*

This chapter explains the similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions on China's rise on the basis of a theoretical framework. As mentioned, this framework includes the theories of Kagan, Havenaar and Baldwin. By explaining these perceptions in relation to various theories, a comprehensive picture will arise. Through this comprehensive picture, it will be possible to verify whether one can indeed speak of a divergence in the perspectives on China's growing political, economic, and military power.

### *6.2 Similarities and differences according to Kagan*

According to the theory of Kagan, differences in American-European foreign policy outlooks can be explained by the disparity in power and ideology. Europe's rejection of military force explains its preference for stability, multilateralism, and diplomacy. America's military strength has resulted in a globally-orientated strategic outlook and a more unilateralist approach. Consequently, the powers set their priorities differently and determine risks and threats in a different ways. Where Europe is inclined to ignore threats, the US sees the necessity to eliminate threats. Because of the power gap and the ideological gap, the US and Europe no longer share a common strategic culture.

When considering Kagan's theory, it appears that this theory is more appropriate for explaining differences rather than similarities in the US-EU perceptions on China's rise. Kagan's analysis of the power gap explains why the contours in which the American and European authors place China's intentions are different. America's military strength has resulted in several security alliances with countries in the South-East Asian region. In addition, it has resulted in a position of being the preeminent military power of the world. For this reason, it is obvious that the reports give special attention to the military aspect of China's rise. The European reports, on the other hand, mainly focus on economic and multilateral issues. The European reluctance to maintain an adequate level of military power since WWII, explains why Europe has been putting so much value on economic and global issues, and thereby neglecting military issues.

However, when looking at the other differences, Kagan's military related interpretation of the power gap is too simplistic. One can better speak of an overall power gap, that includes military, political, and economic power. On the basis of this overall power gap, the difference in risk assessment can be explained. The US perceives the Chinese risk to

comprise economic, military, and political aspects. This risk assessment is the result of the US preeminent supremacy in each of these areas. The European risk assessment is, however, limited to economic and multilateral aspects. This stems from Europe's priority to economic interests over security interests, due to the fact that they are not a political superpower. The explanation of the overall power gap also applies to the difference between the US and the EU in terms of geopolitical outlook. The American perception has a notable geopolitical dimension, whereas in the European perception this dimension has a clearly subordinated place. Finally, the disparity in overall power also explains America's preference for unilateralism and Europe's preference for multilateralism. The EU is more committed to support China's engagement through multilateral institutions, as it has no other requirements on its agenda. The US, however, relies more on its own strength in its engagement toward China, as it has more interests that are possibly at stake.

Kagan's further analysis on the ideological gap also falls short when explaining the differences in US-EU perceptions. One cannot argue that the European reports ignore the existence of risks related to China's rise. Moreover, the reports can be characterized by the recognition that China is bent on expanding its powers. They express their concern that this expansion will affect the existing rules-based economic system. For this reason, Kagan's depiction of Europe's 'ignorance' of threats is rather overrated. The differences in the US-EU perceptions do not necessarily lie in the ideological outlooks, but in the question what will be the best approach to engage with China. As outlined in chapter 4, both the US and the EU prefer a strategy of engagement over a strategy of containment. However, they define the term engagement differently. In the American concept, engagement refers to a better understanding of China's interests and growing mutual trust in the American-Sino relationship. Their unilateral pragmatism stands in contrast to Europe, who interprets engagement in terms of joining Chinese initiatives, and ceding more power to the PRC in multilateral institutions.

Although there is some truth in Kagan's interpretation of the power gap, it is too simplistic to depict the two powers as standing diametrically opposed to each other in their approach of China's rise. He is incorrect to argue that the US and the EU have completely different ideologies, according to which the former is outward and the latter is inward-looking. It should be kept in mind that both regard China's growing power with a certain caution, as they worry that this might have severe effects on the existing global order. Both also believe in a strategy of engagement rather than containment. Within the strategy of engagement, the US is more unilateral-orientated, whereas the EU is more multilateral-

orientated. What does vary, however, is the assessment and mitigation of the risks regarding China's rise. This can be explained by the overall power gap.

