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**THE RISE OF CHINA'S POWER: THE LIMITS OF  
NEOREALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM**

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MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER'S THESIS

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ISTANBUL, APRIL, 2018

I, FIRAT AVCI;

Hereby declare that this Master's Thesis is my own original work and that due references have been appropriately provided on all supporting literature and resources.

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12/04/2018

## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled **THE RISE OF CHINA'S POWER: THE LIMITS OF NEOREALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM** prepared by **FIRAT AVCI** has been judged to be successful at the defense exam held on **12<sup>nd</sup> April 2018** and accepted by our jury as **MASTER'S THESIS**.

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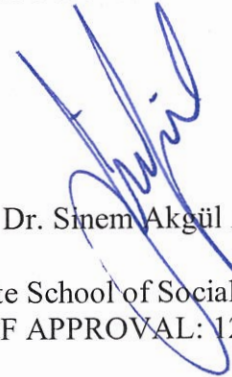
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ÖZET</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1. POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: REALIST AND LIBERAL EXPLANATIONS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 Definitions of Power.....	6
1.2 Realist Views on Power.....	11
1.2.1 The Concept of Power in Defensive Realism.....	14
1.2.2 The Concept of Power in Offensive Realism.....	15
1.3 Liberal Views on Power.....	19
<b>2. UNPEACEFUL RISE OF CHINA’S POWER: NEOREALIST EXPLANATIONS AND MEARSHEIMER’S CONTRIBUTIONS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
2.1 Nature of the System and China.....	26
2.2 State-Centric System and China.....	29
2.3 Military Power of China.....	30
2.4 Intentions of China.....	33
2.5 China’s Goal of Survival.....	34
2.6 Rationality of China.....	35
2.7 Polarity and the China.....	36
2.8 Realist Critique of Ikenberry’s View on China’s Rise.....	39
2.9 Limits of Mearsheimer’s Explanations of Rise of China’s Power.....	41
<b>3. PEACEFUL RISE OF CHINA’S POWER: NEOLIBERAL EXPLANATIONS AND IKENBERRY’S CONTRIBUTION</b> .....	<b>47</b>
3.1 Complex Interdependency.....	48
3.2 Multilateralism or Unilateralism.....	51
3.3 Ikenberry’s Liberal World Order.....	52
3.4 Liberal World Order and One Belt One Road Initiative.....	54
3.5 Ikenberry’s Perspective on Military Power of China.....	56
3.6 The Future of the Liberal World Order and China.....	59
3.7 Liberal Critique of Neorealist Arguments on the Rise of China.....	61
3.8 A Limits of Ikenberry’s Peaceful Rise of China’s Power.....	62
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>LIST OF SOURCES</b> .....	<b>80</b>

## ABSTRACT

AVCI, FIRAT, *THE RISE OF CHINA'S POWER: THE LIMITS OF NEOREALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM, MASTER'S THESIS, ISTANBUL, 2018*

The rise of China is one of today's main concerns for the future of the World order. There are different interpretations of China's rise. The aim of this thesis is to explain the power direction of the rise of China; from the universal comparative perspectives of neorealism and neoliberalism, with a specific discussion on the divergent approaches of John Joseph Mearsheimer representing the neorealist camp and Gilford John Ikenberry representing the neoliberal camp. The main research question is as follows: "In what ways Mearsheimer's and Ikenberry's ideas are helpful or fail to understand the rise of China, and is there a better way to analyse China's power direction?" In this context, this study will provide a clearer and more balanced picture of China's power by uncovering strengths and weaknesses of both camps.

**Keywords:** Rise of China, Rising Power, China, Offensive Realism, Liberal World Order, Peaceful Rise of China, Unpeaceful Rise of China, Mearsheimer, Ikenberry.

## ÖZET

AVCI, FIRAT, *YÜKSELEN ÇİN'İN GÜCÜ: YENİ GERÇEKÇİLİĞİN VE YENİ LIBERALLİĞİN SINIRLARI, YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, İSTANBUL, 2018*

Çin'in yükselişi geleceğin dünya düzeni hakkındaki en önemli sorulardan birini oluşturmaktadır. Çin'in yükselişi hakkında farklı görüşler mevcuttur. Bu tezin amacı, yükselen Çin'in güç yönünü yeni-gerçekçi ve yeni-liberal akımların evrensel varsayımları üzerinden karşılaştırmalı olarak okumaktır. Tezde John Joseph Mearsheimer tarafından temsil edilen yeni-gerçekçilik ve Gilford John Ikenberry tarafından temsil edilen yeni-liberalizm görüşleri üzerinde özellikle durulmuştur. Tezin araştırma konusu, "Mearsheimer ve Ikenberry'nin teorileri hangi açılardan Çin'in yükselişini anlatmada yetersiz kalmıştır; Çin'in şu anki pozisyonunu daha doğru anlatacak bir yaklaşım var mıdır?" sorusunu takiben ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, çalışma Çin'in gücüne dair net ve dengeli bir çerçeve çizme amacını iki farklı teori okullarının güçlü ve zayıf yanlarını belirterek gerçekleştirilmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Çin'in Yükselişi, Yükselen Güç, Çin, Saldırgan Gerçekçilik, Liberal dünya düzeni, Çin'in barışçıl yükselişi, Çin'in barışçıl olmayan yükselişi, Mearsheimer, Ikenberry.

## LIST OF TABLES

Map 2.1	Disputed Claims in the South China Sea	27
Map 2.2	Senkaku/Diayou Islands	28
Figure 2.3	Top 15 Defence Budgets of 2017	30
Map 2.4	Chinese Overseas Military Depots and Civil Ports	35
Table 3.1	ASEAN States' Top Trade Partners	48
Map 3.2	One Belt One Road Initiative Projects	55
Figure 3.3	China's Military Spending Compared to the World	57
Map 3.4	US Forces Commanders' Areas of Responsibility	58
Map 3.5	Chinese Claims over First and Second Island Chains	64



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BP	British Petroleum
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa
CCWAEC	China Central-West-Asia Economic Corridor
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
ECS	East China Sea
EIA	The US Energy Information Administration
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G-7	Group of Seven
G-20	Group of Twenty
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations

MAD	Mutual Assured Destruction
MSR	Maritime Silk Road Initiative
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NDP	New Development Bank (of BRICS Countries)
NDPG	National Defense Program Guideline (of Japan)
NPE	Normative European Union
OBOR	One Belt One Road Initiative
PLA	People Liberation Army (China)
PLAN	People Liberation Army Navy (China)
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Partnership Agreement
RMB	Renminbi (Official Currency of China)
SCS	South China Sea
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## INTRODUCTION

“Let China sleep, for when she wakes she will shake the world” – this is how Napoleon Bonaparte, the French Emperor, described China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Stone Fish, 2016, *Foreign Policy*). China has always been a source of concern amongst world powers at different times, and most recently the end of the Cold War has resurfaced these concerns. After defeating its Soviet rival, the US has started to seek a unipolar security order and re-evaluated possible threats to it.<sup>1</sup> The US saw China as a rival or challenge only after early years of the post-Cold war era, when there was an illusion that no challenger could emerge due to the wellbeing of the liberal order, which included security arrangements of NATO and the UN Security Council as well as international economic institutions such as the Bretton Woods System including the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Money Fund (IMF) and regional organisations in Asia-Pacific including, but not limited to Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The 9/11 shook the liberal system and marked the beginning of the War on Terror in the Middle East, which meant that concerns about a rising China were overshadowed. Yet this period lasted only until the 2008 economic crisis when the US economy stagnated while China proved its robustness and saw economic improvement (Mengzhi, 2009; Nye, 2010).<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this thesis is to explain the power direction of the rise of China from the universal comparative perspectives of neorealism and neoliberalism, with a specific discussion on the divergent approaches of John J. Mearsheimer representing the neorealist camp and John G. Ikenberry representing the neoliberal camp.<sup>3</sup> Both scholars give particular attention to the rise of China and write extensively on this topic. Accordingly, Ikenberry and Mearsheimer are highly influential in analysing China’s

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<sup>1</sup> This is however debatable. Neorealists like Mearsheimer (2014) never accepted that US have the chance to be the only super-power in a unipolar world.

<sup>2</sup> “The financial crisis cost the U.S. an estimated \$648 billion due to slower economic growth, as measured by the difference between the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) economic forecast made in September 2008...5.5 million more American jobs were lost due to slower economic growth during the financial crisis. (*The Pew Charitable Trust*, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Neorealist assumptions are based on Mearsheimer’s arguments as well as ideas from Waltz to Morgenthau (1946), which have also fed into Mearsheimer’s (2006, 2014) view on the rise of China. The paper will continue to similarly assess Ikenberry’s (2005, 2008, 2011, 2017) view, which is to some extent influenced by Keohane’s (1985, 2011), Joseph Nye Jr.’s (2010, 2011) assumptions.

rise, as epitomised in the volume of quotations attributed to them in scholarly works on China. Both scholars wrote about potential future outcomes of the rise of China, from their theoretical perspectives. Moreover, since the aim of this thesis is to understand the direction of China towards becoming a peaceful or an aggressive power, it would be appropriate to discuss the views of Ikenberry who believes that China will rise peacefully due to the liberal international order (Ikenberry, 2006, 2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2014b, 2017, 2018a) and the perceptions of Mearsheimer who argues that China will become aggressive when finalizing its ascendancy due to the anarchic nature of international politics (Mearsheimer, 2001, 2014, 2016a, 2016b).<sup>4</sup>

Some scholars claim that the rise of China will happen peacefully (Ikenberry, 2011; Johnston, 2003; Nye, 1997; Ross and Feng, 2008), which means that China will integrate into the world economy, preventing international power struggles. On the contrary, realists claim that China's rise will not proceed peacefully (Mearsheimer, 2001; Brzezinski and Mearsheimer, 2005; Kagan, 2005). Mearsheimer draws an analogy between the rise of China and Germany's rise in the interwar era. According to this his view, China will become aggressive when it has sufficient economic and political power, following Germany's example. On the contrary, Nye Jr. (2015) argues that due to its economic and political capabilities, China is not going to be a rival for the US in near future. According to Nye;

China does not have enough military capability compared to the US in all areas –even defence or power projection in their own region. Economically this is also impossible because China is lacking know-how industries compared with the US and is only strong in the production sector while simply copying the relevant technology. Furthermore, China is an energy dependent country, thus making any confrontation or rivalry economically unsustainable. (Nye, 2015)

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<sup>4</sup> John Mearsheimer's books and articles titled *False Promise of International Institutions* (1994), *Tragedy of Power Politics* (2001), *The Case for Offshore Balancing* (2016a), *Benign Hegemony* (2016b). John Ikenberry's books and articles titles *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition: Essays on American Power and International Order* (2006), *The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?*(2008), *America's Challenge: The rise of China and the Future of Liberal International Order* (2011a), *The Future of the Liberal World Order: Internationalism after America* (2011b), *The Rise of China and the Future of the Liberal World Order* (2014b), *The Plot Against American Foreign Policy: Can the Liberal Order Survive* (2017), *Why the Liberal World Order will Survive?* (2018).

This work will focus on answering the following question: In what ways Mearsheimer's and Ikenberry's ideas fail to explain the rise of China, its current political and economic status, and is there a better way to analyse China's position? In order to answer this question, it aims to understand why China is not active in world affairs, and why Mearsheimer's and Ikenberry's explanations in isolation from each other are ill-suited to provide a comprehensive explanation. It will not provide a typical focus on the pessimistic view of Mearsheimer on China's unpeaceful rise, but will also attempt to counterbalance it by giving due attention to China's contribution and integration into global economy since China is actively engaged in trade in every region, as well as tries to project soft power in several regions especially including South East Asia. Moreover, its diplomatic relations are open to all countries and several agreements are in force.

The other perspective is mostly related with Ikenberry's view of China's peaceful rise. This is also problematic for several reasons. China, despite of all of its positive diplomatic and economic efforts is acting assertively in South China Sea according to its capabilities. China is also actively engaged in territorial disputes and still does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state. In other words, China and the USA are already finding themselves in a power struggle in South East Asia despite economic ties.

This research is aims at to analysing today's China through a multipolar lense and will argues that China is currently in its own isolationist period similar to the US in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. China is aiming to create its own sphere of influence in the Asia-Pacific, but its reluctance in world affairs is parallel to the US non-interventionist policy in the Old World (mainland Europe). On the other hand, China is quite aggressive or at least active in Asia Pacific like the US in South America. China also pressures it's their neighbours via trade wars or territorial claims.

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Overall, this thesis argues that China is a rising power and an important actor in the multipolar world. Furthermore, China is becoming a significant actor inside the economic and political system constructed by status quo powers such as US and major European countries. China will not rise peacefully; neither will it become a revisionist state like Germany. Firstly, China's domestic (regions like Tibet, Xianyang, huge number of poor people in the West China and low level of democracy) and international struggles (One China policy, territorial disputes) will prevent its peaceful rise. Secondly, China is too interdependent with the free market in order to become a revisionist state like Germany in the interwar years. 'The rise of China' as a security threat is an overrated statement as China's rise is not exclusive or out of line with the rise of recently developing countries such as China, India, and Russia.

In this context, the first chapter will focus on what 'power' is and how it is perceived by neorealist and neoliberal scholars. It is important to analyse the concept of power, owing to its significance in helping to understand regional hegemony, world politics and most importantly the rise of China's power. The source of hegemony relies on power in both theoretical schools, but the way they describe what power is provides crucial distinctions in their approaches to China. The definition of power will provide a broader perspective in understanding China's intentions, actions and the goal of being the regional hegemon in the South East Asia. Chapter two will explore neorealist assumptions in greater detail, especially Mearsheimer's ideas coined as offensive realism. There are a number of neorealist scholars who theorize the rise of China, however for the purpose of this study, only offensive realism (rather than defensive realism) will be explored. Offensive realists portrayed pessimistic future predictions in relation to China's position in the world, namely they predict a rise of China at an expense of security. Then, the limits of Mearsheimer's explanations will analyse under the counter-arguments to his unpeaceful rise of China assumption. Mearsheimer's assumption will be tested by looking at Ikenberry's view of China's peaceful rise in the third chapter. His arguments are founded on the concepts of complex interdependency and liberal world order. His optimistic approach relies on powerful liberal institutions and their role in providing a multilateral world order. In such scenario, China cannot rise turbulently and challenge this liberal world order, due to its dependence on the benefits of the order itself. That is, any challenge can damage China's economic

prosperity and trade-led economy. Ikenberry's claims over peaceful rise of China's power will challenge with counter-arguments to fulfil the thesis aim.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: REALIST AND LIBERAL EXPLANATIONS**

Power is one of the most contested concepts in International Relations. Throughout the history of IR (International Relations), this notion features in many academic debates and between different theoretical camps. This chapter focuses on is the definition of power, and how it is conceptualized in International Relations. The chapter emphasizes the distinction between positive and negative power, that is – power as military capabilities and power as influence. In this context, this chapter is about the focus on realist and liberal definitions of power and their importance in the theoretical debates. Accordingly, power is explained using the realist lens, which includes the ideas of realists such as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer and through the liberal approaches of Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and John Ikenberry.

#### **1.1 DEFINITIONS OF POWER**

“So long as there is politics among sovereign states, there will be estimation of power” (Jones, 1954, p. 439). As stated in this quote, the concept of power takes central role in International Relations. Finnemore and Goldstein (2013, p. 5) suggests that it “has always been at the core of our discipline.”

According to Grayson Kirk (et. al. Baldwin, 2016, p. 92) “during the 1920s the study of international relations was composed mostly of courses on international law, diplomatic history, international economics, and international organization.” “Power” as a term had negative connotations during the interwar years. When one refers to power, it usually signified aggressive military power because of the heritage of the World War I (Baldwin, 2016, p. 92). Power evoked state aggression, while the world was promoting liberal ideas. Idealism embodied in the Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points was on the rise in the interwar years. In those years, due to association of power with aggression,



the concept of power was not used by International Relations scholars due to liberal trends in world politics.

Throughout 1930s, power began to be described as an analytical concept in International Relations. The first approach was defining international politics as “struggle for power”. “In 1933, Nicholas J. Spykman delivered a paper at the Fifth Conference of Teachers of International Law entitled “Methods of Approach to the Study of International Relations,” which described international political relations as a struggle for power”(Baldwin, 2016, p. 92).

Just before the publication of one the most influential of Morgenthau’s (1948) books titled *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* there was a consensus about power and that international politics should be the centre of this new field. “Morgenthau asserted the centrality of power as a foreign policy goal and as a concept for understanding international politics” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 96). Morgenthau centered his book on power, by describing it, analysing and searching for its elements.

Power as a concept was rarely disputed due to publications of Edward Hallett Carr (1939), Frederick L. Schuman (1933), Nicholas J. Spykman (1942), Frederick S. Dunn (1949), Arnold Wolfers (1951), Grayson Kirk (1947) and Hans J. Morgenthau (1948). Only Richard C. Snyder (1955) criticised the centrality of power in the field. His criticism was aimed at Morgenthau’s claims on power. Snyder claims that Morgenthau’s ideas on power is over inclusive. Putting power in center with the help of claims like “lust for power” decreases the explanatory power of the term “power”. If everything will explain with single term, this only damages explanatory impact of “power”. According to Snyder “power is not subject to any rigorous analysis as a concept” and because of too many definitions “the power concept comes close to being meaningless”. Snyder argues that power concept is too inclusive, it is uneasy to distinguish what power is.

Baldwin (2016) cites Dennis Gartland Sullivan (1963) focused on different textbooks on defining power in his doctoral dissertation found the same common problematic. His main findings were that, firstly, there is a “failure to rigorously clarify the concept of power”; (2) a tendency to confuse definition with theory by “a subtle substitution of the determinants [i.e., elements] of power for power”; (3) a failure to understand the

difference between power as a relational concept and the relative power of countries...” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 100). The concept of power has several dimensions and meanings. Power can be defined as influence, or attribute, or identity or relationship, or mechanism or all.

One meaning of power is influence. For example, K. J. Holsti (1964), describes power as influence in three different forms. The first meaning is essentially a means to an end, whereby states pursue policies and utilize resources in achieving their goals. Second form of power is the basic capabilities, which an actor uses or mobilizes in his efforts to influence the behaviour of others. This includes every source of country A’s capabilities in influencing country B’s towards her own will or goal. Thirdly, Holsti (1964) describes power as the relationship between A and B. Their communication and interaction is a power relation. “Power as an influence is the ability to get another actor to do what it would not otherwise have done or not to do what it would otherwise have done” (Dahl, 1970 et. al. Brown and Ainley, 2009, p. 93). “Power is a relationship – it is the ability that people or groups or states have to exercise influence on others.”(Brown and Ainley, 2009, p. 82) Relationship defines similar ideas that see power as an influence. But this approach specifically narrows the communications and bargaining process of states. “the notion of power as a quantifiable mass is giving way to the concept of power as a behavioural relationship” (Sprout H. and Sprout M, 1951).

Because of the similarity between human nature and state reactions, just as humans, states have lust for power and achieving hegemony in world order. They are always looking for more power. Because of that nature of states, Morgenthau (1948) puts power in the heart of every relation between states and he also gives attention to influence as an aspect of power. In other words, “when we speak of power, we mean man’s control over the minds and actions of other men. Political power is psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised” (Thompson, K. W., & Morgenthau, H. J., 1967, p. 33).

