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# China's Growing Global Influence: A Shift from Geopolitical Reach to World Order

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**ABSTRACT**

In the 21st century, China's global growing influence is evident in global politics, economy, and governance structures, marking a significant shift. After the Cold War, the unipolar world faces challenges from the new distribution of power, growing geopolitical rivalry, changes in multilateral institutions, and axiological debates. In this changing environment, China has not only enhanced economic vitality and strategic capabilities but also achieved global initiatives. The purpose of the study is to analyze how China extends its influence through political, economic, and geopolitical strategies and seeks to reshape international relations, values, and institutional structures. The research is based on two central questions: how China is extending its global influence through its political, economic, and geopolitical activities; and to what extent China influences international principles, values, and global governance, and how it reshapes them through Chinese cooperation and civilization-based initiatives. This study employs a thematic qualitative research approach and utilizes secondary sources. A mixed theoretical framework is utilized: Structural realism examines China's strategic influence, Liberalism examines China's economic mechanisms, and constructivism examines how China is shaping a shift in values and norms through its own civilization. Initial findings portray that China's global governance policy is not limited to power maximization, but is based on economic connectivity, institutional cooperation, representation of the Global South, and new global discourses. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), and the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) are the basic pillars of China's grand strategy. This research aims to understand China's rise through power in the global order, through cooperation, and in shaping values.

**Keywords:** China, Belt and Road Initiative, Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, Global Governance Initiative

## Introduction

The 21st-century liberal international order is undergoing fundamental changes, raising questions about power, governance, development, and security. After the Cold War, the liberal world order was considered the dominant global political framework under US leadership. Over the last two decades, however, China's economic rise and the expansion of its military, diplomatic, and institutional efforts have significantly altered the global power balance (Ikenberry, 2018).

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China’s economic rise is considered the fastest achievement in contemporary world history. After 1978, economic reforms and China’s open-for-all, globally oriented policies made it the world's second-largest economy, while its role in global trade, manufacturing, technology, and investment expanded (Naughton, 2018). Beyond economic growth, China’s BRI role has also played a vital role in global politics and governance over the past decade through BRI and other global initiatives such as BRICS+, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Asian Infrastructure and Development Bank (AIIB) (Rolland, 2017)

China’s growing influence has ignited an important debate among international relations scholars and experts. One expert argues that China's rise is fundamentally shifting the balance of power and moving the world toward multi-polarity, challenging the US's unipolar world (Mearsheimer, 2014). Another argues that China plays a vital role in the global economy and joins multilateral institutions not to eliminate the existing world order completely, but to propose reforms and ensure maximum representation (Keohane, 2005). A third view, based on constructivist theory, argues that China promotes new norms, values, and identities on global platforms to ensure a positive image and give soft power a prominent status in the international nation system (Wendt, 1999).

This debate becomes more prominent when China’s global initiatives are examined. President Xi Jinping has launched global initiatives along with the BRI. According to China, the primary aim of these initiatives the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), and the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) is the mutual coexistence of humankind in future, in which development, security, cultural diversity, and justice will have a central role (Xiaochun, 2018). In contemporary debates, these initiatives are considered fundamental pillars of China's grand strategy.

Although there is existing literature on China’s global rise, a clear research gap remains in how it is studied theoretically. Existing literature on China’s global influence usually relies on realism to analyze China’s power or geopolitical strategies, liberalism to examine China’s economic growth or institutional system, or constructivism to examine norms, values, and identities. Yet these theories are rarely used together to examine China’s global role in a single framework (Acharya, 2014a).

In view of this research gap in the theoretical framework, this study examines China’s role in global influence through a hybrid framework of structural realism, liberalism, and constructivism. It focuses on China’s strategic and geopolitical activities, institutional cooperation, development activities, values, and identities to clarify the study’s thesis and main analytical lens.

**Statement of the Problem**

Existing literature on international relations views China's rise through either partial or limited theoretical frameworks. As a result, analyzing China's power

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cooperation and institutional structures is difficult within a single theoretical framework. The main research gap is examining China's growing global influence requires a hybrid theoretical framework that simultaneously analyzes it's geopolitical, institutional, and value structures. There is a visible research gap in the details of the literature review. Most studies evaluate China's rise through a realist or liberalist perspective. These studies usually focus separately on power, security, cooperation and institutionalism. As a result, there is a lack of understanding of the scenario within a hybrid theoretical framework that explains power, institutionalism, and values together. There is extensive literature separately on China's global initiatives, such as BRI, GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI. However, studying them together as the main pillars of a global grand strategy in a single study is limited. As a result, there is no complete understanding of China's collective global grand strategy (Öniş & Kutlay, 2020). The literature on new initiatives like the GCI and GGI is still in its initial phases; therefore, there is limited research on a comprehensive understanding of China's global principles and institutional frameworks. Existing literature usually focuses on China's material influence and pays less attention to China's efforts to build a new civilization through norms, values, and identities in opposition to Western liberal civilization.

This study is based on a Hybrid Theoretical Framework composed of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, with the aim of filling these research gaps and completely understanding China's strategic vision and institutional cooperation. Therefore, this research is conducted through a hybrid theoretical framework to provide a comprehensive study of China's global influence.