### *6.3 Similarities and differences according to Havenaar*

The theory of Havenaar attributes differences and similarities in American-European foreign policy outlooks to underlying emotions that originate from the American side. Where the US mentality fluctuates as regards the use of a hardline approach in foreign policy, Europe consistently rejects such hardline approach. Due to its political trauma since WWII, Europe fears nationalism and expansion in any form and it prefers to hold on to the status-quo. According to Havenaar, the 2010s should be characterized – at least up to now – by a convergence in the mentalities on both sides of the Atlantic.

When considering Havenaar's theory, it seems to explain several similarities in the US-EU perceptions on China's rise. America's mentality has changed since the 2000s as the result of underlying emotions. In the economic realm, the financial crisis of 2008 has caused America to reevaluate the concept of regulation by the government. In the realm of religion, the rejection of Christian-conservative ideals has led to a more pragmatic outlook. In the foreign policy realm, the growing anger regarding its own actions in the Middle East has caused the US to pursue national interest rather than to spread Western values. As a result, the American perception on foreign policy has become more in line with Europe, who has always taken a more moderate stance. This explains why both believe that engagement toward China is the best option. It also illustrates why the US, in accordance with the EU, is self-critical. It has realized that China's direction is partially dependent on its own behavior. Lastly, it explains America's more pragmatic tone in the reports. It sticks to its own values, but it does not go so far as to impose these values on China. There is no 'Messianic' tone, nor is expansion a serious option. This corresponds with the European attitude.

The existence of these strong similarities indicates that a convergence in the mentalities has indeed taken place. However, Havenaar's theory cannot explain one specific similarity. This relates to the common vigilance on China's intentions. The examination of the reports demonstrate that both the US *and* the EU are significantly concerned about the implications of China's rise. The theory, however, depicts Europe's foreign policy outlook as limited. This is surprising, as Europe is well aware of the fact that the preservation of the current international system has its price and that this requires a foreign policy outlook that is in line therewith. Thus, one can conclude that Europe is not as introvert as Havenaar suggests.

In conclusion, Havenaar's theory is right on some points. First, Europe is more eager to maintain the status-quo, as it opts to keep its relationship with China friendly at all price. Second, the EU is significantly more internally-orientated than the US, as the European reports plead for a unified EU approach in the context of China's rise. However, one can also make critical remarks on the theory. The EU is not so inward-orientated as Havenaar suggests. Although he makes a comment in his final chapter that the EU is sailing a more assertive course since Angela Merkel, his theory paints an incorrect picture of Europe. Havenaar's picture does not fully correspond to Europe's perception of China's rise.<sup>224</sup> The fact that the European authors criticize Europe's fragmented foreign policy indicates that they prioritize the importance of international issues. Moreover, they seem to be more leery, as they portray China as a potential risk to the economic system and to multilateral institutions. This leads to the second remark on Havenaar's theory. His analysis of the convergence in mentalities is only partially correct. Although the US has become more moderated in its foreign policy due to a change in mentality, the EU mentality seems to have changed slightly as well. The European reports show that Europe's prudence has been replaced by a more assertive approach. In their eyes, China's rise is not necessarily benign, and the EU must redirect the course of the possible threats. Yet, their recommendations to use only diplomacy and dialogue as its instruments to maintain the status-quo, indicate that Europe's mentality has not changed inherently.

#### *6.4 Similarities and differences according to Baldwin*

According to the theory of Baldwin, the differences in US-EU perceptions should be seen in a context of similarities. Therefore, differences are notably subordinated to similarities. He explains the differences as the result of a process of 'othering' by European and American policymakers. Thus, these differences are primarily hypothetical. This thesis has demonstrated that differences are not as imaginary as regarded by Baldwin. This does not mean, however, that his theory should be neglected. The theory is very useful to keep in mind that the US and the EU have important particularities in common as regards their perceptions. Both regard China's intentions with some suspicion, and both acknowledge that its political rise is a cause for concern. Each of them sees China's growing power not so much as a direct threat, but as a potential risk. Lastly, both believe in a strategy of engagement rather than containment. In both perceptions, China's rise is seen as inevitable. As a result, both believe that integrating

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<sup>224</sup> Havenaar, *Eb en Vloed*, 259.

