

Alternative Futures of China: A Six Pillars Analysis

A dissertation presented

by

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades China has transformed itself from being a poor war-torn country with a centrally planned economy to the second largest economy in the world, and, as a result, has created thought-provoking implications for its future economic, institutional, political, and social direction. A diversity of beliefs and opinions exists about China's futures, often developed through economic or international relations theories. This thesis challenges the idea that the direction, and knowledge, of the futures of countries, in this case China, are owned by politicians, policy makers, international relations theorists or media pundits alone, and posits instead that these directions and knowledge stem from the actions of individuals whose visions of the future have the ability to shape new alternative social orders.

Through the application of six pillars analysis, this thesis will argue that there is no one future for China, but that there are many possible, probable and desired futures, each underlain with competing worldviews and myths. The six pillars used to explore the future are mapping, anticipating, timing, deepening, creating alternatives and transforming. Mapping asks, "Where have we been?", "Where are we today?", and "Where are we going?" Anticipating focuses on emerging issues and trend analysis to look for seeds of change. Timing is the study of grand patterns of civilisational change to understand various stages of history and their impact on the shape of the future. Deepening allows us to unpack unquestioned futures, usually through the next pillar, creating alternatives. Finally, on the basis of the alternative scenarios developed, transforming involves visioning the futures that individuals desire and finding strategies to achieve them.

This thesis intends to show the value of applying futures thinking, theories and methodologies to better understand and deconstruct the varied perspectives of the current world system. In this way this research aims to deepen and widen discussion on the futures of China.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “The futures of China: A six pillars analysis” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written solely by me.

All information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. Ethics Committee approval with the protocol number of 5201300680 was obtained for the information in Chapter 5 “Alternative images of China 2035: A case study of Tamkang University workshops”.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| ABSTRACT | I |
| DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY | II |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | III |

| | | |
|-----------|---|---------|
| CHAPTER 1 | Introduction | 1-27 |
| CHAPTER 2 | China's search for the future: A genealogical approach | 29-65 |
| CHAPTER 3 | Alternative futures of China: A macrohistorical approach | 67-99 |
| CHAPTER 4 | Unpacking images of China using causal layered analysis | 101-127 |
| CHAPTER 5 | Alternative images of China in 2035: A case study of Tamkang University workshops | 129-157 |
| CHAPTER 6 | Conclusion | 159-178 |

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| APPENDIX I | Evidence of Ethics Approval |
| APPENDIX II | Published articles |

| |
|---------------------|
| FULL REFERENCE LIST |
|---------------------|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| Figure 1 | Four Archetypes of Potential Alternative Futures | 13 |
| Figure 2 | Futures Triangle of the Ancient Era | 31 |
| Figure 3 | Futures Triangle of Imperial Era | 40 |
| Figure 4 | Futures Triangle of the Modern Era | 47 |
| Figure 5 | Sima Qian's Dynastic Cycles | 74 |
| Figure 6 | Sarkar's Social Cycle as a Circular Pattern | 79 |
| Figure 7 | Sarkar Eras in Various Societies | 81 |
| Figure 8 | Sorokin's Pendulum | 86 |
| Figure 9 | Spengler's Civilisational Decline | 90 |
| Figure 10 | Futures Triangle of Possible Futures of China | 134 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| Table 1 | Episteme 1 - Ancient Era | 39 |
| Table 2 | Episteme 2 – Imperial Era | 47 |
| Table 3 | Sarkar's Social Cycle | 78 |
| Table 4 | Sorokin's Types | 86 |
| Table 5 | Summary of Macrohistorians/scenarios | 92 |
| Table 6 | Three CLA Stories for the Rise of China | 105 |
| Table 7 | Main Considerations from IR Theory | 107 |
| Table 8 | Western and Other Realist Arguments Supporting 'China Threat' | 108 |
| Table 9 | Western CLA – China Threat | 109 |
| Table 10 | Chinese CLA – China Threat | 114 |
| Table 11 | Liberalist Arguments Supporting 'Peaceful Development' | 119 |
| Table 12 | Alternative Future – Peaceful Development | 119 |
| Table 13 | CLA Feared Future: The Hunger Games (China Threat) | 140 |
| Table 14 | CLA Preferred Future: A New Gaia | 143 |
| Table 15 | CLA Alternative Future: New Revolution | 147 |

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

*‘We have seen the sleep; we come now to the awakening.
What will be the result of it?’
(Tseng, 1887, p. 27)*

This statement by the Marquis Tseng¹ offered to the Anglophone world the message that China’s² past and present sleep (in 1887), believed to be leading to its decay and eventual death, was not assured, and that an awakened China – strong and respected – would be able to meet the challenges of the future. At the time this was a remarkable statement. Until the early 1800s, China’s economy was the world’s largest, some thirty percent larger than that of Europe and its colonies. However, between 1840 and 1940, China’s economy collapsed. This period came to be known in China as the “century of humiliation” (Maddison, 2012). The years leading up to the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 saw a number of struggles with Western powers and the Westernised Japan; and the history of this time reads like a disaster novel: the Opium War with Britain from 1839-1842, the Taiping rebellion against the Manchu dynasty from 1850 to 1864 killing 20 million people, the economic and military reform of the ‘Self-Strengthening Movement’ from 1861 to 1895, war with France in 1885, war with Japan in 1894-95, the Boxer Rebellion from 1898 to 1901, and finally the ‘Hundred Days Reform’ a feeble attempt at modernisation (Yuan, 2010). After the Qing Dynasty collapsed, control of China moved from warlords to the government of the Kuomintang (KMT) or Chinese National People's Party, first under Sun Yat-sen and then under Chiang Kai-shek. Control shifted again in 1949 after a protracted civil war when the communists, under Mao Zedong, defeated the KMT and founded the People’s Republic of China. Since then it has “passed through revolution, socialism, and Maoist radicalism” until 1978 when Deng Xiaoping ‘opened’ China’s economy to the world and embarked on a path of awakening bound up with renewed speculation about what China’s future might be (Naughton, 2007, p.4).

China’s economic growth over the last thirty years has been described by many superlatives and the figures are indeed impressive. According to Maddison (2007, p. 17), between 1820 and 1952 China’s share of world GDP fell from a third to a twentieth. Its real per capita

¹ Qing Empire Ambassador to Britain, Russia and France from 1878-1885.

² The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is referred to as China in this document.

income fell from 90 percent to less than a quarter of the world average. After 30 years of double-digit growth, China is now the world's largest manufacturing nation. In 2011 it accounted for 20.7 percent of world manufacturing while the second largest share, held by the United States, fell to 16.8 percent (Meckstroth, 2013). China has the world's largest automobile industry, consumes half the world's semiconductor output, produces 75 percent of the world's mobile phones, 87 percent of personal computers, has thirteen of the 20 largest buildings under construction and has the world's largest foreign currency reserves, US\$3.7 trillion compared to Japan's, the next highest, of US\$1.3 trillion (Hale, 2014). It is projected that China will transform this economic growth into geopolitical power, and that "[as] China continues to rise, the United States is perceived to be in at least relative, if not absolute, decline"; this may lead to tensions in the current world system (Cronin and Kaplan, 2012, p. 8).

The discourse on China's recent economic and geopolitical rise, and its consequences for the world, draws primarily on a litany of economic data, international relations theory and interpretations of historical themes and parallels that repeatedly situate China's future in an "empiricist-oriented mode," thus limiting meaningful discourse (Inayatullah, 1992, p. 867). The consequences for Western thinkers of uncritically accepting established policy and economic positions and assumptions cannot be underestimated. "Mirror imaging, wishful thinking, entrenched policy positions, bureaucratic inertia, and lack of imagination have all played a part in "intelligence failures" and policy missteps of the last twenty years" (Oppenheimer, 2012, p. 21). While today's visions for China's futures continue to be wide and varied it can be argued that the authors often have bias in putting forth singular visions that support their intellectual paradigms. In this way policy-makers "establish a range of acceptable analyses then brilliantly argue the case for continued stability" because "imagining discontinuous change is intellectually challenging and can be professionally risky – better to be correct most of the time, and when spectacularly wrong, have lots of company" (Oppenheimer, 2012, p. 24).

Some popular narratives are: "Will China rise peacefully?" (Zheng, 2005) and its close relative "Will China be a Threat" (Mearsheimer, 2001); "Will the US remain the world's only superpower?" (Nye, 2012); "Will there be a 'Grand Bargain?'" (Medcalf, 2012); even "Has China already peaked?" (Pei, 2012). Some call for China to have a clearer vision of its own identity and of what kind of society it wants to be (Buzan, 2010). Many realist international

relations theorists argue that China as a rising power will challenge the international order, most likely resulting in war. The liberalist view argues that although China benefits from the institutional order, its political systems and ideology are problematic and that therefore uncertainty prevails (Qin, 2010). Patridge (2012) believes that the constructivist perspective favoured in the United States is “constructing” a future world in which China is its primary enemy. These theories and predictions are at worst doomed to fail, or at best offer only “an uncritical acceptance of established positions and assumptions” (Herrmann and Choi, 2007, p. 133) and cannot advance China futures in any meaningful way.

This is not just an issue for Western scholars, analysts and pundits. According to Michael Pillsbury, “the mutually exclusive “scenarios” employed by Americans to explore alternative possibilities for the future do not exist in Chinese writings” (2000, p. 3). In his study of over 200 Chinese authors, Pillsbury further found that “Chinese writing about the future security environment describes the future in terms of the Warring States era in Chinese history. The age in which the classics of Chinese statecraft were produced was a time when a multistate competition to become “hegemon” featured stratagems, small wars, interstate conferences, treaties, and what Western scholars of international relations would label ‘anarchy’” (2000, p. 35). This finding was echoed by Ian Johnston: “a realpolitik strategic culture still colours the world-view of many Chinese senior security policy decision makers, a world view in which military force is a potentially useful tool (1998, p.2). Ian Johnston later appeared to change his view and asserted: “The PRC has become more integrated into and more cooperative within international institutions than ever before. Moreover, the evidence that China’s leaders are actively trying to balance against U.S. power to undermine an American-dominated unipolar system and replace it with a multipolar system is murky” (2003, p. 49).

The current official vision of China’s future is that of the ‘Chinese Dream’ a slogan first coined by Peggy Liu, popularised by Thomas Friedman and then later adopted by Xi Jinping (Fish, 2013). The meaning of this metaphor is unclear, but the concrete goals are “to achieve a “well-off” society (*xiaokang shehui*) with doubling [of] the GDP and per capita annual household income of 2010 by 2020 and [to] build up a modern socialist state by 2049” (Tsai, 2013). Zheng Bijian (2005) offered the slogan “peaceful rise”, later changed to “peaceful development”, to describe a China that would be well integrated and supportive of the current status quo: a liberalist position.

Lynch (2009) sampled 63 book chapters and journal articles published between 2001 and 2007 by PRC academics and political figures and found that most shifted between Realism, seeking security and power, and pluralist Rationalism, preferring cooperation and absolute gains in international society. Of the Chinese people themselves, when asked what global role their country should play, only 14 percent replied “single world leader;” 45 percent wanted a shared role while 19 percent wanted no leadership role at all for Beijing. In comparison, when asked what global role their country should play, only 9 percent of Americans replied “single world leader,” 74 percent wanted a “shared world leader” role, and 12 percent wanted no leadership role at all (Swaine et al., 2013).

On the economic front, the case for China’s rise and establishment as a superpower rests mostly on a single measure: GDP.³ Among China’s microbloggers this much-hailed measure of economic growth is also translated into the homophonic phrase “*ji di pi*” roughly meaning “a chicken’s fart” to protest against the negative effects of breakneck growth: extensive pollution, social inequality and rising corruption (Allen, 2014). The World Bank predicts that by the end of 2014 China’s GDP in terms of purchasing power parity⁴ (PPP) will surpass that of the United States. However the measure of the market exchange rate of GDP, which measures a country’s weight in the global economy, still puts the US economy at 83% larger than the Chinese economy (Frankel, 2014). Measured in constant dollars adjusting for inflation, the US economy is currently 300 percent larger than the Chinese economy (UNStats, 2013).

There remains some debate about the importance of GDP as a proxy measure of national power. GDP is largely a function of population and there are a number of extremely wealthy countries in per capita terms that do not possess the ability to join the ranks of great powers, for example Luxembourg, Singapore, Qatar, Norway and Ireland (Beckley, 2011/2012). Regardless of which measure is used, most projections have China overtaking the US as the world’s largest economy sometime before 2050 (Beckley, 2011/2012). But again the economic ‘prediction’ changes depending on who is doing the ‘predicting’. The Centre for Economics and Business Research believes that “China could be on [the] brink of [a] ‘new dawn of expansion’,” as it shifts away from investment-led growth and towards consumption (CEBR, 2013). Michael Schuman believes China will “face some sort of terrible collapse” for

³ The monetary value of goods and services produced in a country in a given year.

⁴ An estimate of the real cost of living; useful when measuring improvement to the standard of living.

the simple reason that data on its economy is unreliable (Schuman, 2012). George Soros, too, believes that “[t]he major uncertainty facing the world today is not the euro but the future direction of China. The growth model responsible for its rapid rise has run out of steam” (Soros, 2014). Even Premier Li Keqiang recently warned lenders to China's private sector factories that they should expect debt defaults as the country encounters “serious challenges” in the year ahead (Inman, 2014).

Ultimately GDP was never designed as a measure of national well-being. What is notable is what GDP does not measure: income gap, spending on worthy things (education) versus harmful things (cigarettes), infrastructure, environmental health, and lack of concern for future generations, among other things. As Robert Kennedy once said about GDP:

(it) does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile (Kennedy, 1968).

The idea that GDP has become the *sine qua non* for economic progress and a signifier for a single future in which China's economy is as big as the United States only “encourages activities that are counter to long-term community well-being” including the “natural, social, and human components of community capital on which the community relies for continued existence and well-being” (Costanza, et. al, 2009, p. 9). The persistent emphasis on rising GDP and measures of resource consumption threaten the world, but if China is to shift its emphasis away from this capitalist paradigm to reflect its own deep cultural traditions, wisdoms and insights, including ‘green’ development, alternative paths are possible (Palmer, 2013).

And while these theories and descriptions are helpful in thinking about China's futures, seeing the future of China only through the lens of international relations theorists, economic predictions or historical explanations is problematic in that these theorists offer as ‘truths’ certain assumptions about China's future intentions. Further, the level of debate is arguably shallow, suffering from “motivated belief” and unable to provide deeper understandings of how to fathom China's futures. The choice between seeing China as a future threat or China

as growing peacefully without any consequences seem too limited and unsuitable for a new world construct that does not revolve around Communism versus Capitalism or even Communism versus Democracy, the paradigms that have dominated much of the thinking of the last century. Engaging with futures theories and methodologies in a rapidly changing, uncertain and high-risk world is a way to also engage with a broader and deeper spectrum of thinking that considers probable, preferred and alternative futures and how to understand and change the myths that underlie our paths to these futures.

This study is not about predicting a single definitive future of China, as there is no way to accurately predict any future (Dator, 2011), but to demonstrate the importance of using futures frameworks such as six pillars analysis to identify and prepare for a number of alternative futures and in so doing to develop the resilience needed to cope with and recover from anticipated problems and challenges. Limiting our conceptual frameworks about a country's futures to economic data or international relations paradigms and their associated structures without considering the anticipatory impacts of the worldviews and myths that sit behind these views creates restricted, restrictive and potentially dangerous shortages of foresight. Recent and seemingly reoccurring policy failures, from the global financial crisis beginning in the US to the Arab Spring, from the Eurozone crisis to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and even the consequences of China's rise despite the overabundance of expert analysis are evidence that the current policy and economic paradigms are not sufficient to give a full understanding of alternative futures.

Critical emerging issues and the global problematique

Emerging issues for China are presented throughout the following chapters, however, in order to provide context for the reader, three of the more significant emerging issues for China, the environment, religion and income inequality, are now briefly discussed.

The most pressing emerging issue is the urgency of China's environmental situation; a matter of global and species-wide concern (Geall, 2010). China is now the world's leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (Than, 2014). Asia's pollution has also been found to be contributing to more intense cyclones over the northwest Pacific Ocean, thus creating colder winter weather patterns over North America (Wang, et al, 2014). Images of Beijing's polluted air, of pig corpses floating down benzene-poisoned rivers so polluted they cannot be

made drinkable, desertification creating a generation of “eco-migrants”, habitat loss and the drop in biodiversity: the now extinct baiji dolphin which had existed for 20 million years, elephants in Africa killed every 15 minutes for their ivory, rhinos and tigers targeted, too, for their aphrodisiac qualities, the dubious honour of ‘cancer villages’ that are so polluted that merely living in them poses a cancer risk, and a growing middle class now adopting Western-style consumer patterns including higher consumption of meat and use of automobiles are all indicators of unsustainable patterns of consumption (Lallanilla, 2013). Pollution has become the nation’s single greatest cause of social unrest. Limits on growth as viewed through Floyd and Slaughter’s (2014) concept of descent pathways highlight the civilisational challenge of a politically and economically rising China. Floyd (2014) notes that “given emerging environmental conditions, today’s industrial societies conserve adaptation in ways that do not bode well for ongoing viability” (Floyd, 2014, p. 602). Furthermore, “the myth of progress, as industrial society’s principal source of meaning, presents a particular vulnerability” (Floyd, 2014, p. 602). Dator too sees “the ‘Unholy Trinity, plus one’ of climate change, peak production of conventional petroleum, failure of neoliberal economics and the incapacity of any current governance systems to address these crises—as playing determinative roles in *all* possible futures, a situation he characterises as the ‘New Normal’” (Floyd and Slaughter, 2014, p. 489).

Christianity is booming in China. So too are the three cultural traditions of Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Neither capitalism nor communism have been able to provide meaning or spiritual comfort to an increasingly wealthy but worn out population. The Chinese Communist Party has been supporting the growth of Christianity as a tool for economic growth and a provider of social services, but it remains wary of its possible impact on the Party's grip on power as there are now more Christians than party members (Phillips, 2014). The government in 2013 launched a five-year campaign to promote its own brand of Christian theology in China that, according to Gu Mengfei, deputy secretary-general of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, a state-sanctioned umbrella organisation for Protestant churches, “will encourage more believers to make contributions to the country’s harmonious social progress, cultural prosperity, and economic development” (Chang, 2014). Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism are not only providing transcendent ways for “the cosmos (to) enter human life” (Smith, 2009, Kindleloc 331 of 8303) or to serve as a counterpoint to consumerism, they are instrumental in an emergent homegrown environmental culture. Daoism and Confucianism in particular, “as the two indigenous spiritual and philosophical traditions of

China, are at the very core of the recovery of a specifically Chinese perspective on protecting our planet” (Palmer, 2013).

Income inequality, a serious issue in China, is getting worse. For all the economic success that China has enjoyed in recent decades, the average Chinese citizen has moved from living in one of the most egalitarian countries to one of the least and this has translated into decreasing life satisfaction (Easterlin, et al., 2012). Deng Xiaoping’s proclamation prescription to “let a few people get rich first” accompanied by limited measures or concrete political reforms to restrain the ensuing corruption of special interest groups and party elites is a source of concern to the government because it causes wide-spread discontent and social protest (Wang, 2014). Many people around the world, not just in China, are starting to question the sustainability of the current capitalist development model with its slowing economic growth, associated health and social problems and rising political instability (Ortiz and Cummins, 2011).

There is broad agreement between both Western and Chinese observers today that China is a giant in transition, if not crisis (Benedikter and Nowotny, 2014). Since 1978 China has followed the linear western path of industrialisation and with it has acquired its inherent structural failings. Ervin Laszlo (2011) believes that “current attempts to restabilise or revitalise the dominant structure and processes of the present are a grievous mistake” (Laszlo in Dennis, 2011, Kindleloc. 135). Garaudy makes explicit that

The principle obstacle to the necessary change is that the West, after four centuries of unshared domination during which it has exercised a disastrous impact on the planet, imposes not only its economic, political and military ‘order’, but also the form of culture and history which justifies it, as if the historical trajectory followed by the West was the only possible one, exemplary and universal. (Garaudy in Nandy, 1999, p. x).

It is clear that this transition is not just about China, as the world faces growing complex and interlinking challenges that are neither bound by national borders nor can be solved by any one nation alone. The ‘global problematique’⁵ of climate change, mass consumption and socioeconomic development, biodiversity, governance and geopolitical influence present challenges and opportunities that require new modes of thinking, perceiving and behaving to

⁵ A term describing critical intersecting global issues first coined by the Club of Rome in New York in 1969 and later identified in “The Predicament of Mankind” (Ozbekhan, 1970).

facilitate creative transformation (Dennis, 2011).

While this thesis is not specifically about globalisation⁶ or postnationalism,⁷ it does seek to decolonise the self-interested dialogue of China futures away from the impoverished and narrow thinking of international relations and economics by using the transformative approach of futures studies.

Research Objectives

The overarching goal of this thesis is to investigate the application of six pillars analysis (Inayatullah, 2008) in understanding the alternative futures of China.

This study began because of my dissatisfaction with the way that China futures are discussed in the popular media, which I believed reflected only the limited paradigms of policy-makers and the content of banks' and big businesses' press releases. I was not satisfied with any of these prescriptive scenarios believing, like Fred Polak, that "[t]he rise and fall of images of the future precedes or accompanies the rise and fall of cultures" (1973, p. 19). A good example of this lack of depth in identifying and understanding alternative futures is illustrated by the failure of policy-makers to forecast the Arab Spring. According to Gregory Gause: "The vast majority of academic specialists on the Arab world were as surprised as everyone else by the upheavals that toppled two Arab leaders last winter and that now threaten several others." (2011, p. 81). Oppenheimer supports the consequences of Gause's self-criticism: "In emphasising the strength of the military security complex and state control over the economy, they missed the growing professionalism of some Arab armies (in Egypt and Tunisia) and the rising influence of the business class, benefiting from economic reforms and globalisation and thus [being] less dependent on regime patronage" (2012, p. 23). Clearly policy-makers need better tools and methodologies to improve the quality of their forecasting and preparation for a society's alternative and preferred futures.

When I researched discourse on alternative futures of China that had used six pillars analysis I found very little, though that is not to say that a futures approach, and elements of six pillars analysis, had not been applied to the field of foreign policy analysis: Marcus Anthony (2007)

⁶ According to Held and McGrew (2000) no single universally agreed definition of globalisation exists. Here it is defined as the widening, enduring and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness.

⁷ Postnationalism as defined by Arjun Appadurai is the "search for nonterritorial principles of solidarity" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 56).

used elements of six pillars, causal layered analysis (CLA) and the futures triangle to create alternative futures of China. Hyeonju Son (2013a, 2013b) used CLA to develop alternative futures of South Korea, Sohail Inayatullah (1992) for images of Pakistan. Johan Galtung (2001) provided a number of discourses and alternative futures for China. Most of the literature at the time of the beginning of this journey focused on ‘China threat’, ‘peaceful rise’ or ‘goose that laid the golden egg for Australia’s economy’ theories and maintained that one or other of these scenarios would continue indefinitely (a phenomenon discussed in the previous section).

The purpose of this thesis is not to predict one future for China based on economic drivers, business strategies or international relations theories (all of these are considered to be “colonising the future and closing off options by projecting currently dominant ideas and values into the future and assuming they will continue to dominate”), but to show how futures methodologies can be applied to forecast the potential future directions of a nation/state, in this case China (May, 1999, p.126). According to Philip Tetlock’s study on academic researchers: “they too are prisoners of their preconceptions” or, as John Steinbruner put it, they are prisoners of “grooved thinking” (Herrmann and Choi, 2007, p. 133). Through the application of six pillars analysis this thesis intends to offer a way to open minds and to advance the conversation on the use of futures studies as a valuable tool in understanding alternative futures, deep social structures and epistemic discourse in order to open up alternatives and to create adaptability in decision-making and discussion on the images of the futures presented (Inayatullah, 1992, p. 867). Six pillars analysis provides a path for reflexivity, to allow theorists – both Western and Chinese – to stand back from their assumptions, belief systems and worldviews and enable transformations in thinking, not just reinforcement of existing visions and dispositions.

This research has three objectives:

1. *To utilise six pillars analysis to develop deeper understandings of China futures.* No existing research using this method as a means of examining China futures was found.
2. *To apply futures studies to analyse China futures.* The theory and method of six pillars analysis (mapping, anticipating, timing, deepening, creating alternatives and transforming) will be applied. The application of six pillars analysis will demonstrate

the value of applying non-traditional and deep questioning tools to the inquiry into China futures.

3. ***To provide a base for further studies by policy analysts, academics and business analysts to actively engage with six pillars analysis as a tool for inquiry into China futures.***

Individually any one of these three objectives contributes to both the China futures and Futures Studies communities. In combination they allow this thesis to offer a comprehensive roadmap for other researchers to build upon so as not to consider just alternative future scenarios of China, but to learn new ways of thinking with which to frame the complexities of social, economic and political change.

Methodology and Epistemology

The “general purpose of futures studies is to maintain or improve the freedom and welfare of humankind” (Bell, 2008, p.73). The study of the future is not then just about the ideas and images we hold about the future but also about understanding the consequences of those ideas and images. Attempts to understand the future bring with them multiple perspectives on the same phenomena; individual and collective assumptions about time, knowledge and knowing as well as culture, history, values, life and reality.

Voros (2001) identifies three core foundational concepts upon which the field rests:

1. ***The future is not predetermined.*** This concept rests on Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, which holds that randomness is intrinsic to the universe. If the future were predetermined this would assume that the future is based on the linearity of the past and that individuals then have no ability to influence their future (Inayatullah, 2007, p. 7). Futures studies holds that humans have agency and that they *can* influence the future.
2. ***The future is not predictable.*** There are no future facts and as a consequence we cannot empirically know the future. Data is important for identifying trends and forecasts, but it is impossible to have enough information to construct a complete

model of how the future could develop (Voros, 2001, p. 1). It follows then that because the future is not predetermined, predictability is impossible and we are then able to make choices among the many potential alternative futures (Voros, 2001, p. 1).

3. ***Future outcomes can be influenced by our choices in the present.*** “The future is not an empty space, but like the past an active aspect of the present” (Milojević as quoted in Gore, 2013). We can influence the shape and consequences of the future through our actions and inactions (Voros, 2001).

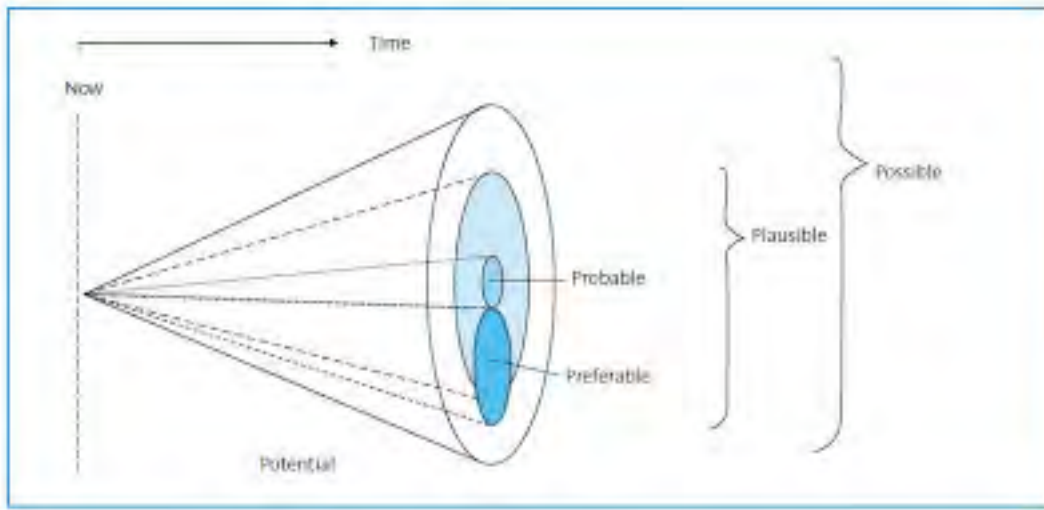
Additional futures concepts important to this study include:

1. ***Not one future but many futures.*** For many there is the embedded idea that there is only one future; it is important to understand that, in fact, multiple futures are possible. The future is an open space (Inayatullah, 2008).
2. ***About transformational shifts.*** The image we hold of the future pulls us towards a future. There’s a strong sense for many individuals that the future is still ‘out there’ in some ethereal space, but it is actually about our creative possibilities –our traumas, our sense of fear and the images that motivate humanity to move toward particular futures (Inayatullah, 2008).
3. ***Historical narratives important.*** Images of the future can be based on historical narratives that have travelled through time and culture (Gould, 2014).
4. ***The future includes both tangible and intangible phenomena.*** Tangible phenomena include those indicators used to measure and monitor economic, social and environmental conditions. Intangible phenomena (also used in aesthetics, law, ethics and religion) are those cultural and personal values around ritual, symbols, meaning, empathy, hope, compassion and trust (Inayatullah, 2012).

Principally futures studies is about disrupting dominant ways of knowing the future through questioning the structures and narratives of these peculiar futures, inviting agency for change and allowing alternative futures to emerge. It is possible then to distinguish between four archetypes of potential alternative futures (Voros, 2001):

1. **Possible futures.** These are those futures that “might” happen – no matter how unlikely. They may involve knowledge which we do not yet possess or even involve transgressions of currently-accepted physical laws or principles.
2. **Plausible futures.** These are those futures which “could” happen according to our current knowledge of how things – physical laws, processes, causation, systems of human interaction, etc. – work.
3. **Probable futures.** Those futures most “likely” to happen. They occur in part from the continuance of current trends and are often called “business as usual”.
4. **Preferred futures.** Those futures concerned with what we "want" to happen. These futures derive from values judgments and are more overtly subjective than the previous three classes (Voros, 2001).

Image 1: Four archetypes of potential alternative futures



(Voros, 2003)

Inayatullah (2008, pp. 5-6) provides a further seven basic concepts of futures thinking:

1. **Default future.** What others say; the official, predicted singular future. Default futures are often presented as a belief and do not seek input from others.

2. ***Used future.*** A future that is borrowed and tends to reflect others' futures, or even pasts. It asks the question, "is your image of the future your desired future or is it unconsciously borrowed from someone else?" (Inayatullah, 2008, p. 5)
3. ***Disowned future.*** Some futures can be disastrous if we don't have a sense of balance or innovation. One vision of the future can actually create a nightmare in another future. What are we disowning that will not go away? For example, if an organisation becomes fixated on implementing a strategic plan but ignores the emerging issues, it will be caught unaware and could face major disruption.
4. ***Aligned future.*** It is important that our inner story of the future matches our actions in the present.
5. ***Alternative future.*** These are desirable futures that are a way to 'escape' from the straightjacket of default, used and disowned futures. If the official future is not challenged, we face a colonised default or used future. Alternative futures are about creating flexibility through scenarios to provide a choice of different futures.
6. ***Model of social change.*** This reflects how we individually and culturally situate ourselves in order to understand time and change. The aim is to determine where we can best influence change within the structures of social change. There are politics around images of the future and who gets to decide the 'official' version of the future.
7. ***Use of the future.*** Futures thinking can be thought of as engaging with different levels of change, the next deeper than the previous. These levels are education, strategy, creating capacity, emergence, new memes, microvita change and no-concept. Education is simply about foresight training: it can be used to create a more effective strategy; by understanding futures concepts organisations can become more innovative. Futures thinking can then create capacity to enhance our confidence in bringing about desired futures. Emergence is then available to create paradigm shifts. Meme change is about altering the ideas that govern institutions and microvita change is about shifting the field of reality or consciousness. No-concept occurs when these futures tools become just another process with the decisions already made or when no alternative futures are allowed to emerge (Inayatullah, 2008, pp. 5-6).

Epistemology

According to Inayatullah (2007) there are four dominant modes of knowing (or epistemes) for conducting futures research: (1) predictive, (2) interpretive, (3) critical and (4) anticipatory action learning research. The predictive approach is based on empirical social sciences. This attempts to predict and control the future and assumes that the future can be known. Language here is assumed to be neutral in that it serves only to link theory and data. This view of language privileges experts; most commonly policy analysts and economists. Linear forecasting is the tool of choice and scenarios are seen as deviations from the norm rather than as stemming from true alternative worldviews. The goal of the interpretive approach is to understand competing images of the future. These are found by examining different cultural or gender or ethnic images of the future and are less technical than the predictive approach. The critical futures approach derives from poststructural thought and asks who benefits by realising certain futures. The role of the state and other forms of power are important in understanding how a particular future has been colonised or become hegemonic. The goal here is to disturb power relations by evoking alternative scenarios. Anticipatory action learning/research asks stakeholders to develop their own probable, possible and preferred futures based on their assumptions about the future and what is critical to them. In this way their visions of the future are created and owned through this pursuit (Inayatullah, 2007). Anticipatory action learning is an important tool with which the future is questioned – questions of “why we do things a certain way” and “who benefits from it” give way to a broader process in which the future is co-created through questioning the future, asking questions of preferred, probable and possible futures at all levels, litany and worldview (Inayatullah, 2007, p. 87). This study uses all four of these approaches due to their overlapping and interconnected natures.

The framework of methods and tools used for this thesis is six pillars analysis, developed by Sohail Inayatullah as a derivative of Dator’s Manoa School (Inayatullah, 2008; 2012). Six pillars analysis was chosen because, as a theoretical framework, it contains the empirical, interpretive, critical and action research approaches described above, making it a robust tool with which to build understanding of complexity, reduce uncertainty and provide greater capability to adapt to change. Below is a brief explanation of each pillar. This thesis uses the tools within each pillar, and more detailed explanations of these can be found in the corresponding chapters.