Morgenthau stresses that there are differences between power and influence, For him, influence does not guarantee power as one always needs to have legitimacy or credibility for power projection. One can influence his superiors for certain time, but this will not provide a complete rule over them. A state can have influence in another

country, however it does not guarantee total power over that given country. For instance recognition of Palestine in the United Nations (UN) would not decrease the power of Israel.. One time victory in power struggles will not give permanent advantage over their superior rival states. Main measurement of power is your capabilities rather than unusual victories. You can only influence them for a certain time. This is true for state-to-state relations as well. For example, small countries like Chile can influence the US at certain points but everyone knows that the US with its superior military and diplomatic capability has greater ability to influence.

“Power is also an *attribute* – it is something that people or groups or states possess or have access to, have at hand to deploy in the world” (Brown and Ainley, 2009, p. 92). As an attribute, it means all sorts of capabilities of a state for succeeding any goal, these attributes include military forces, raw materials, population. Material capabilities were mostly under the monopoly of realism which is powerful nations who have the most military power and capabilities against their rivals. E. H. Carr (1946, p. 109) refers to “the supreme importance of the military instrument,” to “every act of the state, in its power aspect,” as “directed to war,” and to military strength as “a recognized standard of political values.” Capabilities are the main tool that make one state powerful in that way of definition. State power is related how your means/attributes are, and the capabilities that you have.

According to Brown and Ainley (2009) another dimension is seen as structure. If one country has enough power to influence the other one, then this country is powerful in according to this approach. The power part of a relationship, however, is not a separate unit that can be manipulated in isolation from the rest of the relationship (Organski, 1958, p. 105). The second one focuses on structure. This is mostly related with structural realist approach which means that conjecture can give roles to states, and in that situation, states take their parts in world politics.

Power is also seen as mechanism in the case of “Balance of Power”. Since the Thucydides term used to describe relations of city states in Peloponnesian War and it’s still the concern of today’s theorists like Inis L. Claude (1989), Richard Little (2007), Stephen M. Walt (1987), Kenneth Waltz (1979), William M. Moul (1989), Daniel H. Nexon (2009). It works for certain aim, in the case of ‘Balance of Power’ the logic is

balancing each other. Any states who is balancing in this regard creating this balance of power level of international politics. This mechanism can be described as power.

The concept of power is also explained in different dimensions like empirical and normative. Morgenthau understood empirical power as the ability to dominate others, whereas normative power implied the intention to wilfully act together to contribute to the creation of a life-world (Morgenthau, 2012). In his understanding, empirical power is much more related to his famous concept “lust for power” of states. States are willing to gain as much power as they can have. The drive to prove oneself, was predominantly empirically traceable in the form of the *animus dominandi*, “the desire for power” (1946), which literally means lust for *domination* among people (Morgenthau, 2012).

Morgenthau was not the only scholar thinking about normative power. Carr divided power in three different groups, namely - military power, civilian power and power over opinion. Carr also added that propaganda is one of the most important tools for this new form of power. Galtung was describing elements of normative power as ‘ideological power’ or “the power of ideas” (Galtung, 1973, p. 33). François Duchene portrayed the EU as *idée force* (Duchene, 1973). Today the EU is considered as a normative power and debates are still ongoing. For example, Manners coined the concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) and explained the term as the “ability to shape conceptions of “normal” in international relations” (Manners, 2002, p. 239). Human rights, democracy and rule of law are promoted by European countries and the US to developing parts of the world, and this is another embodiment of normative power politics. In this way, Morgenthau distinguishes power in two different senses. One is positive power, which is understood by normative power. From this perspective, it is absurd “[t]o say that a political action has no moral purpose”, in other words, “political action can be defined as an attempt to realize moral values through the medium of politics, that is, power” (Morgenthau, 1962, p. 110). Empirical power is described as a negative power, which directly relates to his ideas about human nature and state commonalities. Just like humans, states are always searching for more power.

## 1.2 REALIST VIEWS ON POWER

In the realist school of thought, power was seen only as military means for a long time. But several wars like US-Vietnam War and any other unpredictable incidents discredit this monopoly. Militarily powerful US could not defeat a small state like Vietnam. Power was then described in a different perspective alongside the military capability and strategy, conjecture and institutions.

Morgenthau claimed that “International politics, like all politics, is struggle for power, power is always the immediate aim” (Thompson, K. W., & Morgenthau, H. J., 1967, p. 31). Because of the similarity between human nature and state interactions, just as humans, states have lust for power and achieving hegemony in world order. They are always looking for more power. According to Morgenthau, power is the human control over other humans’ minds and actions (Morgenthau, 1948). It is political because exercise of power is taking place in the relations between political authorities or between public and policy makers (Tanrisever, 2009).

In general, from realist perspective power struggle creates balance of power in the long run. Because it is impossible to keep power forever, so this condition creates balance between powerful states (Tanrisever, 2009). For realists, power is valuable and functional for creating and maintaining the status quo according to status quo powers which rejoice/enjoys the power balance in the international system.

When Morgenthau (1948) described power with its elements, he added that a state can only be a great power with all of those elements in place. First element is geography. Territory is an unwavering element of power because territorial changes are less likely or not frequent. A state can change its geography only by occupation, secession or unification with another state. This means the territory itself will expand or shrink, but not change. Geographical component used to be more important previously, according to Morgenthau (1948). The United States geographic location provided security for any rival attack thanks to two huge oceans and friendly neighbours and it created peaceful environment to accumulate its power.

Soviet Union or currently Russia survived from enemy attacks or total control due to the sheer amount of territory. In Morgenthau’s words, “this enormous land mass dwarfed

the territory conquered by foreign invaders in comparison with what still remained to be conquered” (1948).

The second element, as identified by Morgenthau, is natural resources – both food which ensures life and raw materials like oil, gas, iron and coal. According to Morgenthau, self-sufficient nations are more secure than others, they can keep themselves safe, can survive longer in war times, and also it deters invasion. Yet the importance of raw materials has changed. Coal and iron was important for every nation in the nineteenth century, thus giving Great Britain more significance until oil appeared as one of the key resource after World War I. Then new lands such as the Arabian Peninsula started to become more valuable due to their rich oil reserves. But in our era, oil has the same destiny as coal and with increase of technology and development of new forms of energy resources, oil is likely to lose its value in our times and thus diminish the power and influence of states that rely on it.

Industrial capacity is another component of national power, which is highly related to raw materials. Production requires raw materials, yet resources alone are not enough to secure a state’s power in production. As Morgenthau (1948, p. 108) states,

“India follows the United States and Soviet Union closely as a depository of coal and iron. But despite these riches in raw materials without which no nation can attain first rank in modern times, India cannot be classified today as a first-rate power. It has no productive capacity, especially for finished products.” (Morgenthau, 1948, 108)

As expected from a realist perspective, military capability is essential for being powerful. Morgenthau sees military force as a tool for act in international politics. “Military preparedness requires a military establishment capable of supporting the foreign policies pursued” (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 110). He gave great importance on military power and amongst it listed tanks, submarines, coordination of land, air and naval forces and nuclear weapons. Of course, tanks and submarines are not brand new technologies today, but he is pointing at military technology innovations and quality and quantity of armed forces.

Population is another important component of national power. It also determines military resource. A state with enough manpower can project power in its region or

even abroad. Morgenthau also underlines that, population itself does not mean power – population without technology and resources has little weight.

Intangible elements of power include national character and national morale. National character described by Morgenthau as “certain qualities of intellect and character [that] occur more frequently and are more highly valued in one nation than in another” (Morgenthau 1985, p. 147). Morgenthau lists certain national characters such as British individualism, German discipline, American individual initiative, gift for improvisation. He also points at certain examples such as the German High Command’s misjudgement of Americans’ will of joining the First World War. “The American cannot swim and they cannot fly, the Americans will never come” (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 123).

“More elusive and less stable, but no less important than all, is what we propose to call national morale” (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 124). According to Morgenthau, national morale is the degree of determination which a nation supports the foreign policies of its government in peace or war. Quality of national morale depends on the quality of the government, Morgenthau adds. This morale can break up or dissolve but it is all related with people’s content in their government. National morale can also be in test in war times.

Finally, but most importantly, the most unstable component is ‘quality of diplomacy’. It is the most important one, since it combines those [natural resources, population, geography, etc.] different factors into an integrated whole, gives them direction and weight, and awakens their slumbering potentialities by giving them the breath of actual power” (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 129).

Neorealism appeared as a systematization of mostly Morgenthau’s assumptions with several distinctions. Kenneth Waltz’s arguments opened a new door for realism and his theoretical assumptions focused on the structure rather than sole actor (it is states as opposed to Morgenthau) In his theory, the aim was showing the importance of distribution of the capabilities. “Different kinds of capabilities cannot be measured separately; he simply asserts it” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 131).

Rather than using force as last resort option like Morgenthau declared, Waltz had different idea about power as a force. “In international politics force serves, not only as the ultima ratio, but also as the first and constant one” (Waltz, 1979, p. 186).

In his attack on relational concept of power Waltz briefly described the reason of failure in the following way,

“We are misled by the pragmatically formed and technologically influenced American definition of power— a definition that equates power with control. Power is then measured by the ability to get people to do what one wants them to do when otherwise they would not do it” (Waltz, 1979, p. 191-92).

“Stephen M. Walt (2002, p. 222) asserted that “the concept of power is central to realist theory”; yet he conceded that “there is still little agreement on how it should be conceived” and concluded his essay with the admission that “the core concept of power is not well conceptualized” As argued by Walt and others, the concept of power has been defined in various ways by different realist scholars in different camps.

### **1.2.1 The Concept of Power in Defensive Realism**

For defensive realists, the centrality of power is the same importance like classical realists. “As in the past, competitive arming and, more generally, power politics are in large part due to an international system of conflicting ends among men and states” (Waltz, K. 1967, p. 279). Defensive realists claim that states seek power until they feel safe. After that point, they will act according to international order and become in favour of the status quo. “One important continuity in world politics must be emphasized: force remains as useful and important in international politics as ever, and more pervasive in peacetime than before” (Waltz, K. 1967, p. 280). Kenneth Waltz is not ignoring the importance of power and its spread into every relationship between states. But his point, maximization of power should be the aim until to reach balance of power between rival states.

As the most significant representative of defensive realism, Waltz (1986) notes that “the belief that states do or should try to maximize power is quite widespread among



realists” (i.e. Waltz, 1986, p. 334). For Waltz, achieving balance of power between states is a state’s main goal for securing itself and status quo, not power maximization like Morgenthau and Mearsheimer assert.

Waltz focused on material capabilities, as well as John Mearsheimer (2014) who pointed the same items about scoring the capabilities of states which are all related each other: “states are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on all of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence” (Waltz, 1979, p. 131).

### **1.2.2 The Concept of Power in Offensive Realism**

John Mearsheimer is the key influencer and a best-known representative of neo-realist thought, who devoted considerable volume of his works to the rise of China. Unlike Morgenthau, Mearsheimer explains power relations in such a way that exercising power is different in two camps of the realist thought. In his view, power comes from the basic needs of states such as survival. “I do not adopt Morgenthau's claim that states invariably behave aggressively because they have a will to power hardwired into them. Instead, I assume that the principal motive behind great power behaviour is survival” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 54). There are reasons why state survival may be the principle motive of great powers. Firstly, the international system is anarchic. “In general, neorealists see anarchy as placing more severe constraints on state behaviour than do liberals” (Baldwin, 1993). Mearsheimer also suggest that due to the anarchic nature of the international system, there is no world police to discipline and resolve conflicts between actors. Because of an absence of a world government, governments want to secure themselves only by being a hegemon. States can never be certain about other states' intentions (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Secondly, states are the key actors in international politics. Mearsheimer respects states in international relations. Due to anarchic nature of international politics, states are responsible for their acts and self-help system is valid only in turmoil and possible

conflict between states. They need to take care of their interests. Because of this self-help system states have to be powerful, and power accumulation is one of the important state's goals. In regard to Mearsheimer's explanation, states are the focus of power maximization, instead of international institutions.

Thirdly, states have military capabilities. Like Morgenthau and Waltz, Mearsheimer is also accepting that military power is the main source of the power. Yet as Baldwin (2016) finds, Mearsheimer assigns military power greater importance than the aforementioned scholars, in fact Mearsheimer (in Baldwin, 2016) argues that "in international politics...a state's effective power is ultimately a function of its military forces... The balance of power is largely synonymous with the balance of military power" (Baldwin, 2016). He also underlines that state power can be measured by military capabilities, therefore a state that has the ability to project power. For example, for the USA, that have population and wealth supported by cutting edge technology and know-how being a hegemon is a reality. According to Mearsheimer, the US first gained its hegemon status in North and South America. There were no challenger in its proximity and oceans secured US land from any attacks. That's why the UK and the US have never been conquered by a foreign power. On the other hand, the US is pursuing various policies in the South East Asia region. Instead of policing the world, the United States encourages other countries to take the lead in checking rising powers, intervening only when necessary (Mearsheimer, J. J., & Walt, S. M., 2016). Mearsheimer maintains that the US is following a realist policy, which will give the US certain power due to using its resources efficiently.

Intentions of states can never be clear, thus creating uncertainties and mistrust. "Realists would argue that states cannot be sure about the future costs and efficacy of war, and they cannot be certain about the future interests and goals of their partners" (Joseph M. Grieco, 1993, p. 548). In other words, such uncertainty puts states in a constant state of mutual suspicion. This uncertainty is another motivator of power maximization according to Mearsheimer's theory, because states can only feel safe if they are powerful enough against their competitors.

Fourthly, state survival is the main purpose of any states. "The logic is here straightforward: the more powerful a state is relative to its competitors, the less likely its

survival will be at risk” (Mearsheimer, 2001). Moreover, Mearsheimer’s theory sees that accumulating power is the optimum option to keep states safe or keep them united against the threats that offensive realism theory pointed out.

“Consequently, states pay close attention to how power is distributed among them, and they make a special effort to maximize their share of world power. Specifically, they look for opportunities to alter the balance of power by acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals” (Elman, C. and Jensen, M. eds., 2014, p.181).

States have zero-sum relations with each other. If one state harms another, then the other state will be better off confronting it. In that nature of political world, every state should gain as much power as it can – this phenomenon is described by Mearsheimer (2014), whereby military and economic power is achieved through latent power, where “latent power refers to the socio-economic ingredients that go into building military power; it is largely based on state’s wealth and the overall size of its population”. The hunger for power never ends for states, this is the reason why offensive realism suggests state survival should be the ultimate goal. “In other words, countries can increase their prospects for survival through actively balancing against powerful rivals” (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Last, but not least, states are rational actors. “They are aware of their external environment and they think strategically about how to survive in it” (Mearsheimer, 2003, p. 31). States are also calculating their mid and long term goals and the effects of their decisions and are also aware that the other states are doing the same. Waiting for the right time to act, not acting before becoming powerful enough are the state goals regarding to this assumption. As a result states are accumulating its power secretly and take an action when the time is right.

About Dahl’s relational concept of power, whereby just like Waltz, Mearsheimer is also ignoring this assumption. “Power exists only when a state exercises control or influence, and therefore it can be measured only after the outcome is determined” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 57).

“Many writers— Schuman in 1933, Spykman in 1942, Morgenthau in 1948, Mearsheimer in 2001, and others— have posited power as the goal of states and described international politics as a struggle for power” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 104).

“Mearsheimer does not identify the international system that emerged after the Cold War in unipolar terms. On the contrary, the theory presupposes that unipolarity is incompatible with a regionalized approach to international politics” (Little, 2007, p. 216). Unlike Fukuyama’s ideas, Mearsheimer ignored the liberal victory after the Cold War and thus rejected unipolarity. For this reason, his focus on research is based on regional balances of power and excludes the prospect of world hegemony or an assumption that there can be the same regional hegemon in a number of regions simultaneously. Another of his assumption is focusing on multipolarity of the South East Asia region and the world itself. “In particular he [Mearsheimer] accepts that war is more likely in a multipolar system than in a bipolar system” (Little, 2007, p. 224). It was possible to predict the actions of great powers in the Cold War. Both sides were controlling their conflicts via proxy wars, not hot conflicts. “It is tempting to argue that it is clear from twentieth-century European history that bipolarity is more peaceful than multipolarity” (Mearsheimer, 2013, p. 84). Mearsheimer pointed that there were two world wars in the first half of the 20th century, yet in the bipolar Cold War there were no large wars.

Those were the reasons why states are taking care of power politics and trying to achieve hegemony. Mearsheimer's interpretation of power is somewhat different. “What is power? It is important to distinguish between potential and actual power. A state's potential power is based on the size of its population and the level of its wealth. These two assets are the main building blocks of military power. Wealthy rivals with large populations can usually build formidable military forces. A state's actual power is embedded mainly in its army and the air and naval forces that directly support it” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 43). The wealthy nations without a huge population such as Sweden and Switzerland are not powerful according to this way of thinking. They are rich nations but they don’t have huge population, thus lacking enough power projection capability such as the power of territory, which is a crucial component of a powerful state according to Mearsheimer. Alternatively, Pakistan – a country with huge population but shrinking economy is a good case study, whereby without economic strength highly populated countries are unable to exercise power even in their regional hemisphere.

All above justifications make Mearsheimer expect the rise of China in an unpeaceful way. If China's economic growth maintains its increase in an efficient way – in line to increase economic power of the country, then China will turn into an aggressive revisionist power. This will create conditions, characteristic to great power politics, under which survival will become China's key aim and following the assumption of offensive realist tradition, China will have to challenge the United States in the Asia-Pacific in order to become a regional hegemon, thus ensuring its survival.

### **1.3 LIBERAL VIEWS ON POWER**

“Liberalism holds that human nature is basically good and that people can improve their moral and material conditions, thus making societal progress—including lasting peace—possible” (Mingst and Arreguin-Toft, 2017, p. 83). Unlike Morgenthau's claim of lust for power where he was explaining human nature, liberals have a totally opposite take on what human nature is like. It does not however mean that realism creates a war-hungry theory and liberals are peace-lovers. Moravcsik defines liberalism as a “liberal theory [that] is a paradigmatic alternative theoretically distinct from, empirically at least coequal with, and in certain respects analytically more fundamental than, existing paradigms such as realism, institutionalism, or constructivism” (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 235). He tries to explain that liberalism has a broad view of the economy, rights of individuals and importance of institutions and collectivity, rather than narrowing relations to struggle for power.

According to one of the distinguish liberalism influencer Baron de Montesquieu, individuals are not guilty of bad decisions, but society creates war like conditions. He stated that “Different nations ought in time of peace to do one another all the good they can, and in time of war as little harm as possible, without prejudicing their real interests” (Montesquieu, 1989, p. 6). According to liberal view, human beings are rational actors and can decide what is in their favours and what is not.

Liberalism features individualistic approach and is focusing on human nature, yet neoliberalism is focusing on international relations on system level rather than

individuals/states level on economic relations, and due to those transactions “complex interdependency” term appears as a way of understanding state relations.

Unlike the human nature component of liberal understanding, interdependence is one of the most crucial aspects of neoliberal assumptions on state interactions. “Liberal theorists believe that free trade and commerce create interdependencies among states, thus raising the cost of war and reducing its likelihood” (Mingst, Arreguin-Toft, 2017, p. 84). As Keohane and Nye claim, “it is asymmetries in dependence that are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another” (Keohane, 1977, p. 10-11).