China into the existing international economic and political system is considered as the best option to prevent it from changing the rules.

In conclusion, despite the fact that Baldwin does not explain any underlying similarities or differences, his theory supports the argument that the US and the EU share many remarkable features, and that *within* these commonalities certain differences can be identified. Both perceptions see China's rise with a certain caution, whereby the degree assessment and mitigation of risks varies.

### *6.5 Conclusion*

This chapter addresses the similarities and differences in US-EU perceptions on China's rise by means of a broader theoretical framework. The overall power gap, as derived from Kagan's theory, explains the differences in the US-EU perceptions. Due to its substantial political, economic, and military interests, the US is concerned with all aspects of China's rise. In contrast thereto, Europe has no security interests in the region. This also explains why the US perception is more geopolitical and Europe's perception is more economic. It is also true that the US and EU assess risks concerning China's rise differently as a result of the disparity in overall power. However, the existence of an overall power gap does imply that the powers have a completely different outlook on that rise. Both powers worry that China might have intentions to change the current rules-based system. In other words, there is no such thing as an ideological gap, as suggested by Kagan. The perceptions differ, however, in their definition of engagement. While the US is inclined to act more unilaterally, the EU prefers multilateralism as an instrument of engagement. Although Kagan's theory is too extreme, this difference can be explained by a certain gap in outlooks: the US is more distrustful, whereas Europe is more hopeful. This also explains the optimism of the latter in mitigating the risks that China's rise brings along.

Havenaar's theory mainly explains the similarities in the US-EU perceptions. The theory is based on the presumption that similarities are the result of America's change in mentality. This mentality has become more pragmatic, more pro-government in terms of regulation, and more moderate on foreign policy issues. Hence, it has come more on line with the European mentality in respect of foreign policy. Havenaar appears to be right in the sense that the US is relatively moderate in its perception of China's rise. For this reason, America's underlying emotion explains several similarities with the EU perception. However, Havenaar's depiction of Europe's mentality is not fully in line with the perception as demonstrated in chapter 3. Therefore, his theory is unfit for explaining the similarities in full.

Baldwin's theory does not explain any differences, nor similarities. Nonetheless, the theory is useful where it comes to the understanding that the similarities on China's rise are more important than the differences. The US-EU perceptions show a remarkable overlap, as both look at China's growing power with a certain caution, both recommend engagement, and both worry about China's intentions to revise the existing economic order. Within these common concerns, the assessment and mitigation of risks differ. Therefore, this chapter concludes that the differences on China's growing power should be seen primarily in the context of similarities.

## Conclusion

This thesis addresses the perceptions of the US and the EU on China's growing political, economic, and military power. The first part demonstrates that the European perception can be characterized by a relatively uniform image. The American perception, on the other hand, can be characterized by several distinct images: a classical realist image, an optimistic image and a vigilance image. Due to this diversity, one cannot speak of *the* American perception on China's rise. This analysis seems to be partially in line with the theory of Walter Russel Mead, who argues in his book *Special Providence* that America's foreign policy is shaped by multiple political traditions. He identifies the traditions of the Hamiltonians (protection of commerce), the Jeffersonians (maintenance of a democratic system), the Jacksonians (populist values, military strength), and the Wilsonians (moral principle).<sup>225</sup> The classical realist image resembles the Jacksonian tradition, while the vigilance image corresponds with the Hamiltonian tradition. Due to the fact that most American reports fall under the category of the vigilance perception, this thesis considers the vigilance image as being the most representative for America's view on China's rise. It should be noted, however, that the existence of these various images within the US can serve as an explanation for the ambivalent character of the 'pivot to Asia'-policy, as described in the introduction.

The first part has also demonstrated that there are remarkable similarities to be found in the American and European perceptions. Both sides of the Atlantic do not see China's rise as a particular threat, nor do they see the rise as an unique opportunity. Each of them takes a relatively moderate stance, as they acknowledge that China's intentions are not necessarily benign. Its ambivalent attitude toward the global free-market system has led to a common feeling of uncertainty on the direction that China will take: revisionist or status-quo-orientated. Therefore, both the US and the EU perceive its growing power is a possible threat to the existing rules-based economic system. Yet, both acknowledge that China's integration in the existing order can mitigate this concern, provided that this integration is effectuated by means of a strategy of engagement rather than containment.