The pillars are:

1. **Mapping.** Mapping the past, present and futures to determine where we have been and where we are going. Three tools are key: (1) the ‘shared history’, to identify the main trends and events that have led to the present; (2) the ‘futures triangle’, to map today’s view of the future in three dimensions: the pull or image of the future, the pushes of the present and the weights holding back, or barriers to, the changes we wish to see; and (3) the futures landscape, often used to audit where an organisation is in the present.
2. **Anticipation.** The emerging changes or drivers of change on the horizon. Emerging issues analysis and the futures wheel are the primary tools used. Emerging issues analysis seeks to focus on those things as they are emerging, before they become well-established trends. Environmental scanning is a commonly used tool for finding those things that are being discussed for the very first time on different websites, blogs, in journals, or academic circles (Dator, 2009). The futures wheel is a kind of structured brainstorming intended to organise thinking and questioning about the future. After identifying trends or possible future events, one can ask, “If this event occurs, then what happens next?” or, “What necessarily goes with this event or trend?” or, “What are the impacts or consequences?” These impacts compose a mental map of the future, acting as a feedback mechanism to stimulate new thinking (Glenn, 2000).
3. **Timing.** This is the search for the deep waves of the past and the grand patterns of change. The theories of macrohistorians are used to structure the shape of time and frame the discussion on the contours of change and what is possible. There are three basic shapes: the linear evolution of progress, the cyclical shape of the natural world and the spiral shape that combines progress and tradition. Chapter 3 presents a detailed discussion of these archetypes in the context of China futures.
4. **Deepening.** This is about understanding different ways of knowing in order to enter alternative cultures or perspectives. Causal layered analysis (CLA) and four-quadrant mapping are the primary tools used. CLA is based on the assumption that the way in which one frames a problem changes the policy solution and the actors responsible for creating transformation (Inayatullah, 2007). An underlying premise of a critical

futures analysis is that much of what is research-worthy for the critical analysis lies ‘beneath the surface’ of events and is often not directly available to the conventional senses (Wright, 2011, p. 11). CLA does this by using four layers which engage an understanding of the “multiple dimensions of social reality that are operating at different epistemological levels,” including the empirical, the interpretive, the critical and participatory action research learning (Inayatullah, 2012, p. 405). It utilises some ideas from Michel Foucault, namely deconstruction, genealogy, distancing and de-familiarisation, reordering of knowledge, and alternative pasts, presents and futures (Wright, 2011, p. 11).

Four-quadrant mapping is a method developed as part of the Integral Model of Ken Wilber and Richard Slaughter (2005). The quadrants adopt four distinct ‘windows on reality’. One covers the external, or physical, development of the individual including that of biological development, of body and brain function. Next is external collective development, namely the physical/social process which leads through the various stages of physical and technical evolution. These two quadrants reveal the world of science that has dominated the industrial period. The third quadrant is the interior development of the individual; each person’s own unique inner world of feeling, emotion, thought and vision. Finally there is the interior development of collective social being: language, worldviews etc. (Slaughter, 1998, p. 998). Inayatullah calls the four-quadrant method an “inner CLA” (Inayatullah, 2008). This study’s preferred method is CLA and this is presented in Chapter 4.

5. ***Creating alternatives.*** The primary tool for creating alternative futures operates through scenarios and questioning. Scenarios allow for an opening up of the present to outline a range of other possibilities for moving into the future. Scenarios are a way to change and challenge our assumptions to reframe our understanding of the future predicted. A scenario is not a single prediction or forecast, but rather a way of organising many statements about the future (Glenn, 2000). As noted by Glenn (2000, p. 4) it is important to know that:

No scenario is ever probable; the probability of any scenario ever being realized is minute. Scenarios should be judged by their ability to help decision makers make policy now, rather than whether they turn out to be right or wrong. “Good” scenarios are those that are: 1) Plausible (a

rational route from here to there that makes causal processes and decisions explicit); 2) Internally consistent (alternative scenarios should address similar issues so that they can be compared; and 3) Sufficiently interesting and exciting to make the future “real” enough to affect decision-making (Glenn, 2000, p. 4).

6. **Transformation.** In this pillar the future is narrowed to the preferred and strategies can then be developed to move toward that preferred vision (Inayatullah, 2008, pp. 7-18). Three methods are commonly used: visioning, backcasting and transcending (this last used when there is conflict between visions). Visions work by pulling people toward a sense of what is possible and invokes a calling for individuals to sacrifice short term goals for the long term. To create visions three methods are used: scenarios, questioning and creative visualisation. When using scenarios, the preferred future is the best to use as a base. In the questioning process, individuals are asked to complete a full description of the nature of the preferred day in their life in the future; this involves questions like, “What does your home look like?”, “Do you go to work?”, and “What do you eat?” The creative visualisation process accesses the unconscious portion of the brain. It asks individuals to close their eyes and enter into a restful state. From there, they are asked to step toward (based on the number of years into the future they wish to go) and onto a balcony to look out into the preferred future. Perhaps someone hands them a note in this future. They are asked what the note says. What does the future look like? All three of these visioning methods are then triangulated to give a more complete view of the future (Inayatullah, 2013). Backcasting works by moving the individual from the future to the present and asks what has happened in the last twenty years to bring us to today? In this way the necessary steps toward a preferred future can be visualised and described. The transcend method is used when there is conflict between visions of the future. It asks the participants to redefine the situation and open up a new landscape including bringing in forgotten stakeholders to create win-win solutions acceptable to each party individually as well as to all parties collectively (Galtung, 2000).

The world is evolving into a global society (Held and McGrew, 2000) and China’s futures are too important to be left to the paradigms, methods and tools of international relations or to economic academics, policy-makers, and pundits, as these routes do not allow for the transformation either of China, or of its relationship with the world. There needs to be space

created for conversations where the concerns of the global community, the Chinese people and their neighbours, including Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, can develop pathways to value oriented futures. Throughout its history, China's leaders have faced the devastating consequences of "challenges from below" by those who have "dreamed a different dream" from their rulers. Today, too, China suffers from many of the same concerns of the rest of the world: ecological degradation and climate change, growing income inequality and associated corruption and rapid social change, the government needs to be open to using alternative tools to facilitate adaptation and resilience rather than focusing on structural stability. In this way, applying futures studies allows us to ask: "What are the possibilities ahead? What strategies can we use to realise our goals? How can a particular image or a range of images of the future better help us understand and change today? Who are the losers and winners in any particular articulation of social time and social space?" (Inayatullah, 1992, p. 867) It is hoped that this thesis advances the use of six pillars analysis in generating foresight discussions and actions in this direction. In this way this thesis is not about predicting a certain future based on current state-centred and economic models, but about using futures thinking to create real possibilities for change.

Thesis Organisation

Chapters 2 to 5 of this thesis have been previously published in internationally refereed journals. They are presented in the body of the thesis with the same formatting as the Introduction and Conclusion and are attached as-published to form Appendix I. Each chapter is themed around investigations of China futures using an element or elements of six pillars analysis.

Chapter 2 presents a genealogy of China futures from ancient times to the present. This chapter represents the first pillar of the six pillars analysis: mapping to investigate the past, present and future. It is a dialectical and interpretive inquiry that traces how various worldviews have come to dominate the present discussions on the futures of China. The futures triangle is used to map three dimensions: the "pulls" of the future in each historical era and the corresponding "pushes" of the present and "weights" of the past. This chapter was first published in *Futures* 54 (2013), pages 53-67.

Chapter 3 investigates the timing of the future, or macrohistory, using the theories of four macrohistorians: Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin and Oswald Spengler. This is the third pillar. This presentation of macrohistorical futures highlights how the structures and patterns of history may lead to scenarios not ordinarily considered, and provides understanding of the stages of history and insights into the possible shape of the future. This chapter was first published in *Futures* 57 (2014), pages 14-27.

Chapter 4 focuses on deepening the future through causal layered analysis (CLA): the fourth pillar. This section of the thesis presents an examination of the discourse on “China threat” theory as used by both Western and Chinese realists, and its mirror image, “Peaceful rise” (peaceful development), proposed by liberalists, using causal layered analysis (CLA) to problematise their claims and examine their underlying beliefs and drivers. This chapter was first published in *Journal of Futures Studies* March 2012, 16(3), pages 1-24.

Chapter 5 is a case study presenting alternative futures of China in 2035. The chapter presents the results of interactive workshops held between 10 and 13 December 2013 with students from the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies at Tamkang University to explore visions of China in 2035. Its purpose was to use the futures methodologies in six pillars to develop the futures the students’ wished to see. The article also provides policy-makers with an opportunity to learn what non-traditional actors, in this case university students, can add to the discussion of China’s futures. It was not possible for the purposes of this study to conduct a comparative study with students at a university in the People’s Republic of China. (PRC). There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly my Associate Supervisor is an Adjunct Professor at Tamkang University and they were very willing and accommodating to my research needs as well as being familiar with the methodology of six pillars analysis. The task of undertaking research in the PRC was more difficult with a number of administrative obstacles with respect to the type of research being undertaken. It is the intention of this researcher to conduct workshops with students in the PRC in the near future and compare this information with my research undertaken at Tamkang University. The results of these workshops rest on pillars 5 and 6: creating alternatives and transforming. This chapter was first published in *Journal of Futures Studies* September 2014, 19(1), pages 13-34.

Chapter 6 is the **Conclusion** and summarises the major findings, discusses their implications and suggests possible directions for further research.

Appendix I contains evidence of ethics approval for conducting the workshops in Taiwan.

Appendix II contains Chapters 2 to 5 in their as-published form.

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CHAPTER 2

China's search for the future: A genealogical approach

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China's Search for the Future: A Genealogical Approach

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a dialectical inquiry, presenting a genealogy of, China futures discourses and visions from ancient times through to the, present. It uses both structural and macrohistorical based approaches. The identified worldviews are placed in their broader historical, epistemes; asked why change has occurred, how it fits within patterns of, history and what kind of futures are offered. It is unique in that I use, the futures triangle methodology to discuss the “pulls” of the future in, each historical era with the corresponding “pushes” of the present and, “weights” of the past. The article concludes with a theory of futures in, Chinese history and looks at which philosophies are likely to play a role, in the possible futures of China. The aim is to highlight which visions, and images have been victorious is affecting the present and influencing, the future.

1.1 Introduction

This article presents a genealogy of China futures discourses and visions of China from ancient times to the present. The intention is to focus on the development of visions of the future and the underlying values and ideologies they have offered to a society faced with the challenges of holding together an immense and diverse population. The genealogies in this article are meant to trace through history discourses about what we hold true (knowledge) and how we came to do so at the expense of other discourses; the history of power over individuals, the normalisation of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and what is deemed moral and immoral [1, p44, 2]. Galtung holds that the actions of nations are symptomatic of deeper historical causes and civilisational cosmologies about how reality is constituted [3, p833]. Understanding the profound civilisational codes that lie beneath the day-to-day actions of a nation such as China will allow us to look at the deep levels of identity which affect the construction of images of the future and allow new insights to

emerge [4]. Understanding how reality changes when the epistemes change is critical. These truths naturally affect how we see ourselves and where we ought to be [5].

The shape and type of future is important and often different in each type of discourse [4]. Whether the future is seen as linear, cyclical or as rising and falling can either support theories about future directions or question the dominant image of the future. Authentic alternative futures therefore can only be achieved through understanding alternative ways of knowing (epistemes) and how these create our realities (ontologies) over time. A genealogical approach to the historical images of the futures of China provides a way to examine the culturally-specific shapes and types of future in each discourse and how they may affect the preferred images of the future rather than on some universal [4].

This is a dialectical inquiry, based on translated rather than original texts, and one which uses both structural and futures-based approaches. It is structural in that the futures triangle is used to explore the dynamics of the contesting macrohistorical patterns of change. A macro-futures-based approach is present in the use of the genealogy of images for each historical era – antiquity, imperial and modern – to reveal which images were dominant, emergent or alternative in each era. Because of the vast span of history and the large number of events it contains some detail may not be covered. This article is not intended to provide the most historically accurate picture of China’s dynastic eras, or all aspects of Chinese schools of thought, but to trace how embedded discourses and images of the futures have shifted and what effects these tensions from the past might have on current discourses.

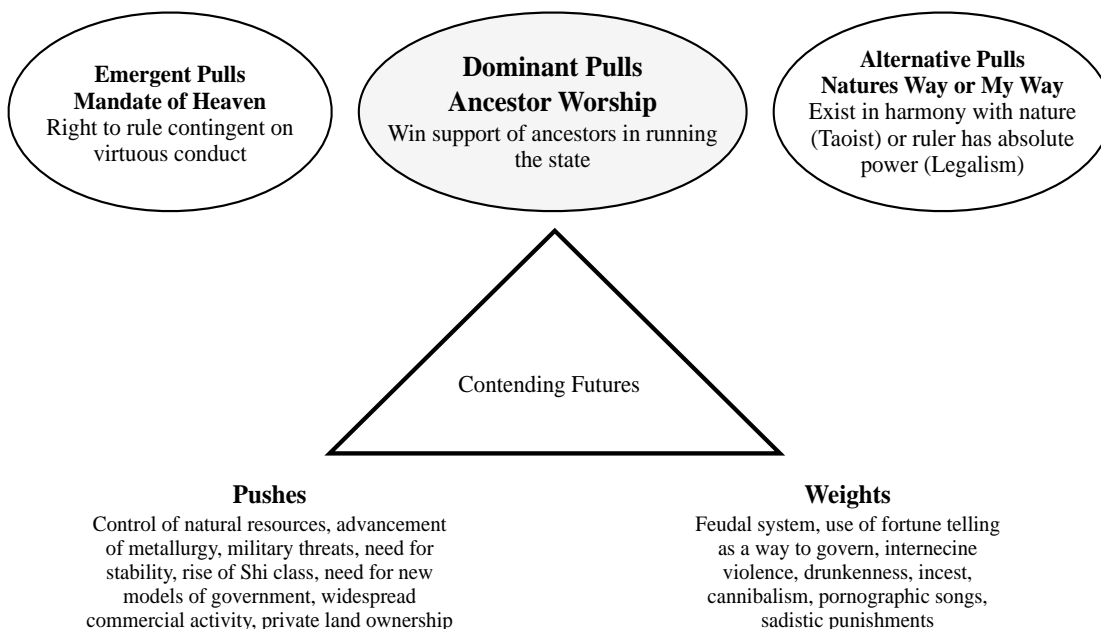
The futures triangle methodology developed by Inayatullah [4] is used to map the competing visions (images) or pulls of the future and consider which are dominant, emergent or alternative in changing the visions of Chinese civilisational futures, as well as the divers and weights to these images. According to Daffara competing visions of the future are part of the dialectical forces that motivate individual and social action for change and progression [6]. The aim is to map which images have been victorious in affecting the present [4]. The “pull” or “visions of change” is where the dominant, emergent and alternative attractors can be identified. The “push” of the future describes the drivers and mechanisms of change – usually identified through economic, social and political factors, and the “weights” of the past are those deep structures that create barriers to change. The dominant vision in each era is the one most commonly used to guide the future and regarded as the most probable. The emergent

images are those which challenge the dominant vision, and which may have the potential to affect the most change – they also have the ability to become the contending vision, by being the preferred image of the future. Alternative visions can be useful in the disturbance of power relations; little immediate change may result, but different viewpoints are offered which may be influential [6]. Taken together, these forces provide a way to trace how particular images have become capable of affecting the present and influencing the future. It is important that the future be allowed to be seen as dynamic, created through a number of interacting processes, and not just by one element alone [4]. How was the future spoken about, who ‘owned’ the images of the future, why did these change over time and what can they tell us about current ‘truths’ about the future directions of China?

2.1 China Futures from the Ancient Era

The key visions of China futures from the ancient era are the dominant Ancestor Worship, emergent Mandate of Heaven and the alternative Taoism and Legalism.

Figure 1: Futures triangle of Ancient Era



2.2 Ancient Era Pulls of the Future

2.2.1 Dominant: Ancestor Worship

Ancestor worship is considered to have been the dominant view of the ancient era because it embodies the foundational concepts of Chinese political and social thinking. During the Shang dynasty (1766–1045 BCE), associations were made between the transformation of a newly deceased person into a living ancestor or ancestress and the economic, social, and political beliefs of lineage, marriage ties, proper ritual, and status relations between the rulers and the ruled. This thinking, although later questioned, continued to influence later thinkers, including Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Han Fei [7].

The primary understanding of humans' relationship to the concept of the future came through the use of oracle bones. This was a kind of necromancy where queries about the future would be recorded on ox scapulae or turtle shells, which were then burned in a fire. The resulting patterns of cracking were taken as signs from the ancestors to determine the course of the future. The future could be 'fixed' by drilling holes into the bones to ensure they cracked in particular ways. The oracle bones reveal a time of superstition, saturated with unpredictable and unruly spiritual powers. The Shang believed that when people died their spirits lived on in the afterworld and were able to influence the fortunes of the living. These were not just any ancestors, they were a hierarchy of royal ancestral and other Powers that were capable of influencing most aspects of Shang life, in positive and negative ways [7]. The use of oracle bones was the exclusive privilege of royalty; the practice provided a source of legitimising power and a position of unassailable authority through the seeming control over the unknown. The practice held a fundamental role in state decision-making, including in the selection of auspicious moments for action. The king and his diviners used this restricted knowledge to support the existing social hierarchy, which was established and maintained on the basis of other sources of power, such as military force. In this way the 'church', the state, society and culture were integrated [7, 8, 9].

In the latter part of the Shang dynasty, interpreting the future was opened to everyone through the first version of the *I Ching* (the Book of Changes) composed by King Wen (1152-1056

BCE). The *I Ching* is considered first among the five “Great Classics”.⁸ In it is contained a system designed to predict the future by using fundamental truths, based on *yin* and *yang*, hexagrams and trigrams, which would suggest how a person should act to ensure the best outcomes. These principles apply to all impartially – kings and peasants alike: the notion that the interplay of *yin* and *yang* are representative of the entire celestial phenomenon in a continual process of change [10] is illustrated by the symbol called *Tai-Chi*. The *Tai-Chi* interlocks the dark *yin* (female) archetype of cold, death and the earth, and the light *yang* (male) archetype of warmth, productivity and life. *Yin* and *yang* are in a rotational symmetry and continuous cyclical movement. Each contains the seed of its extreme; when the *yin* attains its maximum, it gives way to the *yang*, returning to its beginning. Change is endemic. The concept of a symbiotic dialectical relationship between change and celestial time, man and nature and its use in Chinese philosophy is foundational to the “pull” of future images. Confucianism and Taoism have their common roots here, finding much of their inspiration in their interpretations of the *I Ching*.

2.2.2 Emergent: Mandate of Heaven

During the Zhou dynasty (1045–256 BCE), the dominance of the supernatural powers of the ancestors was challenged by an extended period of intellectual debate and the development of new philosophies known as the “Hundred Schools of Thought”. Split into two distinct periods, the Western Zhou (1045–770 BCE) is considered to be the embodiment of just and virtuous rule and the Eastern Zhou (770–250 BCE) to be the birth era of Chinese philosophy, most notably through the philosophers Confucius, Mencius and Lao Tzu [11].

The Duke of Zhou⁹ is credited with the concept of the Mandate of Heaven (*Tianming*), although it is also considered to be a remnant of older ancestor worship practices in which a king’s ability to connect with the spirits of deceased ancestors, *Shang Ti*, enforced his claim to authority [12]. The *Tianming* was a moral concept under which divine power would deem one king or group fit to rule, thus giving both rule and conquest theistic justification [13]. According to the *Shu Jing* (the Book of History), *Tianming* is one of three sources of political authority, the other two being the people’s good will and the ruler’s virtue [14]. The

⁸ The other four works are the *Li Ji* (the Book of Rites), the *Shu Jing* (the Book of History), the *Shi Jing* (the Book of Odes/Songs), and the *Chunqui* (the Spring and Autumn Annals).

⁹ The son of King Wen and brother of King Wu, founder of the Zhou Dynasty.

mythology of the Duke of Zhou was venerated by later Confucians who saw this period as a “Golden Age” that should serve as the exemplar for all subsequent dynasties. So influential was this cyclical change theory, of ascending and declining imperial rule at Heaven’s behest, that the early Zhou period has served as the guiding paradigm for governmental, intellectual and social developments throughout China’s history [15]. According to some later scholars, the explanation may have been more prosaic; in that reading, the Zhou won Heaven’s approval simply by not being as degenerate as the Shang – drunkenness, incest, cannibalism, pornographic songs and sadistic punishments all being attributed to the last Shang king and all creating the weights to their continuing rule [11].

During the Spring and Autumn Period of the Eastern Zhou, Confucius (551–479 BCE) is credited with editing the “Spring and Autumn Annals” (*Chunqiu*) that chronicle the first two centuries of the Eastern Zhou dynasty. Although there is some debate about whether or not Confucius himself actually wrote any of the works attributed to him, his thinking in shaping the past, present and future of China cannot be underestimated. In these writings, Confucius reaches back to mythologise the earlier Zhou in order to provide a moral framework of how people ought to live, and die [16, loc149]. Confucius’s view of history and the future was twofold. First, he repudiated the shamans, who were influential transmitters of religious practice into political action. Confucius’s own mother had been a shaman and so he knew at first hand the nature and power of the shaman class. When Confucius said, “I will not speak of strange happenings, the use of force, disorder or the spirits,” he was undermining the power of the shaman’s words [17, p231].

Second, to support his repudiation of the shamans, Confucius provided a moral framework for the Mandate of Heaven (or claim to power over the state of the world) through “five virtues” and “five relationships” rather than through deceased ancestors alone. His code was concerned with the five virtues of *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (propriety), *zhi* (wisdom) and *xin* (faithfulness), coupled with the five hierarchical relationships; between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother and elder and younger friend. This emphasis on filial piety, and its links with ancestor worship through ritual sacrifice, is a cornerstone of Confucian thinking. Sacrifice was a vital component of *li* for the control of social conduct and in ‘taming the masses’. Although it was secularized and used as a means to integrate the kinship group, the supernatural element of fear of

punishments if proper ritual was not observed allowed Confucius's system to coexist with, and even to co-opt, earlier ancestor worship, Taoism and Buddhism [18, p278].

The Confucian system provided a vision that an ideal society could exist in the future. It was a linear, progressive evolution in three stages with a utopian end state, much like the linear model used later in Marxism. The first stage is one of Disorder, a time of continuous warfare between nations. The second stage is that of Small Tranquillity, characterised by monarchical government, filial piety, selfishness, insecurity and special privileges (nepotism over competency), and official corruption. The five social relationships and five virtues belong only to this time, as does the example of 'six superior men' providing good government. The third and final stage, the Great Similarity, is marked by society and individuals reaching their highest point. This is the 'end of history', a golden age of the future where "all under heaven [belongs] to all" and "the whole world becomes a republic; they elect men of talent, virtue and ability; they talk about sincere agreement and cultivate universal peace" [19, p19]. In this time, four of the five hierarchical relationships no longer exist; the only one that remains is friendship. The distinction of the five virtues is gone and everyone is as good as everyone else [20, loc347]. For Confucius it was a utopian end stage that had never existed before, although it appears, now, to have many principles in common with liberal democracy.¹⁰

Confucian teachings became the preferred ideology partly because of their emphasis on the stability of the natural social hierarchy, an emphasis designed to harmonise relations regulated by sumptuary laws that benefited those of the highest social status [18]. Confucius believed that men, not spirits, could solve the problems of society and government. The *Li Ji* (the Book of Rites) contains a one thousand page moral code about what one must and must not do to contribute to an orderly state. Unlike the *I Ching*, these rules did not apply to the lowest level of society, as Confucius held that such people could not appreciate them and must therefore be ruled by law, a concept taken up by Han Fei (280–233 BCE), a student of Confucian thought who later established the anti-traditionalist philosophy of Legalism [21, p184].

The broad scope of Confucianism was backward-looking, to the mythologised time of the early Zhou, offering no escape from this worldview, no transcendence to the future, only a transmission of power based on man made moral codes and self-discipline, with the ancient

¹⁰ Suspicion of concentrated power, desire for order and cooperation, politics as the art of compromise, and individual rights.

“Five Classics” as the model for proper conduct. The future is assured only if all people, led by their rulers and bureaucrats, live by the highest ethical standards, as established in the Zhou dynasty; it is a future based on some mythological utopian time, materialised as Natural Law by later Confucian scholars [22, p3]. For example, Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BCE), the founder of imperial Confucianism, articulates the importance of the Confucian concept of history, “he who is in doubt about the present, let him examine ancient times. He who does not understand the future, let him look to the past” [23, p136].

2.2.3 Alternative: Nature’s Way (Taoism) or My Way (Legalism)

Taoism

Taoism challenged Confucian patterns and choices for social and political stability. Whereas Confucianism is concerned with social organisation, law and the pursuit of knowledge, Taoism is concerned with returning to the simplicity of man’s natural relationship with the recurring cycles of life called “the Way”, or *Tao*. Lao Tzu is credited with writing the *Tao Te Ching*, the canon text of Taoism, and is both a historical and mythological figure. He may have been an older contemporary of Confucius, he may have lived anywhere between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, or he may be completely mythical, and the work attributed to him written by a number of authors. Taoism itself is said to be even older than Lao Tzu and was already an integral part of Chinese culture by the time the *Tao Te Ching* was written. The text of the *Tao Te Ching* – and a companion book, *Zhuangzi* – is thought to be, in part, a reaction against the teachings of Confucius, whom the book describes as a “man with brambles for brains” [11, p68]. Whereas Confucianism became a state-sanctioned orthodoxy of the ruling class, Taoism was the worldview of the peasants and artisans and was often an impulse for rebellion [21, p175].

Like Confucianism, Lao Tzu’s philosophy appeals to a romanticised past of innocence, security and peace and laments government corruption, greed and ambition. Whereas Confucius appeals to the ancestors to guide the functions of the individual and society, Lao Tzu reaches even further back, to time immemorial, for guidance on the ultimate reality, to the *Tao* (the Way), the source of all things in the world. The essential concepts in the *Tao Te Ching* are the ideas of non-duality (the dichotomy that the void is not matter and matter is not the void), *yin–yang*, perpetual change, the five elements of change (wood, fire, earth, metal

and water), and non-action (*wu wei*) [24, p250]. If people, including the rulers, act in ways contrary to these concepts the natural harmony is upset and humans forsake their proper place in the universe. This ontology made Taoist philosophy fundamentally different from Confucianism in a number of ways: (1) a ruler's powers were not from Heaven's Mandate but were conferred by one of the five elements of change; (2) emperors were to set an example and were encouraged to 'do nothing' (*wu wei*) – an early form of limited government and a sort of anti-materialist return to the simplicity of living in harmony with the universe; (3) rejection of the pursuit of formal knowledge, and; (4) the mystic female, rather than the Confucian father figure, as the ultimate source of all things [25]. This was a challenge to conventional thinking on the nature of the individual's relationship with society, including with government.

For Taoists the future is not a linear thing with a systemic solution, it is a perpetually changing dialectical paradox where any contradiction must exist in a holistic construct; one only needs to discover the pattern from nature. The source of all things is not some mighty, distant ancestor or some golden realm of a utopian age, but a nebulous, nameless, common thing [26]. In order to fulfil one's virtue and create a good society, one must disestablish or retract from the self. To do otherwise is a "calamity" [26, p37].

Legalism

Towards the end of the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE), the rise of the Qin state over the Zhou caused great turmoil. China was struggling to achieve unity and the states which would eventually constitute the unified country had grown to a size similar to today's European nations. Warfare was ferocious – some states demanded the total mobilisation of all men over the age of fifteen, and armies of over half a million men were common [27]. At this time, Han Fei developed the doctrine of Legalism that would go on to have a major impact on the direction of Chinese history. Legalism is credited with helping the Qin establish a military and political philosophy with which to annihilate their rivals, leaving the legacy of a unified and centralised state. The philosophy of Legalism differed from orthodox Confucianism in a number of ways. Most importantly, the sole purpose of Legalism was to ensure that the ruler's authority was uncontested and that each citizen was loyal to the ruler rather than to their clan – the people were to obey and serve the government only [28]. Legalism is largely amoral: the government and the ruler have absolute power that need not be justified ethically, or by some

esoteric Mandate of Heaven. It does not look to the past or to nature for solutions to present problems. The survival of the state was the paramount concern, and in this respect Legalism is related to modern Realist international relations thinking. Legalism ensured that the Qin state was also a police state. It brought order to an unruly transition and standardised government control through harsh punishments and retribution. Tellingly, five groups were vilified for contributing nothing to the state and were to be wiped out: wandering orators, private swordsmen, draft dodgers, merchants and, at the head of the list, Confucians [29].

Shi Huang (259–210 BCE), the so called “First Emperor” of China (he of the Terracotta Warriors) used his absolute power to create important drivers for further change. He standardised weights, measures and currency, built a national canal and roadway system, as well as fortifications which were later to become the Great Wall of China, he reformed the writing system, and, most controversially, burnt all texts (along with a few scholars) in the imperial library which were not on the subjects of divination, medicine, forestry and agriculture [30]. Despite or perhaps *because* of his ruthless nature, the Emperor Shi Huang relied on soothsayers and shamans and was seeking elixirs of immortality when he died [31, loc3317]. Sima Qian later said of the First Emperor that “[he was] ‘greedy and short-sighted’, dismissive of advice and precedent, ignorant of the masses and ‘led the whole world in violence and cruelty’, his laws were harsh and his conduct deceitful – all of which was not conducive to a just and permanent empire” [11, p90].

Legalism made sure that people were not allowed to decide their own future: it was determined for them by the emperor. There were no transformative or transcendental choices to be made about the future, no ‘stages of history’ and no way to bring about a new future. Only the ruler could determine the future, all others must follow for fear of retribution.

2.3 Conclusion: Ancient Era

From these contesting visions of the future it can be seen that the major turning points in the period of China’s antiquity accompanied a need for stability after major social and political upheaval. Ancestor worship, where power was conferred through unpredictable and unruly spirits, as the dominant pull of the future was probably not a suitable governing tool for a country as large and complex as China. Despite this, the folk beliefs and practices developed at this time continue to serve as the foundational code for Chinese civilisation. Confucius

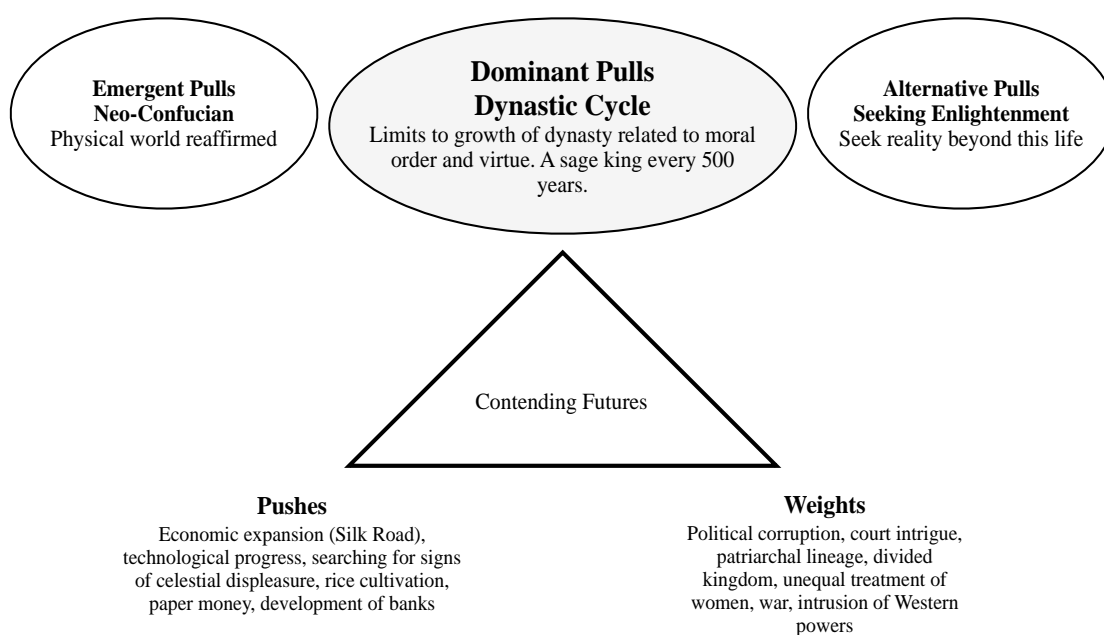
provided a moral framework and offered stages of history; a formula for progress after great social turmoil. His philosophy of bureaucratic stability did offer a way to transform and improve the morality of society and to provide good governance through self-improvement and strict observance of ancient rites. As long as people stayed the course, society would ‘progress’ back to a mythical ‘golden age’. Lao Tzu’s philosophy, born in another time of unrest, saw a return to the fatalism inherent in cycles; the world was seen as being in continuous flow and change and only through the individual existing in harmony with nature could balance be restored. Legalism, too, was only able to offer the kind of stability inherent in a police state, but was also unable to offer a compelling image of the future.

Episteme 1—Ancient Era

| Who | Shape of future | Main Metaphor | Unit or stages |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| Fu Shi | Cyclical | Cosmic <i>yin-yang</i> | Waxing and waning of universe |
| Shang dynasty | None | Divination | Ancestors determine |
| Confucianism | Linear | Mandate of Heaven | Disorder, small tranquillity, great similarity |
| Taoism | Cyclical | Nature | Integrate heaven, earth, and mankind |
| Legalism | Linear | Rewards and punishments | Ruler determines |

3.1 China Futures from the Imperial Era (221 BCE–1911 CE)

The key visions of China’s futures from the imperial era are the dominant Dynastic cycle, alternative Buddhist and emergent Neo-Confucian.

Figure 2: Futures triangle of Imperial Era

3.2 Imperial Era Pulls of the Future

3.2.1 Dominant: Dynastic cycles

Confucians were persecuted during the short-lived Qin dynasty (221–202 BCE). Emperor Shi Huang (259–210 BCE), the ‘First Emperor’, did not attribute his rise to power to the Mandate of Heaven, but rather to the metaphysical ‘power of water’, one of the five elements¹¹ used by *yin–yang* theorists to explain historical changes. The Han (202 BCE–220 CE) also used this theory to credit their defeat of the Qin to the earth element overcoming the Qin’s water element. The Han dynasty saw a dynamic and growing empire with the economic drivers of nearly 60 million people trading silk, wool, amber, wine, gold coins and bullion with the Romans via the Silk Road, and the security of the northern borders requiring 100,000 cavalry and up to a half a million foot soldiers in any one campaign [27, 30]. Imperial civil service examinations (based on the “Five Classics” associated with the Confucian school) were established in 136 BCE for all who wished to obtain official positions in the Han government.

The essence of human history was now seen through celestial portents of change rather than through following strict codes of behaviour. In this period, the Grand Historian and

¹¹ Wood, water, metal, fire, earth. Wood floated on water, metal felled wood, fire melted metal, water quenched fire and so on.