The role of international institutions as strongly underlined by one camp of the neoliberals, i.e. the liberal institutionalists such as Robert Keohane. Liberals, since Kant’s “pacific union” or “pacific federation” and after Wilson’s “League of Nations”, emphasize the importance of international institutions. Neoliberals seek to explain why states are still cooperating under the anarchic nature of the world. For example, Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane seek to explain this through prisoner’s dilemma.<sup>5</sup> “Rational players understand they can maximize their expected benefit by cooperating, and over time, cooperation becomes their preferred or dominant strategy.

Throughout history liberalism reshaped, embedded with different ideas from politics to economics to individualism. “Neoliberalism —like realism and constructivism— is not a logically coherent theory but rather a loosely related set of ideas criticizing the neorealist (and realist) treatment of actor designation, institutions, cooperation, international anarchy, the hierarchy of state goals, the role of power in international politics, and/or some combination of these topics” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 155).

Liberals, on the other hand, explain power relations from a different focus. “Power...can be thought of as the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the actor)” (Keohane, 1977, p. 11). According to Nye and Keohane (2012) power is a “concept of asymmetrical interdependence as a power source”. Albert Hirschman’s (1945) book titled *National*

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about the prisoner’s dilemma, See Axelrod, R. and Hamilton, W.D., 1981. The evolution of cooperation. *science*, 211(4489), pp.1390-1396.

*Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* and Kenneth Waltz's *The Myth of National Interdependence* (Kindleberger, 1970) share the same assumption.

As opposed to realist arguments Keohane and Nye (1977), explain why power relations are not narrowed to states as sole actors, force is the main tool and not only hard politics are the only concern for states for their survival.

Firstly, there are multiple channels of governmental relations, like formal governmental ties and informal non-governmental ties (NGOs, multinational companies). Interstate relations are the normal channels assumed by realists. Transgovernmental applies when we relax the realist assumption that states act coherently as units; transnational applies when we relax the assumption that states are the only units (Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S., 1977). States are not the only actors anymore, and thus not the only focus of interstate relations. With complex interdependency, liberals are challenging the dominance of realist thought. Transgovernmental companies create a connection with governments and became one of the factors that affect relations of those countries, and specifically power relations.

Secondly, the agenda of states is more diverse than what realists think. Absence of hierarchy among issues means, among other things, that military security does not consistently dominate the agenda (Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S., 1977) (Devlet ve Ötesi[State and Beyond], Eralp, 2009). Today's political agenda not only includes hard politics such as military, security issues, but there is a blurred line between domestic and foreign policies of states. Most of the times, domestic politics concern changed the foreign policy preferences and decisions. Hard politics are not the only agenda of states, economic ties, international investments, credit notes provided by international corporations shape power relations among states.

Thirdly, military force is not used by governments towards other governments within the region, or on the issues, when complex interdependence prevails (Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S., 1977, p. 20-21). For a realist, power is measured by military capabilities, but liberals ignore this assumption. Many economic problems that affect a state's foreign policy cannot be solved by military power alone. Even when looking at structures of state foreign ministries, we find distinguished personnel who are experts on economy and trade relations. "The importance of military force has been exaggerated; the role of

non-military forms of power has been underestimated; and the field of international relations has been impoverished by its insulation from studies of power in other realms” (Baldwin, 2016, p. 285).

Despite this, liberals still understood that, using force is still a one of the option for states for achieving their goals. But also in the condition of complex interdependency, weaker states have the ability to use international organisations and transnational actors to their advantage as leverage against strong states. Palestine, US and Israel had struggled over the status of Jerusalem for so long. US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and proposed to move US Embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. Despite all the threats from the US side (Trump declared that US can cut the funds to UN) a resolution was passed in the United Nations General Assembly, where 128 countries voted in favour of Palestine, but only 9 countries voted in favour of the US decision (*Deutsche Welle*, Top Stories, 21 December 2017).

In his book titled *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition* John Ikenberry states that multilateralism “involves the coordination of relations among three or more states according to a set of rules or principles” (2007). At the same time Keohane sees multiple reasons for rising importance of multilateralism via international institutions.

“Institutions perform the functions of reducing uncertainty and the costs of carrying out transactions for their members; ... International institutions that succeed in establishing relatively clear rules, which provide standards for judgment of behaviour, and in stabilizing expectations, thus reducing uncertainty” (Keohane, 1990).

The other important point Keohane (1990) rises is that the more interdependent states become, the higher opportunity costs of policy discoordination are. Specifically in the Asian region, there is a different way of institutionalisation. Relations are established on bilateral agreements rather than multilateral approach. Some trilateral agreements are also in place – like the one between South Korea, Japan and China, but most of the state’s interactions are determined by bilateral agreements. Even though South Korea initiated this trilateral agreement, it did so for reducing uncertainty and increasing its bargaining power, as Keohane declares. To reduce higher opportunity cost, South Korea is main motivator of this trilateral agreement, which have problems with China at the same time.



Ikenberry came up with a different idea which we can count towards the liberal front. The American hegemonic order was not simply a unipolar directorship. There was a sort of hierarchically organized through a “concert” of liberal democracies. Different states within the order had different roles and responsibilities, and the order itself was tied together with strategic bargains and understandings about leadership and collaboration (Ikenberry, G. J., and Lim, 2014). Ikenberry explains power by describing what order is. He had pointed out three main factors that determine order: First one is configuration of power. A leading state or group of states can only create and lead an international order if it or they have material capabilities to coerce and entice other states into the order (Ikenberry, G. J., 2014). The second one is the legitimacy of primary actor in world politics. This state had some kind of normative will to influence other nations. Supporting democracy, human rights, rule of laws are examples of those normative goals. Third one is functionality for other states. This order should provide some positive outcomes for other states too. If every state has some role in that system, this provides long life for both system and primary actor or actors of the system. He also underlies the importance of consensus between states. The relations between states within this order are not based on a balance-of-power logic or even overtly marked by anarchy-driven power politics. “Bargains, institutions, and deeply intertwined political and economic relations give the American-led order its shape and character” (Ikenberry, G. J., 2012b, 36).

He is also against the anarchic nature of international politics. “Power is explained in a different form. In effect, the anarchy problematic misses two features of the American-led international order — hierarchy and democratic community” (Ikenberry, G. J., 2012b, p. 37). In his understandings, international politics is under hierarchical order. Every state has a unique role in their relations with each other.

Ikenberry also describes two effective orders that influenced power politics. One is Westphalian system that is still effective in world politics. The great powers compete, cooperate, and balance each other within a wider framework of rules and norms (Ikenberry, G. J., 2014). This system promotes state sovereignty, underlines the equal rights between states. The other is associated with the liberal ascendancy, where liberal democratic states have risen up in power, exercise influence and engage in repeated efforts to build international order (Ikenberry, G. J., 2014). Ikenberry believed that,

these liberal values, functionality provided to other countries and consensus among the powerful nations keep this system still working.

Based on liberal assumptions of power, main aim of the states are keeping liberal world order long lasting via economic transactions or more liberal states in the system as Nye and Keohane (1977, 2012) stated according to complex interdependency theory. To protect liberal world order, states are focusing on power to sustain this order as a result of liberal world order. States like China cannot disrupt due power concentration secured by USA, Canada and western states like Germany, France and their allies Japan, Australia as Ikenberry stated (2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2017, 2018). Without power, states are unable to sustain free economy, fair relations and reciprocity in diplomacy between states. Owing to power maximization aims of states, they are securing this liberal order. This is one of the major difference between realists and liberals.

In conclusion; as above sections demonstrated, power has a variety of conceptualizations by different schools IR thought, particularly among realists and liberals. Liberals showed power as a liberal ascendancy, institutions and consensus. If the dominant power wishes to maintain its predominant position, then it should act with strategic restraint so as to prevent the emergence of potential rivals. (Barnett, M., & Duvall, R., 2004) Neorealists understand hegemony simply as domination that is achieved on the basis of coercive military power in the hands of powerful states (Barnett, M., & Duvall, R., 2004). More specifically in the comparative arguments of Mearsheimer and Ikenberry as ardent representatives of respective schools. Based on their assumptions, this thesis underlines that the rise of power of a given actore would be considered as aggressive/unpeaceful/hegemonic/revisionist as Mearsheimer suggests or peaceful/non-aggressive/order-based as Ikenberry argues.

## CHAPTER 2

### UNPEACEFUL RISE OF CHINA'S POWER: OFFENSIVE REALIST EXPLANATIONS AND MEARSHEIMER'S CONTRIBUTIONS

In this chapter we will look at pessimist realists who ultimately see China as a danger. According to Mearsheimer, China's rise will be unpeaceful, because the desire to survive or to be safe will force China to play great power politics, be aggressive in its region and try to take the US out of Asia-Pacific. Mearsheimer's ideas are shaped by offensive realism and he insists that the power of China cannot rise peacefully. Mearsheimer believes that China is a revisionist state (Little, 2007), it will therefore, due to its need to survive, in one way or another will seek to become a region hegemon in an attempt to counter influence of its competitors – namely US, Japan and/or Russia.<sup>6</sup> “From the perspective of offensive realism, all states are revisionist or potential revisionist because they seek regional hegemony in order to survive in an international anarchy” (Jung and Lee, 2017, p. 89). To prove his point, he looks back at historical examples such as the relationship between the United States and the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and rising Germany and European Powers early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Similarly to analogy between Germany and status quo European powers, China is expected to be a future revisionist power in the region.

Mearsheimer's best known book titled *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* had a huge impact on Asia Pacific's politics mostly due to depicting China as a real competitor or even a rival. He argues that “if China continues ascendancy, it will look to make a bid for regional hegemony in East Asia, much as the US did in the Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century” (Elman and Jensen 2014, p. 464). As stated in the theory, instead of seeking to become world hegemon due to associated costs and risk, states

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<sup>6</sup> Revisionist state means, a state who wants to change current order in other words changes the status quo. Late unification of Germany and Italy put them in a backward position both economically and politically. The great Powers already subordinated the weak states as their colonies or imperialistic agendas.

look to secure themselves by becoming a regional hegemon.<sup>7</sup> Regional hegemony can give a state enough security and space for manoeuvre in other regions as well. While seeking to become regional hegemons, they may also seek “to prevent great powers in other geographical regions from duplicating their feet” (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 41). In other words, they may look suspiciously towards those who may prove to be their peer competitors. They have certain goals that keep their regional hegemony safe and stable. In this context, China should first emerge as a regional power against its regional challengers like Russia, Japan and even India, and then seek to challenge the US military, politically as well as its influence over the world. But China does not want to create overreaction or suspicion towards itself. Mearsheimer claims that China will not start becoming aggressive before getting its power full force.

In this context, the rest of the chapter will focus on the offensive realist assumptions on power and Mearsheimer’s contributions to understanding the type and direction of the power of China. Nature of the system will be the first step to understand state’s major role in world politics due to anarchic nature of the world. Later, as another determinant of power, China’s military power will be analysed. Power is the optimum tool for compete against indeterminate intentions of states. After that, this chapter will focus on why states are certain upon survival as a sole aim. Furthermore, chapter will look at why states act rationally in their decisions inside this power struggle in the multipolar world. Realist critiques over liberalism will be presented alongside the Mearsheimer’s ideas and finally as one of the main argument of this thesis will be analyse which is the limits of Mearsheimer’s explanations called “Unpeaceful Rise of China”.

## **2.1 NATURE OF THE SYSTEM AND CHINA**

The assumption of anarchy, the lack of world government, is helpful in understanding the territorial disputes between China and many other states like China, Taiwan,

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<sup>7</sup> According to Mearsheimer, World hegemony is not possible because no power can rule all over the world, even the United States couldn’t achieved this after the early years following the end of the Cold War.

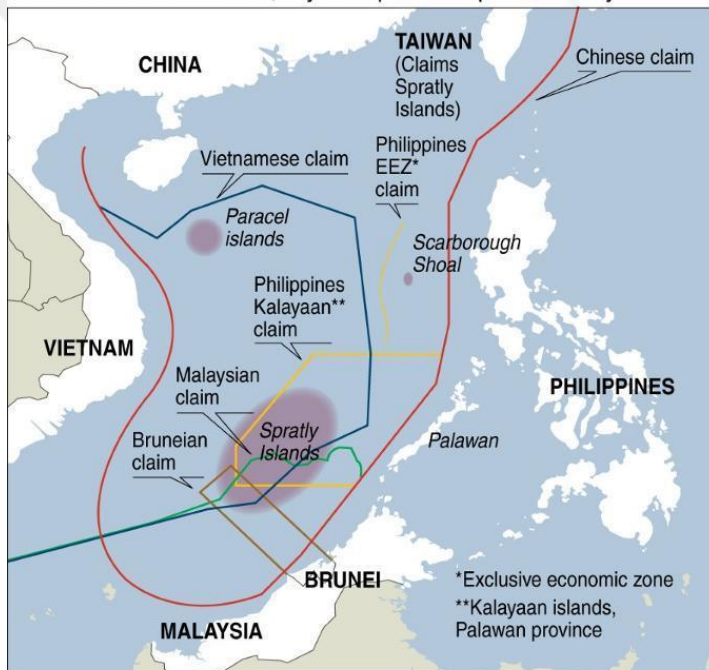
Philippines and others. China still claims the right on major islands in South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS) (Paramesweran, 2018).

“There are four island groupings, The Pratas Islands, a choke point in the Taiwan Strait, are currently occupied by Taiwan but also claimed by China. The three other groups- The Paracels, Spartlys and Macclesfield Bank/Scarborough Shoal- pit China’s claims (mirrored in the background by Taiwan) against the claims of Vietnam the Philippines, and Malaysia.” (Weatherbee, 2014, p. 168) [As seen in Map 2.1]

Map 2.1 : Red Line shows China’s claim over South China Sea, Yellow line belongs to The Philippines, Green one belong to Malaysia claims, brown line shows Brunei claims and Blue one shows Taiwan claims over South China Sea.<sup>8</sup>

### Disputed claims in the South China Sea

China is considering declaring a new Air Defence Identification Zone over the South China Sea, says a Japanese report on Friday



When looking back at territorial disputes, anarchic nature of the international politics is visible in Asia Pacific. Neither disputes in South China Sea, nor the East China Sea is far from resolution despite China’s own promise of a peaceful rise. There are several issues that make the dispute difficult to be solved. Firstly, as mentioned above, struggles over territorial claims make both China Sea and East China Sea a problematic conflict

<sup>8</sup> The Conservative Thinker 7/24

zone. South China is not the sole territorial problem. East China Sea is the other conflict zone in Asia Pacific. Two major powers of the East China Sea are China and Japan. Japan has a more problematic position in this area due to several territorial disputes with Russia over Kuril Islands, with South Korea over Tokyo/Takeshima Islands and finally Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with China.

Map 2.2: Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands have very strategic location due to closeness to Taiwan and also it is strategic location due to energy and export routes of China and possible oil and gas reserves alongside the East China Sea.<sup>9</sup>



Secondly, energy resources are a main area of debate. “EIA (The US Energy Information Administration) estimates that the East China Sea has between 1 and 2 trillion cubic feet and probable natural gas reserves” (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2014, p. 3). “EIA estimates that the East China Sea has about 200 million barrels of oil (MMbbl) in proved and probable reserves” (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2014, p. 2). The picture is not different for South China Sea, the “EIA estimates there to be approximately 11 billion barrels (bbl) of oil reserves and 190 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas reserves in the South China Sea” (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2014, p. 1). “Second major economic resource at stake in the South China Sea competition is its fisheries, vital to Southeast Asian food security as well as an important export industry” (Weatherbee, 2014, p. 171). Finally,

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<sup>9</sup> Dyer, 2013

strategic locations of all of the islands create concerns to China. China's main route for energy transportation and export (which is main driver of its export-led economy) routes are following the route over SCS and ECS.

Because of anarchic nature of the system, power is the main concentration of China regarding to territorial disputes or conflict over territorial disputes. China is never abstain from being active in disputes and any territorial or energy resources claims over strategic locations.

## **2.2 STATE - CENTRIC SYSTEM AND CHINA**

States are the key actors in international politics. In that way, apart from the territorial disputes, the Asia Pacific is not fertile for cooperation. Furthermore, Asia Pacific is not a place for multiple alliances but bilateral agreements. Every state has unique problems and good relations with each of their neighbours. Territorial disputes are the reality of the region in the South China Sea, but also there are some loosely tight regional organisations like ASEAN.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, channels for liberal institutions can still be open, even if China is convinced its territorial claims are undisputable under international law. "China argues that its actions<sup>11</sup> are lawful and in accordance with what others have been doing in the same area. It also promises that the new facilities will be used to promote regional cooperation on search and rescue, meteorological observation, and safety of navigation" (Min Gyo Koo, 2017, p. 52). On the other hand, China is trying to increase their territorial waters via artificial islands in South China Sea. This approach proves that China is aware of anarchic nature of the world system and take necessary measures which includes aggressive moves like artificial islands. Those actions are early steps of China's future revisionist moves regarding to Mearsheimer's explanations of rise of the country. China's sole actions towards territorial claims are in harmony with offensive realism power explanations.

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<sup>10</sup> ASEAN is regional institution established by ten member states (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Myanmar, Philippines, and Singapore.) The aim is promoting security and economic ties inside the region. One of the important goal is not interfering internal matters of member states.

<sup>11</sup> Creation of artificial islands in South China Sea, for declaring continental shelf claims.

## 2.3 THE MILITARY POWER OF CHINA

States have military capabilities. It is not a secret that most of China’s neighbours are putting emphasis on military spending. Most of the states in the Asia Pacific have already increased their military spending and placed emphasis on domestic means of military production.

The “security dilemma,” which is one of the best known concepts in the international relations literature, reflects the basic logic of offensive realism” (Mearsheimer et. al. Elman, C. and Jensen, M. eds., 2014, p. 182). If one state increases its military force or creates powerful bilateral or any diplomatic alliances, this will affect rival state security in a negative way equivalently. Hence, reasons for increase of military spending can be explained by the security dilemma.

