

China's Smart Rise

Çin'in Akıllı Yükselişi

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Abstract

China and its rise have been the most discussed and published topic since the start of our century. Internet is abundant with scholarly articles examining Beijing's posture and each year numerous books and journal articles discuss the concepts of "peaceful rise," or "peaceful development," "three harmonies," "harmonious world," "China's soft power," etc. This article takes a different approach. It seeks to examine the plausibility of applying the Western concepts of power to China. For that purpose it will trace the notions of soft, hard and smart power in Chinese self-conceptualization to identify which of the three best characterizes Chinese rise. It will start with an introductory overview of the Western understanding of power in international relations. In the second section it will look at the official Chinese narratives. Furthermore, in the third and the forth sections it will discuss China's soft and hard power respectively; and finally, it will conclude with the analysis of the findings, stating that Chinese self-conceptualization, indeed, envisages all three notions of power, however, Beijing gives preference to smart power approach.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *China; hard power, soft power, smart power; self-conceptualization; discourse analysis; International Relations Theory.*

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Öz

Çin ve Çin'in yükselişi, yüzyılın başından beri en çok tartışılan ve üzerinde en çok yayın yapılan konu olmuştur. Pekin'in duruşunu inceleyen çok sayıda akademik makaleye İnternet aracılığıyla erişilebilmekte ve her yıl "barışçıl yükseliş", "barışçıl gelişme", "üçlü uyum", "uyum içinde dünya", "Çin'in yumuşak gücü", vb. kavramları ele alan birçok kitap ve makale yayınlanmaktadır. Bu makale farklı bir yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Makalede Batı'nın güçle ilgili kavramlarını Çin'e uygulamanın akla yatkınlığını incelemek amaçlanmaktadır. Makale, bu amaçla, Çin'in kendini kavramsallaştırma süreci içinde yumuşak güç, sert güç ve akıllı güç kavramlarının izini takip edecek ve bu üç kavramdan hangisinin Çin'in yükselişini en iyi şekilde yansıttığını tanımlamaya çalışacaktır. Makale Batı dünyasının uluslararası ilişkiler alanındaki güç kavramıyla ilgili anlayışının kısa bir incelemesiyle başlamaktadır. İkinci bölümde Çin'in resmi söylemleri incelenecektir. Ardından üçüncü ve dördüncü bölümlerde, sırasıyla, Çin'in yumuşak ve sert gücü tartışılacaktır. Makalenin son bölümünde bulgular incelenerek Çin'in kendini kavramsallaştırmasının aslında güçle ilgili üç kavramı da içerdiği ancak Pekin'in akıllı güç yaklaşımına öncelik vermeyi tercih ettiği ortaya konulacaktır.

Key Words: *Çin, sert güç, yumuşak güç, akıllı güç, kendini kavramsallaştırma, söylem analizi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorisi.*

Introduction

Power has been a focal point of study and one of the most contested concepts within the theory of international relations (IR).¹ As Joseph S. Nye Jr., eloquently, and maybe also discouragingly for a researcher, put it, "Power in international politics is like weather.

¹ David A. Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes et al., Sage Publications, London, 2002, pp. 177-192.

Everyone talks about it, but few understand it.”²

So what is power? Could it be solely vested in the material (military and economic field) or, putting it in another way, is it only guns and money that empower certain states or are there other factors contributing to the might of a nation to achieve whatever goals it holds?

Those questions, if put in an academic discourse, represent the so called hard power vs. soft power debate in IR theory. It is believed that in this particular debate realism stands for the hard power concept (the one comprised of military and economic power) and that realist thinkers advocate that this type of power is the ultimate goal aspired by all states.³ Neorealists, on the other hand, would assume that power is used as an instrument to attain certain goals, rather than the goal itself. In other words, the better off a state is guns and money (wise, the greater the chances that it will survive the competition and foster its existence in an anarchic system).⁴

On the soft power side of the debate, most prominently stands Joseph S. Nye, who indeed was the one to coin the term “soft power.” It is not that Nye excludes the importance of hard power elements; rather he argues that this type of [soft] power is of co-optive nature (unlike the coercive hard power). Interestingly, Nye also discusses the possibility of co-optiveness of hard power elements; e.g. he argues that military posture and the image of “invincibility” of a certain state might be also attractive to others and “...command power may sometimes be used to establish

² Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 53.

³ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, McGraw Hill, Boston MA, 1993, p. 4.

⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics,” *International Security*, 1993, Vol: 18, No. 2, pp. 44-79.

institutions that later become regarded as legitimate.”⁵

Against the backdrop of the controversy, this article tends to oppose the strict exclusivist divide between the realist and liberalist approaches in their attitudes towards power and its components. Rather it argues that while giving preference to certain components, neither of the schools suggests that power is comprised of exclusively either hard or soft elements.⁶

In addition, this article suggests that power is derived from a composite range of sources. Among those are both of hard (military, economics) and soft (intangible –culture, education, attractiveness) nature and neither the military strength nor the quality of governance represent power per se. Rather it is the ‘smart’ combination of the relevant elements at a state's disposal that gives certain states their power.