**Research Questions**

1. How does China strategically expand its global influence through its political, economic, and geopolitical initiatives?
2. How does China reshape global norms, values, and governance structures through cooperative and civilizational initiatives?

**Significance of the Study**

1. The study's academic significance lies in addressing a research gap by providing a hybrid theoretical framework to analyze China's global influence across multiple dimensions. This framework examines how China's power, cooperation, and values reshape mutual relations (Acharya, 2014b).

2. The policy significance of the study is that China's grand strategy extends beyond geopolitical influence to long-term development, infrastructure, security, and global governance goals, which are central to the research questions (Kose & Ruch, 2025).
3. The study's practical significance lies in identifying opportunities and challenges for the Global South and the developing world. BRI, GDI, and AIIB provide clearer explanations, and their strategic implications should also be understood .

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4. This study contributes to International Relations scholarship by offering a hybrid theoretical framework and a thematic synthesis. Its primary objective is to examine China's global rise in power, institutional cooperation, and values through a mixed theoretical orientation.

## Literature Review

### China's Strategic Rise and the Reconfiguration of Global power

In the 21st century, China's strategic rise is a major debate in contemporary international affairs. Over the past four decades, China has made significant economic, security, technological, and diplomatic gains, reshaping the balance of power, regional security structures, and the world order (Hung, 2015, 2015). International relations analysts conclude that China's strategic rise is not merely a national developmental success but a structural change in global governance. However, analysts strongly critique the results, capability, and goals of this change. China's rapid economic growth has paved the way for its global rise. In 1978, following Deng Xiaoping's policies, China's reform and opening-up policies entered the market, resulting in significant economic growth. According to the World Bank, China has lifted millions of people out of poverty and into the middle class and has become the center of global manufacturing. This economic vitality has enabled China to play a vital role in world politics.

According to structural realism, China's rise is best understood as a product of an anarchic balance-of-power system. Kenneth Waltz argues that states tend to attain power through a self-help world. China's economic and military expansion is therefore an effort to achieve security and gain global influence. From this perspective, China's rise is not an ideological agenda but a response to the structure of the world system: power increases support for survival, and survival requires power. China's growing role is thus a natural product of the international system (Waltz, 1979).

According to Offensive Realism, rising powers tend to seek regional dominance. Building on this view, China is maximizing its influence in Asia, as the US does. China also seeks to contain US influence in the region over the long term. Its modern navy, South China Sea activities, Taiwan policy, and presence in the Indian Ocean are part of this strategy.

On the contrary, not all analysts agree with power politics explanations. China's rise is also understood through economic merger and multi-faceted cooperation. China has been actively involved in international institutions. China has achieved its goals by adhering to existing global rules. Therefore, China is not fully a revisionist power but a reformist power.

Power Transition Theory states that there is a risk of conflict between rising and dominant powers. US-China relations are seen in this regard. The Thucydides Trap suggests that competition often shapes relations between dominant and rising powers: dominant powers safeguard their position, and rising powers seek to prove their strength (Destined for War,2024).

Some analysts view power transition simply. Today's international system differs from

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historical ones. The modern international system is associated with organizations and mutual cooperation, and China's rise fits within this structure. That is why, for China, overthrowing the international system is less logical, while staying in the system and fulfilling its goals is more beneficial.

BRI faces major criticism from analysts. For some, it is a grand strategic framework for China. China is increasingly expanding its influence in Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America in the long term. While other analysts disagree, they argue that the BRI's aim is not strategic influence but trade connectivity and economic development (Blanchard, 2020). In this perspective, BRI is not a geopolitical dominance strategy by China.

China's military advancement is evident in the increase in its defence budget over the last two decades. China has given special attention to its modern Navy, Air Force, Cyber, and Air capabilities, indicating that it is increasingly militarizing with modern equipment (*Active Defense | Princeton University Press*, 2019). From a realist perspective, these initiatives and advancements are intended to counter the US and its allies in the Indo-Pacific. While some experts say that China's military strategies are for defence objectives, its purpose is to safeguard its sea routes, trade routes, regional stability, and economic aims. The peaceful rise of China is evident in the literature on China's rise. China seeks to maximize its global influence through economic power rather than coercive means (*Celebrating Beijing Plus Ten 2005*). It aims to minimize apprehensions in the international system of nation-states by presenting its development in a positive, constructive light.

According to Constructivist theory, state behavior is not only judged by material power; identity, values, and norms also play a vital role. International politics is shaped by social norms and values. In this view, Peaceful Rise is not only a policy but also a discourse on norms and values. China shoulders global responsibilities to demonstrate to the world that it is peaceful and working hard to uphold them (Callahan, 2015). China portrays itself as a follower of a pluralistic world order.

**Great Power Competition and China's Strategic Expansion**

The rise of China has highlighted the return of great-power competition in international politics. After the Cold War, the US was considered a unipolar world power. China's economic and military development has pushed the global order toward multi-polarity. In this view, US-China rivalry is a significant strategic rivalry in the 21st century. In the structural realist perspective, great-power competition is considered a natural feature. In an anarchic world, there is no central power; state safety has no clear guarantee (Waltz, 1979). As a result, states tend to maximize their power and balance their rivals' power to survive. Therefore, the US adopted the Pivot to Asia and the Indo-Pacific Strategy initiatives. The US has appreciated its defence partnership with regional allies. This strategy aims to balance China's influence (Modoni, 2024). On the other hand, China has expanded its economic and military power. These efforts show a strategic rivalry among the big powers.