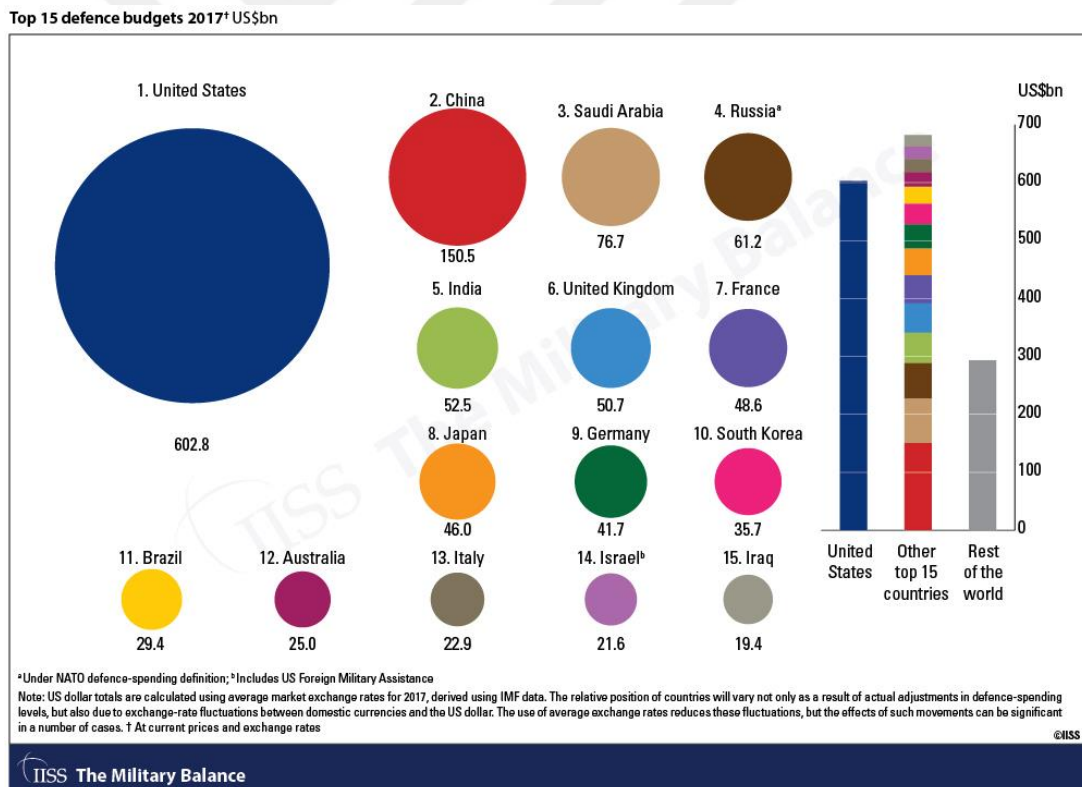


Figure 2.3: Top 15 defence budget 2017 of the world.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> IISS, 2018



According to the figure 2.3, the US is the highest spender in the military area and China's spending amounts to only one quarter of the US military spending. Russia, India, Japan, South Korea and Australia are from the Asia Pacific, which is a striking reality of the military matters. This is very clear picture showing the increase in military spending in the Asia Pacific region.

“According to the IISS Military Balance 2017 China's inventory are 62 Chinese ICBMs; 72 satellites; 6,740 main battle tanks; 57 tactical submarines; 79 principal surface combatants (including one aircraft carrier and 21 destroyers); and 2,307 combat-capable aircraft in its air force. There are 1,150,000 members of the People's Liberation Army” (IISS, Military Balance 2017).

The huge numbers and different types of forces show that China is also a growing military power and is starting to make itself ready for power projection over Asia Pacific and show its desire to do this beyond the region. There are some doubts about the size of the PLA in contrast to the US forces. Nevertheless, China is one of the major powers in Asia-Pacific.

According to the “most obvious manifestation of superpower status – the projection of air power from the sea – on 26 April launched its (China's) first domestically produced carrier, known as the Type 001A: the largest ever warship built in a Chinese shipyard” (Felstead, 2017, *IHS Markit*). The aircraft carrier provides power projection anywhere in the world both with air force and land force. China already has one aircraft carrier, but looking at the numbers of US aircraft carriers one sees huge capabilities gap between the two powers – US currently has nineteen aircraft carriers.

China has already focused on the blue-navy project which would enable it to deploy huge numbers of troops to any part of the region with its new aircraft carrier (Keck, 2015). Philippines have close relations with Japan and have started to carry out joint naval exercises with the neighbour (Paramesweran, 2015). US sell arms to Taiwan, thus increasing the tension between China and the US. For instance, “China responded furiously to Obama's decisions on arms sales to Taiwan and a meeting with the Dalai Lama in early 2010 with a threat of sanctions on American companies” (Kai He, 2016, p. 146). “Obama's "pivot" to -- or "rebalancing" toward -- Asia and the Pacific, in both words and deeds, has aroused a great deal of suspicion in China. These suspicions deepened when the United States got itself entangled in China's dispute with Japan over

the Diaoyu Islands and in the debates over maritime issues in the South China Sea” (Yafei, 2013, *Foreign Policy*). (Even states like Japan and South Korea have territorial disputes over Takeshima-Dokdo Islands. Conflicts in the Asia Pacific are deeply rooted in history and can be seen as frozen conflicts. Japan and Korea crisis (Dokdo-Takeshima Territorial Dispute) can provide a very good example in how the relations are complex and complicated. “Dokdo is not simply an easternmost island. It is a Korean national symbol and a reminder of Japan’s past aggression” (Choi, 2005, p. 471). This continued with nationalistic-populist political problems such as Yasukuni Shrine visits.

“Korea–Japan relations turn turbulent when historical contentions surface. When Koizumi (Japan’s prime minister 2001-2006) repeatedly visited Yasukuni shrine, Koreans turned critical. In 2005 when a Japanese prefecture, Shimane, declared February 22 “Takeshima Day,” which celebrates the annexation of the island to Japan in 1905, anti-Japanese attitudes surged in Korea” (Cheol Hee Park, 2008, p. 14).

After World War II, Japan was embedded to the US in security and military matters. From that day, their security is providing by the US forces. Currently, the fear of China’s rise increased fear in Japan as a result from the security dilemma. This created another concern for regional hegemony which is Japan’s initiative to become a normal state in military manners.

“The rise of China presents for Japan a myriad of challenges and opportunities that are clouded by uncertainties. While trying to optimize the potential economic benefits of China’s rise and stabilize political relations with its giant neighbour, it is also hedging against the risks and possible threats that China may pose in the future” (Mike M. Mochizuki, 2007, p. 739).

Economic benefits, US presence and its allied commitment to Japan never countered the risk posed by the rise of China. Due to suspicions over the rise of China, Japan was pushed to become a normal state having national security policies, having a proper army for defending and power projection and not relying on international agreements or powerful allies like the US. The National Security Council of Japan “drafted Japan’s first National Security Strategy and new NDPGs...Japan has acquired arms that strengthen its defence of the Nansei Islands that lie south of the Japanese main Islands,

close to China” (Lande, 2017, 7). Rising nationalism like in the Japan-South Korea dispute is another proof that Japan is working over preventing power.

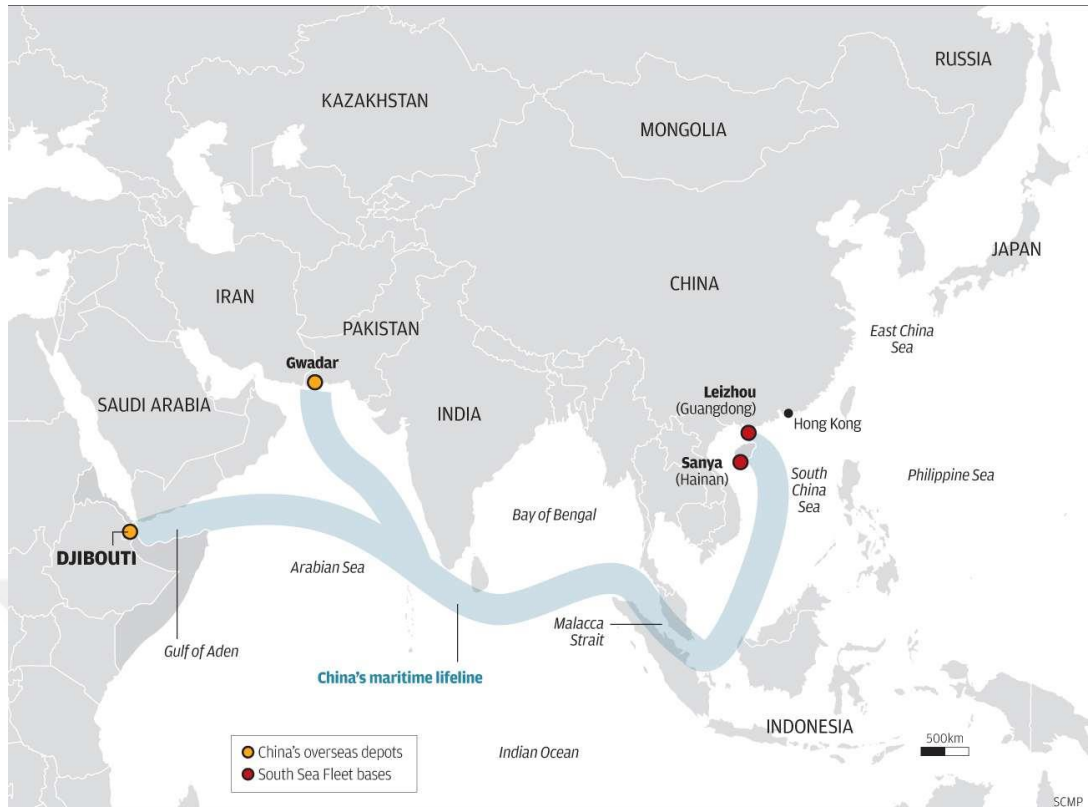
## **2.4 INTENTIONS OF CHINA**

Fourthly, intentions of states can never be clear, thus creating uncertainties and mistrust. Asia Pacific region is also full of uncertainties. Owing to no cultural or political balance as in Europe, states are vigilant against their competitors or even allies. ASEAN states, Japan, South Korea are following the hedging system for their economic and security reasons towards China. “Appropriated from the financial world, the basic assumption is that hedging means a state spreads its risk by pursuing two opposite policies towards another state” (Hemmings, 2013, *The Diplomat*). For the states of Asia Pacific hedging means relying on US in security matters and continuing economic relations with China at the same time. This strategy is a result of uncertainty. This is related with China’s unpredictability, which is associated with its government system. China is open to world in economic matters, but there is a fog of war in security policies. “The US hopes that through strengthening military cooperation with Vietnam, Vietnam will be able to adopt a firmer stance against China on the South China Sea issues” (Jaipragas, 2018, *South China Morning Post*). Because of uncertainty in China’s acts, Vietnam and the US can come closer in security cooperation. On the other hand, Asia Pacific states focused on increase on military spending and investing their own military productions. “Indonesia officially launched the fourth in a series of locally-build fast attack crafts” (Paramesweran, 2018, *The Diplomat*). Japan, on the other hand, started to take extra security measures in respect of China. “The 150-nautical mile Miyako Strait stretches between Miyako-jima and Okinawa-jima. It is the largest gap in the northern part of the so-called first island chain that traces from Japan south through the Philippine archipelago and encircles China’s entire coast” (Stashwick, 2018, *The Diplomat*). China, on the other hand, is trying to keep its profile low due to concerns of the neighbouring states. “Beijing prefers to accomplish its objectives quietly and through non-military means. In both the East and South China Seas, China has sought to exploit “grey zones”, gaining control incrementally and deterring others without resort to the

lethal use of weapons” (2017 Index of US Military Strength). In that way, China is trying to hide its intentions over neighbouring states.

## **2.5 CHINA’S GOAL OF SURVIVAL**

Fifthly, state survival is the main purpose of any state. “China’s militarization of the South China Sea [is] showing no signs of stopping” (Paramesweran, 2018, *The Diplomat*). Aside of territorial claims, even though China is giving importance to mutual understanding and peace and cooperation in the region, it is still increasing its military presence in the conflict zone. In return, the US took necessary steps on steel and aluminium export and increased tariffs. In response, “China’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying, condemned the US decision and threatened to take countermeasures” (Gao, 2018, *The Diplomat*). Furthermore, energy transport is very crucial for export-led economy of China, for this reason, China established its first overseas military base in Djibouti to secure its maritime lifeline. China is planning to establish another military base in Jiwani. “Plans call for the Jiwani base to be a joint naval and air facility for Chinese forces, located a short distance up the coast from the Chinese-built commercial port facility at Gwadar, Pakistan” (Gertz, 2018, *The Washington Times*). However, this plan was denied by Chinese authorities in a statement to the media by the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lu Kang (*The Times of India*, 2018). China already has one important base in Djibouti and has another in Gwadar, Pakistan. Even with this capability, they have secured their trade routes against certain threats. Rather than trusting international institutions or any maritime international law, China is taking its own precautions with its overseas military bases and commercial ports. As seen in the map 3 below, the military base and the commercial port are located in a very strategic locations, where there is a connection to Gulf of Oman, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. Regarding the energy dependency of China, those bases will give the Chinese security, monitoring the oil and trade transport and power projection capability around those regions.



**Map 2.4: China's overseas military depots with yellow dots, are key locations for oil and gas transportation from the Middle East.<sup>13</sup>**

## 2.6 RATIONALITY OF CHINA

Last, but not least, states are rational actors. States are also calculating their mid and long term goals and the effects of their decisions. U.S. military presence is a factor in the region as the U.S. have several naval and air-force bases and several aircraft carriers in the region, thus shedding light on US policies. Aircraft carriers give states the ability to deploy expeditionary forces without help from the mainland (Index of U.S. Military Strength, 2017). “Furthermore, why would a powerful China accept US military forces operating in its backyard?” (Mearsheimer, 2003). Such rational actions can be explained by realist mentality. In Mearsheimer’s view, China is not reacting harshly to US military presence, instead, it is in accordance with its strategic plan to get powerful

<sup>13</sup> Chan, 2017

enough in its own region and to eventually accomplish regional hegemony when the time is right. China's State Council issues a White Paper every year, which focuses on China's policies on security concerns and cooperation in Asia-Pacific. The latest Paper states that "China is committed to promoting peace and stability in this region. It follows of peaceful development and the mutual beneficial strategy of opening up" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017). In relation to security concerns emanating from US and China's neighbours the White Paper reads that "China's international standing and its security and development interests is a strategic task in China's modernization drive, and provides a strong guarantee for its peaceful development" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017). In this way, China vindicates its military rise by saying that it is necessary for their growth and creating peace in Asia Pacific. "China is still the weaker power because a military defeat derail the quest for predominance in East Asia and the Western Pacific" (Singh, 2017, 2). As noted by Allison and Blackwill (2013, *Foreign Affairs*) Chinese leadership still favours the "hide your strength, bide your time" approach of Deng Xiaoping.

## **2.7 POLARITY AND THE CHINA**

"Mearsheimer does not identify the international system that emerged after the cold war in unipolar terms. On the contrary, the theory presupposes that unipolarity is incompatible with a regionalized approach to international politics" (Little, 2007, p. 216). Unlike Fukuyama's ideas, Mearsheimer ignored the liberal victory after the Cold War and thus rejected unipolarity.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, his focus on research is based on regional balances of power and excludes the prospect of world hegemony, or an assumption that there can be the same regional hegemon in a number of regions simultaneously.<sup>15</sup> His another assumption is focusing on multipolarity of the South East

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<sup>14</sup> Fukuyama, F., 1992. *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Avon. Fukuyama, claimed that after end of the Cold War, USA announced their victory and the war will be over at least in big challenges between states like in the Cold War.

<sup>15</sup> If US wants to achieve World hegemony, they needs to achieve regional hegemony in Northeast Asia, Eurasia and Europe to like they did in Western Hemisphere.

Asia region and the world itself. “In particular he [Mearsheimer] accepts that war is more likely in a multipolar system than in a bipolar system” (Little, 2007, p. 224). It was possible to predict the actions of great powers in the Cold War. Both sides were controlling their conflicts via proxy wars, not hot conflicts. “It is tempting to argue that it is clear from twentieth-century European history that bipolarity is more peaceful than multipolarity” (Mearsheimer, 2013, p. 84). Mearsheimer pointed that following the two world wars, the world was bipolar between Soviet Union and the USA and were no large-scale wars in this period. But in this perspective, Asia Pacific includes China as an upcoming rival, the US with their naval and air capabilities in the region with their US bases, critical second states like Taiwan, North Korea and Vietnam. Asia Pacific itself is multipolar in many ways. Mearsheimer also argues that because of the anarchic nature of the structure, even a bipolar system is not entirely safe.

Offshore balancing is the one of the strategies which Mearsheimer offers to US to deal with rising powers like China in multipolar world. He admits that US should transform her strategy on upcoming threats to its hegemony in Western Hemisphere. “Thus, the United States’ principal aim in Europe and Northeast Asia should be to maintain the regional balance of power so that the most powerful state in each region—for now, Russia and China” (Mearsheimer and Walt 2016, p. 73). Mearsheimer believes that China will be powerful in the future, therefore the US should employ the above strategy and use their energy efficiently.

“The optimal strategy for dealing with a rising China is containment” (Mearsheimer, 2014, *The National Interest*). Mearsheimer believes that, this is the only efficient way to deal with a rising China. This will not create fear in China and in that way US will use its power efficiently which suits the strategy of offshore balancing. “Containment is essentially a defensive strategy, since it does not call for starting wars against China” (Mearsheimer, 2014, *The National Interest*). “Many offensive realists strongly suggest containment policies” (Jung and Lee, 2017, p. 104). Mearsheimer briefly explains the three ways of containment. First option is seen as preventative war against China. Some of the reasons that this way of containment cannot work well are China’s nuclear possibilities and its enormous conventional military capabilities such as huge land army of China. For these reasons, “slowing down Chinese economic growth is certainly more attractive option than nuclear war, but it, too, is not feasible” (Mearsheimer, 2014, *The*

*National Interest*). China is one of the main manufacturing powers in the world, and is therefore a key factor in global economy owing to its production and assembly capabilities. According to Mearsheimer (2014) the same policy of containment through economy can affect the US policy as well. Any restriction on free trade can affect US sectors because China is one of the important places for manufacturing industry in the world and many US companies are designing their products in homeland yet producing them in China. Economies are highly tied with each other. These and several sensitiveness this policy have vulnerability. His third option of containment is rollback. He states that “United States would seek to weaken China by toppling regimes that are friendly to Beijing and perhaps even by fomenting trouble inside China” (Mearsheimer, 2014, *The National Interest*). US already have allies in the region like, Japan, South Korea, and after Obama Administration relations with Philippines improved in US favour. Despite China’s success in creating a good environment for economic growth, it still has problems with religious unrest “in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia” (Shirk, 2008, p. 182), which can be used as a tool for a rollback strategy. Those regions are sensitive for China’s internal security. China declared its internal troubles to be ‘three evils,’ namely terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism (Dupont, 2007). Xinjiang is region populated with Uighur minority. US according to that strategy can focus those weak points of China’s power.

Mearsheimer claims that China will rise unpeacefully due to several reasons. In his theory, states can only feel secure if they reach regional hegemony. Because international system is anarchic, and the actors are the states, China needs to be a hegemon in Southeast Asia. There is no international organisation that can act like a world government. To achieve this, China is increasing its military spending, and has started to take part in many aspects of security from satellite to IBMs to aircraft carriers. Furthermore, intentions of the other states are not clear, because of that China cannot promote peace or peace-like conditions in the Southeast Asia. Due to this uncertainty, it can never feel safe. Mearsheimer claims that the world is currently multipolar and this is the most dangerous world order, because there are multiple actors that want to gain greater power. As a consequence, the main aim of the states is survival. Mearsheimer argues that, due to the aforementioned conditions in current world politics, China will try to achieve regional hegemony and this will create a revisionist China.