Moreover, as Qingguo Jia argues, it is possible to distinguish between ‘hard’ soft power resources and ‘soft’ soft power resources where the former refers to quantity and quality of hard power capabilities and the latter to education, culture, values, etc.⁷ Hence, it should also be possible to argue that using hard power to produce soft outcomes requires a smart approach.

In our “information age”, it is the smart power, the combination of both hard and soft elements that matters. “Smart power is the ability to combine the hard power of coercion or payment with the

⁵ Nye, *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 66.

⁶ Even Morgenthau allocates place to immaterial factors (quality of diplomacy, governance, national character, etc.), saying that “Power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control ... from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties...” Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 13.

⁷ Qingguo Jia, “Continuity and Change: China’s Attitude toward Hard Power and Soft Power, *Brookings North East Asia Commentary*, 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/12_china_soft_power_jia.aspx (Access date: 28.03.2013).

soft power of attraction into a successful strategy... Americans need better to understand both these dimensions of smart power.”⁸

The above quote comes as Joseph Nye's advice to the US administration on how to ensure its global leadership in the modern world, which elsewhere Nye calls “a complex three dimensional chess board.”⁹ But how much do we know about the advice Chinese authorities receive?¹⁰

The concepts of hard, soft and smart power have been developed and implemented to varying extents in the West. And Western scholars and analysts have tried to understand China through the lenses of Western paradigms. A particularly large amount of literature has been devoted to Chinese soft power, as Beijing claims to be anything but pursuing hard power strategies. However, when it comes to smart power, there is not much of a discussion on the issue and even less about to what Chinese conceptualization of smart power is.

China's Self-Conceptualization

Theory of IR was never studied or taught in China in classical Western terms until the late 1980s. As some scholars argue, even today, despite the reforms, Chinese academia is far more policy oriented and lacks discussion and academic work on IR theory as such.¹¹

In order to conceptually unpack the notions of hard, soft, and

⁸ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “The War on Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy*, 12 April 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/12/the_war_on_soft_power?page=full (Access date: 15.12.2012).

⁹ Nye, *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 98.

¹⁰ Michael Bristow, “Who Writes China Leader's Wen Jiabao's Annual Speech,” *BBC News*, 5 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12548685> (Access date: 02.03.2013).

¹¹ David Shambaugh, “International Relations Studies in China: History, Trends, and Prospects,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 2011, Vol: 11, No. 3, pp. 339–372.

smart power in the Chinese context; this section will examine several documents and public speeches delivered at different times by key Chinese figures.

To start with, it should be of particular interest to look at some of the speeches by Zheng Bijian's, who is considered a prominent ideologists behind modern China and the author of "peaceful rise," later transformed into "peaceful development."¹²

Bijian believes that on the international scene China's top priority should be proper relations with major powers. However, he also stresses the importance of cooperation with developing countries, where China has what could be labelled as a missionary vision and a type of soft expansionism. It appears as a modernizer and a rule setter but apart from economic means it also acts through soft power channels (political, diplomatic and cultural). "...cooperation with these countries in the international economic sphere will help establish a new international economic order and speed up the industrialization process... China's exchanges... in the economic, political, cultural, and diplomatic fields will be expanded and deepened."¹³

Bijian portrays China as a peaceful latecomer with good intentions; however, he does not miss any opportunity to praise its people for the great achievements and to express pride: "No late-comer to development in the contemporary world has been able to achieve this during its rise." The phrase appears in the text several

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¹² Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" *China Quarterly*, 2007, Vol: 190, pp. 291-310, http://tailieu.tapchithoidai.org/Demise_of_Peaceful_Rise.pdf (Access date: 22.03.2013).

¹³ Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise: Implications for Domestic Development and International Relations," *East Asian Visions: Perspectives on Economic Development*, 2006, p. 239, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEASTASIA/PACIFIC/Resources/226262-1158262834989/EA_Visions_18.pdf (Access date: 14.04.2013).

times¹⁴ and alludes to what Kenneth Waltz said when discussing the states' attitudes towards the desire of becoming superpowers: "Pride knows no nationality."¹⁵

On the other hand, despite the achieved progress, China realizes its own shortcomings and still considers itself as a developing nation. In the words of the current President Xi Jinping, China "...remains the world's largest developing country and it faces many difficulties and challenges... We need to make relentless efforts in the years ahead to deliver a better life to all our people."¹⁶

On the international scene, China presents itself as an advocate of multilateral diplomacy, favouring cooperation and interdependence over isolation that behaves "like a responsible power." Globalization, though bringing challenges, still offers vast opportunities, as China acts in good faith on the international scene, including its surrounding region, where it "had maintained sound relations of cooperation with neighbouring countries and regularly addressed "border issues". "Multilateral diplomacy is the main channel for China's expansion (the expansion "of exchanges and efforts at cooperation")"¹⁷

Modern China is "a symbol for economic cooperation", not seeking world hegemony, rather lowering its head, working towards excellence to "ensure the right to subsistence and the right to development of over one billion Chinese people. This achievement,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 241-243.