China's strategic expansion is not limited to military and economic strategies, but has also spread to diplomatic, technological, institutional, and developmental strategies. China maximizes its global influence through platforms such as the AIIB, SCO, and BRICS. These platforms enable China to increase its influence in the Global South.

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Chinese strategy combines conventional power politics and liberal institutional cooperation. In this regard, state influence and institutional cooperation work together.

The main question in the great power competition is whether China is challenging the global order or strengthening its position within it. This debate is especially seen in the different phases of BRI. To better understand China's role as a global influence, it is necessary to draw on diverse theoretical frameworks, including liberalism and constructivism. GDI, GCI, GSI, and GGI are included in the analysis. This study aims to analyze China's global influence from multiple theoretical perspectives.

**Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Transformation of Global Governance**

BRI is considered a major initiative in China's global grand strategy. President Xi Jinping first launched this initiative in 2013. Initially an economic initiative connecting Eurasia, it later expanded into a geographic, economic, diplomatic, and institutional strategy. In contemporary literature, BRI is seen as a shift in China's global order rather than only an infrastructure project (Zaki et al., 2023).

From a structural realist perspective, BRI aims to maintain a long-term position through strategic expansion and geopolitical presence. Realists argue that ports, railways, energy routes, and logistics networks provide China with strategic, geographic, and economic reach. Gwadar, Hambantota, Piraeus, and other ports are discussed in this study.

On the other hand, liberal supporters consider the Belt and Road Initiative an economic interdependence and a means of regional connectivity. According to this, China connects developing countries with the global economy through infrastructure. It creates opportunities for trade, investment, and economic development. It minimizes economic dependence and conflict while maximizing opportunities for cooperation ("Power and Interdependence," 2020).

From a constructivist perspective, BRI is not only an economic and strategic policy but also a narrative-building project. China connects it to mutual development, mutual happiness, and mutual future. Through the BRI, China aims to position itself as a friendly global power while shaping its identity. It also reshapes global concepts and global politics.

According to the State Council of China, BRI is a development, connectivity, and inclusive economic development platform for the Global South. State Council of China considered it a Win-Win Cooperation in 2023. However, critics raise concerns about debt burden, transparency issues, and political influence. In this debate, no comprehensive hybrid theoretical study exists; explanations are provided through different theoretical frameworks.

**China's Cooperative Mechanisms and Institutional Diplomacy**

In China's global influence study, institutional and cooperation-based diplomacy is central. Over the past two decades, China has increased its presence in international organizations and initiated new international platforms. This trend challenges the assumption that rising powers must emerge from the existing world order.

According to Liberalism, international organizations play a vital role in mediating

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relations among states through trust, cooperation, and collective problem-solving. China's SCO, AIIB, BRICS, and New Development Bank present organic examples of this. Through these organizations, China not only promotes financial development but also creates a global economic environment that gives the developing world greater representation (McNicoll, 2017).

Currently, China has launched global initiatives, including GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI. These initiatives are the backbone of China's global grand strategy and are linked to building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Global Development Initiative was launched in 2021 at the UN General Assembly. Its basic aim is to eliminate poverty, provide quality food, health, and digital development, support climate sustainability, and shoulder the responsibility for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from which US President Trump withdrew in 2025. According to the liberal perspective, GDI promotes economic cooperation, mutual development, and mutual benefit on the international level (*UNDP Annual Report 2023*, n.d.).

Global Security Initiative was launched in 2022 to ensure mutual, collective, and sustainable security. According to Xi Jinping, security should not be seen as a Zero-Sum Game but as a mutual responsibility (Yip, 2024). A liberal perspective views it as an example of cooperative security, but it is also seen as a Chinese strategic shift to strengthen its presence in the global south.

Global Governance Initiative launched in 2025 to bring reforms to global organizations, increasing representation for the developing world, and promoting a pluralistic system. Few studies suggest that China's GGI calls for global governance institutions to address power distribution and better represent the global south .

**Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) and Normative Power Transformation**

Global Civilization Initiative was launched by President Xi Jinping in 2023. In Chinese literature, GCI is considered an ideological and values project. It promotes cultural diversity, cultural respect, inter-civilizational dialogue, and shared human values among different civilizations. From a constructivist perspective, global politics is shaped not only by hard power but also by ideas, values, identities, and social meanings. In this view, GCI is an example of Chinese soft power and a better tool of normative diplomacy (Khan, 2024).

Civilization analysts view this initiative as reflecting the Clash of Civilizations. China states that, through the Dialogue of Civilizations, different countries can learn from one another, and mutual respect is significant for global peace and stability. In this view, the initiative presents global politics as cultural multiplicity rather than cultural dominance.

According to constructivists, GCI is part of China's identity politics. China represents itself as a civilizational state and proposes alternative concepts to Western liberal civilization, presenting new norms and ideas globally to strengthen its national identity (Qin, 2018). However, there is no scholarly consensus on the depth of GCI. Some analysts consider it an effort at inter-civilizational cooperation, while others view it as a strategy to expand China's soft power and global narrative influence. This debate

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suggests that global power is gained through both power and ideology.