Astrologer Sima Qian (145–90 BCE) began writing a record of the knowable past, the *Shiji* (the “Record of the Grand Historian”), forming his theory of change which would be called the Dynastic Cycle. It is important to note that Sima Qian was the imperial astrologer and in that role was expected to have a deep understanding of the celestial phenomena that validated the dynasty’s power [32]. Influencing his beliefs were Zou Yan (305–240 BCE) a prominent *yin-yang* thinker, and Confucius. Sima Qian believed, like Confucius, that there were profound and unchanging moral patterns underlying human history, but he found the idea of a return to some utopian golden age of the past laughable. He believed that people could learn from the history of the present period, asking in the *Shiji*: “why must one only learn from ancient times? ... Take for your model the kings of later ages, for they are near to us and the forms of their customs are like ours” [23, p153].

Sima Qian was able to combine elements of these two influential schools of thought, connecting religious and astronomical time, where all creation was in a constant process of growth and decay, waxing and waning, rising and falling, with a moral theory of change in line with Confucian principles [23]. Sima Qian’s view of the future began with a dynasty founded by a sage king of virtue and wisdom. Each dynasty had a dominant virtue – good faith for the Hsia, for the Shang virtue and for the Zhou refinement – and for each dynasty this virtue eventually turned into a fault – good faith into parochialism, virtue into superstition and refinement into materialism – requiring correction during the next virtuous stage of the cycle [23]. Gradually this dynasty would decline until its last king becomes so tyrannical and degenerate that he is overthrown by the next sage king, who founds the next dynasty. The cause of this decay and transition from the Shang to the Zhou dynasty, for instance, was a deterioration of reverence toward Heaven in favour of the spirits of the ancestors [33].

Sima Qian’s work was more than the usual matter of the succeeding dynasty writing about the failings of the previous one; it was a new kind of historiography, providing a theory of the future through the prism of the gaining and losing of the Mandate of Heaven that had long influenced Chinese thinking. It was said that a true sage king would rise every 500 years when the planets aligned in a preordained pattern of change. This phenomenon was associated with the founding of the Xia in 1953 BCE, the Shang in 1576 BCE, the Zhou dynasty in 1046 BCE, the Han in 206 BCE, in 1524 CE before the fall of the Ming, and so on; the next cosmic alignment will occur in 2040 [33].

In accordance with Sima Qian's cyclical theory, the Taoist-inspired Yellow Turbans (184 CE) revolted against the Han and threw China back into a four hundred year period of anarchy and division. This "Period of Disunity" (220-589 CE), also referred to as China's Dark Ages, saw a series of warring factions struggle for control of China. The time was chaotic, there was no universal imperial order to bring a sense of stability, and a lack of tranquillity or certainty about the future saw the rise of Buddhism and Taoism as attractive and legitimate alternatives from within which to locate the future.

3.2.2 Alternative: Seeking Enlightenment (Buddhism)

During the breakup of the Han dynasty the country was split into three states: the Wei, the Wu and the Shu. Prolonged war between these Three Kingdoms (220-265/280 CE) was the norm. Unification did not occur again until the Sui Dynasty (589-618 CE). Throughout this time the peasants were afflicted with hunger and persistent calamity; they had left their fields and were roaming the land. Banditry was rife, with an estimated one hundred times more displaced persons than working farmers in the area around Luoyang, the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty [34].

Buddhism provided an alternative pull of the future because, as Wright [34, p11] asserts, Confucianism was "inapplicable [to] or incapable" of dealing with the new circumstances because it was based on orderly and predictable sets of behaviours. Initially, religious Taoism was taken up to fill the void felt by the masses, but this revival offered no way to restore society. The power vacuum had brought in non-Chinese – mostly from central Asia – to settle in the northwest. It is known that in Luoyang these foreign people, envoys, merchant, refugees and hostages were practicing the Buddhist faith. By 65 CE a Buddhist community of monks and Chinese laymen had been established at the court of Liu Ying of Chu at Pengcheng [35].

Early Buddhism (during the first and second centuries CE) was associated with the cult of Huang-Lao,¹² the practice of which was thought to lead to immortality [36, 35]. It was a distinctly urban phenomenon and, like Confucianism, it was at first restricted to a cultured upper class of monks with a literary education and to the governing class. But, as the

¹² Huang-Lao is a hybrid name, with Huang referring to Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor, and Lao referring to Lao Tzu, the semi-mythical founder of Taoism.

Buddhist hierarchy grew, and the monasteries became centres of learning and culture, its influence began to spread to the lower classes, offering a new way to break through the rigid class boundaries of medieval Chinese society [35]. Most Chinese did not embrace the more monastic elements of Theravada Buddhism. Theravada's prescription that followers must renounce the world, practice celibacy and believe in reincarnation was completely at odds with the Confucian familial duty, and thus was only achievable by nuns and monks [11]. Instead Mahayana Buddhism (The Great Vehicle) took hold, through which followers could achieve salvation in their lifetime by focusing on all individuals reaching enlightenment collectively, not just individually as in Theravada Buddhism [35]. Huiyuan (336–416) established the Pure Land sect, teaching at Mount Lushan where participants helped each other into Paradise, allowing them to stay with their families and thus fully popularizing Buddhism.

Buddhist beliefs opposed fatalistic and particularistic folk and Taoist traditions with a message that was universalist, readily accessible to illiterate and semi-literate herdsmen and peasants, and offering a release from suffering regardless of caste, wealth, gender, education or race, not just formulas for a good, orderly society [11, p208]. Buddhism brought profound changes to Chinese society, as it recognized the individual as separate from the family or the clan, in opposition to Confucian thinking. Every individual had a place in the great wheel of dharma, and this made it possible to transcend the suffering of this life either through rebirth or reaching some other dimension of reality. Traditional Chinese notions of time and space tend to be expressed in finite life spans, eras or generations [34]; for Buddhists, time is a mystery. It was not until Chinese Chan (Zen) Buddhism that the argument that enlightenment exists in the here and now was fully developed. According to Chan, nirvana is within ordinary existence, echoing Confucian tradition. In Chan, all time is sacred time, because to fully experience the present moment is to experience enlightenment. Another change was the idea of spiritual debt and pious activity toward the welfare of living creatures as a way to reduce evil karma from past lives and to ensure that the next life was provided for [34]. In Buddhism, the future was within one's own awakening.

The early Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) was the Golden Age of Chinese Buddhism, but, like all dynasties before it, the Tang leadership became corrupt, irresponsible and degenerate. Warlordism returned. Attacks on Buddhism, on the basis that it was foreign, that it engaged in wasteful expenditures on temples and ceremonies and that it protected a lazy and idle clergy

who could be better used in the fields, began to find support [34]. Emperor Wu Zong, who may have been a Taoist fanatic, decided to dissolve the monasteries, confiscate their land, buildings, gold, silver and copper and put all those associated with maintaining these vast estates back into the tax and labour pool. An imperial edict of 845 CE saw to the forcible removal of 260,500 nuns and monks from their temples, of which 4,600 were destroyed [11]. Buddhism never fully recovered its position; as with others before it, the law of constant changes once again marked a rise and eventual fall.

3.2.3 Emergent: Neo-Confucian

The term “Neo-Confucianism” is often used to refer to the evolution in political, social and economic thought that began in the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE) and ended with the collapse of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 CE). It is a blending and synthesizing of Confucian concern for political principles and the metaphysics of man’s relationship with society with the Buddhist and Taoist concern for enlightenment and meditation. The recasting of Confucianism came about as a response to the political and social changes of a growing empire that neither Buddhism, with its emphasis on withdrawal from society, nor Confucianism, with its emphasis on centralized government and powerful rulers, had been able to cope with. The Song dynasty in the eleventh and twelfth centuries reached a level of development not equalled in Europe until the eighteenth [37]. It is estimated that the population of the country at the end of the eleventh century had grown to about 100 million people, and this growth was accompanied by a number of technological advances in agriculture, textiles, lacquer, porcelain, printing, maritime trade, and weaponry. In particular, improvements in rice cultivation, leading to greater yields, enabled the study of Confucian thinking, as this was considered a noble profession. A market economy flourished, with paper money being issued for the first time in the world and a new type of bank called a “deposit shop” being created to facilitate commercial transactions. A new social class, noted for its literary excellence, social consciousness, and political participation, was formed along with the reimplementation of the Confucian examination system (1315 CE).

Special note needs to be taken of the transformation of the role of women during this time. Before the Neo-Confucian movement, women had a high degree of autonomy, including the right to divorce, remarry and to receive an education. Song philosophers changed this through new interpretations of *yin-yang* theory and abstruse philosophical abstractions from

Confucian doctrine which held that women were subordinate to men. The most influential writers to promote this kind of misogyny included Zhang Zai (1020–1077 CE) who, through his idea that women and men could not be reconciled with each other, paved the way for segregation – cloistering women “within the confines of the inner household ... and preventing them from developing separate lives from their husbands” [38, p596]. Cheng Yi (1033–1107 CE) believed that a wife should not only be obedient to her husband, but if he were to die that she should starve herself to death to protect her honour. Zhu Xi (1130–1200 CE) went even further, saying that after the age of ten, girls should not even go outside [38]. Women had to cover their faces in public and were not allowed financial independence. Foot-binding was introduced, a practice which was to last nearly a thousand years, ensuring women went nowhere [11]. The re-emergence of rigid Confucian patriarchy and notions of submission, combined with physical disfigurement, completely shut down any visions of the future that women might have been able to contribute to society.

According to Wood [37], Neo-Confucianism has long been burdened with the charge that it laid the foundations for the growth of autocracy in China. The philosophers of the early Song dynasty promoted a policy of “revering the emperor and expelling the barbarian”: the reverence this imposed was unconditional and the obedience to the ruler it required was absolute, hindering the growth of liberal democratic values as compared to the situation in the West. In the Analects of Confucius (ca 500 BCE), order in the state was linked to a hierarchical view of obedience within the family. Taoists and Buddhists challenged this view, believing that order would be maintained not through a hierarchical social structure but through living in harmony with nature. The new Confucians were bitterly opposed to the otherworldliness and antisocial values associated with Buddhism and believed their mission was to purify Chinese thought by removing what they considered to be “foreign rubbish”. Still, they needed to contend with its teleological arguments [39]. Explaining the relationship between spiritual and intellectual forces was central to Neo-Confucian traditions, especially reconciling the duty of obedience to the ruler with the duty of the ruler to obey the moral laws of the cosmos [37].

The traditional, cyclical view of history was considered to be wrong. History for Neo-Confucians was divided into three periods: first came antiquity, when the first three sage kings and their dynastic empires came forward, the Way (*Tao*) was put into practice in government, and correct learning was spread and promoted. Second was the period in which

the Way was lost; it was neither practiced nor understood by government officials or scholars, as happened under the great centralised bureaucracies of the Han and Tang dynasties. Third was the new age when the Way was once again understood by scholars, but not practiced in government. When scholars lacked political power it represented a break in time, the point at which moral men, not government, began to take responsibility for society [40]. For Neo-Confucians, antiquity was an ideal period, the second stage one of decline – but there was no promise of salvation in the future; its fate was in the hands of the scholars. Neo-Confucians had a philosophical rather than transcendental concept, one that made a universal claim about reality. If society could operate according to the right principles, culture could change, removing any reason for loyalty to an ancient past [40].

The Confucianism of Chinese society continued until the fall of the Qing (Manchu) dynasty in 1911 CE. Confucianism rose from being an emergent viewpoint with a myriad of different schools of thought to become state orthodoxy, transforming itself into a mechanism of political control. The Qing set themselves up as the exemplars of Confucian truth and so would not tolerate the freedom of scholars to interpret any other truths, imposing harsh measures such as literary inquisitions [27]. Ultimately, the Confucian notion of time and history, always looking to the past to justify the present and expecting society to progress in a linear fashion, clashed with Western liberal values, science, technology, medicine and education. Confucianism was not sustainable and a number of new spiritual, cultural and intellectual movements rose to fill the void.

3.3 Conclusion: Imperial Era

The alternating periods of unity and disunity in the Imperial Era produced compelling visions and grand theories of the future. Sima Qian provided a theory of cyclical change through his perspective on Dynastic Cycles. Incentives still remained for enlightened leadership. Buddhism, like Taoism, changed the teleological landscape and focused on the individual's ability to transcend nature, not society, and for a time China was known as the land of Buddha, not the land of Confucius. In times of crisis, however, the need for solutions to the mundane problems of political and social organisation saw Neo-Confucianism challenge Buddhism and concepts of dynastic cycles in its attempt to provide the path to the future.

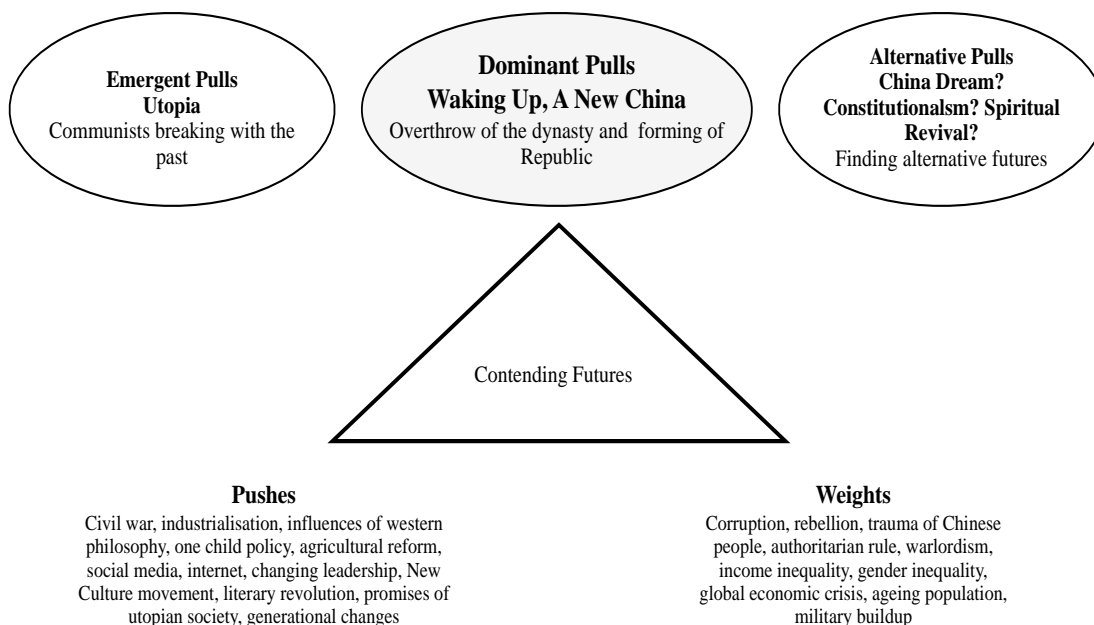
Episteme 2—Imperial Era

| Who | Shape of future | Main Metaphor | Unit or stages |
|----------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| Sima Qian | Cyclical | Dynastic Cycle | Dynasty: sage king—tyrant—sage king |
| Buddhism | No time | Nirvana | Enlightenment can be achieved here and now |
| Neo-Confucian | Linear | Syncretism of right principles and mind and heart | Antiquity—Tao lost—Tao found by scholars |

4.1 Futures of China from the Modern Era (1911 to the present)

The key visions of China futures from the modern era are the dominant New China, emergent Communist Utopia and the alternatives of China Dream, Constitutionalism and Spiritual Revival.

Figure 3: Futures triangle of Modern Era



4.2 Modern Era Pulls of the Future

4.2.1 Dominant: Waking up to a “New China”

The downfall of the Qing dynasty and its eventual replacement by another political, economic and social system necessitated an intellectual mission to replace the old culture of Confucian ethics with that of ‘modernity’, to be used as a model for China’s future. It was a time of great intellectual debate, similar to the earlier Hundred Schools of Thought, and it continues to this day. This ‘modernisation’, however, did not come without a large amount of ‘baggage’ associated with Western imperialism and perceptions of cultural defeat and loss of identity [41]. The long-standing Confucian order of government by virtue and ritual did not accord with Western concepts of equally sovereign nations [8]. The Chinese did not yet understand the need or desire of the capitalist system of the Europeans, Americans and Japanese to obtain a foothold in China for territorial expansion and commercial investments, creating the conditions for a major historical rupture. China was seen in Europe as a decaying corpse with no future. For this to change, China would need to ‘wake up’ [19, p20].

The Hundred Days of Reform, in 1898, made an attempt at the task. Reform-minded Chinese intellectuals wanted to reform the entire state apparatus, including constitutional reform from the top down. The Emperor issued more than 200 edicts, imperial rescripts and decrees meant to change every imaginable aspect of Chinese society – industry, education, commerce government administration and military – to transform China into a modern nation [27, p244]. This ended in failure [11]. In 1905, the Confucian-based civil service examination system was abolished and the need for its teachings to legitimise rule collapsed. The long-standing power relationship between the rulers and the governed had changed, but without a new philosophy to lead China and the Chinese people into the future.

Elite students were now encouraged to go abroad to study Western legal and government institutions as models for modernisation, bringing back to China this “new” learning. The New Culture movement, from about 1915 to 1923, including the 1919 May Fourth demonstrations, is considered to be a watershed in China’s break with Confucian values. It saw little of the past that was worth preserving; its proponents wanted a total annihilation of all the values, traditions and customs of the past and their replacement by a new culture based on individualism, liberation for women and children and western science [42]. The attack on

Confucianism because it was thought to have no place in the modern age was led by Chen Duxiu, one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921 [43, 30].

Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the first president and founding father of the Republic of China, was a tireless campaigner for revolution and had a vision to “overthrow the Manchus, restore China to the Chinese and establish a Republican form of government” [8, p148]. His political party, the Kuomintang (KMT) was considered to be the party of the educated elite and struggled to find support with the masses [27]. Sun believed that although imperial dynasties had changed over the last 2,000 years, the substance of government had not. The dynastic cycle of division, disorder, unification and despotism should be replaced, he thought, with a federal republic in which people could fulfil their dreams, exercise their rights and themselves become leaders of the country, similar to Confucius’ Great Similarity [42]. To these ends Sun had an ideology, which he termed the “Three Principles of the People,” that combined aspects of nationalism, democracy and socialism. According to Jonathan Spence, Sun believed that a strong central government should counter the forces of capitalism in industry and of powerful landlords in the countryside. Through a “carefully calibrated period of “tutelage,” the Chinese people would be introduced to the principles and practices of representative government, until finally the tutelage would end and China could emerge as a strong, full-fledged democracy” [44].

National elections were held in China in the winter of 1912–1913, with about five per cent of the population eligible to vote. Despite China undergoing a political and social revolution there was no strong leader to hold the country together during this time of uncertainty: Song Jiaoren, the first Prime Minister, was assassinated in 1912; Sun died before his utopian vision of peace and order could be realised; Yuan Shi-kai, a warlord who betrayed the revolution and tried to establish a new dynasty, died in 1916; and Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Kuomintang after Sun’s death, could not unify the country. From 1916 to 1927 the country fell into the period of chaos and disorder that had consistently followed the fall of dynasties throughout China’s history. Warlordism had returned. The Kuomintang and their leader, Chiang Kai-shek, were able to reunite the country between 1928 and 1937, but their vision was muddled and they were not able to offer the peace and security the country desperately needed, either before or after the Japanese invaded in 1937. The KMT focused on urban renewal at the expense of the rural population. The rudiments of national administration were

set up (ministries for the executive, legislative, judicial, civil service and auditing branches) but the government lacked the principles or idealism to embed promised improvements for the whole country. Improvements were made to transport and communications between provinces, education and control of finances, but the KMT utterly failed to carry out social and economic reforms to reduce the misery of the peasants, who were still required to pay 60% of their earnings as tax, leading Chiang Kai-shek to declare in 1932 that, “the Chinese revolution has failed” [45, 8, p221].

In 1946 the Political Consultative Conference was held in Chongqing with 38 members drawn from the KMT, CCP, Democratic League, Youth Party and independents agreeing to a constitutional and democratic government with a cabinet, executive and legislative chambers, division of powers between provincial and federal government and government control over the military [45, p626]. Unfortunately cooperation between the two main parties – the KMT and CCP – proved to be impossible. The KMT was plagued with problems: factional infighting, corruption, an inability to contain inflation, financial mismanagement, a focus on defeating the CCP over the Japanese, and little regard for social justice issues. In the end the KMT was militarily defeated by the CCP, overwhelming any chance of a move from a highly centralised authoritarian government towards a constitutional democracy. The Kuomintang government was now regarded as the last, bad ruler of a dynasty, having lost any chance of retaining the Mandate of Heaven [8]. The scene was set for Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976) and the CCP to offer a new future for China.

4.2.2 Emergent: A New Utopia (Communism)

The concern of the Communists was always the future of China, but this was not to be through a revitalisation of old ways; the traditions of the past were to be broken down and then reformed. Mao himself said that the past was of little concern; the important thing for Chinese communists was to look toward the future [43]. At its core, Marxism is concerned with the idea of the progression of human history through a number of stages, and that the internal tensions or contradictions of each stage eventually lead to its replacement by the next stage. At this level it sounds similar to the concept of Confucian stages, with a sort of utopian, stateless, classless society free from oppression and scarcity as the final phase. After the CCP came to power, the drivers of this change pushed toward a new China that citizens could be proud of: inflation was controlled, foreign privileges abolished, public works repaired,

literacy reformed, land redistributed and women allowed to freely choose their spouses and to exercise equal rights in divorce, child custody and property. There was no turning back [8].

Mao Tse-tung had a vision of China's future centred on regaining national dignity by building a socialist future, but which fell short of progressing a democratic mechanism of rule. Mao wanted to transform China "from an agricultural into an industrial country and from a new-democratic into a socialist and communist society, can abolish classes and realize the Great Harmony" [46]. The democracy Mao envisioned was defined in a speech delivered in 1940, titled "Politics and Culture of New Democracy", in which he spoke of creating a "people's republic" based on the Three People's Principles espoused by Sun Yat-sen as the first stage of advance towards a socialist and communist society. The "people" in this case were the four recognized classes: workers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeois and national bourgeois who were to enjoy "the rights of freedom of speech, assembly, association and so on". He went on to say, "democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries is the people's democratic dictatorship" making both a democracy for certain people and a dictatorship over others – the landlord class and the bureaucrat-bourgeoisie [46].

Mao's utopian project toward a communist vision was to be realised through the Great Leap Forward (1958–1961), an attempt to economically surpass the Soviet Union and the United States, first by collectivising and then de-collectivising agricultural land. Mao was informed by Kang Youwei's interpretation of the Book of Rights (*Li-Ji*), which argued that only through destroying the family and emancipating women could society eliminate private ownership of land, industry and commerce, to be replaced by public ownership of hospitals, education, maternity wards and old age homes [45, p657]. However, the policy ended in famine and disaster with between 15 and 45 million deaths [47, p.x]. His second project – reorganising the party-state superstructure to transform the economic base, harnessing anti-intellectualism and renewing the spirit of the revolution, known as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) – also had disastrous consequences [48]. Before Mao died in September 1976, the Tangshan earthquake in July of that year, initially reported to have killed 655,000 people (revised down to about 240,000), was thought by some to have presaged his dynasty's end [49].

After the excesses of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, both upheavals in economic and social terms, Deng Xiaoping emerged to take China on a completely new

course, opening up the country's trade relations with the West and lifting millions out of poverty. Economic reforms did not coincide with major political reforms, lest they 'get out of hand' like those in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, where communist governments were being overthrown. Deng Xiaoping ordering tanks to enter Tiananmen Square in 1989 is a notable example of the regime controlling the discourse of change. However, some believe that economic reform and modernisation have succeeded precisely *because* China did not enact accompanying political reform [50]. China's economic reforms, and its integration into the world economy, as well as its increased cultural, educational, social and military links with other nations, all while remaining non-democratic, have not been without critics. Ci believes that the path China has travelled over the last half-century "is the path from utopianism to nihilism—a nihilism that retains all the implications of a profound loss of meaning even as it merges into hedonism" [41, p207]. The future that China was supposed to have come into contact with has not yet happened. Now, with the economic 'rise' of China, questions are arising of broader issues of personal freedoms, democracy, the environment and continued and persistent poverty.

4.2.3 Alternative: China Dream? Constitutionalism? Spiritual Revival?

China is at a crossroads. It has not only transformed, but is still transforming and there are a number of alternative futures and identities that can be realised. There are many challenges, and the drivers and weights of change are multiple. According to *The Economist* [51], China is presiding over the world's largest military build-up, worrying some of its neighbours. Its economy has been slowing, caught up in the global financial crisis. The country is aging; according to a RAND study, the proportion of the population at working age has peaked and started to decline in 2012. The share of the elderly population is beginning to rise; in 2010, 8.6 per cent of the population was 65 or older, by 2025 that figure is expected to be around 14.3 per cent. Economic inequality has seen the term *yizu* ("ant tribe") emerge as a description of a struggling, disillusioned middle class who, although university educated, cannot return to their home towns for lack of jobs, nor settle in big cities because housing prices are out of their reach. The government is pushing ahead with plans to relocate 250 million rural residents by 2025 into newly constructed cities in order to create a new class of urban consumers. Political and economic marginalisation has the potential to increase tensions between the people and the government. The Chinese are becoming increasingly

dissatisfied with the “growth first” model of development and are demanding greater social justice and equity [51].

The China Dream – Strong Military

Whoever ‘owns’ the images of the future holds a vital element of modern state power. There are distinctions between a “China Dream” (an official slogan used by the CCP to realise rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and become the world’s dominant power) and a “Chinese Dream” of the Chinese people where the government abides by the constitutional promise of the rule of law and democracy. Xi Jinping used the phrase “China Dream” several times in his inaugural presidential speech on March 17, 2013 and gave a precise date for its fulfilment: 2049. According to Xi, the China Dream is “to achieve a comprehensively well-off society, to build a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilised, and harmonious modern socialist country and to attain the Chinese dream of the great renaissance of the Chinese nation is to achieve prosperity, revitalize the nation, and bring about the happiness of the people...”[52]. This vision of a better future might, however, have other implications than the realisation of bliss for all. Xi’s “comprehensively well-off society” sounds consistent with Confucian principles, but there is corresponding talk of a “strong-army dream” to make China a major military power which is seen to guarantee the prosperity of the country. Xi, who is also head of the military, reminded the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), in a speech in December 2012, that obeying the Party at *any* time under *any* circumstances was the “soul of a strong army” [53]. Unsurprisingly, Colonel Liu Mingfu, a professor at Beijing’s National Defence University and the author of *China Dream: The Great Power Thinking and Strategic Positioning of China in the Post-American Age* and the soon to be released *Why the People's Liberation Army Can Win*, supports Xi’s vision for China to be the world’s most powerful and dominant country. This overtly militant stance, coupled with some of the recent territorial disputes China has had with Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and challenges by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan over China’s territorial claims in the resource-rich South China Sea, is seen by some as evidence of an emerging Chinese Monroe Doctrine [54]. To fulfil such a dream more funds will be needed for building a blue water navy and to improve the capacity of the People’s Liberation Army to fight and win wars. Clearly in the next ten years of Xi’s presidency the building of aircraft carriers, strategic ballistic missile submarines, stealth fighters, nuclear attack submarines and GPS satellite will change the balance of power in the Pacific. How the leaders of the country manage this

change is crucial for the stability of the region. China could become more hawkish and even establish military bases overseas or the improved military capacity will allow China to participate more fully in international military and humanitarian co-operations [55].

In response to Xi's 'China Dream', millions of users of Weibo, the popular micro-blogging website, have indicated that they do not believe the rhetoric. One user commented on their own unrealized hopes writing, "cleaner air, healthier water, safer food, safer baby formula, on time flights, unimpeded roads, lower gas prices, lower taxes...not a lot, just a little" [56]. Yu Jianrong, a Weibo user with over 1 million followers and a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said: "the 'American Dream' represents the dreams of each American, and it is based on the protection of individual rights; the 'China Dream' represents the dream of the nation, which is based on re-enforcement of the state's power" [56]. For a country that, according to a Freedom House survey, is "unfree", and even on a downward trend "due to increased Communist Party efforts to restrict public discussion of political, legal, and human rights issues, including through the systematic disappearance of dozens of leading social-media activists and lawyers", it remains to be seen how readily this type of dream will be accepted by all the people [57].

The Chinese Dream – Constitutionalism

Xi's vision of a China Dream has a contesting image called Constitutionalism, based on the argument that the Chinese government needs to obey the rule of law, and provide constitutional government, freedom of speech and democracy. According to Zhang Qianfan, a legal scholar at Peking University: "...more than three-quarters (of the Chinese) would associate the Chinese dream with a dream of constitutionalism" [58, p22]. The "Constitutionalism Dream" took on increased importance after the release of Charter 08 on the 60th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 2008, signed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo and 303 intellectuals and dissidents calling for a society based on greater political freedoms and respect for human rights. Charter 08 has a vision of democracy, something that China has been seeking for more than a hundred years, and calls for the "establishment of a free, democratic, and constitutional country" [59].

Following Xi Jinping's speech on the China Dream, the Southern Weekend, an influential newspaper in China, contained an editorial on January 7, 2013 entitled "The Chinese dream, the dream of constitutionalism", calling for the protection of civil rights and for checks on

government authorities. The local propaganda office revised and replaced the article with bland words from recent Xi Jinping speeches, prompting a writers' strike in denunciation of the censorship. The original editorial included the phrases: "Constitutional government is the basis for the entire beautiful dream" and "only when we have established constitutional government, only when the powers of government have been limited and separated, will citizens be able to voice their criticisms of authority with confidence and be able to live in freedom, in accordance with their inner convictions. Only then will we have a free country and a country that is truly strong... The real 'China dream' is a dream for freedom and constitutional government" [60].

The official government discourse, as seen in a recent Red Flag magazine article, attacks greater demands for greater rights and freedoms saying that these "potentially pose a challenge to vested interest in the leadership (of the Party)". In the same article, Yu Zhong, director and professor at the School of Law at Capital University of Economics and Business in Beijing, perhaps hoped to end the discussion by saying "the Chinese Dream is bigger than the Dream of Constitutionalism" [61]. Nevertheless, more people are joining in the conversation. According to research by the Chinese Academy of Governance, the number of protests in China doubled between 2006 and 2010, rising to 180,000 "mass incidents", with most of these concerning corruption, environmental contamination and land grabs [62]. Returning students from Western democratic countries, Taiwan and Japan will not just be returning with degrees, but with exposure to democratic values such as rights and the responsibilities of the individual, transparency, equal opportunity and rule of law. Sina Weibo, the major micro-blogging web site in China, with some 300 million users, allows people to share their discontent with government actions and policies and stimulate action through displays of mass outrage. By allowing people to debate issues, attack corruption and come together in communities of interest, it serves as a platform of training for citizenship. As Minxin Pei reminds us, "roughly 80 countries have made the transition from authoritarian rule to varying forms and degrees of democracy in the past 40 years" [63]. Could China's turn be next?

Spiritual Awakening

Perhaps the most compelling future for China, falling into Dator's classification that "any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous", is a Christian future [64]. In

1949, China had just four million Christians and today the number is estimated to be as high as 130 million, with China home to the world's seventh largest Christian population, mostly comprising followers of Protestant and Catholic faiths [65, 66]. By 2040 the number of Christians is expected to reach 30% of the population [67]. Although Confucianism is still considered to be the primary tradition of Chinese society, the spiritual awakenings of Buddhism and Taoism have played a significant role in disrupting the dominant view in order to meet the demands of society during times of turmoil. Today, Christianity is fulfilling a number of roles, from its theological notions of salvation to its sociological links with modernity, as well as a desire for social and spiritual healing through ritual congregationalism [68]. Yan Xuetong, a noted and influential academic warns, "the Party leaders realise they don't have a dominant ideology they can use to run the country. For them there is no core social value. At this moment, the sole dominant ideology shared by this government and its people is money worship" [49, p261]. As one convert explains, "Our life has become so hectic, there is so much pressure. When my husband left me, I was devastated. But one of my friends took me to one of their gatherings and I realised that someone loves me. I want my daughter to grow up knowing that there is more in life than just money. I want her to care more about other people" [69].

Over the past thirty years, Christianity has adapted to local realities with the fastest-growing number of Christians belonging to unstructured Protestant "house churches" of fewer than 15 members. Once the house churches grow beyond 15 members, they split into new 'churches' in order to avoid becoming a "Three Self" church under the ideological control of the CCP, including restrictions on teaching the second coming of Jesus, opposition to abortion and the denial of Jesus' divinity [70]. Ironically this ensures that new branches of the Church are continuously being created.

In such turbulent times, the rise of Christianity traces back to the instinct for forming self-help associations to provide a kind of emancipation, to push back against an insufficient political and social apparatus. Evangelists are travelling the countryside converting followers. According to one evangelist, "There are still masses of converts everyday in the countryside. It is very encouraging" [71]. Despite suppression of religious groups such as Falun Gong, the CCP is encouraging the growth of Christianity as a means to improve China's socioeconomic landscape. A member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as quoted in Niall Ferguson's book *Civilisation: The West and the Rest* declared that what made the West so

powerful was not superior weapons, political system or economic system “but in the past twenty years, we have realised that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. That is why the West is so powerful” [72]. While the CCP supporting Christianity as tool for growth, it is a strategy with potential for unintended consequences. Struggle for legal status and independence of family churches have become part of the broad rights movement characterized by openness, peace and rationality. Fan Yafeng, a Christian legal scholar and one of the signers of Charter 08, believes that “religious freedom will become a pioneer of Chinese freedoms” [73].

4.4 Conclusion: Modern Era

The fall of the Qing dynasty was a major historical rupture for China. It was no longer thought that the Confucian ethos and moral virtues were enough to build a new cosmopolitan and egalitarian future; the trauma of change produced a need to reform old customs and beliefs. New ideologies were competing for power and knowledge. Sun Yat-sen wanted a complete revolution and offered a future in which China was to become a democratic federal republic. After his death, and the defeat of the Nationalists, transforming China became the concern of Mao Tse-tung and his Communist Party. The epistemological and ontological starting points of this new philosophy were different, but the weights of the past – feudalism, war, inequality and corruption – remained major obstacles to its new utopian vision of the future. After Mao’s death, Deng Xiaoping ushered in an era of change, not just for China but for the world, by opening up the economy and allowing China to compete in an increasingly globalised world. Now China, with the latest change in leadership, is potentially entering another time of change. President Xi offers a China Dream, but it is not clear whose dream he is referring to. For the CCP part of this dream is to make China a strong military power, with the army acting as the guarantor of the party’s rule. Constitutionalism is an alternative national dream of democracy and freedom, primarily driven by the creative minority. During this time of a changing socioeconomic landscape, many in China have been turning to spiritual, especially Christian, traditions to navigate their futures. China has a long tradition of accommodating ‘foreign’ religions and of using their doctrines to challenge the dominant images of the future.