¹⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, 1993, Vol: 18, No. 2, p. 66.

¹⁶ "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of Boao Forum," *People's Daily Online*, 8 April 2013, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/8198392.html> (Access date: 20.05.2013).

¹⁷ Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise: Implications for Domestic Development and International Relations," *East Asian Visions: Perspectives on Economic Development*, 2006, p. 239, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEASTASIA/PACIFIC/Resources/226262-1158262834989/EA_Visions_18.pdf (Access date: 14.04.2013).

in itself, will be a huge contribution by China toward world development and human progress.” It is a proactive power taking trust in cooperation and interdependence to “achieve win-win and all-win outcomes.”¹⁸

On the other hand, due note is taken of the importance of rationalism when referring to terms like “soberly assess” or “soberly take into account the international and domestic situations, bear in mind the risks and uncertainties...”¹⁹ or “...maximize benefits and minimize risks.”²⁰

21st century China is experiencing “the great renaissance” through peaceful rise that conceptualizes the harmony among material, political, spiritual, social and ecological civilizations, which on their own are rooted in the moral qualities of general Chinese public and the nature of relations inside and outside the country. China’s rise takes “a peaceful, civilized, and open pathway” and its outcome in Mao’s words will be “a big, powerful, yet approachable country.”²¹

Bijian uses self-other dichotomy to illustrate that, in its essence, China is a unique power. He draws on the past examples from history and while comparing China to Germany and Japan in the first half of the 20th century, states that “it [China’s path] is totally different from the path undertaken by any power in modern history... [and] ...in the history of socialism, for example, the policies by the former U.S.S.R. during the rule of Brezhnev, which sought supremacy on the strength of military bloc and arms race.”²²

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²² Zheng Bijian, “New Opportunity for China-US Relations,” (speech delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations of the United States, 13 December 2002), *China’s Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997-2004*, p. 11, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

China's uniqueness and the unprecedented mode of rise are vested in the strategic choice made in favour of economic power and soft methods. Hard power, like military strengths and armed forces are less valuable. "Armed forces cannot make peace and ...power politics cannot ensure security."²³ "...an aggressive path of war and expansion... is doomed to failure."²⁴

From this perspective of international relations cooperation is not only possible, but is rather necessary. In addition, there is a certain level of scepticism towards the overall impact of systemic factors in shaping modern China. Rather it is stated that today's China is the product of the reforms undertaken by Chinese authorities and not of the modalities that have taken place with the end of the bipolar system. In other words, the driver or independent variable is China's internal transformation and not the systemic change.²⁵

Importantly, the Chinese view of the international system is twofold: China strives to adhere to its strategy of opening up and integration in the globalized world, underlying that its rise is peaceful and cooperative, but at the same time, reiterates the necessity of stability and security in the world to guarantee its prosperity and development. It is a reformer and a democratizing force in international relations: "It advocates a new road toward a new international political and economic order... It maintains the

²³ Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise and Opportunities for the Asia-Pacific Region," (speech delivered at the Roundtable Meeting between Bo'ao Forum for Asia and the China Reform Forum, 18 April 2004), p. 23, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf> (Access date: 25.04. 2012).

²⁴ Zheng Bijian, "A New Path for China's Peaceful Rise and the Future of Asia," (speech delivered at Bo'ao Forum for Asia, 2003), p. 15, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf> (Access date: 25.04. 2012).

²⁵ Bijian, "New Opportunity for China-US Relations," (speech delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations of the United States, 13 December 2002), *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997-2004*, p. 10, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

world peace for its own development, which in turn reinforces world peace.”²⁶

In our interconnected world, hard power should be used with caution and there is a need for a new type of security strategy. “China cannot follow the footsteps of Western powers down the path of colonization, exploitation, aggression and expansion... more weapons cannot make the world a safer place. Only greater development and cooperation can bring us greater safety.”²⁷

Beijing is firmly turning away from the use of military force for expansionist purposes, but this is not to say that it puts no value on that particular component of hard power. While addressing the military, Xi Jinping underlined: “We must devote ourselves to the materialization of a strong army.”²⁸ Moreover, in its efforts to educate the domestic audience on the importance of a strong military, Xi’s predecessors even used to air a television program about the linkage between peace and military, military and economics, etc.