**Normative Power and Global Governance**

China's current strategies show that it is not limited to expanding its influence in the existing global order. Beijing reshapes global norms and governance bodies. Some researchers refer to it as China's Normative Power, a concept similar to Europe's Normative Power (Manners, 2025).

GGI aims to make international institutions more just, participatory, and representative. GGI focuses on the rise of the Global South and multilateralism. Global institutional reforms have a central role. According to Beijing, existing global bodies reflect power after the Second World War. These bodies should be changed in line with contemporary practical realities.

In this debate, Liberalism and Constructivism are used together. Liberalism explains institutional reform and multilateral cooperation, while Constructivism explains how China reshapes norms, values, and concepts.

**Methodology**

***Research Design***

This research is conducted through Thematic Qualitative Research; its main objective is to examine China’s global influence, strategic vision, institutional cooperation, and power shaping in depth. Qualitative Research is considered better for understanding political, social, and ideological ambiguities because it focuses on meanings, concepts, and policies (Hussain, 2025). In this research, China’s global initiatives are examined through grand political and ideological lenses. The study answers both research questions. It contains multidimensional power, institutional cooperation, identity, and global governance. Owing to this complexity, the Thematic Qualitative Research Approach is chosen. This study uses the Interpretivist Research Orientation model. According to this model, international politics is not only measured by material realities but is also shaped by meaning, concepts, and social conduct. This research does not cover China’s initiatives only as economic and military means, but also as ideological, normative, and institutional (Hussain, 2025).

***Research Approach***

This Study adopts a hybrid deductive-inductive approach. At the deductive level, it provides a theoretical framework such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism. This helps analyze China’s Global role. On the Inductive side, it examines themes such as policy recommendations, government statements, reports from international organizations, and academic literature. Resultantly, it provides a theoretical framework and facts.

***Thematic Synthesis Strategy***

In this study, the Thematic Synthesis Method is used, which allows material from different sources to be organized into themes (Hussain, 2024). The study is conducted on the following themes.

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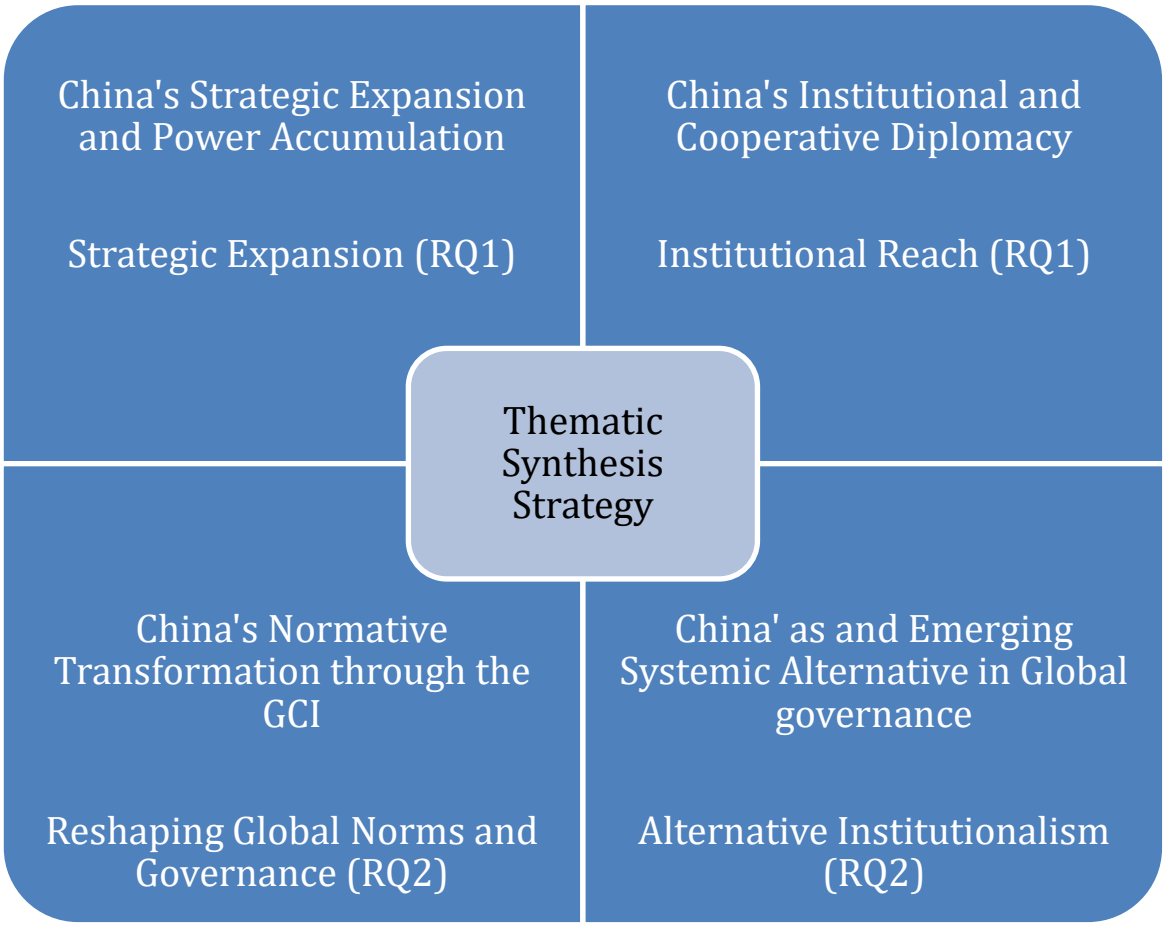


These four themes are directly linked to the research questions and provide a comprehensive thematic analysis of the research.