5.1 Conclusion

The genealogy presented in this paper has shown that in times of turmoil and uncertainty, when the rulers become indifferent to the needs of the people, unexpected and dramatic changes occur. The epistemological knowledge developed by Chinese philosophers about social, political and spiritual images of the futures is contingent upon these unpredictable events and offers contesting discourses. Creating futures scenarios for China should not be attempted without understanding the overlapping philosophies and worldviews given by the sages, and why their stories have prevailed. They are part of the living social memory of China and the products of contentious historical forces that continue to operate today.

The China Dream supported by a strong military dream reaches into the civilisational code of the need to create order and stability – especially felt by the rulers. It is important for them to invoke the idea of Chinese civilisation or of the ‘great revival of the Chinese nation’¹³ so that the government can protect the patriarchal/Confucian culture of obedience to the father or ‘benevolent’ absolute ruler. Xi Jinping is well aware that the Mandate of Heaven is still a powerful concept in Chinese thinking, but his “China Dream” vision, if it becomes too focused on achieving military might rather than the improvement of social justice and spiritual conditions, may not be enough to satisfy a restless population. The dream of Constitutionalism is an alternative way of realizing a revival of the Chinese nation that has not been fulfilled in the 100 years after the collapse of the last dynasty. Members of the creative class, including Liu Xiaobo, who was jailed for his part in writing Charter 08, remind the leaders of China that, since the May Fourth Movement break with Confucianism, the “era of emperors and overlords is on the way out” and a new system of liberties, of democracy, and the rule of law under a new constitution is needed, echoing the democratic aspirations after the fall of the empire. The breakneck speed of economic and material growth has been found wanting by an increasing portion of the population and has seen a rapid growth in Christianity over the last thirty years. If there is no top down approach to genuine reform, a bottom up approach through a growing Christian population may occur, and, like Buddhism and Taoism before it, this will challenge the social, political and economic landscape.

¹³ Phrase used in Xi Jinping’s keynote speech to the 18th National People’s Congress in March 2013.

The methodology of the futures triangle illustrated how the interplay between the pulls, pushes and weights of the future does not guarantee a universal outcome, but instead provides a way to map competing and complementary dimensions. There are deep changes underway in Chinese society today, but the tensions and traditions of the past have not disappeared, creating competing images for the future. What this genealogy has shown is that although the future is unknown, the pulls of the future matter. For China going forward, the knowledge frames and worldviews available to it offer a rich set of references from which to draw both theory and praxis, combining indigenous beliefs about the successes and failures of the past with imported thinking, enabling the Chinese to become leaders of their own destiny. When looking to China's futures, understanding the relative importance of these dimensions can help to identify where the focus should be: should China – both the CCP and the Chinese people – focus on a new image; should the weights creating barriers to change, including the Century of Humiliation, weak legal institutions and continuing authoritarian rule with vested military interests be challenged; should the pushes of future freedom, individual rights, rule of law and democratic politics be emphasised; or all three [4]?

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CHAPTER 3

Alternative futures of China: A macrohistorical approach

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Alternative futures of China: A macrohistorical approach

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an heuristic application in understanding China's alternative futures by looking at the deeper patterns of history and social change developed by four macrohistorians: Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin and Oswald Spengler. It questions the dominant perspective on the future that the Western liberal and consumerist system will endlessly rise. By using macrohistorical perspectives, distance is created from short-term economic and political projections allowing a view of the stages of history, the broader shape of the future through space and time, which provides another way to think about China's alternative futures. Four alternative futures are developed. In the first future, there is a regime change, with moves towards democracy and greater human rights. In the second future, there is a Golden Age for China and the world with major scientific, political and cultural achievements. In the third future, change is material and shallow, and in the fourth future there is collapse, not just of China's rise, but also of the world capitalist system.

1. Introduction

The Global Language Monitor which tracks the top 50,000 print and electronic media sites around the world found that the phrase "the Rise of China" to be the Top News Story of the Decade followed by "the Iraq War", the "9/11 Terrorist Attacks" and "the War on Terror" [1]. Some claim that not only is China rising economically and politically but, as world power shifts from the West to the East, that the 21st century will be known as the "Chinese Century" similar to the 20th century being known as the "American Century" and the 19th as the "British Century" [2–5]. The financial crisis in 2008, which also triggered the European sovereign debt crisis, as well as long running wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the volatility and uncertainty caused by the U.S. debt crisis all appear to be evidence of this

change, like a pendulum swinging in a new direction. Regardless of the merits of this view, the shape of China's future remains uncertain and challenges remain.

To question this image of the future, namely that the United States is in decline and we are entering into the "Chinese Century", this article will examine the larger patterns of structural social change in which actors find themselves living. The theoretical approach borrows from Galtung and Inayatullah and focuses on the systemic, overall patterns of change rather than the study of some region at some point in time, as would be the case with history [6]. It is different from other offerings on China futures because it takes a longer-term view, informed by macrohistorical theories that are not guided by narrow time and space limits of modern day international relations theories, the short-termism of economic and financial models, or by shallow opinion polls.

In this context, this article will describe the work of four macrohistorians: Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin and Oswald Spengler and develop four possible futures scenarios, one for each macrohistorian. Why these four? Their theories of historical social and political change are coherent enough to make them useful for forecasting possible futures, providing a path from idea to image, thus making them valuable to question current 'real life' conditions. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses the importance of macrohistorical theories in defining alternative futures and gives a broad overview of each macrohistorian. Section 3 presents some of the factors driving political and social change in China. Sections 4–7 present the macrohistorical theories of Sima Qian, Sarkar, Sorokin and Spengler in detail with a heuristic analysis of their alternative future scenarios.

2.0 Macrohistory and macrohistorians

A key concept in the theory of macrohistory is that the future is structured through time and space, allowing historians to find occurrences and reoccurrences of historical and social themes in order to make pivotal insights. This suggests that not only can we learn from the past, but we can also use it to look for visions to use in creating new futures. Macrohistorians offer patterns of history that are linear or cyclical or some combination of both to provide understanding of which stage of history we may be in and where we may be going (endless rise, downward spiral or move to a new era, for example). This does not make one macrohistorian's view of the future better or more 'accurate' than another's, nor does it allow

us to predict exactly where we are headed, but it does allow remarkable insights into changing domestic and global power structures, including the dynamics and shape of change – the causes of change, the patterns of change and the metaphysics of change, the metaphors of change, and who will lead this change [7].

The first macrohistorian presented, Sima Qian, was one of the great recorders of dynastic change in the history of the Chinese people. His theory of macrohistory was concerned with “the power and potency of human agency in shaping history” and is perhaps the most widely read of all Chinese historical works [8, p.66; 9]. The first scenario, developed from Sima Qian’s theory, is of a future that will see a new sage arise to lead China into democratic change. The works of Sarkar and Sorokin are considered to be foundational in the use of history to theorise about civilisational possibilities [10]. Sarkar provides a predictive and interpretive theory of the future through his use of a universal social structure with four structures and four epochs, each exhibiting a certain mentality [11]. The second scenario, based on Sarkar, sees China enter a new Golden Age of prosperity and achievement. Sorokin gives us three cultural orientations in which all societies alternate. He also provides us with the principle of imminent change which tells us that societies change because it is in their nature to change, not because of some external force. The third future is established by Sorokin’s principle of limits and will see the status quo of material growth continue until or unless there is political or spiritual change. Spengler too offers a foundational concept in the form of the “civilisational lifecycle” into which we can then place a civilisation according to its developmental stage. The fourth possible future, borrowed from Spengler, is of collapse, not just of China, but of the entire capitalist world order. Taken together, these scenarios are able to provide a broad view of macrohistorical theories leading us to see change through grand theories rather than day-to-day events. This article is not meant to be a critical examination of their theories, but a heuristic application intended to gain insight into a number of possible futures constructed from their macrohistorical visions.

3.0 Driving forces of social and political change in China

3.1 Political Reform

The benefits of China’s economic reforms since Deng Xiaoping set China on a path, which favoured economic growth over political and social stability in 1978, are well known. They

have taken China from being one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GDP one-fortieth that of the U.S., to being the second largest economy in the world with a current per capita GDP about one-fifth that of the U.S. and on par with Brazil [12]. Despite all of the benefits to the millions lifted out of poverty, there has been a dark side, exemplified by rising inequality, corruption and environmental damage.

Hu Shuli, the Editor-in Chief of Caixin Media, argues that economic reform is the flip side of political reform and that if the relationship between either of these two aspects is ignored China will not be able to move forward [13]. Former Premier Wen Jiabao warned at a press conference on March 14, 2012, after the closing meeting of the Fifth Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC), that China must implement successful political reform or “the gains we have made in these areas [economic reforms] may be lost, and new problems that popped up in the Chinese society will not be fundamentally resolved, and such historical tragedies as the Cultural Revolution may happen again in China” [14]. There are a number of political activists who agree including Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo who drafted Charter 08, a manifesto signed by 303 Chinese intellectuals calling for reform of China's human rights, democratic elections based on the principle of “one person, one vote”, protection of private property, separation of powers, and freedom of the press, among a number of other elements of systemic reform.

Political and economic marginalisation is increasing and is becoming a major source of disruption. Deng Yuwen an editor with the journal *Study Times* has published an article on ‘The Ten Grave Problems Facing China’ listing the most pressing social, economic, regional, political and ideological problems facing the Xi government, including the need for new guiding principles for society, economic restructuring, declining fertility and aging, environmental pollution and insufficient efforts towards political reform and the promotion of democracy [15]. In Wukan, an anti-land grab protest in September 2011 resulted in a negotiated settlement where villagers and provincial officials agreed to village elections to resolve the conflict. Sun Liping, one of China's leading sociologists considers this a watershed moment – both sides chose to use democratic processes instead of continued “repressive violence” [16, p.74]. Some 70 scholars and legal experts have expressed the need for the new CCP leaders to further political reform according to the existing Chinese Constitution. A petition was released on December 25, 2012 via micro-blog Sina Weibo titled “An Initiative on Reform Consensus” calling for a framework for separation of powers

between party legislators and party leaders, intra-party democracy, checks and balances on power and transparency, bottom up democratic election for people's representatives, freedom of expression, press, assembly and demonstration, a fair wealth redistribution mechanism and the prevention of forced land acquisition, as well as judicial independence and rule of law [17].

The CCP leadership is listening and political and social reform has been championed at the highest level. In 2010, at the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, Premier Wen Jiabao said: “We must not only encourage institutional reform in economic life but also institutional reform in political life. Without the safeguard of political reform the fruits of economic reform would be lost and the goal of modernisation would not materialise” [18]. At this same event President Hu Jintao called, according to the China Daily, for “expanding socialist democracy” and said that “that efforts should be made to carry out democratic elections, decision-making, management and supervision in order to safeguard the people's right to know, to participate, to express and to supervise” [19]. More recently the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued its five-year communiqué on the direction of this reform process. The communiqué issued by the fifth plenum of the party's 17th Central Committee in 2010 stresses the need to transform the nation's economic development pattern and further states that: “Great impetus should be given to economic system reform, while vigorous yet steady efforts should be made to promote political restructuring” [20].

There is a sense of caution and tension between the speed expected of political reform and its outcomes. According to Cheng Li one of the most popular books in PRC intellectual circles today is Alexis de Tocqueville's 1856 classic *The Old Regime and the Revolution*. Li further notes that: “One frequently quoted passage is Tocqueville's argument that revolutions usually occur not when the old regime resists change, but rather when it begins to attempt reform only to find expectations outstripping any possible rate of improvement” [21]. The early successes of the “Jasmine Revolution” or “Arab Spring” in North Africa and the Middle East inspired protesters across China to declare, “We want food, we want work, we want housing, we want fairness” [22]. According to research by the Chinese Academy of Governance, the number of protests in China doubled between 2006 and 2010, rising to 180,000 “mass incidents”, with most of these concerning corruption, environmental pollution and land grabs [23]. As a

consequence the government budget of 2009 increased spending for internal security and “maintaining stability” to RMB 514 billion, nearly equal to military spending [24, p.48].

3.2 Social Reform

China has 400 million microbloggers – more than the whole population of the United States [25]. Sina Weibo is China’s version of Twitter and for many it is their main source of information outside the official news media. According to Tea Leaf Nation, Weibo’s users include many influential businessmen and businesswomen, authors, intellectuals, journalists and scholars. Their followers are, “the most educated, tech-savvy, socially aware and politically active bunch in China. In other words, they are the type of people who help drive the debate and bring about change in any country. In the U.S., this type of person votes, signs petitions, writes to their congressmen, or runs for office. In China, they log on to Weibo” [26].

According to Elizabeth Economy, the growing role of the Internet is “evolving into a virtual political system in China: the Chinese people inform themselves, organise, and protest online” [13, p.3]. The power of the Internet has been mobilised to launch a number of successful campaigns against a variety of public concerns, especially corruption, environmental pollution, and greater media freedom. Ai Weiwei, the artist turned activist, notably launched an effort to compile a list of students killed in the 12 May 2008 Sichuan earthquakes which cost 69,195 lives [13]. According to Kaiser Kuo, the director of Corporate Communications at Baidu.com, the leading Chinese search engine, the importance of this form of media is unprecedented: “It’s now driving, in many ways, the entire national dialogue” [27]. By allowing people to debate issues, attack corruption and come together in communities of interest, it has become a powerful social tool and serves as a platform for citizenship training. Perhaps owing to the growing force of social media in changing the way the Chinese people think, the government has recently implemented a crackdown on users, including imposing three year jail terms for negative posts about the country if these are viewed by more than 5,000 people. The carrot to this stick is the protection from prosecution of users who expose corruption – a common use of social media [28].

To provide structure to these near term drivers of change, and to test the pull of the “Chinese Century”, the grand patterns of change of Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin

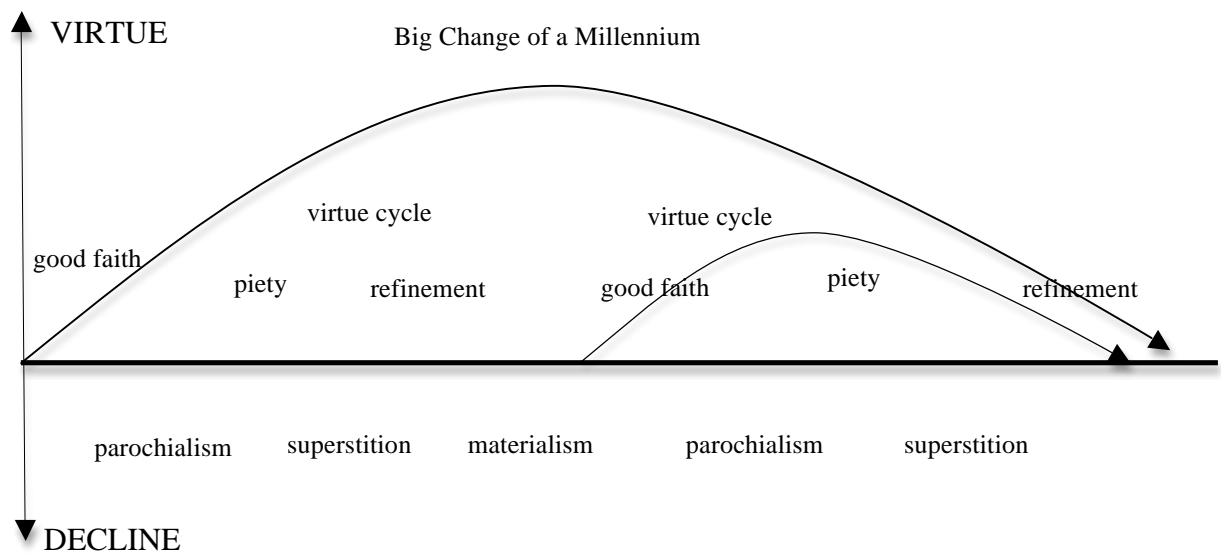
and Oswald Spengler are now presented so that we can better understand some of the possible alternative futures ahead.

4.0 Sima Qian, Dynastic Cycles

4.1 Theory

In understanding the dynamics of change in Chinese history, Sima Qian (145-90 BCE) stands out. His opus, the *Shiji* (“The Record of the Grand Historian”) recorded the history of the Chinese, as well as of all non-Chinese peoples then known, from the time of the Yellow Emperor (c. 2696–2598 BC) to his own. It was not a work of flattery. The central metaphor is that of the dynastic cycle, informed by Taoist cosmological beliefs, which begins with an enlightened and virtuous sage king, continues through a number of generations until the arrival of a morally depraved, bad ruler who signals the end of the dynasty, only to be replaced by another virtuous sage king. Adhering to the same behaviour cannot restore virtue; the cycle demands an understanding of the old way’s faults and a return to righteous and virtuous behaviour by the rulers [9]. For Sima Qian, small changes took place every thirty years, medium changes every one hundred years and great changes every three hundred years; each length of cycle repeating again and again with each dynasty bringing its own virtues and thereby sowing the seeds of its own demise [29]. Its purpose was to remind rulers to govern well; otherwise they would lose the Mandate of Heaven: heaven would show its displeasure by causing catastrophic events resulting in the ruler’s overthrow.

According to Sima Qian there are two qualities of each dynasty’s rule. The first is called *chih* (solid qualities: directness and simplicity) and the second is called *wen* (refinements: order, elegance and culture), similar to *yin* and *yang*, one bearing the seed of the other. If these qualities are not kept in balance, the dominant virtue for each dynasty – “good faith” for the Hsia dynasty, “piety” for the Shang, and, for the Zhou, “refinement” – is eventually transmuted into a fault: good faith into parochialism, piety into superstition and refinement into materialism. Dynasties fall because their initial good qualities become perverted. When the good faith-piety-refinement cycle is complete, it must begin again, the previous fault requiring correction in the next virtuous cycle [9].

Figure 1: Sima Qian's Dynastic Cycles

(Source: [6])

4.2 Sima Qian's Alternative Future: Dynastic Fall and Democratic Change

This scenario sees new power centres form to challenge the CCP's political legitimacy. According to Sima Qian's schema, when the CCP took control of China from the KMT in 1949 it was seen as the beginning of a new dynasty. Mao would have been seen as the new sage king, his rise heralding a period characterised by hopes for virtuous rule. The civil war had ended, the Japanese were defeated and the government had a number of successes: wives were made equal to husbands, streets were cleaned up, beggars and prostitutes rehabilitated, foreign privileges abolished, literacy spread and diseases controlled. At the same time strict social and political control was introduced, limiting freedom of expression, proscribing thought and beginning campaigns to reinforce party authority which resulted in many imprisonments and deaths [30].

Economic controls were relaxed under Deng, but the system has remained the same. China has followed the path of modernisation and is in the process of developing a market economy which will require less government intervention, more highly skilled workers, technological innovation and a robust environment for entrepreneurship. Modernisation theory holds that as a society's economy develops, that society tends to become increasingly democratic. Viewed from this perspective the legitimacy of the CCP as the deliverer of strong economic growth is being challenged by demography and increasing levels of inequality. The reserve of peasants

looking for work reached a peak of 150 million in 2010 and will collapse by 2020, reaching the so-called Lewis Turning Point (LTP) sometime between 2020 and 2025. This is the point at which the hitherto seemingly unlimited supply of peasants for the factories will be exhausted. At the LTP, wages in the urban industrial sector begin to climb, profits are squeezed and investment falls. A consequence of reaching the LTP is that inflation begins to rise and, as the middle class grows, income inequality, already a serious issue in China, will likely get worse. After reaching the LTP, economies can no longer rely on cheap labour, copied technology and export-led growth [31]. Higher wage labour and appreciation of the *renminbi* (RMB) has resulted in Chinese-made goods and manufacturing costs becoming less competitive. In and of themselves these trends will not be enough to rally ordinary Chinese workers to seek more democracy, but the pressures created by growing inequality and diminishing trust in the CCP will facilitate calls for change.

Calls for political change were seen in the pro-democracy Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, a movement sparked by the death of the reform-minded General Secretary of the CCP Hu Yaobang, who had been pushing against the one party system. The bottom-up challenges have not disappeared and in the rise and fall of dynasties, as seen by Sima Qian, the next generation of leaders in China may “lose the Mandate of Heaven” and be the last of the current system. His theory of change, while it may acknowledge the current dynasty’s piety (improvements in the level of prosperity, cultural pride and unity), would also concede that the amount of energy the current system is using to control the greater dissatisfactions of the population (including income inequality, corruption, the declining birth-rate, rising nationalism and, most importantly, the lack of a leading ideology apart from making money) is too great and will see the CCP fall and disappear, unable to lead the country into a period of cultural and economic refinement [32, p.43].

Perhaps this change will be led by one of the 303 intellectuals and dissidents who signed Charter 08, calling for a society based on greater political freedoms and on respect for human rights, or perhaps, instead, by someone the Charter has inspired. And such inspiration is spreading: students returning from Western democratic countries, as well as from Taiwan and Japan, will not just be returning with degrees, but with exposure to democratic values such as the rights and responsibilities of the individual, transparency, equal opportunity and rule of law. As the voices for change have grown stronger the government has become concerned. The growing ability of Chinese netizens to hold officials responsible for their actions and to

talk of reform has created a sense of unease in the top levels of government. “Document #9” a recently released internal Communist Party memo describes seven “perils” that threaten the Party including: “Western constitutional democracy”, promotion of “universal values” of human rights, Western-inspired notions of media independence and civic participation, ardently pro-market “neo-liberalism,” and “nihilist” criticisms of the party’s traumatic past [33].

There are also a number of Confucian democracies to serve as role models for China: Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. According to the *Study Times*, published by the Communist Party’s Central Party School, China’s incoming president Xi Jinping has for several years “led a team investigating the Singapore model and how it might be applied to China” [34]. In Taiwan, democratic transition came as a result of skilled and dedicated political leadership [35]. Through a top-down approach and gradual devolution of power, Chao and Myers concluded that a responsible opposition and respect for constitutional law and institutions were key prerequisites [36]. Writers at *Southern Weekly* echoed these thoughts on January 7, 2013 when they went on strike as a denunciation of censorship after an editorial on the “China dream” was revised and then replaced with bland words from Xi Jinping’s speeches. The original editorial included the words, “Constitutional government is the basis for the entire beautiful dream”... “Only when we have established constitutional government, only when the powers of government have been limited and separated, will citizens be able to voice their criticisms of authority with confidence and be able to live in freedom, in accordance with their inner convictions. Only then will we have a free country and a country that is truly strong... The real ‘China dream’ is a dream for freedom and constitutional government” [37]. As Minxin Pei reminds us, “roughly 80 countries have made the transition from authoritarian rule to varying forms and degrees of democracy in the past 40 years” [30]. China’s turn could be next.

5.0 Sarkar, Social Cycle of Power and Class¹⁴

5.1 Theory

Sarkar offers another way to interpret the rise and fall of civilisations through his law of social cycle, which describes the endless social evolution of a society. For Sarkar, there are four basic groups or classes of people known as *varnas* or “mental colours” and four eras in which they dominate: Labourer (*shudra*), Warrior (*ksattriya*), Intellectual (*vipra*) and Capitalist (*vaeshya*). Each *varna* is crucial to social progress, but not every group is rewarded in accordance with their contribution to the system (especially the Labourers). On an individual level, every person tends to have a dominant mental tendency, but it is possible for an individual to have a mixture of all four *varnas* or to move from one *varnas* to another.

At any given time a society is dominated by the political, cultural and economic mentality of its controlling *varnas*; moving from one era to another is a reaction to each controlling *varnas*’ struggle with the environment. No single group can remain in power forever, and according to Sarkar: “the era of Labourers is followed by the era of Warriors, the era of Warriors by the era of Intellectuals, and the era of Intellectuals by the era of Capitalists, culminating in a social revolution” [38, p60]. While the order is cyclical and must be followed in the long run, there are short-term reversals. Galtung adds that in the short run whoever possesses power is regarded as the “State”, and they can exercise various types of power [39]. In every age, the ruling class passes through two phases, one ascending or beneficial (*vidya*) and one descending or perverse (*avidya*).

The Labourer (*shudra*) era is a time of individuals existing for themselves dominated by their environment and guided by the basic instincts of the collective psychology – in this case fear and the desire to gratify the sensual mind [40]. Historically, a member of this group is referred to as a “peasant” or “serf”, meaning someone who does physical labour or unskilled work. They tend to spend their time simply trying to make ends meet rather than pursuing the “finer” aspects of life. Their time is for the short term, the immediate; they are present-oriented. The other classes generally exploit them, but if the Labourers seek education and expand their minds they can become Warriors or Intellectuals. In the ascending phase the

¹⁴ In Sarkarian terms “class” denotes any one of the four social groups with common inherent traits, not productive relations as per Marx.

Labourers give service; in the declining phase, Labourers create disruption until the next stage arises [38, 41, 42].

The Warrior (*ksattriya*) confronts the environment with force, fighting spirit and bravery – importantly they protect the family, group, tribe or nation from outside threats. In the ascending age, they protect Labourers and their material needs, in the declining age they exploit them. This declining phase also creates the conditions for the next phase, the Intellectual (*vipra*) [38, 41, 42].

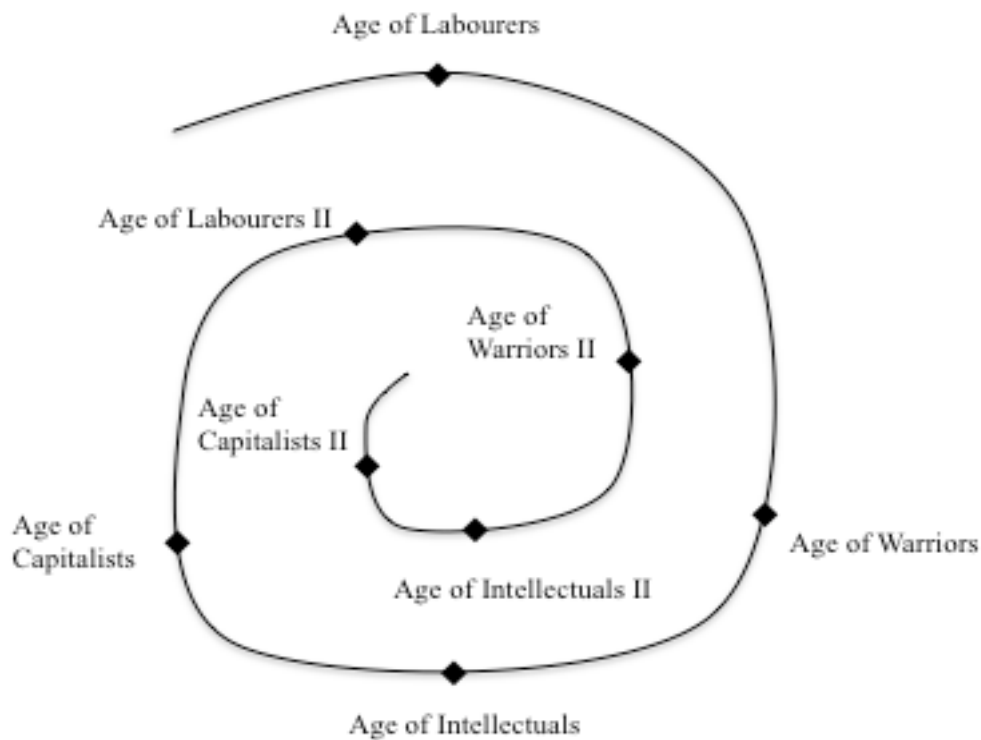
The Intellectual (*vipra*) era sees cultural, religious and scientific advancements depending on the political nature of the society: whether the society is a monarchy, a democracy or a theocracy. Priests, professors, lawyers and other white-collar workers are all among the *vipra*. In the ascending phase, the Intellectuals create truth and meaning. In the descending phase the power to create truth and meaning becomes available to only a few, dogma sets in and Intellectuals use this to stay in power (e.g. institutionalised religion), exploiting the Labourers and manipulating the Warriors and Capitalists [38, 41, 42].

The fourth group, the Capitalists (*vaeshya*), gain power through the accumulation of resources. They are often not as smart as the Intellectuals, but they do take risks to generate wealth, which is their only goal in life. In the ascending age, material wealth is shared by all, in the descending age, the Labourers are exploited leading to revolution that starts the cycle again [38, 41, 42].

Table 1: Sarkar's Social Cycle

| | <i>Shudra</i> | <i>Ksattriya</i> | <i>Vipra</i> | <i>Vaeshya</i> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Stage | Labourer | Warrior | Intellectual | Capitalist |
| Emotion | Fear | Lust | Cunning/hypocrisy | Greed |
| Relationship with environment | Dominated by environment | Physically dominates environment | Mentally dominates environment | Transforms environment by turning it into a resource |
| <i>Vidya</i> (beneficial) stage | Giving of service | Protection of workers' rights | Learning/teaching truth and meaning | Application of material gain |
| <i>Avidya</i> (adverse) stage | Exploited / creating disruption | Oppressing workers' rights | Maintaining/Enforcing truth and meaning | Accumulating material gain |

(Source: [42])

Figure 2: Sarkar's Social Cycle as a Circular Pattern

(Source: [38])

Figure 2 demonstrates Sarkar's social cycle as a circular pattern. It explains how societies change over time – that no society lasts forever and each era is followed by the next with each new phase bringing on progressively higher levels of human development [38].

5.2 Sarkar's Alternative Future: A Golden Age of Achievement

In this scenario, using Sarkar's logic, when the CCP took over from the Kuomintang (KMT) in 1949, China entered into an ascending phase of the age of Warriors. During such a time the Warriors themselves are compassionate, just and magnanimous, but they become corrupt and autocratic in the descending stage, once they get a taste for luxury [38, p.63]. The ascendancy of the current Warrior era used the Labourers in a revolution that mobilised and unified the country. The early years were filled with moderate and pragmatic policies of 'rehabilitation and rebuilding', land reform and the beginning stages of modern economic development. Only later when the "utopian" policies, such as the Hundred Flowers and Cultural Revolution, were implemented was enormous damage caused to the social and economic condition of the country.

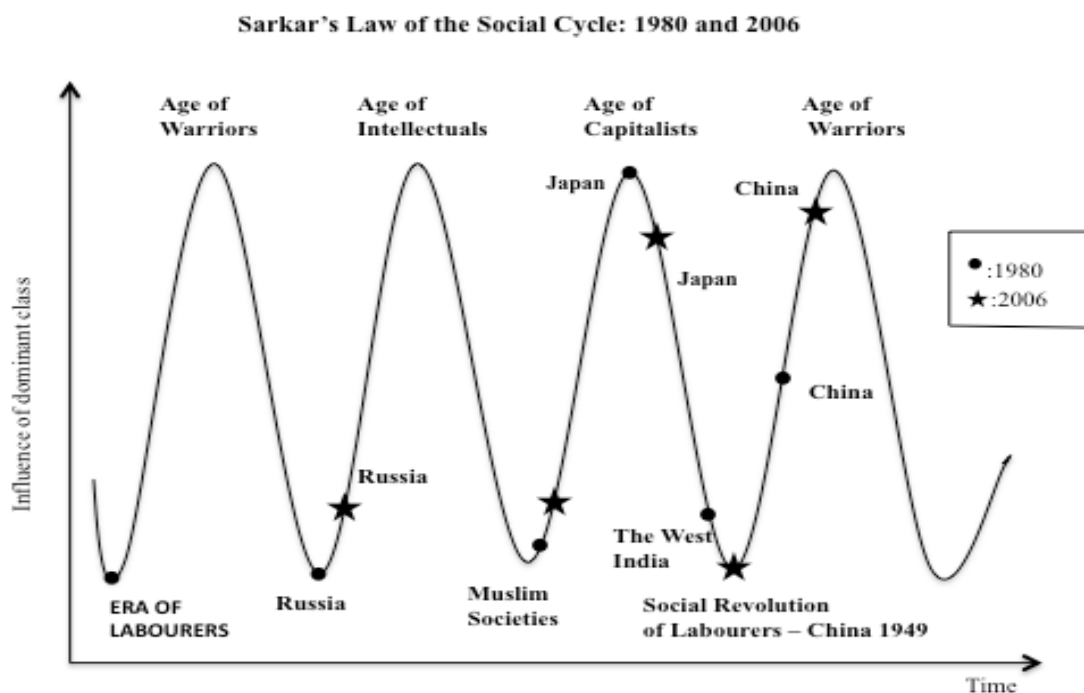
In Sarkarian terms, the rise of Deng Xiaoping, and his championing of “socialist democracy”, is viewed in structural terms rather than actor-defined terms. Deng Xiaoping, and every president since, has maintained their power through the military. The external expansion of China’s economy through the model of state-led capitalism cannot result in a higher state of human development while it is still under the ‘control’ of a Warrior state. As such, growth will reach Sorokin’s principle of limits, beyond which it cannot grow unless the political system becomes more inclusive.

Sarkar explains that there are several causes of economic depression; one of these is the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and the resultant inability of that wealth to circulate to the wider population [41, p.42]. Tellingly, the Chinese government has not published the country’s Gini coefficient, a measure of income inequality, in almost a decade. The Gini coefficient is expressed as a number between 0 and 1: a measure of 0 represents perfect equality and 1 represents perfect inequality. A coefficient of 0.4 is widely considered the threshold for social instability. According to the China Academy of Social Sciences, China’s Gini coefficient is between 0.45 and 0.5 [43]. However, the Samsung Economic Research Institute, an influential South Korean think tank, believed the figure, as of 2007, to be higher, 0.55, putting it at close to 0.6 in 2013 [44]. By World Bank standards, a Gini coefficient of 0.6 suggests that a country’s economic and social stability is at risk. The Chinese economy is dominated by state-owned enterprises and state-led investment and, at a local level, governments resume land and real estate with little compensation. What this means is that the Chinese financial system funnels wealth from ordinary households to a handful of well-connected political insiders and state-owned firms [45]. In this way it is an ‘extractive economy’, extracting resources from the many and passing those resources on to the few, failing to protect property rights or to provide incentives for economic activity [46, p.430]. Acquisition of wealth is a major focus for the rulers of China with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao’s family reported worth an estimated US\$2.7 billion [47].