From the mentioned series, of particular note are several conclusions: first, economic and military power should be developed alongside each other as they are enabling each other’s development and are complementary; secondly, economic power does not by all means equal military power, and that despite the fact that there are several countries (the program cited Switzerland as an example) that have no valuable military strength but are

²⁶ Zheng Bijian, “China’s Development and Her New Path to a Peaceful Rise,” (speech Delivered at Villa d’Este Forum, September 2004), p. 29, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf> (Access date: 25.04. 2013).

²⁷ Le Yecheng, Assistant Foreign Minister of China, “The Rapid Development of China’s Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” (address delivered at the Seminar on China’s Diplomacy in 2011 and its Prospect, 18 December 2011), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t890675.htm> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

²⁸ In that regard, the current Chinese leadership may seem bolder than the previous ones, Willy Lam, “Beijing’s Aggressive New Foreign Policy and Implications for the South China Sea,” *China Brief*, 2013, Vol:13, No.13, 11-14, p. 13, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/cb_08_09.pdf (Access date: 28.06.2013).

economically very wealthy, they, nevertheless, are not able to act as independent players in international relations, which is so important from a Chinese perspective; thirdly, there is a vivid example from Chinese history, when China as an economically powerful state under the dynasty of Song was unable to protect itself because it failed to develop a matching power in the military field; and finally, national interest, which in the Chinese case is to ensure self-preservation and protect its own development, is crucial and without military power it cannot be fully secured.²⁹

Therefore, there is an imminent need for China to find the right balance among different components and China cannot be either utterly “soft-” or utterly “hard-line.” Even inside the country, there are concerns over the greater emphasis on soft power strategies and some even call on authorities to show its muscles.³⁰ However, official Chinese discourse pretty much directly conveys the significance of proper composition of both power elements and also takes into consideration the value of choosing proper timing. Importantly, power in either of its appearances is not a goal but rather means or options for achieving the goals and those means should be used in a relevant place at a relevant time.

A high-ranking Chinese diplomat put it better in his address: “I don't think only the use of force can make diplomacy strong, or dialogue and negotiation only make diplomacy “soft”. We Chinese believe in combining firmness and flexibility, which is to say that “firmness” and “flexibility” are two sides of a coin. A man may be gentle at one time, but angry at another time. Sometimes an army

²⁹ Hayoun Jessie Ryou, “The Meaning of China's ‘Peaceful Development’ Concept,” *Observer Research Foundation Occasional Paper*, 2009, Vol: 3, No.12, pp. 14-15.

³⁰ Le Yecheng, Assistant Foreign Minister of China, “The Rapid Development of China's Diplomacy in a Volatile World,” (address delivered at the Seminar on China's Diplomacy in 2011 and its Prospect, 18 December 2011), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t890675.htm> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

needs to march forward bravely, while at other times it needs to avoid a direct confrontation. Confrontation and compromise are not the goals of diplomacy, nor are they the yardsticks for our diplomatic work. They are just means to achieve our diplomatic goals or options we can choose from. This means we must know when to fight, when to cooperate, and when to avoid direct confrontation. Wisdom is way important than fists.”³¹

What more for a smart power?!

China as a Soft Power

Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding name several possible sources for measuring soft power, including the number of foreign students sent for the purpose of acquiring higher education.³² In that regard, China is trying to become a “knowledge power,”³³ an attractive educational destination by impressively increasing quotas for foreign students.³⁴

Apart from that, China uses various means to project its soft power around the globe, such as Hanban, the Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language;³⁵ China International Publishing

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding, “Dragons’ Underbelly: An Analysis of China’s Soft Power,” *EAST ASIA*, 2006, Vol: 23, p. 24.

³³ However, the number of Chinese going abroad is much bigger and among the countries sending their young people top 10 includes the US and China’s immediate neighbors. Out of the European countries, Russia is the only representative on the list. Sean Coughlan, “Record Numbers of International Students,” 10 March 2011, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12671198> (Access date: 20.03.2013).

³⁴ Wang Ying, “Foreign Student Quota to Expand”, *China Daily*, 28 July 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-07/29/content_6884445.htm (Access date: 20.04.2013).

³⁵ Hanban, “Confucius Institute Headquarters,” http://english.hanban.org/node_7716.htm (Access date: 22.03.2013).

Group (CIPG);³⁶ television (CCTV/ CNTV broadcasting in six foreign languages)³⁷.

One of the manifestations of China's soft power is the traditional soft power component of diplomacy sometimes referred to as "smile diplomacy".³⁸ Chinese themselves see its foreign efforts comprising of different directions, like "good neighbourhood diplomacy" (mulinwajjiao), "great power diplomacy" (daguowajjiao), "energy diplomacy" (nengyuanwajjiao), and "public diplomacy" (gongzhongwajjiao).³⁹

China is taking all efforts to boost this particular soft power capability by staffing its diplomatic service with the best professionals who mostly speak local languages and are relatively young compared to the overall median age of bureaucracy back at home.⁴⁰

Moreover, Beijing tries to be attractive, allows for cooperation where it does not contradict its vital interests, and conveys non-ambitious foreign discourse to ensure that its ascendancy is not confronted with major opposition. The Chinese government took efforts in self-mitigating the nationalistic sentiments in border disputes with some of its neighbours. In that regard, the 2008 Treaty with the Russian Federation is often referred by the Chinese themselves as a model for peacefully

³⁶ "Overview", China International Publishing Group (CIPG), http://www.cipg.com.cn/about_cipg/overview/ (Access date: 12.03.2012).