## **2.8 REALIST CRITIQUE OF IKENBERRY'S VIEW ON CHINA'S RISE**

Understanding realist critiques against neoliberal equivalent will show a broader picture of the neorealist assumptions. Neorealists criticize liberal ideas which are supported by Ikenberry himself. According to Ikenberry, current world order is multi-layered and there is shared leadership in the world. Moreover, the idea of cooperation via international institutions – widely explored by neo-liberal school, is the first phenomenon that can be challenged. “In general, realists have argued that cooperation is possible under anarchy, but that it is harder to achieve, more difficult to maintain, and more dependent on state power than is appreciated by the institutionalist tradition” (Grieco, 1993, p. 302). Joseph Grieco also believes that liberal institutionalism is overrated in world politics. “They (neorealists) believe that neoliberals exaggerate the extent to which institutions are able to “mitigate anarchy’s constraining’s effects on inter-state cooperation (Grieco 1988a, p. 485). Best example is the ineffectiveness of the ASEAN organisation. ASEAN itself is not a mediator or resolver in the struggles between states in the region or major powers, it is more often acts as a catalyser of crises.

“It is clear that arrangements (made by ASEAN) have not eradicated competitive dynamics between the United States and Japan, on the one hand, and China, on the other. Such competition has been evident, for example, in the form of competing regional and bilateral initiatives offered to ASEAN states by major powers (for example competing free trade)” (Ba and Alice, 2010, 2).

None of the ASEAN members, Japan, South Korea or states like US, Australia is fully in favour of regional arrangements or cooperation. Furthermore, members of ASEAN have no bargaining power over China in the region, which is an acceptable counter-argument. “If it were counted as a single country, ASEAN would already be the world’s seventh-largest economy with a combined GDP of US\$2.4 trillion” (Reeves, 2017). On the other hand, according to its GDP which is US\$11,19 trillion, China is the world’s second largest economy, thus it is far ahead of ASEAN’s collective economic power (World Development Indicators database, *World Bank*, 15 December 2017). It is not the anarchic nature of the world politics that motivates states to co-operate, instead co-operation is made possible due to their desire for relative gains and possibility to cheat. Consequently, it is not justified to accept that inter-state relationships can be equal, and

it is evident that powers of liberal institutions are limited due to complex relations caused by territorial disputes and the plurality of issues they are ought to deal with.

Other realist criticism of liberal thinkers is interdependency between states, a basic liberal assumption which expects that states will not fight each other due to economic relations. Ikenberry explains rise of China with power of liberal world order. In his explanation, one of the column of this order relies on interdependency of China to liberal states like Japan, European states and the US. In other words, economic relations are supposed to make conflict less likely or prolonged. “Interdependence suggest a condition of roughly equal dependence of parties on one another” (Brown, 2008, p. 39). Instead, realists would argue that economic interdependence can only result in weak ties between states. “States if they can afford to, shy away from becoming excessively dependent on goods and resources that may be denied to them in crises and wars. States take measures, for example Japan is managing its trade so as to avoid excessive dependence on others” (Gilpin, 1987) (Berger and Dore 1996, p. 93). “Japan was in fact exporting more and importing less in relative terms. Moreover, despite Japanese rhetoric in praise of multilateralism and the Pacific community, Japan only slowly opened its market to the manufactured exports of its Asian neighbours” (Gilpin, 1987). States are keeping multiple trading channels with each other not for being dependent, but in an attempt to decrease dependency on any single state, thus rendering the economic interdependency theory irrelevant. Ultimately, in terms of state aims and motives, in their view more trade equals to more economic power and security, not to greater interdependence.

Mearsheimer’s criticism includes US role in the world and its badly constructed policies. Liberal hegemony represented by US created more confrontation and conflicts. Liberal hegemony can be described by free trade in the world, promotion of democracies, and praising international institutionalism.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the liberal hegemony approach holds that the United States should exercise its power responsibly – while being a hegemon, it has to promote international institutions, democracy and human rights” (Mearsheimer, 2016a). That is, liberal hegemony is embodied in USA’s

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<sup>16</sup> Next chapter will focus Ikenberry’s ideas about liberal World order. This argument will be presented more clearly.

role of the ‘world’s policeman’ – something it has long been criticised for in the wider global community. Northeast Asia which China is the main concern of the whole region for US, creating obstacles for them and dealing onshore about crises decrease the power of the US in the region and in the world.<sup>17</sup> Because of these liberal commitments, the US are using their energy, money and military capability. The responsibilities placed on the hegemonic US by liberals often mean that the country is actively taking part or is being drawn into conflicts.

## **2.9 LIMITS OF MEARSHEIMER’S EXPLANATIONS OF RISE OF CHINA’S POWER**

The possibility of the unpeaceful rise of China is high and should be expected in the long run, as argued by Mearsheimer. According to his offensive realist approach, China will turn aggressive for the sake of its survival, which is as argued by realists - the only aim of a state. But this explanation is only partly true. This part tries to describe China’s integration to world liberal system and its barriers to becoming number one in the international system and finally will mention about internal problems related energy dependency and it’s low level of international presence in the world problems.

Mearsheimer, presented his views under these theoretical assumptions. He presented a historical analogy between China and Germany and transition from British Empire to United States. This approach is ill-suited due to differences of the regions and the actors. China is an authoritarian regime within the liberal order and has good relations with the United States trade-wise, on the other hand Germany became an authoritarian regime following an election and was facing economic turmoil due to conditions of interwar years. On the other hand, the transition period from British Empire to the United States is also a badly made comparison unfit to explain current possible

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<sup>17</sup> There are different regions descriptions, this research mostly will use Asia Pacific to describe the region. Because main focus is China, this way of description will provide some flexibility to understand China more broadly. In this way, China’s position in World politics will be underlined, because the US is take great importance in rising China debates. Using Asia Pacific adds the US into debate alongside the region states. Because, excluding ASEAN states, Japan, South Korea or North Korea can create limitations to understand rise of China phenomenon.

transition period of China. First of all, British Empire had a multinational state that had a lot of territories around the world. British Empire and the United States despite the historical conflicts from colonization period shared similar Anglo-Saxon culture. This transition period happened smoothly due to same logic and the world view provided by common culture. Transition period of hegemony from the USA to China, if it will happen at all, will have no such commonalities. This does not mean that this transition will be happening aggressively, but it is obvious that it will not happen using same cultural or political expectations.

Mearsheimer also underestimates the international institutions and economic ties in the Asia Pacific region. Bodies like ASEAN, ASEAN plus three are active to some extent. Economic ties are stronger than Mearsheimer gives them credit for. The problem is that Mearsheimer did not analyse the nature of relationships in the Asia Pacific. The relationships are centered on bilateral agreements and institutionalisation is not accomplished in the same way as between European states or between the United States and its allies.

Feigenbaum (2017) suggests that China is a disruptive power but not a revolutionary one. China is challenging the role of the US inside the international institutions by its voting powers in GATT and WTO, China even established its own investment bank called Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). “The bank was launched in 2015... a host of close U.S. allies, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, South Korea, and the United Kingdom (although with the notable exception of Japan), had defied Washington and signed up” (Feigenbaum, 2017, *Foreign Affairs*). Yet these attempts are more like offering different options for rising powers and developing states already in and within the system rather than offering a totally new system. For example, “Beijing argues that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank...will uphold good governance and environmental protection” (Lind, 2017, p. 80).

China holds US treasury securities and its economy highly connected to the US vis a vis. Any political or economic embargo or ban can affect both sides and this can be more damaging than EU embargo on Russia due to size of China’s economy and interconnectedness to World trade.

Unlike the United States, China is in a disadvantaged geopolitical position which includes several challengers. The United States became a great power with its geopolitical and geographic reasons as well. Two oceans create a very effective and costless barrier for close contact with the United States, that is – it has a very convenient natural border. There are only two neighbours - one of them is its close ally Canada, well known by its soft power and its responsible role inside the UN forces. Mexico is the other neighbour US has no any arguments left except immigration which is just a security concern at internal ministry levels.

“Surrounded by 15 countries on a 22,000-km land border and by six countries on an 18,000-km maritime border, a revisionist China cannot avoid conflicts with neighbours or major powers, including the United States, Russia, Japan and India” (Jung and Lee, 2017, 93). China has friends whose intentions are not clear-cut. One is Russia. Due to China’s One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), China put in a project for reawakening the Silk Road. China sees this as both –zone for political influence and an economic catalyst for improving relations with the states that will be part of the initiative<sup>18</sup>. There is an ongoing debate about one corridor<sup>19</sup> which connects China, Central Asia and West Asia (Iran). Third corridor includes Central Asian countries which are Russian sphere of influence traditionally. The other problem is Russian-Chinese border. Russia is underpopulated in its eastern regions and is actively implementing social and economic policies to address the population imbalance compared to its eastern neighbour (Higgins, 2016). China and Russia are partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and this body established under this threat.

“Historically, Russia has viewed other powers’ economic initiatives in post- Soviet Eurasia with suspicion. Moscow was initially cautious in its reaction to the OBOR, worrying about the implications for Russian interests and about potential encroachment from a country that has far more to offer economically to the five post-Soviet Central Asian countries”(Charap, Drennan et. al. Noel, 2017, p. 33).

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<sup>18</sup> China proposed its One Belt One Road Initiative as open to every states who wants to join. Currently Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and even Greece is possible partners for this Project.

<sup>19</sup> There are 3 main corridors. One is China-Mongolia-Russia line. Second one is New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic corridor. Third one is China, Central Asia, West Asia includes China-Pakistan, China-Indochina and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar

The other country is India which also has good relations as well as important concerns. First of all, like China's One Belt One Road Initiative, India has its own project called Spice Route, which is "being perceived by some as India's rival concepts to China's initiative" (Parashar, 2014, *The Times of India*). There are also other areas for conflicts which are related with One Belt One Road Initiative. Third corridor of the Silk Road project includes several sub-corridors, and one of them directly concerns India. The aim was connecting Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar. But due to India's objections this corridor cancelled.

There are also historical rivals like Japan. According to Mearsheimer's latent power theory, Japan has enough wealth but not enough population to show some power in its region against China. Japan has very close ties and alliance with the United States and militarily US are projecting military power in the region from several US bases, "including Andersen Air Force Base on Guam" (Lind, 2017, p. 76). There are also historical roots for rival tradition between China and Japan. Japan conquered Manchuria region in interwar years till the end of the Second World War (see Gordon, 2006).

China's domestic problems present another struggle. Some of these are chronic, and likely to follow the Chinese government even if the economy and the political situation keeps developing at the current pace. (Rising Chinese role in world events, Xi's speech about Palestine) Economic vulnerabilities such as energy dependency and domestic issues like brain-drain and ethnic conflicts are some of the issues that China has to deal with it (*China Daily*, 2017a).

China's export-oriented economy is a major concern for the Chinese policymakers. Beijing is looking for ways to use its huge economic clout to achieve its long term political objectives. Although the 2008 economic recession did not directly affect China due to its mass production, it did have a negative effect through deteriorating economic conditions in its trading partners. Furthermore, as Len (2015) finds, the BP Energy Outlook expects China to become the world's largest net energy importer, thus showing how significant China's energy dependence can be. Its energy vulnerability is exacerbated due to its huge population, and dependency at such scale creates enormous sensitivity. One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR) attempts to address this problem by securing energy transportation routes via land corridors and newly-built or purchased

ports. The other goal of the project is to improve economic conditions in West China – its poorer region. Most ethnic minorities of China live in the China's west which are Tibetans to Uyghurs, thus making it a core priority and reason behind the strive to improve economic conditions in the region.

Another domestic issue China is facing is the so-called 'brain-drain.' China's economic liberalization has paved the way for young Chinese to study abroad. "Between 1978 and 2007, more than 1.21 million Chinese nationals left for study and research opportunities abroad but only about a quarter returned" (Cao, 2008, p. 331). Many Chinese students who study abroad decide to settle overseas, thus having a knock-on effect on China's demographics and ageing population. Perhaps most importantly, it also hinders the chances of nurturing an economy that is not only strong production-wise, but can also rely on its own research and development capabilities.

The other barrier to China's unpeaceful rise is its economic relations with the United States. "The United States is China's largest export market and China loans most of the dollars it earns from trade to the U.S government, which uses the money to cover its large budget deficit" (Shirk, 2008). In both ways, any serious conflict can damage this complex economic relation. Any harsh measurements against China can affect the US economy.

Apart from promoting world peace and underlying the importance of mutual respect and criticism over western imperialism, China is not taking forward steps in crisis relating to international interests. For example, China remained distant and unengaged in the crisis in Qatar, only expressing hope for resolution through negotiation, and took a back-seat in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict despite exploring opportunities for more active presence (Tzogopoulos, 2018). Qatar – Saudi Arabia crisis is related with oil consumption, so it shows another weakness of China in international events (China's main oil purchase is coming from the Middle East.). At the same time, the Israel-Palestine conflict shows that China's reluctance to be the world police.

The other concern raised is the quality of Chinese foreign aid. Details of the aid programs are kept secret due to heavy Chinese government control. "The rest [of the aid which is not in the world standard like US aids-focusing on local needs rather than influence of the provider state] is concessional lending at below market interest rates,

mostly to Chinese companies, working abroad – the kind of aid that used to be common in the West but went out of fashion in the 1990s because it overburdened recipients with debt” (2017a, *The Economist*).

In conclusion, this chapter examined Mearsheimer’s assumptions on offensive realism and focused on the main arguments of his theory by relating all these assumptions to the rise of China. Due to his following assumptions that states are the only actors, survival is the main goal, relative gains of states are their concerns, offshore balancing or containment strategies will be possible solution for the US because of possibility of unpeaceful rise of China in the future’ are the key reasons of unpeaceful rise of China. Nature of states is the reason behind aggression or responses aimed at securing their entity. His ideas in his book “Tragedy of Great Power Politics” are centered on China over the US perspective and its hegemony over the Asia Pacific and the World. This chapter picked Mearsheimer’s ideas concerning China’s rise. Mearsheimer’s assumptions of rise of China focused and its limits was the main focus at the end of this chapter. Next chapter will focus on Ikenberry’s “Peaceful rise of China” assumption.



## CHAPTER 3

### PEACEFUL RISE OF CHINA'S POWER: NEOLIBERAL EXPLANATIONS AND IKENBERRY'S CONTRIBUTION

Inspired by liberal explanations such as interdependency and multilateralism, Ikenberry explains peaceful rise of China using domestic determinants such as energy dependency, separation and terrorism (Dupont, 2007). His “Liberal World Order” approach is a useful perspective for understanding the way towards which China is heading. Thus, due to trade and business commitments international actors sensitive to each other’s decisions, rising powers like China need this interdependency due to export oriented economies.

His ideas are unique since he does not see China as a threat due to its (in)capabilities and liberal world order. He views liberal world order as a glue that prevents welfare of authoritarian states. Accordingly, he concludes that China’s peaceful rise is coming from its incapability of create a new order, not providing a new political or economic model, and also coming from its integrity to world market and dependence on energy resources and export goods. While neorealists see new rising powers as future or even current challengers of this order, Ikenberry ignores these views. He argues that:

“...this panicked narrative misses a deeper reality: although the United States' position in the global system is changing, the liberal international order is alive and well. The struggle over international order today is not about fundamental principles. China and other emerging great powers do not want to contest the basic rules and principles of the liberal international order; they wish to gain more authority and leadership within it.” (Ikenberry, 2011, p. 57)<sup>20</sup>

Ikenberry’s arguments on the peaceful rise of China derive from his adoption of the liberal principles of complex interdependency and multilateralism as well as his own invention of “Liberal World Order” which is founded on those principles.

In this context, the first part of this chapter will focus on Ikenberry’s liberal world order assumption with specific focus on complex interdependency, multilateralism theories.

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<sup>20</sup> Declining of the US-led Liberal Order.

Later, Ikenberry’s critiques over neorealist assumptions will be present and finally the limits of explanatory power of Ikenberry’s liberal world order will be analyse.

### 3.1 COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCY

Economic factors encompass huge part of neoliberal predictions about the rise of China (Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 2003). Dave Copeland (2003) provides new perspective to this argument by stressing that “if trade expectations are positive, dependent states will expect to realize the positive benefits of trade into the future” thus making peace desirable and more likely (Copeland, 2003). Copeland also adds that where trade expectations are negative, a negative balance may allow conflict or even aggression between states. Ikenberry and other optimist neoliberals point out that due to economic growth dependency, China cannot pave the way for negative balance or any aggression because of this vulnerability (Friedberg, 2006). Its economy depends on export revenues which is related with good relations with other governments. This is also a reality for other states in the region. If we look at ASEAN member states, they have huge economic relations with China. Furthermore, China’s integration into world order is necessary for its export oriented economy. As Table 3.1 indicates, China is the second biggest trade partner of ASEAN states.

**Table 3.1: ASEAN Top Trade Partners in 2015<sup>21</sup>**

Trade partner country/region <sup>1/</sup>	Value			Share to total ASEAN trade		
	Exports	Imports	Total trade	Exports	Imports	Total trade
ASEAN	306,086.45	239,324.60	545,411.0	25.8	21.9	24.0
China (People's Republic of)	133,981.81	212,392.70	346,374.5	11.3	19.5	15.2
Japan	114,869.92	124,503.66	239,373.6	9.7	11.4	10.5
United states	129,468.84	83,348.69	212,817.5	10.9	7.6	9.3
EU-28	127,916.55	100,244.38	228,160.9	10.8	9.2	10.0
Korea, Republic of	46,310.90	76,564.16	122,875.1	3.9	7.0	5.4
Taiwan	33,435.69	61,334.66	94,770.4	2.8	5.6	4.2
Hong Kong	77,270.13	14,263.32	91,533.5	6.5	1.3	4.0
Australia	33,029.29	18,772.09	51,801.4	2.8	1.7	2.3
India	39,240.58	19,500.95	58,741.5	3.3	1.8	2.6
Total top ten trade partner countries	1,041,610.2	950,249.2	1,991,859.4	87.9	87.1	87.5
Others <sup>2/</sup>	143,625.1	140,955.5	284,580.6	12.1	12.9	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,185,235.3</b>	<b>1,091,204.7</b>	<b>2,276,440.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ASEAN Merchandise Trade Statistics Database (compiled/computed from data submission, publications and/or websites of ASEAN Member States' national ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) units, national statistics offices, customs departments/agencies, or central banks)

Notes  
<sup>1/</sup> preliminary data  
 Some figures may not sum up to totals due to rounding off errors.  
<sup>1/</sup> identified/ranked based on share of total trade  
<sup>2/</sup> includes trade of all other countries and those that could not be attributed to specific countries

<sup>21</sup> ASEAN Merchandise Trade Statistics Database, 2016

Complex interdependency has been described by Keohane and Nye, Jr. as “*mutual dependence*”, where “in world politics [it] refers to situations characterised by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries” (1977, 8). They also add that this new form of description of relation (or the term interdependence) between states is not limited “to situations of mutual benefit”. Otherwise “such a definition would assume that the concept is only useful analytically where the modernist view of the world prevails where threats of military force are few and levels of conflict low” (2011, p. 8).

Interdependence in economic matters is clearly demonstrated through China’s ownership of U.S. Treasury securities, which now stand at \$1.24 trillion and are the largest among foreign governments (Leon, 2017). As noted by Morrison (2011) these securities help the US government to finance its budget deficit and the largest category of U.S. securities are held by China. In other words, China owns a part of U.S. government debt, thus showing economic interdependence whereby possible China’s economic decline would badly affect US and so would the state of China’s economy have an effect on its American partner. Trump’s policies on implementing tariffs on Chinese imports provoked China to take some steps, but even those steps are related with close economic relations between US and China. China was buying US securities as a safe investment tool with its trade surplus, but China is aware of possible threats of this investment in danger as a consequence of Trump’s criticism over current free trade. Even if they want to implement same tariffs on US imports, this can hurt China too.