The future scenario as borrowed from Sarkar will ultimately see this extreme concentration of wealth weaken China’s growing capitalist system. Power in Sarkar’s social cycle flows from the Warriors to the Intellectuals to the Capitalists. Despite the recent backslide to what appears to be an age of Capitalists, Figure 3 shows that China continues to be in the age of Warriors, nearing its peak, and moving, now, into an Age of Intellectuals. For China to continue its Warrior-led Golden Age, with all the achievements in science, technology,

economics, the arts, literature and music that have occurred since 1949, the Capitalist *varnas* will need to be held back [38, p.222]. If this does not happen, a social transformation to an Intellectual era will overcome the Warrior mentality; this can come about either through evolution or revolution [40]. The response to Warrior rule by some of the Intellectuals, including Ai Wei Wei¹⁵, Fang Lizhi¹⁶ (who died in 2012) and Liu Xiaobo,¹⁷ has been through protests and dissent. The government must be able to inspire Warriors and Intellectuals to work together to remedy not just the contradictions of capitalism, but also the very real issues of corruption, authoritarianism and weak judicial processes. The age of Intellectuals exhibits a society achieving scientific, religious and cultural advancements which can moderate the authority and cruelty of a declining Warrior era [41]. Importantly, Intellectuals will assist in making the transition to a high-end economy and in China playing a greater role in global governance.

Figure 3: Sarkar Eras in Various Societies



(Source: [38])

¹⁵ Artist and activist. Known for his contribution to the Beijing National Stadium, or “Birds Nest”. Published the names of the deceased after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

¹⁶ Physicist whose writings inspired the pro-democracy student movement of 1986-87. Granted asylum in the U.S. in 1989.

¹⁷ Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 for his contribution to human rights.

For the CCP to peacefully move from its Warrior era into an Intellectual era, bringing into play Sima Qian's period of refinement, Intellectuals need to look into China's own indigenous cultural and philosophical resources to create a cultural and political renaissance. Importantly there needs to be inner change, focused on an economic democracy in which the economy is decentralised and economic decisions are put back into the hands of local people. For Sarkar, economic democracy is not the same as liberal democracy, where power is controlled by a handful of capitalists, or socialism as practiced in some countries, where the power is concentrated in a small group of party leaders [48]; there is "no right of economic equality" in either system. In such a future, China will need to transcend the Capitalists' profit-making in favour of people's well-being. One major consequence will be the growth of ecologically sustainable industries, benefitting both social inclusion and spirituality. As a possible way of achieving these goals, Confucianism is making a comeback as the state philosophy of China. Xi Jinping believes that a revival in Confucianism as well as of Buddhism and Taoism is needed to fill the spiritual void left behind by China's recent economic growth [49]. One mechanism to develop positive reforms based on the Confucian ethos of protecting all life has been launched by the International Confucian Ecological Alliance headed by Tu Weiming of Peking and Harvard universities. This partnership of major Chinese Confucian organisations, formed in 2013, is soon to launch an eight-year programme of projects aimed at environmental protection [50].

Jiang Qing, the founder and director of the Yangming Confucian Academy, would like to see a restoration of Confucianism as the state ideology rather than the introduction of liberal democracy to progress the desires and interests of all Chinese citizens [51]. In this model, the Confucian tradition of "humane authority" takes precedence over Western-style multiparty elections. According to Qing, government authority should be exercised by a tri-cameral legislature: "a House of Exemplary Persons that represents sacred legitimacy; a House of the Nation that represents historical and cultural legitimacy; and a House of the People that represents popular legitimacy" [52]. Qing goes on to say that the leader of the House of Exemplary Persons should be a great Confucian scholar. The leader of the House of the Nation should be a direct descendant of Confucius; other members would be selected from among the descendants of other great sages and rulers, along with representatives of China's major religions. Members of the House of the People should be elected either by popular vote or as the heads of occupations or professions [52].

According to Batra [38, p.98], the United States and other Western countries are in a Capitalist-cum-Labourer era, in which the wealthy capitalists pull the economic strings and every other class supplies the labour, making the rich ever richer. This is an end stage, and soon there will be a revolution or movement taking the U.S. into an ascending Warrior era. This will coincide with China's moving from a Warrior to an Intellectual era, attaining new heights of culture and awareness, seeing not just China but the whole world enter into a Golden Age of achievement.

6.0 Sorokin, Immanent Change and Principle of Limits

6.1 Theory

Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) was a Komi-Russian sociologist who had the distinction of being imprisoned six times by both the tsarist and Communist governments, sentenced to death for attempting the overthrow of the Communist Government in Archangel in 1918 and eventually pardoned and banished by Lenin in 1922. He emigrated to the United States where he became the founder of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University. His major work, the four volume *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, was published between 1937 and 1941. In it he describes his theory of immanent cultural patterns which define the nature of cultural change in transitions to new orientations. For Sorokin, the major issue of the time (1941) was not “democracy versus totalitarianism, nor liberty versus despotism; neither is it capitalism versus communism ... nor any of the current popular issues daily proclaimed by statesmen and politicians,[...] the main issue [is] namely the sensate form of culture and way of life versus another, different form” [53, p.22].

Sorokin believed that societal change came from internal, inherent (immanent) forces, a kind of inner necessity of that culture; any society bears within itself the seeds of change, regardless of whether those changes are good or bad or even desired or intended by the system, independent of external conditions. Each cultural phase is a partial truth; meaning that when a civilisation focuses on one mentality over another, imbalances occur which must be corrected. Because Sorokin's theory is one of recurrent but non-identical rhythms, a society's historical processes, like a pendulum, cannot continue forever in the same direction, and it eventually runs out of momentum. The possibility of all things in a social system changing in proportion to one another so as not to break the perpetual trend would “require a miracle” [54,

p.653]. This is the essence of his principle of limits. Like Sarkar, the Hegelian dialectic and Yin Yang theory, change comes when a cultural system reaches the limits of its mentality; the tension of the opposite mentality sets in motion transformative forces which mark the beginning of a shift to a new mentality. The possibilities of change are limited, however: entirely new systems do not arise and therefore cultures can only work within a limited range when creating new forms.

Sorokin distinguished between different kinds of cultural mentality (a culture's way of perceiving reality and satisfying needs), each following the other in a predictable and orderly sequence: two 'pure' types, the Sensate and the Ideational, and one mixed type, the Idealistic or Mixed. These mentalities exemplify a single overarching cultural value-system, or what Sorokin calls a "supersystem". Each mentality is ultimately about how society views reality: in art and literature, science, ethics, spirituality, law, and forms of social organisation [55, p.291]. Sorokin's pattern sees the Sensate followed by the Ideational and then by the Idealistic. Since the days of the early Greeks, the West has completed two oscillations of this cycle. Similarities with Sarkar's theory are noticeable; the Sensate is comparable to the *Vaeshyan* or Capitalist era, the Ideational to the *Vipran* or Intellectual era and the Mixed to the *Ksattriyan* or Warrior era [40]. No culture, Sensate, Ideational or Mixed, can go on forever without experiencing a correction of its course.

The first cultural mentality, the Sensate, views reality through the sense organs – only the material, scientifically verifiable world is real. For the last five hundred years, according to Sorokin, the West has been in a Sensate era. Everything must be materially useful and profitable. The dominant values and the main determinants of happiness are hedonism and the accumulation of wealth [54, p.524]. Power belongs to the rich; money-makers are leaders of such societies. Hypocrisy, lying, cynicism and carelessness about the truth are the conspicuous traits of present day political ideologies. Ethical and moral values are atomistic and relative, changeable according to individual whim. As a result of this anomie, force becomes the supreme arbiter and so, echoing Hobbes, "war of everybody with everybody" becomes the norm [54, p.428]. Sensate culture can be "active" where leaders of the culture focus on efficiently transforming the external environment to fulfill the needs and desires of Sensate humanity; the great executives, conquerors and builders of empires are exemplars of this active type. The "passive" Sensate mentality attempts to fulfill physical needs through "parasitic exploitation" and "sensual pleasures" rather than transforming the external world;

“life is short,” “*carpe diem*,” “wine, women, and song,” “eat, drink and be merry” are all mottos of this mentality. The third type of Sensate mentality is the “cynical” type, which produces hypocrites and social climbers [54, p.28].

The second cultural mentality, the Ideational, is characterised by a reality viewed in spiritual or supersensory terms. Brahmanic India, Taoist China, Lamaist Tibet, Ancient Greece from the 8th to the 5th centuries BCE, and medieval Western culture from the 5th to the 12th centuries were examples of this mentality. Those who claim, or are thought, to see most deeply into the nature of ultimate reality are the priests, shamans, prophets, lamas, messiahs, mystics, sages, saints, Brahmans or *Ksattriya* caste, founders of world religions, as well as the greatest poets, composers, sculptors, and other creators of “inspired” art. Science and technology are deemphasised in favour of seeking the forms of truth revealed by mysticism and control of the inner self. Ideational wisdom is characterised by idealism, spirituality, quietism, religiosity, mysticism and qualitativism, in contrast to the Sensate mentality characterised by materialism, empiricism, mechanisticism and quantitativism [54, p.34]. Money and ‘success’ are tolerated in Ideational cultures, but seen as a hindrance to peace of mind, truth and morality. Ideational cultures are divided into “ascetic,” “active,” and “fideistic” subtypes. The “ascetic” type seeks to dissolve the self, eliminating carnal needs, and views the self as a mere illusion, non-real or non-existent. This mentality has been a central feature of Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Sufi, Jain, Zoroastrian, neo-Platonic, and early Christian societies. The “active” Ideational culture seeks to transform and reform the sensate world along the lines of its own spiritual reality. This type does not seek to disengage from the world as ascetic Ideational culture does, but strives to save the souls of all human beings. Early stages of Christianity and Islam would be examples of active Ideationalism according to Sorokin [54, p.27]. The third form, “fideism”, represents a stage of ideational culture where faith becomes independent of reason. At this stage “the ongoing testimony of the mystics, prophets, and saints is replaced by a blind and desperate “will-to-believe” on the part of a people who have lost any kind of direct contact with the supraconscious” [55, p.295].

The third type of culture, the Idealistic or Mixed culture, is able to balance the two tendencies of the ‘pure’ cultures so that truth is woven from both sensory and supersensory elements. Sorokin is a great admirer of Mixed or Idealistic cultures; they are, to him, “the only perfectly integrated and logically consistent form of the Mixed mentality, not very frequently met with”

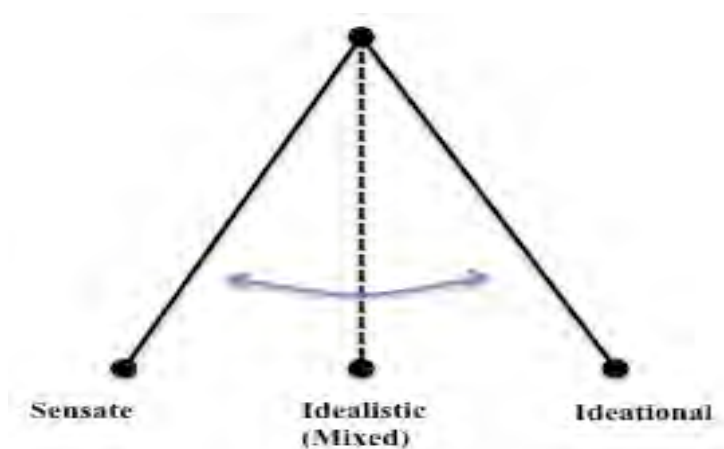
[54, p.49]. Science and philosophy are embraced together; thus the two major cultures are able to reach a dialectical balance between opposite values.

Table 2 provides an overview of Sorokin's types.

Table 2: Sorokin's Types

| Type | Sub-Type | Definition | Example |
|-------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Sensate | <i>Active</i> | Dominant tendency is for the carriers of the culture to attempt to transform the external environment through energetic activity directed at fulfilling the needs and desires of sensate man. | Great executives, conquerors and builders of empires |
| | <i>Passive</i> | Focused on enjoyment and self-gratification rather than any kind of energetic transformation of the external world. | Life is short, "carpe diem," "wine, women, and song," "eat, drink, and be merry" |
| | <i>Cynical</i> | Produces hypocrites and social climbers. | |
| Ideational | <i>Active</i> | Seeks to transform and reform the sensate world along the lines of its own spiritual reality. | Early stages of Christianity and Islam |
| | <i>Ascetic</i> | Seeks to dissolve the self, eliminating carnal needs, and views the self as a mere illusion, non-real or non-existent. | Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Sufi, Jain, Zoroastrian, neo-Platonic, and some early Christian societies |
| Idealistic/Mixed | | Able to balance the two tendencies of the 'pure' cultures so that truth is woven from both sensory and supersensory elements. | |

Figure 4: Sorokin's Pendulum



6.1 Sorokin's *Alternative Future: Continued Consumerism*

The Chinese cultural mentality, according to Sorokin, is partly Ideational, influenced by Taoist ways of thinking, and partly Mixed or Sensate, reflecting Confucian influences; Its pendulum swings between religion and authority; it now hovers over the latter. As the Western Sensate culture declines and enters a period of chaos, does that necessarily mean that there will be a 'clash' of cultures with China? Sorokin believed that change came only through the internal dynamics of a culture, and he would not have thought it possible, or even useful, for Confucian societies like China to adopt Western dynamics to guide any future scenario for themselves. Wallerstein points out that the Chinese believed that they could break with the old system, something Sorokin's model does not allow – providing one recognises that to make such a break it is not sufficient to change only some economic and political institutions. It is well known that China has engaged in an actual cultural revolution in order to do exactly that: rebuilding its economy after the devastation of the so-called Cultural Revolution and opening itself to the world through science, technology, management systems and markets, all of which suggests China is currently an active Sensate culture [56].

Sorokin believed in the growing importance of developing countries, including China, stating that "this shift is pregnant with momentous changes in all areas of all cultures ... its effects upon the future history of mankind are going to be incomparably greater than those of the alliances and disalliances of the Western governments or ruling groups" [57, p.16]. But Sorokin's future of China is not guaranteed to be a bright one: as China struggles with myriad social issues that could lead to stagnation or even to violent disruption. According to a 2011 survey, the concerns of the Chinese people reflect those of a Sensate culture: inflation, the cost of health care, a rising income gap, corruption, unemployment and unaffordable housing were all named as major problems [58].

There are signs that, although still Sensate, China may be moving from an active Sensate to a passive Sensate stage in the near future. Not only is China experiencing rising materialism and rampant consumerism, these forces are measurably stronger in China than in the United States, at least among young adults [59]. Government officials have taken notice. China's censors have been compelled to rein in a popular dating show after one contestant, when asked if she would like to go for a bicycle ride, replied, "I'd rather sit and cry in the back of a BMW". Another, when asked for a handshake, responded: "Only my boyfriend gets to hold

my hand. Everyone else: RMB 200,000 per shake,” or about US\$29,475 [60]. Yan Xuetong, a noted and influential academic warns, “the Party leaders realise they don’t have a dominant ideology they can use to run the country. For them there is no core social value. At this moment, the sole dominant ideology shared by this government and its people is money worship” [61, p.261]. And so, until China enters into an Ideational phase with an emphasis on spirituality over Mammon, the country will continue to pursue its economic goals, and all the material improvements and contradictions that go with them.

7.0 Oswald Spengler: Decline of the West, Rise of China?

7.1 Theory

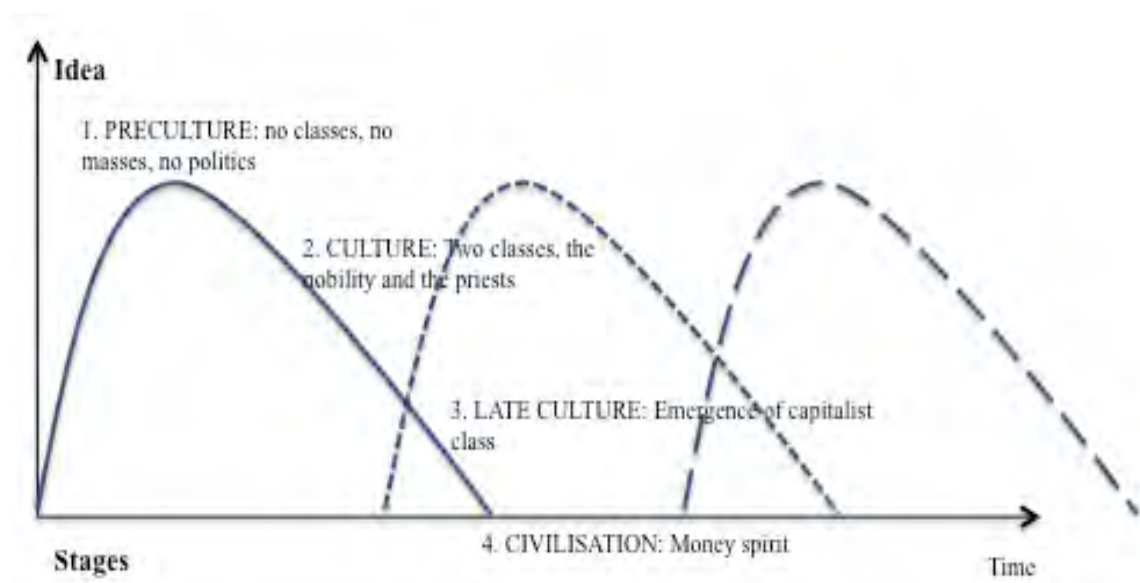
Spengler’s best-known work, the *Decline of the West*, is nothing less than the problematic of Civilisation – and from it the philosophy of the future [62, p.5]. Like Toynbee, Spengler was concerned with the rise and decline of civilisations. Importantly, his work liberated historical inquiry from a strictly Eurocentric viewpoint by including other, non-Western civilisations at a time when the West held centre stage; the West was “a fixed pole ... and mighty faraway Cultures are made to revolve around this pole in all modesty” [62, p.13]. His work influenced a generation of academics, philosophers and politicians, including George Kennan, Paul Nitze, Louise Halle, Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr and Henry Kissinger, whose undergraduate thesis in part analyzed the philosophy of Spengler [63, p.2]. Spengler wrote in a time of great turmoil; he foresaw war in Europe as early as 1911, but curiously he also hoped for a victorious and imperial Germany, lest Germany deteriorate like Rome after the Punic Wars [62, p.xv]. Although he voted for the Nazis, he opposed much of their policy of extremism and racism; equally, he hated Utopians, “World Betterers” and Pacifists who believed that world peace was a one sided affair [62, p.xvi]. Spengler died in 1936 – before Hitler’s Germany fully unleashed its own vision for the future of Europe, and before America, “with its focus on liberal democracy, free markets and the control of the individual over his own destiny” [63, p.8], not Germany, became the outpost of Western civilisation.

Spengler rejected the notion of linear progress; that with Civilisation mankind has achieved its destiny or reached the ‘end of history’. In fact he saw Civilisation as the death of a culture. His logic of the philosophy of the future is organic in structure, rejecting scientific methods – the central metaphor is the life cycle “of endless formations and transformation, of the

marvellous waxing and waning of organic forms” [62, p.18]. As such he saw culture as the key unit in history. He identified eight cultures: Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, Classical (Greek/Roman), Arabian (Magian), Western (Faustian) and Mexican (Aztec/Mayan); each one having a period of youthful growth, maturity and decay, and each with a fundamental logic or destiny that must be fulfilled.

There were three stages in this transition: pre-history, culture and civilisation. Pre-history has no memory; it is primitive with “neither an organism nor a sum of organisms” [62, p.233]. This is analogous to Sarkar’s early Labourer stage and Marx’s early communism [40]. The second stage, “culture”, occurs when a culture’s soul awakens and develops its “own image; each having its *own* idea, its *own* passions, its *own* life, will and feeling, its *own* death”, for there is no universal culture [62, p.17]. Each of these cultures now has a sense of its own self-expression and possibilities, which, once fulfilled, “suddenly hardens, it mortifies, its blood congeals, its force breaks down, and it becomes *Civilisation*” [62, p.74]. Civilisations manifest themselves in the “world-city”, the domain of the intelligent and rich, “distorting the concepts of old and replacing them with cynicism, cosmopolitanism, irony and a money culture” [63, p.5]. Urbanisation is not seen as progress or advancement of society, nor as a betterment of culture, for with it comes the money-spirit, and political parties keeping alive the illusion of self-determination.

The character of civilisation then is that of “an active, fighting, progressing whole”, resolving to be the master of Nature, directing “the world [according] to its will” [62, pp.165 & 410]. Imperialism or Caesarism, the destiny of the West, is seen as the symbol of the end of the Civilisation. For Spengler it did not matter if the system was capitalist or socialist, for “one day it will become arch-expansionist with all the vehemence of destiny” [62, p.28]. It is this idea of wealth and the sword over the soul, with no relief from democracy, because the actuality, theory and practice are all a matter of money – the price of a vote. All political movements, including Communism, notes Spengler, operate in the interest of money. Perhaps the most powerful message Spengler imparts is that through directing the world to our will, humankind has created the idea that technology will obey the will of humans alone. But all is not as it seems, for Faustian humanity has become the slave of its creation. “The peasant, the hand-worker, even the merchant, appear suddenly as inessential in comparison with the three great figures that the Machine (technology) has bred and trained up in the cause of its development: the entrepreneur, the engineer and the factory-worker” [62, p.412].

Figure 5: Spengler's Civilisational Decline

(Source: [11])

7.1 Spengler's Alternative Future: Cataclysmic Collapse

For Spengler, the West is dead, but there is no salvation in a rise of China; it is an old, fossilised civilisation and it can only act negatively. For Spengler, it is possible for China to combat Western influence, but not for it to become a world power [64, p.153]. It does not matter whether China, with its growing middle class, becomes democratic or not, because democracy is at an end. Democracy destroys itself through money, after money has destroyed intellect; Caesarism then grows from the soil of Democracy [62, p.396]. There is no salvation through Taoism or Confucianism, at least not as described by Confucius and Lao-tse, as might have been the case in Sorokin's Ideational phase. Those ideologies were born in the *ancien regime* of their world and their philosophies come from the cities not from the land. "As soon as one historical element makes its appearance it immediately calls forth an opposing element[...] the Taoism of Lao-tse helped to create Confucianist China" [65, p.20]. Buddhism suffers equally as a source of salvation for it is a mode of spiritual extinction and is morphologically equivalent to end phenomena.

Modern capitalism and industrial civilisation is both transitory and a product of Western culture; not, as Marx and Smith thought, of a "desire to satisfy universal human material needs" [66, p.402]. Both suffer from the same hallmarks of decline, and although China is engaging in "Socialism with Chinese characteristics", this is an example of Faustian

Civilisation ethics. Regardless of the fact that China started its socialist journey from a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, the idea of ‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number’ is superficial because “socialism is not a system of compassion, humanity, peace and kindly care, but one of will-to-power” [62, p.186]. The 12th Five Year Plan (2010-2015) emphasises industrial development, energy production, information technology, and consumption, much like the three figures produced by the Machine.¹⁸ Spengler argued that the final breakdown of the global economy will come from the competition of non-Western economies [66]. For Spengler, war is likely: “if the white races are resolved to never go to wage a war again, the coloured will act differently and be the rulers of the world” [67, p.207]. There is already talk of a new cold war or at least of the U.S. and China being ‘frenemies’, neither friends nor enemies; South Korea has signed a new ballistic missile deal, Indonesia has received new fighter aircraft, Australia is hosting U.S. marines, and joint U.S. military exercises are underway in Vietnam and the Philippines [68]. Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe told parliament on January 31, 2013 that he intends to amend the Constitution to allow the Japanese military, currently called the Self-Defense Forces, to take aggressive action. And so, tragically, “we stand today at the climax, there, where the fifth act begins. The final decision will be reached. The tragedy comes to a close” [66, p.407].

8.0 Conclusion

China is in a time of flux and its future is not guaranteed. The pull of the “Chinese Century” is strong, but, as this article has shown, there is no promise of what this future will look like. The Chinese government is well aware that there are a number of drivers pushing change and they are looking for incremental reforms to improve social and economic problems in order to remain in power. Others, like the signers of Charter 08, are looking for more rapid change, demanding an end to one-party rule through a system based on democracy and greater human rights. Still more are working around the system, using social media to organise, protest and influence decision-making, providing new opportunities for self-expression, which, according to Michael Anti, has taught people that “freedom of speech is their birthright” – all of this further influences change [69].

¹⁸ Entrepreneur, engineer and factory worker.

This article has offered four possible futures following a heuristic application of the theories of Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin and Oswald Spengler. These scenarios explore the structures and patterns of macrohistory and civilisational change rather than confining the discourse to the narrow space and time of economic or international relations paradigms.

Table 3: Summary of Macrohistorians/scenarios

| Macrohistorian | Scenarios | Structure | Unit | Stages |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|
| Sima Qian | New sage/democracy | Cyclical | Dynasty | Sage king/tyrant/sage king |
| Sarkar | Golden Era | Cyclical/spiral | Varna | Shudra/Ksatriya/Vipra/ Vaeshya (worker/warrior/intellectual /capitalist) |
| Sorokin | Continued materialism to Awakening | Pendulum | Integrated meaning | Ideational/Idealistic/Sensate |
| Spengler | Collapse | Cyclical | Culture/civilisation | Childhood/growth/maturity and death |

Sima Qian offers one possible future based on his understanding of the rise and fall of dynastic virtue. Using Sima Qian's cycle of faith-piety-refinement, the CCP has not been able to bring China to a period of refinement and so its time is coming to an end. The CCP experienced a period of good faith and piety by unifying the country, meeting basic needs and providing the platform for economic prosperity, lifting millions out of poverty, but the dynasty has now become corrupt and been transformed into its opposite. A new sage ruler will arise, perhaps from among the many intellectuals and academics or someone inspired by them. In this future, China will move towards democracy.

Sarkar gives us the law of the social cycle and, like Spengler, describes the social evolution of civilisation. For Sarkar, China is at a peak period of the Warrior mentality, moving into an Intellectual era; this combined with the U.S. moving into an ascending Worker-cum-Warrior era will see the world enter a Golden Age. As the Warriors peak and decline, the Intellectuals will move in to smooth the transition to greater human rights, new spirituality and changes to governance. This will not be a Western style liberal democracy, but a new kind of governance

based on Sarkar's theory of economic democracy and indigenous Chinese concepts of governance incorporating Confucian principles.

Sorokin reminds us of the principle of limits: civilisations, throughout history, alternating between material and spiritual mentalities, one giving form to the other as each system of truth also suppresses the other. The West is in the last stage of a Sensate phase, China is moving from an active Sensate to a passive Sensate phase with its focus on enjoyment and self-gratification, valuing the material over the spiritual. In the long run, China will continue on this path until its people's needs for fulfillment become spiritual at which point it will move into an Ideational mentality.

Spengler offers the most provocative future. From his perspective, Western civilisation is dead, but there is no salvation from Chinese civilisation – it too has reached old age and withered. Unlike Sarkar, who believes in regeneration, or Sorokin, who believes change is possible, Spengler offers the possibility that another, as yet unknown civilisation will form, perhaps a Sorokin spiritual or religious society or a Sarkar Intellectual era.

It is impossible to know which alternative future is right; nor should it necessarily be desirable to know. This presentation of macrohistorical futures highlights how the structures and patterns of history may result in scenarios not ordinarily considered, and for some this creates an uncomfortable challenge. Ultimately only the Chinese people can choose their aspirations. Remembering Polak's [70] principle is instructive: that the future is unbounded and that through creating positive images of the future we are actively participating in the creation of that future. The one thing all of the macrohistorians are agreed upon is that nothing lasts forever.

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CHAPTER 4

Unpacking images of China using causal layered analysis

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Unpacking Images of China Using Causal Layered Analysis*

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to use Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) to map the International Relations (IR) theories of 'China threat' and 'Peaceful rise'. The paper looks at the way in which Western and Chinese constructs and prevailing metaphors impact the debate on the 'rise' of China and what limitations each view brings to the discourse. Both theories are shown to be problematic in their own way. It is argued that China futures need to be further investigated using more complex tools such as CLA to enable more than well rehearsed patterns of the future to emerge.

Key Words

International relations theory, realism, liberalism, China threat, peaceful rise, causal layered analysis.

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Introduction

The choice of China's role in the world, whether it will successfully fit into the current Western system or become a threat to it is "the greatest question of our time" according to Jim Steinberg, United States Deputy Secretary of State (Carr, 2010, p.4). China is certainly on the rise economically, culturally and politically and with it has come a dose of Spengler inspired 'declinism' in the West. Time magazine recently declared "The End of Europe" (Foroohar, online), the United States has been downgraded by Standard & Poor's and protestors are 'occupying Wall Street' around the world providing further proof that something is not quite right within the system. Adding to this impression of a changing power dynamic between China and the West is the recent popular book *Unhappy China* which offers 44 nationalistic essays severely criticising Western countries and advocating for Chinese leaders to follow more uncompromising and aggressive foreign policies (Xiao, 2009).

So, if China is the future, what kind of future lies ahead? Much of the 'popular' thinking in the Western media about the future of China is presented as a choice between riding on the coat tails of a rising China versus a declining United States and 'the West' in general; viewing the rise of China like some stereotypical villainous cartoon dragon using currency manipulation and unfair trade policies to destroy Western jobs, or perhaps even an entity to be 'managed' so as not to upset the current hegemonic apple cart; scenarios are often presented as black or white caricatures rather than identifying new perspectives on the push and pull toward a broader and deeper image of possible futures. China is still finding its direction and, indeed, popular images of its future include the hard nativist-realist sentiments for China to take a leading role in the world (such as those advocated in *Unhappy China*), as well as softer and more globalist versions of the future as offered by liberal internationalists.

This article is not about the rise of China and the decline of the West per se, but about the number of ways to see the future of China depending on the perspective of how one sees the functions of the world system. Seeing the future of China through the lens of International Relations (IR) theorists is problematic in that the theorists offer certain 'truths' about the future intentions of China; and the level of debate can be argued to be shallow, suffering from "motivated belief" and unable to provide deeper understandings on how to understand China's futures. With this in mind this article intends to deepen and widen the discussion on

questions about the future of China by mapping the three most widely discussed futures of China as seen through IR theories. I will examine the discourse on the “China threat” theory as used by both Western and Chinese realists and its mirror image of “Peaceful rise” (peaceful development) used by liberalists using a futures methodology causal layered analysis (CLA) to problematise their claims and examine their underlying beliefs and drivers.

Broadly speaking these debates can arguably be described as simplistic, but since they are the most frequently occurring, I hope to offer a more nuanced understanding of the differing political perspectives. It is not possible or the intention of this article to map all IR or other types of scenarios for the futures of China due to the amount of space provided, only those that are considered to be, “colonising the future and closing off options by projecting currently dominant ideas and values into the future and assuming they will continue to dominate” (May, 1999, p.126).

Theoretical Framework

CLA, developed by Sohail Inayatullah (2004), was chosen as the methodology to map the most common images of the rise of China because it allows an opening of the present and past to create alternative futures rather than simply predicting a particular future based on a narrow empiricist viewpoint. In CLA, the way in which a problem is framed ultimately provides its solution, thus framings are not neutral, but part of the analysis. CLA does not claim or argue for any particular ‘truth’, but to explore how a discourse becomes privileged - that is who gains and who loses when a particular discourse becomes dominant. For this reason it is useful in examining the conclusions made by popular images of the future of China and test whether or not they have enough depth to support their conclusions. As such CLA requires the user to travel through a number of layers which ultimately question or ‘undefine’ the future and make the units of analysis problematic. This unique layered approach allows the user to deepen the future and unpack the unconscious stories used to make sense of the way reality is formed. Importantly CLA explores not just the noise of litany and systems, but the deeper worldviews and myths to support these underlying layers of data.

The following is a brief summation of his concept and how it applies within this analysis across four overlapping layers: Litany, Systemic Causes, Discourse/Worldview and Myth/Metaphor.

The litany level identifies facts often presented by news or other media for political purposes and often exaggerated. These facts are not value free, and they are hard to challenge because they are presented as the 'truth' on which the system, worldview or myth rests.

The next level, systemic causes and their effects, is concerned with exploring the interrelated social, technological, economic, environmental, political and historical factors of an issue and the underlying data. The data can be questioned, but not the paradigm within which the question is framed. At this level, the government, experts from academia or someone else are expected to solve the problem. These two levels are considered 'shallow' and short term in their focus. In order to move into deeper and more complex analysis, the next two levels are necessary to uncover.

The third level concerns discourse or worldview. The key here is to recognise what deeper positions are shaping the assumptions behind the systemic and the litany views. Who are the stakeholders? How do their worldviews and nested beliefs about themselves, others, the future, time and space provide the deeper discourses which ultimately constitute the issue? This level is critical in determining how the first two levels are legitimised. Whether to include or exclude a particular discourse can ultimately privilege the issue and the scenarios which emerge. This level allows other perspectives or epistemologies to place claims on how the scenarios are framed, so whether one has a realist versus idealist worldview, a Chinese versus a macro-historical worldview or even a Chinese versus a Western worldview; will have consequences for how scenarios are constituted (Inayatullah, 2010).

The fourth level is that of unconscious myths and metaphors. Myths create a sacred image of the future which, an unconscious archetype which structures the perceptions and worldviews and hence a persons experience of the world. This level is reliant on specific cultural and civilisational assumptions about the nature of time, rationality and agency. Most importantly the ability to open up or transform the future can require unlearning particular myths or worldviews held dear so as to learn new ways of thinking about the future.

If what Polak (1973) says is correct that the future must not only be perceived, it must also be shaped, it is therefore critical to explore and deconstruct the underlying assumptions, narratives, worldviews and myths being told about the rise of China.

Table 1 below outlines the three stories for the rise of China.