***Data Sources***

This study uses secondary qualitative data and academic sources, including Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science Journals, SAGE publications, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, Springer Nature, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press. It also uses institutional reports such as United Nations Reports, World Bank Reports, Asian Development Bank Reports, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Reports, and UNDP Reports (Hussain, 2020). It also uses official documents such as Chinese Government Statements, Ministry of Foreign Affairs China Reports, BRI Cooperation Documents, GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI Concept Papers. It also utilizes Policy Publications such as the Council on Foreign Relations, Chatham House, the Brookings Institution, the Carnegie Endowment, and the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

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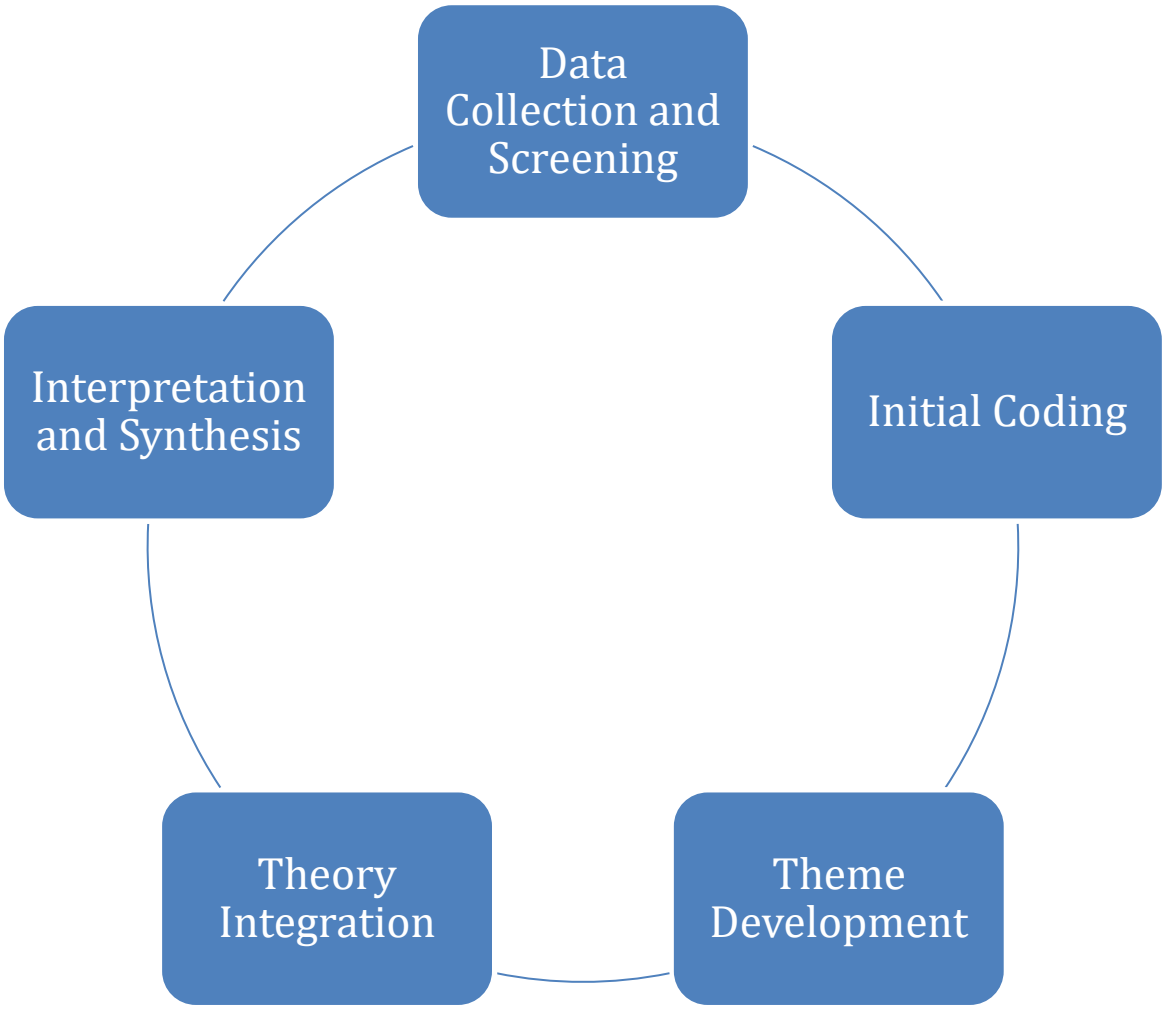
*Analytical Procedure*




**Theoretical Orientation**

In International Relations, China's rise cannot be fully understood through a single theory. In China, Global Rise, Power, Institutional Cooperation, and Norms Construction are all part of the same process. That is why this study adopts a Hybrid Theoretical Framework. This framework combines Waltz's Structural Realism (Anarchy, Survival Maximizer, power centrality, security), Liberalism (Cooperation, Institutionalism, Economic Interdependency, and Multilateralism), and Wendt's Constructivism (Ideas, Identity, Norms, Social Conducts). With this Hybrid Theoretical Framework, China's Global Rise can be better studied with a more complete understanding.