“[Because of tariffs] US consumers could expect higher prices, and China could retaliate on US-made products and services and sell its \$1 trillion-plus investments in US securities-although this would hurt China too, as any attempt to unload large amounts of US securities would immediately reduce the dollar’s value”(Contractor, 2017, *YaleGlobal Online*).

Complex interdependency claims that due to interconnected economic relations, states depend on each other. The US and China have mutual interests in several trade and foreign direct investments (FDI). “Chinese FDI in the US in 2015 amounted to \$15.3 billion, but US investment in China was almost five times as big, at \$74.6 billion. For

2015, there were 6,677 American company affiliates in China compared with 1,200 Chinese-owned companies in the US” (Contractor, 2017, *YaleGlobal Online*).

Ikenberry uses complex interdependency as a tool for understanding China’s relations with other states and international organisations. Compared to power politics description by neorealists, his approach is of a totally opposite view on state relations. “International order itself is complex: multi-layered, multifaceted and not simply a political formation imposed by the leading state” (Ikenberry, 2018a, *International Affairs*). He also adds that the US is a member of several institutions like the UN, WTO while resisting on ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention, but it’s also the same conditions for rising states like China who has strong relationships with international organisations. US is not acting differently from rising states. China is not under pressure of a single hegemonic power in its world affairs. International liberal system is open to join, after all “The struggles over the existing international order will reshape the rules and institutions in the existing system in various ways. But rising states are not... “revisionist” states seeking to overturn the order; ...they are seeking greater access and authority over its operation”(Ikenberry, 2014b, p. 22). Ikenberry is claiming that China is not a revisionist state and China does not want to change the system at all. Ikenberry is describing this liberal system as system with huge integration capacity, which is welcoming every different state, promoting shared leadership via G7 and G20 platforms, there is horizontal movement of wealth, trade and finally it is open to accommodating the differences like different economic models and political systems – be it authoritarian China or democratically modelled Europe (Ikenberry, 2014b). “China’s rapid growth makes itself open to and dependent on the global economy” (Jung and Lee, 2017, p. 86). China is currently second biggest economy in the world and enjoying free trade, and liberal international order. But it did not become like this overnight. “By 2010, China became the world’s second-largest economy, after the United States. In 2011, it became the largest manufacturer, surpassing the United States. In 2012, it became the world’s largest trader” (Sutter, 2016, p. 60). As an important exporter China uses its internationalization of currency and started giant projects like One Belt One Road Initiative.

As a result of interdependency, there are several signs in change in attitude of China’s. It’s new tone on human rights, free trade and democratic institutions has become more

prominent in the recent years. In one of the articles published in China Daily, stating that “under the leadership of a sober-minded, forward-looking CPC (Communist Party of China), Chinese-style democracy has never been healthier and China has absolutely no need to import the failing party political systems of other countries. ...the Western model is showing its age” (Laifang, 2017, *China Daily*).

### **3.2 MULTILATERALISM OR UNILATERALISM**

Ikenberry explains peaceful rise of China with multilateralism in the world order. Although, US’s unwillingness to promote liberal views such as free trade (trade tariffs), criticism over importance of multilateralism by international organisations (criticism over NATO, and UN by Trump) and its reluctant support is exist. Ikenberry claims that multilateralism will survive due to certain strengths:

“Next era will necessarily involve a more developed system of shared leadership. ...WTO trade system has a unique capacity [reciprocal bargaining system which is trade occurs in win-win situation],...some forms of multilateral governance will inevitably flow into regional political settings [bargaining in regional level like ASEAN, EU, NAFTA]” (Ikenberry, 2015, p. 411).

Multilateralism is the broad concept that explains multi-layered connections and communications of the state. Trade and global economic approach paved the way for this concept became useful and popular. There are several definitions of multilateralism. Multilateralism is “Institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions.”(Ruggie, 1993) Multilateralism character will give an order to system and rule-based relations between states.

In May 2017, China organised and hosted Belt and Road Summit, at which Xi aimed at establishing multilateralism which is praising free trade, mutual respect in political and economic matters in his speech “Cooperative security is a more realistic vision than collective security as it avoids the old-fashioned friend-or-foe distinction of the world and is oriented toward the greater goal of protecting the security and interests of all” (Ying, 2017, *The Diplomat*). Even in military matters, despite territorial disputes, China

is supporting multi-way approach and this is a clear reflection of China's intentions in economic relations with other states.

The other important point is institutional structure of the region. When Ikenberry and liberals try to explain a lack of regional institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, they are highlighting bilateral relations. "Thus, proponents of the ASEAN Way argue that, in contrast to the pessimism of realist theory and its variants, and to the "follow-me" hubris of European institutionalization and integration, the Asia-Pacific is developing patterns of institutional form and content that can lead to high levels of cooperation even with low levels of formality and intrusiveness<sup>22</sup>" (Johnston, 2003, p. 108). Asia Pacific has a low level of institutionalization, but cooperation is a fact that keeps the relations in check between states in spite of territorial disputes over South China Sea or bilateral disputes<sup>23</sup>. In result, cooperation occurs by bilateral relations under the regional bodies like ASEAN, ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN, China, S.Korea and Japan). This is clear proof that multilateralism is also valid for South Asia and for the World Order by the help of declining approach of the US thanks to Trump's administration.

### **3.3 IKENBERRY'S LIBERAL WORLD ORDER**

Liberal World Order is the phrase that Ikenberry used for describing current world order. Furthermore, he mentioned US-led system as a Liberal World Order that "U.S.-led order is distinctive in that it has been more liberal than imperial -- and so unusually accessible, legitimate, and durable" (Ikenberry, 2008, *Foreign Affairs*).

Ikenberry presents three different scenarios for the future of the world system. Firstly he described as *Post-Hegemonic Liberal International Order*. "In this post-American liberal order, authority would move toward universal institutions" (Ikenberry, 2011, p.

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<sup>22</sup> Member states (Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Brunei, Cambodia and Indonesia) of ASEAN aimed increased economic growth, political stability in South East Asia region. ASEAN Ways discourse is pointing that Non-interference in the internal affairs between member states, mutual respect for independence. (ASEAN official website <http://asean.org/asean/about-asean/overview/>)

<sup>23</sup> Territorial disputes are complex issue, next chapter will be focus on more deeply to this conflict.

81). His only concern in this future prediction is inefficiency of UN Security Council and regional security alliances like NATO in security matters. Ineffectiveness of these institutions will increase the need of reforms in security matters.

Ikenberry is pointing out questions like, what will happen to US-led liberal system while US is declining in power. He is also adding that the US hegemony is declining, but not the liberal world order. Thanks to liberal world order, China is in good form according to economic growth rate and became a member of WTO, appreciates and benefits from free trade all over, allowing it to implement new projects like One Belt One Road and new international institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Bank and One Belt One Road Fund. Ikenberry is also arguing that China does not want to change or destruct the current order, but just wants to increase its voice with more leading roles and influence international organisations in its favour.

China is not only collaborating with existing international institutions, but also creating its own. States in the region are highly economically dependent on China. This however does not eradicate concerns of a possible attempt at becoming a hegemon by China. For this reason, China tries to mediate this fear through a diplomatic approach with the further help of economic ties. This is clear example that China benefits from liberal world order by multilateral political and economic relations. China tries to participate this order actively with more integration rather than trying to change existing order. China had tried a number of ways in gaining the advantage. “First, it is increasing its level of participation and engagement with existing multilateral institutions” (Mingjiang, 2011 et al Ikenberry, 2017, p. 1). This approach shows that liberal world order is multi-layered and there is no hierarchical structure in this system. “Second, it is building new institutions, such as the New Development Bank (NDB, formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank), the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership trade agreement (RCEP), and most prominently the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)” (Ikenberry, 2017, p. 1). China’s attempt of creating a new international bodies showed that Ikenberry’s liberal world order is inclusive and open to change. Thanks to this flexibility, China have not any aim to being revisionist in this current order. Apart from that, China is currently member of UN Security Council, member of Bretton Woods System institutions like World Trade Organization (WTO) and many others, thus giving it worldwide recognition as a major power. Due to

increasing economic power, China started to use its power in those institutions. Ikenberry (2017) describes this configuration as *Authority-Seeking Stakeholder* whereby China is joining international institutions while seeking to influence decision-making process by being more active. This is clearly illustrated in China's effort to secure more voting power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (see Kastner, Pearson and Rector, 2016). Yet by also establishing new institutions China is trying to challenge current institution by establishing new ones. Ikenberry described this choice as “*external innovation*”. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is key in this attempt to create new institutions, and so is its One Belt, One Road initiative which is seeking to secure China's trade routes for energy resource transportation and creating sphere of influence through infrastructure projects all the way from China to Europe. The route includes countries like Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Turkey and Middle East countries and has historic references. To fulfilling this goal [Energy transportation security, create sphere of influence] China established a new bank which can be competitor of World Bank and Asian Development Bank within the system as called liberal world order by Ikenberry.

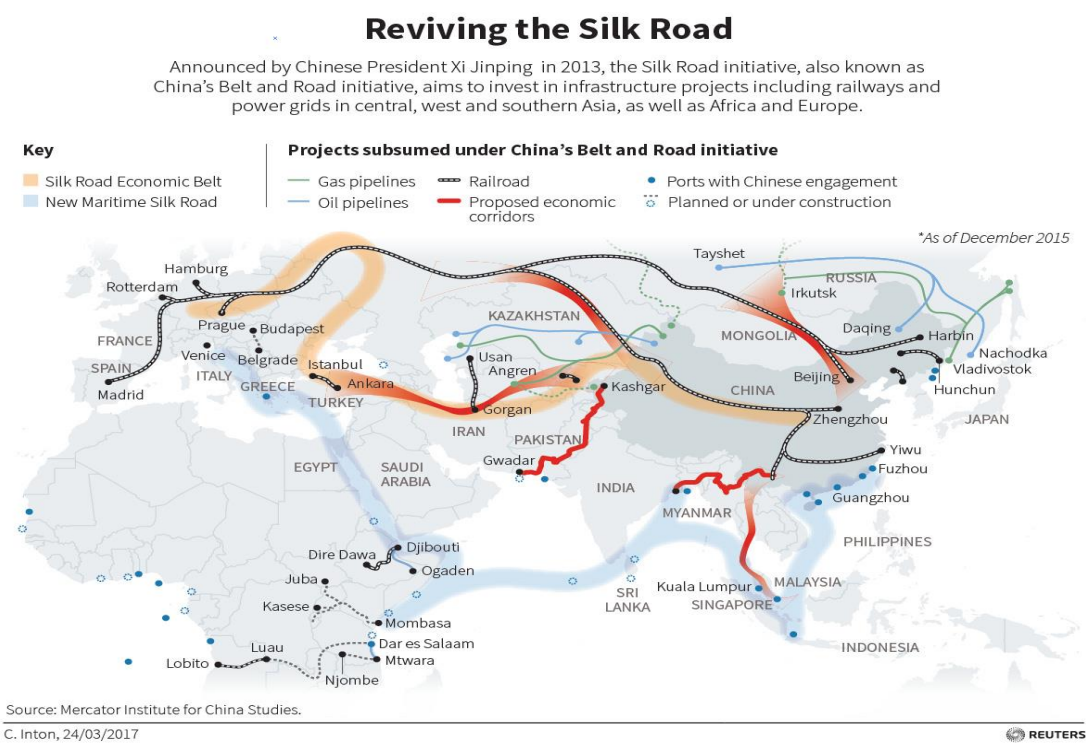
### **3.4 LIBERAL WORLD ORDER AND ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE**

China's integration into the liberal world order is clearly evident in its new project called One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR). Ikenberry argues that China is integrated into liberal order and promoting mutual benefit projects with different partners; and its economic rise made possible by this very liberal order.

As it seen in map 3.2, One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR) is a massive project, starting from China and including Central Asia, Middle East, Europe, Africa and several sea routes. There are domestic reasons in China for the implementation of the project. China wanted to secure its energy transportation routes with various infrastructure projects and those routes are also important for its exports, which is the main driver of its economy. Stable and efficient transport routes would ensure that Chinese industries have a steady supply of demand – a crucially important factor in the survival of China's economy, which rests on the enormous manufacturing industry. Because this project is



constructed as a revival of the Silk Road, West China will benefit more due to OBOR economy. Trade routes are passing through West China, one of the poorest parts of the country, thus giving an additional domestic-level argument in favour of the project.



**Map 3.2: One Belt One Road Initiative Projects<sup>24</sup>**

For external reasons, China wants to increase its significance in world politics in order to raise its voice, and fund investment through its trade surplus.

OBOR “will consist of 900 infrastructure projects, valued at about US\$1.3 trillion” with some sources estimating the total figure to be at US\$900 billion (Bilal 2017; *The Economist*). One of the important route is China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“The connection of the BRI [Belt Road Initiative] to the Gulf is achieved through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the China-Central-West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC). The harmonious development of this connection can reduce Beijing’s dependency on the Strait of Malacca for its international trade.”(Tzogopoulos, 2018)

China have already a port in Gwadar which is at a very strategic point close to Gulf of Oman, a securing its energy resources.

<sup>24</sup> Miller M. and Zhang S. 2017

Funding options shows a clear picture of being element of liberal world order. China started to take steps in creating its own international bodies for financing infrastructure projects all over the world. “The funding of the BRI projects, taken individually, and in their interlocking connections, is largely to be Chinese, on present evidence; Beijing has a ‘Silk Road Fund’ that runs to over US\$100 billion” (Rana, 2017, p. 4).

“In his keynote, Xi promised China will funnel an additional RMB 100 billion (\$14,5 billion) into the Silk Road Fund, while the China Development Bank and Export-Import Bank will set up new lending schemes of 250 billion (\$36,2 billion) and RMB 130 billion (\$18,8 billion), respectively for Belt and Road projects. In addition China will provide RMB 60 billion (\$8,7 billion) for humanitarian efforts focused on food, housing health care, and poverty alleviation.”(Tiezzi, 2017, *The Diplomat*)

Xi Jinping also added in his speech that Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, China-Laos railway, Addis-Ababa-Djibouti railway and Hungary-Serbia railway constructions are going full force as a current part of OBOR.

### **3.5 IKENBERRY’S PERSPECTIVE ON MILITARY POWER OF CHINA**

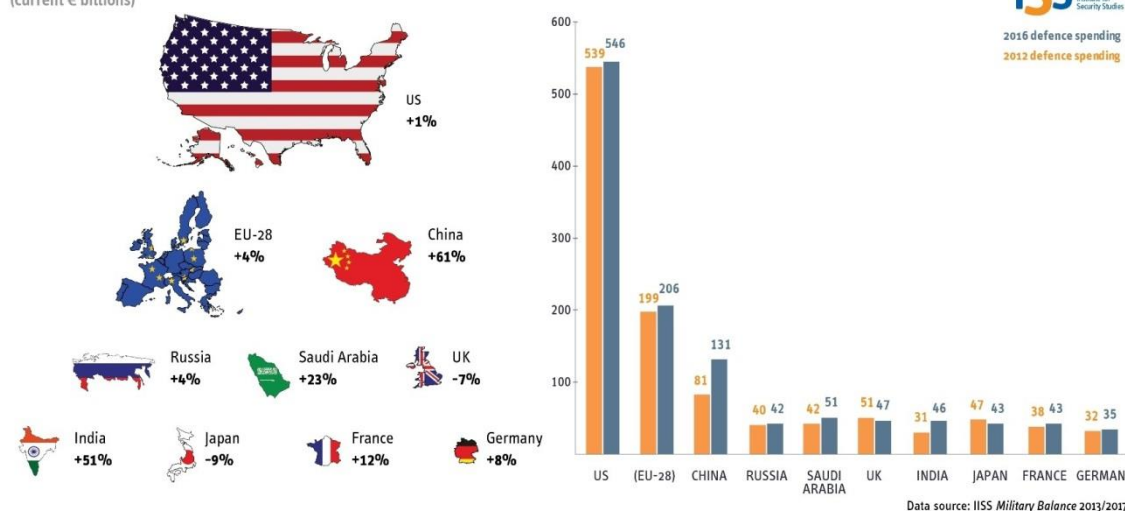
“The US security commitment to Japan, as well as its bilateral security ties to South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and other countries in Southeast Asia, reassures partners and helps to mitigate security dilemmas” (Ikenberry, 2003, p. 423). Although Chinese military spending is increasing in all areas (air, navy, land), including build-up for a blue-water navy,<sup>25</sup>, China faces a dilemma between increasing military spending and increasing its rivals. The global defence expenditure, that is, the global distribution of military expenditure. “The United States clearly leads the world in defence spending, accounting for 36.1% of all of the world’s military budgets combined” (IISS, 2015). On the other hand, “China’s military budget is dwarfed by the U.S. budget, being a very distant number two at 8.0%” (Leon, 2017). In addition there are other obstacles to China having a sufficient military force against US military force. As you see in table 2, there is a huge gap between the military spending of China and the United States.

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<sup>25</sup> This is military term represents that a navy which can be held operations in overseas and far from their homeland. This kind of navy at least needs aircraft carriers, enough air force to support any overseas air operations and navy ships to secure Marine Corps, aircraft carriers with their frigates and destroyers.

## Who are the largest defence spenders around the globe? (2012 vs 2016 levels)

(current € billions)

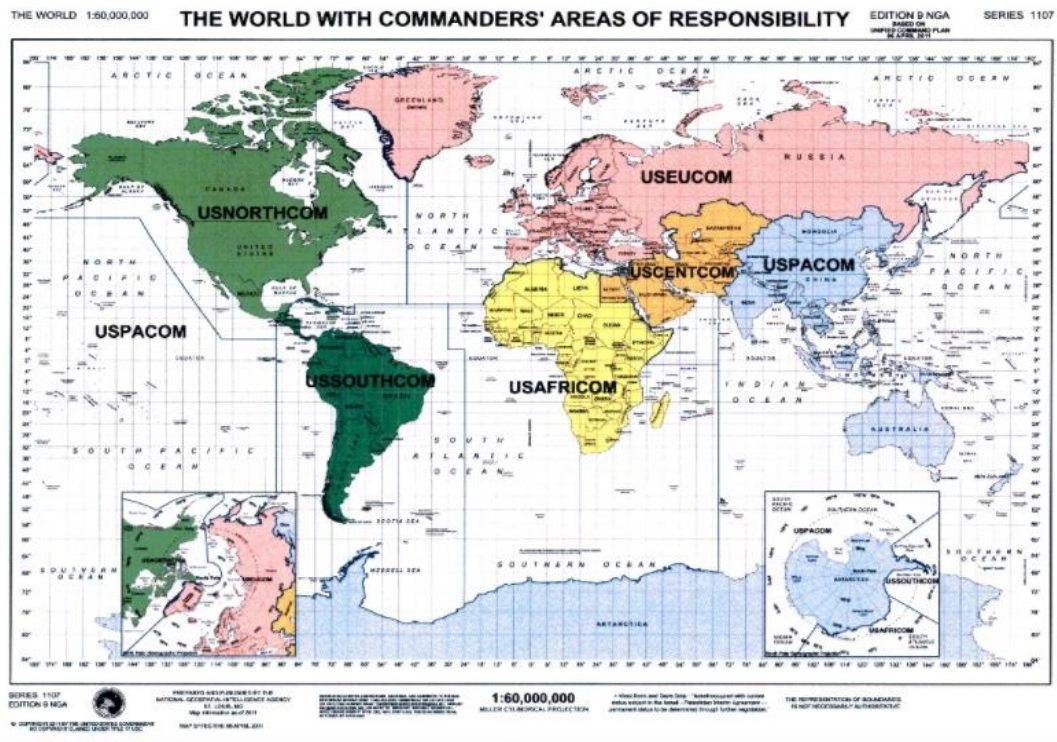


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**Figure 3.3 China's Military Spending comparing the World<sup>26</sup>**

As Figure 3.3 shows that, China is far away from US military spending. The US enjoys superiority in many areas such as the number of aircraft carriers, size of the air force, and modernisation of armed forces in general. In contrast to Chinese military power, the size of the US forces is superior and it is clear from the different Unified Combatant Commands Center which divides the world six different command post as map 5 shows. According to table 3, it is clear that US military capability, make US capable of overseas military operations or missions. Alliances system is working in benefit of US. NATO which is US is the major ally country, have good relations and somewhat power projection or at least consensus against competitors, but on the other hand Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (CSO) have no consensus and also there are possible conflict eras between two major partners; Russia and China. One Belt and One Road Initiative is one of the debate area due to sphere of influence intersection over Central Asia countries. “Moscow was initially cautious in its reaction to the BRI[The Belt and Road Initiative], worrying about the implications for Russian interests and about potential encroachment from a country that has far more to offer economically to the five post-Soviet Central Asian countries.”