³⁷ "Home: Languages", CCTV/CNTV, <http://english.cntv.cn/01/index.shtml> (Access date: 24.06.2013).

³⁸ "Smile Diplomacy Working Magic Along China's Periphery," *Economist*, 29 March 2007, <http://www.economist.com/node/8880901> (Access date: 20.04.2013).

³⁹ Zhiqun Zhu, *China's New Diplomacy: Rationale, Strategies and Significance*, Ashgate, Surrey, 2010, pp. 1-21.

⁴⁰ Kishore Mahbubani, "Smart Power, Chinese Style," *American Interest*, March/April 2008, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article-bd.cfm?piece=406> (Access date: 22.04.2013).

resolving territorial issues.⁴¹

“Health diplomacy” is another label granted to part of Chinese foreign policy in the field of foreign aid.⁴² Beijing stresses the importance and magnitude of it as a Chinese contribution in fighting poverty and health issues.⁴³ China has been particularly active on the African continent, where it has conducted exceptional aid policy by implementing government sponsored programs, compared to the other charity/privately sponsored organizations.⁴⁴

The peculiarity of Chinese soft power in the developing world may also become Beijing’s major advantage.⁴⁵ Unlike Western soft power which along with the aid brings its values including democracy and human rights, China’s soft power projection is more ‘tolerant’ in that regard. This increases Beijing’s attractiveness vis-à-vis the governments of developing countries that fall short of the Western standards.⁴⁶

This so called “no strings attached” approach is clearly stated

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⁴¹ Sheng Ding, “Analyzing Rising Power from the Perspective of Soft Power: a New Look at China’s Rise to the Status Quo Power,” *Contemporary China*, 2010, Vol: 19, No.64, 255-272, pp. 267-268.

⁴² “Health Diplomacy: In Africa, China’s Soft Power Provides a Healing Touch,” *Arabic Knowledge@Wharton*, 22 November 2011, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/arabic/article.cfm?articleid=2748> (Access date: 25.03.2013).

⁴³ Wen Jiabao, “Towards the Attainment of Millennium development Goals,” (statement at the Un High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium development Goals, New York, the US, 22 September 2010), http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/debate/CN_en.pdf (Access date: 24.03.2013).

⁴⁴ “Health Diplomacy: In Africa, China’s Soft Power Provides a Healing Touch,” *Arabic Knowledge@Wharton*, 22 November 2011, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/arabic/article.cfm?articleid=2748> (Access date: 25.03.2013).

⁴⁵ Yuan Qing and Ronald Ssekandi, “Africans Hold Own View on Chinese Aid,” *Xinhuanet*, 21 August 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-08/21/c_131064221.htm (Access date: 26.03.2013).

⁴⁶ “Health Diplomacy: In Africa, China’s Soft Power Provides a Healing Touch,” *Arabic Knowledge@Wharton*, 22 November 2011, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/arabic/article.cfm?articleid=2748> (Access date: 25.03.2013).

in a 2011 Chinese White Paper on foreign aid: "Imposing no political conditions. China ...respects recipient country's right to independently select their own path and model of development."⁴⁷

China's debt relief policies have also been a significant contributor to increasing Beijing's attractiveness. However, the relief does not come without caveats, and as a Chinese White Paper states, it favours countries that "have diplomatic ties with China".⁴⁸ This actually means giving preference to diplomatic relations with Beijing over Taiwan.⁴⁹

When it comes to the priorities to which sector the Chinese foreign aid should go first, it is to agriculture. The activities undertaken with the support of the Chinese government have contributed to growth in the grain and cash crops' output in the recipient countries.⁵⁰ In addition, Chinese foreign aid policy now includes a bigger share on environmental issues with the emphasis on clean energy and climate change.⁵¹

It has been argued that the delivery of the extensive foreign aid, especially to Africa, is conducted for political and economic reasons. In other words, the soft power channels are used in a smart way to receive desirable outcomes that could include votes in international organizations and support in international regimes in the Taiwan issue, as well as Tibet and Xinjiang; China might be interested in better agriculture elsewhere as it needs food for its own people; China needs African oil; and Africa is a vast market

⁴⁷ China's Foreign Aid, White paper, 21 April, 2011, p. 3, <http://www.eu-china.net/web/cms/upload/pdf/nachrichten/2011-04-21Chinas-ForeignAid-WhitePaper.pdf> (Access date: 20.03. 2013).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Zhiqun Zhu, *China's New Diplomacy: Rationale, Strategies and Significance*, Ashgate, Surrey, 2010, pp. 21-51.