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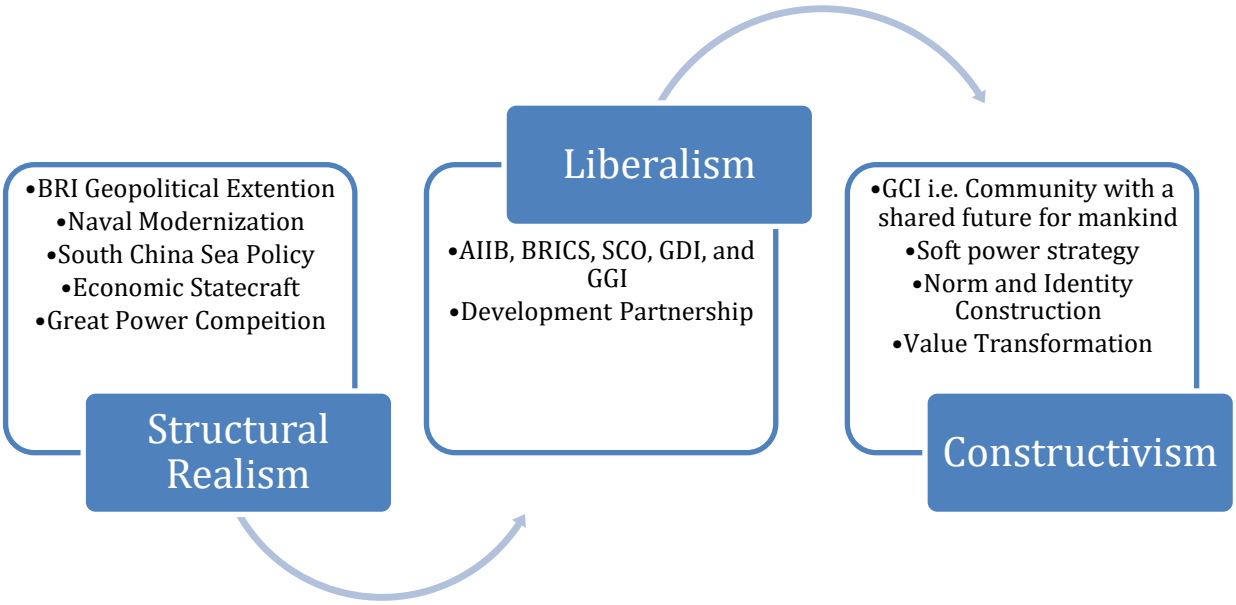


A realist perspective examines RQ1: how China pursues power, security, and political, economic, and geographic expansion. The liberalist perspective examines RQ1 and RQ2 by examining how China rises through both global governance and institutional cooperation. The constructivist perspective inquires RQ1: how China rises globally through norms, values, and identity.

**Findings and Analysis**

Four main analyses are derived from the thematic analysis of this study: China's Strategic Influence, Institutional and Cooperation Diplomacy, Norms and Civilization Creation, and Alternative Role in Global Governance. In these four thematic analyses, the first two will be addressed in accordance with the research questions and theoretical frameworks. The basic aim of the study is to examine China's Strategy not solely through power or economic cooperation. But it is a grand strategy that considers material power, institutional cooperation, and constructive norms as part of its framework.

**China's Strategic Expansion and Power Accumulation**

This research shows that China's Strategic Expansion is a multilateral strategy. It includes economic investment, geopolitical influence, diplomatic participation, technological development, and security efforts. Since the last two decades, China has

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converted its economic power into global influence. China's role is maximized in global trade, basic organizations, energy projects, digital connectivity, and financial institutions. It can also be understood from a realist perspective, which holds that states accumulate power in a chaotic world.

BRI is the bedrock of Chinese grand strategy, connecting China to Asia, Africa, South Asia, Europe, and Latin America through billions of dollars in infrastructure projects. From a realist perspective, BRI is not merely an economic development program but a geostrategic policy. Through BRI, China strengthens its position in global supply chains, gains access to major sea routes, ensures energy security, and grows regional influence. BRI is an example of Geo-economic Statecraft, in which economic means are used for geopolitical goals. In this perspective, the Gwadar and Hambantota ports, along with the Central Asian land routes, strengthen China’s global influence and strategic presence.

China’s economic power has become its primary tool for global influence. According to the World Bank, by 2024, China will become the world's second-largest economy, exporter, and trade partner of developing countries. China provides finance, debts, developmental projects, and industrial cooperation through Economic Statecraft. This is evident from the Economic Interdependence. From this point of view, the more countries that join China economically, the more China's political and diplomatic influence will increase. That is why countries from the global south view China as a better partner.

The main geopolitical aspect of China's rise is Great Power Competition, US-China Rivalry. According to John Mearsheimer, China’s rising global influence will ultimately collide with the Western liberal world order. This collision is evident in the Indo-Pacific Region, South China Sea, Technology Competition, Artificial Intelligence, Semiconductor Industry, and Global Supply Chains. According to Structural Realism, this situation predicts a change in the Balance of Power. Moreover, when a rising power challenges an existing dominant power, great power competition intensifies at the international level. However, the study shows that China avoids direct confrontation with the US and maximizes its global influence through economic vitality and institutionalism.