However, there are also significant differences between the two perceptions. The American perception is more geopolitical, whereas the European perception remains restricted to economic, societal, and multilateral issues. As a result, the US worries over possible implications in the economic, political, and military realm, whereas the EU only assesses the

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<sup>225</sup> Walter Russel Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York, A Century Foundation Book, 2003) xviii.

risks in the economic and multilateral order. In this respect, the American concern about China's military rise stands in sharp contrast to the European perception. Lastly, whereas Europe's definition of engagement consists of guiding, and supporting the power of the PRC in multilateral institutions, the US prefers to engage with China bilaterally. The latter believes that by means of cooperation, trust, and mutual understanding, China can be successfully integrated into the existing international order. In this respect, the Europeans are also more optimistic, whereas the Americans are more pragmatic.

The second part of the thesis explains the similarities and differences on the basis of the theories of Kagan, Havelaar, and Baldwin. One can conclude that the differences can be explained by a disparity in overall power. America's political, economic, and military strength has resulted in large military interests in South-East Asia. Second, its strength has caused the US to identify risks in each of these realms. Third, it has given American authors a more geopolitical outlook. Lastly, it explains why the US has a preference for unilateral action. The US has simply more to lose as regards China's rise. Europe's interests, on the other hand, are principally economy and politics-driven. Therefore, China's ambivalent attitude in the economy and multilateral institutions poses a possible risk to the European style of global governance. In this respect, it is obvious that the EU tries to mitigate this risk within multilateral frameworks, whereas the US wants to engage with China bilaterally.

The similarities can be explained by a change in the American as well as the European mentality. The US has become more moderate in foreign policy issues, due to an implicit rejection of military action in conflicts. As a result of the financial crisis of 2008, it also has become more concerned with regulation of the economy and maintaining the rules relating thereto. Hence, it is seriously concerned about China's economic intentions. This concern corresponds with that of Europe, who always has been focused on a regulated free market economy. Although this explains why the US and the EU share many commonalities regarding China's rise, one can also argue that the European mentality has taken over more features of the American vigilance perception. The European reports have proven that the EU perception has become more assertive, more outward-orientated, and more cautious of the possible risks that China poses. In other words, the European mindset has also changed. The EU is more alert on international political developments. One can argue that this alertness has derived from the growing Russian aggression and the conflicts in North-Africa and the Middle East since 2011. This 'ring of instability' has made Europe aware that its internal security is inextricably linked to external foreign policy issues. The common perception of China's rise can also be explained from that perceptive.

The analysis made in chapter 6 demonstrates that the similarities in the US-EU perceptions are significantly meaningful. The perceptions show a notable overlap, as both see China's growing power with a certain caution, both recommend engagement, and both worry about China's intentions to revise the existing economic order. This leads to the argument that the American vigilance perception and the European perception have many features in common, but that *within* these commonalities certain differences can be identified. Both perceptions see China's rise as a cause for concern, whereby the degree of assessment and mitigation of risks varies.

With the theory of Baldwin in mind, one can conclude that the US and Europe – as founders of the existing liberal international order – do not have diverging views on China's rise. Each of them qualifies China's growing political and economic rise as a *possible* risk to the existing global order. In other words, none of them sees China as a panda, embracing Western values. Nor do they see China as a dragon, spitting its fire rays towards the international system. There is, however, a divergence in the assessment of risks and in the understanding of how to best engage with China. The US – as a political, economic, and military superpower – prefers to engage in its own way in order to mitigate the political, economic, and military risks it has identified. The EU – as an economic power – prefers to take a multilateral-orientated direction to mitigate the economic and multilateral risks it has identified. Nonetheless, these differences cannot be seen in isolation. They must be seen within the context of the similarities in the perceptions. Thus, if the powers are willing to develop a common strategy toward China, there are certain parameters on which this strategy can be developed. However, the two powers interpret engagement differently. For that reason, it is more likely to suggest that the US and the EU will not act jointly but that each will go its own way in finding out whether China is a panda or a dragon.

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