Table 1. *Three CLA stories for the rise of China*

| | |
|--|---|
| (1) Western CLA – China Threat (dominant) | |
| Litany | China is on the rise - it is a potential hegemon. |
| Systemic Causes | Anarchy in international system shifting the balance of power. |
| Discourse | Must stop the hegemon. |
| Myth | China can be controlled. |
| (2) Chinese CLA – China Threat | |
| Litany | They're afraid and they're trying to stop us. They're the ones with problems, not us. |
| Systemic Causes | We have legitimate issues of a developing nation-state. |
| Discourse | Global institutions need to recognise our interests. We're not going away and things are going to change. Don't humiliate us. |
| Myth | We're not the threat - they are. We will bring in a new golden age. |
| (3) Alternative Future - Peaceful Development | |
| Litany | Focus on economic growth and securing comfortable life for its people. |
| Systemic Causes | We're trying to work in the system. |
| Discourse | We will regain our lost international status through peaceful means. |
| Myth | All neighbouring countries will live in harmony respecting China's cultural and civilisational superiority |

Setting the Scene

The narrative on the 'rise' of China and its impact on the current hegemonic state of international relations into a post hegemonic (or at least next hegemonic according to Callahan, 2008) world order is often discussed in a number of ways.

Realists in the West tend to generally focus on distribution of power in the international system; either as an economic rise or as a military threat both of which often neglect deeper social and cultural dimensions. War is the normal state of affairs when the hegemonic balance becomes disrupted. Defensive realists such as Waltz (1979) argue states have every intention of maintaining the balance of power in order to provide stability. Offensive realists such as

Mearsheimer (2001) argue that China “might be far more powerful and dangerous than any of the potential hegemons that the United States confronted during the twentieth century” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.57). According to Mearsheimer, even integrating China into the world economy is ‘misguided’ because as it becomes wealthy it will become “aggressive...determined to achieve regional hegemony” (2001, p.58).

Realists in China are considered to be the dominant group in the discourse about China’s future and they too sit within “offensive” and “defensive” camps as well as use “soft” – the power to attract and influence and “hard” – the power to coerce - concepts of power. Chinese realists also see the international environment as anarchic and unpredictable, upholding the principle of state sovereignty and thus seeing the need for a strong state to navigate through the pressures of external influences. Somewhat differently from realists in the West is a strong sense of discontent over China’s historical weakness and “Century of Humiliation” (Shambaugh, 2011, p.12).

Liberal theory (liberalism) focuses on individual rights, constitutionalism, democracy and limitations on the power of the state and this can be seen in the spread of democracy and globalisation (Burchill, 2009). Within this theory are the institutionalists who believe that if a rising power (China) is integrated into the system of international institutions, it is and will be possible to avoid future military conflict (Goldstein, 2007). In this way China becomes a ‘responsible stakeholder’ in the international system and will avoid conflict with the United States at all costs (Chung, 2009/2010; Lampton, 2008). This view is common to both a Western liberal and Chinese perspective.

Economic interdependence in determining the likelihood of war plays an important role in both theories. Realists believe in a mercantilist view whereby access to goods and materials must be maintained and thus creates an incentive to initiate war. Liberalists claim that interdependence increases the value of trade over aggression and thus lowers the incentive to initiate war.

Table 2. Main considerations from IR theory

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Western Realist | Anarchy and Balance of Power War is normal Mighty states seek hegemony |
| Chinese Realist | Anarchy and Balance of Power States seek hegemony, but this can be done peacefully Reject globalisation |
| Western Liberalist | Preference for diplomatic resolution of conflict War can be avoided States seek opportunity for cooperation |
| Chinese Liberalist position | Beneficiary of international system Wants emergence driven by capital, technology and resources by peaceful means Seeks cooperative partnerships |
| Institutionalist | Integration into international institutions avoids war Responsible stakeholder |
| Interdependence | Realists - war possible because access to goods and materials needs to be maintained Liberalist - trade valued over aggression |

Legitimacy of future images often rests upon the established and accepted ideas of the past. This is no less so for international political theory. The future cannot be predicted with any sort of accuracy, but uncovering preferred images of the future allows us to open up the future, see things more clearly and deeply and offer better or preferred solutions. As China's economic and political powers continue to grow, its security interests will certainly become more complicated. Let us now look to how China's future is constructed through the lens of realist and liberalist IR theories.

Realist Paradigm – Origin of the “China Threat Theory”

The origin of the notion that an economically rising China was a threat was first put forward in August 1990 by Tomohide Murai a professor at Japan's National Defense Academy. Murai wrote an article describing China as a potential adversary in view of its comprehensive national strength and sustained development. The phrase itself is said to have been coined by a Chinese writer, in a Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) article titled “Put and end to ‘China threat theory’” (Callahan, 2005, p.708). According to Deng (2008) another account comes from Xu Xin who claims that in August 1992 at a Heritage Foundation symposium in

Washington D.C. the United States (US) Assistant Secretary of Defense blamed China for sparking an arms race in the Asia-Pacific. Also in late 1992, the confluence of Deng Xiaoping's Southern tour and consequential economic growth and the passing of the Law on the Territorial Sea which claimed sovereignty over some of the islands in the South China and East China Seas was interpreted by some in the Japanese media as a sign of China's expanding military and hegemony strategy (Ateba, 2002).

This term now captures a full range of foreign fears about China being harmful to the global order as well as Chinese fears about containment and international perception (Rabinovitch, 2008). The "China threat" theory is used not only by Western and Chinese realists to construct a version of national identity, but has been advocated by commentators in Japan, India, Taiwan, and briefly South Korea to create their own Chinese threat reputation. Having said that this paper will focus primarily on the discourse from the United States with some comment about the others. That the place of origin of the theory is so broad also gives symbolic power to the construct of 'us' vs. 'them' and this is well used by realists both within China and elsewhere to represent and frame the discourse of political intent about China and the rest of the world.

Western & Other "China Threat" Perspectives

Table 3. Western and other realist arguments supporting 'China threat'

| Economic | Military | Ideological |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cheap labour stealing our jobs | First rate military power by 2020 | Non-democratic, one party state |
| Currency manipulators | Push to control sea lanes | Poor human rights record |
| Competition for energy and resources will create shortages | Will create provinces | Unreasonable territorial claims |
| Relationships with SE Asia will destabilize the region | Establish regional hegemony | Revisionist power that will stop at nothing to become regional hegemon |

The realist discourse outside China focuses on the link between China's increasing economic strength and political weight (Layne, 2008) and is further echoed through the hyperbole of realist pundits in the United States who claim that their cheap labour is stealing jobs, currency

manipulation enhances its trade position, competition for energy and resources will create shortages and economic ties with South East Asia will destabilise the region. The pessimism about the rise in Chinese military spending is also seen by some outside the US as being quite aggressive. Shoichi Nakagawa, former policy chief of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, said that Japan could be subject to China's strong influence in the context of China's "rising military spending". He went on to say: "If something goes awry in Taiwan in the next 15 years, then within 20 years, Japan might become just another one of China's provinces" (as cited in Feng, p.9). Taiwan and India have also found the realist "China threat" discourse useful to achieve policy ends. India was once a leading originator of the "China threat" theory and in 1998 the Vajpayee government touted the "China threat" theory as a pretext for nuclear testing (Li, 2008, p.231; Deng, 2008, p.104). The recent 2011 Taiwan Ministry of National Defense report advocates that China's growing military strength continues to target Taiwan and still poses a major threat to the country and despite increasing economic ties, China's threat to Taiwan remains "unabated" (Minnick, online).

While the preceding realist argument regarding China as a threat is an unpleasant scenario, or even in the words of Mearsheimer a "tragedy", it serves as a background to the following analysis in uncovering key underlying preconceptions, biases and assumptions.

Western Construct "China Threat" Theory Seen Through CLA

Table 4: Western CLA - China threat

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Litany | China cannot rise peacefully – creating potential for war. Growing economy, increasing military spending, still authoritarian. |
| Systemic causes | Balance of power and security dilemma. Structure of international system: anarchic, building up of offensive military capability and asymmetric information about states intentions. |
| Discourse/worldview | Realist worldview: seeking power for power's sake, attain resources through violent means. Must contain China's growth otherwise neighboring states will become vassals. |
| Myth/metaphor | Clash of civilizations. Yellow Peril. China is an angry dragon, Godzilla; a 'bully'. The only way to deal with a rising China is to push or tie it down. |

Litany level

The message at the litany view of the “China threat” argument is one of fear. The characteristics of this level is that it is the most superficial, appeals to mass readership and fails “to probe beneath the surface of social and cultural life” (Slaughter, 1996, p.318). The central concern here is the potential for war resulting from China’s economic growth. The assumption is that the growth in economic position (although only returning to historical levels), will push China to restore its lost superpower status, expand its political influence in the region and in doing so necessitate military conflict. The pattern of China’s behaviour is clear; with its growing economic clout, it will emulate the push for hegemony as attempted by Germany (1900-1918, 1933-1945) and Japan (1931-1945) and achieved by the United States in the 19th century (Mearsheimer, 2006).

We are often reminded that the growth of China’s economy is “unparalleled in modern economic history” and so “poses challenges for other countries” (Pan, 2004, p.306). The litany of economic data tells us that jobs have shifted from the US to China, resource costs are being driven up and China is the world’s largest creditor nation to the world’s largest debtor nation, the United States. Negative images in the media reinforce a threatening image of suppression and state violence warning us of “angry Chinese hurling rocks at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing” (Gries, 1999, p.63).

Systemic causes level

Mearsheimer (2006) envisages a system where fear and brute strength are the driving factors for states concerned about their security in the international system. Once this zero sum paradigm is created; the anarchy, buildup of military capability and uncertainty of other’s intentions, the data to fit within this paradigm must be maintained. Denny Roy fans these flames when he argues that, “China’s military modernization has included weapons systems that can boost the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) capability to project power beyond China’s shores” (1996, p.759). He further states that, “Many observers infer from all this that China intends to build itself into a military superpower by early next century.” And for added effect he then goes to say, “presumably to enforce a regional hegemony” (1996, p.759).

Worldview/discourse level

The realist worldview here frames an image of China that is seen to be quite limited and ultimately bleak. The foundational definition of the paradigm is that “the mightiest of states attempt to establish hegemony in their region of the world while making sure that no rival great power dominates another region” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.160). Thus, China will always be an aggressor, bent on threatening the Western way of life in its relentless pursuit of power and historical redemption. The problematic of this worldview is how reductionist it is in its conclusions; indeed, no matter what action is taken by China, it will be seen to be a threat. Based on this paradigm any policies of engagement are doomed to fail because the great powers continually have to seek power if they want to maximize their odds of survival (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Metaphor/myth level

I now intend to provide a picture of the worldview under inquiry so that it “can be refined or rejected as part of an unlearning process that is necessary for envisioning more authentic desired futures” (Kelly, 2004, p.478). For as Kelly has argued “Metaphors serve the discourse and support the litany” (Kelly, 2004, p.478). Because the only solutions to a rising China from a realist point of view are to maintain US military presence in Asia to contain and enmesh China, the myths supporting these solutions reinforces the Eurocentric, linear historical and cultural Great Power paradigm. The metaphors and myths of “China threat” are discussed below.

Yellow Peril

Samuel Huntington provides us with a new enemy: the “ideal enemy for America would be ideologically hostile, racially and culturally different, and militarily strong enough to pose a credible threat to American security”, and believes China fits this bill (Huntington, 2004, p.266). This clash of civilisations parallels images of a “Yellow Peril” or “Yellow Terror” where Chinese swoop down like Mongolian conquerors with their cheap workers, authoritarian rule and development model and uncompromising attitude threatening Western ‘values’ and reclaiming their past glory. For Huntington, China is undergoing sustained expansion of its military power citing evidence of it testing a one-megaton nuclear device,

development of aircraft carriers and a new form of arms competition. For these reasons, he argues that the expansion of Chinese military power needs to be contained. There is a clear anti-Chinese fear of the other, the Chinese cannot represent themselves and as Edward Said detailed - an assumption around the myth of “the inherent superiority of the former (the West) to the later (the East)” (Said, 1978, p.43).

Mearsheimer argues that due to its size and growing economic clout that China will attempt to establish regional hegemony while making sure the United States loses its advantage and dominance (hegemony) in Northeast Asia. China should be expected to develop a kind of Monroe Doctrine to support its claims and make it clear that “American interference in Asia is unacceptable” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.57; Garrett, 2003). Mearsheimer further claims that “the United States has a profound interest in seeing Chinese economic growth slow considerably in the years ahead” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.57). Realism and the offensive realism of Mearsheimer in particular holds that China is a ‘revisionist power’ and as such needs to be contained and prevented from becoming a regional hegemon at all costs. Simply put, China is a non-democratic, one party controlled state pursuing military modernization. The consequences of these values are absolute in realist terms. Roy states, “Beijing has long generated bad feeling among many outside nations with its poor human rights record, its resistance to multilateral discussion of expansive Chinese claims in the South China Sea, and its persistent threats to use force against Taiwan” (1996, p.760). It is therefore a simple linear argument that the only way China can return to the past glory of China as the dominant power in the region is through military and economic dominance. Because China is a “bully” that if not contained will threaten war, “growing too big and too strong for the continent it finds itself on” with the subtext that they are coming after yours (Krauthammer, 1995, p.72).

Angry dragon

“We have an image of China as an awakening dragon...It is non-European, non-democratic and avowedly the last communist stronghold in the world” (Klintworth as cited in Roy, 1996, p. 760). In China the symbol of the dragon is one of power, strength, and good luck, but in the West it is one of malice, greed and destruction. “It is better to be Godzilla than Bambi”, claims Mearsheimer (2006, p.162). And so there is only one solution, “For a declining hegemon, “strangling the baby in the crib” by attacking a rising challenger preventively - that

is while the hegemon still holds the upper hand militarily - has always been an attractive strategic option” (Layne, 2008, p.16). A peer competitor cannot be tolerated and so the dragon must be ‘tied down’ and strangled (Mearsheimer, 2005, p.48; Roy, 1996, p.766).

Charles Krauthammer (1995) promoted the view of China as a “bully” that needed to be contained going as far to suggest that if it is not contained, China could be the instigator of the next world war. Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro (1997) wrote in, *The Coming Conflict with America* that China sees the United States as the ‘chief obstacle’ to its strategic ambitions in Asia. Bernstein and Munro further paint a picture of a China that is “driven by nationalist sentiment, a yearning to redeem the humiliations of the past and the simple urge for international power” (p.17). They further claim that any vision of an ‘unthreatening’ China becoming more like the West as a country that is “non-ideological, pragmatic, materialistic and progressively freer in its culture and politics” was obsolete (1997, p.18).

More recently, Western pundits are calling China’s behaviour “aggressive, assertive, hard-line, obstructionist, deliberately insulting, tough and confrontational” (Swaine, 2010). India and China have been squabbling about border disputes and the Dalai Lama, a stronger stance on south-east Asian issues has been concerning those in the region, trade difficulties in Latin America and the arrest and jailing of executives from Rio Tinto-Chinalco has strained relations with Australia. (Shambaugh, 2010). For realists in the West and elsewhere this provides ‘evidence’ of China’s true colours, with articles titled, “The Chinese tiger shows its claws” and statements such as “China is behaving exactly as one would expect a great power to behave” (Shambaugh, 2010; Kagan and Blumenthal, 2009).

This discourse ultimately appears bounded by its own definitions and cannot see China as anything other than as a rival to the United States and the West. Joseph Nye (2006) has argued that war is caused by the fear engendered in one power from another and that belief in the inevitability of conflict is a self fulfilling prophecy. At all of these levels, the only solution offered is to contain China through balancing, undermining and inevitably war.

Chinese “China Threat” Perspectives

From the Chinese perspective it is perhaps unsurprising that the “China threat” theory is viewed as a way for the United States and its regional allies to “denigrate the Chinese political system, overstate China’s strengths and assigns irresponsible, destabilizing motives to Chinese external behaviours” (Deng, 2008, p.105). In this way the realist discourse in China views the “China threat” theory as being about international perception and quality of treatment abroad and ultimately simply concocted by hostile forces seeking to threaten China and attributing these views to racist “Yellow Peril” conjecture (Deng, 2008, p.106).

Chinese Construct “China Threat” Theory Seen Through CLA

Table 5. Chinese CLA - China threat

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Litany | West is trying to contain or impede the rise of China. Fear gripping the West. |
| Systemic causes | A way to deny China’s rightful place at the table of global institutions. Threatening to China’s core interests. |
| Discourse/ worldview | Use the “China threat” theory to reshape the international environment. Useful for identity construction. “China threat” aims to tie China down. |
| Myth / metaphor | It’s a trap - US trying to surround China. Sense of victimization from historical wrongs. China is different - will not be a hegemon. |

Litany

The litany for realists in China is that China is a natural competitor to the United States, but this relationship can be managed without clashes that threaten the global order (Yan, 2011). There is an “unjustified fear gripping the West” and that “China is just regaining its long lost right to have its say in world affairs” according to Lui Xiaoying (Li, China Daily, August 2, 2010). The recent realist “China threat” narrative focuses on three factors according to Rozman (2011, p.4). First is the failing of other countries, especially as a result of the recent global financial crisis casting doubt on the current capitalist model and the rising appeal of the “China model”. Secondly, the assumption that China will be expansionist as Western realist

paradigm predicates. Third, there is an identity crisis in Western countries, especially the United States where continued ascendancy is not assured and so China must be demonized while it is still relatively 'weak'. From a Chinese perspective, "China's supposedly more activist, assertive foreign policy stance reflects intense anxiety over the gradual loss of American political, military and economic power and influence globally, as well as an effort to make China into a scapegoat for the failings of the West" (Swaine, 2010, p.6).

Systemic causes level

"China now wants a seat at the head of the table" and "its leaders expect to be among the key architects of global institutions" according to Cheng Li, director of research at the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institute (Foroohar and Liu, 2010, p.36). The "China threat" theory is seen as a way to deny China's rightful place at the table. Ultimately Chinese realists are pessimistic about China's external environment, cross-strait relationships, and especially the United States. Concepts such as transnational challenges, globalization and global governance are rejected (Shambaugh, 2010).

The "China threat" theory is then seen as threatening to Chinese "core interests" and related "national security" issues including challenging the need for U.S. military activity near China, arms sales to Taiwan, disputed territories in the South China Seas and other incidents. Yan holds that realists in China "actively participate in international affairs, open itself up to the greater world, and enlarge international cooperation; however, all of these should be in favour of China's national interests" (2001, p.35).

Worldview/discourse level

The dominant discourse is not to "put an end to the China threat theory", but to use it to reshape the international environment.

Official Chinese publications often refer to the "China threat" theory and so can be seen to be a useful tool for identity construction whereby anything considered hostile to the interests of China is lumped in with the "China threat" theory. A common response then becomes that America is the real threat, or Taiwan, or Japan, or India or whomever depending on the needs

of the security matter at hand (Callahan, 2005, p.709, 711). This discourse is politically useful to the ears of a domestic audience who have historical sensitivities to foreign invasion and other external threats and the ensuing internal uprisings. No doubt a strategy that aims to keep China weak, contain its rise by militarily encircling the Chinese mainland and slow economic growth through currency and trade wars for no other reason than preventing it from emerging as a peer competitor is open to moral criticism (Wang, 2011).

Carlson (2011) sees the Chinese worldview as evolving into two contrasting, contested and more fluid shapes. On the one hand, China accepts the bedrock of the international system, tempered by a realistic acceptance of US hegemony and a degree of the diminution of states rights and questions of multilateral intervention. On the other hand, there is a renewed interest in a version of the vision of Tianxia (“all under Heaven” this will be developed further in the “Peaceful rise” construct) argued by Zhao Tingyang with particular interpretations about Chinese history and the normative principles underlying the current international order. Zhao cautions that we are currently facing the prospect of a ‘failed’ world in which the “American empire as “winner takes all” will not lead to something of a cheerful “end of history” but rather to the death of the world” (Zhao as cited in Carlson, p.97). Zhao (2006) argues that the only way to prevent such an outcome is to create a grand narrative of three elements: a view of the world as a global geographical entity or ‘Oneness of the world’, a commonly agreed institutionally ordered world/society as the highest political order rather than one of nation/states and somehow legitimised by most of the people (but not democratic).

Metaphor/myth level

It's a dangerous trap or “encircled”

The People’s Republic of China has countered the “China threat” theories by equating them with a cold war mentality, ill will and a bias against China. There is a fear of China being surrounded by the US and jeopardising China’s national interests. Chinese realists argue that “Western attempts to enlist greater Chinese involvement in global management and governance is a dangerous trap aimed at tying China down, burning up its resources, and retarding its growth” (Shambaugh, 2011, p.13). “If China does not oppose the US, the US will abuse China’s interests and China will become America’s puppet”, says Zhang Ruizhang (as

cited in Shambaugh, 2010, p.13). According to Dai Xu in response to an agreement between South Korea and the United States to construct a naval base to protect Seoul from attack, he states that Beijing “cannot always put up with American provocations” and that China “must draw a clear red line against American attempts to surround it”. (Global Times, online). Dai Xu further states that the US is trying to create a kind of “Asian NATO” with the purpose to “create a global empire, and China will be the first to be threatened, because this undercover Asian NATO will be distributed along China’s soft underbelly similar to the “encirclement” seen during the Cold War” (Global Times, online).

Any slight to national pride and sovereignty adds fuel to the historic sense of victimization. From a Chinese perspective, the threat comes from a United States along with other Western powers, Japan, India and Taiwan that is hostile to China’s political values and wants to contain its rise by supporting Taiwan’s separation from mainland China, sympathy for Dalai Lama and Uighur separatists, US military alliances perceived to encircle the Chinese mainland and the sustained argument that China should slow its growth. The unrest that has erupted; in Tibet in 2008 Xinjiang in 2009 and the awarding of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to Lui Xiabo are all evidence of “foreign hostile forces” and Westerners’ “ill intentions” (Wang, 2011, p.69).

This time it’s different

This time it’s different. China’s expansion will be different from the “imperialism and hegemony of the United States and ‘the West’ because it is aimed at restoring justice in an unjust world order” (Hughes, 2011, p.605). Realists such as Yan Xuetong offer a moral argument about China’s rise. Yan claims that China is only concerned with national rejuvenation and regaining their “lost international status rather than obtaining something new.” He believes that by dismantling the unipolar configuration of the world, China will make the Asia-Pacific region more peaceful, the world more civilized, bring about a booming world economy and contribute to scientific progress (Yan, 2001). Not to be misunderstood, Yan advocates that “Peaceful rise” is a dangerous theory which impedes China’s ability to act forcefully to protect its national sovereignty and interests, especially with regards to Taiwan. This is echoed the more nationalistic writings of Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu who argues in his book, China’s Dream that “Chinese cultural and racial superiority will allow it to outpace the

United States economically” and bring in an “era of ‘Yellow Fortune’” (Saunders, 2010, p.9; Hughes, 2011, p.606).

Peaceful Rise (Peaceful Development) Construct

That China will rise peacefully, without threatening the current world order is a policy produced as a direct response to China threat theories and discourses. At the 2007 17th Party Congress held every five years, President Hu Jintao reiterated that China’s foreign policy will follow the path of peaceful development and pursue a win-win international strategy (Wu, 2008, p.15). The concept of a “peaceful rise” was first discussed in 1998 by Yan Xuetong with three other researchers at the China Institute for International Relations (CICIR) (Narayanan, 2007). Zheng Bijian, the then Vice Principal of the Central Party School articulated the concept of a “peaceful rise” of China during the 2003 Boao Forum for Asia. Wen Jiabao (2003) at a speech at Harvard University introduced this concept by declaring “We are determined to secure a peaceful international environment and a stable domestic environment in which to concentrate on our own development, and with it to help promote world peace and development.” Hu Jintao officially launched this argument as a strategic choice for China in December 2003. By mid 2004, the phrase had changed to “peaceful development” and by 2006 Hu Jintao declared that China’s principle objective was to build a “harmonious world” (Rabonovitch, 2008, p.41).

Peaceful rise (from now referred to as “peaceful development”) is about the “soft power” aspects of participating in the globalized economy and lifting the Chinese population’s standard of living into a middle income bracket. Importantly for liberalists, the “peaceful development” theory holds that China will not seek hegemony and attempt to destabilize the international order. Peaceful development is echoed in the liberalist view that states with high economic interdependence are prone to foster peace as this is more profitable than war. States therefore must choose between being a ‘trading’ state, concerned with gaining wealth through commerce or a ‘territorial’ state, obsessed with military expansion (Copeland, 1996).

Table 6. *Liberalist arguments supporting ‘Peaceful development’*

| Economic | Military | Ideological |
|--|---|--|
| Continued economic and political reforms | Military spending is considered routine, moderate and long-overdue | Harmonious society will be created if all act according to the ‘rules’ |
| Plans for a ‘well-off’ society | No recent military incursions | Competing social interests are balanced |
| Working within current world system | Security sought through institutions, cooperation and interdependence | Broad social support |
| Deepening economic ties make conflict unlikely | | Cooperative internationalism |

“Peaceful Development” Theory Seen Through CLA**Table 7. *Alternative future - peaceful development***

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Litany | Focus on economic growth and securing comfortable life for its people. |
| Systemic causes | Internal security environment and economic growth important to maintain power. |
| Discourse / worldview | Liberalist international relations worldview. Rejuvenation of China to regain its lost status. Restoration of fairness as a recognised power rather than through military or territorial gains. |
| Myth / metaphor | Tianxia or Grand Harmony. Tribute system where all neighbouring countries lived in harmony respecting China’s cultural and civilisational superiority. |

Litany

The message at this level is one of stability, development and cooperation. The central image that China wants to create is that of a “Harmonious Society” which President Hu Jintao described in 2006 as “one that development in a comprehensive way, which gives full play to modern ideas like democracy, rule of the law, fairness, justice, vitality, stability, orderliness and harmonious co-existence between the humankind and nature” (People’s Daily, online). In order to do this China will behave in a way that respects the current international order while

pursuing a higher standard of living for its people and more active role in the international community.

There is a strong narrative link between the litany level and all other levels, where the messages reinforce each other and support a simple view that “most Chinese people merely hope that their nation can grow to be as rich as the United States and can secure proper respect in the international community” (Yan, 2001, p.36).

Systemic causes level

It is generally accepted that China is working within the current world system and as such is regarded as a status quo state. “What separates China from other states, and indeed previous global powers, is that not only is it ‘growing up’ within a milieu of international institutions far more developed than ever before, but more importantly, it is doing so while making active use of these institutions to promote the country’s development of global power status”(Lanteigne as cited by Ikenberry, 2008, p.24). The number of international institutions China is a member of is no small matter; is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council with veto power and is the largest contributor of peace keeping personnel among the five members, a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2001, a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank with a growing voice, and an active participant in a number of regional organisations including the ASEAN-China dialogue, ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, S. Korea), ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), East Asia Summit, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Asia Europe Meeting (Li and Worm, 2011). It has joined well over 1,000 international institutions and organizations which seek to both uphold the international order as well as reform the international order to balance its interests. China has gained a great deal of material accumulation by working within this system and the trend is clearly towards continued integration.

The problems concerning the Chinese leadership at this level are economic growth and gaining acceptance as a great power (Brzeninski & Mearsheimer, 2005). The Chinese government appears to be well aware of challenges facing these interrelated factors and as a result have committed itself to further structural reforms in the 12th five-year plan (2011-

2015) delivered by Premier Wen Jiabao in March 2011. So the solutions offered at this level are about continuing to grow the economy within the current world system but one that also contributes to sustainable environmental outcomes.

Worldview/discourse level

There are a number of elements to the liberalist worldview that are important here. Perhaps the most important is the rejection of the realist worldview that states are “trapped in a struggle for power and security” (Burchill, 2009, p.58). The diplomatic philosophy is to maintain a strong, united and independent China so that it can continue to pursue its goal of economic development. If there are times where in pursuing these goals, China appears aggressive as “China threat” proponents charge, it is because of a “Chinese Cult of Defense”, a combination of two strands of culture - Confucian/Sun Tzu element and the Realpolitik element. The Confucian/Sun Tzu element promotes a primarily pacifistic, non-expansionist view while the Realpolitik is predisposed to deploy force when confronted (Johnson, 2009, p.10).

The ‘liberal internationalists’ group of Chinese thinkers including Zheng Bijan, Qin Yaqing and Shi Yinhong believe that China is and must continue to be a peaceful and responsible member of the international order (Leonard, 2008). The overriding narrative of the Chinese worldview is that China has sought to join the institutions that support the current system of international rules. In working within the market system and established institutions it has been able to achieve massive economic benefits and will ultimately be able to increase its power and influence within these already established systems. This is a world where China is a successful trading nation, on a path to prosperity and increasingly sharing ‘certain basic values with the US’ which include a commitment to the free market (Jia & Rosecrance, 2010, p.78). The tone of repeated and consistent messages around ‘peace, development and cooperation’ is reassuring. Premier, Wen Jiabao’s message that “The Chinese government and people are willing to work with the international community to respond to risks and challenges, share in development opportunities, and make new contributions to humanity’s lofty causes of peace and development” requires some consideration (Wen, March 5, 2011, p.39).

Metaphor/myth level

As an ancient culture, China has a number of deep narratives from which to draw the underlying stories as to what the future should look like. The roots of the “Peaceful development” concept can be found in the Chinese philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism.

Tianxia - all under heaven

This vision of a utopian world where all things were in balance sits as both a worldview and a myth. Tianxia originally “was shaped only by the Chinese experience” which “embodied the idea of universalism and a superior moral authority that guided behaviour in a civilised world” (Wang, 2006). The concept in recent times has been more broadly applied to a universal utopian system and is consistent in message to those in the West who desire ‘world peace’ or ‘world governance’. There is clearly a desire to return to the time before China’s interaction with the West, when China was the centre of the region’s political, cultural and economic system - indeed it thought itself to be the centre of the world. It is well known what happened from there; what followed for the Chinese is known as the ‘Century of Humiliation’ and often used as an argument to substantiate the need for a return to the utopian Sinocentric world order with its guiding Confucian moral superiority.

Tianxia is seen as a way to give priority to mutual benefit where the global public interest doesn’t strive for interstate competition with winners and losers as seen in the Westphalian system (Zhao, 2008). At a policy level, Tianxia claims the grand strategy for the future of China will be won by concepts of peace, development and cooperation - all key elements of China’s stated foreign policy (Wu, 2008). Understanding Tianxia and the repeated use of Confucian concepts disparaging the use of force does offer some assurances that China does not seek conflict and perhaps even opens some room for greater understanding of cultural factors shaping China’s decision making.

As a non-democratic, authoritarian state in a region with democratic societies who’s regional security relies on the large liberal democracy of the United States, China faces challenges in its capacity to establish the legitimacy of this discourse without seeing it as “a hunger for nationalistic solutions to global issues” (Callahan, 2008, p.759). Blame is often placed on

stereotypical thinking in the West for not fully embracing this concept (Wu, 2008). This myth also embraces a cure for the growing social economic inequality in China but is unclear on how an essentially Confucian ideology will prove as a model for an already established world order.

Conclusion

*China is finding itself. We have a new will to build a certain kind of society
(and) this is irreversible. (Pocha, 2005)*

The transformation of China in the last thirty years has changed the world, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. If China's leaders and citizens do not engage in creating a positive preferred future and the rest of the world does not respond in a constructive and creative way, the future of the international order and perhaps the planet could be threatened. Each of the futures presented in this article is seen to be the 'disowned self' of the other, whereby it disowns or pushes away its opposite (Inayatullah, 2007). As long as the opposite future pushes away its alternative, we cannot discover or develop alternative scenarios that sit outside our discursive frames. By viewing the future of China through the narrow lens of IR theory, without examining the deeper myths and worldviews held by those interest groups claiming expertise, it is not possible to move to a future beyond the planned. IR theory in the West is considered a general theory and as such may be resistant to incorporating futures thinking and methodologies into constructing policy analysis. This is a mistake. I argue that because the future cannot be predicted with any sort of accuracy, it is important to challenge the conclusions made by IR theory and make use of broader and deeper perspectives in order to move toward preferred images of the future. Only in this way, by broadening the research agenda to explore the deeper layers of the way strategic identity is formed, can we move away from continued limited and potentially dangerous thinking and allow a new story of transformation to occur.

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CHAPTER 5

**Alternative images of China in 2035: A
case study of Tamkang University
workshops**

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Alternative images of China in 2035: A case study of Tamkang University workshops

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of scenario planning workshops held on 10 and 13 December 2013 on the futures of 'China (PRC) in 2035' at the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies (GIFS) at Tamkang University in Taiwan. The workshops were structured around Inayatullah's (2008) six pillars foresight process and employed the futures triangle, causal layered analysis and creation of scenarios to create plausible futures. Four images were imagined: (1) the probable future, The King of the World or Next Superpower; (2) the feared future, The Hunger Games (China Threat), (3) the preferred future, A New Gaia; and (4) the alternative future, New Revolution.

Introduction

On 10 and 13 December 2013, scenario-planning workshops on the futures of "China (PRC) in 2035"¹ were held at the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies (GIFS) at Tamkang University (Tamkang) in Taiwan.² Futures studies is compulsory for all undergraduate students at Tamkang University, who must take one futures class during the course of their study. The students from GIFS were chosen as a suitable pool of participants to develop future scenarios for the People's Republic of China (China) because of their knowledge of futures methodologies, their diverse educational backgrounds as well as their familiarity with issues regarding the "rise of China" and China's changing regional role. A number of students have travelled in China as tourists, to visit family or have lived there as university students. The workshops were additionally aimed at building the capacity of Taiwan's future leaders to envision better futures for China and Taiwan as well as to give them experience with the tools and mindsets needed to shape the kind of future relationship with China they imagine. Applying a futures approach in the form of the development of scenarios additionally allows policy-makers to learn what non-traditional actors, in this case university students, can add to the discussion around China's futures. Taiwan has a unique relationship with China. In 1949 the Kuomintang (KMT) government of Chiang Kai-Shek withdrew from the Chinese mainland to the island of Taiwan after their defeat by Mao Zedong's Communist Party in a protracted civil war. Chiang Kai-shek continued to proclaim himself and his government as the legitimate rulers of the Republic of China (its

territory including Taiwan), while Mao established the People's Republic of China (PRC), a one-party socialist state controlled by the Communist Party. China still considers Taiwan to be part of its territory. While recognising that identity is fluid, the majority of Taiwanese are native born and have no historical relationship with mainland China (Wang, 2007). The so-called "1992 consensus" between Taiwan and China states that "there is one China, with each side having its own interpretation of what that means" (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada, online). Taiwan began to democratise in the mid-1980s, after the death of Chiang Kai-Shek (1975), although martial law remained in place until 1987. There are two major political parties, the KMT, which generally favours reunification with China, and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which in the past has strongly favoured declaring Taiwan's formal independence from China. It is important to note, and it was communicated to me by a number of students and faculty members at Tamkang, that Taiwan does not consider itself part of China, nor do the people living in Taiwan consider themselves to be Chinese; they are Taiwan and Taiwanese respectively.