⁵⁰ China's Foreign Aid, White paper, 21 April, 2011, p. 11, <http://www.eu-china.net/web/cms/upload/pdf/nachrichten/2011-04-21Chinas-ForeignAid-WhitePaper.pdf> (Access date: 20.03. 2013).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

for Chinese industries, including the military complexes, etc.⁵²

China as a Hard Power

China's impressive progress in its hard power capabilities has given grounds for extensive debates.⁵³ To start with military power, it is not only the possibility of threat or implications that should be studied, rather as David Shambaugh wrote more than a decade ago, People's Liberation Army of China (PLA) would serve a good indicator of what kind of a power China would eventually become.⁵⁴

However, the impact of the PLA on actual policy making and especially, the tangibility of its influence on real foreign policy outcomes are still debated. Moreover, the shortage in the unbiased sources of information further complicates the process of acquiring a clear picture.⁵⁵

A Chinese White Paper on Defence gives a comprehensive overview of the modernization of the Armed Forces.⁵⁶ Beijing's military build-up according to the white paper is of "defensive nature" and has three main tasks: safeguarding national sovereignty, territorial integrity ("Taiwan independence," "Tibet Independence"

⁵² Zhiqun Zhu, *China's New Diplomacy: Rationale, Strategies and Significance*, Ashgate, Surrey, 2010, pp. 21-51.

⁵³ Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security*, 2011/12, Vol: 36, No. 3, p. 42.

⁵⁴ David Shambaugh, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," in *The Rise of China*, ed. Michael E. Brown, et al., MIT Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp.105-132.

⁵⁵ Michael D. Swane, "China's Assertive Behavior, Part Three: The Role of the Military in the Foreign Policy," *China Leadership Monitor*, 2011, No. 36, pp. 1-23, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Swaine_CLM_363.pdf (Access date: 25.03.2013).

⁵⁶ "China's National Defense in 2010," White Paper, 31 March 2011, pp. 10-13, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm (Access date: 23.03.2013).

and “East Turkistan Independence”), and social stability.⁵⁷

When it comes to actual figures, China's investment in its military capabilities is more than impressive, especially against the backdrop of the relative decline in the West.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, of particular use is not the mere statistics of “the world's biggest military expansion”⁵⁹ but the Beijing rationale behind the timing of the spending. In the official statistics from the Ministry of Defence of China, it is clearly indicated that China had ensured the economic development first (1978-1987) and only after that started to increase its military spending again.⁶⁰

Therefore, China pursues a strategy of the right balance in the development of its military and economic capabilities. When it comes to the economic part of hard power, today China may not be the world's biggest economy; but, as the study conducted by the Economist and involving 21 economic indicators found, China has already overtaken the US in about a half out of the total 21 indicators and will overtake it in the rest within the coming ten years.⁶¹

Moreover, Beijing also appears to be the highest contributor to the world GDP growth⁶² and the world's biggest contributor to

⁵⁷ In addition, National Defence strategies take due note of the non-conventional threats of the modern era, such as terrorism, cyber threats, natural disasters and threats to energy and environmental security, *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁸ “Asia's Balance of Power: China's Military Rise,” *Economist*, 7 April 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21552212> (Access date: 26.04.2013).

⁵⁹ “China's Military Rise, Dragon's New Teeth: a Rare Look inside the World's Biggest Military Expansion,” *Economist*, 7 April 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/2152193> (Access date: 12.04.2013).

⁶⁰ “Defense Expenditure,” Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/Expenditure/index.htm> (Access date: 24.04.2013).

⁶¹ “Daily Chart: The Dating Game,” *Economist*, 27 December 2011, http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2010/12/save_date (Access date: 30.03.2013)

⁶² “GDP Forecast,” *Economist*, 21 April 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21553046> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

the liquidity in the financial sector.⁶³ In addition, China has been increasing the share of its contributions to international institutions, like the IMF and the World Bank. But as this does not go hand in hand with the increase in its power in the decision-making process, Beijing is actively involved in the “BRICS Development Bank” project.⁶⁴

The increase in China’s hard power capabilities both in the military and economic sectors is significant. However, what matters is whether those boosted capabilities actually make China a hard power and not a soft or smart power. Hard power resources may have soft outcomes, if used in a smart way. And hard power, as argued by Nye, may also lead to co-optiveness.