<sup>26</sup> European Union Institute for Security Studies, March 2017



**Map 3.4 US Forces in the World.**<sup>27</sup>

“Needless to say, Chinese leaders are well aware that military power projection, say against Southeast Asia, would pose certain costs and risks vis-à-vis its relations with the United States and Japan” (Copeland, 2003, p. 335) China is currently a member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (CSO) with Central Asian States and Russia. China and Russia have already some suspicions between Russia and China about China’s One Belt One Road Initiative (more details below). This is far away from NATO’s institutionalism<sup>28</sup>. As seen in the map 5, size of the US forces shows that the US is still the major military power.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Defence

<sup>28</sup> Conclusion chapter will go deeply why there is a difference between NATO and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (CSO)

### 3.6 THE FUTURE OF THE LIBERAL WORLD ORDER AND CHINA

Ikenberry claims that China is not offering a new model to the world. This debate started with “Beijing consensus”. This is basically to understand China’s political structure, state-owned enterprises are the key form of companies in that model, and governments auditing the firms like owners in liberal economies, controlling all of the resources like money and implementing 5-year plans, which is long term strategy.<sup>29</sup> This model, according to him is not available or suitable for liberal democratic states.

“If China were try to promulgate a Sino-centered order-a hegemonic/imperial order that did not immediately rest on the consent and cooperation of other state-it would face very steep costs. [In any condition] China would need to spend resources to entice and bully these states [any rising state who wants to join this system] into cooperation. This would be a very huge task for a developing country with mid-range per capita income”(Ikenberry, 2018a, p. 27).

Neither Chinese statism nor China’s ability to lead is not likely in the near future according to Ikenberry.<sup>30</sup> He is rejecting the claims of power transition assumption regarding China.<sup>31</sup> He is ignoring that after the fall of US-led order, a new order will rise and this order will be possible by the most powerful candidate, which is China. “Just as importantly, rising states (led by China) are not engaged in a frontal attack on the American-led order...the non-Western developing countries remain tied to the architecture and principles of a liberal-oriented global order” (Ikenberry, 2018a, p. 18).

China’s domestic weakness is another dimension of China’s dependency to liberal world order. “The ideology of communism is long gone, and the legitimacy of the ruling party depends upon economic growth and ethnic Han nationalism” (Nye Jr., 2011). Energy dependency is another huge problem in China. The world centre of manufacturing and producing is hugely dependent on oil and gas import from other regions. “Oil import dependence rises from 61% in 2015 to 79% in 2035. Gas dependence rises from 30% to 40% in 2035” (BP Energy Outlook Country and regional insights – China)

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<sup>29</sup> According to one of the economist from China. (Bennhold, 2011)

<sup>30</sup> State-led economic model which is Chinese model.

<sup>31</sup> “Power transition theories see a tight link between international order-its emergence, stability and decline-and the rise and fall of great powers.

China's other weaknesses stem from the specific of the Asia Pacific region. China has important challengers of its status as a possible hegemon. India is the first country that comes into mind. India is mostly considered as a South Asian country, but it has convergence interests in the Asia Pacific too. Both rising powers have economic and cultural plans including Asian states. "Both countries have lately emerged as major economies with growing maritime and overseas interests leading to growing interactions at sea", thus bringing opportunities and challenges (Khurana, 2015, p. 20). China due to its growing economic power started to establish new projects like Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSR) and One Belt One Road project. "Xi's MSR is an initiative to restore the historical maritime prestige and influence that China once wielded as a maritime power. It is the counterpart of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative..., which focuses on overland connectivity between China and Central Asia into Europe" By doing that, China had put themselves in a tricky position. Due to the project, there will be some infrastructure development projects which will be focused on Central Asian countries. Historically, Central Asian states are under the Russian sphere of influence, therefore the rise of Chinese activities in the region is likely to trouble its biggest neighbour. Because of the reasons mentioned above, China and its possible close partners are not creating a bloc like in the West between the US and the European countries (like France, United Kingdom, and Germany). Brazil, China, India and Russia have very diversified interests, challenging territorial disputes (between India and China, Russia and China). Brazil is having problem of unemployment due to deindustrialization caused by rapid growth in Chinese production in last two decades. Ikenberry argues that "there is also diversity in what rising states 'want' from the international order. In some instances, what rising states want is more influence and control of territory and geopolitical space beyond their borders" (Ikenberry, 2018a, p. 21).

### **3.7 LIBERAL CRITIQUE OF NEOREALIST ARGUMENTS ON THE RISE OF CHINA**

Although “many observers have expected dramatic shifts in world politics after the Cold War - such as the disappearance of American hegemony, the return of great power balancing, the rise of competing regional blocs, and the decay of multilateralism” (Ikenberry, 2012a, p. 43), as Ikenberry argues, the liberal world order is still in force in the Asia-Pacific region. Ikenberry rejects any possibility of revisionist state actions as envisioned by Mearsheimer due to this liberal order.

His counter argument to neorealism starts with the inefficiency of neorealist arguments about international institutions. “Neorealist theories are inadequate to explain both the durability of Western order and its important features, such as its extensive institutionalization and the consensual and reciprocal character of relations within it” (Ikenberry, 2012a, p. 44). As Axelrod and Keohane (1985) described, there are two reasons behind cooperation between states: the first one is the mutuality of interests of states where it is “not based simply upon objective factors, but is grounded upon the actors’ perceptions of their own interests”, whereby interests are defined by perceptions (Axelrod and Keohane, 1985, p. 229). This is why it is hard to analyse whether successful cooperation is happening or not. Secondly, shadow of the future is the reason behind cooperation. In this way states aim to decrease negative effects of an uncertain future.

Ikenberry explains why cooperation via international institutions is possible and effective through looking at the US led order. According to Ikenberry, US is in many aspects a reluctant hegemon due to the absence of US territorial claims against a third state, its liberal nature and democratic political system which mean that it is an ‘open hegemony’. Ikenberry describes open hegemony to be a US-led order which has specifications like low barriers to entry for any state, mutual understanding of states territorial independency, equal rights for trade under WTO regulations. There are number of reasons for claiming this argument. “First is simply the transparency of the system, which reduces surprises and allays worries by partners” (Ikenberry, 2012a, p. 65). Furthermore, this system does not alienate or has exclusive nature, so even China

which is seen as a challenger according to offensive realists, is highly integrated in the liberal order<sup>32</sup>.

In economic way, Ikenberry supports that current WTO body is one of the examples of post-hegemonic liberal order. Every states even the US are liable/responsible on international law. His second approach is, *A Renegotiated American-Led Liberal Order*. He briefly describes that “In this adaptation, the United States would renegotiate the bargains and institutions of the past decades but retain its position as hegemonic leader. Ikenberry sees US as ‘first among equals’ in the world order in that pathway. His final pathway for possible future outcome is *Breakdown of Liberal International Order*. Ikenberry is also adds that this is not complete breakdown of the system, it is only dissolving of world order characteristics like multilateralism, rule of law. He continues “The American hegemonic order could simply yield to an international system where several leading states or centers of power-for example, China, the United States and the European Union-establish their own economic and security spheres” (Ikenberry, 2011, *Foreign Affairs*).

### **3.8 A LIMITS OF IKENBERRY’S PEACEFUL RISE OF CHINA’S POWER**

In his earlier books and articles, Ikenberry was strongly supportive of the well-being of the liberal world order. He stressed that if this system can survive, there would be no threats against this order. He also admitted that the US would lose its primacy at some point, but because of this liberal system the main principles would survive.

But ideas of Ikenberry are now being challenged by the ‘Trump phenomenon.’ Donald Trump’s Presidential Administration totally ignored liberal systems, focusing only on absolute gains rather than relative gains. “Trump’s challenge to the liberal order is all the more dangerous because it comes with a casual disrespect for the norms and values of liberal democracy itself,” Ikenberry (2017, *Foreign Affairs*) remarked.

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<sup>32</sup> Trump Administration had very different effect since from end of the Cold War Administrations. Even that changing nature, this liberal order is still alive according to Ikenberry (2017).



On the other hand, as Nye (2017) described, the liberal system survived since 1945 due to “the liberal international [being a] loose array of multilateral institutions in which the United States provided global public goods such as freer trade and freedom of the seas and weaker states were given institutional access to the exercise of U.S. power” (Nye, 2017, *Foreign Affairs*). In other words, a neo-liberal world order in which an unpeaceful rise of China is impossible: The current order exists only thanks to US being a ‘friendly’ and responsible hegemon.

Ikenberry and Nye’s ideas about liberal world order did not change, but the Trump Administration created an empirical test which their theories have to pass. There are also some other challenges emanating from China itself. Territorial disputes in particular are big concerns for China: It needs to deal with several conflicts with their neighbours as its authoritarian regime struggles to improving its soft power. One China policy is still the case and Taiwan crisis is waiting there, and this is another weak point of China.

If economic growth slows and problems multiply, there is a possibility that China’s leaders could be tempted to “wag the dog” - to mobilize domestic support by creating an international crisis” (Shirk, 2008). It is more like using foreign policy as domestic policy tool and this is highly related to the public view. Sometimes this kind of policy behaviour can damage Asia Pacific security and claims of China’s peaceful policy.

China has long history related with this problem. There are several islands over which China is claiming rights. Most of them are inside the South China Sea, and there is an oil and gas reserves, fisheries (crucial food resource and trade good) inside the South China Sea and this is set off the conflict in the Asia Pacific.

Aggressiveness in this territorial claims have another reason too. “China sometimes impetuous emotional responses to Japan, Taiwan, and the United States are the unfortunate result of the need to prove to the public, the military, the ‘control coalition’ (internal security and propaganda agencies). They are staunch defenders of national sovereignty” (Shirk, 2008).

“The sovereignty disputes over the Paracels (Hoang Sa in Vietnamese/Xisha in Chinese) and Spratlys (Truong Sa in Vietnamese/Nansha in Chinese) - two groups of

islands lying at the centre of the South China Sea (Bien Dong or, East Sea in Vietnamese/West Sea in the Philippines)” (Nguyen, 2012, p. 165-166). These islands are claimed by Vietnam, China and Taiwan. The reason of this complexity has several sources. According to Nguyen (2012), those are the geostrategic location, competition over natural resources, and the absence of a clear answer in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Spratly Islands, on the other hand, share the same destiny with even more actors. Those islands are claimed by Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan and China. “The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) aims to expand its scope of influence from the first island chain, connecting Okinawa, Taiwan and the Philippines, to the second island chain, connecting Guam and Saipan” (Jung and Lee, 2017, p. 92).



**Map 3.5: Chinese claim over first island chain influence zone and second island chain influence zone<sup>33</sup>**

China’s long term goal is to gain influence over island chains. As seen in the map 6, the first island chain includes Taiwan, Okinawa which is a Japanese island. The second

<sup>33</sup> Globalsecurity.org, 2018

island chain is also very important because the US base in Guam Island is inside this area.

Ikenberry described this administration as “[a] hostile revisionist power has indeed arrived on the scene, but it sits in the Oval Office, the beating heart of the free world” (Ikenberry, 2017, *Foreign Affairs*). Ikenberry also mentioned about Western society view such as, this liberal order is just a playground for rich states, and Trump is the consequences of this unbalanced system. With its new projects like One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR) and AIIB, China sought to capitalise on this weaknesses and started to create its own sphere of influence inside the liberal system. In addition to that, Nye (2017) admits that “China, India, and other economies will continue to grow, and the U.S. share of the world economy will drop.” Nye (2017, *Foreign Affairs*) adds that “A rising China and a declining Russia frighten their neighbours, and U.S. security guarantees in Asia and Europe provide critical reassurance for the stability that underlies the prosperity of the liberal order” (Nye, 2017, *Foreign Affairs*).

Trump Administration also paved the way for China’s leader Xi to give a speech focusing on liberty and free trade. “His (Xi Jinping) keynote speech promoted globalization, free trade, and multilateral organizations, and called for further cooperation and integration in the Asia Pacific region – in sharp contrast to Trump’s keynote speech reaffirming ‘America’s First’ policy and criticizing the general notion of multilateral and intergovernmental trade organizations” (Pham, 2018, *The Diplomat*). This is also an important point to consider. If there is a pro-multilateral leader will be in power in the US, is this approach will still be valuable is one of the question that needs to answer.

It is too early to talk of the success or failure of OBOR, yet the aim here is to show the current risks, and issues China faces both as an investor and receiver state. In it’s OBOR initiative, China is cooperating with states that are known for their unstable economies, high security risks, bad records of paying their foreign debts and political turmoil.

“China has been caught out before; it is owed \$65 billion by Venezuela, now torn by crisis” (Miller M. and Zhang S., 2017, *Reuters*). Complete projects also risk low profitability or low turnover. In Ethiopia, China constructed the light railway and spent \$475 million, yet after finishing the project the Chinese realised that repayment of

expenses will not be easy. There were several problems: “The system is limited because of power issues...it runs infrequently or with single cars. ...soon they have to start paying back the Chinese loan, and the project is barely making a profit” (Tarrosy and Vörös; 2018, *The Diplomat*). China will recover its money, but due to low ticket sales, low revenues and maintenance problems, it will be a hard task. Such risks are not limited to African countries. In Pakistan, for example, security of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the main concern. In the BRICS Summit, members declared that Pakistan is the safe haven for several terrorist groups, and China is also in the same line also hold talks with Baloch militants to secure its nearly \$60 billion worth of investment. (Jamal, 2018) Pakistan’s Balochistan region is a strategic point of CPEC. Gwadar port and possible military base in Jiwani is located there and also coasts reach to Gulf of Oman which is important for trade routes for China. Baloch militants are active in this region and are creating a security threat to Chinese investments. Some projects have already been cancelled and others delayed as a result. As noted by Listerud (2017) “bidding strong on projects but then backing down due to unforeseen problems is turning into a pattern for China”. Similarly, plans to build a high-speed rail in Thailand have fallen under similarly considerable delays, and in 2014 plans for China to build a high-speed rail in Mexico were quickly cancelled” (Listerud, 2017, *The Diplomat*). The last but not least, Central Asian states get revenue from sales of natural resources to China, but in return although China has a huge production capacity for consumer goods, Central Asian countries have limited demand due to low population. Debroy (2017) is also point at ineffectiveness of Chinese investments in various locations in the world saying that “[It is] much like the East African Railways built by British colonialists at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”.

To sum up, Ikenberry’s view, apart from possible challenges of the liberal system, is oriented on the continuity of the liberal world order. He is underlying that, the US hegemony is going to end, however, the system which US created will survive owing to low barriers of entry and interdependency of all states - even of states such as China. He openly claims that China will rise peacefully. By saying that, he agrees that it is not the US hegemony or influence that is preventing a turbulent future rise of China. Instead, the power of the liberal world order and China’s integration into it is ensuring future peace. He does however admit that the liberal order has its weaknesses, namely its

dependence on the political will of US. In other words, “the U.S.-led international order can remain dominant even while integrating a more powerful China - but only if Washington sets about strengthening that liberal order now” (Ikenberry, 2008, *Foreign Affairs*). Moreover, he adds that current Trump administration deals with the problem in favour of a peaceful China. Trump’s open criticism of open trade and multilateralism via international institutions have damaging effects on this liberal order, China is not a revisionist state, it only wants to increase its voice in international affairs and its commitment to the existing world order is secured via economic relations. “To the extent that the institutions that underpin the liberal international order are well-functioning, enjoy widespread legitimacy and, most importantly, deliver China significant benefits, Beijing may see the need to become a more activist defender of the status quo.” (Ikenberry, 2017, p. 3) Later in this chapter, the limits of Ikenberry’s “Peaceful rise of China’s power” phenomena are represented. Owing to China’s own internal problems, its geopolitical position in the Asia, and increasing aggressiveness in South and East China Sea, this rise will not be purely peaceful.

## CONCLUSION

“The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear” (Gramsci, 2011).

This research attempted to assess the future of the rise of China. In order to answer this question, it followed a certain structure: It contrasted Ikenberry’s peaceful rise and Mearsheimer’s unpeaceful rise to explore the rise of China. The research focused on this pathway to understand future of this country and of course the world order.

Firstly, power as a concept was explained in the second chapter. Because power is an important component and source of conflict and cooperation, it clarified why states cooperate and fight with each other. In that chapter, firstly liberal school assumptions were mentioned to analyse clearly of new coming neoliberal theory, followed by the roots of realism were represented to understand clearly what neorealist explanations says new about what power is. Realist theory focuses on material capabilities as a source of power. In Mearsheimer’s theory, population, wealth, military capability and economic power are determinant factors of the state power. In regard to that logic, realists argued that power is related with material capabilities. According to realist theory, power struggle is eternal for international politics, hence capabilities took great part in realist explanation of power. Realists claims that only powerful states in terms of military can survive in this anarchic nature of the world. On the other hand, liberals have different views on the definition of power. Classical liberalism claims that human nature is peaceful, and states are prone to make peace with each other. There are certain factors that facilitate the peace conditions which are trade and its interdependency. Because of trade relations beneficiary states are suspicious about wars, because they are favouring from trade and improve their conditions. But asymmetrical interdependency is another dimension of this relation, some of the states are indigent and desperately following the rule of the game. Liberals adds that state goals are diversified, military or security concerns are not the only concern of the states, rising influence of international institutions, increasing number of economic relations created the complex interdependency as Keohane and Nye (1977) describes. They are pointing that, there are multiple channels of state relations, like via international organisations or regional

groups. Ikenberry is describing power as international liberal order. He is describing characteristics of this liberal order such as configuration of this power or liberal order. In his view, it is important to understand which is going to lead this order or who is going to take burden of this international liberal order. Secondly, legitimacy of the primary actor in this liberal world order is responsible for creating this system over other states. The leading states should follow universal values such as human rights, free trade and rule of law in this order. Legitimacy of this primary actor is only possible in this condition. Thirdly, functionality of the other states has final element of this power. If this system provides benefits to other states and if it is easy to enter and take place this can make the international order long lasting. In those 3 conditions, international order can be established and this is what power is according to Ikenberry. He also adds that Westphalian system is the foundation of this order to make it possible. Mutual respect, and fruitful environment for cooperation and compete make this liberal world order possible. Apart from realist claims, Ikenberry asserts that international politics have hierarchical roots which is horizontal relations. International order is not anarchic, this is why cooperation is possible and international institutions have great responsibilities and influence in world order.