China has increasingly gained influence in the Global South, its basic reasons are Infrastructure financing, Development Assistance, technology Transfer, South-South Cooperation, and political non-interference. China’s stance is that developmental cooperation should not be conditional on politics. This stance is spread in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the existing literature, China shoulders global responsibilities for the interests and representation of the Global South. This research plays a significant role in answering RQ1 because China’s global influence is not only exercised through power but also through developmental participation.

**China’s Institutional and Cooperative Diplomacy**

Institutional diplomacy is the second pillar of China’s Global Strategy. China played a significant role in international organizations and launched new alternative platforms, such as the AIIB, BRICS, NDB, SCO, and the BRI Forums. Liberal Institutionalist perspectives view it as a cooperative organization among states and reduce the likelihood of unclear situations. The research finds that China has made this strategy a main part of its foreign policy.

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Global Development Initiative is an example of Chinese cooperation-based diplomacy. It focuses on poverty alleviation, food security, health, digital development, and environmental protection. From a liberal perspective, GDI is a tool for mutual gains globally. China represents itself as a Global Development Leader through GDI. For instance, the Trump Administration gave up on the SDGs in 2025, creating a vacuum that China has since filled; China shoulders the UN Agenda 2030 DGs. DGs.

Global Security Initiative reflects a global vision representation through Chinese security. GSI focuses on the Cooperative study, Dialogue, Sovereignty, Non-Interference, and Peaceful Conflict Resolution. According to the liberal perspective, GSI portrays a modern image of collective security, while the structural realist perspective portrays it as China's growing global security leadership.

China does not completely negate existing institutions, but demands reforms and more representation. The Global Governance Initiative is an example of this. GGI focuses on Multilateralism, Institutional Reform, Greater Representation, and Global South Participation. It is the amalgamation of both Liberal Institutionalism and Constructive norms.

**China's Normative Transformation through the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)**

Research finds that China's global presence unfolds in five phases through the economy, geopolitics, and institutionalism. China's global strategy is not limited to material power; it also includes concepts, norms, values, identity, and political means. This is basically evident in the GCI, which President Xi initiated in 2023. GCI's basic elements are Civilizational Diversity, Cultural Respect, Inter-Civilizational Dialogue, and Shared Human Values. According to Constructivism, Global politics is not only shaped by military and economic power, but also by concepts, ideologies, identities, and values. That is how GCI can be seen as a Normative Dimension of China's global strategy.

Norm Entrepreneurship is a significant concept in constructivist literature, which means that non-state actors introduce new principles and values. A study shows that China portrays itself as a Norm Entrepreneur. Through GCI, China focuses on Mutual Respect among Civilizations, Dialogue of Civilizations, Cultural Diversity, Shared Human Values, and Civilizational Learning. According to the Chinese stance, which states that instead of opposing each other, they can mutually develop (Xi, 2023). GCI is an alternative concept to the ''Clash of Civilizations (Huntington, 1996).

GCI is not only constructing identity but also reshaping China's soft image globally. According to constructivism, states not only act for material benefits but also shape their identities and social capacities. China wants to reflect its social status as a Responsible Global power, a Representative of the Global South, a Promoter of Peaceful Development, a Defender of Cultural Diversity, and an advocate of Inclusive Global Governance. This identity narrative is evident throughout China's Foreign Policy and Global Diplomacy.

Soft Power is the ability of states to gain influence through attraction, values, and culture. GCI is a part of China's Soft Power Strategy, which uses Confucius Institutes,

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Educational Exchange, Media Networks, Cultural Diplomacy, and Academic Partnerships. These initiatives aim to foster a positive image of China worldwide. This Narrative Competition is actually a global narrative rivalry, in which China presents an alternative vision to Western political and civilizational narratives.

**China as an Emerging Systemic Alternative in Global Governance**

China does not portray itself as a complete alternative to the existing order, but seeks reforms within international institutions. GGI launched for this aim, which focuses on the Sovereign Equality, Multilateralism, International Law, Inclusive Governance, and Greater Global South Representation. According to Beijing, the existing institutions operate on the aftereffects of WW2 and need reform in light of contemporary realities.

Global South Leadership is a central part of China's Global strategy. China links its different global initiatives with the representation, participation, and development of developing countries. Global South countries consider China a great partner for its Development Financing, Infrastructure Investment, Non-Interference Principle, Alternative Development Model, and South-South Cooperation. This shows that China is not only a regional power but also a grand centre of development and political unity.

Moreover, China is shaping new alternative institutions, including AIIB, BRICS+, and NDB. These institutions do not function as a complete alternative but rather complement one another to bring about a new order. According to Liberalism, these institutions support global cooperation. According to Constructivism, these institutions work as new identities and new global priorities. While Realism analyzes it as China's growing global influence and power.

In this research, one theme is repeatedly stated: Community with a Shared Future for Mankind. China's total global initiatives are linked to this theme. This envisagement consists of development, security, cultural respect, global cooperation, and participatory governance. From a constructivist perspective, this is China's Meta-Narrative, reflecting an alternative foundation for global politics.