The building of Beijing’s military muscle might couple with the side effect of accelerating security dilemmas in the region.⁶⁵ Recent developments in the South China Sea let the commentators assume that the new leadership would embark on a more assertive foreign policy.⁶⁶ However, up to today, the only projection of Chinese military power abroad has been its participation in international missions, for instance in the fight against piracy. Referring to it as a Chinese contribution to peace and stability beyond its borders, seems to be a kind of soft excuse for its military build-up in Beijing’s pocket, which it pulls out when portraying

⁶³ In the last five years, China’s Central Bank experienced a 118% rise. “China’s Central Bank Becomes World’s Biggest in Total Assets: Standard Chartered,” *Caijing*, 23 April 2012, <http://english.caijing.com.cn/2012-04-23/111823281.html> (Access date: 25.04.2013).

⁶⁴ Lingling Way and Bob Davis “China to name a Leader for Development Bank,” *Wall Street Journal*, 12 April 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323741004578418273283766076.html> (Access date: 21.06.2013)

⁶⁵ Prashanth Parameswaran, “Sino-Indian Border Negotiations: Problems and Prospects,” *China Brief*, 2012, Vol: 12, No.6, pp. 3-6, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/cb_03_06.pdf.

⁶⁶ Please see the latest issue of *China Brief*, 2013, Vol: 13, No.13. http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/cb_08_09.pdf (Access date: 28.06.2013).

itself as an attractive responsible player.⁶⁷

Or take the over-discussed “Beijing Consensus” which is considered to be a Chinese soft power component, boosting Beijing’s attractiveness as a model of “prosperity and affluence” giving higher hopes to developing countries with political systems far from Western standards.⁶⁸ But the “Beijing Consensus” is grounded in hard-power economic capabilities, which China uses in a smart way to reach soft outcomes.

This also seems to be the case with its relations with ASEAN countries. To counterbalance the US “insurance policy” (strengthening military ties with Australia, Japan, and India) against Chinese rise, Beijing attracts neighbours through the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement.⁶⁹

Conclusions: Smart Power

Unlike a vast amount of literature on China-related issues, this article avoided the blunt application of the very Western notions of power to Beijing’s posture and activities. Rather it examined China’s self-conceptualization to trace hard, soft and smart power concepts to understand the importance or preference, if any, attributed to the each of the three.

The article looked at Chinese narratives and found that the Chinese self-conceptualization cannot be described as exclusively soft or hard. Despite the emphasis made on soft approaches to international relations, China grants relevant significance to its hard power capabilities as well. In addition, pragmatism and rationalism

⁶⁷ “China’s National Defense in 2010,” White Paper, 31 March 2011, pp. 17-18, http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm (Access date: 23.03.2013).

⁶⁸ Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding, “Dragons’ Underbelly: An Analysis of China’s Soft Power,” *EAST ASIA*, 2006, Vol: 23, p. 28.

⁶⁹ Kishore Mahbubani, “Smart Power, Chinese Style,” *American Interest*, March/April 2008, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article-bd.cfm?piece=406> (Access date: 22.04.2013).

are referred to as the best ground upon which the policies should be formulated.

After discussing China's soft and hard power, it was found that Beijing has indeed been investing heavily to build up its capacity in both aspects. Drawing on the examples of Chinese military participation in international missions and the ASEAN FTA, this article concluded that China attempts at receiving soft outcomes from its hard power capabilities as well.

To sum up, Chinese self-conceptualization gives indications of the importance and availability of both hard and soft power components, but does not characterize itself as utterly soft or utterly hard-line. Rather it gives preference to appropriate composition of both and takes note of the place and timing of their use. Similar is Nye's description of a smart power (a proper combination of the coercive and the attractive) which also goes parallel to China's self-conceptualization about the necessity of combining "firmness" and "flexibility," the importance of knowing when and where each of the two should be deployed.

So far Chinese have been resorting to smart approach in their international relations. But will China carry on with its smart power policies? Is it the best choice for Beijing, given its political and social structure which is in need of further opening up and reform? How sustainable is Chinese progress? Will this progress eventually lead to its global superpower status, or is China destined to be successful with its smart power approach only within the realm of the developing world?

These are just some of the questions that might accompany the ideas developed in this article. This writing did not aim at giving direct answers to them; it attempted to have contributed to creating a better understanding of China upon which further research could be successfully conducted.

ÖZET:

Güç, uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinde üzerine en çok odaklanılan ve tartışılan konulardan biridir. Joseph S. Nye Jr.'ın da söylediği gibi, “uluslararası siyasette güç hava durumu gibidir. Herkes onun hakkında konuşur ama çok az insan onu anlar”. Peki güç nedir? Güç yalnızca askeri veya ekonomik alandaki malzemelere yapılan ve belirli ülkeleri güçlendiren yatırım mıdır yoksa bir ülkenin sahip olduğu hedefleri gerçekleştirme kabiliyetine katkıda bulunan başka faktörler de var mıdır?