Unpeaceful rise of China's power is valid and reality according to Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism. Mearsheimer described that power struggle in the region, and expected that China will rise unpeacefully, and gets aggressive in order to survive. Mearsheimer also added that China will attempt to be the regional hegemon in its region, so any claims from China about cooperation should be suspiciously. His main argument about rise of China is depends on China's continuous economic rise. He claims that if China's ascendancy will continue (high GDP rate, increasing military spending), it is going to be aggressive in its region and will claim regional hegemony. Because states main goal is survival, and this is only possible with regional hegemony. As realist, he lay emphasis on power struggle in international politics. Mearsheimer is focusing on several factors to understand which state is powerful. In his theory, latent powers can achieve this power. Latent power means a state which have huge population to make their economy big, create manpower for its army, wealth will provide economic resources for its military and also is sign of well-working economy and finally military capability to use power projection in to gain order. China's huge population, increasing

military spending and growing economy is justifying his theory. But before getting this supremacy, China is hiding its real intentions to secure its rise. China's peaceful statements, showing commitment over mutual respect it's the sign of those intentions according to Mearsheimer perspective. The other reason of denying alliance system of the world and showing equal share both in security and economic relations, showing that China is rational actor who is aware that it cannot claim power over any rival state without alliances systems or its superior military capability against neighbouring states in current conditions.<sup>34</sup>

On the other side of the argument of rise of China's power, Ikenberry shows that, due to power of liberal international order, China will rise peacefully, and China is closely integrated to world economy and trade networks. This is also another insurance for this liberal order. He admits that Trump Administration gave a shock to this order, but due to power of this order and the possibility of giving developing countries to place to act, this system will be secure in the long term. Economic relations of China is the main factor of its peaceful rise due to this reason, he adds that China will benefit from this economic gain, and most importantly the US is benign power that every state can easily join and benefit from this system. Despite the Trump Administration, the liberal world order is still functional and give opportunity to rising states a new place and even give chance to shape the system according to their needs. China's attempts over establishing international organisations like AIIB and OBOR is the proof of this friendly nature of this order to change. In this perspective military power of China is also questionable. The US is still the powerful military power in its region and in the Asia Pacific. It is biggest challenge and its alliance system much more well-functioning despite the Trump Administration. Finally, Ikenberry claims that China is not offering a new economic or political model to the world. It is good model for its own requirements. Statist economic model cannot work in any liberal state. Liberal states are prone to free trade and freedom of ownership but on the other hand Chinese enterprises are state-own and audited by states. Apart from that, in soft power eras, China is not offering a blessed future due to bad records in human rights, rule of law and corruption of the government.

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<sup>34</sup> US is also China's neighbour via alliances with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, have military base in Guam which is very strategic location close to China, have military presence and overseas bases in several countries like Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.



Main aim of this thesis was focusing on Mearsheimer's and Ikenberry's limits of explaining China. Both theories have claims over each other and without starting to analyse the China apart from Ikenberry and Mearsheimer claims, it is not enough to look at it.. Mearsheimer failed to understand economic interdependency of China to world system. China's energy dependency and trade led economy can prevent it from being aggressive, because without help of economic power states cannot maintain war as Mearsheimer described in its latent power definition. China is heavily integrated to world system and it is one of the beneficiary country, that's why its economy is the second biggest today. On the other hand, China's geopolitical position is real threat to China's growth, unlike US, China have territorial disputes with nearly ten states.

Ikenberry ignored to regional conflicts and domestic threats that China belongs. After focusing on those realities, this chapter tried to answer China's current position, with isolation from badly made predictions about overestimated economic performance of China's in the early years of after 2008 economic recession, or unpredicted Trump's administration. China's long live policy called 'One China Policy' have serious effects in foreign relations. China still have claims over Taiwan and do not recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state, the other problem is ethnic minorities of China. Uighur and Tibet regions are two important regions of that China puts those issues inside to 'One China Policy'. In any possible rising tensions over relations can cause trouble and put China towards to more nationalistic policies which can pave the way for hot conflicts and provoke confrontation. The other dilemma of Ikenberry theory is Trump Administration, Ikenberry was claiming that declining is US hegemony rather than liberal world order, but Trump's effect is not easy to forget or not take into account in world affairs. It already provoked rising nationalism in Europe which is not new, but they found themselves as a convenient ground. This will be not different in Asia Pacific too. One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR) is a huge project have lots of partners already. It is early to predict, outcome of this project but China is planning to invest in developing economies or less developed economies. The nature of this loan system,

beneficiary states have to repay their debts. So far some of the projects cancelled or already active projects have problem of low turnover.<sup>35</sup>

Mearsheimer and Ikenberry's arguments are not comprising the realities of economic transformation and embeddedness into liberal economy and their challenging nature and claims especially in Asia Pacific, their arguments are not addressing today's challenges. This is largely due to the structuring of their theories that rely on the comparison of their predictions of unpeaceful rise of China with Germany after its unification in the early 20th century – as in the case of Mearsheimer, or China's total embeddedness into liberal order both economically and politically – as put forward by Ikenberry. On the one hand, Mearsheimer is claiming that if China continues its ascendancy in the current conditions it will become aggressive, while Ikenberry claims that if the liberal world order survives then China will rise peacefully.

Chapter 5 focused on alternative perspectives trying to interpret China's rise. And the alternative views are not previously unheard of. As Henry Kissinger describes "China and the United States no longer [have] a common adversary, but neither they [have] yet developed a joint concept of world order" (Kissinger, 2011). He also adds that any war between China and the US is not likely because both countries need each other economically, and they are huge both geographically for domination and they are militarily great rivals to each other. He is also adding that there are historical analogies between British Empire and a newly unified Germany, and the US and China on the other hand. He is rejecting this analogy, due to international conditions of the current world. He adds that "no doubt were the United States and China to fall into strategic conflict, a situation comparable to the pre-World War I European structure. ...historical parallels are by nature inexact." He suggests that both states have different cultural identity which praises a vision of universality and general interests on mankind. Furthermore, the economic and political relations are different from the European version of the conflict in early 20th century. His research assistant and loyal friend of Henry Kissinger, Graham Allison followed the logic of Kissinger's on the rise of China. In his book titled *Destined For War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's*

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<sup>35</sup> As mentioned in chapter 5, Mexico Railway Project is cancelled, Ethiopia light railway have low turnover problem.

*Trap?* explained how these relations will take place (Allison, 2017). Allison (2017) explains that “when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power, alarm bells should sound: danger ahead” – a phenomena explained by what is termed as ‘Thucydides’s Trap’. In his book he looked at Thucydides’s assumptions about war between Athens and Sparta. When Athens increased its military and economic power, showed up as a rising power, as status quo power Sparta created fear over Athens and The Peloponnesian War broke out. (Allison, 2017) He draws an analogy between Thucydides explanations and current China US relations. He concluded that a war between China and the US is not inevitable. He explains the reason as;

“First, on the current trajectory, war between the US and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than currently recognized. Indeed, on the historical record, war is more likely than not. ...If leaders in Beijing and Washington keep doing what they have done for the past decade, the US and China will almost certainly wind up at war. Second, war is not inevitable. History shows that major ruling powers can manage relations with rivals, even those that threaten to overtake them, without triggering a war. The record of those successes, as well as the failures, offers many lessons for statesmen today” (Allison, 2017).

“Those who fail to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors are destined to repeat them” (Santayana, 2014). Graham Allison also argued that the Chinese character and cultural identity predisposes them to apply lessons taught by history. They are closely following and learning from their mistakes from the historical examples. In one of the conversations between Henry Kissinger and Graham Allison they both mentioned China’s elites’ interest in historical context (Allison and Kissinger, 2017).

Ikenberry’s and Mearsheimer’s claims on the rise of China collide. It is true that China is rising, either because of its economic progress or decline in the the rest of the world – just like the rise of US hegemony. The best comparison and a parallel of today’s China is the isolationist era of the US in its late 19th and early 20th century. The US was concerned only about its western hemisphere and military presence there as well as covert operations in the South America. On the other hand, US was not playing a role in the Old World (Europe) crisis or preventing any European Power move into its western hemisphere which includes North and South American continent. China today is also

not playing any key roles in the crises in the Middle East or engaging in addressing Russian aggression. Instead, it is only focusing on their own benefits and projects like OBOR - a project destined to be global. The project's main aim is securing China's energy and trade routes. OBOR could also provide prosperity to China's poorer Western region.

Because of internal problems China will not get rid of its problems, their powerful neighbours (like Japan, even Russia) are prone to create problems to China, on the other hand its economy will continue to grow at least higher than those of other states. Even if China becomes the first economy in the world, they have weaknesses such as China not being a member of any alliance system nor belonging to any 'normative clubs' such as the promotion of political systems like praising freedom of rights, human rights – as a result, China has no normative space where they could contest leadership.

There is also another problem with the assumptions of China's economic rise. China's GDP is increasing, the country has a huge amount of money and is ready to invest around the world with several projects, but its economic model depends on export-oriented growth, which is an unsustainable economic model. Because of cheap labour force and low cost of production, China developed economically, but demand will change in the long run and inevitably export will fall compared to today's numbers, or most importantly positive impact of this demand which is increase on GDP, and more possible FDI will not be the same as today to Chinese economy. China has the problem of aging population and is the world's most highly populated state. China has no social security system like those in Europe or in the US. Moreover, its economy is not creating a normative value system like the US did.

Apart from the economic indicators, China is facing serious obstacles on the political level. Its geopolitical location is not favourable for a rising power. Currently there is no examples of a successful rise of countries that have more than two neighbours in land borders (Rise of Germany). For example, China has several territorial disputes with countries ranging from India to Taiwan. Today, none of them create any devastating problem but if China's inexorable rise will happen as Mearsheimer claims, any of those problems will become a real challenge for China. Furthermore, peaceful rise is not possible due to Asian non-intervention politics that limit involvement in each other's

domestic politics. This is not only related with sovereignty of the states or ASEAN way of international politics. There is striking reality that China and some of the ASEAN states like Philippines under Duterte have serious domestic challenges to promote order like current liberal world order.

“If both neorealist and neoliberal assumptions are wrong, what is the best way to analyse China?” is a serious question to answer. First of all, China’s internal insecurities will influence the country’s course. The second assumption will be not to expect radical changes in order of China’s Communist Party in short term.

China’s internal problems are important. Energy dependency is at the root of every initiative of the Chinese government. BRI, AIIB, and territorial disputes are connected with this dependency. In 2008, economic recession created a picture in which China would be a great power soon, and dominate the world agenda, but after the economic decline of few years this tendency has disappeared. [At least there was a consensus that China will not rise and surpass the US in the next decade.].

It is important to say that China will not be great power very soon. Militarily, “the United States spends four times as much on its military as does China, and although Chinese capabilities have been increasing in recent years, serious observers think that China will not be able to exclude the United States from the western Pacific” (Nye, 2017). This gap still stays the same and it is not narrowing down. On the other hand, incidents like Trump administration are challenging legitimacy of this liberal order, and the in political arena, US policies started attracting criticism even from close allies like the United Kingdom (Agerholm, 2017). This is starting to open new political grounds for China. Those two realities should be investigated together. Otherwise, the same mistake [early assumption of China’s quick rise in 2008 economic crisis] will be inevitable to understand China’s role in world politics. No one clearly answered Trump’s rise, because no one clearly focused on the reason behind. The problems of the white middle and low class is who describe themselves white, Anglo-Saxon Americans. Trump Administration itself created an illusion of a liberal China both economically due to praise on liberal trade, and in politics due to Chinese support of international organisations and cooperation.

The other problem is not understanding the regional dynamics. “John Foster Dulles (1952) discovered that many prospective members of any Asian alliance ‘have memories of Japanese aggression that are so vivid that they are reluctant to create a Mutual Security Pact with Japan.’” There are also other reasons that prevent any cooperation in the Asia Pacific. “In Asia, by way of contrast, the Korean War failed to spur any move toward increased multilateralism” (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002, p. 586). Relations are bilateral basis in the region, so any explanation under the dynamics of multilateralism are ill-defined to understand the region. “Asian governments remain largely uninterested in political solutions at the regional level” (Katzenstein, 2005). Multi sided conflicts are dealt with on an ad hoc basis by the transnational links between states. There are territorial disputes between most of the states vis a vis and have good economic relations. Due to reasons mentioned above expecting China to be a multilateral actor in the region is ill-founded. In order to understand this, neoliberal interdependency theory failed to understand territorial disputes and offensive realism failed to clarify good trade relations.

China stays in multipolar region, which have important rivals like the United States with several air bases and close allies. Historical rivals like Japan are present as well. Japan is still an important challenger due to its alliance with the US. Taiwan is always a problem both internationally and internally. The internal dimension is more important, because even China tries to show benign intention to the world, but any incident from the Taiwan side can feed nationalist tendency amongst the hawks of military elites inside China. Power relations under the multipolar world is not happening via hot wars, close military contacts or peaceful or at least coherent partnership like in the European Union. Multipolarity also explains the rise of China, the current position of the USA, possible long-term rise of India, and more active role of Russia and finally as a normative power the European Union. Every each of them has unique weaknesses and opportunities and non-of them includes any clue for future but there is one certain thing that have to be mention, world is going slowly to multipolar world. This can be going to like concert of Europe which is full of harmony but still includes bilateral struggles or can transformed into very loosely tight polarities which one part can be USA-EU-Japan and the other can be China-Russia and maybe India too. The second group have far greater problems with each other than first group (Even after the Trump phenomenon).

China is still relatively weak in military power (compared to US military power and its alliance system), it has serious internal sensibilities, and Asia Pacific is not a region that promotes institutions like the European Union and world is becoming multipolar. China lives its isolationist period in own terms but this period much like the US period about world politics and creating own sphere influence. China has unique problems. It is trying to be sole power in Asia Pacific, trying to expel the US from the South and East China Sea. At the same time China is creating a dependency on ASEAN states, like the US did in the Latin America in the American Imperialism period. It is not effective in world crisis with low voice on world politics, and China is highly against alliance system with its new term called cooperative security rather than collective security strategy. The US was growing with its economy and was not affected by any war in the isolationist era, while the old world (European Empires) were fighting with each other, US had no rising states on its doorstep and was enjoying great natural security from Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

China, on the other hand, is struggling to solve its internal problems like, urgency of creating employment in its poorer western region, struggling with middle-income trap and income disparity.<sup>36</sup> Internationally, China has border conflicts and territorial disputes with many states. China is not representing a new future order that any state can enter, instead the current system only serves its own needs. China's massive government body works well for the country, yet not a single liberal country would accept the one-party system.

China will be huge, bulky state in this upcoming multipolar world. No one knows whether technological progress can create what kind of state relations or more broadly, the way of life in the future, but one assumption is possible is to predict that China has multi-dimensional and frozen problems like territorial disputes, concerns about One China Policy, this will therefore prevent its unipolar rise, and its dependency on export-energy resources import will not be revisionist because this damage can abolish Chinese Communist Party power inside the country which is main concern for every Chinese

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<sup>36</sup> Middle-income trap "...means that several developing (low income) economies were able to transition to a middle-income economy, but because they were unable to sustain high levels of productivity gains (in part because they could not address structural inefficiencies in the economy), they were unable to transition to a high income economy." (Sutter,2015)

leader – including Xi Jinping. The censorship of free media, bad record on human rights are the results of this fear. So China would neither become an aggressive state, even if it had the power because of economic ascendancy as claimed by Mearsheimer, nor it will be fully integrated into liberal order and obey the liberal vision of rule of law, human rights and will not be effective in its territorial conflicts just like Ikenberry claimed. This will be ‘made in China’ quality of order of China.

Mearsheimer’s assumptions rooted in offensive realism and the argument of unpeaceful rise of China has certain weaknesses, thus missing the importance of interdependence of world economies, relations over trade, economic and finance concerns of China preclude of ‘military or security matters first’ approach. Ikenberry’s approach of liberal world order is not explaining China’s aggression in its territorial claims and reactions to its internal security concerns.

It is fair to conclude with the right points of both Ikenberry’s and Mearsheimer’s claims on the rise of China. Firstly, yes, China has no political and economic model of its own, so there is nothing new to offer to world. Secondly, China is disguising its intentions of an unpeaceful rise, hence leaving little space for peaceful co-existence in a peaceful trust-based scenario. Thirdly, China is not going to fully adopt to international order due to its domestic characteristics of an authoritarian state. Fourthly, China is not going to rise as Germany did pre-world War I era due to its dependency on liberal order. Finally, China’s hegemony will be of ‘made in China’ quality in the sense that it will look like a replica of a product designed in the US, yet quality and operability of it will be questionable.

China’s position is best explained by the existence of loose multipolarity in world order. It is clear that neoclassical realist assumptions underlies the importance of source of security threats and understand China’s integration to liberal order and its aggressiveness in South China Sea. “In summary, the goal of revisionist states fits the neoliberal view of states as rational egoists, that is, actors who wish to maximize their individual absolute gains and are indifferent to the gains made by others. They are, however, rational egoists for very different reasons than those put forth by the neoliberal school. As atomistic actors, revisionist states are power maximizers not, as neorealist assume, security-maximizers. (Schweller, 1996, p. 114) Neoclassical realism explains



cooperation in a different manner. Cooperation can take place while disagreements and conflicts is highly available in Southeast Asia. “Realists do not deny the veracity of the neoliberal claim that international regimes may be created through negotiated process. In explaining these kinds of orders, however, realists of all stripes characterize them, not in terms of cooperation to promote the general welfare of states as liberals past and present tend to do, but rather as a form of collusion among powerful oligopolistic actors to serve their perceived interests at the expense of the “others,” (Schweller and Priess, 1997, p. 8).

The relative uncertainty in the world order is better explanation of China`s position in world order. Economically, it supports current economic bodies by trying to increase its volume by more voting power or creating its own international system but not being an enemy but alternative to current order. On the other hand, China still acts aggressive in security matters. “Moreover, because rapid growth often produces social turmoil, because accommodation is tricky, and because China is emerging onto the scene in a multipolar regional environment lacking most of the elements that can mitigate conflict, the future of East Asian international politics seems especially problematic.” (Rose, 1998 p. 171) China`s leaders subjective security threats understanding also increases the crisis. “In the neoclassical realist world leaders can be constrained by both international and domestic politics. International anarchy, moreover, is neither Hobbesian nor benign but rather murky and difficult to read.” (Rose, 1998 p. 152) China`s position is take form in this murky international environment and its domestic constraint. China`s leaders deciding their moves under the domestic political subjectivity. Their aggressiveness in South China Sea or any initiatives for cooperation well suited to this political atmosphere.

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