For China, there is much speculation about "where to go from here". A number of recent books and long-standing theories highlight the diversity of opinion, especially in the West, about China's futures. Schell and Delury (2013) believe that China will at last achieve its two-century quest for wealth and power (*fuqiang*) and will be able to claim its "rightful" place among nations in a relatively peaceful way. Martin Jacques (2009) also predicts that China will overtake the United States as the world's superpower and the yuan/renminbi will replace the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. Beardson (2013) is less optimistic about China's future due to the burden that a host of demographic factors – a shrinking labour force, relentless ageing, extreme gender disparity, and a falling population – will place on economic growth and government stability. Altman (2013), too, suggests a scenario in which China may fail to reach its potential due to a lack of transparency, favouring of conformism over innovation, corruption and burdensome bureaucratic procedures, all of which limit productivity improvements, economic growth and living standards. International relations pundits such as Gertz (2000) and Mearsheimer (2001) believe that China is a threat to the West in general, and to the United States in particular, and imagine that war is likely as China strives for regional hegemony, also making it a threat to its immediate neighbours. Gill (2007) suggests that China will engage in a peaceful rise as it seeks to further modernise and develop. Understandably, many Chinese writers represent

China's rise in the region as peaceful and question any suggestion or action that could be seen as "containment", such as the United States' "pivot to Asia" (Wang, 2013; Saunders, 2013).

But the futures of a country are not shaped just by the desires of business and political elites or by international relations theorists, and while futures archetypes are well accepted, the way individuals see the world shapes the future that they see (Inayatullah, 2002). It was in this spirit that students of Tamkang University sought to create their own mental maps and images of China's futures using the six pillars foresight process; this paper discusses the results. The images of the futures, including the drivers and the weights, are the students', not mine. I have provided additional detail about the drivers and weights identified by the students as well as applying them to their respective images to provide some context for the reader. The scenarios are from a Taiwanese perspective and I have intentionally omitted commonly used comparisons between China and the United States because although there was an acknowledgement of the interplay between the two countries, it was not the main focus of the workshops. Students communicated with each other in Mandarin and responded to me in English with the help of an interpreter. It should be said at the outset that, because of time constraints, not all of the questions (below) could be explored. Also, because some of the students had to leave during the running of the workshop to attend to other commitments there was some disruption to the development of the scenarios.

Three of the images of the future were discussed using causal layered analysis (CLA, discussed in the Methodology section), but the first – the probable future – was not; the first scenario was discussed in building the futures triangle rather than through CLA due to time constraints. Subsequent futures – the feared, the preferred and the alternative – were discussed using the drivers and weights to assist in developing a CLA. Four images were imagined: (1) the probable future, The King of the World or Next Superpower, assumes continued economic and military growth with growing use of soft power; (2) the feared future, The Hunger Games (China Threat), sees a collapse of the benefits of a richer, more powerful China that uses its gains to impose further authoritarian and undemocratic governance on its people and neighbours; (3) the preferred future, A New Gaia, sees the environment valued and China becoming a leader in sustainable development, and; (4) the alternative future, New Revolution, in which China is politically transformed, human rights take precedence, democracy can exist and China's people live in a fair and just society, but there is the possibility of civil war.

Methodology and Case Study

The workshops were structured around Inayatullah's (2008) six pillars foresight process in order to answer the following questions:

1. What is the history of the issue? Which events and trends have created the present? If the current trends continue, what will the future look like? Why?
2. Which future are you afraid of? Do you think that you can transform this future into a desired future?
3. What are the hidden assumptions of your predicted future? Are some assumptions taken for granted?
4. What are some alternatives to your predicted or feared future? If you change some of your assumptions, what alternatives emerge?
5. What is your preferred future? Which future do you wish to become reality for yourself or your country?
6. How might you get there? What steps can be taken to move towards your preferred future?
7. Is there a supportive narrative, a story? If not, create a metaphor or story that can provide cognitive and emotive support for realising the desired future (Inayatullah, 2008).

By this process scenarios for alternative futures of China were developed. In the six pillars analysis framework, scenario planning is the fifth: the creation of alternatives (Inayatullah, 2007). The other pillars of the framework most important to this report are: (1) the futures triangle, (2) causal layered analysis (CLA) and, as mentioned, (3) scenarios. Through an analysis of these three dimensions, a plausible future can be created (Inayatullah, 2007).

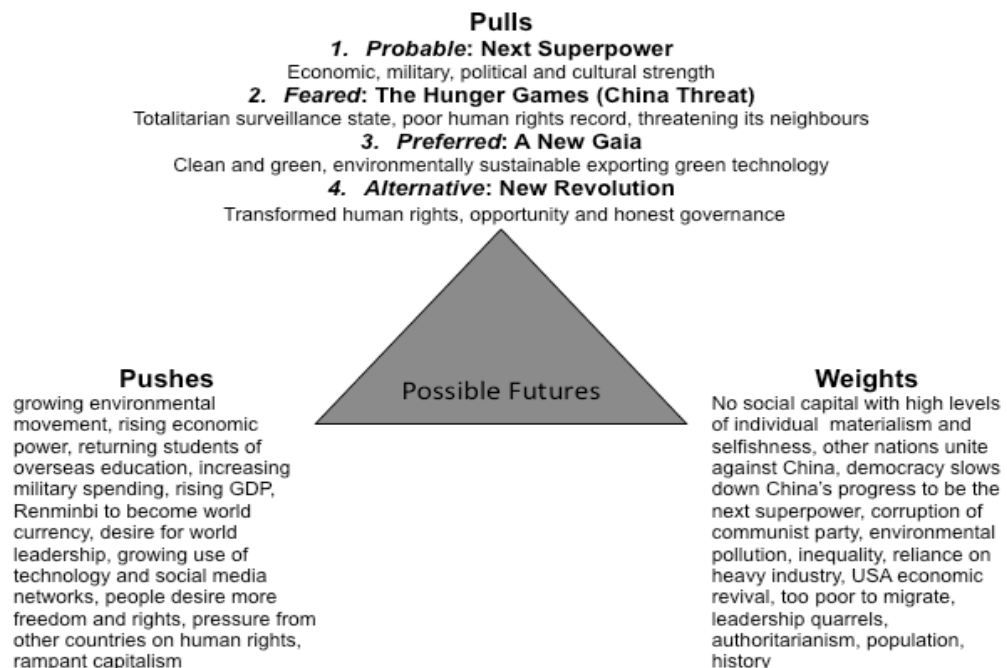
The futures triangle was used as a way to map three dimensions: the pushes or present drivers of change, the pulls, the future visions of change and the weights of the past – the

deep structures creating barriers to change (Inayatullah, 2007). Through mapping, the students were able to see that the future is dynamic, influenced not by individual elements but by interacting processes (Inayatullah, 2007). CLA, developed by Sohail Inayatullah (2004), requires the user to travel through four overlapping layers (litany, systemic causes, discourse/worldview and myth/metaphor) to question or 'undefine' the future and make the units of analysis problematic, and his method is described below. The litany identifies the official popular version of events. This is often presented by news or other media for political purposes, and is often exaggerated. Solutions at this level are short term. The next level, systemic causes and their effects, is concerned with exploring the interrelated social, technological, economic, environmental, political and historical factors relevant to an issue and affecting the underlying data. At this level, the data can be questioned, but not the paradigm within which the question is framed. Solutions at this level often come from partnerships, between the government and academia, for example. The third level concerns the discourse or worldview. This is the level of thinkers and philosophers who recognise the deeper positions that are shaping their assumptions behind the systemic and litany views. Solutions at this level require changes in worldviews and paradigms, usually brought about by social movements or public intellectuals. The fourth level is that of unconscious myths and metaphors. Solutions at this level involve finding or creating new stories.

The workshops each opened with an explanation of the success factors of futures studies: default future, used future, disowned future, alternative future, desired future and the capacity to align the inner story with strategy (Inayatullah, 2008). The default future refers to a future in which nothing changes and we just keep following present trends. When asked to consider what they thought China's default future was, the participants identified images of continued corruption and growing economic and political power in the pursuit of unfettered capitalism and overdevelopment. The used future is the result of people doing the same thing over and over again, often as a result of others reinforcing certain thoughts, though it doesn't actually meet their needs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when the students were later asked about the *probable* future of China based on current trends, they described linear economic growth and mass consumption similar to that of the United States – a used future. The disowned future describes why things fall apart; this is the future pushed away in pursuit of the images or thoughts others may have reinforced in a person's mind. When asked what China has had to disown to become economically successful, workshop participants provided images

of breakdown in family values, environmental ruin and social inequality. Alternative futures are about recognising that there is more than one future and that alternatives can only be known through scenarios. If we cannot see the alternatives, we make the same mistakes over and over again. It is not possible to precisely predict a future but by focusing on a range of alternatives we can prepare better for uncertainty. This is linked to the desired future; people are often able to identify the future they don't want rather than the one they do want. The inner story explains that there must be an alignment between the individual and collective inner story or metaphor and the strategy that helps to realise that story. If the inner story doesn't match the strategy, it fails (Inayatullah, 2008). Students believed that the inner story for many Chinese was about money worship – growing materialism and selfishness – and that if the Chinese government impedes this accumulation of wealth there will be conflict. Figure 1, below, highlights the pushes, pulls and weights the students identified for China.

Figure 1. Futures triangle of possible futures of China



Probable Future: Next Superpower or “The King of the World”

Based on what the students believed to be some of the main drivers for China – its growing economic, military and cultural influence, this future – *The Next Superpower* or *King of the World* – was considered to be the most probable image. This future follows the conventional linear path, reported by Goldman Sachs in 2003, that China would overtake the US and become

the world's largest economy in 2041 (Wilson and Purushothaman, 2003). The metaphor also assumes that China's growing economic power will translate into superpower status, with the ability to adopt a unilateral approach to its relationship with the world, but without the full consequences of the feared *Hunger Games* future. The students didn't necessarily believe that the Chinese government or the Chinese people wanted to deviate much from this path to becoming a superpower as it was a matter of historical pride, recalling the "century of humiliation" (discussed below), which was seen as both a driver and a weight. As one student said, "When the Chinese have the economic superiority, population, wisdom of the Chinese, they will be the king finally".

The Chinese themselves when asked what global role their country should play, only 14 percent of ordinary Chinese replied "single world leader", 45 percent wanted a shared role while 19 percent wanted no leadership role at all for Beijing. In comparison, when asked what global role their country should play, only 9 percent of Americans replied "single world leader", 74 percent wanted a "shared world leader" role, and 12 percent wanted no leadership role at all (Swaine et al., 2013). Superpower status is often measured along four axes of power: economic, military, political and cultural (or what political scientist Joseph Nye has termed "soft" power) and a description of the major trends in each area is provided below (Miller, 2005).

Economic power

Until the early 1800s, China's economy was the world's largest, some thirty percent larger than that of Europe and its colonies. However, between 1840 and 1940, China's economy collapsed. This period came to be known among Chinese people as the "century of humiliation" (Maddison, 2012). The IMF has predicted that the Chinese economy will overtake that of the United States by 2016 in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), and that by 2025 it will become the world's largest economy with roughly 20% of world output (The Economist, 2011, p.7). It is projected that "As China continues to rise, the United States is perceived to be in at least relative, if not absolute, decline," perhaps leading to tensions in the current world system (Cronin and Kaplan, 2012, p.8). There was also fear among the students that a consequence of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement between China and Taiwan would see China economically overwhelm Taiwan.

One factor identified by one student that could prevent China from becoming a superpower was the prospect that “the United States will rise up again” meaning that the US economy would recover and begin to exert stronger influence around the world. Another factor possibly preventing China’s continued rise is a profound demographic shift driven by the “mutually reinforcing phenomena of declining fertility and ageing” resulting in a labour-shortage economy (Das and N’Diaye, 2013, p.7). The reserve of labourers brought in from the poorer regions to work in the factories reached a peak of 150 million in 2010 and will collapse by 2020, reaching the so-called Lewis Turning Point (LTP) sometime between 2020 and 2025. A consequence of reaching the LTP is that inflation begins to rise and, as the middle class grows, income inequality, already a serious issue in China, is likely to worsen (Evans-Pritchard, 2013). China’s economic rise also faces competition from other economies such as India, Brazil and the countries of South East Asia, including Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, and even from unlikely sources of strong economic growth, such as South Sudan (32%), Libya (20%) Sierra Leone (17%) and Turkey (11%) (International Monetary Fund, 2013).

China’s economic growth is at a 14-year low and there are concerns that high levels of debt, encouraged by the state-owned banks in order to support high growth rates, have resulted in too many non-performing loans, risking China’s growth rate (BBC News, 2014). Yao Jingyuan, former chief economist at the National Bureau of Statistics of China, has flippantly said that even small dogs could operate China’s banking system (Blum, 2013). In order to boost productivity, consumption and growth, the government is encouraging urbanisation by loosening the *hukou* system (household registration) that restricts movement to urban regions by migrant workers. This system has resulted in a number of inequalities between rural and urban workers with an estimated 260 million migrant workers denied equal access to services as provided in the cities including access to housing, pensions, education and healthcare services (An, 2013).

Military Spending

Taiwan’s future in the face of rising military spending from China was a major concern of the students who believed that China would try to occupy Taiwan when it becomes strong enough. China’s military is growing and it now has the world’s second largest defence budget after the United States. Officially, China’s heavy military investment is no more than creating a

professional military through modernisation of equipment and training, including information systems, as defence against foreign aggression (Defense, 2013). Yet there are potential dangers in this change. Changes in the status quo and rising tensions have led to an arms race in South East Asia (Kurlantzick, 2014). The Senkaku/Diaoyutai/Diaoyu Islands are a notable potential flashpoint, claimed by China, Japan and Taiwan. Both China and Japan recently conducted military drills to “protect” these islands – the Japanese from Chinese incursion, the Chinese from Japanese incursion (RT News, 2014). Notably, China’s first aircraft carrier the Liaoning participated in these drills, with the Japanese unveiling the 9,500-ton helicopter carrier Izumo soon after. India, too, has launched its first aircraft carrier, Vikrant, sparking calls from the Global Times for China to speed up its carrier production (Einhorn, 2013). Interestingly the students were not concerned about the Senkaku/Diaoyutai/Diaoyu Islands dispute believing the situation was about China wanting to ‘pretend’ it is strong.

In November 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton laid out the United States’ strategy of a “pivot” to Asia. The overarching ambition of this pivot is to establish a web of partnerships for stability in the Asia-Pacific similar to that which the United States helped to construct in post-war Europe. Secretary of State Clinton reaffirmed that the alliances the US has with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand will continue to support regional peace and the region’s economic ascent (Clinton, 2011). In China, a few hardliners believe that the “pivot” policy is intended to intimidate and contain China, though most analysts believe that US engagement in the region is positive, saying that there are “no fundamental, structural, or irreconcilable differences” between the two countries (quoted in Sutter et al., 2013, p.17). Many Taiwanese, including the workshop students, are particularly concerned about China’s military spending and its potential use of force (Morrison, 2003). If China is able to “reunite” Taiwan with Mainland China, it will mark, in a military sense, the emergence of a multipolar world (Kaplan, 2012). China talks about unification with Taiwan being for the good of all “ethnic Chinese” (Kaplan, 2011). For many Chinese the loss of Taiwan was considered to be the nadir of the “century of humiliation” and support for Taiwan, especially by the United States, is viewed as an “imperialist insult” (Gries and Su, 2013, p.74). For Taiwanese people including the students, their future is about independence, self-determination and preservation of their democratic way of life (Wang, 2007).

Political and Cultural (Soft) Power

No other country seeks to emulate China's one party political model (Miller, 2005). Larry Diamond goes so far as to say that countries like China, Cuba and North Korea may be facing the "70 year itch" whereby the personal charisma of their founding leaders fades with the passing of their generation and their political legitimacy becomes highly vulnerable (Diamond, 2013). President Xi Jinping seems to be in no mood to introduce more freedoms into the Chinese political system. In April 2013, 'Document #9' was released to party cadres to warn of "seven perils" that threaten the Party, including: "Western constitutional democracy", promotion of "universal values" of human rights, Western-inspired notions of media independence and civic participation, ardently pro-market "neo-liberalism", and "nihilist" criticisms of the party's traumatic past (Buckley, 2013). For the students, the absence of progressing in these areas not only determined their feared future, but were also important elements in realising their preferred and alternative futures. Political change is happening, but its ultimate shape is not yet clear. The Chinese territory of Hong Kong is going to the polls in 2017 for the election of its chief executive. This will be the first real test of universal suffrage, providing the government in Beijing with a dilemma: how willing is it to consider abandoning full control if the winner is not acceptable to the CCP (Carlson, 2014)?

The use of soft power is a well-recognised and growing tool for China. In 2007, President Hu Jintao told the 17th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party that China needed to invest more in its soft power resources (Nye, 2012). The Olympic Games of 2008 and the Shanghai World Expo in 2010 were considered instrumental in increasing China's soft power. Several hundred Confucius Institutes have been created around the world to teach its language and culture (Nye, 2012). China is a generous aid donor to much of the developing world, particularly Africa (Wolf, 2013), though aid figures range anywhere from US\$10 to \$189 billion for 2011 depending on the classification of the aid given (Brant, 2013). Increasing soft power also poses many challenges for the Chinese government: internet censorship, nation branding (especially in relation to food safety and product quality), environmental degradation; and the high profiles of a number of its dissidents, including Ai Wei Wei and Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, do not make for positive images and have led to increasing scrutiny of the country and its leaders. Ultimately for the students, China possesses more economic than

political or cultural soft power and this was seen as the primary threat to Taiwan's continuation of a modern open society.

Feared Future: The Hunger Games (China Threat)

For the students there does not appear to have been much difference between the future of China they thought probable and the future they feared. The difference is between a vision of China as strong militarily and economically and is relatively benign and a vision in which, once China achieves this strength, will become either expansionist or politically chaotic; both scenarios creating ripples in Taiwan's well-being. The feared scenario closely resembled Anthony's (2007) metaphor of *Big Brother*, the "nightmare world of government controlled dictatorship, where "The Party" controlled even the very space within people's minds" described in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Drivers of major concern were the limitations on freedom of expression, especially via social media, and a lack of respect for human rights. From these drivers emerged the dystopian metaphor of *The Hunger Games*, describing the complete control "The Capitol" exerts over its citizens, including the totalitarian excesses of surveillance, curtailment of free expression, arbitrary enforcement of the law and even torture. It is noteworthy that the students felt that in order for China to avoid becoming a "predator", democracy and openness to other cultures and countries was needed. Democracy is discussed in the fourth scenario, *New Revolution*.

Table 1. *CLA Feared Future: The Hunger Games (China Threat)*

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Litany | Headline: China of <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> in 2035 “Heil (Our President)” – anti-America (our enemy) We’re going to rule all of Asia <i>Solution</i> : balance of power between society and politics |
| System | Mind control and brainwashing through control of media, authoritarian culture and government <i>Solution</i> : do not limit freedom of information, respect different points of view and cultural |
| Worldview | Top always on top, bottom always on bottom <i>Solution</i> : Democracy |
| Myth | Hunger Games <i>Solution</i> : love and interaction with other countries and cultures |

In summary this CLA focused on the fear as well as the solution including need for the CCP to give greater respect for freedom and democracy. One student described the CLA as follows.

For the litany, all the newspapers will create an image of an idol in their leadership, like Mao. At the same time they will try to convince the people that they are the best and that they will try to rule all of Asia. The group believed the solution would be through greater democracy. Otherwise the system would create a social class that is always on top and a bottom class that is always on the bottom and try to make this irreversible. They (CCP) will try their best to control the social media to brainwash the people. Also they (CCP) will try to achieve a cultural dictatorship by organizing nations around only one kind of culture, like North Korea. It is important to insure freedom of information. The solution is education to respect and care for different cultures. Teach that everyone is different which will allow for different worldviews and cultures. Once again the group emphasised that in the worldview the top is always on top, and the bottom always on the bottom; like lower social standing that immigrants face. Solution is democracy in this way those from the lower class will be able to rise to power. Humanism is important here. The metaphor needs to change to love.

Technology and social media networks

The growth of social media around the world has provided a way for individuals to interact with a large number of people and to share news and information that might have been impossible by other means. In China, by the end of December 2012 74.5% of the total population had Internet access (CNNIC, 2013). As a driver, one student believed that, “The social network will keep opening up and will become a huge push for Chinese people into the future”. There was a perception that many Chinese people were insular in their thinking and that social media was a way to begin interacting with the world. Youtube, Facebook and Twitter are currently banned in China, but their Chinese substitutes YouKu, RenRen and Sina Weibo are growing just as strongly as their foreign antecedents (Shen, 2012). The Internet is, according to Elizabeth Economy, “evolving into a virtual political system in China: the Chinese people inform themselves, organise, and protest online” (Economy, 2010, p.3). The power of the Internet has been mobilised to launch a number of successful campaigns against a variety of public concerns, especially corruption, environmental pollution, and limited press freedom. According to Gary Wang, founder of Tudou, China’s largest online video site, “Younger generations are getting a taste for being able to express themselves. It will be very difficult to put that into a cage. I’m optimistic that this will be unstoppable” (Osawa, 2013).

The Chinese government has been very active in trying to control online content that it deems to be sensitive and harmful to social stability, implementing the so-called “Great Firewall of China” to block such material. There are 20,000- 50,000 Internet police (*wang jing*) and Internet monitors (*wang guanban*), as well as an estimated 250,000-300,000 “50 cent party members” (*wumao dang*) at all levels of government (central, provincial, and local) involved in the censorship process (King et al., 2013). A recent study to measure the overall purpose of the censorship program and found that the Chinese government is not interested in suppressing criticism of the Communist Party, as is widely thought, but in reducing the possibility of any kind of collective action, which it considers to be the death knell of authoritarian regimes (King et al., 2013). The government’s control over the media continues to be tested by microblogs and other online tools used to share and access uncensored information, and until the government gives up its quest for total control of information, the cat and mouse game will continue (Freedom House, 2014).

Desire for more freedom and human rights; pressure from other countries on human rights

In expressing their feared future, one group said that their fear was “a government that won’t change or adapt. They want to keep their power to control. They are not ready to face human rights or freedom of speech”. The assumption was based on the CCP remaining in power or “always the boss” as one student expressed. This view is supported by Human Rights Watch (HRW) when they unveiled their assessment of China’s 2009-2010 National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), questioning the sincerity of the Chinese government’s commitment to take human rights more seriously and noting its failure to implement key aspects of the NHRAP (HRW, 2011). HRW recently released unflatteringly report states that the government remains an authoritarian one-party system, giving a list of measures including: arbitrary curbs on freedom of expression, association, and religion, including censorship of the press, the Internet, and the publishing industry, prohibition of independent labour unions and human rights organisations and the imposition of highly repressive policies in ethnic minority areas such as Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia (HRW, 2013a). Sophie Richardson, China Director of HRW, questions the Chinese government’s ability to ignore the growing expectations of Chinese citizens and of the global community for change saying, “China can’t afford another decade without reform and rights protections” (HRW, 2013b). The students believed the Chinese government was a ‘menace’ to try to control its people. One group identified that China needed to be less like North Korea, pay more respect to human rights, equality and wealth and that ultimately this could only be done through a change in the system of government. Although the Chinese government has approved the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2012-2015) (China Daily, 2012), the students were less optimistic these goals would be achieved, believing that the weight of Chinese history, from which China is still recovering, was preventing the necessary change to human rights and freedom of speech.

Preferred Future: A New Gaia

The Gaia theory sees the earth as a living, self-regulating organism that seeks to maintain the physical and chemical conditions optimal for life on the planet. It is also a metaphor for environmental sustainability (Stober, 2009). The preferred future that featured in a couple of the groups was one of a China that was clean, green and environmentally sustainable, qualities that would flow on to the rest of the region, including Taiwan. Importantly for this scenario – A

New Gaia – China is not just seen as a consumer of green technologies, but has become the leading innovator and exporter as well. The current measure by which the world has come to know China – its GDP – will be replaced with others that include environmental sustainability and knowledge skills. The existing government paradigms of production and consumption will be challenged by social awareness that values long-term thinking, environmentalism, equity, global partnership, and local empowerment (Goffman, 2013). Pollutants from China often form heavy and dangerous smog over Taiwan. Air pollution is a serious problem in Taiwan, which ranks 35th out of 38 countries surveyed by the World Health Organization (WHO), with Taipei 551st out of the 565 cities profiled (The China Post, 2011). While the workshop task was about the futures of China, it was clear that students would like to see quality of life in Taiwan improve differently from the current path of continued industrial sprawl and overdevelopment as well.

Table 2. *CLA Preferred Future: A New Gaia*

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Litany | Headline: Japan Buys Green Energy Technology from China (China Now World Leader in Green Energy) |
| System | China's labour and material costs reduced, more efficient government Brain gain through freedom of movement for international labour People and government focus on environmental policies at the highest levels |
| Worldview | Green energy = money & health and is a major driver in the world Sustainability is the most important goal in policy, education, culture and knowledge work |
| Myth | A New Gaia |

This CLA was summarised by one group as the following.

In the litany Japan buys green energy from China. This will be cheaper and more efficient. The system provides cheaper labour and materials and efficient government. All international talent will work together. Government and people all pay attention to environmental policies and prioritise environmental policy. The worldview needs to change to believe that environmental sustainability is the most

important government policy. This can be done through cultural and information exchange and education about the importance of environmental sustainability. In Chinese culture we've been accepting the negative environmental consequences of growth, but this needs to come back to some balance, like Tai Chi. We need to love the world just like your family. China can work with all the countries in Asia to build a green energy grid. What can stop this is if China wants to be selfish and not share with other countries, especially if it is too hard to share with Japan and the U.S.. Green energy needs to be seen as profitable and good for business.

Environmental movement

Elizabeth Economy (2004) famously called attention to China's environmental policy (or lack of it) in *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. In this work, Economy described "how a centuries-old tradition of trashing the earth, exacerbated by China's helter-skelter economic expansion since the late 1970s, had led to devastation: erosion, flooding, desertification, water and food crises, shrinking forests, and air and water pollution" (Dreyfuss, 2010).

China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gasses and it will produce nearly 50% more than the United States by 2015 (Friedman, 2012). Air quality in Beijing is often so poor that the US Embassy's air quality measuring station can only describe it as "beyond index". A 2010 study conducted by the WHO found outdoor air pollution contributed to 1.2 million premature deaths in China, accounting for almost 40% of the global total. According to a recent Deutsche Bank report, China's air quality will become 70% worse by 2025, due to expected increases in coal burning and vehicular and industrial emissions (Huang, 2013). There are industrial towns where rates of cancer are so high that they are known as "cancer villages". More than half of China's surface water is so polluted that it cannot be treated to make it potable and about one quarter of the country's total land area is now undergoing desertification (Bloomberg News, 2013).

There is fear that local environmental problems will lead to global disasters (Bhuiyan, 2012). This includes the Tamkang students who were mindful that there could be a repeat of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in China with radiation affecting Taiwan. One group believed that

environmental education was the key and that China needed to look toward alternative sources of energy.

Concern for the environment is growing in China, and people are calling on the government to act. In northern China, Li Guixin from Shijiazhuang is suing the government for failing to curb air pollution, saying: “The reason I’m proposing compensation is to let every citizen see that amid this haze, we’re the real victims” (Floto, 2014). Pollution is now the primary motivation for the majority of the estimated 180,000 “mass incidents” that occur in China every year (Bloomberg News, 2013). The message is starting to make an impact; the Chinese government is acting to develop robust policies on green development. According to one government official, spending on development of renewable energy will reach 1.8 trillion yuan (US\$294 billion) in the five years through 2015 as part of the nation’s efforts to counter climate change (Shen, 2013). A pilot emission-trading scheme is being implemented in seven key regions (Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangdong, Tianjin, Hubei and Chongqing) through the period 2013-15 with a national scheme coming into effect by 2015-16 (Reuters, 2014).

Researchers from Harvard and Beijing Tsinghua Universities found that China has the potential to meet all of its electricity demands through wind power projected for 2030 (Rutter, 2009). Before 2020, there are plans to more than double the number of wind turbines to achieve 200GW (gigawatts) of energy production (Shukman, 2014). China is now becoming an exporter of wind technology, with Dongfang Electric Corporation exporting turbines and other technology to a power plant in Sweden projected to be the largest wind power plant in Europe (Steelguru, 2014).

Solar power, too, is making an impact. The U.S. and China are leaders in this clean energy sector, number one and two respectively. China is the world’s largest manufacturer of photovoltaic cells, which convert sunlight directly into electricity, and the U.S. leads in high-tech goods and services that are key components in the solar value chain, as well as being the largest high-volume consumer of finished products (Pew, 2011). China is now the world’s largest producer of solar energy in terms of capacity, installing 12GW of solar power capacity in 2013, edging it closer to its goal of 21GW of capacity by 2015 (Martin, 2014; Shah, 2013).

With China expected to continue to urbanise and develop, it is at a crucial point in time for improving its environmental sustainability. An environmentally sustainable China is not just the preferred future of the students at Tamkang University, but encouragingly appears to be the goal of the Chinese government and people as well.

Alternative Future: New Revolution

The alternative future chosen by the students was one in which gross domestic product (GDP) and maintaining its power were not the driving factors for the Chinese government. Instead China would become a leader in human rights, a place of opportunity for all, meritocracy, and honest governance – much like Singapore today, which ranks well in these areas. President Xi Jinping also believes that Singapore may be an appropriate model for China (Harcher, 2012). “For several years, Xi has led a team investigating the Singapore model and envisaging how it might be applied to China,” (quoted in Harcher, 2012). However, Singapore, at the beginning of its democratic transition, had some key advantages over China, including its small size and strong institutions as a legacy of British rule. To emulate Singapore’s successes, China will need to develop a strong civil society where rule of law is respected, courts are independent, officials accountable, private property protected and human rights accessible (Lee, 2014).

Interestingly the students did not cite Taiwan as an example for China to emulate, even with its distinction of being the first Chinese republic, as well as the first republic of any kind in East Asia (Westad, 2012). Undoubtedly Taiwan stands out as a model for not tolerating official malfeasance with ex-president Chen Shui-bian sentenced to a 20-year prison term for corruption in 2009; an event viewed by some as a sign of a maturing democracy and by others, especially those in Chen’s political party, the DPP, as a vendetta against him for supporting independence from China (Li, 2013). The students saw the Singapore model of governance – a single party democracy – as being more acceptable to the current Chinese government. Somewhat upsetting was the students’ belief that governmental change could only happen through violence or through another revolution.

Table 3. *CLA Alternative Future: New Revolution*

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Litany | Headline: A Fair and Just China (Like Singapore) |
| System | Measure GNH (gross national happiness) not GDP |
| Worldview | Human rights is the top priority of government |
| Myth | A fair and strong country = human rights Solution: Needs a new Chinese revolution |

The CLA for this scenario was described by the students in the following way.

We think that in 2035 China will be a “fair” China. So their social system can become more equitable and this will lead to greater happiness. Because the worldview will change to believe that human rights is the highest responsibility of the government. And so they will view that they are a fair and strong country and this is equal to greater human rights.

Corruption

All groups of students believed that government corruption was the major source of overdevelopment and pollution in China. According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), stealing from the public purse by officials amounts to a loss of around 2 per cent of GDP each year – and that figure is rising (Lee, 2014). Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has said that the extensive involvement of the government in markets and business is a key reason for rampant corruption (Warren, 2014). Many people believe that the bringing to justice of corrupt officials is one of the most important tasks of the Chinese government. In his speech to the 18th Party Congress, President Hu Jintao warned that failing to combat corruption “could prove fatal to the party, and even cause the collapse of the party and the fall of the state” (Hu, 2012).

Democracy

One of the assumptions in the discussion of this scenario was that China would become democratic, or at least partly democratic, in order to create a country where human rights and fairness take precedence over economic growth. For one group, however, democracy was thought to be a weight to China becoming a superpower as democracy would slow down China's efforts shifting the focus away from economic growth toward human rights. It has been observed that the monetary threshold for democratic transition is a GDP per capita of US\$1,000. This transition becomes more likely after reaching US\$3,000 GDP per capita, and after crossing US\$5,000 GDP per capita, a non-democracy will definitely become freer over time (Hu, 2004). According to the CIA's *World Factbook*, China's estimated GDP per capita in 2012 was US\$9,100, comparable to the income level in South Korea and Taiwan in the mid-1980s when those countries made their democratic transitions (Pei, 2013). But by themselves growing incomes are not enough for people to call for greater democratic governance. Rustow (1970) provided three indispensable factors for the genesis of democracy: a sense of national unity, entrenched and serious conflict and a conscious adoption of democratic rules with both politicians and electorate habituated to those rules.

National identity is an area of disagreement in China. While the majority of Chinese consider themselves Han Chinese (92% of the total population), there are an additional 55 ethnic groups (8% of the total population), some of which would prefer self-rule. For Chinese leaders, national unity is threatened by democracy. Democratisation brings with it the likelihood that people will use it to support their claims for independence, especially in Tibet, Xinjiang (Uyghur/Uighur people) and On Rustow's second factor, China could not be considered to be in any kind of serious conflict. Finally there is no evidence of a conscious adoption of democratic rules by the current government (He, 2013). According to Freedom House, China is one of the least free countries in the world, and its outlook is not improving (Freedom House, 2014a; Puddington, 2014). Perhaps just as importantly, Rustow (1970) further said, "democracy is that form of government that derives its just powers from the dissent of up to one half of the governed" (p.363). As a one party state, the CCP would have no plans to share power.