Güçle ilgili bu tartışmaların arka planında, makale güce ve gücün unsurlarına yönelik gerçekçi ve liberal yaklaşımlar arasındaki kesin ve birbirini dışlayan ayrıma karşı çıkmakta ve bunun yerine belirli unsurlara öncelik verirken gücün yalnızca sert veya yalnızca yumuşak unsurlardan oluşmadığını savunmaktadır. Ayrıca, makalede gücün farklı kaynakların bir bileşiminden elde edildiği öne sürülmektedir ve bunlar arasında hem sert hem de yumuşak doğaya sahip kaynakların bulunduğunu ve askeri gücün veya yönetim kalitesinin tek başlarına gücün kendisini temsil etmediğini öne sürmektedir. Makaleye göre, güç belirli devletlere güçlerini veren ve devletin elinde bulunan ilgili unsurların “akıllı” bir bileşimidir. İçinde bulunduğumuz bilgi çağında, asıl önemli olan akıllı güç, yani hem sert hem de yumuşak unsurların bir bileşimidir.

Sert, yumuşak ve akıllı güç kavramları, Batıda çeşitli ölçülerde geliştirilmiş ve uygulanmıştır. Batılı akademisyenler ve analistler Çin'i Batı paradigmalarının gözlükleri aracılığıyla bakarak anlamaya çalışmıştır. Çin'in yumuşak gücüne ait çok sayıda yazı yazılmıştır ve Pekin sert gücün peşinde olmadığını savunmaktadır. Ancak konu “akıllı güç” olduğunda, bu konuyla ilgili ve Çin'in akıllı gücü kavramsallaştırmasıyla ilgili fazla bir tartışma bulunmamaktadır.

Bu makalede Çin'in resmi söylemlerinin incelenmesinin ardından, Çin'in sahip olduğu yumuşak güç ve sert güç çeşitli söylemlerle ve örneklerle ele alınmıştır.

Çin ile ilgili kaleme alınan eserlerin büyük bir çoğunluğunun aksine, bu makale Batı'nın güç kavramlarını Pekin'in duruşuna ve faaliyetlerine kaba bir şekilde uygulamaktan kaçınmıştır. Makale, bunun yerine, Çin'in kendini kavramsallaştırma çabalarını incelemiş ve sert güç, yumuşak güç ve akıllı güç kavramlarının izini sürerek Çin'in bu kavramlara veya bu kavramlardan herhangi birine verdiği önemi veya önceliği anlamaya çalışmıştır. Makalede, Çin'in kendini kavramsallaştırma çabalarının yalnızca yumuşak güç veya yalnızca sert güç olarak tanımlanamayacağı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çin uluslararası ilişkilere yönelik olarak yumuşak güç yaklaşımına vurgu yapmakla birlikte, sert güç kabiliyetlerine de yeterince önem vermektedir. Buna ek olarak, politikaların üzerine inşa edilmesi gereken en uygun zeminin pragmatizm ve rasyonalizm olduğu kabul edilmektedir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, Çin'in kendini kavramsallaştırması, hem sert güç hem de yumuşak güç unsurlarına verilen önemin ve bu unsurların kullanılabilirliğinin göstergelerini ortaya koymaktadır ancak Çin kendisini bütünüyle yumuşak güç veya bütünüyle sert güç olarak tanımlamamaktadır. Çin, daha çok, her iki gücün uygun bir bileşimine öncelik vermekte ve bu güçlerin kullanım yerine ve zamanlamasına dikkat etmektedir. Nye'nin akıllı güç tanımı da (zorlayıcı ve çekici gücün uygun bir bileşimi) Çin'in "katılığı" ve "esnekliği" birleştirmeyi gerekli kılan ve bu ikisinin ne zaman ve nerede kullanılması gerektiğini bilmenin önemini vurgulayan kendini kavramsallaştırmasıyla paralellik göstermektedir.

Çin şu ana kadar uluslararası ilişkilerinde akıllı güç yaklaşımını benimsemiştir. Ancak Çin bu akıllı güç politikalarını uygulamayı sürdürebilecek midir? Daha fazla açılması ve reformların gerçekleştirilmesi gereken siyasi ve toplumsal yapısı dikkate alındığında, Pekin için en iyi tercih bu akıllı güç müdür? Çin'in ilerleyişi ne ölçüde sürdürülebilir olacaktır? Bu ilerleme nihayetinde Çin'i küresel bir süper güç konumuna taşıyacak mıdır yoksa Çin akıllı güç yaklaşımıyla yalnızca gelişmekte olan dünyanın kapsadığı alan içinde başarılı olmaya mı mahkûmdur? Bu sorular, bu makalede ortaya konan fikirlere eşlik edebilecek

sorulardan yalnızca bazılarıdır. Makalede bu sorulara doğrudan yanıt verilmeye çalışılmamakta; ileride daha çok sayıda çalışmanın başarıyla gerçekleştirilmesi için Çin'le ilgili daha iyi bir kavrayış oluşturmaya yönelik çabalara katkıda bulunmak amaçlanmaktadır.

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