**Conclusion**

China's Rise is a hot topic in international relations in the 21st century. The objective of this study was to examine how China is growing its global influence through politics, economy and geopolitical initiatives. China affects global principles and institutions through cooperation, cultural connectivity, and global governance. China's rise is not limited to power or the economy; it is multilateral, encompassing strategic influence, institutional cooperation, and developmental participation. Initiatives like BRI, GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI are the main pillars of this strategy. China converts its material power through these initiatives into global influence. In addition, China shows new Narratives of global governance, development, and culture.

In response to RQ1, the study finds that China uses certain mutually reinforcing means to expand its global influence. This includes financial investment, which reshapes basic institutions. Trade connectivity and developmental value also play significant roles in supporting this influence. China plays an active role in new institutions and initiatives such as the BRI, AIIB, BRICS, and NDB. Strategic transits reshaping is also part of this strategy, reinforcing long-term influence in world affairs. According to Structural

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Realism, these efforts give China long-term influence in world affairs by advancing power, security, and strategic influence. In addition, the liberal perspective says that China uses mutual economic dependence and institutional connectivity to support this influence. Collectively, China's global influence is grounded in both power maximization and institutional cooperation.

In direct response to RQ2, the research shows that China seeks to introduce new narratives of global principles and governance through GCI, GDI, GGI, and the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." China presents itself in global politics through a South Asian perspective that prioritizes cultural diversity, respect for autonomy, participatory development, and multilateral cooperation. According to Constructivism, this effort reflects the creation of norms and the formation of identity. China does not fully reject global institutions; instead, it proposes value transformation and institutional reform. It demands greater representation to make these institutions more participatory. In this way, China seeks to remain within the existing world order while influencing its values and institutions.

This research has adopted a hybrid theoretical framework to understand China's global influence through multiple factors. Realism explains its strategic influence factor, liberalism examines its cooperation and institutional factors, and constructivism explains its norms-creation and identity-formation factors. Meanwhile, its academic contribution is that this research provides a comprehensive study of the BRI, GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI, which the existing literature lacks. Secondly, this research combines China's hard and soft power, meaning its influence is not limited to economic or strategic power; norms and values also play a significant role. Thirdly, China upholds the Global South through its cooperation, strategic influence, and new narrative building.

**Recommendations**

1. For policymakers, China's initiatives should not be seen only through a geopolitical lens, but also through economic, trade, infrastructure, and institutional cooperation lenses. The developing world should benefit from cooperation and prioritize Debt sustainability to prevent long-term financial burdens. They should also ensure that local economic interests are taken into account to drive real-time internal development. They should also focus on governance standards to ensure transparent administration.
2. International institutions such as the United Nations, the IMF, and the World Bank should take China's participation and representation seriously. These apprehensions are coming repeatedly from the Global South. Global institutions should align with today's facts. If that is not done, global alternative institutional platforms may rise.
3. Major Powers like the US, the European Union, and others should not view China's rise as a confrontation. Cooperation is needed on global issues such as climate change, food security, cybersecurity, pandemics, and sustainable development. A balanced approach to competitive cooperation can be more beneficial.
4. Developing countries should ensure that, before participating in Chinese cooperation, they are in line with their national interests, that participation is

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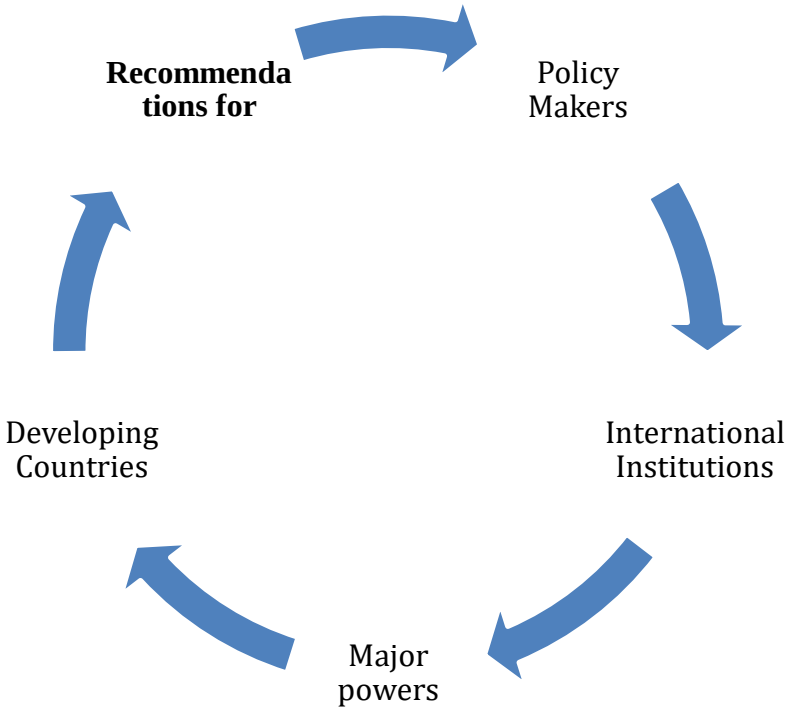
beneficial to the domestic economy, that transparency and accountability are maintained, and that economic dependency is avoided.




**Future Research Directions**

- Digital Silk Road and Technological Governance
- Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Western Governance Models
- China's Influence in Specific Regions
- Global Civilization initiative and Norm Diffusion
- China and the Future of Multi-polarity

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