Liu and Chen (2012) observed that mostly Western academics had created terms to describe the longevity of the CCP – expressions like “illiberal adaption”, “rightful resilience” and “authoritarian resilience” – all indicating a pessimistic view of democracy’s role in China’s political future. However, Liu and Chen (2012) go against this perception by claiming that China will begin to democratise around the year 2020. He (2003) contends that: “No matter how strongly the CCP may argue against democracy, a section of the Chinese people still demand democracy as their inherent right, a right that cannot be denied by any intellectual theorising” (p.72). Returning students from Western democratic countries, Taiwan and Japan will not just be returning with degrees, but with exposure to democratic values and concepts such as the rights and responsibilities of the individual, government transparency, equal opportunity and the rule of law. One student expressed how an overseas education would allow, “Chinese people will go abroad and bring back different opinions (to the current) around policy and the next generation can oversee change”. Another student said that when Chinese students come to Taiwan they are always amazed at the level of freedom and that because the focus on the government is about economic growth; it prevents people from acting for the common good. Sina Weibo, with its some 300 million users, allows people to share their discontent with government actions and policies and to stimulate action through displays of mass outrage. By allowing people to debate issues, attack corruption and come together as a community of interest it serves as a platform of training for citizenship. As Minxin Pei (2013) reminds us, “roughly 80 countries have made the transition from authoritarian rule to varying forms and degrees of democracy in the past 40 years”. The hope for students at Tamkang University is that China’s turn will be next.

Conclusion

The futures scenarios for China in 2035 developed by students at Tamkang University are as varied as they are revealing. The students highlighted a number of drivers and weights of concern to them, including China’s lack of human rights, and lack of democracy, its rampant corruption and growing economic clout and their belief in China’s nationalistic desires to become the next superpower. Two of the scenarios created by the students emphasised their feelings of being “threatened” by the rise of China. The probable future assumed that China would increase its regional and global political power as a result of its continuing economic growth. The feared future highlighted the need for China to display more soft power with its own people by

allowing them more freedom of expression and further human rights, and to alleviate concerns of bullying felt by its democratic neighbours. It could be argued that the students' perceptions of China as a potential threat won't change until China shows more substantial progress with its policy of "reform" and "opening up". It is evident that the students believed that China's rise to global prominence should be achieved through the preferred futures in which environmental sustainability and human rights are valued over GDP, combined with respect for more a participatory form of governance. For these scenarios to be realised, the Chinese government must allow its citizens to regain their agency and must also place an emphasis on self-improvement and learning from others.

Within China the power of the trends and issues emphasised by the students in this paper is also recognised as altering the way the government must respond to the desires of the people. Social media, concerns about corruption, pollution, growing income inequality and China's role as a "single power" are changing the relationship between the people and the government. Economic growth is not enough. The alternative scenarios envisioned by the students challenge the probable and even the feared futures for China in 2035. These desired visions are pulling people forward and will influence the future well-being of the Chinese people and of everyone in the region for the next generation and beyond.

Notes

1. China and PRC (People's Republic of China) are used interchangeably. 2035 was chosen because it represents the period after the appointment of the next leader of the CCP; not the current leader (Xi Jinping) or even his successor, but the one following them.
2. Taiwan and ROC (Republic of China) are used interchangeably.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Conclusion

This study has investigated the application of six pillars analysis (Inayatullah, 2008) to understanding the alternative futures of China. Six pillars analysis provides a theory of futures thinking that links futures methods and tools with praxis through: mapping, anticipating, timing, deepening, creating alternatives and transforming (Inayatullah, 2008). Incorporating these six pillars to investigate some futures of China has shown that the futures colonised by international relations experts and economic pundits are problematic and routine. Even among IR scholars there exists anxiety over the “entrenched coloniality and disciplinary straitjacket” contributing to an existential malaise among some specialists (Picq, 2013, pp. 1-2). Several recent books, including Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* and David Harvey’s *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*, have brought the conversation about the contradictions of capitalism into the mainstream and have allowed people to think about and challenge dominant economic theories in new ways. However, the international relations and economics community has not fully engaged with the unconscious and transformative dimensions of futures studies and because of this they are limited in their ability to present layered knowledge, to understand epistemic discourses in order to unpack different ways of knowing, or to create space to identify alternative or more desirable futures. The general theoretical literature points to gaps and failures in the current methods and tools used to question the futures of a country – be they economic, international relations-focused or social – thus limiting the potential for transformative growth outside the paradigms of the nation/state.

This thesis has provided another opportunity, through the use of foresight thinking concepts, methods and tools, to offer a measure of the comprehension and insight needed to break down the boundaries preventing dialogue between interest groups and to create transformative spaces for transformative futures. If these spaces are not created there will be continued partisan linear predictions of rise, conflict and collapse rather than the crafting of wise, inclusive and alternative perspectives. This level of comprehension not only contributes to the improvement of foreign policy decisions and economic forecasts, it has also achieved the larger goal of decolonising, deconstructing and reconstructing these overarching perspectives. Genealogy, CLA, macrohistory and scenarios all demonstrate that the China futures space is open and contested.

China's national conversation about its futures primarily rests on the China Dream, itself centred on national development, individual prosperity, good governance and sustainable, green growth (OECD Secretariat, 2014). This has a paradoxical and more recent partner in the form of the New Normal, the two overarching objectives of which are to ensure the party's right to govern and to transition the country's economic structure to one fuelled by domestic consumption with lower energy demands and less pollution (Xinhua, 2014). But although these are the official, and arguably used, futures, they are not the only ones, and a number of alternative scenarios have been investigated in this study. In a continually transforming world, with the rise of new and non-traditional powers such as China, there is a need for robust tools to enable better understanding, reduce uncertainty and provide greater capability to adapt to change. It is worth noting that China has always been an influential global society within the larger world order and will continue to be so with globalisation and the blending of eastern philosophy and western objectivism.

This concluding chapter will provide chapter summaries that include a discussion on the main pillars under discussion. Following this, it will provide a response to the three major tasks of the study, which were:

1. To utilise six pillars analysis to develop deeper understandings of China futures.
2. To apply futures studies in order to analyse China futures.
3. To provide a base for further studies by policy and business analysts and academics in the hope that these will actively engage with six pillars analysis as a tool for inquiry into China futures.

Chapter Summaries

The main findings are chapter-specific: (1) China's Search for the Future: A Genealogical Approach, (2) Alternative Futures of China: A macrohistorical approach, (3) Unpacking Images of China Using Causal Layered Analysis, and (4) Alternative Images of China in 2035: A case study of Tamkang University workshops. The section below also addresses the first research objective: *To utilise six pillars analysis to develop deeper understandings of China futures.*

Genealogy

Chapter 2, China's Search for the Future: A Genealogical Approach (representing pillar one, mapping), presented a genealogy of China futures discourses and visions of China from ancient times to the present. The futures triangle was used to map the competing and complementary dimensions between the pulls, pushes and weights of the future. The triangle showed that there is not one vision of the future China, but many competing images with their own discourses. Once again, China is in a time of transition, and there is a battle over the images that will define it, with many in the creative class wanting transformative change in the areas of economic justice, fairness and spiritual conditions, rather than continued economic and military growth. It is important that China re-examine its relationship with western industrial civilisation as well as its own cultural traditions to ensure further transformation into an ecological civilisation (Yue, 2011).

By recognising how reality is constituted through deep historical causes and civilisational cosmologies it is possible to identify which visions and images have been victorious in affecting the present and influencing the future. The genealogical analysis supports the need to understand what Slaughter (1995) terms the 'interregnum' – the period between two paradigms. When those in power are unable to grasp the shift from the old system to the new – believing there to be only one social system, ideal or value – disorder, and even revolution, will occur. Chapter 2 recognised the alternative future and consequences of a Christian China, and the concurrent recognition by the Chinese government of indigenous Chinese ideals: Taoism, Confucianism and even Buddhism, which sit at the core of Chinese culture, to seek to balance man and nature and to find new paths to a better way of living (Yue, 2011). Taoist and Confucian groups are quietly emerging as powerful forces for a cleaner, greener China (Palmer, 2013). Environmental activism has been steadily growing in China since the founding of Friends of Nature (FON) in 1994. The influential Alliance of Religion and Conservation (ARC) founded by Prince Philip of the UK has been working with Chinese faith groups to establish faith-specific projects to find solutions to the social and environmental realities of China's rapid economic development (ARC, 2014). The Taoist projects are leading the way in the promotion of sustainable health remedies in place of animal body parts, which are often taken from endangered species like tigers, elephants and rhinoceroses and are used in Traditional Chinese Medicine, which has its roots in Taoist principles of the harmony of nature (ARC, 2014). Buddhist projects have addresses the

environmental crisis directly through the showing of compassion, by promoting the protection of all living creatures and by using renewable resources in temple offerings (ARC, 2014). The most significant Confucian project for ARC was the 2013 formation of the International Confucian Ecological Alliance (ICEA) to work with the 500 Confucian temples in China on environmental action. Martin Palmer, the Secretary General of ARC said, “This conference, and the launch of ICEA, perhaps marks the single most powerful force helping to reform the social and political structures of modern China and the ambitious programme being developed by the ICEA is a sign of their confidence, heritage and vision” (ARC, 2014).

China will soon be home to the largest Christian population of any country on earth, according to Professor Fenggang Yang, a leading scholar on religion in China (Phillips, 2014). The characteristic aphorism that every Chinese “wears a Confucian cap, a Taoist robe, and Buddhist sandals” may now also need to include a “Christian cross”. It’s easier to talk about Jesus than Chinese President and Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping on Weibo, China’s Twitter-like social media platform (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2014). The growing influence of Christians at times has the government on edge and there are rumours that the CCP will nationalise Christianity in order to control it. The CCP may not be able to control Christianity, but they will have to learn to accommodate it, as one Church leader remarked: “They do not trust the church, but they have to tolerate or accept it because the growth is there” (Phillips, 2014).

Macrohistory

Chapter 3, *Alternative Futures of China: A macrohistorical approach* (representing pillar three, timing), developed four possible futures scenarios from the theories of four macrohistorians: Sima Qian, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Pitirim Sorokin and Oswald Spengler. These scenarios were shown to be useful to the exploration of alternative structures and patterns of macrohistory and civilisational change rather than confining the discourse to the narrow space and time of economic or international relations paradigms. Sima Qian’s theory is structured around the metaphor of the dynastic cycle: benevolent ruler, decline and new sage. It showed that the contradictions inherent in the current regime (including income inequality, corruption, the declining birth-rate, rising nationalism and, most importantly, the lack of a leading ideology apart from making money) are too great and will see the rule of the CCP fail and disappear. The next turn of the cycle will see transformational change, with a

new sage leading cultural and political reform, perhaps resulting in democracy. Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar also uses the metaphor of the social cycle to interpret the rise and fall of civilisations. In Sarkar's theory there are four basic groups or classes of people, known as *varnas* or "mental colours", and each dominates its own era: Labourer (*shudra*), Warrior (*ksatriya*), Intellectual (*vipra*) and Capitalist (*vaeshya*). The current Warrior era in China is in decline, becoming corrupt and coming under the influence of the Capitalist class. The next era for China will be that of the Intellectuals and will see China show more concern for spiritual pursuits and an aversion to material interests. This transition will see China enter into a "golden age" with achievement in science, technology, economics, the arts, literature, and music (Batra, 2008). Pitirim Sorokin's theory proposes three cultural mentalities: the Sensate (only the material, scientifically verifiable world is real) and the Ideational (reality viewed in spiritual or super-sensory terms), and one blended type, the Idealistic or Mixed (a balance of the two). Cultures swing from one mentality to another as society changes. China is now an active Sensate culture with materialism and rampant consumerism being the main activities. China, in this current stage of Sorokin's theory, will continue with its material pursuits. Oswald Spengler rejected the notion of linear progress and believed that all cultures eventually decline and die and, according to Spengler, there will be no exception to this rule for China.

These deep waves of the past and patterns of history can help us to structure the trends we see creating our future and to contour what is possible (Inayatullah, 1997). The importance of these perspectives is that through their use of various shapes of the future, be they cyclical, linear or spiral, they do not enforce a "hierarchy of nations" worldview (Inayatullah, 1997). This is important when considering that the worldview of a China Dream, the official vision of China's future, includes the goal of surpassing the West in general and the United States in particular, in order that China resumes its place at the forefront of the world. However, from this follows that the "future of another country represents one's own present, either it has to be followed as in development thinking or somehow surpassed, in either case, the future is fixed – nation-centred and without authentic creativity" (Inayatullah, 1997, p. 6). Roger Gaudry paints the consequences in a more expressive way: "the deceived countries are those made to believe that their future lies in imitating the sick countries" (in Nandy, 1999, p. x). There have been many advantages for the CCP in adopting a linear pattern of growth, but the social and even global costs of exploitation and air, water and ground pollution require a more

complete theory of progress. The Chinese concept of cyclical time through the rise and fall of dynasties (Sima Qian) perhaps reinforces this idea that it is “China’s time” to reclaim its self-image, dulled by historic Western imperialist pressure, but this does not allow for the internal structures to change. What is needed is a transformative rethinking of development that can be inclusive of linear, cyclical and spiritual time.

Deepening the future

Chapter 4, Unpacking Images of China Using Causal Layered Analysis (representing pillar four, deepening), used causal layered analysis (CLA) to map the international relations theories of ‘China threat’ and ‘Peaceful rise’ by both Western and Chinese academics and policy-makers. This chapter showed, through the four lenses of CLA (litany, systemic causes, worldviews and myths), how China futures are constructed and bounded by their truths. China futures has been colonised by international relations theories to such a degree that policy decisions made from within such predictive paradigms are beginning to show their weaknesses (Oppenheimer, 2012; Gause, 2011; Herrmann and Choi, 2007). This chapter showed the power of CLA as a tool for opening up China futures, deconstructing embedded knowledge and presenting a process for scenario construction using layered knowledge to generate alternatives ways of thinking, thus contributing to better forecasting and decision making. The four levels: litany, system, worldview and myth are discussed below.

Litany level

The litany of China futures, whether through a western or Chinese international relations lens, focuses on the continuation of high economic growth and the desire for regional hegemony, or at least constant reminders of the humiliation of others to advance CCP objectives both domestically and overseas. The litany construct ultimately lays down the past as a determinant of the future and does not allow for challenges to the ‘truth’ behind these claims. The concerns of regional neighbours or the shifting dynamics of the planet’s changing climate including elements of the current capitalist model are absent, and are a much needed discussion point. To prioritise discussion around a few statistical points, be that GDP or the inevitability of war because Beijing is unwilling to talk about many key military issues and Washington continues to “rebalance” its military assets to the Pacific (Pillsbury, 2014), does

nothing to explain why they might go to war, or to explore why the litany is focused on worst case scenarios.

Systemic level

The systemic level ‘business as usual’ scenarios are developed either because China’s continued growth will result in war (Mearsheimer, 2001) or because China’s rightful place in the world is being denied with the result that China must rewrite the rules governing the global order (Yan, 2001). In either case, the litany of economic data dictates the focus for the system and vice versa. Concepts such as transnational challenges, globalisation and global governance are rejected (Shambaugh, 2010). This is additionally highlighted by the National Intelligence Council’s (NIA) 2005 scenario document *Globalization and Future Architectures: Mapping the Global Future 2020 Project*. Four scenarios are identified - Davos World, Pax Americana, A New Caliphate, and Cycle of Fear, with each representing different visions of conflict between “terrorism” and “globalisation” (Cascio, 2005). The document includes substantive data and analysis, but the systems, worldviews or metaphors that underlie this data are not questioned. The underlying themes of the scenarios are reduced to whether globalisation or terrorism “wins” and the degree of US domination of the system (Cascio, 2005).

Globalisation and labour saving technologies have deepened income inequalities around the world, including in China. The politics of austerity and lack of effective demand have given rise to global financialisation to create “new products, production processes and new sites of production” (Calhoun cited in Harvey, 2014), resulting in speculative bubbles and a decoupling of capital accumulation and production (Harvey, 2014). If we are to stay bounded by the litany of economic data and dominant realist paradigms the structural solutions can only call for more money and more power.

Worldviews and myths level

The investigation of the most widely used IR worldviews and myths of China futures uncovers the unconscious dimensions of the rise of China. This thesis has highlighted the ‘China threat’ and ‘Peaceful rise’ theories based on the Western realist, Chinese realist and liberalist worldviews or, as Lakoff remarks, “We may not always know it, but we think in

metaphor” (Lakoff, 1995, p. 1). The worldview/myth levels of CLA highlighted how the different intentions and futures of China are constituted depending on the perspective of the stakeholders. Even the terms ‘China threat’ and ‘Peaceful rise’ can be said to drive the litany and systemic solutions. Phillip Tetlock’s (1999) study of academic experts is as relevant today as it was when he conducted it. In his study he found that experts are prisoners to their pre-conceptions and that their narratives “reflect deep-rooted ideological assumptions about both political causality and the characters of specific political actors” resulting in experts confidently “presenting counterfactual beliefs [that] often feel factual” (Tetlock, 1999, p. 338). The most illuminating argument of his study found that the conservative experts could not see past the monolithic power of the Bolshevik Party or conceive of a Gorbachev move toward social democracy (Tetlock, 1999). The expert excuses for being unable to forecast or predict the future are numerous, but it is clear that questioning and deconstructing their bias and political values is a necessary step to initiating dialogue and worldviews to see futures beyond the futures given.

The CLA in Chapter 4 examined only three of the most widely held IR narratives about the futures of China but there are arguably as many different worldviews as there are IR narratives. It is important that the IR community has an inclusive dialogue around the current knowledge derived at the worldview/myth level about China futures. Importantly this analysis has shown that the unconscious dimensions and cultural narratives are factors which influence litany and systemic levels of knowledge and must be addressed in any conversation about China futures. Because language and symbolism are constitutive and represent power it is important to question how the socio-cultural context influences the type of knowledge used in decision-making about China futures, especially in an IR context where the stakes are so high. The Chinese realist language that sees “Western strategic culture – especially that of the United States – as militaristic, offense-minded, expansionist, and selfish” participates, with the Western realist language that sees China as a “threat”, the CCP as “inscrutable” and as “an aggressive, expansionist power”, only in providing grand story narratives that are dualistic and limited in their solutions (Nathan and Scobell, 2012). New language needs to be adopted so that the China futures discussion can move away from the archetypes of a world divided into good and evil toward positive images that construct a shared, progressive and more humane and peaceful political and social order.

Creating alternatives and transforming

Chapter 5, *Alternative Images of China in 2035: A case study of Tamkang University workshops* (representing pillars 5 and 6), presented a case study of Taiwanese students creating images of China's futures using the six pillars foresight process. This chapter represents a major contribution to the China futures field because no previous research on China futures has used all six pillars in a workshop setting. Four scenarios were created: the 'Next Superpower', where China is able to exert great economic, military and political power; the 'Hunger Games', where the elite suppress society resulting in poor human rights and a totalitarian state; a 'New Gaia', seeing China become a leader in environmentally sustainable growth; and a 'New Revolution', leading to democracy and greater human rights. One notable emerging issue the students were concerned about is the growing level of materialism and selfishness in China. They believed, like Evan Osnos (*The Economist*, 2014) in his forthcoming book, that the Chinese people are being changed psychologically and that with increased levels of individualism and higher personal expectations, there could be conflict.

Whether in its individual parts or as a whole, the use of six pillars analysis has been shown to be a successful and stimulating way to open experts' minds to a tool for forecasting alternative scenarios and, in so doing, to add value to policy formulation and decisions. The use of CLA as a poststructuralist method to construct scenarios as was done in the workshops allows the positivist "knowledge" that IR relies on to be questioned and deconstructed. Poststructuralism reveals rhetoric as subversive and thus arbitrary. As seen in Chapter 4, IR futures of China constitute reality through the fearful and othering archetypes of us/them, Pax America/Pax Sinica, East/West, North/South, etc., but the four scenarios developed by the students represent something broader – the two sides of the student's experience of China and their desire for global transformation. On the one hand, the scenarios of the 'Next Superpower' and the 'Hunger Games' reflect the influences from the dominant IR discourses on the rise of China – 'the statist and materialist ontology of power' and hierarchies of power (Sabaratnam, 2011, p. 783) whereas the 'New Gaia' and 'New Revolution' scenarios represent poststructural potential for emancipation and, although the workshops were not IR specific, the poststructural critique of the constitutive elements of international relations. What possibilities exist for peace, agency and green revolution when conflict defines us?

Transformation cannot occur when there is a dependence on the “other” to define our motivations or to emancipate us from the colonising effects of rendering China no more than a competitor for power or money. Rather than legitimise the view that we are heading for a certain future, it is important to challenge these discourses to allow a reframing of questions and to provide alternative views of choices concerning the future so that dialogue from different subject-positions can take place. The Tamkang workshops provide great value in reminding the IR community that it is important to move beyond their confines of claims of knowledge and authority and that transversal actors and movements such as environmental awareness, rising global consciousness and the desire to move past structural realism are the only path to the future.

Findings

2. To apply futures studies to analyse China futures.

Using futures studies to analyse China futures has a number of implications that could be of great value to policy-makers and to those who seek non-traditional alternatives to the official discourse of the real. Since futures studies is about the study of possible, probable and preferred or desired futures and of the worldviews and myths that underlie them, it is implicit that the choices we make today matter (Inayatullah, 2012). All nation states are limited by an official discourse regarding given social phenomena and interpretations of identity, history and politics (Wright, 2010). Researchers are often bound by their own epistemological commitments: their social histories, political inclinations, and ideological biases, making objectivity difficult, if not impossible. Futures studies advances the notion of reflexivity in international relations, allows various perspectives to be identified and transformative solutions to be achieved. The domestic and international challenges China faces over the coming decades are complex, with no single solution. A major contribution of this thesis is to go beyond an uncritical focus on the trends and systems supporting the status quo in order to look for deeper structures of social and political change from a poststructural futures perspective.

This research has shown that there is no true participatory approach to a national conversation as far as China futures is concerned. A current official image of the future offered by the Chinese government promotes to the world a vision of a strong economy and a peaceful

geopolitical rise. While that sounds encouraging, alternatives to these goals, such as greater individual rights and religious freedom, or the consequences of their implementation, are suppressed within China in the name of stability. Most Chinese people would agree that they receive some benefit from the status quo in government. The Chinese public is overwhelmingly satisfied with the direction in which their country is headed (87%) and a similar number expect continued economic progress over the next five years (Pew, 2011). However, the future is a consequence of decisions made today. In China, growing wealth, travel, education and freedoms of religion and input into governance are things the Chinese people want to engage in. For the Chinese government, the need for stability, legitimacy and continued rule have been shown to be important factors in policy making.

Limiting debate on epistemic disruptors, such as technology, and economic, cultural and security factors, restricts their susceptibility to positive alternative transformations. Xi Jinping has been promoting reform by “rectifying the relationship between markets and the state”, but if this reform is not seen to be to the benefit of the nation and the people, it will bring chaos, as have such reforms many times in the past (Martin and Cohen, 2014). It is important for the Chinese to have their own authentic images of the future – images of the future are a social process that can be used to realise major social, political or economic goals (Slaughter, 1991). The creation of these alternative images cannot be achieved through a top down approach, borrowed from Western images or determined unilaterally by Western or Chinese policy-makers, academics or experts. Western observers of China’s futures apply their own theoretical biases; blueprint behaviours for attaining and maintaining their own interests and power. If the leaders operate under the assumption that they are on a linear path and that any disruption to that would lead to chaos, it should be considered that this assumption of linearity is problematic as well. Not all social systems operate in a linear fashion and understanding alternative viewpoints is important to being well prepared for the unanticipated.

In thinking about the future directions of nations, there has been a long-standing need for ways of thinking in international relations theory to be restructured. Lakatos (1970) showed the limitations of traditional positivist perspectives as they apply to social sciences. Through the application of six pillars analysis (discussed below), this thesis has problematised the conversations about the images of China futures and offered new ways of thinking about the possibility of nation/state futures, how they are constructed and their effects. In this way, this

thesis extends the range of tools available to policy-makers and decolonises the creation of China futures from economic trends, geopolitical gain and domestic political economy. Applying futures methods to the analysis of China futures has been shown to challenge embedded worldviews and images, suggest different paths by which the future may unfold and offer a means to improve early recognition of emerging trends.

3. *To provide a base for further studies by policy and business analysts and academics in the hope that these will actively engage with six pillars analysis as a tool for inquiry into China futures.*

This thesis provides a foundational document for policy-makers and academics so that they might engage with futures theories and methods in the development of China futures. In carrying the research forward, opportunities exist to:

1. Use the articles in this thesis to promote discussion and advocate for greater inclusion of futures studies in the field of China futures. This thesis does not encompass all aspects of the potential of six pillars analysis to garner understanding of the layers of reality of social and political change, be they theoretical or through praxis, but it does show the potential, in this world of high risk and low certainty, for practitioners to move from: single point forecasting to anticipatory action learning; reductionist to complex analysis; horizontal to vertical; as well as to incorporate macrohistory and moral futures (Inayatullah, 2002).
2. Engage academics and policy-makers in the area of futures studies to continue to use the six pillars framework to offer methods of analysis outside traditional approaches. It is important to have an interdisciplinary approach in developing alternative worldviews and myths so as to engage with a variety of perspectives. A number of tools are widely used, such as trend analysis and scenario planning, but genealogy, the futures triangle, macrohistory, causal layered analysis and searching for transformed futures are not often considered.

Understanding the impact of competing images of the future from various social, political and economic perspectives, the dynamics between the pushes, pulls and weights of these images and the role these images have in the unfolding history of a nation are often undervalued, but would contribute to understanding and to creating more effective

strategy and policy. Engaging academics in the use of futures studies in areas such as foreign policy could be done at universities around the world that teach futures studies (in Australia, Taiwan, the US, England, Finland, Hungary, Singapore, Columbia, Italy and South Africa), as well as through governments that have created futures-oriented institutions, notably Singapore and Finland (Dator, 2011).

3. Conduct six pillars-based workshops within China and its regional neighbours to explore alternative futures of China. In this way it familiarises academics and policy-makers in the region with the methodology and provides a way to create futures from Chinese perspectives. Limitations could exist on conducting scenario planning workshops in China, especially if the scenarios question the official version of the future (Lemos, 2012).

Concluding remarks

This thesis has shown six pillars analysis to be an appropriate tool for challenging current economic and political models in order to move toward a deeper and more holistic way of creating and understanding alternative futures. This thesis has offered theoretical, practical and applied examples of using six pillars analysis to explore the many possible futures of China. Given that the future is not predetermined, creating alternative futures through the process of six pillars analysis allows policy-makers, leaders, and academics to think deeply about their default futures and to view the past, present and futures from new perspectives. In this way insight is provided, uncertainty is reduced and space is created for change.

Creating futures scenarios for China should not be attempted without an understanding of the epistemological knowledge developed by Chinese philosophers and why their stories have prevailed; they are part of the living memory of China. The methodology of the futures triangle illustrated how the interplay between the pulls, pushes and weights of the future does not guarantee a universal outcome, but instead provides a way to map competing and complementary dimensions. Understanding the timing of history allows insights into changing domestic and global power structures, including the dynamics and shape of change – the causes of change, the patterns of change and the metaphysics of change, the metaphors of change, and who will lead change (Inayatullah, 2007). Deepening the future through the four dimensions of causal layered analysis enables us to identify the many levels of reality

and competing narratives, elements often missing or dismissed by the ‘experts’, who frequently believe that there is a basic asymmetry between explaining the past and predicting the future (Herrmann and Choi, 2007). It is important when developing scenarios that alternatives to the most plausible are explored. A vision of desired or preferred futures is essential to the creation of new pathways of thought and focus. Without a vision for a desirable future, how is it possible to achieve it?

In the close of this inquiry, there are three themes that have emerged and their consideration will reveal the gestalt or pattern of what has been learned. The first theme is that transformation cannot occur when the worldview and metaphor of the future are imposed by ‘superficial metaphors’ like ‘China threat’ or ‘Peaceful rise’ (Lakoff, 1995). Ultimately these worldviews need to be recognised as part of the war discourse “that pervades civil society, wherein one group is pitted against another in continuing struggle” (Devetak, 2009, p. 188). In some respects it is as if the economic rise of China has “caused” China to be a threat to the West while, paradoxically, the West has benefited from China’s positive role in the world economy. To legitimise the dominant realist discourse of the present is to discount and close off the more inclusive and democratic “laws” of foresight: that the future is not predetermined, is not predictable, that the future can be influenced in the present by our choices (Voros, 2001).

The second theme is that China futures need to be considered as integrated into and part of global futures; the consideration needs to be epistemologically pluralistic as well as ontologically separated from the state as the only unit of analysis in realist IR theory. There is a need to authentically listen to the stories of others, perhaps put best by Huston Smith: “The community today can be no single tradition; it is the planet. Daily the world grows smaller, leaving understanding the only place where peace can find a home... Those who listen work for peace, a peace built not on ecclesiastical or political hegemonies but on understanding and mutual concern” (Smith, 2009, Kindleloc7967). International relations perspectives fail to understand or address ‘the global problematique’ that amplify the disturbance of the meta-system, especially with regards to global justice and global environmental problems. For Chinese leaders, contemplating alternative futures from the current could be problematic. The pressures of slowing economic growth, removing capital controls on the *renminbi*, pressure from migration of labour from the countryside to the cities, an aging population, income inequality, corruption and pollution will require stronger cooperation between the state,

business and citizens to solve. This includes the need for a greater voice for the Chinese people in how policy is made and deliberated. The CCP has introduced some elements of ‘consultative authoritarianism’ for citizens to voice their policy concerns with the introduction of limited participatory channels to stem pressure for more comprehensive change (Truex, 2014). Empirical research into whether or not this consultative mechanism can engender regime legitimacy or reduce pressures for change shows that the CCP “may ultimately be playing a game it cannot win. Limited participation channels may temporarily increase stability and buy some support among citizens with low expectations. In the long term, however such reforms may raise expectations that must be satisfied with further reform” (Truex, 2014, p. 25). Futures of China have also been viewed through the nation state, but what is lost by taking a state centric perspective? The discourse has become trapped in the language of economics and power politics without taking into account the interactions that cut across nation-state boundaries, in particular the rise in global consciousness and links with ecological awareness.

This leads to the third theme: the category of China needs to be re-visioned against the background of rising global consciousness (Nelson, 2014). The hegemonic paradigm of development “has involved the imposition of a set of normative rules and practical constraints on states and other actors, reflecting the uneven distribution of global power and a common “script” of world politics thereby written more in some places than in others” (Agnew, 2010). The possibility of another kind of society or world order cannot occur without “dynamic balance: balance between regions, balance between genders, between epistemological cycles. And of course this balance must be ever transforming, chaotic” (Inayatullah, 2013, p. 10). The Future We Want campaign organised at the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, was the biggest UN conference ever and a major step towards achieving a sustainable future (United Nations, 2012). More than three million people in China have shared their vision and made suggestions for a better world to the UN project. It should be no surprise that the dreams of people in China are to the common dreams of people in other parts of the world, such as: “That the grasslands stop turning into desert”, “That people can make friends with people in all places to eliminate cultural divisions in different nations”, and “That I can accompany Mom in traveling around the world”. The wishes expressed by the participants are summed up as “mercy, kindness, proactive behaviour, and health” – the common wishes of all who long for a better life (China Times,

2012). These are not wishes for geopolitical hegemony, they are wishes of people who strive for an awakened China – strong and respected - as envisioned by Marquis Tseng. It would be a great benefit to the world if policy makers, economists, academics and leaders both in China and in the West to embrace the emerging ideas of using this expressed wisdom which cannot be grounded in outmoded ideas or beliefs to develop our awareness and understanding of the future (Lombardo, 2010).

There is an assumption within both IR theory and economic theory that only the past is instructive for the challenges of the future as it emerges. The alternative future – Gaia – as developed by the Tamkang University students and no doubt endorsed by those in the global community who seek this model as an emerging possibility, suggest that we also need to learn from the future. Existing complex challenges cannot be met with old ways of thinking without the ability to pull us as a global society into future possibilities; “only through dialogue and acceptance of mutual differences can we all grow and thrive” (Bruguera, 2015). This study has shown that there are other possibilities waiting to emerge. If China chooses a path based only on material growth, individualism, growing inequality and acquiring more regional power its future will be bleak, regardless of which political or economic theory is used. If China aspires to a path that the Chinese people and people around the world desire (Poushter, 2013), where spirituality is encouraged, the environment valued, corruption controlled, inequality reduced, and political reform undertaken, allowing more personal freedoms, so many positive future images can occur. To create this transformation, the tools, such as six pillars analysis, and mindsets developed through futures thinking are needed; to shape the kind of futures desired, in which all peoples can flourish.

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APPENDIX I

Fwd: Ethics application ref: 5201300680 - Approved

Dalbir Ahlawat <[REDACTED]> Mon, Nov 18, 2013 at 8:40 AM
To: Jeanne Hoffman <[REDACTED]>, Andrew McNeill <[REDACTED]>

Dear Jeanne

Congratulations, Ethics Application has been approved. Now you can plan the future course of action.

Regards
Dalbir

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ethics Secretariat** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, Nov 18, 2013 at 9:37 AM
Subject: Ethics application ref: 5201300680 - Approved
To: Dr Dalbir Ahlawat <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Ms Jeanne Hoffman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Dr Ahlawat

Re: "China in 2035: Scenario Planning Workshops" (Ethics Ref: 5201300680)

Thank you for your recent correspondence.

Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities) and approval has been granted, effective 18th November 2013. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e72>

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 08 November 2014
Progress Report 2 Due: 08 November 2015
Progress Report 3 Due: 08 November 2016
Progress Report 4 Due: 08 November 2017
Final Report Due: 08 November 2018

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

Please ensure that a copy of this letter is provided to all personnel on the project. Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval. Students will be need to attached a copy of this email with their thesis.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

The HREC wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White
Director, Research Ethics
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

Ethics Secretariat
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—
Dr Daibir Ahlawat
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APPENDIX II

This article has been removed as they contain published material. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article.

Hoffman, J. (2013). China's search for the future: A genealogical approach. *Futures*, 54, 53-67.

DOI: [10.1016/j.futures.2013.10.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2013.10.018)

This article has been removed as they contain published material. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article.

Hoffman, J. (2014). Alternative futures of China: A macrohistorical approach. *Futures*, 57, 14-27.

DOI: [10.1016/j.futures.2013.12.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2013.12.006)

This article has been removed as they contain published material. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article.

Hoffman, J. (2012). Unpacking images of china using causal layered analysis. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 16(3), 1-20.

Link: <https://ifsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/2012-2/vol-16-no-3-march/article/unpacking-images-of-china-using-causal-layered-analysis/>

This article has been removed as they contain published material. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article.

Hoffman, J. (2014). Alternative images of China in 2035: A Case study of Tamkang University workshops. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 19(1), 13-34.

Link: <https://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/2014-2/vol-9-no-1-sept-2014/articles/alternative-images-of-china-in-2035-a-case-study-of-tamkang-university-workshops/>

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